









# BIBLE COMMENTARY

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## VOLUME FIVE

Containing Explanatory Notes and Comments on Matthew,  
Mark, Luke, John, Acts of the Apostles, and Romans

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# PREFACE to the NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

When I began to write a commentary on the New Testament I realized that I would not be able to answer all the questions in advance that might arise in the mind of the reader. I learned this truth in my experience of teaching a class orally. After going into much detail explaining a chapter and then calling for questions, I have been surprised at the points that were suggested which I had overlooked. And in a work where no opportunity can be had for a hearing from the student it would be impossible to avoid all such omissions. But it was my purpose to deal with every question occurring to me, no matter how unimportant it might seem to the advanced student, using such words and phrases as are understood by the average reader. I could not hope to meet the demands of the overcritical or those who might feel themselves qualified from the standpoint of the scholarship of the world. My intention has been to write a "commentary for the common man."

A word of caution will be given as to the proper use of a commentary. It should not be considered as an authority but only as a means of suggestion for the various fields of thought. Very often an explanation will be self-evident when it is stated and will need no further proof of its correctness. Yet the thought might not have occurred to the reader had he not seen the suggestion. This truth gives one of the main purposes of a commentary. If the comment is not thus evident, the reader should carefully investigate for himself before accepting the explanation. And if the author has cited the grounds for his statement, the reader should examine all such proof with all the care possible, in justice to himself as well as to the author. Regardless of any preconceived opinions, the reader should approach the commentary with a mind that is like a clean sheet of paper, ready to receive and record any truth that he may find

that is sustained by satisfactory evidence. In conclusion of this paragraph, a commentary should be given the same kind of treatment that its author would receive were he doing his teaching orally. He should be heard respectfully and full consideration be allowed for all of his statements. They should be compared with all the proofs or evidences available, then be accepted or rejected according to whether they are in harmony therewith or not.

The reader should see the preface to Volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary, since many statements therein as to the general plan of this work apply to it as a whole. Also the list of works given in that preface have been consulted in the writing of the New Testament Commentary. All of those works named are classed as "authorities" in their respective fields. While on this subject I will add a few lines in explanation of the definitions in the lexicon. Thayer sometimes defines a Greek word as it applies in specific passages, and at other times he gives its meaning in general. This distinction has usually been called to the attention of the reader. And also, what he offers as the direct meaning of the word is printed in italics, and if he has any personal comments or explanation of his own definition, that is printed in common type. I sometimes quote both kinds because a learned writer of a lexicon certainly knows why he has offered his definition of the word being considered. In addition to the "authorities" mentioned I have consulted commentaries and writings of religious teachers. No man knows it all, and frequently one can obtain valuable suggestions and references to sources of information that he otherwise would have missed. In the use of these works I have observed the same rules of caution toward them that I have asked the reader to maintain in his use of this Commentary.

*The Author*

# Bible Commentary

## MATTHEW 1

Verse 1. The word *book* is from the Greek word *BIBLOS* and is defined by Thayer, "A written book, a roll or scroll." *Generation* is from *GENESIS* which Thayer defines, "used of birth, nativity." *Book of the generation*. This phrase is commented on by the same author as follows: "A book of one's lineage, i. e. in which his ancestry or his progeny [ancestors from whom he is a descendant] are enumerated." *David; Abraham*. Matthew wrote his book for the special benefit of the Jews is the reason he did not go any farther back than to Abraham. He was the first patriarch to whom the promise of the Messiah was made and their interest in Him would hence not include any earlier ancestors. After Abraham the most important man in the ancestry of Christ was David, so the record makes mention of him. The word for *book* means generally any written document, but in this place it applies only as a title for the family history of the ancestors of Christ which will include verses through 17.

Verse 2. Abraham had more than one son but the promised seed was to come through his son Isaac (Genesis 21: 12; Romans 9: 7), hence Matthew goes from Abraham to Isaac in the record. Isaac also had more than one son and it was stipulated that Jacob was the one through whom the line was to go (Genesis 25: 23; Romans 9: 12, 13) thus the author goes from Isaac to Jacob in his tracing of the blood line. Jacob also had many sons who figure in an important manner in the history, but only one of them (Judah, here called Judas) could be used in the blood line, so the significant wording is *Judas and his brethren*. This idea of singling out the particular one in each family was observed all down the line. I have gone into detail in this verse to set forth the subject, and such details will not need to be repeated in all of the following verses.

Verse 3. *Thamar* is called Tamar in Genesis and she was the daughter-in-law of Judah. The account of how she became the mother of his sons is in Genesis 38.

Verse 4. *Aram* is in the form of Ram in the Old Testament account.

Verse 5. *Booz* is Boaz in the account found in the Old Testament. His mother *Rachab* is called Rahab in Joshua 6: 25; she was the woman in Jericho. This verse names two women who were connected with the blood line of Christ (*Rachab* and *Ruth*) who were not direct descendants of Abraham. However, this should not confuse us because it was customary in ancient times to ignore the daughters in the family registers. But these women were so outstanding in their parts of the great drama that the inspired writer gives them special mention.

Verse 6. Here the record takes on an additional phase of importance. In the days of Samuel the prophet the people of Israel clamored for a king in order to be like the nations around them. The Lord was displeased with their request but suffered them to have a king. The first one was Saul of the tribe of Benjamin, but he was so unrighteous that God took the throne from him and his family and even shut out that tribe from the royal line. The throne was then given to the tribe of Judah which had possession of the kingdom in Jerusalem until the Babylonian captivity. David was the first man to occupy the throne from that tribe, hence the words *David the king*. All of the rest to be named in the blood line were kings also but the fact will not be mentioned. This special notice was given to David because he was the first man to be in both the royal and blood lines. And in having such a place in the history of Israel he became the most important type of Christ as king, hence the various references to Him as sitting on the throne of his father David. The term "father" refers to the blood line and the term "throne" refers to the royal line. The mother of Solomon is referred to but not named as were *Rachab* and *Ruth*. No reason is given in the Scriptures for this variation in the mention of persons. It is worth considering, however, that of the many wives that David had, this one was the mother of both Solomon and Nathan (1 Chronicles 3: 5). The significance of this is in the fact that both of these sons of David were direct ancestors of Christ; Solomon's line coming down to Joseph the (foster) father, and

Nathan's coming down to Heli the father of Mary. Hence, the two blood streams from David coming through the two sons who were full brothers, were brought together by the marriage of Joseph and Mary.

Verse 7. *Roboam* is Rehoboam in the Old Testament and *Abia* is *Abijam*.

Verse 8. *Joshaphat* is Jehoshaphat, *Joram* is Jehoram, and *Ozias* is Uzziah in the O. T.

Verse 9. *Joatham* is Jotham, Achaz is Ahaz and *Ezekias* is Hezekiah formerly.

Verse 10. *Manasses* is spelled Manasseh and *Josias* is the same as Josiah.

Verse 11. *Jechonias* has three different forms in the Old Testament but the one generally used is Jehoiachin. He was not the last temporal king that the people of Israel ever had; there was one more (Zedekiah). But while he was a son of Josiah, he had been placed on the throne in Jerusalem by the king of Babylon (1 Kings 24: 17), having deposed Jehoiachin and taken him to Babylon as a captive. But the blood line remained with him, hence the present verse words it *Jechonias and his brethren*. Also, the words *about the time they were carried away to Babylon* are explained by the facts just mentioned in this paragraph.

Verse 12. *After they were brought to Babylon*. Family life was not discontinued even though the Jews were in captivity. The inspired writer is able to give us the names of lineal descendants that he wished to use in connecting the blood line from Abraham to Christ. Not all of the succeeding names are given nor was that necessary. The present verse virtually covers the 70 years of the captivity, for it was in the days of *Zorobabel* (Zerubbabel) that they came out of it (Ezra 3: 2).

Verses 13-15. This paragraph covers the space of over four centuries, from the return after the captivity to the time of Jacob, father of Joseph. It is evident that not all of the men in the blood line are named, but only enough of them to show the connection of the list as that would affect the ancestry of Jesus.

Verse 16. The use of the term "begat" is not used here because Joseph was only the foster father of Jesus. But the verse states that he was the husband of Mary in order to show how the two blood streams from David

were joined. *Husband* is from ANER which is the only word for "husband" in the New Testament. It is so rendered 50 times and by "man" 156 times. The word cannot hence be known to designate a married man except by the connection in which it is found. *Jesus who is called Christ*. The specific meaning of the first word is "saviour" and the last is defined "anointed." The force of the combined title is "Saviour and King."

Verse 17. *Generations* is from GENE and Thayer's definition at this place is, "The several ranks in the natural descent, the successive members of a genealogy." The three sets of 14 generations are so arranged for the sake of uniformity as an aid to the memory. There are several names omitted and a man may be said to have begotten a person when it really means a generation or more later. This manner of speaking was done before this; for instance, in Daniel 5: 18 Belshazzar is spoken of as the son of Nebuchadnezzar whereas he was his grandson. The count of the generations is based on the ones named in the chapter. By strict count there are 40 instead of 42 as the three sets of 14 would require; this is because David and Jechonias are each counted twice.

Verse 18. The meaning of espousal as compared with marriage will be considered at verse 20. *Before they came together* means before they began living together as husband and wife. *Found with child* should be considered separately from the words of *the Holy Ghost*. Joseph did not know that her condition was produced by a miracle but thought she had been impure. The inspired writer adds the italicized words for the information of the reader. The meaning of the clause is as if it said "she was found with child (which later proved to be by the Holy Ghost)."

Verse 19. *Being a just man* denotes that Joseph was kind and considerate, yet was conscientious and unwilling to ignore the moral law. Because of this he planned to *put her away* which means to break the engagement. He had such a personal regard for her that he did not want to expose her to public disgrace, yet he did not think it would be right to live with her.

Verse 20. While Joseph was pondering the subject the angel of the Lord appeared and explained the situation. He further advised him to proceed with their plans because Mary was

pure from all wrong. She is here called his *wife* and in Luke 2: 5 she is called his "espoused wife." All this is because in Biblical times an espousal was regarded as binding, as to the obligation, as the actual marriage.

Verse 21. The angel not only told Joseph the cause of Mary's condition, but even told him what to call the child when born. Proper names in ancient times usually had some specific meaning, hence the name Jesus, meaning "Saviour," was to be given to this son to be born of Mary, because he was designed to save his people from sin.

Verse 22. The information was also given Joseph that what was happening was in fulfillment of prophecy, all of which would meet his approval because he was a believer of the inspired word.

Verse 23. The angel then quoted the prophecy to which he had referred which is in Isaiah 7: 14. The thing of special importance is that the child was to be born of a *virgin*, an event that could not occur by the laws of natural reproduction alone. *God with us*. This signifies that since the body of this child was both divine and human, it meant that it would be virtually the presence of God with man, hence he was to be called by the name of Emmanuel which has that meaning.

Verse 24. *Did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him* denotes that what follows in this verse and the next will be in obedience to the command of the angel. *Raised from sleep* is explained by the fact that in ancient times God used various means in communicating His will to the people (Hebrews 1: 1) and one of them was by dreams. After the dream had delivered the desired information to Joseph, it was time for him to arise out of sleep and proceed with the program pointed out by the angel.

Verse 25. Joseph took Mary into his home in fulfillment of his espousal and on the instructions of the angel. *Knew her not* is a Biblical expression for the intimate relation of the sexes. The reason Joseph did not have this relation with Mary now was because the angel had told him that her son was to be born of a virgin, which required that at the time of the birth his mother must never have had intimate relations with a man. *Till she had brought forth* has to mean that after the birth of Jesus, Joseph lived with Mary in the intimate relation of

husband and wife, else the language is meaningless and deceptive. It therefore proves that Mary did not continue to be a virgin, but lived with her husband in the relationship of a wife, and her children by that marriage will be met with in later chapters of this book.

## MATTHEW 2

Verse 1. *Bethlehem* was a small town not far from Jerusalem, and *Judea* was one of the three divisions or territories into which Palestine was divided in the time of Christ. Judea was the most important part of the country in that it contained the important city of Jerusalem, which was the capital and place of the temple of the Jews. *Herod the king*. I shall quote from history regarding this man who occupied so prominent a place in the affairs of God's people: "This year was born Herod the Great, who was afterwards king of Judea (for he was twenty-five years old when he was first made governor of Galilee in the year before Christ 47). His father was Antipas, a noble Idumaeon, and his mother Cyprus of an illustrious family among the Arabians . . . By country therefore he was an Idumaeon, but by religion a Jew, as all other Idumaeans were from the time that Hyrcanus brought them all to embrace the Jewish religion, of which I have above given an account." Prideaux's *Connexion*, year 72. "But Antigonus, by way of reply to what Herod had caused to be proclaimed, and this before the Romans, and before Silas also, said, that they would not do justly if they gave the kingdom to Herod, who was not more than a private man, and an Idumean, i. e., a half Jew." Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book 14. Chapter 15, Section 2. The Herodian family figures prominently in the New Testament history, and the various members of it will be identified by their individual names as they appear in the passages. *Wise men* is from *MAGOS* which Thayer defines at this place as follows: "Oriental wise men (astrologers) who, having discovered by the rising of a remarkable star that the Messiah had just been born, came to Jerusalem to worship him." The original word is used with reference to both good and evil men, but the whole context indicates that it was used in the former sense in the present instance. We are sure that the case of the shepherds as recorded in Luke 2 was not an accident, likewise the fact that the star led the wise men

correctly would show their standing with the Lord. Furthermore, God spoke to them in a dream (verse 12) on the matter which again proves that the visit of the wise men to Jerusalem was under the direction of God. Since the New Testament was not yet written, this event would be another to come under Hebrews 1: 1. *East* is defined by Thayer, "eastern region, the east." The term therefore refers not merely to the direction from which the wise men came, but the country in general lying in that direction from Palestine. The guidance of the star was general only and directed them to Jerusalem. This was doubtless by the hand of God, to bring them in contact with those who were concerned in this grand occasion, particularly Herod who was destined to play such an important part in the drama.

Verse 2. When the wise men reached Jerusalem they made inquiry, seeking the exact location of the newborn *king of the Jews*. This specific statement is another proof that the whole movement of these men was under the instruction of the Lord. *Seen his star in the east* denotes where they were when they first saw the star, not that it was merely in the east when they saw it. It was over Jerusalem when they reached the city, for verse 9 describes it as moving immediately before them even to the extent of detailed guidance in the local territory. They gave as their mission only the desire to *worship* the newborn king. It might be wondered as to how an infant could be worshiped by wise men, seeing that the general idea seems to restrict that word to some specified schedule of religious performance. The word in its several English forms is used in various connections in the New Testament, and also comes from many different Greek originals. These Greek words are also rendered by other words in the Authorized Version. I shall give a complete list of these words, showing where they occur as the original for *worship*, followed by other words (if any) by which they have been translated in the New Testament. The figure after the word denotes the number of times the word is so rendered. DOXA, Luke 14: 10. Worship 1, dignity 2, glory 144, honor 6, praise 4, glorious 6. EUSEBEO, Acts 17: 23. Shew piety 1, worship 1. THERAPEUO, Acts 17: 25. Cure 5, heal 38, worship 1. THRESKEIA, Colossians 2: 18. Religion 3, worshipping 1. LATREUO, Acts 7: 42; 24: 14, Philip-

plans 3: 3; Hebrews 10: 2. Do service 1, serve 16, worship 3, worshiper 1. NEOKOROS, Acts 19: 35. Worshiper 1. PROSKUNTES, John 4: 23. Worshiper 1. SEBAZO, Romans 1: 25. Worship 1. SEBOMAI, Matthew 15: 9; Mark 7: 7; Acts 16: 14; 18: 7, 13; 19: 27. Worship 6, devout 2, devout person 1, religious 1. SEBASMA, 2 Thessalonians, 2: 4. Devotion 1, that is worshiped 1. THEOSEBES, John 9: 31. Worshiper of God 1. PROSKUNEO is rendered "worship" 58 times in the New Testament and is never rendered by any other word. Not one of the Greek words in this group is used of the public services of the church when translated by the word "worship." This list will not be copied again, so the reader is advised to mark it for ready reference.

Verse 3. Herod was only half Jew and was appointed to the office of ruler by the Romans, who had acquired control of the country. He was fearful of losing the throne when he heard that a child of Jewish blood had been born and was spoken of as king of the Jews. He was therefore troubled or disturbed in mind. All Jerusalem with him was troubled also, because there were a great many men in the city who depended upon him for the place of dignity that they were permitted to enjoy.

Verse 4. Herod was an Idumæan by nation but a Jew in religion. He thus had learned something of the Old Testament Scriptures, and knew that it had been prophesied that a king was some day to be born to the Jewish nation. However, he was not sufficiently informed to locate the town where it was to take place. He called upon the priests and scribes for the information because they were supposed to be able to give it. (See Leviticus 10: 11; Deuteronomy 17: 9; Malachi 2: 7.)

Verse 5. Concordances and other works of reference were not in use at the time of this history, but the scribes were familiar with the scriptures from having to copy them so often. It is not much wonder then that they could give Herod the information.

Verse 6. As proof of their statement they quoted from Micah 5: 2 which designates where the birth was to occur and also what the child predicted was to do. *Rule* is from POIMAINO and sometimes it means to feed or nourish. Thayer defines it in this place by, "To rule, govern," and he explains

the word elsewhere as meaning, "of the overseers (pastors) of the church." It should be observed that the newborn king was to rule the people of Israel, not the political world.

Verse 7. Herod evidently believed that the star appeared at the same time as the birth and that would give him a point from which to recognize the age of the child. He called the wise men privately because his entire behaviour was prompted by craftiness.

Verse 8. The wicked king doubtless believed the prophecy, for he sent the wise men to Bethlehem in search of the child. *Diligently* is from AKRIBOS which Thayer defines, "exactly, accurately, diligently." Hence they were not only to be diligent or earnest in their investigation, but were to be careful that the information that they obtained was reliable. It will be understood that Herod's claim of wanting to worship the child was made in hypocrisy.

Verse 9. The wise men were obedient to Herod for the present in that they started on their journey to Bethlehem. That was a small town not far from Jerusalem and could have been easily found without any special aid. But it was necessary that they not only go to the right town but also that they find the particular house where the child was at that hour. The community was full of people who had come in response to the decree of Caesar (Luke 2: 1-3). It might not have been known that a child had been recently born among the throng, and an inquiry would not likely bring any accurate information. Hence the star, which evidently had temporarily disappeared, came into view again and went as an escort for the wise men, going even to the very house where the infant was then being nursed.

Verse 10. Having been led from their home country by the star, the confidence of the wise men had already been pretty well established. Now that it reappeared just at the time they were starting on the final lap of their journey, their confidence was made stronger and hence they had great rejoicing.

Verse 11. They worshiped him, not the mother. For the meaning of *worshiped* see the note at verse 2. *Gifts* is from DONON and Thayer says in this place that it means "gifts offered as an expression of honor." An infant this young could not have personal appreciation for material articles,

hence the performance was in token of their recognition of his dignified importance. It was customary in old times to show recognition of either social or official rank by making presents. (See Genesis 32: 13; 1 Samuel 10: 27 and the comments on those passages.)

Verse 12. To be *warned* ordinarily conveys the idea of danger, but it might not concern the person receiving the warning but someone else to whom he was to deliver the message. The word is from CHREMATIZO and Thayer defines it, "To be divinely commanded, admonished, instructed." The meaning is that God instructed the wise men not to return by way of Jerusalem. The word would include the idea of danger, but it would be concerning the child Jesus and not the wise men directly. Had they gone back through Jerusalem they would have been forced to meet up with Herod, and that would have given them no way to keep the information from him that would have meant harm to Jesus.

Verse 13. *When they were departed* indicates that the angel gave these instructions to Joseph at the same time that he started the wise men on their journey homeward.

Verse 14. This verse indicates that Joseph arose while it was yet night, for it was under the darkness that he started for Egypt. This is another instance showing promptness in obeying the command of the Lord. Abraham manifested a similar attitude about the offering up of his son as recorded in Genesis 22: 3.

Verse 15. The writer completes the part of his story that pertained to Egypt in order not to break into the line of thought, and he will resume it a little later on. In giving instructions for Joseph to come with his son out of Egypt, the prophecy in Hosea 11: 1 was fulfilled the second time; first time was in the days of Moses.

Verse 16. The original word for *mocked* has a somewhat varied meaning, but in the present instance it denotes that Herod regarded the actions of the wise men as intended for a trifling with him. Whether they had such a motive or not, he was much enraged at the slight upon his dignity. But he was not to be frustrated (as he thought) in his wicked plot to make away with the child whom he regarded as his rival. He therefore formed the plan to draw a



dragnet around the territory of Bethlehem in the hopes of entrapping the child Jesus, and he placed the maximum age at two years. It had been that long since he made his inquiry of the wise men which he supposed was the time of the royal birth. This plot might have accomplished his satanic purpose had it not been for the intervention of the Lord as recorded in verse 13. Many people have been confused between the slaughter of these infants and the one in Egypt in the time of Moses. In that case the male children only were to be slain, while no distinction was made in the present instance. Pharaoh was concerned only about children who might become soldiers to make war against him and hence he ordered just the males to be killed. Herod would not risk the excuse that could have been offered by some in sparing their infants had the girls been exempted, hence the passage says that *all the children* were ordered slain. That word is from PAIS which Thayer defines is this place by the following: "1. a child, boy or girl; . . . plural infants, children."

Verse 17. When one inspired writer makes an application of another inspired statement, it leaves us with no uncertainty as to its meaning. Thus we know that Jeremiah had the "slaughter of the innocents" in mind when he wrote Jeremiah 31: 15.

Verse 18. The context of the statement in Jeremiah had to do with the sorrows of ancient Israel at the hands of the heathen nations. Many of them had been slain or otherwise mistreated by these foreign people. Rama (or Ramah) was near Jerusalem and Rachel was buried in that district. She was an important "mother in Israel" and her name is used to represent the mothers in Israel generally. Following a practice of the Old Testament prophets in going from their time to that of the New Testament for a like occurrence, Jeremiah looked forward to another when the near kin of Rachel would be cruelly mistreated. This was done when Herod caused so many of the Jewish children to be slain, hence the reference of Matthew to that prophecy of Jeremiah.

Verse 19. Sometimes angels were sent in visible form to communicate with man on behalf of God, and at others they came only in an inspired dream which was the way it was done

to Joseph in Egypt when it was necessary to give him information.

Verse 20. He was instructed to leave Egypt and return because the ones who sought to slay the child were dead. The first instructions were general and designated only that he should return to the *land of Israel* which would include Galilee as well as Judea.

Verse 21. This verse is still in the general form and merely states that Joseph brought the child and his mother into the *land of Israel*, and in so doing he carried out the first instructions of the angel delivered to him in the land of Egypt.

Verse 22. It was after the Lord informed him of the reign of Archelaus that Joseph was afraid to enter Judea which was only one part of the *land of Israel*. The word *notwithstanding* is not in the original and serves no good purpose by being injected into the text and should be ignored. The verse simply means that God warned (same word as in verse 12) Joseph about the son of Herod, and that caused him to change his course and enter another part of the land of Israel called Galilee.

Verse 23. The city to which Joseph went with his family was Nazareth, which was the former home of Mary (Luke 1: 26, 27). This seems to have been a mere coincidence for them to settle at this place, but we may be sure that God had a hand in all of the affair. The writer says it was in fulfillment of a prophecy that *He was to be called a Nazarene*. The last word is not in any prophecy of the Old Testament. The term is derived from the formation of the name Nazareth which seems to signify "a sprout or branch," and under such like terms Jesus is referred to in Isaiah 11: 1; 53: 2; Jeremiah 23: 5; 33: 15; Zechariah 3: 8; 6: 12.

### MATTHEW 3

Verse 1. *In those days* is indefinite and it is at least a quarter of a century after the close of the preceding chapter. In that chapter (verse 21) Jesus was but a "young child" while now he is about 30 years old (Luke 3: 23). *Baptist* is from the Greek word BAPTISTES which Thayer defines, "a baptizer; one who administers the rite of baptism," hence the name John the Baptist. It is sometimes asked why a man would come to baptize in a wilderness where there are no people

to baptize nor any water available for such a purpose. Both assumptions are wrong, for while the territory was not settled or inhabited, there was nothing to prevent the people of the settlements going out to him, which they did (verse 5). Also the word does not mean a place where there would be no water. *Wilderness* is from EREMOS which Thayer defines, "an uncultivated region fit for pasturage." There would not likely be much pasturage where there was no water. Besides, Judea was not so large a region but that the river of Jordan could be reached for the purpose of baptizing.

Verse 2. *Repent* is from METANOEO and Thayer defines it here as follows: "To change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence for one's past sins." To amend means more than a mere state of the mind; it requires that one do something about it. BASILEIA is the only word in the Greek New Testament for "kingdom." It has several phases of meaning and hence I consider it well to give a pretty extensive quotation from the lexicons as to their definitions: "1. royal power, kingship, dominion, rule. 2. a kingdom i. e. the territory subject to the rule of a king. 3. properly the kingdom over which God rules . . . the kingdom of the Messiah . . . the rule of God, the theocracy . . . God's rule, the divine administration."—Thayer. I have quoted only such words in Thayer's lexicon as are in italics, which denotes the direct definition, omitting for the sake of space his many remarks on the word. The same rule will be followed in quoting from the other lexicons: "1. dominion, reign, rule. 2. a kingdom, dominion, realm."—Robinson. "A kingdom; royalty, dignity, power, reign, rule, sovereignty, dominion."—Groves. "A kingdom, realm, i. e. the region or country governed by a king; kingly power, authority, dominion, reign."—Greenfield. This paragraph may not be quoted again in full, hence the reader is urged to study it carefully to discover its shades of meaning, also to make a note of its location for ready reference. *At hand* is from EGGIZO and means "is near," which denotes that it was not yet in actual existence in the days of John the Baptist.

Verse 3. The prophecy cited is in Isaiah 40: 3 where the prophet passes from a favorable turn in the affairs of ancient Israel to the time when prepa-

rations were to be made for Christ's entry upon the new dispensation. *Make his paths straight* has the idea of preparing a path for another to use afterward. By taking down the high and rough places and taking out the sharp curves, the other party could make better progress in his travels. Of course this is all figurative and refers to the work of John in bringing about a reformation among the Jews. Such a work would get a group of people in better frame of mind and character to receive the more advanced work of Christ.

Verse 4. In Zechariah 13: 4 a false prophet is described as wearing a rough garment to deceive the public, indicating that such a garment was an article of clothing peculiar to a prophet. It was appropriate that John the Baptist, who was a true prophet, wear such a piece made from the hair of camels. The girdle served as a belt to hold the loose garment close to the body. Leviticus 11: 22 included the locust among clean foods that the Jews were permitted to eat. *Wild honey* is so called because it was made by wild bees and deposited in hollow trees or crevices of rocks. Honey is one of the purest of foods in the vegetable class, and locusts could be classed with the animal kind. John the Baptist, therefore, had a somewhat balanced though simple diet.

Verse 5. The text does not say that every individual in these districts was baptized, but that great throngs from all of them came out to be baptized.

Verse 6. *Baptized* is from BAPTIZO which Thayer defines first, "Properly to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge. 2. to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water." Strong defines it, "To make whelmed (i. e. fully wet)." From this meaning of the word we can understand why John was baptizing in *Jordan*, not at or nearby. *Confessing their sins* is the simple phrase used here, but in Mark 1: 4 and Luke 3: 3 it is worded "baptism of repentance." The meaning of the passage is that the people professed to have repented of their sins and were baptized on that declaration.

Verse 7. The *Pharisees* and *Sadducees* were two leading sects of the Jews in the time of Christ. They had some radical differences which will be described in another place. There were some principles, however, which they both had in common and one of

them was hypocrisy, and both made great claims of excellence which they did not possess. This, too, will be described elsewhere. *Generation of vipers* is a figure of speech meaning a class of vile and poisonous characters. They came to the baptismal services of John for the outward appearance it made. In his preaching John exhorted the people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, in order to escape the wrath of God. He had not specified any classes, so the response of these sects was an outward admission of their being sinners though their attitude was one of self-righteousness.

Verse 8. *Meet for repentance* means for them to prove by their works that they have really repented. A mere sorrow or regret for sin does not constitute repentance in the sight of the Lord, but the guilty one is expected to reform his life by ceasing to do the things that were wrong.

Verse 9. John was an inspired man and could read the thoughts of these boastful pretenders. But aside from this truth, the language of these Jews indicated their pride of ancestry. (See John 8: 33.) John did not intend to belittle the importance of Abraham, but he meant that having descended through the line of that great patriarch did not entitle them to any special favors in their wrong doing. It was God's will that Abraham's lineal descendants become the special race for His purposes, but that was not because no other plan would have been possible. As far as power or ability was concerned, He could have caused the stones to become impregnated with the divine germ of life so that they could give birth to children to be enrolled in the register of Abraham's seed. Such a possibility as described above existed though the Lord never intended to do such a thing. There was another feat, however, that was as wonderful as that, which was to convert Gentile heathen into descendants of Abraham by faith. (See Romans 4: 11.)

Verse 10. This verse is figurative and general and denotes the judgments of God against sin. An ax lying at the root of a tree suggests a probable attack upon it. The instrument is near but inactive, yet ready to be used if and when a decision is made against the tree. The fact on which the decision will be made is that the tree does not produce good fruit. I do not

believe this verse applies to the Jewish nation as a whole for there was only one "tree" of the Lord that could be considered. The words *every tree* indicate that John was speaking of individuals all of whom were exhorted to repent and thus escape the wrath of God. The condemnation to such wrath was starting through the preaching of John, but the final result of rejecting that preaching would not come until the great judgment day. Being an inspired man John the Baptist was able to predict the future lot of all classes of men who were in his hearing, even to the punishment of fire awaiting the unsaved at the time of the final judgment. This prepares us to understand the following two verses.

Verse 11. There are three baptisms referred to in this verse, one administered by John and two by the Lord; the two were in the future when John spoke. The three baptisms were in different elements, namely, water, Holy Ghost and fire, and the three were for that many different kinds of subjects. The water baptism administered by John was performed upon penitent Jews and it was for the remission of their sins. The Holy Ghost baptism administered by the Lord was performed upon the apostles and it was to "guide them into all truth" (John 16: 13). The baptism with fire to be administered by the Lord (at the judgment day) upon the unsaved and it is for the purpose of punishment. The simple pronoun *you* is used by John because he knew that in his audience were men who would become apostles and hence would receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He knew also that some of his hearers would live and die in their sins because they would be too stubborn to repent, and these would receive the baptism of fire. But he spoke to the multitude as a whole and intended the two baptisms to be applied to the ones deserving them. This explains Acts 1: 5 and 11: 16 where the baptism of the Holy Ghost only is mentioned because the apostles were the only ones being considered. *Shoes not worthy to bear* is an allusion to the customs of that time. Loose sandals were worn in foot travel and upon entering a home they were removed and taken charge of by a servant. By way of illustration John regarded himself as unworthy even to bear the shoes of the one who was soon to come after him in the work of further reformation.

Verse 12. The figures now change and are drawn from a different source. In verse 10 they were based upon the work of horticulture, while in this they are upon that of agriculture. *Fan* is from *PTUON* and is defined "a winnowing-shovel" in Thayer's lexicon. Grain was piled down on a smooth place called the threshing floor and trampled out by oxen or beaten with a large club called a flail. Then an instrument like a broad shovel was used to scoop up the shattered grain and toss it up into the wind so the chaff could be blown to one side. The grain was stored in the garner (granary) and the chaff was burned. The process is used to illustrate the separation of the wicked from the good at the day of judgment. The good will be taken to the garner which is heaven, and the wicked will be cast into the lake of fire. The terms ordinarily used to describe the threshing process do not cover all of the phases of the work as it pertains to humanity, hence John qualified the fire by the word *unquenchable* which comes from the Greek word *ASBESTOS* and Thayer's definition is, "unquenchable." There will be only one judgment day and hence no continual gathering of chaff to cast into the fire. There is but one explanation, therefore, for using unquenchable fire, and that is that the wicked will not be put out of existence as literal chaff is, but will continue to exist and burn endlessly, and that will require a fire that cannot be put out.

Verse 13. Jesus had spent his life through childhood and early manhood with his parents at Nazareth which was in Galilee. The time came when he was to enter upon his life's work and he had reason for starting it with being baptized. There was only one man baptizing people then and that was John the Baptist, hence Jesus left his home and came into Judea where John was baptizing in the Jordan.

Verse 14. John did not know the divine identity of Jesus until the baptism had taken place (John 1:33), therefore his remarks were not prompted by that subject. They were cousins according to the flesh and about the same age. It is reasonable to conclude that John knew Jesus as a near relative and humbly placed himself in a lower rank of excellence. All that John knew as to the purpose of water baptism was that it was for the remission of sins. Someone had to

start the great work of reform without being baptized himself, and of the two John considered Jesus to be the more worthy of the honor.

Verse 15. Had the remission of sins been the only result to be accomplished by baptism, Jesus would not have come to John at all for it because he had no sins to be remitted. Hence it was necessary for John to be informed of the reason why Jesus made the request. *Fulfill* is from *PLEROO* and Thayer's definition at this passage is, "to perform, execute." *Righteousness* is from *DIKAIOSUNE* and Thayer defines it as follows: "b. integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting. Matthew 3: 15; 5: 6, 10, 20; 6: 33." Note that nothing in the definition requires any act in the nature of repentance or confession, hence Jesus who had no sins to confess could adopt the definition in his reason for requiring baptism. But while he had no sins to confess he did have a duty to "perform," and by so doing he could maintain his "integrity." When this explanation was made to John he promptly performed the baptism and thus cooperated in the act that Jesus said would be fitting or becoming.

Verse 16. If Jesus went up *out of* the water it was necessary that he go down into it, and that would agree with the definition of "baptize" as given at verse 6. The heavens were opened *unto him* and *he saw* the Spirit in the form of a dove. This together with John 1: 32-34 indicates that Jesus and John were the only witnesses of this remarkable event. It was fitting that John be permitted to see it since that was the sign the Lord had given him by which he was to recognize the One for whom all this preparatory work was being done.

Verse 17. If only the eyes of John and Jesus saw the heavens open and the bodily shape of the dove, it would be reasonable to conclude that their ears only heard these words. It also indicates one reason why the words "hear ye him" were not added as they were at chapter 17: 5. The Father here acknowledged Jesus as his Son after he had *fulfilled* his righteous duty of being baptized. But his life's work was only beginning and hence it was not time to give the command to hear him.

#### MATTHEW 4

Verse 1. *Led up of the spirit* denotes that Jesus was divinely instructed to

go into the *wilderness* (same place as chapter 3: 1) and submit to the test. *Tempted* is from PEIBAZO and has various shades of meaning in the New Testament. I shall copy most of the italicized words in Thayer's definition which constitutes his direct description of the word: "To try, i. e. 1. to try whether a thing can be done; to attempt, endeavor. 2. to try, make trial of, test. To solicit to sin, to tempt. To inflict evils [afflictions] upon one in order to prove his character and steadfastness of his faith." The context must be considered in each case to determine which part of the definition applies. The word *devil* is from two originals in the Greek New Testament which are DAIMONION and DIABOLOS. Thayer defines the first, "1. the divine Power, deity, divinity. 2. a spirit, a being inferior to God, superior to men . . . evil spirits as the messengers and ministers of the Devil." (It is the word frequently thought of for demons.) The second word is defined, "prone to slander, slanderous, accusing falsely . . . false accuser, slanderer . . . In the Bible and in ecclesiastical writings THE DIABOLOS is applied to Satan." The rule is that when the plural word "devils" is used it comes from the first word above, and if singular, "the devil," it is from the second word and means Satan.

Verse 2. A man would not have to go forty days without food to become hungry in the ordinary sense or degree. The meaning is that by the end of that period the pangs of hunger became severe.

Verse 3. *Tempter* is from the same word as "tempted" in verse 1, and the person doing the tempting is the devil also defined in that verse. The devil knew that the great issue at stake was the divinity of Christ, hence the suggestion he made was a challenge for Him to prove his claim. There is no doubt with us (and neither was there with the devil) as to Christ's ability to do the thing suggested. But Christ never used his miraculous power or divine character in his own behalf. He was here to set an example for his followers who were to be taught the lesson of self-denial. It would have been inconsistent to ask his disciples to resist temptation when they had only their natural powers for support, while He overcame his trials by falling back on his divine power. Another thing that would have made it wrong for Christ to turn the stones into bread

is that it would have been an act proposed by the devil. It is wrong to have any fellowship with Satan in any act, even though it might be right in itself.

Verse 4. In quoting the statement that is in Deuteronomy 8: 3, Jesus showed his respect for the inspired word of God and set a worthy example for others. He ignored the challenging phase of the preceding verse and based his reply on the principle that physical satisfaction is not the only thing that should interest a person in this life. One might be abundantly supplied and contented physically and yet lack the more important food which is for the inner man and is found in the words of God.

Verse 5. Thayer's definition for the original of *taketh* is, "1. to take to, to take with one's self, to join to one's self." The word does not mean that Jesus was carried against his will to the place, but that He accompanied the devil as a further step in the procedure of the test to which he was being put. The word *pinnacle* is a subject of some uncertainty in the several works of reference that I have consulted as to what part of the temple is meant. It is evident that a specific place is meant for the Greek definite article is used in the original text, making it read "the pinnacle" instead of "a pinnacle." But regardless of all these considerations the point is that it was a place high enough to have caused death to one who would fall from it.

Verse 6. Much importance has been attached by commentators to the devil's omission of the words "in all thy ways" from his citation to Psalms 91: 11, 12. The word *ways* is from DEREK which Strong defines, "a course of life or mode of action," regardless of whether that course is right or wrong. The context must determine in each case whether it is the one or the other. To say that casting himself down would have been wrong is to assume the very point in question. Had it been right for him to perform such a stunt as the devil suggested, then the passage which he cited would have given the assurance of divine protection according to the passage in Psalms.

Verse 7. The word for *tempt* is similar to the one in verse 1 but is a stronger word and is defined by Thayer, "To prove, test, thoroughly tempt." Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6: 16 and thus it will be well to look at that passage and consider the connection. It says not to tempt God as

they tempted him in Massah. That refers to Exodus 17: 2, 7 where the people complained because of their thirst and questioned if the Lord was among them. It was trying (one meaning of tempt) on the patience of God to hear such attacks upon His power and goodness. That justifies the comment of Thayer in his definition of the word when he says, "by irreligion and immorality to test the patience or avenging power of Christ." God's long-suffering is infinite for people who sincerely rely on Him for help, even to the last degree of indulgence for their unusual requests. But He will not suffer being approached in the spirit of challenge just to see if He can and is willing to gratify their disrespectful curiosity.

Verse 8. If the reader will examine the various definitions of *kingdom* given in chapter 3: 2, he will learn that the word sometimes means the territory ruled by a king; in other words, it is something that can be seen with the fleshly eye. However, the rulership of such realms would necessarily involve much *glory*, so the devil called the attention of Jesus to that feature. A miracle or supernatural performance had to be done in order to make such a display before the eyes of Jesus, but that does not present any difficulty for the Bible has numerous instances that show he has been suffered to use such power when it suited the Lord's plan to have it so.

Verse 9. In the corresponding passage in Luke 4: 6 the devil makes a stronger claim than is recorded here. He says that he possesses the "glory" of all these realms of the world and Jesus does not deny it; the following passages will also bear out his claim. (John 14: 30; 16: 11; Ephesians 2: 2.) In this verse the devil promises to give up his control of the glory existing in the kingdoms of the world and turn it over to Jesus. The only condition he requires is that Jesus fall down and *worship* him. See the note in comments on chapter 2: 2 for the meaning of *worship*. Regardless of what phase of that word the devil had in mind, to have complied with the proposition would have been sin and that would have for ever disqualified Him from being a perfect sacrifice.

Verse 10. The word *satan* is spelled the same in both Greek and English and the definition in Thayer's lexicon (the part written in italics) is the single word "adversary" when used as

a proper name, and "a Satan-like man" when used figuratively. Jesus used it as a proper name in this verse and thus identified him with "the devil" in this account of the temptation. *Get thee hence* means for him to leave which he will do in the next verse. *Worship* is from PROSKUNEO and *serve* is from LATREUO, and both of them are found in the long note on the word "worship" at chapter 2: 2.

Verse 11. Luke 4: 13 adds the words "for a season" to the statement here that "the devil leaveth him." This is significant and adds force to the statements in Hebrews 2: 17, 18; 4: 15 which indicate that Jesus was subject to temptation all through his life on earth. These temptations came whenever the devil or his servants had an occasion to try their hand. For the present the devil has gone the limit of his resources, for 1 John 2: 16 says that "all that is in the world" is the "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life." He used these three with Eve and won over her. He used them in the temptation of Christ in the wilderness and was defeated. The item of bread was an appeal to the lust of the flesh; the display of the kingdoms of the world appealed to the lust of the eyes, and the idea of casting himself from the pinnacle appealed to the pride of life in that it would only be pride that would prompt a person to perform some sensational exploit. Having been defeated in this encounter with Jesus, the devil quit the scene to await another opportunity.

Verse 12. The account of John's imprisonment is in the 14th chapter, being inserted there to explain a remark that was made by the Herod who was reigning then. We are not told in this place why Jesus departed from Galilee, but the purpose is indicated in John 4: 43-45. *When Jesus had heard*. Jesus did not have to obtain information about the activities of men by the ordinary means of hearing (John 2: 23-25), so the phrase is used merely to state the occasion on which he left Judea. It means as if it said "upon the report;" etc., Jesus left Judea and went to Galilee. The word *hear* is from AKOUO and has various shades of meaning which must be understood in each passage according to the connection. The word is so important that I believe it will be well to give a quotation from Thayer's lexicon on the definitions of the word. I shall quote the parts in italics since



that is his direct definition, while the words in regular type are his own comments and explanation of the definitions. I urge the reader to make note of it and be prepared to consult it as occasion suggests. "To be endowed with the faculty of hearing. To attend to; consider. To understand, perceive the sense of what is said. To get by hearing, learn. A thing comes to one's ears, to find out (by hearing), learn (hear of); to learn. To comprehend, understand. To perceive any one's voice. To give ear to one, listen, hearken. To yield to, hear to one; to listen to, have regard to. To perceive the distinct words of a voice. To yield obedience to a voice."

Verse 13. *Nazareth* was a town in Galilee where the parents of Jesus lived after coming back from Egypt. Now he moves his residence to another town in the same province called Capernaum. From now on when mention is made of "his own city" it will mean this place, while the term "his own country" will still mean the vicinity of Nazareth.

Verse 14. *That it might be fulfilled* does not always mean that a certain thing was done just so a particular prophecy might be fulfilled, although it will sometimes mean that. In every such passage it will be well to consider it in the light of saying, "and in so doing the prophecy was fulfilled which," etc.

Verse 15. The prophecy of Isaiah 9: 1, 2 is quoted which was fulfilled when Jesus took up his residence in the city of Capernaum. Sometimes more than one place would have the same name, hence the inspired writers gave several marks of identity by which the correct one would be known.

Verse 16. Heathen darkness had brooded over the communities around Capernaum, but the presence and teaching of Jesus penetrated that gloom and gave the people the benefit of spiritual light which fulfilled an important prophecy of the scriptures.

Verse 17. *From that time* denotes that Jesus began his public teaching after his baptism and not before. Likewise, men are not regarded as the Lord's workers today until they have been baptized. It indicates also that they are expected to begin working for Him as soon as they are baptized. In most respects the preaching of Jesus was like that of John in that its main subject was to require men to repent in view of the nearness of the king-

dom of heaven. Each of them taught that the kingdom was *at hand* which would mean that it did not exist in fact in their lifetime. Moreover, it also shows that it was soon to appear which disproves the teaching of the present day by some that the kingdom is still in the future.

Verse 18. According to John 1: 35-42 these two brothers were disciples of John. They had not ceased their regular occupation since there was nothing wrong about it and the command of John that his disciples repent would not interfere with their business. They were fishermen by occupation and were in the act of casting a net into the water when Jesus came by. That was the principal means of fishing in those days; the other was with a hook (Matthew 17: 27).

Verse 19. We note that the Lord did not say anything to these men as to their personal conduct. They had already been converted by John and hence nothing was wanting along that line. John's work was to "prepare the way of the Lord" by persuading men and women to repent and be baptized. That made it entirely proper for Jesus to call upon them to enter the work for which they had been prepared. *Make you fishers of men.* That was a psychological appeal to these men in view of their usual occupation. Jesus did not belittle or even criticize their business, but only promised to give them an improved opportunity to work at the trade of fishing. He intended for them to have better bait (spiritual meat) and take more valuable fish, the souls of men.

Verse 20. In leaving their nets they gave up their secular occupation for the sake of following Christ. A similar but fuller statement will soon be made of two others whom Jesus will call.

Verse 21. *Zebedee* is referred to in the reference works simply as a Jew who was a fisherman by trade. The information that he was the father of the two apostles, James and John, will be useful in other places for distinguishing them from other men with the same names. These brothers were called by Jesus and no particulars are given as to why they were called.

Verse 22. This contains the fuller statement referred to in verse 20; the brothers left the ship *and* their *father*. This would not have been necessary if nothing but information were the object. It would be taken for granted that they could not follow Jesus with-

out leaving their father as well as all other objects at home. The lesson is that love for earthly relatives should not be regarded above service for Christ.

Verse 23. The word *synagogue* occurs many times in the New Testament and I will give Thayer's definition of the original Greek: "In the N. T. 1. an assembly of men. 2. a synagogue, i. e. a. an assembly of Jews formally gathered together to offer prayer and listen to the reading and exposition of the Holy Scriptures. b. the building where those solemn assemblies are held." The first meaning of the word is virtually the same as a congregation and then it came to be applied to the building in which the people met. Thayer says the following historically on the subject: "Synagogues seem to date their origin from the Babylonian exile. In the time of Jesus and the apostles every town, not only in Palestine but also among the Gentiles, if it contained a considerable number of Jewish inhabitants, had at least one synagogue, the larger towns several or even many."

The law of Moses made no provision for these buildings, yet there was nothing in its teaching that would prohibit them. The national worship was conducted at Jerusalem where the tabernacle and later the temple were located. Such services, which consisted in the animal sacrifices and burning of incense, also the service of the show-bread and burning of oil on the golden candlestick, must all be conducted at Jerusalem only. But other items of Jewish worship might be performed in any place available and hence these many synagogues that are mentioned throughout the New Testament.

The word *gospel* is from EUAGGELION, and its universal definition in the lexicons is "glad tidings" or "good news." Any specific additional meaning to be attached to it must be obtained through the connection in which it is used. Hence in the present verse the words *gospel of the kingdom* simply means the good news that the kingdom is at hand. There is not much difference between *sickness* and *disease*. The first especially refers to the symptoms of nausea and the second to some bodily weakness. In taking care of *all manner* of ailments Jesus proved his super-human power.

Verse 24. Syria embraced most of the country including Palestine and the region north and northeast of it. Such beneficial work as Jesus was

doing would naturally be reported so that would cause him to become famous. The personal interest that people would have in such subjects as sickness and other afflictions would bring them forth to have Jesus relieve them. *Possessed with devils* will be explained in another place.

Verse 25. The preceding verse makes a general statement of the territory from which the afflicted people came; this specifies some parts of that vast area.

## MATTHEW 5

Verse 1. This and the next two chapters constitute what is commonly called the "sermon on the mount," so called because the verse says that the Lord *went up into a mountain*. The text does not specifically state why Jesus went up to this place further than to say he did it *seeing the multitudes*. However, since the distinction is made between the multitudes and the disciples, we may reasonably conclude that the purpose was to be less hindered in the teaching of the ones who were really interested in it, and not moved only by curiosity or desire for temporal favors. *Disciples* is from MATHETES which Thayer defines, "A learner, pupil, disciple . . . the twelve apostles." The word has a broader or narrower application according to the way it is used, and the connection must always be considered in determining its meaning in a given case. Thayer's remarks included with the definition also show the word sometimes means those who favored Jesus and "became his adherents." That is its most prevalent meaning and the one it has in the present verse.

Verse 2. *Opened his mouth and taught them* is very significant. In all of God's dealings with man He has never influenced him in his moral and spiritual conduct except by the use of words, either written or spoken, and hence Jesus followed that plan in talking to his disciples about things pertaining to the kingdom of God. In this great sermon Jesus lays down many principles of life that pertained to the time before the kingdom was set up, and others were to be applied afterward. Where a distinction is necessary to the understanding of any passage I shall so state it.

Verse 3. *Blessed* is an adjective coming from the Greek word MAKARIOS, and Thayer defines it simply by the words "blessed, happy." In the Authorized Version it is rendered by the first



43 times and by the second 6 times. These verses are usually called "beatitudes," and Webster's definition of that word is, "Consummate [complete] bliss; blessedness." It will be well for us to think of the word in the sense of being happy as that is the more familiar word. To be *poor in spirit* means to recognize one's need of spiritual help. Such characters are the ones who will accept the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 4. There could be no happiness in the fact of mourning but it is by way of contrast. The new system that Jesus was about to set up would provide the only genuine relief from the sorrows of this world.

Verse 5. The word for *meek* is PRAOS which Thayer defines, "gentle, mild, meek." It is a contrast with the fierce and domineering spirit so often shown by the members of earthly kingdoms, especially the rulers. To *inherit* is generally defined in the lexicons "to receive by lot." Thayer's definition of this verse is, "to partake of eternal salvation in the Messiah's kingdom." *The earth* is the same that is referred to in 2 Peter 3: 13 which the apostle says was promised to the righteous.

Verse 6. To hunger and thirst after righteousness means to be eager to learn what constitutes a righteous life. It does not stop there, for when a man is hungry he not only seeks to find some food, but also is ready to partake of it. This means that the ones whom Jesus was blessing would be eager to do that which is right.

Verse 7. The single English word "mercy" is Thayer's definition of the word here. It is defined in the English dictionary to mean to be sparing in inflicting even punishment that is due another. It does not call for endorsement of wrong or for overlooking it, but to be considerate of the other person.

Verse 8. When disconnected from all qualifying terms the word *pure* simply means "unmixed"; something that is not combined with any other substance, and hence it could mean either good or bad. An object that has no good in it would be pure evil. When the connection shows it is used in a good sense (as in our verse) it means a heart not mixed up with the evils of a sinful world. The definition of the Biblical heart will be given in another place.

Verse 9. Every statement of scripture must be understood in harmony

with others on the same subject for the words of inspiration do not contradict each other. James 3: 17 says the wisdom from above is *first* pure *then* peaceable, and Paul in Romans 12: 18 commands us to live at peace with all men "if possible." The verse here means that disciples are to make every scriptural effort to be at peace with each other, and also to bring about a peaceable settlement between others who are at variance. Such will be *called the children of God* because He deals with mankind on that principle.

Verse 10. Thayer defines the original at this place, "to harass, trouble, molest," and he says that it may be done "in any way whatsoever," hence the persecution may be against one's body or his mind. But this must be done because the victim is righteous, and has no reference to accidental affliction, or punishment for wrong doing. These persons have the qualities of the citizens in the *kingdom of heaven*.

Verse 11. This verse is similar in thought to the preceding one except that it is considering only the persecution of the mind. The evil things said against a disciple must be done in falsehood to bring him under the application of this blessing.

Verse 12. This verse continues the thought of the preceding one. It will be nothing new for the Lord's disciples to be treated unjustly, for the righteous prophets were thus treated in former years. The *rejoicing* is to be for having been classed with the righteous prophets. The reward will come after this life is over and the victims have been admitted into heaven.

Verse 13. The teaching of Jesus contains many illustrations drawn from nature and the customs of mankind. *Salt* has two outstanding qualities; preservation of articles with which it comes in contact, and rendering food more agreeable to the taste. The lives of true disciples will shed the truth among men by example and teaching, and thus contribute to the salvation of their souls. And next, the trials or hardships of this life will be easier to bear, will "taste better" for having the salt of divine truth mixed with them. But if the salt *losses its savour* ("to make flat and tasteless") it will not be of any use either as a preservative or palliative. The first *it* is a pronoun for *the earth* which cannot be salted if *it* (the salt) has lost

strength. Such salt is fit for nothing but to be trodden upon as the soil of the ground. Likewise, if the disciples of Christ cease to be an influence for good—cease to practice the principles taught by their Master, they will finally be rejected and trodden upon by the Judge.

Verse 14. Disciples of Christ are the light of the world in much the same sense that they are the salt of the earth. The righteous lives they exhibit and the truth they spread among their fellowmen will reflect the light that comes from the Lord. The *hill* is the mountain or government of Christ and the light of divine truth shines forth from that exalted position like the glow of light from a city upon a hill.

Verse 15. It is possible for a strong light to be rendered useless, which would be done if a man lighted a lamp and then put some vessel over it. But men do not do such things in temporal matters; only in spiritual things do they act thus foolishly.

Verse 16. Jesus does not wish his disciples to act so unreasonably as the description in the preceding verse implies. *Let your light shine* does not call for any special effort to bring attention to the good light that has been made. If a host just makes a good light and leaves it uncovered, the guests will see it and give proper credit for the favor. *Your light* and *good works* are mentioned in direct connection which shows they mean the same. It is not necessary for one to boast of his good works in order to have men see them; all that is necessary is to perform the works. However, the doer of these good deeds for the benefit of others, must also live a good life otherwise or in addition to his benevolence, or his good deeds will be rendered ineffective in the mind of men. ("Let not then your good be evil spoken of.") *Glorify* is from DOXAZO and Thayer's definition at this place is, "to praise, extol, magnify, celebrate." It is the Greek word for "glorify" in every place in the Authorized Version. The reason men will glorify God for these lives of the disciples is because they know that such conduct is not the natural result of the fleshly motives.

Verse 17. Jesus lived and completed his work on earth while the law of Moses was in force. He taught that men should respect and obey that law, yet he gave many instructions that

were not specifically set forth in that system. That was because he was getting ready to bring into the world another system of laws that were to be different from the old. This opened the way for the critics to charge him with being opposed to the law of Moses. In answer to such erroneous notions he used the difference between *destroying* and *fulfilling*. He was not in the world for the first but for the second. The Old Testament writings had predicted that a son of David was to come into the world and give it a new religious law. Because of such predictions, the very things Jesus taught of a different character constituted a fulfilling of the law.

Verse 18. *Verily* is from the Greek word AMEN which occurs 150 times in the New Testament. In the Authorized Version it is rendered "amen" 50 times and "verily" 100 times. Thayer defines the word as follows: "surely, of a truth, truly; most assuredly; so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled." These various phrases define the word according to the connection in which it is used, whether at the beginning or ending of a passage, etc. *Till heaven and earth pass* is a phrase denoting the certainty of the fulfillment of the law of God. The material universe will pass away, but not until it has served the purpose of the Creator. Likewise, the law will not pass away until it has all been fulfilled. *Jot* is from IOTA which is the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet and was originally written as a subscript under the regular line. *Tittle* is one of the diacritical marks used by the Greeks in their writings. The two terms are used to illustrate the importance that Jesus attached to the law. Even such apparently small points of the law as these will not be dropped until they have been fulfilled.

Verse 19. The commandments of the law will not be in force in the kingdom of heaven. The thought is that a man who would break the least of these commandments while they are in force shows the wrong attitude toward divine law. Such a person would not rank very high in the kingdom of heaven after it has been set up.

Verse 20. *Exceed* is from the same Greek word that is used in 2 Corinthians 3: 9, and we know that it is there used in the sense of quality and not quantity. Jesus means that his disciples must have a better kind of righteousness than the Pharisees prac-

ticed, for theirs was done for appearance and came from the lips only. A full description of the Pharisees will be found in connection with the comments at chapter 16: 12. The kingdom of heaven was to be entered into only by men who were converted in heart and whose actions were induced by a genuine acceptance of the Lord's commandments.

Verse 21. In half a dozen places in this chapter Jesus quotes some things that were said in *old time* which means the time that was regulated by the law of Moses. He does not discredit the authority of the Sinaite lawgiver, but shows how some changes or additions will be made in the teaching for the kingdom of heaven. He being the Son of God and the one who will be the king on the throne of David when the church is set up, it was appropriate that he begin showing some of the contrasts between the two. Those contrasts will generally consist in making a more spiritual application of the ancient laws, and/or in tightening their requirements so as to make them more rigid.

One of such items was the law of trial for murder, that such a crime would lay a man under charges to be heard by the *judgment*. This is from the Greek word KRISIS and I shall give the definition of two lexicons: "The college of judges (a tribunal of seven men in the several cities of Palestine; as distinguished from the Sanhedrin, which had its seat at Jerusalem . . . Matthew 5: 21, 22)." — Thayer. "A judgment seat, tribunal, put for a court of justice, judges, i. e. the smaller tribunals established in the cities of Palestine, subordinate to the Sanhedrin; see Deuteronomy 16: 18; 2 Chronicles 19: 5. According to the Rabbins they consisted of 23 judges; but Josephus expressly says the number was seven."—Robinson. Even as serious a crime as murder was considered as only being in danger of facing this secondary court of justice.

Verse 22. Jesus is teaching that under the standards of right and wrong that he will establish, being angry with a brother *without a cause* will endanger one before the same *judgment* seat as murder did in old time. As a further indication of increased strictness, to give way to one's temper to the extent of calling his brother *Raca* (a term of reproach meaning empty-headed or senseless), would endanger him before the greater

court; the *council* which was the Sanhedrin. Still increasing the picture of responsibility, to accuse a brother of being a *fool* will put a man in danger of hell fire. According to Thayer, Robinson and Greenfield, the word for *fool* means "a wicked rebel against the Lord." And it should be noted that all of the evil actions are on condition that they are *without a cause*. The word *hell* is from GEHENNA which refers to the lake of unquenchable fire into which the wicked will be cast after the judgment. A fuller definition of the English word "hell" as it is used in the New Testament will be given in another part of the COMMENTARY.

Verse 23. *Therefore* is said because the last subject treated was the sin of showing the wrong attitude toward a brother. Under the law of Moses the Jews were encouraged to bring voluntary gifts to be consecrated to the Lord on the altar of sacrifices. These were in addition to the sacrifices specifically required on stated occasions or for specific purposes. Such an act was supposed to indicate that the giver was very much devoted to the Lord, and yet at the very time he might recall that his brother had a complaint against him. Such a complaint, for instance, could consist of calling him "a fool" according to the preceding verse.

Verse 24. One command is no more important than another, neither may one duty be made to take the place of another. But the gifts presented at the altar were expected to proceed from the heart, which would not be the case if a man would refuse to make a matter right with his brother. In other words, a ritualistic service should not be treated as a substitute for one of humility and brotherliness. Hence the man was directed to postpone his altar service until he had made it right with his brother.

Verse 25. This verse is in the nature of good advice concerning disputes with a fellow citizen on the subject of a debt. A conscientious attorney will advise his client to "settle the case out of court" if possible, which is the gist of this admonition from Jesus. *Whiles thou art in the way with him* means while they are still out of the jurisdiction of the judge. A man would better suffer some loss and remain a free man, rather than risk having the case decided against him and then have to spend a term in prison because of being unable to pay

the sum assessed. All of this is to be understood in the light of an old law where a man could be put into prison for a debt.

Verse 26. Had the man offered to settle privately he might have been let off upon the payment of a part of the debt. If he lets it go on through court he may have to lie in prison until the entire debt is paid to which will be added the "court costs."

Verse 27. This verse introduces another place where Jesus shows that his laws will be stricter than the old ones. The law against adultery pertained to the physical act only as it was pronounced "by them of old time."

Verse 28. This passage has been strained out of its true meaning. To say it means a man sins if he thinks of the subject of sex at all in connection with a woman would be to fly in the face of much scripture. In 1 Corinthians 7: 2 Paul instructs a man to marry in order to "avoid fornication," and yet he could not have been in any danger of that sin unless he had been mindful of the subject in connection with some woman. The apostle does not condemn him for the mere fact of that state of mind and hence we should not construe the teaching of Jesus to make it condemn him. The thought is of a man who has no intention of honorable marriage, but who indulges his mind with the subject and who cultivates an imagination on the subject in a case where he knows he could not carry out his inclinations without violating the moral law, either because he or the woman would not be free to consummate the union.

Verse 29. A physical operation will not cure a moral evil of the mind. If a man were deprived of his natural eyes it would not prevent him from thinking of the woman towards whom he had been looking with evil intent. But the loss of so valuable an organ as the eye is used to illustrate the extent of sacrifice that one should make in order to rid himself of an evil action of body or mind. A friend or an occupation may seem to be as valuable as the eye, yet one should better go on through life without it rather than enjoy it a few years and then he be lost entirely.

Verse 30. The lesson in this verse is exactly the same as that in the preceding one, using the hand instead of the eye for the illustration. A full definition of the word *hell* will be

given here and may not be repeated in full again. The reader should mark the place for convenient reference when needed. The word comes from three different Greek words in the New Testament. I shall give Thayer's definition, based upon his knowledge of history and of the language: "GEHENNA, the name of a valley on the S. and E. of Jerusalem . . . which was so called from the cries of the little children who were thrown into the fiery arms of Moloch, i. e. of an idol having the form of a bull. The Jews so abhorred the place after these horrible sacrifices had been abolished by King Josiah (2 Kings 23: 10), that they cast into it not only all manner of refuse, but even the dead bodies of animals and of unburied criminals who had been executed. And since fires were always needed to consume the dead bodies, that the air might not become tainted by their putrefaction, it came to pass that the place was called GEHENNA PURBOS [Gehenna fire]." The following are all the places in the New Testament where the word *hell* comes from GEHENNA. Matthew 5: 22, 29, 30; 10: 28; 18: 9; 23: 15, 33; Mark 9: 43, 45, 47; Luke 12: 5; James 3: 6.

HADES is defined by Thayer as follows: "1, a proper name, Hades, Pluto, the god of the lower regions, the nether world, the realm of the dead . . . it denotes, therefore, in Biblical Greek, Orcus, the infernal regions, a dark and dismal place . . . the common receptacle of disembodied spirits." Following are all the places in the New Testament where the word *hell* comes from HADES: Matthew 11: 23; 16: 18, Luke 10: 15; 16: 23; Acts 2: 27, 31; Revelation 1: 18, 6: 8; 20: 13, 14. The word *hell* comes from TARTAROS in one place only which is 2 Peter 2: 4, and the definition is not very different from that of HADES. To sum up, HADES is the place where all disembodied spirits go at death regardless of whether they are good or bad. TARTAROS is that part of HADES where the spirits of the wicked go at death. GEHENNA is the lake of unquenchable fire into which the whole being of the wicked (body soul and spirit) will be cast after the judgment.

Verse 31. The law referred to is in Deuteronomy 24: 1 which required a man to give his wife a writing that showed she had not deserted him, but that he had compelled her to go away. We know that was the purpose of that law, for the next verse says she may

become another man's wife. If she did not have the writing no man would risk marrying her for fear she was a deserter. If the writing had been done the husband was considered as having done full justice to his wife. But Jesus is going to show this to be another instance where his law will be stricter than the old.

Verse 32. Jesus never taught anything at one time that disagreed with what he taught at another. This verse should be considered in connection with chapter 19: 9 which is a fuller statement. The mere putting away of a wife does not constitute adultery, for there may be cases where a man would have to put his wife from him in order that he might live a Christian life. A woman might be guiltless as far as the intimate subject is concerned, and yet develop such a character and conduct herself in such a manner as to prevent a man from doing his full duty as a disciple of Christ; this idea is taught in chapter 10: 34-39. But unless his wife also is guilty of immorality the husband is not permitted to marry another. Neither would the wife who is put away for some cause other than immorality have the right to marry another under the regulations of the kingdom of heaven that Jesus was soon to set up.

Verse 33. *Forswear* means to make a false oath, or to testify under oath that which one does not intend to fulfill. The reference is to Leviticus 19: 12 where false oaths were expressly forbidden. Jesus cites the saying in contrast between his ruling and the old.

Verse 34. As to whether an oath is true or false is not the question with Jesus, for he forbids his disciples to make any oath at all. When a man makes an oath he backs it up by the authority of some power supposed to be great enough to make the oath good. That is why Jesus mentions various things by which men might pronounce an oath. The Jewish people had come to think they should not swear by the name of God, but Jesus shows it is as bad to swear by heaven since that is God's throne.

Verse 35. On the same basis as the above, they should not swear by the earth since it, too, is a part of the seating place of God, being his footstool. Jerusalem was the city of the great King who was God in the old system and will be the city of the new

king when the kingdom of heaven is set up.

Verse 36. If a man cannot even cause one hair of his head to change its color at his will, it would be foolish to rely upon it for making his oath good.

Verse 37. *Yea, yea; Nay, nay* means to let the statements be simply that of affirming what is in the positive class and denying the negative. The laws of the state do not require any man to make an oath if he declines to do so, but will accept his affirmation at the same value as an oath. Since that is true, there could be no good reason for wanting to add the oath, which is the reason Jesus said it *cometh of evil*.

Verse 38. In a number of places the old law did require the kind of penalty that is described in this verse. That was to be done as a legal act and not a personal one. Jesus teaches that no personal retaliation was to be permitted under the pretense of that law. If a man is actually harmed he has the right to appeal to the law of the land as it is in authority for that purpose (1 Timothy 1: 9, 10), but he should not take the law into his own hands.

Verse 39. The sermon on the mount is largely a document of principles and not specific rules, and the spirit of the teaching is to be followed instead of the letter. This very verse is an indication of the correctness of the aforesaid conclusion, for no one would be expected literally to turn a cheek toward a would-be smiter.

Verse 40. Men wore inner and outer garments in old time. Using the circumstance as an illustration only, as was done with the cheek, Jesus teaches that if a man insists on having one's outer garment, just let him have the other also.

Verse 41. Under some peculiar customs of the old times there seems to have been one of providing an escort for a man making a journey. However, the lesson is the same as that contained in the preceding verses which is that the disciples of Christ should show a willingness to be imposed on rather than wanting to impose on others.

Verse 42. In all of the teaching of the scripture regarding the granting of favors, we should consider what Jesus says in Matthew 7: 6. We should always try to learn whether the person asking a favor is worthy before granting it. If we find that he is, then

we may give him what he asks and lend him what he wishes to borrow.

Verse 43. The passages that were cited for the saying in this verse are Leviticus 19: 18 and Deuteronomy 23: 6. Jesus is still on the line of contrasts between his teaching and the old, and that introduces the subject of *love* which has caused some difficulty with students of the Bible. They think that Christians are required to have love in cases where it seems impossible. The difficulty lies in not understanding that the English word *love* comes from two words in the Greek New Testament which have different meanings. I shall give the information gleaned from the lexicons and the reader should make note of it for reference.

One of the Greek words in verb form is AGAPAO, and it is defined in part as follows: "To love, to be full of goodwill and exhibit the same: Luke 7: 47; 1 John 4: 7; with accusative [objective] of a person, to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of: Matthew 5: 43; 19: 19; Luke 7: 5; John 11: 5; Romans 13: 8; 2 Corinthians 11: 11; 12: 15; Galatians 5: 14; Ephesians 5: 25, 28; 1 Peter 1: 22, and elsewhere; often in the epistle of John of the love of Christians towards one another; of the benevolence which God, in providing salvation for men, has exhibited by sending his Son to them and giving him up to death, John 3: 16; Romans 8: 37; 2 Thessalonians 2: 16; 1 John 4: 11 . . . of the love which led Christ, in procuring human salvation to undergo sufferings and death, Galatians 2: 20; Ephesians 5: 2; of the love which God has for Christ, John 3: 35; 10: 17; 15: 9; Ephesians 1: 6. When used of love to a master, God or Christ, the word involves the idea of affectionate obedience, grateful recognition of benefits received: Matthew 6: 24; 22: 37; Romans 8: 28; 1 Corinthians 2: 9; 8: 3; James 1: 12; 1 Peter 1: 8; 1 John 4: 10, 20, and elsewhere. With an accusative [objective] of a thing AGAPAO denotes to take pleasure in the thing, prize it above other things, be unwilling to abandon it or do without it; . . . to welcome with desire, long for; 2 Timothy 4: 8."—Thayer. "To love (in a social or moral sense)."—Strong. In the noun form it is from AGAPE and defined in part as follows: "a purely biblical word. . . . In signification it follows the verb AGAPAO; consequently it denotes 1. affection, good-will, love, be-

nevolence: John 15: 13; Romans 13: 10; 1 John 4: 18. Of the love of men to men; especially of that love of Christians toward Christians which is enjoined and prompted by their religion, whether the love be viewed as in the soul or as expressed; Matthew 24: 12, 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8; 2 Corinthians 2: 4; Galatians 5: 6; Philemon 5, 7; 1 Timothy 1: 5; Hebrews 6: 10; 10: 24; John 13: 35; 1 John 4: 7; Revelation 2: 4, 19, etc. Of the love of men towards God; . . . of the love of God towards Christ; John 15: 10; 17: 26. Of the love of Christ towards men: John 15: 9; 2 Corinthians 5: 14; Romans 8: 35; Ephesians 3: 19: . . . 2. Plural AGAPAI, agapae, love-feasts, feasts expressing and fostering mutual love which used to be held by the Christians before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, at which the poorer Christians mingled with the wealthier and partook in common with the rest of food provided at the expense of the wealthy: Jude 12."—Thayer. "From AGAPAO; love, i. e. affection or benevolence; specifically (plural) a love-feast."—Strong. The other word for love is PHILEO, a verb, and is defined in part as follows: "1. To love; be friendly to one, Matthew 10: 37; John 5: 20; 11: 3, 36; 15: 19; 16: 27; 20: 2; 21: 15-17; 1 Corinthians 16: 22; Revelation 3: 19; . . . to love, i. e. delight in, long for, a thing . . . to love to do with pleasure: 3. As to the distinction between AGAPAN and PHILEIN: the former by virtue of its connection with AGAMAI, properly denotes a love founded in admiration, veneration, esteem, like the Latin diligere, to be kindly disposed to one, wish one well: but PHILEIN denotes an inclination prompted by sense and emotion, . . . Hence men are said AGAPAN God, not PHILEIN; and God is said AGAPESAI TON KOSMON (John 3: 16), and PHILEIN the disciples of Christ (John 16: 27); Christ bids us AGAPAN (not PHILEIN) TONS ECHTHROUS (Matthew 5: 44), because love as an emotion cannot be commanded, but only love as a choice . . . As a further aid in judging of the difference between the two words compare the following passages: John 11: 5, 36; 21: 15-17 . . . From what has been said, it is evident that AGAPAN is not, and cannot be, used of sexual love."—Thayer. "To be a friend to (denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling: while AGAPAO is wider, embracing especially the judgment and the deliberate assent



of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety).”—Strong.

These definitions are somewhat detailed, and for the convenience of the reader, I shall condense the two and the information of the lexicons will be the authority for the statements. One word means that sentiment of feeling such as a man will have for his wife or other close friend. The other is that feeling of interest that a man can have in another's welfare that would prompt him to try to save him if possible, regardless of his unpleasant disposition that might naturally provoke a feeling of dislike.

Verse 44. *Love your enemies* is explained with the note on the preceding verse. *Bless* is from EULOGEO which Thayer defines, “2. to invoke blessings, Matthew 5: 44,” or to wish something good of another. *Curse* is from KATA-RAOMAI and Thayer defines it in this place as follows: “To curse, doom, imprecate [ask or wish for] evil on.” The clause means that while an enemy is wishing for some evil to come on us, we should be wishing something good for him. *Do good to them that hate us* does not mean to do him a favor that he could use in the furtherance of his evil intentions, but do something that will actually benefit his soul. To pray for our persecutors denotes that we ask the Lord to help us overcome the evil one with righteous deeds in the hope of leading him into a reforming of his life.

Verse 45. Children are supposed to be like their parents in disposition and actions. The disciples of Christ should be like their Father in heaven in that they are not selfish or partial in the bestowal of favors. God gives the blessings of nature on all classes alike, because these favors are not supposed to be rewards for righteous living, and hence their bestowal could not be regarded as an endorsement of their lives.

Verse 46. *Love* here is from AGAPAO, and the word is defined in the long note at verse 43. From that it can be seen that Jesus disapproves of the selfishness that would lead us to benefit only those who are willing to benefit us. Even the publicans were willing to do that, although that class of citizens was not thought of very highly.

Verse 47. To salute means to “pay one's respects to” in the way of polite greeting. We should show that much courtesy even to those who are not in our class; not be “clannish.”

Verse 48. *Perfect* is from TELEIOS and the simple meaning of the word is “completeness.” When anything or person is all that is expected of it, it can be said to be complete and hence perfect. It is taken for granted that human beings are not expected to possess all of the traits that God has, but the spirit of impartiality is one characteristic that man can possess in common with God. If he does then he is complete on that score and hence is like the Father in heaven.

## MATTHEW 6

Verse 1. *To be seen* is the key to this verse. To say it means we should do all of our good deeds unknown to others would make it contradict chapter 5: 16 where others were to *see our good works*. But our motive in doing good deeds should not be to be seen of men. If we do so, we will get only the reward that men can give us in the form of praise, for the Father will not give us any reward for it.

Verse 2. The three words *sound a trumpet* are from SALPIZO which Thayer defines “to sound a trumpet.” The same author comments on the word as follows: “To take care that what we do comes to everybody's ears, to make a noise about it.” In the preceding verse the alms were done in order to be seen of men. This verse goes further and sounds the trumpet in order to be sure the deeds will be seen. *Hypocrite* is from HUPOKRITES which Thayer defines as follows: “1. one who answers, an interpreter. 2. an actor, stage-player. 3. in Biblical Greek a dissembler, pretender, hypocrite.” The word originally had no moral significance, meaning only a man who went upon the stage to play a certain role in a drama. It then got into the moral and religious language to mean a man who acts a part on the stage of human experiences. The word means one who pretends to be something he knows he is not. *Have their reward*. The first word is defined, “To have received all that one can expect.” The praise of men is what these hypocrites sought and that is what they will have; nothing else.

Verse 3. *Hands* cannot literally know anything hence we have to conclude this verse means we should not make a great ado over our good deeds.

Verse 4. *Alms in secret*. We have seen in verse 1 and chapter 5: 16 that our good deeds are not required to be done literally in secret. The meaning of this verse, therefore, must be that

we should do good even in cases where men may not realize the good we have done. But God knows all things and will give full credit where it is due.

Verse 5. The place of the praying is not what is condemned, but the motive, *to be seen*, is the thing that is wrong. At any proper time it would be right to pray even on the streets, but it must not be done for show. *Have their reward* virtually means they may not expect any further reward. (See verse 2.)

Verse 6. The servants of the Lord may offer either private or public prayers in lawful service to Him. Both kinds should be considered in connection with this chapter. But it is improper to pretend to be offering a private prayer and yet do it in a way to attract attention. This verse means that if a disciple actually means his prayer to be private he should seek a private place to offer it.

Verse 7. *Vain repetitions* is explained in the lexicon to mean saying the same things over and over again for the sake of taking up time, or for the purpose of making a favorable impression. *Heathen* is from ETHNIKOS which Thayer defines, "3. in the New Testament savoring of the nature of pagans, alien to the worship of the true God, heathenish." *Much speaking* means the same as vain repetitions as to its motive. Many prayers of disciples of Christ today have unnecessary phrases that would come under the disapproval of Jesus. Our prayers should be brief and simple and made to pertain to the occasion that caused the prayer to be called for.

Verse 8. Prayer is not for the purpose of informing God about our needs for He already knows that. It is an occasion of showing our faith in the Heavenly Father.

Verse 9. After *this manner* denotes that Jesus only intended this to be an example of the kind of prayers he wished his disciples to offer. It therefore is not "the prayer he taught his disciples to pray." There are no set forms of service in the kingdom of heaven as to the wording of them. *Hallowed* is from HAGIAZO and is defined, "to render or acknowledge to be venerable, to hallow." It is equivalent to saying that the name of our Father is holy.

Verse 10. Both John and Jesus had taught that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. That would mean that it was near but not yet set up. The

prayer for the kingdom to come would therefore be a scriptural one for the disciples to offer at that time. However, it would be unscriptural to make that prayer today since the kingdom is *in earth* now. *As in heaven*. God's rule had been going on for centuries in heaven, hence the prayer was to recognize that fact while praying for it to take place on the earth. Such a prayer indicated two things; that the disciples wished the kingdom to come, and also that they believed in the promise of Christ that it was to come soon.

Verse 11. There are two outstanding thoughts in this verse. *Daily* is from a Greek word that means "necessary," showing they were to pray for what they needed and not what they merely desired. And *this day* indicates that prayer should be offered daily.

Verse 12. God does not have to be given an example of righteous performances before He will do it. But if a disciple is unwilling to forgive those indebted to him, the Lord will not regard him as worthy of such a favor. (See chapter 18: 23-35.)

Verse 13. *Temptation* is from a word that sometimes means "adversity, affliction, trouble," and *evil* is from one meaning "hardships." God never leads men into sin and the words are not used in that sense in this place. The clause is simply a prayer for God to help the disciples in the trials of life. *For thine is the kingdom*, etc., is given as a reason for believing that God could control the elements of creation according to His will, and hence he would be able to give the disciples this assistance. For the meaning of the word *amen* see the comments at chapter 5: 18.

Verses 14, 15. See the comments on verse 12 for the explanation of these.

Verse 16. Fasting was never commanded as a regular practice, but it was voluntarily done on particular occasions as an outward symbol of grief or penitence or great anxiety. The act was approved by the Lord when prompted by a sincere motive. But the hypocrites wished to obtain the praise of men for fasting when they had not actually abstained from food long enough to produce any visible effects on their countenance. To accomplish their purpose they would *disfigure* their faces and then put on a sad look. Thayer defines the word *disfigure*, "to deprive of lustre, render unsightly; to disfigure." This was done in order to



appear unto men *to fast* or appear as men fasting.

Verse 17. When David was ready to cease fasting (2 Samuel 12: 20) at the death of his child he arose and washed himself. Jesus instructed his disciples to proceed with the usual customs of daily life in spite of their season of fasting. That would tend to the opposite effect of the disfigurement that the hypocrites practiced for attention.

Verse 18. *Appear not unto men to fast.* By following the usual routine as described in the preceding verse the disciples would not appear to be men on a fast. That would take them out of the class of hypocrites who made a show of their performance in order to receive the praise of men. God who knows the hearts of men would see and reward the devotions of His servants as would be fitting.

Verse 19. *For yourselves* is the key to this verse and is in line with 1 Timothy 6: 18. To say the passage forbids the accumulation of property beyond the present day needs would be to set some scriptures against others. We may lay up something for the future but not simply *for ourselves*: it is that "we may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4: 28). When we have thus accumulated a surplus we must be careful not to trust in it or become attached to it lest we make it an idol.

Verse 20. In addition to the reasons against hoarding described in the preceding verse, it is also foolish from the standpoint of an investment. Our idle wealth may be attacked and taken by thieves and all be lost for any good use. But the treasures in heaven, which consist of the credits from God for our righteous lives, will be safe because no thief will ever be admitted to that place, neither will any form of decay be possible there. That is why Paul used the impressive words, "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6: 19).

Verse 21. This is another reason for not hoarding material wealth *for ourselves*, because that will become the object of our greatest interest which will lead to a form of idolatry. Doubtless that is the reason for Paul's statements in Ephesians 5: 5 and Colossians 3: 5. The heart is the inner man and the seat of emotions and the cause of activities. If that is centered in worldly wealth it will induce man to

devote his attentions upon it to the neglect of God.

Verse 22. The human body is again used for illustration, the eye being the particular part for the comparison. This organ is the only one that admits light into the body and hence complete dependence upon it is necessary. *Single* is from HAPLOUS which Thayer defines by, "good, sound." The literal fact is that if a man's eyes are sound or normal he will be able to receive all the light that is offered him.

Verse 23. *Evil* is defined in the lexicon to be "in a bad condition." *If the light that is in thee be darkness.* If the only means that one has for receiving light be darkness (which it would be if it became in bad condition), then the darkness would be great because one has no other means of seeing. The lesson in this illustration is that a man has only one means of receiving spiritual light which is his intellect or mind. It is that part of his being by which he either accepts or rejects spiritual light. (See John 3: 19-21.) Therefore if that mind is rendered "unsound" by the love of darkness or evil deeds, "how great is that darkness."

Verse 24. In the time of Christ and the apostles the country had many slaves and the relation of master and slave was referred to frequently in the speech and literature. If a man belonged to a certain master he would not be able nor even should desire to serve another or to divide his services. If he so much as attempted to do so he would be brought to punishment by his rightful master. Jesus made his own application of the illustration by comparing it to God and *mammon*. That word is derived from a Chaldean one that is defined, "what is trusted; treasure; riches." We have seen in verses 19-21 above that our wealth can become an idol in our hearts, and that would make it another god that would be a rival of the true God. The lesson is that we must not try to divide our devotion between God and anything or anyone else.

Verse 25. *Therefore.* If you are going to serve God and not riches, you will not be so concerned about temporal things which do not constitute the object of your chief devotions. *Take no thought* is from MERIMNAO, which Thayer defines, "to be anxious; to be troubled with cares." It is the word for *be careful* in Philippians 4: 6 where the connection shows it means

not to be too much concerned but to look to the Lord for help. Hence Jesus does not mean that his disciples were to be indifferent about the needful things of life, but they should not be overanxious about it. The reasoning the Saviour offers is both simple and forceful. The body and the life within it are certainly more valuable than the clothing for the body or the food for the life. But they already possessed the major blessings, then why have any doubts about God's ability and willingness to give them the minor ones?

Verse 26. This verse is not intended to encourage indolence on the part of man, for the fowls cannot perform the scientific works of production while man is able to do so. The idea is that since these helpless creatures are abundantly supplied without their own help, it shows the power and willingness of the Creator to accomplish all that is necessary. Therefore the servants of God should have full confidence in His ability and willingness to supply all the needs of man that he cannot obtain for himself.

Verse 27. Undue anxiety will not add the slightest amount to one's size, hence it is useless to be concerned about the necessities of life to the extent of foolish worry.

Verse 28. This verse has the same lesson as verse 26 except it has to do with clothing only. The lilies are as helpless as the fowls and do nothing to produce their outward appearance and growth.

Verse 29. The glory of Solomon's royal robes was artificial, made by the art of man, and doubtless was unexcelled by any other king of his time. His general surroundings also were the greatest of his time. (See 1 Kings 10.) The glory and beauty of the flower is natural and hence is made directly by the hand of the Creator without the instrumentality of man, which shows the ability of God to accomplish the utmost in the field of adornment and clothing.

Verse 30. *Grass* is from *CHORTOS* and is defined in the lexicon, "grass, herbage, hay, provender." The lily is of the vegetable kingdom and hence is in the general class of the herbs. *Which is* comes from *ONTOS* which is defined, "truly, in reality, in point of fact . . . that which is indeed."—Thayer. The thought is that this beautiful lily is actually in existence but only for a brief time. Notwithstanding its uncertain and short existence, God

thinks enough of it to give it a beauty that far excels that of Solomon. Certainly, then, He will not forget man who is made in His image. *Cast into the oven* refers to the use of light fuel such as leaves and grass that was burned in the portable baking stoves of many homes in that day. Smith's Bible Dictionary says the following of these ovens: "The eastern oven is of two kinds—fixed and portable. The latter is adapted to the nomad [traveling] state. It consists of a large jar made of clay, about three feet high and widening toward the bottom, with a hole for the extraction of the ashes. Each household possessed such an article, Exodus 8: 3, and it was only in times of extreme dearth that the same oven sufficed for several families; Leviticus 26: 26. It was heated with dry twigs and grass, Matthew 6: 30, and the loaves were placed both inside and outside of it."

Verse 31. This verse is a summing up of the thoughts in the verses starting with 25 and the repetition is for the purpose of emphasis.

Verse 32. *Gentiles* is from *ETHNOS* and refers to the nations in general out over the world. God knows all about our needs for He has created the very bodies that have them, hence he certainly will not refuse to provide what is necessary to support them.

Verse 33. There is nothing that we really have to do in making a living that will need to interfere with our work in the kingdom of God. The point is that we must be concerned first about the righteousness belonging to the kingdom. While doing that we can also do what is necessary for our temporal needs, and it is in that way that "all these things shall be added unto us."

Verse 34. Again the exhortation comes not to be overanxious about *the morrow* which means the future in general. *Evil* is from *KAKIA* and Thayer defines it at this place, "evil, trouble." The thought may well be expressed with a familiar one "don't borrow trouble" from the future. Also by another household saying not to try to "cross a bridge before we get to it." Sufficient unto the day, etc., means that each day has enough trouble for itself without looking ahead and worrying about some evil that may never come anyway. When the morrow comes, if it brings trouble to us it will then be time enough to think about it. We will be able then to care for it in the way just set forth in this chapter.

## MATTHEW 7

Verse 1. *Judge not.* These words are often quoted by people who resent being corrected for their wrong doing. Such persons fail to consider that the word has a very wide range of meaning and that they should learn the bearing of it in any particular place before applying it to themselves. Were they asked if they believe the Bible contradicts itself in any way they would say no, yet the same Greek word is used in John 7: 24 where Jesus says for us to judge. But it may be replied that Jesus says to judge "righteous judgment." That is the very point, and hence our present verse simply means not to judge unrighteously. But if a judgment is according to the truth and facts in a case then it would be righteous judgment and not forbidden by this verse.

Verse 2. With the first verse explained this one should not be difficult. If a man passes unrighteous judgment upon another he lays himself open to condemnation. In other words, if a man condemns another without evidence, it will indicate that he is himself the guilty one and is trying to divert attention from himself to another.

Verse 3. The terms *mote* and *beam* are used figuratively to illustrate the inconsistency of a hypocrite. Two wrongs do not make one right, neither must a man profess to be "as pure as an angel" before he has the right to condemn sin in others. It should be noted that both these men were afflicted in the same manner (in the eye), only one was less than the other. The illustration pictures a man with a serious obstruction in his eye and wanting to operate on the eye of another who is much less affected. In practice it would be like a man condemning another for getting drunk every Saturday night when he was himself drinking every day.

Verse 4. This continues the thought of inconsistency just described.

Verse 5. A hypocrite is one who pretends to be what he knows he is not. This man pretends to have unaffected eyes, yet he knows better if he is able to recognize what is an affection in the other's eye. That is, he knows his own eye is not right if he can understand that a mote renders the other man's eye defective.

Verse 6. *Dog* sometimes means a sodomite (Deuteronomy 23: 18; Revelation 22: 15) or other impure man,

but it is here associated with literal swine and hence should be understood as meaning the brute creatures. Both animals were classed as impure and unclean under the law and hence are used to illustrate unworthy human beings. The lesson in the verse is that we should not bestow favors upon those who are not worthy. If a man spends money in unrighteous indulgencies, we should turn a deaf ear to him when he makes a cry of poverty and destitution.

Verse 7. The favors of God are offered to us on conditions. Thus the invitation to *ask* is restricted to the things that are "according to his will" (1 John 5: 14). The promise of obtaining what we seek for is to be in harmony with chapter 6: 33, and the same principle would apply to knocking, which is merely a sign that we wish to be admitted into the favor of God.

Verse 8. This is an assurance of fulfillment of the preceding verse, the key to it being in the words *every one*. Since God is no respecter of *persons* (Acts 10: 34), it follows that all who meet the conditions set forth in the preceding verse will be favored of God without partiality as to who the individual is.

Verse 9. A humane father would not answer a son's request for bread with a stone.

Verse 10. Or will he substitute a fish with a serpent in his son's request.

Verse 11. *Being evil* is used as a contrast with God. The disciples would admit that they were sinful men and yet were humane in their treatment of their children. Certainly, then, a divine Father will be kind to his children. It is significant that He will give *good things* to them who ask him, not just anything they might think they needed. Even an earthly humane father might deny a request of his son if the thing asked for should not be the best thing for his welfare.

Verse 12.\* *Therefore* is from OUN and Thayer's over-all definition of it is as follows: "Then, therefore, accordingly, consequently, these things being so," and Robinson and Greenfield define it in virtually the same way. The conclusion is drawn from the facts and truths set forth in verse 7-11. God will not refuse to grant necessary favors to His children, and even sinful man will not refrain from granting like requests to a relative. Using this

as an example, we should even not wait to be asked for a needed favor since we would not refuse the thing if requested, but should voluntarily advance the favor, such as we would expect from others under the same circumstances. *This is the law and the prophets* is equivalent to "on these hang all the law and the prophets" (chapter 22: 40). If we love our neighbor as ourselves we will do to him as we would expect him to do to us. We will not steal his property, or invade his home, or falsify on him, or seek to kill him, etc., because we would not want him to do so unto us.

Verse 13. A companion passage to this is Luke 13: 23-30 where the connection shows the subject is eternal salvation after the judgment day. *Enter ye in*, therefore, means to enter into eternal life. Jesus first describes the way that leads to destruction. *Gate* and *way* are used figuratively, because there is no specific route established for the purpose of taking people to eternal death. It means that the opportunities for entering or starting on this evil way are many and the kind of life that will lead to death of the soul is so easy that it is compared to a wide or roomy one; that is the reason that many go that way. It is the universal practice of man to follow the course of least resistance in this life. Such is the way of sin because there are only a few people who will oppose a man who wishes to follow a life of sin.

Verse 14. Both Thayer and Robinson give "narrow" as one definition of the original for *strait*. *Narrow* is from *THLIBO* and is defined by Thayer, "A compressed way, i. e. narrow, straitened, Matthew 7: 14; figuratively to trouble, afflict, distress." From the definition we understand the road to eternal life is one in which the traveler will be pressed with hardships and persecutions. It is also narrow in the ordinary sense of that word because the travelers go as individuals as far as responsibility is concerned, and just one man does not need a wide path; the going is "single file." *Find* is from *HEUBISKO* and Thayer's first definition is. "To come upon, hit upon, to meet with; to find a thing sought." Not many people are looking for a way of life that will bring them hardships and tribulation, hence Jesus says *few there be that find it*.

Verse 15. *False prophets* comes from *PSEUDOPROPHETES* which Thayer defines, "One who, acting the part of a divinely

inspired prophet, utters falsehoods under the name of divine prophecies, a false prophet." The same author explains *sheep's clothing* to mean "the skins of sheep." A wolf having the skin of a sheep around him would be like these evil men who are posing as the prophets of God.

Verse 16. *Know them by their fruits*. The wolf would soon show his true character by his ravenous attack upon the unsuspecting sheep. A thorn bush or thistle will finally prove itself to be such by bearing thorns instead of fruit.

Verses 17, 18. These verses are a direct statement of facts upon which the foregoing comparison was based. The statements are absolute and describe conditions that are normal, not those that may only seem to be. However, an evil tree without exception will be unable to bear good fruit. If a tree that is or was naturally good appears to bear evil fruit it is because something has been done to it to interfere with its regular function and virtually turned it into an evil tree. We know that such a change is possible in the life of a man, for a good one may fall from his righteous course of life and become evil and henceforth bear evil fruit in his life.

Verse 19. In the literal field, a farmer will remove an evil tree to make room in his orchard for a good one, and will do away with the bad tree by burning it. The lesson is that if men do not bear good fruit, which means to practice good deeds while in this life, the great Owner of the garden will cast them into fire.

Verse 20. This verse is the conclusion of the important comparison of good and bad trees which applies to the lives of men in this world.

Verse 21. *Lord* is from *KURIOS* and means, "One who has control of a person, the master." The mere addressing one as a master without doing what he expects of his servant is inconsistent. Such empty professors will not be admitted into the kingdom of heaven, because there will be things that need to be done by its citizens.

Verse 22. Neither may a servant select his own type of activities according to what suits his preferences and expect to be rewarded for it. If that should be permitted there would be much necessary though less apparently glorious work neglected. The works described in this verse were possible in the days of miracles and Jesus does

not deny the claims of these one-sided servants.

Verse 23. In spite of the ritualistic performances or works of display which these men did, there was something of the practical that was lacking. They did only what suited them and were content to construct a character that did not respect all the sayings of Christ. For this reason Jesus says he *never knew you*, which means he never recognized or endorsed them as being true servants.

Verse 24. No doubt the people described in the preceding verse lived a life that made a fair appearance to others because their deeds seemed out of the ordinary. Yet they were not well founded because they were not backed up by a program of practical obedience to the whole law of useful service. A house must not only be pleasing to the eye of an admirer in order to stand, but it must be founded on something solid. Hence Jesus compares the all-around and serviceable man to one who not only put some desirable things into the construction of his building, but who was careful to underlay it with a rock foundation.

Verse 25. The elements of the weather are used to illustrate the final test that will be put upon every man's life. The trials of this world will have their part to play in the great drama, but the final test will come when the Lord tries all mankind at the bar of the last judgment when Christ sits upon the throne of judgment.

Verse 26. The man who builds a house on the sand is like one who estimates his needs by present conditions only. In the absence of water and wind, sandy ground would seem about as firm as a rock, or at least enough so that it would appear firm and hard and suitable to hold up a house. Likewise, if no tests were made of a man's work in this life, either now or at the judgment, then one kind of spiritual structure might be as acceptable as another and hence he might as well do as he sees fit about it.

Verse 27. But the test is sure to come and the house on the sand will fall. *Great will be the fall* because it will be the loss of a soul.

Verse 28. The word for *astonished* is defined by "amazed" in the lexicon, which was caused by the *doctrine* or teaching of Jesus. *People* is from OCHLOS and that Greek word has been rendered by company 7 times, multi-

tude 79, number 1, people 82, press 5. It has a wide range of definitions in the lexicon such as, "a crowd; multitude of men who have flocked together in some place, a throng; the common people; a multitude." From chapter 5: 1 and 8: 1 we cannot conclude that it means all the people of the territory heard him in the mount, yet a considerable number did follow the Lord to that place as those desiring to learn of him.

Verse 29. *Having authority, not as the scribes*. The scribes were not inspired men neither were they in any official position. Their business was to copy the law and then quote it to the people for their information; they could only say "it is written." Jesus was the Son of God and could speak independent of all written documents, although he always respected what had been written by Moses and the prophets.

## MATTHEW 8

Verse 1. The *multitudes* evidently were the ones Jesus left behind in chapter 5: 1 when he went up into the mount. Their interest did not seem to be strong enough to take them up the place where they would have to climb. Now that he is again on the lower level they are ready to go along after him. *Followed him* refers to their bodily movement in walking with him and not to any particular attitude of mind toward his teaching.

Verse 2. The leper *worshipped* Jesus which would mean only that he assumed a position of respect. See the long definition of the word at chapter 2: 2. The law of Moses required a leper to maintain a safe distance from others (Leviticus 13: 45, 46), hence the conduct of this man could be only one of courtesy. Leprosy was incurable except by miraculous power, and Jesus had previously proved his ability to cure bodily ailments by his miraculous power (chapter 4: 23, 24).

Verse 3. Jesus was willing to heal the leper and did so both by physical contact and word of mouth. The healing was *immediate* and not like the pretended working of miracles today where the patient is exhorted to "hold out with faith and finally be cured."

Verse 4. There was no medical cure for leprosy known to the ancients but sometimes a leper was cured miraculously. And after the physical cure had been accomplished, a ceremonial cleansing was required under the law which included certain sacrifices. (See

Leviticus 14.) The Mosaic law was in force in the time of Christ, hence he commanded this man to comply with that ordinance pertaining to leprosy. *For a testimony unto them.* When the former leper presented himself before the priest to perform this service, it was proof that a miraculous cure had been done and hence another bit of evidence would be furnished of the power of Jesus.

Verse 5. The Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary defines a *centurion* as follows: "The commander of a 'century,' i. e., a hundred men, the sixtieth part of a legion, in the Roman army." This man was a Gentile, being an official in the Roman military forces. But the fame of Jesus had reached the ears of all classes, and they believed that the benefit of his mercy was to be enjoyed by any who were afflicted.

Verse 6. The word *Lord* in the original has several shades of meaning, one of which is "sovereign, prince, chief." This centurion had not become a disciple of Jesus and hence he did not address him as *Lord* from that standpoint. But he had learned enough about his great work to believe him to be a superior person in wisdom and power. He therefore appealed to him on behalf of his servant who was sick of the palsy which was a form of paralysis that retained a considerable amount of feeling in the parts.

Verse 7. Jesus was able to give "absent treatment" as effectively as otherwise. However, the proposal to come to the home of the centurion drew from him an expression of complete faith. He had not even requested that Jesus come, but only appealed to him in the attitude of a simple trust in his power and willingness to do something for him.

Verse 8. This verse gives us one reason why the centurion had not asked Jesus to come to his home; he did not feel worthy of such a guest. He therefore was to be satisfied with the favor to his servant though absent, and expressed his belief thus.

Verse 9. This verse indicates that the good things the centurion said in the preceding verse did not come out of a desire to use empty flattery, because he gave a logical reason for his statement. *Under authority . . . under me* is a very significant line of argument. The centurion had the power to give commands to servants who were *under* him, even though he was himself *under* another. Jesus, on the other

hand, was under no one (as the centurion thought) and hence should be able to exercise unrestricted authority. This was in line with one definition for *Lord* which is: "One who has control of a person, the master."

Verse 10. A meaning of *marvel* is "to admire." Jesus could not be surprised or impressed as if by some unexpected occurrence for his wisdom was divine. Therefore we are to understand this to mean he was filled with admiration for this unusual exhibition of faith. *So great faith, no, not in Israel.* The centurion was not a member of the nation of Israel but belonged to the idolatrous Gentiles. Yet he showed more faith than the people who were supposed to possess great confidence in the seed of Abraham.

Verse 11. *East and west* is used figuratively to mean the earth or world in general, not merely the land of the Jews that was virtually restricted to the land of Palestine. *Kingdom of heaven* means the "everlasting kingdom" that is promised in 2 Peter 1:11 to the faithful. *To sit down* means to become a guest and admitted to the hospitality of a home. It is used in this place to refer to the favors that will be given to the faithful in the Eternal Home after this life on earth is over.

Verse 12. *Children* is from *HUIOS* and Thayer's definition at this place is, "those for whom a thing is destined." It does not necessarily mean those who had actually become members of the kingdom, but those who would logically have been expected to be foremost in entering it as were the Jews. The fathers of that nation, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, had lived faithfully under the system that was in force over them (the Patriarchal Dispensation), but their descendants of the later centuries in the time of Christ rejected the teaching of their great *seed* and will be rejected in the day of judgment. Paul set forth this same thought in his speech at Antioch (Acts 13: 46).

Verse 13. Having concluded his speech to the hardened Jews, Jesus gave his final attention to the centurion by promising him the favor he requested. *As thou hast believed* means that the centurion would receive the favor he believed he would, namely, the healing of his servant at once by the simple word of Christ. Hence the statement that the servant *was healed in the selfsame hour* is given in direct connection.



Verse 14. One observation we should make here is that Peter had a wife, contrary to the dogma of the church of Rome. *Laid* means she was prostrated with the fever as if thrown down by the force of the disease.

Verse 15. In this case Jesus saw fit to make bodily contact. We are not told here whether he said anything, but in Luke 4: 39 it says he "rebuked the fever." This healing also was immediate and complete for the woman was able to perform the work of administering to them.

Verse 16. Thayer defines *even* in this passage to mean, "from our three to six o'clock P. M." That accounts for the many things that seem to have been done yet on that same day. *Possessed with devils* will be explained at verse 28, but it should be noted here that healing the sick was distinguished from casting out devils. It is also stated that Jesus did both *with his word*.

Verse 17. *That it might be fulfilled* does not always mean that a certain thing was done just so a particular prophecy might be fulfilled, although it will sometimes mean that. Whichever the case may be, it will be well to consider it in the light of saying, "and in so doing the prophecy was fulfilled which," etc. The prophecy cited here is in Isaiah 53: 4.

Verse 18. Sometimes the multitudes were so great that it interfered with the work of Jesus (Mark 2: 4; 3: 9; Luke 8: 19). That was the case here and hence Jesus gave orders for them to depart unto the *other side* (of the Sea of Galilee).

Verse 19. A full description of the work and character of the *scribes* will be given at chapter 13: 52, but I will state now that they were a very important group of men among the Jews. They made great pretensions of learning and wished to be recognized as an indispensable class. This scribe came to Jesus with an air of one who was deeply concerned in the work of the new teacher who was gaining so much fame among the people. But Jesus knew his heart as he always did all other men, and knew that he had mixed motives in his apparent devotional attitude.

Verse 20. To *follow* Jesus at that time meant to go bodily over the country with him and with no certain arrangement for personal comfort. The foxes and birds had fixed places of abode and always knew where they

would lodge. However, we should not take the saying of Jesus to mean that he would be like a friendless wayfarer with no chance of accommodations at night. We are sure that he had friends (such as the family of Lazarus) who gladly opened their homes for him. But he did not hold possession of any such a place so that he could provide the comforts of temporal life for his followers, hence there was no object in following him with such luxuries in view. There is no ground for saying this verse is a statement to show how "poor" Jesus became as a popular notion claims for it.

Verse 21. It is unreasonable to suppose that this man's father was actually dead at this time, for had that been the case he would not have been away from home. The necessary conclusion is, then, that the father was aged and likely to pass away almost any time, and the son presented this family duty as an excuse for not going abroad over the country with Jesus.

Verse 22. As the father was not yet dead, and this man professed to be a disciple of Jesus and hence *alive* spiritually, he should leave the temporal work of a burial to those who were *dead* spiritually. The general lesson in the case is that even as important a circumstance as a funeral should not be allowed to interfere with the spiritual services we owe to Christ.

Verse 23. The *disciples* were that part of the crowd that professed to be the followers of Jesus in belief as well as wanting to go along with him in the traveling. We would naturally conclude that the multitude could not enter the ship.

Verse 24. In the Scriptures as in any other literature, we should deal with figurative language according to reason. We know that had the ship been literally *covered* with the water, the disciples would have already perished and would not have been able to speak. The meaning of the passage is, therefore, that the ship was filling and that unless it was stopped they would perish.

Verses 25, 26. The disciples had been with Jesus and had seen his power over great obstacles. They should have had such confidence in him that as long as he was with them no harm could come. Their failure to take that view of it was the reason for charging them with "little faith." Jesus then did what they should have confidently

expected him to do; he stilled the tempest.

Verse 27. Each new miracle seemed to fill the disciples with astonishment. The distinguishing feature of this event would lie in the fact that it was inanimate things that Jesus controlled. That is indicated by their word *obey*, which ordinarily would require intelligent response which the storm could not do.

Verse 28. Gergesenes (also called Gadarenes) was situated near the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The *tombs* were caves in the rocks that were used for the burial of the dead. They were generally open so that persons could enter and leave them as occasion suggested. It was in this kind of a place that the Lord met the two afflicted men. *Possessed with devils* all comes from the Greek word **DAIMONIZOMAI**. Another Greek word that is always (with one exception) rendered by "devil in the Authorized Version is **DAIMONION**. These two Greek words are so frequently related that I shall consider them both in the comments at this verse. I shall quote from both Thayer and Robinson as they discuss the words in their lexicons. Because of the important history that they give in connection with their specific definitions, I think it will be well to give the reader the benefit of this authentic information. It will be so necessary in various places in our study of the New Testament, that I urge the reader to make it convenient to consult it carefully any time it is referred to. First will be Thayer on **DAIMONIZOMAI**:

"In the N. T. **DAIMONIZOMENOI** are persons afflicted with especially severe diseases, either bodily or mental (such as paralysis, blindness, deafness, loss of speech, epilepsy, melancholy, etc.), whose bodies in the opinion of the Jews (see **DAIMONION**) demons had entered, and so held possession of them as not only to afflict them with ills, but also to dethrone the reason and take its place themselves; accordingly the possessed were wont to express the mind and consciousness of the demons dwelling in them; and their cure was thought to require the expulsion of the demon." Next is Thayer on **DAIMONION** "1. the divine Power, deity, divinity . . . 2. a spirit, a being inferior to God, superior to men . . . evil spirits or the messengers and ministers of the devil . . . to have a demon, be possessed by a demon, is said of those who either suffer from some ex-

ceptionally severe disease, Luke 4: 33; 8: 27; or act and speak as though they were mad, Matthew 11: 18; Luke 7: 33; John 7: 20; 8: 48. . . . According to a Jewish opinion which passed over to Christians, the demons are the gods of the Gentiles and the authors of idolatry. . . . The apostle Paul, though teaching that the gods of the Gentiles are a fiction (1 Corinthians 8: 4; 10: 19), thinks that the conception of them has been put into the minds of men by demons, who appropriate to their own use and honor the sacrifices offered to idols." Next will be Robinson on **DAIMONIZOMAI**:

"In New Testament, to have a demon or devil, to be a demoniac, to be possessed, afflicted, with an evil spirit; found only in the Gospels." Next is Robinson on the Greek word **daimonion**: "1. generally a deity, a god, spoken of heathen gods, Acts 17: 18. 2. specifically a demon. In the New Testament, a demon, devil, an evil spirit, an unclean spirit. These spirits are represented as fallen angels, 2 Peter 2: 4; Jude 6; and are now subject to Satan as their prince, Matthew 9: 34; 25: 41; 2 Corinthians 12: 7; Revelation 12: 9. They were held to have the power of working miracles, but not for good, Revelation 16: 14; to be hostile to mankind, John 8: 44; to utter the heathen responses and oracles, Acts 16: 17; and to lurk in the idols of the heathen, which are hence called *daimonia*, devils, 1 Corinthians 10: 20. . . . They are likewise represented as the authors of evil to mankind, both moral and physical."

Verse 29. These devils were fallen angels (see note on preceding verse), and had been in the place of torment in Hades (2 Peter 2: 4; Jude 6) where they would have remained until *the time* of judgment for which they were being reserved. They had been enjoying a short relief from that torment by being in these human creatures. They knew they would be doomed eternally at the last judgment, but if they could remain on earth until that day they would escape that much torment. But now if Jesus sends them back to their place in Hades, they will again be tormented *before the time* of the great judgment day that is awaiting all intelligent beings.

Verses 30, 31. Rather than go back to their previous place in Hades, these devils preferred to inhabit the swine because then (as they thought) they would get to remain on the earth until the judgment of the last day.



Verse 32. Their request was granted but it did not benefit them very long. The possession of devils sometimes caused great physical derangement in men, and here it produced a madness in the swine that caused them to plunge into the water and perish.

Verse 33. Such an event was so unusual that the keepers fled into the city and reported the whole thing to the people.

Verse 34. The people came out to where Jesus was and requested him to leave the community. That could not have been on account of the one afflicted with the devils for in Mark's account (Mark 5: 19, 20) he was benefited and became a preacher of Jesus. The only conclusion possible is they feared others might lose some of their stock.

### MATTHEW 9

Verse 1. Having been requested to leave the country of the Gergesenes, Jesus took passage in a ship and recrossed the Sea of Galilee. *His own city* means Capernaum as may be learned in chapter 4: 13 where he changed his residence.

Verse 2. The *palsy* was a form of paralysis and rendered a man helpless. Jesus knew the hearts of all men and hence the words *seeing their faith* does not mean that what he saw was what gave him the information. The conclusion must be that what Jesus saw was an outward indication of faith. But the palsied man was not doing anything, hence as far as the direct evidence shows, the men carrying the bed were the only ones who had faith. Thus we have no positive authority for saying that the patient had any faith, notwithstanding which, the Lord gave him forgiveness for his sins. We also have no evidence that such a favor was being sought when they brought him to Jesus, but rather that they merely wished to have the afflicted man cured. *Son* is from *TEKNON* and Thayer renders it in this place, "affectionate address, such as patrons, helpers, teachers, and the like, employ."

Verse 3. *Blaspheme* is from a Greek word of virtually the same form, *BLASPHEMEO*, and Thayer defines it, "To speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate [accuse falsely]." In his own comments on the word he says it means, "Specifically of those who by contemptuous speech *intentionally* [emphasis mine, E. M. Z.] come short of the reverence due to God or to sacred

things." Thus we see they accused Jesus of showing disrespect for God in claiming authority to forgive. In Mark's account of the same event they make that item the basis of their accusation (Mark 2: 7).

Verse 4. The scribes were afraid to make their accusation so that others could hear it, but Jesus knew their thoughts and exposed them.

Verse 5. The thing Jesus declared to be done was invisible and thus open to question. He then proposed to make another declaration that would be visible if accomplished. *Whether it is easier* means that if he has the authority to do the one he also has it to do the other, for one would be no harder to do than the other for one endowed with divine power as he claimed to be.

Verse 6. Jesus then proposed to prove his *power* (from *EXOUSIA* meaning authority) to perform the invisible by doing the visible. Addressing the palsied man, Jesus told him not only to arise, but to take up his bed and go home. This evidently was the bed on which he was lying when the men came to carry him to Jesus.

Verse 7. It would require something more than imaginative "mind over matter" to enable a helpless paralytic to walk and carry a piece of furniture.

Verse 8. The aforesaid logic was suggested to the minds of the multitude and they expressed themselves to that effect. Nothing is said about the attitude of the accusers, and they doubtless hung their heads in shame. *Glorify* is from *DOXAZO* and Thayer defines it in this place, "to praise, extol, magnify, celebrate." *Given such power unto men*. The last word is from *ANTHROPOS*, and its universal meaning as given by Thayer is, "A human being, whether male or female," and hence the distinction is made between the brute creation and human beings. We are not told how much this multitude knew about the dual character of the person of Christ, but the outstanding appearance was that he was a man. That is why they marveled at his authority and might which could be accounted for only by giving the credit to God.

Verse 9. *Receipt of custom* is from one Greek word that means "tax office." The man who had charge of the taxes was called a publican, and that subject will be explained in detail in the next verse. Matthew was connected with that work when Jesus came along, and he was called to follow which he

did. He was baptized by John since Jesus "came unto his own" who were the ones whom John baptized and prepared for him. It was in keeping with his instruction from John, therefore, for him to quit his secular employment and follow at the call of him for whom he had been made ready.

Verse 10. All men are sinners to some extent, but they are named as a class in this passage which means they were unrighteous in their life as a whole and hence regarded as an unworthy group. They are also classed with the *publicans* which shows they also were regarded as an unworthy group. They are referred to frequently in the New Testament, and I shall quote from the works of reference for the information of the reader.

"The class designated by this word [publican] in the New Testament were employed as collectors of the Roman revenue. The Roman senate farmed the direct taxes and the customs to capitalists who undertook to pay a given sum into the treasury, and so received the name of *publicani*. Contracts of this kind fell naturally into the hands of the *equites* [military orders], as the richest class of Romans. They appointed managers, under whom were the *portitores*, the actual custom-house officers, who examined each bale of goods, exported or imported, assessed its value more or less arbitrarily, wrote out the ticket, and enforced payment. The latter were commonly natives of the province in which they were stationed, as being brought daily into contact with all classes of the population. The name *publicani* was used popularly, and in the New Testament exclusively, of the *portitores*. The system was essentially a vicious one. The *portitores* were encouraged in the most vexatious or fraudulent exactions, and a remedy was all but impossible. They overcharged whenever they had an opportunity, Luke 3: 13; they brought false charges of smuggling in the hope of extorting hush-money, Luke 19: 8; they detained and opened letters on mere suspicion. It was the basest of all livelihoods. All this was enough to bring the class into ill favor everywhere. In Judea and Galilee there were special circumstances of aggravation. The employment brought out all the besetting vices of the Jewish character. The strong feeling of many Jews as to the absolute unlawfulness of paying tribute at all made matters worse. The scribes who discussed the

question, Matthew 22: 15, for the most part answered it in the negative. In addition to their other faults, accordingly, the publicans of the New Testament were regarded as traitors and apostates, defiled by their frequent intercourse with the heathen, willing tools of the oppressor. The class thus practically excommunicated furnished some of the earliest disciples both of the Baptist and of our Lord. The position of Zacchaeus as a "chief among the publicans," Luke 19: 2, implies a gradation of some kind among the persons employed." — Smith's Bible Dictionary, article, Publican.

"TELONES, 1. a renter or farmer of taxes; among the Romans usually a man of equestrian [one who rides on horseback] rank. 2. a tax-gatherer, collector of taxes or tolls, one employed by a publican or farmer-general in collecting the taxes. The tax-collectors were, as a class, detested not only by the Jews but by other nations also, both on account of their employment and of the harshness, greed, and deception, with which they prosecuted it."—Thayer. "TELONES, a farmer of the taxes or customs, one who pays to the government a certain sum for the privilege of collecting the taxes and customs of a district. . . . Whence in the English Version, a publican. The public revenues of the Greeks and Romans were usually thus farmed out; and among the latter the purchasers were persons of wealth and rank, and in the later periods chiefly of the equestrian order. . . . The farmers-general had also sub-contractors, or employed agents, who collected the taxes and customs at the gates of cities, in seaports, on public ways, bridges, and the like. . . . In the New Testament in the later sense, a toll-gatherer, collector of customs, publican, the object of bitter hatred and scorn to the Jews, and often coupled with the most depraved classes of society."—Robinson's Greek Lexicon. This long note will not be copied again, hence it will be important that the reader make careful note of its location for reference as occasion requires.

Verse 11. The information given with the comments on the preceding verse shows the moral and social standing of the *publicans and sinners*. The significance of *eating* with others was different in ancient times from what it is now. I shall quote from Funk and Wagnalls Standard Bible Dictionary on this subject: "The moral

aspects of eating are taken account of in a series of prescriptions and prohibitions on the manner, time, and articles to be eaten. 'Eating together' was a sign of community of life, and symbolized either adoption into the household, or entrance into irrevocable [unbreakable] covenant (Jeremiah 41: 1). This conception underlies the sacrificial meal in which God is taken as a participant. It was the worst form of treason, therefore, to break a covenant entered into through the ceremony of eating together." The Pharisees who pretended to be very righteous, wanted to appear shocked that a righteous teacher like Jesus would defile himself by associating with these low characters, especially on such an intimate occasion as eating a meal together.

Verse 12. Jesus does not admit that the Pharisees are as righteous as they claim, but if they are, they are inconsistent in criticizing Jesus for associating with sinners. These sinners are spiritually sick and are the very ones who need treatment. Incidentally, the Lord made a declaration that condemns those who deny the good work of physicians. It is claimed that medicine is unnecessary, that it is not a good thing, and that sick people can be healed without a physician. And this in spite of the statement in Proverbs 17: 22 that medicine "doeth good," and that Jesus said that the sick *need a physician*.

Verse 13. *Learn what that meaneth.* Learn the meaning of the statement, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice.* I request the reader to "learn" its meaning by consulting Isaiah 58: 3; Ezekiel 34: 1-4; Hosea 6: 6; Joel 2: 13; Micah 6: 6-8. By these passages it will be learned that the self-righteous Jewish leaders in former times imposed on the poor and common people, then tried to get things even before the Lord by offering big material sacrifices. Under those circumstances the Lord would want these leaders to leave off their sacrifices until they had showed mercy to the unfortunate populace. Jesus wanted these same pretentious Jewish leaders before him to get this lesson so they would cease their selfish attitude toward the "sinners." A physician does not make calls at homes where all are in good health, and on that principle Jesus came to call on the sinners of the earth because they are the ones who are spiritually sick. If the Pharisees were as righteous as they professed to be, they

should not expect Jesus to pay much attention to them.

Verse 14. Fasting was never commanded as a regular practice but was voluntarily done in times of grief or anxiety. At the time of this conversation John the Baptist had been slain, which is recorded later in this book, and his disciples were fasting in honor of his memory. Not that they were doing so just at the time they came to Jesus, but had been doing so *oft* or at intervals since his death.

Verse 15. Jesus represents himself as a bridegroom who is still present with the *children* which is used in the sense of friends. These friends would have no occasion to fast or mourn for their bridegroom because he was still with them. Fasting under these circumstances would be inappropriate. *Days will come* refers to the time when he would be taken from them and when that time happens they will mourn (Mark 16: 10).

Verses 16, 17. I have made one paragraph of the two verses because they are on the same subject, and whatever comments I wish to make will have a common application to both verses. But I shall first explain the literal meaning of the terms used, after which I shall offer my comments on the application. When fabric is old it is shrunk, and also weakened with age and easily torn. If a hole in it is repaired with new and unshrunk cloth, it will pull loose in shrinking and tear the old cloth. Bottles were made of the skins of animals, being closed tightly around the mouth somewhat like a leathern pouch. While these pouches are new they are moist and capable of expanding without bursting. New wine has to expand as it ferments, and if it is put into old pouches that have become dry, the expansion of the liquid will burst these vessels. The usual explanation of these illustrations is that it represents the folly of trying to mix the *new* religion that Jesus was introducing with the *old* one that Moses gave to the people of God. I do not believe that is the purpose of the illustrations and will give the reasons for my statement.

It would be an abrupt change of subject from anything that had been said for several chapters. Nothing in the conversation between Jesus and the audience would call for the injection of a highly figurative argument concerning the comparative merits of the Old and New Testaments. On the other hand, the importance of the work of

John and Christ, and of the truth that the first was to be replaced by the second, would justify some further teaching from Jesus on it. If the old garment and old bottles represent the old law, on which and into which the new law should not be put, then what constitutes the old cloth and old wine that is to be attached to it? I believe the whole point is simply a lesson on the subject of appropriateness. The disciples of John could fittingly mourn because he had been taken from them. Jesus was still with his disciples and they could not appropriately mourn. It will be well to recall the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3: 4, "A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance."

Verse 18. The word for *ruler* is defined by Thayer, "A ruler, commander, chief, leader." The word could hence be applied to various persons, but in this verse it means, "of the officers presiding over the synagogues." For a description of these synagogues and their uses see the comments at Matthew 4: 23. This man was a Jew and had learned enough about the work of Jesus to have the faith that he expressed. He was consistent in his attitude, for if a person has the power to perform other miracles he also can raise the dead. Modern professed miracle workers betray their fraudulent practices by refusing even to try raising the dead, because they know they have no miraculous power.

Verse 19. Jesus had previously showed his ability to work miracles by "absent treatment" (chapter 8: 13). He therefore had some special reason for going to the ruler's house.

Verse 20. On the way to the ruler's house an afflicted woman sought relief from a chronic case of hemorrhage of blood of twelve years' standing. Her only contact with Jesus was that of touching the hem of his garment. There was no literal curative properties in the clothing of the Lord, but the woman thought there was and her faith was manifested by touching it which induced him to favor her.

Verse 21. The woman expressed her faith in words only to herself.

Verse 22. Jesus could read the thoughts of mankind and knew the woman *said within herself*. Turning, he made no mention of her touching his garment, but granted her the cure because of her faith. As usual, the recovery from her disease was immediate.

Verse 23. By this time Jesus had

reached the ruler's house. As he entered he saw the *minstrels* (musicians) and the people *making a noise*. These words are from THORUBEO which Thayer defines at this place, "to wail tumultuously." The instruments that such minstrels used were flutes and they could be made to produce a turbulent "noise."

Verse 24. *Not dead but sleepeth*. The Bible as well as secular compositions uses both figurative and literal language, and the distinction should always be remembered or confusion may result. I shall quote Webster on the two words: "figurative, 2. Expressing one thing in terms normally denoting another with which it may be regarded as analogous [similar]; as figurative language, sense. Literal, 4. Of senses of words, conveying the primary meaning, — opposed to figurative." With this authentic information we may form a convenient and correct formula as follows: "Figurative language is that based on appearances regardless of the facts; literal language is that based on the facts regardless of appearances." Jesus used the figurative because when a person is dead he "appears" to be asleep. The people did not recognize the figure but thought he was speaking literally and hence they *laughed him to scorn*. The last word is not in the original and the statement should merely say that they laughed at him. The same kind of circumstance as to language occurred in the case of Lazarus in John 11: 11 and 14, except that Jesus used both figurative and literal language for his disciples.

Verse 25. This is another instance where Jesus saw fit to make bodily contact in performing the miracle. However, that would not account for it as far as any physical cause was concerned, for the same procedure would not raise the dead if performed by another without the possession of supernatural power.

Verse 26. *Fame* is from the Greek word PHEME and one word in Thayer's definition is, "report." The idea means to express the fact of the extent of the news about the deed, not so much the thought of Jesus from the standpoint of notoriety.

Verse 27. These blind men must have heard this report referred to in the preceding verse. *Son of David* means he was descended from David in the blood line. Many people in Palestine were familiar with the prediction in the law that the Messiah

was to come through that line. Their addressing him with this title not only acknowledged him to be possessed with miraculous power (others had possessed that), but that he was the fulfiller of the law and the prophets.

Verse 28. The blind men did not lose heart but followed Jesus until he had entered another house, and there they came to him for relief. Jesus knew all hearts and was aware of the faith in the minds of these men, but a public profession of faith is one of the acts that puts a man in favorable light before the Lord.

Verse 29. *According to your faith* is said on the same principle as that said to the centurion in chapter 8: 13, "as thou hast believed."

Verse 30. *Eyes were opened.* Thayer explains the last word to mean, "to restore one's sight," hence the passage does not mean their eyelids had been closed.

Verse 31. Did not Jesus know these men would immediately begin to spread the report of their wonderful recovery? They would have been the most unnatural and ungrateful persons in the country to have received such an unspeakably gracious blessing and then not tell anyone about it. But Jesus did not want the public to think he was doing miracles just for the sake of fame. Should anyone accuse him of it, there would be plenty of witnesses to deny the accusation because they had heard him ask the favored ones not to make an ado about it.

Verse 32. *Dumb, possessed with a devil.* The reader should consult the long quotation from the lexicons that is given at chapter 8: 28. It will there be seen that being possessed with a devil did not always produce the same effect on the people. In the case of our present verse it produced dumbness in the man.

Verse 33. The relief sought was granted although the fact is not stated except to take it for granted. It was the man that was dumb, not the devil, for when it was cast out the man spake. *It was never so seen in Israel.* This was the remark of the uninspired multitudes but it was true, for it was not contradicted by even the Pharisees.

Verse 34. The Pharisees could not deny the fact of the casting out of the devil, but tried to rob Jesus of due credit by attributing his power to Satan. This subject will be dealt with in chapter 12: 22-32.

Verse 35. Jesus taught in the syna-

gogues because he could meet the Jews assembled there to hear the reading of the Scriptures. *Gospel of the kingdom* means the good news that the kingdom of heaven was near. Healing every sickness and disease is significant. Modern professed miracle workers will select such ailments that are not apparent so that their failure to effect a cure cannot be known.

Verse 36. The multitudes were worn out by foot travel in their quest for the favors they hoped to get from Jesus. Their condition caused him to be moved with pity, which fulfilled the many predictions that he was to be a man who could "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4: 15).

Verse 37. There were so many people who needed help that neither Jesus nor any other man could be bodily present with all of them. That is what he meant by *harvest plenteous, laborers few.*

Verse 38. The prayer intimated in this verse will call for something definite to be done. Jesus will himself bring about a fulfillment in the next chapter.

## MATTHEW 10

Verse 1. *His twelve disciples.* Jesus had many disciples, but he selected twelve out of the group to be his apostles. In Mark 3: 14 it is stated that these men were designated as the ones who should "be with him." This was to be one of the qualifications required of the original apostles. (See Acts 1: 21, 22.) These men were to be "laborers" sent forth into the harvest as was asked by the Lord in the preceding chapter. Since they were to be separated at least at short intervals from him, they would need to be qualified to back up their work by miracles of various kinds. *Power* is from EXOUSIA which also means "authority." With the appointment that Jesus made they were given the right and ability to execute the mission.

Verses 2-4. There are three accounts or lists of the twelve apostles; here, in Mark and in Luke. The men are the same ones but the names of some of them are not the same, and the three accounts do not give them in the same order. For the purpose of identification I shall number the list as given by Matthew from 1 to 12 consecutively, using it as a schedule for the other two. The list given by Mark 3: 16-19 should be numbered as follows to correspond with these in

Matthew: 1, 3, 4, 2, 5, 6, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12. Number the list in Luke 6: 14-16 as follows: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 7, 9, 11, 10, 12. All of the men with the same number are the same regardless of the name. *Who also betrayed him* is said to distinguish the traitor from the brother of James who has the same name in one list, although the betrayal had not taken place when this was written.

Verse 5. This and the following verses through 5 constitute what is familiarly known as the first commission. It was limited as to the territory or people to whom they were to go. All people who were not full blooded Jews were regarded as Gentiles. Samaritans were distinguished from the Gentiles because they were a mixed race, part Jew and part Gentile, both in their blood and in their religion. This history of their origin is recorded in 2 Kings 17, and explained in volume 2 of this Commentary.

Verse 6. *Lost sheep*. The Jewish nation had been imposed upon and neglected by the leaders for generations, hence they were compared to sheep who were lost in the wilderness, deserted by their shepherd. That is why Jesus had compassion on them and thought of them as being "scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (chapter 9: 36).

Verse 7. At this time the kingdom of heaven was *at hand*, which shows it was near but not yet in existence as a fact. Hence we know that John the Baptist (who was then dead) did not set up the kingdom as some people teach today.

Verse 8. These apostles were able to perform the same kind of miracles that Jesus did, and that included the power to *raise the dead*. Pretended miracle workers today refuse even trying to raise the dead on the ground that the early disciples were restricted to miracles on the living. The present passage disproves their doctrine and exposes their hypocrisy. *Freely received, freely give*. The apostles received all their power from Jesus—it was not a natural trait—hence they should pass its benefits to others.

Verse 9. These metals refer to the coins used in those days. The reason they were not to provide themselves with them will be explained in the next verse.

Verse 10. A *scrip* was a provision bag, used in the same manner as the modern lunch basket. They were also

told not to take any extra clothing besides what they wore as they started. The reason given is that *the workman is worthy of his meat*. They were to be supported by the people among whom they labored. Since those people were Jews, and hence already disposed somewhat in their favor, it would be reasonable to expect some returns for their work. Later, when they were to go among the heathen, and especially as they would be without the immediate support of Jesus, they were to "look out" somewhat for themselves. (See Luke 22: 35-38.)

Verse 11. *Enquire* is from EXETAZO which Thayer defines, "To search out; to examine strictly, inquire." This would require the apostles not merely to ask some person whom they might meet as to what house it would be well to enter, but they were to take whatever means would be necessary to obtain reliable information. After finding a house worthy of their visit they were to confine their work in that town to that house. The reason for this restriction is shown in verse 23.

Verse 12. The enquiry mentioned above would include the added information they would receive through the attitude manifested by the residents of a house upon entering it. A house might be selected temporarily because of some apparently favorable indications, and the test would be concluded after meeting the people on the inside. This would be introduced by an act of courtesy in the form of *salutation*. That word is from ASPAZOMAI and Thayer defines it at this place, "To salute, greet, wish well to."

Verse 13. After the investigation has been completed, if the house is found to be worthy, their *peace* or good wishes was to be bestowed upon it. That would be accompanied with their delivering of a message of good news of the kingdom. If the house was found to be unworthy, their peace was to return to them, and that means their good wishes would be recalled.

Verse 14. A group of citizens that were such as to be regarded as unworthy, would be the kind that would reject the offered blessings of the apostles. *Shake off the dust of your feet*. People traveled on foot and thus picked up the particles of soil on the way. This act was purely a symbolic one, for there would be no contamination in the dust due to the character of the people. It meant that all responsibility for their fate was to be left at their own door, seeing they



would not receive the favors offered them by their good visitors.

Verse 15. *Be more tolerable* in popular language would mean to "stand a better chance." Sodom and Gomorrah were very wicked cities, yet their opportunities for knowing better were far less than those of the cities to be visited by the apostles. These conditions made them less responsible and hence less to answer for. It should be noted that the difference was to be made *in the day of judgment*. That is, in making up the verdict as to the eternal fate of people, the Judge will consider these facts as to their opportunities. After the day of judgment nothing is said about any difference.

Verse 16. If a sheep had to be put into the midst of wolves he would not escape being attacked but by the best kind of behavior. He should not make any unnecessary movement toward one of these beasts for that would attract his attention. Instead, he should go about his search for food or whatever he was seeking, using his good judgment and not doing any harm to the interests of the beasts. The simple lesson was that the apostles were to be discreet in their dealings with the people they met.

Verse 17. The *councils* were the sanhedrins, the highest courts the Jews were permitted to have at that time, and the synagogues were the buildings where they met for religious purposes. (See the description of them at Matthew 4: 23.) The object in forcing the apostles into these places was to persecute them from both the secular and religious standpoints as far as their authority permitted.

Verse 18. Not being satisfied with what they could accomplish in their own assemblies, the Jews would drag the apostles before the rulers of the Roman Empire where they would hope to obtain some decrees against them. *For a testimony* does not mean the persecutors would hail the apostles into those courts for the purpose of hearing the testimony against themselves. Jesus meant that such a circumstance would give them an opportunity thus to speak against them and all the sinful men of the nations.

Verse 19. This verse is in line with the comments on the preceding one, that the calling of the apostles before the various courts was to be turned into an opportunity for speaking the truth. They were not to be worried as to what kind of speeches they were to make, for they would be furnished

with the necessary material for the speech. *In that same hour* indicates that the subject matter would be adapted to the circumstances of the occasion when it arrived.

Verse 20. This verse states the means by which the apostles were to speak, that they would be guided by the Spirit of their Father.

Verse 21. The same opposition to truth that would bring the apostles into the courts, will also divide between the members of families. This prediction is made specifically in Luke 12: 53 where Jesus is speaking of the results of his teaching.

Verse 22. *Hated . . . name's sake*. Because of their loyalty to the name of Jesus, men would hate the apostles wherever they labored. *Endureth to the end* means those who hold out faithful to the end of the persecutions will be saved or divinely blessed.

Verse 23. To endure persecution does not mean that one must needlessly expose himself to possible death. If he can escape without compromising any truth or evading any duty, he should do so and thus be able to do good elsewhere. The apostles would have plenty of places in which to preach, therefore when their work was rejected and their lives endangered in one city, they were to flee into another. Even then they would not have time to visit all the cities in Israel until their period for working would be ended. That was the reason for the restrictions mentioned in verse 11.

Verse 24. The word *above* means the disciple and servant are not any better than their master and lord, or any more entitled to escape persecution than they.

Verse 25. *Enough to be as*. It should be regarded as a favor not to be any more liable to persecution than they. Since the master of the house has already been virtually called Beelzebub (chapter 9: 34), the servants may expect the like treatment.

Verse 26. The persecutors perform their evil deeds often in an underhanded and cowardly manner. But their works will finally be exposed and all false charges disproved.

Verse 27. *Darkness* and *light* are used figuratively, and have the same meaning as the next clause. Jesus taught his apostles many things while they were alone with him, and they were then expected to tell them to others publicly. The *housetops* were flat in those times and used very much in the



same manner as our verandas or sidewalks. (See Deuteronomy 22: 8; Matthew 24: 17; Acts 10: 9.) That would give the apostles an opportunity to preach to the people in a public manner.

Verse 28. Mere human beings can cause us to die physically, but Jesus teaches that they cannot go any further in their work of destruction while someone else can. All this proves that death as we use that term does not end it all, hence the materialists are shown to be teachers of false doctrine. God is the One who can *destroy* (cast) our whole being in *hell*, therefore we should *fear* or respect Him. See the note at chapter 5: 30 for the lexicon explanation of *hell*.

Verse 29. God's care for his creatures is the point in this verse. A sparrow was of such little commercial value that two of them could be bought for a farthing, one of the smallest of coins; yet every time one of them is brought down God sees it.

Verse 30. Before finishing the subject of the sparrow, Jesus makes direct reference to the value of the human being. *Numbered* is from the Greek word ARITHMEO, and Thayer defines it with the one word only that we have in our Authorized Version. Robinson defines it, "To number, to count." The meaning is that each hair is counted or considered.

Verse 31. If God takes such notice of the sparrow which has such small value, He certainly will not overlook man who is destined never to cease his existence.

Verse 32. The fear of persecution might cause some to deny Christ, so this verse is properly placed in the midst of that subject. *Confess* is from HOMOLOGEO, and I shall give Robinson's definition of the word because it is more condensed: "To speak or say together, in common, i. e., the same things; hence to hold the same language, to assent, to accord, to agree with." To confess one, then, means to admit being in agreement with him and endorsing his teaching. Of course Jesus will not need to agree with the teaching of his disciples except to acknowledge that the disciples had accepted the teaching given them by the Lord.

Verse 33. This verse is simply the opposite of the preceding one.

Verse 34. *Peace* is from EIRENE and the primary definition in Thayer's lexicon is, "A state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and

havoc of war." His definition in our verse is, "Peace between individuals, i. e., harmony, concord." Jesus uses the word *peace* in a restricted or figurative sense, and hence the word *sword* is also thus used, and the meaning will be explained in the verses following.

Verse 35. The conditions described in this verse are the opposite of the specific definition of "peace" in the preceding one. These relatives will be set at variance with each other because some of them will accept the teaching of Christ and some will not.

Verse 36. Not only will distant relatives be opposed to each other, but right in a man's household there will be members who will become his personal enemies because he is determined to accept Christ's teaching.

Verse 37. The only way to prevent the above difficulty is to reject the doctrine of Christ. If one does that it proves that he loves his earthly relatives more than he does Christ, in which case he becomes unworthy of his Lord. That will put him in the class mentioned in verse 33 and he will be rejected at the last day.

Verse 38. The *cross* is used figuratively in this place. The original word is defined by Thayer simply, "A cross." However, the same author cites us to some history that explains the language of Jesus as follows: "The judicial usage which compelled those condemned to crucifixion themselves to carry the cross to the place of punishment, gave rise to the proverbial expression [about bearing the cross], which was wont to be used of those who on behalf of God's cause do not hesitate cheerfully and manfully to bear persecutions, troubles, distress,—thus recalling the fate of Christ and the spirit in which he encounters it."

Verse 39. The key word in this verse is *life* which comes from PSUCHE in both cases. The word has been rendered in the Authorized Version by heart 1 time, life 40, mind 3, soul 58. Among the phrases in Thayer's long definition are the following: "Breath; the vital force; life; that in which there is life; the soul; the seat of the feelings, desires, affections; the soul as an essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death." From the above information we may learn that man has an outer and an inner life. Expressed in another way, he has a physical life and an inner life that can be saved spiritually. Both

kinds of life must be considered in this verse which will make it read as follows: "He that findeth [or is working for] his earthly life shall lose his spiritual life." Of course the last half of the verse means just the opposite, but we may extend the language and say that if a man actually loses his earthly or outer life (verse 28) for the sake of Christ, he will gain eternal life.

Verse 40. Jesus and his Father are one in purpose, and both were upholding the apostles who had been chosen. Of necessity, then, the attitude of the people towards any one of the three would count for all of them.

Verse 41. The apostles were classed as prophets under the new order of things under Christ. To receive one of these *in the name of a prophet* means to receive him because he is a prophet of the Lord. *Prophet's reward* means the reward such as a prophet can bestow. The same principle applies to receiving a righteous man for his reward.

Verse 42. These "little ones" are the same disciples referred to in earlier verses of the chapter. Kindness of ever so little a character shown to them is the same as doing so to Jesus and will be rewarded in due time. This is the same lesson that is taught in Matthew 25: 40.

## MATTHEW 11

Verse 1. All the words *it came to pass* are from GINOMAI and that word is used over 400 times in the Greek New Testament. It has a wide range of meanings and has been rendered in the Authorized Version by, be done 62 times, be 249, be made 69, become 42, come 53, come to pass 82, and others. In places where it is rendered 'came to pass' it has the simple meaning; "it happened." *Made an end* means for the time being, for Jesus gave them commandments many times afterward. When the twelve disciples are mentioned it always means the apostles. Having given his apostles their "first commission," Jesus resumed his own work of *teaching* and *preaching*. There is not much difference between these two words when applied to the words of Jesus. The specific meaning of the first is "to instruct," and the other is, "to proclaim or announce."

Verse 2. This is the third time that the imprisonment of John has been referred to without relating its events.

(See chapter 4: 12; 9: 14, 15.) The account of it will be found in chapter 14: 1-12. John sent two of his disciples on an inquiry to Jesus. Let it be noted that it was his own disciples he sent, not those of Jesus who were daily near him and seeing his miracles on the sick and infirm.

Verse 3. I do not believe that John made this inquiry through any weakness of his own faith. That would have been a serious fault after the kind of preaching he had done. His own languishing in prison even should not have put any strain on his faith for he had preached to the people and told them concerning Christ and himself that "He must increase, but I must decrease," so that his persecution would harmonize with his own preaching. And had it been the case that his faith was weakening. Jesus would certainly have said something of a reproving character either to or about him. But he not only did not do that, but the entire speech that he made afterwards at verses 7-14 about John was highly complimentary. I am persuaded that it was for the reassurance of his own disciples who had not been seeing the miracles that Christ's disciples had seen. No doubt John believed that by getting his disciples in the immediate presence of Jesus on the occasion of the inquiry, they might get to see some of those evidences for themselves. This idea is borne out by the account in Luke 7: 21 which says "in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities," etc.

Verse 4. Having "performed" doubtless for the benefit of John's disciples, he sent them back to John with the instruction to show him "again" about these miracles that they had just seen. The language shows that John had previously known about them, hence the report would not bring him any additional news. It might be asked why they should go tell John if the circumstance was just for their benefit. Well, the mission in the mind of John would have been accomplished, but their duty would not have been performed until they reported, and of course Jesus would not interfere with that.

Verse 5. This verse is the same account of the deeds which Luke says Jesus did "in that same hour." They all were things that required miraculous power unless we except the preaching of the gospel to the poor. That would require the miracle of

inspiration but not the physical kind that is usually meant.

Verse 6. *Not be offended* is from SKANDALIZO and Thayer defines it at this place, "To be offended in one," and he explains his definition to mean, "i. e., to see in another what I disapprove of and what hinders me from acknowledging his authority." Jesus was giving so many evidences of the authority in his possession that no doubt should be had as to whether he was the one "that should come," and they need not "look for another."

Verse 7. The importance of John and his work will be the subject of some verses, all of which will show that Jesus had a high regard for him. A *reed* is a tall and slender stem that would be swayed easily by the wind. Such would illustrate a man with little stability and one who could be easily influenced. The question of Jesus implied that John was not that kind of a man.

Verse 8. A man who was accustomed to the soft and luxurious life of royal palaces would be unsuited for work out in the wilderness. But the prophecy had foretold that the forerunner of Jesus was to operate in the wilderness, hence no surprise should be felt over the rough outdoor raiment of John the Baptist.

Verse 9. Coming more specifically to the office of John, the subject of a prophet was mentioned. The ordinary prophet was a man who wrote and/or spoke general predictions that would have widespread fulfillment. John had himself been the fulfiller of other prophecies and hence he was *more than a prophet*.

Verse 10. Jesus makes references to the predictions that had been made of John, which are recorded in Isaiah 40: 3, 4; Malachi 3: 1. The pronouns *I* and *my* stand for God, *thy* and *thee* refer to Christ, and the *messenger* means John the Baptist.

Verse 11. Up to the time of John's birth there had never been a greater prophet than he, for he not only fulfilled other prophecies, but uttered some himself that were of the greatest importance. Notwithstanding, he never was permitted even to see the kingdom of heaven, much less to set up and be "in it." For that reason the least person in that kingdom would be greater than John in the sense of having superior advantages over him, the privileges only possible to those **who are members of the final master-**

piece of Heaven in the salvation of mankind.

Verse 12. This verse is used by some to prove that the kingdom of heaven was in existence in the days of John. There have been several passages under observation that would forbid such a conclusion, hence we should seek for an explanation of the apparent contradiction. An organization is like a house in that it exists in preparation before it does in fact. Passing a site and seeing some digging of soil and unloading of material, a man may say to his friend: "This is our new school house." He would mean it was the school house in preparation. John began to "prepare" a people for Christ and thus it was the kingdom of heaven in preparation. But John's work was opposed even by force and hence it is said that the kingdom suffered violence.

Verse 13. After Malachi completed his book, there was not one word of inspiration from heaven recorded until the voice of John was heard in the wilderness. That is, there was silence until his teaching about the kingdom introduced the new subject.

Verse 14. *Elias* in the New Testament is the form for Elijah in the old. Malachi 4: 5 prophesied that "Elijah the prophet" was to come, which Luke 1: 17 words" in the spirit and power of Elias." John the Baptist was not Elias in person (for he had gone to heaven, 2 Kings 2: 11), but had the same kind of *spirit* (PNEUMA) and *power* (DUNAMIS) as he, and hence he is called by his name.

Verse 15. This is an emphatic call to attention, meaning that all who are blessed with the faculty of perceiving the sense of the divine teaching should use that faculty by attending to what is said.

Verse 16. *Markets* is from AGORA which Thayer defines, "1. any collection of men, congregation, assembly. 2. place where assemblies are held." The same author further explains: "In the New Testament the forum or public place,—where trials are held, Acts 16: 19; and citizens resort, Acts 17: 17; and commodities are exposed for sale." At such a place persons of all ages and classes would gather sometimes only for pastime. *Children* here is from PAIDARION which Thayer defines, "A little boy, a lad." These children were gathered to amuse each other. One set was to "furnish the

music" and the other set was to respond.

Verse 17. But the set that was to respond was hard to please which was used by the Lord to illustrate the people of that generation in their attitude toward John the Baptist and himself. The one set of children first played on their pipes or flutes, but the others would not respond by dancing. Thinking they were not in the mood for jollity, they next set up a wailing sound and the others refused to respond to that, too, showing that they were determined not to be satisfied with anything that was done.

Verse 18. *Neither eating nor drinking.* No man can live without eating and drinking, but John did not eat among the people or from their supplies. He dwelt in the wilderness and lived on locusts and wild honey. *He hath a devil.* This charge is not recorded in any place except in the words of Jesus, but that makes it an established fact. They meant by such an accusation that John was a maniac or "out of his mind" to live as he did. That was the meaning that was attached to such a charge as may be seen in the following passages. John 7: 20; 8: 48, 49, 52.

Verse 19. Jesus did the very opposite as to his social activities and did eat "with publicans and sinners" (chapter 9: 11), yet that did not suit the people so they represented him as a man especially interested in his appetites. *Wisdom is justified of her children.* The last word is from a Greek word that means something that is produced by another. The wisdom that John and Christ showed in their different manner of life will be justified by the good results (the product or children) of their work, which was adapted to the peculiar circumstances in which they moved.

Verse 20. The key to this verse is that *they repented not.* God does not condemn unrighteous persons rashly on the mere fact of their sinfulness, but it is when they have been admonished and refuse to repent. (See Revelation 2: 5, 16; 3: 3.)

Verse 21. These cities first named were not literally as wicked as Tyre and Sidon, but they had received more opportunities for learning better. Those ancient cities would have shown a better spirit in that they would have *repented*, which is the idea of importance in the passage.

Verse 22. Notice the toleration was to be *at the day of judgment*, not afterward. See the comments on this thought at chapter 10: 15.

Verse 23. The same comparison is to be made between the cities of this verse as was made in verse 21. *Exalted unto heaven* is a figure of speech, based on the fact that Jesus was an inhabitant of Capernaum by choice (chapter 4: 13), and hence it had the advantage of his presence. *Hell* is from HADES, and the literal meaning of it is the abode of disembodied spirits after death. However, it is used figuratively in this passage, since its fate is contrasted with what would have been that of Sodom under as favorable opportunity, namely, that *it would have remained until this day.* The prediction of Jesus is that the city will sink into a state of forgetfulness. The prophecy has been fulfilled because the works of reference can only tell of various places that claim to have been its location. Funk and Wagnalls Standard Bible Dictionary says, "Its present site is a matter of dispute," and Smith's Bible Dictionary declares, "It is impossible to locate it with certainty."

Verse 24. For *more tolerable* see the comments on verse 22.

Verse 25. The Pharisees professed to have superior wisdom, yet their hearts had become so hardened with selfishness that the important principles of responsibility had been *hid* from their perception. *Babes* is a figurative term for the honest and humble people who were ready to hear the lessons of truth offered to them.

Verse 26. The endearing term of Father is used here, to which Jesus had joined that of Lord in the preceding verse. Jesus endorsed the work of God with *NAI* which is translated *even so.* Thayer defines it, "Yea, verily, truly, assuredly, even so." The beautiful reason for his endorsement was that it "seemed good in thy sight." The best of reasons for any action of God is that He considers it to be good.

Verse 27. The complete intimacy between Jesus and God is the main point, and he indicates it by using the terms Father and Son. In anticipation of the full delivering of authority to him (chapter 28: 18), he says *all things are delivered.* No person will be permitted to benefit from this great intimacy but the one to whom the Son reveals it, and that will be only the man who accepts the Son.

Verse 28. The willingness of Jesus to share the forementioned blessing with others is indicated by the rest of this chapter. This whole passage is often called Christ's world-wide invitation. To *labor* means to be distressed with the hardships of life, especially those brought about by sin. The kind of rest to be given will be shown next.

Verse 29. *Yoke* is from *zugos*, which has been rendered in the Authorized Version by *yoke* 5 times and *pair of balances* 1. The word is used as an illustration of the obligation that one must accept as a co-worker with Jesus in the service of righteousness. *Learn of me* is consistent with the whole situation, for if a man expects to serve his yokefellow he should desire to know something about him. That learning will reveal that the owner of the yoke is meek and lowly which means he is humble and interested in the welfare of the unfortunate ones of earth. The *rest* is to be for the *soul*, not that a disciple of Jesus will be an idler in the vineyard. But while his body may be bent down with the toils of the service and from its persecutions imposed by the enemy, the inner man will be at peace and rest in the Lord. (See 2 Corinthians 4: 16.)

Verse 30. *Easy* is from a word that means it is not harsh nor galling because it is made correctly. If a yoke for a beast is made to fit his body, he can pull a heavy load without any injury to his shoulders, and that would make a big burden comparatively light. On that principle the service that Christ places upon the shoulders of his disciples is adapted to their needs and abilities, which makes it easy to bear.

## MATTHEW 12

Verse 1. *At that time* is a phrase that does not have any specific meaning as to date. On the same event Mark 2: 23 and Luke 6: 1 word the thought "it came to pass." It is the writer's way of introducing another subject, and if the particular date is important in determining the meaning it must be learned by the context. Corn in the Bible means small grain such as wheat or barley, and *ears of corn* means the heads. Deuteronomy 23: 25 gives the public the right to make a personal use of this grain while in the field, but it was not permitted to cut any of the straw with a sickle.

Verse 2. The Pharisees knew about

this law and hence could not accuse them of trespass. They were so eager to find fault, however, that they charged them with breaking the law of the sabbath.

Verse 3. Two wrongs never make one right, but these Pharisees pretended to have so much respect for David and other of the fathers or ancestors, that it was fair to refer to him in this manner to expose their hypocrisy.

Verse 4. The incident is recorded in 1 Samuel 21 when David was fleeing from Saul. He did not eat of the bread that was then on the table, but that which had been put back for the use of the priests after the table had been supplied with new loaves. While it was intended *only for the priests*, yet an emergency existed which allowed David and his men to eat. Likewise, the disciples were out from home with Jesus and were in need of food, and that justified them in eating in this way because the necessities of life do not constitute a violation of the sabbath law.

Verse 5. To *profane* means to make a secular use of a thing. Numbers 28: 9, 10 shows the priests performing the manual labor of handling an animal in the sacrifice. John 7: 22, 23 tells of a child being circumcised even on the sabbath day. The surgical act of performing circumcision was a manual one and hence technically violated the sabbath law. But it was understood that if an emergency or positive commandment called for some physical act even on the sabbath day, then the regular law as to its observance did not apply or bind the parties to its usual observance.

Verse 6. The temple was holy and it was the place where these manual performances were done. *In this place* means the case of Jesus and his disciples, and that it was of more importance at that time than the sanctity of the sabbath day.

Verse 7. This subject is explained at chapter 9: 13.

Verse 8. The title *Son of man* is used only by Jesus himself, and it applies especially to him because he was born of a member of mankind, as well as having been begotten of God. *Lord of the sabbath* does not imply that he would belittle the law of the holy days. He was with his Father in all of the works of creation, also in the issuing of laws and dispensations for the con-

duct of human beings. Any lawmaking power has the right to alter its own edicts if and when it sees fit to meet an emergency, hence Jesus was within his rights in the above conduct.

Verse 9. The use of the synagogues is explained at Chapter 4: 23. Jesus entered into such a place and there met another opportunity of performing a good work, also of exposing the hypocrisy of the Jews who were present.

Verse 10. Jesus was not long in meeting such an opportunity as referred to in the preceding verse. A hand *withered* means one that had been cut off from obtaining its normal share of moisture and nourishment from the circulation. The condition would be caused by some permanent obstruction that could not be cured by natural means. The account here says *they asked him*, while the accounts of the same event in both Mark 3: 2 and Luke 6: 7 say they *watched him*. There is no contradiction for the last two passages explains the first to mean that they were asking that question in their minds. This conclusion is borne out by the 8th verse of Luke 6 which says, "But he knew their thoughts." The idea is that they had an accusing suspicion of him in their minds that Jesus would probably heal the man, then they could charge him with breaking the sabbath.

Verse 11. But, knowing their thoughts Jesus anticipated their verbal question and asked one himself. The manual labor necessary to lift a sheep out of a pit would be far greater than what is required to heal an afflicted man. Yet these critics would not hesitate performing that kind of deed even on the sabbath day.

Verse 12. The contrast between the value of a man and a sheep is so evident that they could not give Jesus any answer to his question. *Lawful to do well* was putting the case in an unexpected form. It ignored the technical fact of a physical action on the sabbath day and expressed the more important and unanswerable idea of doing well. They could not deny that it would be doing well to relieve a man of an affliction, neither would they presume to say that any time existed when it would be wrong to do well.

Verse 13. The hand only was afflicted, hence the man could use his arm to extend the hand toward Jesus. We have no doubt that Jesus could have healed the man without any ac-

tion on his part, but it has always been a feature of the Lord's dealings to require man to cooperate with Him. This was exhibited as an act of faith on the part of the afflicted man when he reached out his hand and so he received the favor of a cure.

Verse 14. The Pharisees displayed the very depths of wickedness in wanting to destroy Jesus. They could not deny the good done to the afflicted man, neither could they answer the reasoning that Jesus put to them, so the next resort was to destroy him. *Council* is from *SUMBOULION* and does not mean the sanhedrin, but a meeting especially called in the form of a consultation.

Verse 15. Jesus always knew what was going on and prevented the wicked designs of the Pharisees by leaving the scene. He was not intimidated from continuing his good works, for when the multitudes followed him he healed all that were afflicted.

Verse 16. *Not make him known*. See the comments at chapter 9: 30.

Verse 17. *That it might be fulfilled* is explained at chapter 4: 14.

Verse 18. The quotation is from Isaiah 42: 1-3 which is the Old Testament form of Esaias. The pronouns of the first person refer to God. Gentiles means the nations in general. The favor of Christ's work was finally to be given the people of the world.

Verse 19. *Strive* is from *ERIZO* which Thayer defines, "To wrangle, engage in strife." *Cry* is from *KRAUGAZO* and defined, "To cry out, cry aloud." It means that Jesus was not to be a noisy, loud-mouthed person. His voice was not to be heard in *the streets*; he was not to be an ordinary "street preacher."

Verse 20. The figures in this verse are used for the same purpose as the preceding verse, to illustrate the gentleness and quietness with which Jesus was to go about his work. A reed in normal condition is not very resistant, much less if it has been bruised. Jesus would not use enough violence even to break such an article. *Smoking flax* denotes the wick in a candlestick that is being used as a light. Jesus would not use enough violence even to snuff out that imperfect light. He was to maintain that spirit until he had completed his work and was ready to sit upon his throne.

Verse 21. The word *Gentile* comes from different Greek words and they



also are rendered by different words in the Authorized Version. The general meaning of the word is that it refers to the people of the world who are not Jews. The Mosaic system was for the Jews only while that given by Christ was for universal benefit.

Verse 22. Being *possessed with a devil* is explained at chapter 8: 28. It was the man who was rendered blind and dumb, for when the devil was cast out the man spoke.

Verse 23. It was known by many that David was to have a descendant who would be a wonderful man in many respects. When they saw these mighty works being performed by Jesus, they concluded that he was that one predicted by the prophets.

Verse 24. The Pharisees could not deny the fact of the casting out of the devil, for the people were there and saw the evidence of it. They thought of robbing Jesus of his proper credit by reflecting against the power by which he did it. It was known that Beelzebub (Satan) had displayed supernatural power, hence it seemed convenient to reason that he could be working through Jesus, little realizing how their inconsistency would soon be exposed and turned against them.

Verse 25. *Jesus knew their thoughts.* The Pharisees did not always express themselves directly to Jesus because they were too cowardly to do so, but they would make their remarks to the multitude. But they could not escape exposure in that way because the Lord always knows what people are thinking. He therefore made this argument based on the unreasonableness of their statement. For Beelzebub to assist Jesus in casting out the devils, beings in the same wicked moral class as Satan himself, would be like a kingdom engaging in conflict with itself which would certainly bring it to ruin.

Verse 26. Satan is one of the names of Beelzebub and he would be interested in the same conditions that would be favorable to the other devils, and surely would not cooperate with Jesus or any other person in opposing their interests.

Verse 27. Jesus did not admit that these persons really did cast out devils, they just made that claim such as the case in Acts 19: 13. But their position on the subject gave Christ another basis for exposing their inconsistency. They would not admit that their children did their work by the help of Beelzebub, for that would be classing

them as unworthy of respect as they were trying to place Jesus.

Verse 28. Taking for granted, then, that Christ was doing his work by the Spirit of God, it would prove his claim that he was the one to bring the kingdom of God to them.

Verse 29. This verse is another argument against the accusation of the Pharisees. Whoever can enter forcefully into a man's house and plunder him must be stronger than he. Likewise, to overcome Satan and cast him out of his lodgings, one would have to be stronger than he. Therefore, it could not be Satan doing this for that would be making him stronger than himself.

Verse 30. This verse is a conclusive statement of principle on which Jesus regards all intelligent creatures. There is no neutrality between the kingdom of Christ and that of Satan. A man may refuse to be outwardly an advocate of the kingdom of Christ but still wish to profess being in favor of it. But in that case he will be regarded as an active worker in the kingdom of Satan and against that of Christ.

Verse 31. *All manner of sin.* This phrase is so direct and complete that it will not admit a single exception but the one that Jesus makes. (More on this thought in the next verse.) The original word for *blasphemy* is defined by Thayer as follows: "Universally, slander, detraction, speech injurious to another's good name."

Verse 32. Sometimes persons will attempt to formulate a description of some very wicked actions. They may think they have an unanswerable argument when they tell of the vicious things that have been said about Christ, and state that such conduct as that must be the "unpardonable sin" if there ever was any. Yet our present verse is directly against that because it specifically says that speaking against the Son of man "shall be forgiven." It should be noted that the Scriptures in no place calls this the "unpardonable" sin. We do not know that it would be impossible for God to pardon this sin, but we are told plainly in these two verses that *it shall not be forgiven. Neither in this world, neither in the world to come.* The original word for *world* is AION and one meaning of it is "age." When Jesus spoke this passage the Jewish age was in force, and the Christian age was to come. The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven under



either dispensation. This sin will be described in detail at Mark 3: 30. To say that the world to come means the life in heaven would imply that some sins will be forgiven at that time which we know is not true. All sin, whether "pardonable" or not will have to have been forgiven before the judgment day for any person to enter into that life. At that time the status of every intelligent being will be as described in Revelation 22: 11.

Verse 33. *Make* is said in the sense of describe or consider or classify. The clause means that as a bad tree cannot produce good fruit, so the good work of casting out a devil could not be done by a wicked character like Satan.

Verse 34. *Generation of vipers* is defined by Thayer, "Offspring of vipers," and the same author explains his definition thus: "Addressed to cunning, malignant, wicked men." On the principle that a corrupt tree cannot produce good fruit, these wicked Pharisees are unable to bring forth good fruit in the way of righteous words or deeds. It is under that rule of reasoning that Jesus accuses them of having an evil heart, because the words of their mouth were evil against the Holy Spirit.

Verse 35. See the preceding verse for the explanation of this.

Verse 36. The original for *idle* is ARGOS, and its proper or literal meaning is to be worthless or meaningless. Such a word not only cannot convey any good impression to the hearer, but it might be mistaken for something the speaker never intended. To make that use of language would therefore be wrong and will have to be accounted for.

Verse 37. See the comments at chapter 11: 19 on the word *justified*, to learn in what sense a man may be justified by his words. It should be noted that the text does not say a man will be justified by his words *only*.

Verse 38. The word *sign* is from SEMEION which has been rendered in the Authorized Version by miracle 22 times, sign 51, token 1, wonder 3. Jesus worked miracles for a testimony to those who were honestly disposed toward information, but there is no case on record where he did it to gratify mere curiosity. These Jews had just witnessed the casting out of the devil, and that should have convinced them that Jesus was a good man, to say the least. This present re-

quest was in the nature of a challenge, and it also was in line with the leading characteristic of their race (1 Corinthians 1: 22).

Verse 39. For the reasons expressed in the preceding paragraph, Jesus called them an evil generation and refused to perform any miracle at that time. However, he was willing to stake his reputation as a prophet on an event yet to come.

Verse 40. Just as certainly as Jonas spent three days and three nights within the whale, so the Son of man will spend that much time in the heart or inner part of the earth. The subject has two significant parts as it pertains to the test that Jesus proposed. If he spends a stipulated time only in the earth, then he must come forth unharmed as Jonas did from the whale, which would prove him to be a man under the care of God. Likewise, if and when that occurs it will prove Jesus to have been a true prophet at the time he spoke this to the Jews.

Verse 41. We know that Christ will be the only one to sit on the throne of judgment at the last day, hence all apparent statements to the contrary are to be understood in some accommodative sense. The word *condemn* is from KATAKBINO which Thayer defines, "b. by one's good example to render another's wickedness the more evident and censurable." If the men of Nineveh were willing to repent at the preaching of a man like Jonas, there will be no excuse for people who have had that of the Son of man given them.

Verse 42. The lesson of responsibility based upon opportunity is that in the preceding verse and is the same in this. If as notable a person as a queen would come so far to hear the wisdom of a man, surely the people should show greater interest in the wisdom of such a person as Jesus. This woman is called the *queen of the south* because the country of Sheba was a great distance from Judea and was south as to direction and in such a trip signified that a great territory was represented.

Verse 43. Jesus made some arguments based on the practices and beliefs of the people without necessarily endorsing those beliefs. (See comments at verse 27). The Jews believed that the devils haunted the deserts, but made raids into the places of civilization to torment human beings. One of those devils was cast out of a man and it went back to its regular dwell-

ing place (according to the Jewish notion) but could not find a satisfactory spot to rest.

Verses 44, 45. A man's body is likened to a house and hence the clearing out of the demon is called the sweeping and cleaning of a house. The demon saw the place he had just been occupying in such an inviting condition that he wanted to share it with his special friends and took them with him. Logically, then, that man was in worse condition than he was the first time. Let the reader remember that Jesus is only using this notion of the Jews for an illustration, not that he endorses it, and it serves as a likening of what was to come to their race. The things used for the story existed only in the belief of the Jews, but the thing it was used to illustrate was to come as an actual experience upon the nation. The Jews at first accepted the Gospel and furnished many recruits, but the nation as a whole turned against it and became unbelievers. Their city was finally destroyed and they became the object of scorn in the eyes of the peoples of the world.

Verse 46. *Brethren* is from ADELPHOS which Thayer defines as follows: "1. A brother (whether born of the same two parents, or only of the same father or the same mother): Matthew 1: 2; 4: 18 and often. That 'the brethren of Jesus,' Matthew 12: 46, 47; 13: 55; Mark 6: 3 (in the last two passages also sisters); Luke 8: 19; John 2: 12; 7: 3; Acts 1: 14; Galatians 1: 19; 1 Corinthians 9: 5, are neither sons of Joseph by a wife before Mary (which is the account in the Apocryphal Gospels), nor cousins, the children of Alphaeus or Cleophas (i. e., Clopas) and Mary, a sister of the mother of Jesus (the current opinion among the doctors of the church since Jerome and Augustine), according to that use of language by which ADELPHOS like the Hebrew . . . denotes any blood-relation or kinsman, but own brothers, born after Jesus, is clear principally from Matthew 1: 25; Luke 2: 7 . . . where, had Mary borne no other children after Jesus, instead of HUION PROTOKON, the expression HUION MONOGENE would have been used, as well as from Acts 1: 14; John 7: 5, where the Lord's brethren are distinguished from the apostles." For the convenience of the reader and to save him from confusion, I will state that this quotation from the lexicon shows that Jesus had **fleshly brothers who were the children**

of Joseph and Mary, and that Mary did not remain a virgin after the birth of Jesus as the Romanists teach.

Verse 47. Jesus never disrespected his mother but treated her as any man should the woman who had given him birth, but the people needed the lesson that is set down here, and it was for their benefit that he spoke.

Verse 48. The question does not indicate that Jesus intended to ignore his family relations, or that he did not recognize them; it was not asked for that purpose.

Verse 49. After the aforesaid remark, Jesus pointed toward his disciples as an answer to his own question. Since the persons included in the gesture were men and women, while he named three relationships regarding family ties, we know he had some figurative sense in mind for the terms.

Verse 50. The only proper relationship that can be produced by obedience to the will of God is that of brethren. Thus the conclusion is necessary that no earthly relative should be regarded as near to one as our fellowship with Christ.

### MATTHEW 13

Verse 1. The conversation reported at the close of the preceding chapter took place in a house. It was on that same day that Jesus went out and sat down on the shore.

Verse 2. A person as interesting as Jesus would not be left to himself very long if the people know where he is, so we are told that *great multitudes* came unto him. The second word is from a Greek original that means the populace or people in general, and that alone would indicate a goodly number of men and women. Then the other word emphasizes the expression so that we understand that a very large audience came together. Jesus wished to be heard by the multitude and that suggested also that he be seen. For this twofold purpose he entered a ship where he could be in the position of a public speaker with his audience on the shore that doubtless was elevated rearward on the order of an inclined floor of an auditorium.

Verse 3. The literal meaning of the original for *parable* is, "A placing of one thing by the side of another."—Thayer. As to the results of such a placing, or the reason or reasons why it is done, that has to be determined

by the context in each case. (See the comments at verse 11.) Caution should be observed in the study of the parables not to make them mean more than was intended. Jesus spoke about thirty parables all pertaining to the plan of salvation that he intended to set up among men. Surely that many would not have been necessary just for the sake of emphasis. The conclusion is that different parts of that plan were considered in the various parables. No one illustration could be large enough to cover all the phases of the one plan of salvation that was to be given to the world. As a result of the above truths, there may be some features of one parable that do not fit in with the Gospel plan at all. That is because the whole story had to be told in order to make it understood at the point where it does apply. Then another parable will be given that will cover the points in its application where the other one seemed not to be fitting. The parables of our Lord were drawn both from nature and art, and from the customs of man in the conduct of his public and private affairs in all of life's relations.

Verse 4. In the days before machinery, seed was sown by the system known as broadcasting, even as such seeding is done sometimes today. In such a work a man could not have full control of the direction of the seed and hence did not always deposit it where it might have been desired. *Way side* is from *HODOS* which Thayer defines, "A traveled way." In such a place the surface would be packed down and hard so that the seeds could not find any opening to bury themselves in the soil. Being thus exposed, they would soon catch the eyes of the birds and be devoured.

Verse 5. Stony ground is that where small rocks are mixed with the surface of the soil, thereby limiting the amount of earth at any given spot. *Forthwith* means "*immediately*," and the seed sprang up in that way because it ran out of material for growth in the ground, hence it had to come up into the open where it could feed on air and sunlight. But having been thus impelled upward prematurely, the root part of the plant was incomplete and therefore was weak.

Verse 6. Sunlight is necessary for plant life and growth, but other elements must accompany it; it must have a "balanced diet." This plant was deprived of the moisture and

mineral food that should have been supplied in the ground. Not having such necessities, the one article in the menu (that of the sun) was too much and the result was fatal.

Verse 7. *Thorn* is from *AKANTHA* which Thayer defines, "A thorn, bramble-bush, brier." It is a plant that grows near the ground in the nature of coarse grass. That is why the soldiers could plait it into a wreath or crown to place on the head of Jesus (Matthew 27: 29). The seeds of this plant were not visible at the time of the sower's work, but when the growing season came they sprang up with all other vegetation. Being more rugged and wild than the good seed deposited by the farmer, they soon choked out all the other plants just as weeds will often smother out the good grass today.

Verse 8. The *good ground* would be that where the three forementioned obstacles were not present. Yet with all that advantage it should be noted that the crop was not the same in every place as to the amount, which will be explained at verse 23.

Verse 9. See comments for this statement at chapter 11: 15.

Verse 10. Attention is called to the fact that the question the disciples asked pertained to *them*, the multitude.

Verse 11. A familiar statement that may be heard on the parables is as follows: "Jesus spoke in parables in order to make his teaching easier to be understood by the people." Such a statement is exactly opposite of the truth, for this very verse says, in answer to the question of the disciples, that it was *not given* to the multitudes to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. It may be replied that it was because this knowledge of the mysteries was not possessed by the multitudes that the parables were given to explain them. But that is not correct, for even the disciples did not understand the meaning of the parables until Jesus had them to himself and explained them. A natural question now is in regard to the present day. May we speak of the parables as a means of making the subject plainer in our teaching of the subjects of the New Testament? The answer is that we may, and the reason is that we have both the illustration (the parable) and the thing illustrated with us which is the church and the Gospel, and we can show the comparison. The kingdom had not yet been started

when Jesus spoke to the multitudes and hence it was not time to introduce them to all of its mysteries or unrevealed truths.

Verse 12. Jesus had told the disciples that it was not given to the multitudes to know the mysteries of the kingdom, and in this verse he begins to tell them why. We would think it impossible to take from a man something that he hath not, hence we must look for some figurative or accommodative use of this language. A useful illustration of the subject is in John 15: 2. Every branch had been given an opportunity to bear increase but it did not do so. Hence the branch itself was to be removed from the vine. The multitudes had been given the words of Moses and the prophets, yet they refused to see in them the beauties of the kingdom of heaven in predicted form. Now it was certainly just to keep them still in the dark as to those beauties (mysteries) until such time as the whole world would have a full description of the system in detail.

Verse 13. The first clause of this verse is similar in meaning to verse 11. *Seeing see not*, etc., means that they were given the ability and opportunity to see and hear but they would not use them.

Verse 14. Failing to use the means of information within their reach is the subject of this verse. The prophecy referred to is in Isaiah 6: 9, 10.

Verse 15. The condition described is with reference to their moral or spiritual situation, but the natural organs are named by way of illustration. Gross means "To make fat; to make stupid (to render the soul dull or callous)." And this was not an accident that came to them, for the verse states the motive they had for bringing on the condition. It was done deliberately for fear they might hear some truth that would expose their evil deeds and later lead them into the service of Christ.

Verse 16. The disciples were willing to use their opportunities for obtaining information and hence were pronounced as blessed of the Lord. That was why they were admitted into the explanation of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, while the multitudes were not permitted to receive anything but the unexplained parables.

Verse 17. This verse sounds as if some others who were righteous were in the same class as these multitudes in that they had not seen or heard either. The apparent difficulty is ex-

plained by going back to the time when the Lord did not expect the people to have a full knowledge of the divine plan. But even the things they could have discerned by proper attention to what was revealed, the Pharisees had failed to grasp because of their hardness of heart. *Which ye see* and *which ye hear* is spoken in prospect as if Jesus said, "which ye are going to hear," meaning the explanation of the parables which comes in the next and following verses.

Verse 18. This verse invites the disciples to listen and they will hear the inner meaning of some of the "mysteries" that had not been told even to the prophets.

Verse 19. Failure to understand might not always be a fault, yet we know it is used as one in this case. The original word is SUNIEMI, and its general meaning is, "to set or bring together," and the definition is explained to mean, "to put the perception and the thing perceived together; to set or join together in the mind." It denotes that the hearer will give careful attention to what is said so as to arrive at the thought intended by the speaker. Of course a person will not understand what is said to him if he refuses to give it due consideration. As a further result, that person will soon forget all that was said to him and the thought will be lost as was the seed that fell on the hard or beaten ground.

Verses 20, 21. *Anon* is from a word that is defined "immediately" in Thayer's lexicon. It does not indicate that one can be too ready to accept the word, but he may be influenced more by enthusiasm than serious consideration. Such a person may be sincere in his motives, but he has failed to consider that the same word that he received with so much joy for the present, will need to be retained as firmly in the future. He will have to endure opposition from the enemies because of his devotion to the truth, and when that comes if he yields to the foe he becomes *offended* which means to stumble and reject the word he had heard so joyfully.

Verse 22. See the comments at verse 7 for a description of these thorns. *Care* is from MERIMNA and Thayer's simple definition is, "Care, anxiety," and he explains his definition to mean, "anxiety about things pertaining to this earthly life." Robinson defines it, "Care, anxiety, anxious

thought," and his comment on it is, "as dividing up and distracting the mind." It means to be so concerned about the things of worldly interest that one neglects to give proper attention to spiritual matters. *Deceitfulness of riches* means the false pleasures that one may have by means of his wealth. He should not be thus deceived because "the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Corinthians 7: 31).

Verse 23. The good ground is the heart or mind that *understands*, and this word is explained at verse 8. The hundred, sixty and thirty fold is different in amount only. It is all good wheat, but not all men even in the good class have the same ability or capacity for producing results. The Lord is not concerned about the amount of work a man accomplishes in the vineyard just so he does what he can.

Verse 24. The reader should first see the comments at verse 3 about the right use of parables. The one now before us is for a different purpose from the one just concluded. The main point in this is to show what is going to take place at the judgment day. But in order to explain why that will be done it is necessary to tell what was going on in the world before that. In relating those details the Lord mentions some things that do not represent the activities within the church. The items of the parable will first be given and the explanation will follow a little later in the chapter. It starts with the simple fact that a man sowed *good seed* in his field as no man would sow any other kind in his own territory.

Verse 25. *While men slept* means the time when mankind was usually asleep, and that would be the most likely time for an enemy to get in his evil work. *Tares* is from ZIZANION, and Thayer's description of it is, "A kind of darnel, bastard wheat, resembling wheat except that the grains are black," and Robinson says of it, "At first having a close resemblance to them" [good grain]. A common idea is that the tares were growing in such a way that the roots of them and the wheat were entwined so that a man could not pull up the one without uprooting the other. This is a mistake, and instead, it is the resemblance that is considered and which will be considered also below.

Verse 26. There was enough difference as the growing proceeded that

some informed servants recognized the presence of the tares and were puzzled about it.

Verse 27. The servants asked their master for an explanation.

Verse 28. He explained that an enemy had done it. The natural conclusion with the servants was that he would want them to gather the tares out of the field.

Verse 29. The close resemblance between the tares and the wheat might cause some of the servants to mistake the one for the other while the plants were not fully matured.

Verse 30. By harvest time the growth will be completed and hence no harm can be done to the wheat even if it is pulled up. Also by that time the distinction will be clearer so that the reapers whose experience guides them in the harvesting work will be able to make the separation between the things that should not remain together.

Verse 31. The parable of the tares was dropped for the present because the multitudes were still present and the explanation was not to be for them. Before dismissing them Jesus spoke two shorter parables, one of which was about the mustard seed.

Verse 32. The point in this parable is the extent to which the kingdom of heaven was to grow from a very small beginning. The variety of mustard that is considered is the garden kind or that which is cultivated. The word is from SINAPI and Thayer describes the plant as follows: "The name of a plant which in oriental countries grows from a very small seed and attains to the height of 'a tree'—ten feet or more." The birds of the air need not be thought as being the largest kind for the text does not require such a conclusion. There are many varieties of small birds that could easily perch in the branches of a plant ten feet high. The kingdom of heaven started in one city and with only a few hundred members at most, but it spread until it became universal and people of all nations sought spiritual shelter in it.

Verse 33. The next parable is contained in this one verse. The meaning is somewhat the same as the preceding one but from a different standpoint. The nature of leaven is to work its way through the mixture in which it has been deposited. If nothing inter-

feres with its operation it will continue until it converts all of the material into a nature like itself. The leaven of the Gospel was deposited at Jerusalem and it spread its influence until it reached to the extremities of "the whole" world or was carried out according to the great commission (Romans 10: 18; Colossians 1: 23).

Verse 34. *Without a parable* applies to the multitudes at such times as Jesus was using to talk about the kingdom of heaven (verse 11).

Verse 35. In speaking the parables Jesus fulfilled a prophecy spoken by David in Psalms 78: 2. *World* is from *KOSMOS* and means the people of the earth.

Verse 36. The first verse of this chapter states that Jesus went out of the house where he spoke to the multitudes. He now dismissed them and went back into the house, and when the disciples came to him they asked for an explanation of the tares and wheat.

Verse 37. The sower is the Son of man or Jesus the Christ.

Verse 38. The field is the *world* (mankind in general) and not the church as some people teach. *Good seed are the children* means the good seed (which is the divine truth) produces children for the kingdom of heaven. The tares are the children or product of evil teaching. These evil men are people of the world who would not accept the kingdom of heaven and the Lord's teaching.

Verse 39. *Devil* is from *DIABOLOS* which means Satan or Beelzebub. He has always been an enemy of righteousness and has used his influence to keep men out of the kingdom of the Lord. *World* in this and the following verse is from *AION* and means age; specifically the age of the earth. Angels have been instruments of God since the human family has existed. They are said to be the reapers, and the same prediction is made of their part in the last harvest as recorded in Revelation 14: 14-20.

Verse 40. All refuse material that accumulates in the course of a growing season generally is disposed of at the time of harvest. Thus it will be done with the tares at the harvest time which will be at the end of the world.

Verse 41. One meaning of the word for *kingdom* is, "The territory sub-

ject to the rule of a king," and Jesus said (chapter 28: 18) that "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." This shows that the whole inhabited earth is the kingdom of Christ in this broad sense. Hence the wicked characters in the world will be taken out of it at the last day and cast into the fire.

Verse 42. *Wailing and gnashing of teeth*. The subject of endless punishment will be fully considered at chapter 25: 46. It will be stated here however, that the phrase in italics indicates a condition of conscious torment.

Verse 43. *Then* is an adverb of time and refers to the condition just after the harvest which is at the end of the world. In 1 Corinthians 15: 24 Paul says that Jesus will give up his kingdom when he comes and deliver it to his Father. That is why this verse says that the righteous will then shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Verse 44. The lesson in this parable is the value of salvation, and hence the sacrifice that one should make willingly in order to obtain it. The treasure represents the salvation which Jesus brought and deposited in the same field that is a part of the parable of the tares. When a man "finds" that salvation through hearing the Gospel and desires to obtain it, he will devote all his time and talents for that purpose.

Verse 45. This parable teaches the same lesson as the preceding one on the value of salvation. One word in the definition for *goodly* is, "genuine." There are many things that appear as pearls but are only imitation. This merchant was not wishing anything but the real and hence he was *seeking* for it.

Verse 46. Salvation also is something for which a man should seek (chapter 6: 33), and he should be just as careful to find the genuine and not some imitation. Like the parable, there are systems made by man that have the appearance of being good, like "simulated pearls," but upon examination will be found to be false. And there is no reason for anyone to be deceived for the Scriptures will make it very clear as to what the salvation from God is like. When a man finds it he must devote his entire attention to it in order to retain this *pearl of great price*.

Verse 47. When a man casts a net



into the water he does not know what may be taken because he cannot see the fish until the net is drawn out. Likewise, no man can read the mind of another, and when he offers the Gospel to the world he cannot see the hearts of those who profess to accept it.

Verse 48. After the fishing time is over the net will be drawn out and taken to the shore where the good fish can be separated from the others. In like manner the Gospel fish net will be spread out on the shore of the judgment. Then all those persons who have deceived their fellow men will be exposed before the eye of the great Judge.

Verse 49. As in the parable of the tares, the angels are represented as the servants of the Lord in separating the good from the bad at the end of the world.

Verse 50. This verse takes the same comments as verse 42.

Verse 51. Jesus was still talking to his disciples, the multitudes having been dismissed (verse 36), hence it was appropriate for him to ask them if they understood what had been said. We recall that the disciples who were following Jesus had shown enough sincere attention to the things that had been recorded to have formed a commendable idea of the matters, which entitled them to the explanation of the "mysteries" of the kingdom. But some of the teaching of Jesus was more literal or direct so that honest minds like these would be able to grasp it without special explanation. Hence we are not surprised that they answered his question with *yea Lord*.

Verse 52. One important key word in this verse is *scribe*, and I shall give some information from the writings of learned authors upon the work of this special class of men. The word is from GRAMMATEUS and Thayer's general definition of it is, "1. A clerk, scribe, especially a public scribe, secretary, recorder . . . 2. In the Bible, a man learned in the sacred writings, an interpreter, teacher." This definition of the word is based on the special work of these men. On this subject Robinson in his lexicon says the following: "The scribes had the charge of transcribing the sacred books; whence naturally arose their office of interpreting difficult passages, and deciding in cases which grew out of the ceremonial law. Their influence was of course great, and many of them were members of

the Sanhedrin." As further consideration of this subject, we observe that mechanical means of recording literature were not in existence in Biblical times, hence the copies of the law had to be made by hand. Such frequent contact with the sacred writings naturally made these men familiar with the text, and they could be relied on to quote from it when occasion called for it. With this knowledge of the Old Testament to begin with, after a scribe received the instruction belonging to the kingdom of heaven he would be qualified to offer the treasures of sacred knowledge from both the *New and Old Testaments*.

Verse 53. *Finished these parables* refers to the ones in this chapter.

Verse 54. Jesus was in Galilee all the time he was teaching these parables and hence he was already in his *own country* with reference to the province. Thus the term has specific reference to the vicinity of Nazareth where he had been brought up. Having lived there in his boyhood and early manhood, the people were acquainted with his humble life and hence they were astonished when they heard his teaching and saw his works.

Verse 55. The people were acquainted with much of the family history of Jesus and never knew of any training he had gone through to give him the talents he was now displaying. There could be no question about his general standing as a citizen for they knew all of these nearest relatives and could mention them by name. For comments on the term *brethren* see those at chapter 12: 46.

Verse 56. The Romanists insist that Mary always remained a virgin, and that when his "brethren" are mentioned it means his disciples since they are known by the name of brethren also. That is true, but when so used it includes all of the disciples regardless of sex. If that had been the meaning intended in verse 55 there would have been no reason to mention *sisters* in this verse for they would have been included in the other.

Verse 57. *Offended* is from SKANDALIZO and Thayer's definition at this place is, "To find occasion of stumbling," and he explains his definition to mean, "To see in another what hinders me from acknowledging his authority." Jesus uttered the familiar proverb about a prophet's honor in his own country. People are inclined to



have more respect for a teacher who is unknown to them than for their acquaintances. Jesus did not state any reason for this and hence I am unable to explain it.

Verse 58. Pretended miracle workers try to explain their failure at performing certain miracles on the ground of the unbelief of the multitude. They will refer to such passages as the present verse and try to hide behind it. They ignore the point that Jesus did do some of his works in spite of the unbelief of the multitude. The reason their unbelief restricted his mighty works so that he did not *many* of them was their unbelief which rendered them unworthy. (See chapter 7: 6 and Mark 6: 5.)

#### MATTHEW 14

Verse 1. The Herodian family was a prominent one in the days of Christ and the early years of the church. Its head was Herod the Great who had several sons by a number of wives. The name "Herod" became a family title and the various members had personal names that made distinctions between them. The different members of the Herodian family held offices of greater or lesser importance in Palestine and figured largely in the affairs of the church as well as the nation. The one in this verse was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. *Tetrarch* originally meant "ruler of a fourth part of some territory," but finally came to mean one who had the rulership over a small part of any district to which he might be assigned.

Verse 2. Hearing of the fame of Jesus, Herod thought he would have to make some kind of an explanation of it since he could not deny the facts. He doubtless had a sort of guilty feeling over the way he had treated John the Baptist and it gave him this weird-like impression. He explained the matter to his servants by saying that John had come back to life and was doing these mighty works in the person of Jesus. However, this return to life on earth to which Herod referred was not a part of the general resurrection that is taught in the Scriptures, but to a belief that many people had that is described in the histories and other works of reference as "transmigration."

I shall quote Webster's definition of the word: "Act or instance of transmigration; specifically, the passing of the soul at death into another body or

successive bodily forms, either human or animal; also (*often transmigration of souls*), the doctrine that souls so pass." We know that such a doctrine did not originate with any true teacher from God, although many of His professed people took up with it. The idea of repeated transmigrations was based on the theory of Brahma, the Hindu name of the Supreme Being. I shall quote from Myers Ancient History (pages 99, 100) on this matter: "A chief doctrine of Brahmanism is that all life, apart from Brahma, is evil, is travail and sorrow. . . . The only way to redemption from evil lies in communion with and final absorption with Brahma. But this return to Brahma is dependent upon the soul's purification, for no impure soul can be reabsorbed into Brahma. . . . As only a few in each generation reach the goal, it follows that the great majority of men must be born again, and yet again, until all evil has been purged away from the soul and eternal repose is found in Brahma. He who lives a virtuous life is at death born into some higher caste, and thus he advances towards the longed-for end. The evil man, however, is born into a lower caste, or perhaps his soul enters some unclean animal. This doctrine of rebirth is known as the transmigration of souls." While this doctrine originated with the heathen teachers, it had become widely known in the time of Christ and the apostles and was reflected even in the opinions of some of the Jews. That made it necessary for our Saviour and his apostles to deal with it (Matthew 16: 14; Mark 8: 28; Hebrews 6: 2), hence the reader should make himself familiar with this paragraph for future reference when the subject may be mentioned.

Verse 3. The imprisonment and slaying of John the Baptist had taken place several months before this but nothing was stated on the subject at the time. Now the remark of Herod being recorded by Matthew brought up the subject which might leave the reader in confusion, hence he interrupts his story and goes back to tell that incident, beginning with this verse and running through verse 12. The cause of the trouble was the marriage of Herod with the wife of his brother Philip I.

Verse 4. John the Baptist told Herod that it was unlawful for him to have her. That would have been a true accusation for more than one reason, but

the most outstanding one was the fact that his brother Philip was still living.

Verse 5. Herod would have slain John in spite work, but was kept from it by the force of public opinion which held John in high esteem as a prophet of God. Besides, Herod might not personally have been inclined so harshly towards him if he had not been influenced by his wicked wife. Mark 6: 19 tells us that she quarreled with John and would have put him to death had she been able to do so.

Verse 6. But an unexpected event gave her the opportunity she wanted to accomplish her wicked purpose that was prompted by an adulterous heart. Herod celebrated his birthday by a banquet to which he invited the high men of rank in his estate. The text does not state that his program included the following performance, but for some reason the daughter of his wife by a previous marriage danced before him and his guests. The word for *dance* is ORCHEOMAI which Thayer defines simply, "to dance." Robinson defines it, "to lift up, to raise aloft; to leap, to dance." Young's definition is, "to lift up (the feet), dance." There is no intimation of any display of musical rhythm, but on the other hand from the definitions of the word in the lexicons, and also from the effects her dancing had on the adulterous mind of Herod, the conclusion is clear that the girl exposed herself before the eyes of that lustful king. It says it *pleased Herod*, and that pleasure overcame his better judgment.

Verse 7. Herod was so overcome by the effect of the girl's appearance before his eyes that he seems to have lost his reason. He told her with an oath and without any stipulation that she could have whatever she asked, and Mark's account says that Herod extended his offer to include half of his kingdom.

Verse 8. *Before instructed of her mother*. Herodias knew the nature of Herod, in that he was willing to marry her while her husband was living. Doubtless it was her suggestion that caused the girl to dance before the group and display her charms in the way she did. She further prompted her daughter what to do in case her dancing produced the effect she anticipated. Consequently she asked for the head of John the Baptist in a *charger* which means a large dish. The wicked woman would not risk merely request-

ing the death of John for she would never be sure that it was carried out. But if his head is severed from his body and brought to her she would know the deed was done.

Verse 9. The king was not expecting such a request as this and he was doubtless genuinely sorry because of it. But he had bound his promise with an oath in the knowledge of his royal guests, and pride as well as a false notion of the sacredness of an oath, though a sinful one, prevailed over his personal sentiments so that he commanded the wish to be granted and gave orders to the executioner to behead the righteous man.

Verse 10. John was in prison and the beheading was done there.

Verse 11. The head of John the Baptist was placed in a dish and brought to the damsel. The head of that forerunner of Christ, the one who had been foretold by the prophets, the man whose preaching aroused the multitudes of all Judea, was severed from his body because he dared to rebuke a lustful man and woman for their wickedness. Of course the damsel was true to the orders of her mother and delivered this reward of her own immoral actions to the vicious woman waiting for it.

Verse 12. *His disciples* means the disciples of John. They got possession of his body and buried it, then went and told Jesus because they knew that he would be concerned.

Verse 13. *When Jesus heard it* means what the disciples of John had just reported. Hence the whole narrative including the works of Jesus goes back to the time of the death of John and proceeds again from there. Jesus wished some privacy or at least some relief from the presence of the crowds after receiving the sad news, and hence he went into a ship and journeyed to a place not much inhabited. Notwithstanding, the people came in throngs on foot to follow him.

Verse 14. The patience and love of Jesus knew no bounds. He went out to this place for a little relaxation from the press of the multitudes, but when they came on after him his compassion asserted itself and he healed their sick.

Verse 15. It was getting on towards the close of day and the crowds were lingering in the presence of Jesus. Thinking they might not realize the hour and thus would let darkness find

them without provisions, the disciples suggested that Jesus send them into the villages for food.

Verse 16. This situation provided the occasion of one of the most noted of the miracles of Jesus. The faith of the disciples was to be tested, also they were to receive a lesson on the subject of cooperation; Jesus told them to feed the people.

Verse 17. The reply of the disciples indicates they had no miraculous power, and that they thought they were expected to feed the multitudes from their own private stores. Hence they explained how scant was their supply of food.

Verse 18. The amount of supplies the disciples had would not have been even a taste for the crowds, but the lesson was that whatever man has, whether little or much, must be contributed to the cause if he expects the Lord to make the project effective.

Verse 19. *Grass* is mentioned which indicates that the place was not without moisture even though it was called a desert. The word means a territory that was not occupied generally by people. It would be more orderly to serve a large crowd if sitting than while standing. Looking up to heaven was a gesture of recognition of the source of the good things at hand. *Blessed* is from *EULOGEO* and Thayer's first definition is, "to praise, celebrate with praises." The clause means that Jesus took the bread in his hands before serving, then looked up toward heaven and "Praised God from whom all blessings flow." It was orderly to pass the bread out through the hands of the disciples, besides it made them partakers with Jesus in the service of the hour.

Verse 20. Even had the whole multitude been able each person to have tasted of the amount of bread the disciples had, it would not have been a miracle although a remarkable thing. They not only tasted but ate—not only ate but were filled; which could not have been accomplished naturally with five loaves. And to show that *filled* was not figurative there were twelve baskets full of fragments taken up. Why bother with these scraps when it was so easy to obtain bread with Jesus with them? John 6: 12 reports the same event and adds the reason given by Jesus was "that nothing be lost."

Verse 21. It may have been only a coincidence that there was one loaf to

each thousand men, but by leaving out the enumeration of the women and children that figure of pro rata was obtained.

Verse 22. Jesus *constrained* or commanded his disciples to enter a ship and go across the sea before him. He wished to dismiss the multitudes which would require some considerable time because of the large number of them.

Verse 23. Before joining the disciples Jesus retired to a mountain to pray, so that by the time evening had come he was alone. That would be a very suitable situation for prayer with his Father.

Verse 24. In the meantime a storm had come up and the disciples were having difficulty with their ship. *Wind was contrary* means the wind was blowing against them or in the opposite direction to that in which they wished to row. Evidently Jesus was expecting such a condition and selected the occasion for one of his great miracles.

Verse 25. The *fourth watch* was the same as our three o'clock in the morning, as the twelve hours of the night were divided into four divisions of three hours each, beginning at six in the evening. Thus the hour that Jesus went toward the disciples was still in darkness although not very far from the time of daylight.

Verse 26. Peering out over the sea in the darkness the disciples saw an object on the surface of the water coming toward them. While it was still in the darkness of night, yet it was not total darkness, so that an object could be discerned but not very distinctly. The sight startled them and they cried out with fear because they thought it was a spirit. Ordinarily a spirit is not supposed to be something that can be seen, but the original for this spirit is *PHANTASMA* which means a phantom or something that appears to exist but which belongs to the unseen world. There is enough of the superstitious in most people to make them have a weird or uneasy feeling in the presence of such an appearance, hence the disciples cried out in their fright.

Verse 27. They did not recognize Jesus from his appearance but did know his voice, hence the Lord spoke to let them realize who was coming to them.

Verse 28. We are not told the motive that Peter had in wanting to walk on the water. If it was from a desire to make a show, the Lord certainly knew how to humble him.

Verse 29. Peter actually got started walking on the surface of the sea and hence had evidence that it was Jesus who was dealing with him miraculously. This should have reassured him that no harm need come to him.

Verse 30. The power of the Lord is not affected by any apparent difficulties. Peter had started on his journey over the sea and had evidence that Jesus was there. He also should have remembered the previous event (chapter 8:23-27) in which the sea was calmed by the Lord's voice. But his human nature got the better of him and he began to sink. Of course Jesus would not let his disciple perish, but he used the occasion to rebuke him by allowing him to think he was going to sink and perish.

Verse 31. The Lord chastised him at the same time he was rescuing him by accusing him with having little faith. A good lesson may be obtained for all of us from this event. It does not require as much faith to appear firm when everything is favorable. The test comes when it appears that things are against us, and it is then that we should think of the words of Paul in Romans 8:31, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Verse 32. Whether it was the mere presence of Jesus in the ship that quieted the storm we are not told, or that he commanded it to be so as he did in the case referred to above. What we know is that when he entered the vessel the wind ceased.

Verse 33. The circumstance had a deep effect on the men in the ship and caused them to *worship* Jesus. See the comments on chapter 2:2 for the meaning of that word. The worship in this case took the form of a confession that Jesus is the Son of God. That was one purpose of the miracles that Jesus performed according to John 20:30, 31, and not merely to gratify the curiosity of idle or disinterested people.

Verse 34. The storm being over, the ship resumed its journey and landed on the western shore of Galilee at the country of Gennesaret.

Verse 35. The fame of Jesus had become known in this territory. After his arrival the sick were sent for and

brought into the presence of the man who was known as the healer of all kinds of diseases.

Verse 36. Touching the garment of Jesus had no curative effect in itself, but the act showed their faith and they were healed as a reward for it, on the same principle as that of the woman in chapter 9:20-22.

## MATTHEW 15

Verse 1. See the comments on chapter 13:52 for a description of the scribes. The Pharisees were a leading sect of the Jews who made great pretensions of righteousness. They, with the scribes, were enemies of Jesus and frequently tried to get him into trouble with either the Sanhedrin or the Romans.

Verse 2. The Pharisees and others who stood with them doctrinally placed great stress on the traditions of those who were the elders or forefathers in the Mosaic system. In most cases they held these traditions to be of more importance than the written law of Moses, and where there was a disagreement between them they perverted the written law in favor of the tradition. One of such rules had to do with washing the hands at certain specified times. This was not done as a necessary act of sanitation but was one of the self-imposed rituals of the elders among the Jews. The disciples were busy with the important affairs of their work with Jesus and did not observe such ceremonies. But the critics thought they had a cause for accusation against them and came to Jesus with their complaint.

Verse 3. It was a much worse fault to set the traditions of the elders against the positive requirements of the Mosaic law than it was to ignore the customs of the fathers, and that was the accusation that Jesus made against these critics.

Verse 4. The law of Moses plainly required a man to honor his parents (Exodus 20:12). The word *honor* in the commandment to which Jesus referred comes from the Hebrew word *KABED* which Strong defines, "In a good sense (numerous, rich, honorable): causatively [as a cause], to make wealthy." The definition of the word which Moses wrote, as well as the reasoning of Jesus on the subject, shows that honoring one's parents included the financial support of them also.

Verse 5. A man's parents are in need of the good things of life and look to their son for help. But he puts them off with the excuse that the money that he would otherwise have spent on them so that they would have *profited* by it, had been "earmarked" for the Lord's treasury. This was hypocrisy on their part for they never carried out their claim of devoting the money to the cause of the Lord. Besides, the law never intended that money should be put into the public treasury that was needed for dependents.

Verse 6. The Pharisees taught that if a man withheld his support of his parents on the pretense of giving it to the Lord, he would be exempt from the commandment in Exodus 20:12, thus putting their tradition above the law.

Verse 7. A hypocrite is one who professes to be what he knows he is not. See the comments at chapter 6:2 for the lexicon definition and other accounts of the word. *Well did Esaias prophecy* means the prophet did well in predicting these characters.

Verse 8. Generally speaking, the lips and mouth pertain to the fleshly or outer man, and the heart refers to the inner man. The Biblical heart is the occasion of so much confusion among religious teachers that I shall give the reader a description of it as will be taken from the lexicon definition of original Greek. With one exception (PSUCHE in Ephesians 6:6) the word in the New Testament is from KARDIA and I shall quote Thayers definitions (the part in italics) for it in its various applications: "1. a. the vigor and sense of physical life. b. the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors. Specifically of the understanding, the faculty and seat of intelligence. Of the soul so far forth as it is affected and stirred in a bad way or good, or of the soul as the seat of the sensibilities, affections, emotions, desires, appetites, passions. 3. used of the middle or central or inmost part of any thing, even though inanimate." This Greek word occurs 158 times in the New Testament and is not rendered by any term but "heart" in the Authorized Version. From the extended definition as well as by the various connections in which it is used, it is plain that when "heart" is not used figuratively it means the mind or intelligence of man. This ex-

plains how a person's mouth or lips can say one thing while the heart does not really mean it, and thus he is acting hypocritically.

Verse 9. *Worship* is from SEBOMAI which Thayer defines, "to revere, to worship." The people of whom Jesus was speaking professed to have great respect for him and that is the sense in which he said they worshiped him. *In vain* is defined "fruitlessly" and means that the pretended reverence they had for Jesus would not bring them any favor from him as long as they taught the doctrine of human authority instead of that of the man they claimed to honor but whose teaching they were rejecting.

Verse 10. *He called the multitude.* This was not for the purpose of explaining a parable of the church, but to show them why he had accused them of inconsistency in their undue emphasis on washing the hands.

Verse 11. Jesus was not ignoring the need for cleanliness, but was teaching the lesson of putting moral and spiritual matters above the physical. If a man permits a particle of dirt to enter his mouth and into the stomach it cannot do him any harm for the system will take care of it. Jesus will explain this subject to his disciples a few verses farther on in the chapter.

Verse 12. *Were offended* denotes that they stumbled at the saying of Jesus, and because of it they were unwilling to recognize him as having the wisdom or authority to make a declaration upon the conduct of others.

Verse 13. Jesus was willing to stake his right to speak and the correctness of what he said on the outcome. Every plant not planted by his Father was to be rooted up. If the work of Jesus was not authorized of God, then it would not stand and he would be exposed as an impostor. On the other hand, if his work holds fast it will prove him to have been a true teacher and one over whom the Pharisees had no reason to stumble. This statement had special reference to the church or kingdom that he was about to set up, for in Ezekiel 34:29 a "plant" is predicted and the context there (verses 20-31) plainly shows that it has reference to the church.

Verse 14. *Let them alone* is defined by Thayer, "c. to let go, let alone, let be; to disregard." It means for the disciples not to lose any time or spend any efforts on them as it would be use-

less. A further reason for ignoring them was the danger involved in following or associating with them. They were blind leaders and those who would follow them are as blind as they. That would mean that all of them would share the same fate and fall into the ditch or go astray.

Verse 15. Peter called the teaching of Jesus about washing and eating a parable. However, it was not a parable of the kingdom (chapter 13: 11), hence Jesus had called the multitudes to him to give that lesson. But it was somewhat indirect or figurative and the apostles did not understand it.

Verse 16. The expression of Jesus sounds as if he were surprised at the lack of understanding shown by his disciples, when he was supposed to know all about man and not to be surprised at anything. That is not the point, but he said this to them as a mild rebuke for their slowness in thinking out the matter.

Verse 17. Mere filth that is not in the nature of disease germs goes through the stomach and other digestive organs and is separated from food particles the same as the other waste matter, and it is then discharged from the body without having done it any harm. A draught corresponds with our modern sanitary stool.

Verse 18. The things that come *out of the mouth* originate in the heart, and if they are evil it indicates an impure and a defiled heart. (See chapter 12: 34.)

Verse 19. See again the definition of the heart at verse 8 and it will be observed why the things mentioned in this verse are said to come from it.

Verse 20. Certainly no man can entertain an interest in murder and the other things named in verse 19 and not be defiled. They affect his character while the soil passing from the hands into the mouth has no relation to that.

Verse 21. *Coasts* means region and Jesus went to that surrounding these cities.

Verse 22. *Woman of Canaan* is indefinite because all the land west of the Jordan was generally known as Canaan, and there were both Jews and Gentiles living there. However, the term was used to designate this woman as outside the class recognized as Jews. This woman not only recognized Jesus as Lord but also as a son of

David. The latter term was specific and meant that she believed him to be the descendant of David according to the prophets, for many of the Gentiles were acquainted with the Old Testament. This woman's daughter was possessed with a devil which is explained at chapter 8: 28.

Verse 23. Jesus had his own way of trying out the faith of those who sought favors of him, and he used it here by appearing to ignore the woman. But she was not to be discouraged by this seeming indifference, for she continued crying after him until the disciples became impatient and asked Jesus to send her away.

Verse 24. Instead of directly doing as the disciples requested, Jesus merely gave the woman to understand that she was not in the class to which he was sent. See the comments at chapter 10: 6 for the meaning of *lost sheep*.

Verse 25. This did not entirely discourage the woman for she repeated her plea accompanied with an attitude of worship towards Jesus.

Verse 26. Jesus made his answer much more in the nature of an argument in figurative form. *Dog* is from KUNARION which Thayer defines, "a little dog." No special disrespect was intended to her personally by this term, for it was commonly known that the Jews were regarded as God's children, and the Gentiles would logically be in a lower class. Besides, Jesus knew the heart of the woman whose faith he was drawing out, and purposely furnished her the illustration by which she could make one of the most touching appeals I have ever known. With all this in view, he compared the Jews to God's children, the favors he was bestowing on them to the bread provided by the Father, and the Gentiles to the little dogs that might be playing at the feet of their master.

Verse 27. The woman was not discouraged nor even hurt at the Lord's comparison. Instead, she accepted the classification as a good basis for her persistence. After the children have been abundantly fed, the scraps are generally gathered up and given to the dogs. She would be satisfied with a temporal favor from Jesus in the healing of her daughter, even though it would be like the crumbs compared with the loaves of spiritual blessings that he was daily bestowing on his disciples.



Verse 28. *Great is thy faith.* This was indicated by her patience or endurance. She had full confidence at the start in the ability of Jesus to perform her request, but her persistence showed her faith in his willingness to do so if she did not give up too soon. In this she has set an example for those of us who profess to believe in the goodness and power of God. We are often too apt to "lose heart" and cease looking to the Lord for his grace. This is the subject of one of the parables of Jesus recorded in Luke 18: 1-8. The faith of the Canaanite woman was rewarded with the immediate recovery of her daughter.

Verse 29. The region of Tyre and Sidon where Jesus was teaching and working bordered on the Sea of Galilee but was an area a mile wide and several miles long. He now came nearer to the sea and went up into a mountain where he received the multitudes.

Verse 30. As usual Jesus had a great following because his fame had gone all over the country. Afflicted people who were unable to travel alone were brought to Jesus and cast down at his feet. This word might give us an unfavorable impression as it seems to indicate an act of impatience if not indifference. It is from the Greek word *ΒΗΙΡΤΟ* and Thayer's definition at this place is the simple phrase, "to set down." He then explains his definition to mean, "(with the suggestion of haste and want of care), of those who laid their sick at the feet of Jesus, leaving them at his disposal without a doubt that he could heal them." They were not disappointed for the text says *and he healed them.*

Verse 31. Again Jesus proved his ability to work all kinds of miracles and did not have to select his cases as do the pretenders of miracle-working today. A remarkable thing about the event is that *they glorified the God of Israel.* Everyone knew that an ordinary man could not accomplish such wonderful works, hence they attributed it to the *God of Israel* (not any of the gods of the Gentiles). That was the main purpose Jesus had in performing his great deeds according to John 20: 30, 31.

Verse 32. Once more the compassion of Jesus asserted itself in behalf of the multitude whose interest had kept them in his presence for three days. Of course there would be no oppor-

nity for procuring food out there in that mountainous area. *Fasting* is from *ΝΕΣΤΙΣ* and Thayer's definition is, "fasting, not having eaten." The mere fact of being without food during the time necessary to reach a market would not cause them to *faint in the way*, but they would already be weak, having not eaten for three days.

Verse 33. It is strange the disciples seem to have forgotten the event of chapter 14: 15-21; probably they had not forgotten it but took that way of asking Jesus to take care of the case in hand as he did the other time.

Verse 34. The supply of food in the possession of the disciples was nothing compared with the needs of the multitude, but Jesus was still inclined to require his disciples to have a part in the good work.

Verse 35. For the sake of orderliness the multitudes were told to sit down.

Verse 36. In this case Jesus *gave thanks*, in the instance of chapter 14: 19 he "blessed" which was virtually the same meaning as was explained at that place.

Verse 37. *And were filled.* See the comments on this phrase at chapter 14: 20, also John 6: 12 as to why the scraps were taken up.

Verse 38. No disrespect was intended by the writer in giving the number of men and only an indefinite reference to the women and children. In old times it was the custom to list families and other groups of human beings according to the men only.

Verse 39. The multitudes were given sufficient nourishment to overcome the effects of their three-day fast and were dismissed. Magdala was a city on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee and it is sometimes mentioned by other names.

## MATTHEW 16

Verse 1. A full description of these two sects will be given at verse 12. They were opposed to each other in various respects, but often forgot their differences and united in opposing Christ or his apostles. Their motive in coming to Jesus here was to tempt or test him. Had they been honestly seeking for evidence of the might and wisdom of the Lord he would have granted the request, but he never performed a miracle to gratify mere curiosity or to meet a challenge.

Verse 2. Jesus referred them to



their own study of the heaven in which they professed to know how to figure out the future by the present indications.

Verse 3. *The signs of the times* were as clearly portrayed in the Scriptures as were the weather signs, yet they pretended there was nothing on record to indicate the work and purpose of Jesus. Since this was only a pretended necessity for additional evidence Jesus called them hypocrites.

Verse 4. This subject of the sign of Jonas is explained at chapter 12: 40.

Verse 5. The preceding verse says that Jesus departed from the multitude. He and his disciples had been in the vicinity of Magdala which is on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. They then crossed over the sea, and verses later in the chapter show that they were to spend some time in an uninhabited territory where there would be no opportunity to purchase provisions. Jesus knew the disciples had forgotten to attend to that matter (Mark 8: 14 says they had one loaf), and decided to use the fact as a basis for a test of their faith in him as one who could and would care for them.

Verse 6. Without mentioning bread directly, Jesus warned them against the *leaven* of the Pharisees and Sadducees whom they knew to be two evil groups of Jews.

Verse 7. There is no logical connection between literal leaven and these sects as far as the disciples were considering it. But a guilty conscience sometimes interprets an unrelated statement as a rebuke and that is what they did about Christ's remark.

Verse 8. Jesus accused his disciples of small faith because they were disturbed over as trival a matter as a shortage of bread. Had there been no visible prospects for food at all for the present, their general knowledge of past experiences should have given them confidence that nothing serious would be allowed to happen to them.

Verses 9, 10. It seems that man needs to have his faith renewed from time to time on account of his unreliable memory. Moses had seen all the mighty works of God in Egypt and the Red Sea, yet when he was told that nation was to be given an abundance of flesh to eat he wondered where the Lord would get it. (See Numbers 11: 18-23.)

Verse 11. Jesus needed only to state

that he was not considering bread when he used the term *leaven*, for the disciples then concluded rightly that he had used it figuratively.

Verse 12. The disciples made the correct interpretation of the comparison and applied it to the *doctrine* or teaching of those two sects. I shall give the description of these prominent groups of the Jews as may be learned from reliable works of reference. "What I would now explain is this, that the Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers which are not written in the law of Moses; and for that reason it is that the Sadducees reject them, and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory [binding] which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our forefathers." Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book 13, Chapter 10, Section 6.

"In addition to the books of the Old Testament, the Pharisees recognized in oral traditions a standard of belief and life. They sought for distinction and praise by the observance of external rites and by the outward forms of piety, such as ablutions, fastings, prayers, and alms-giving; and, comparatively negligent of genuine piety, they prided themselves on their fancied good works. . . . A Sadducee, a member of the party of the Sadducees, who, distinguished for birth, wealth, and official position, and not averse to the favor of the Herod family and of the Romans, hated the common people, were the opponents of the Pharisees, and rejecting tradition acknowledged the authority of the Old Testament alone in matters pertaining to faith and morals; they denied not only the resurrection of the body, but also the immortality of the soul and future retribution, as well as the existence of angels and spirits." These last two quotations about the Pharisees and Sadducees are the historical remarks of Thayer in his Greek lexicon, the original words being PHARISAIOS and SADDUKAIOS. Having given an extended account of these two sects for the information of the reader, I shall summarize it by saying that the false doctrine of the Pharisees was that the tradition of the fathers was of equal authority with the written Scriptures. That of the Sadducees was that there would be no resurrection of the body and consequently no future life.

Verse 13. Jesus and his disciples having landed on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee they journeyed northward until they came into the *coasts* or vicinity of Caesarea Philippi. This is to be distinguished from the Caesarea that was on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The place got its name by the desire of Herod Philip who wished to honor Caesar and himself both by a twofold name. That was accomplished by the name which we have just read as the double name includes both Caesar and Philip. Jesus concluded it was time to introduce the most serious phase of his own authority and purposes. He opened the subject by inquiring about the current opinions concerning himself; not of his doings but of his identity. He had been out among the people long enough for them to have formed some kind of ideas as to his real standing as a public teacher. He could not have asked this question for information for he already knew what was in man (John 2: 24, 25). Hence it was asked to bring out the contrast that should be existing between the opinions of the common people and that of the men who had been chosen to be the apostles after Jesus was ready to leave this world.

Verse 14. All of the persons named had died, hence the reference to them in connection with Jesus was on the theory of the transmigration of souls. See the explanation of that subject with the comments on chapter 14: 2.

Verse 15. Jesus then came out with the climax of the conversation. The answer to the question he was going to ask would be read by future generations. The apostles had been with him and seen his work and heard his teaching. It remained to be shown by the answer whether that association had made any better impression on them than was expressed by the common people. Jesus asked *them* (all of the apostles) for their estimate of him regarding his identity.

Verse 16. Jesus had addressed his question to all of the apostles, but it would not be expected that all of them would speak at once in answering the question. Peter was generally the spokesman for the others, and if what he said did not agree with them they would have made it known. The reply that Peter gave to the question embraced all that Jesus claimed to be. The word *Christ* means "anointed" and as it applied in this case it meant

that Jesus was *the* one that God would recognize as a ruler in the kingdom. *The Son* is equivalent to the phrase "only begotten Son" in John 3: 16. God has numerous sons from a spiritual standpoint, but Jesus is the only one who is the offspring of the person of God. The *living* God signifies that he is not the offspring of the idol gods for they are lifeless objects.

Verse 17. Bar-jona means son of Jona, and the full name is given to distinguish him from others who were named Simon. *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it.* Peter could not have received this information from any human source, hence it had to come from the Father in the way of divine inspiration.

Verse 18. I do not believe it is necessary to trouble ourselves about a grammatical basis for arguments that are frequently made over the original Greek words for *Peter* and *rock*. It is true that they are different from each other to some extent. But if we should consider them only in their literal meaning they are similar. But we know that Jesus did not mean to tell Peter that he was to be "the rock" on which the church would be built. It is also clear from other passages that Peter is in the foundation of the church but so are all the apostles (Ephesians 2: 20). Then we cannot single out this one apostle and say that he is the foundation rock as the Romanists teach. The rock on which Christ intended to build his church was his own divinity that was embodied in the confession that Peter had just made. Much questioning also is done as to the antecedent of *it*; but that, too, is needless for we know that Jesus meant everything that would be necessary to accomplish his purpose of building his church. *Gate* is from PULE and Thayer defines it, "access of entrance into any state." *Hell* is from HADES and means the state or place of the soul after death. Jesus knew he must die and that his soul would go through this entrance to Hades, but that those gates would not be able to retain him, for he would come out from within them into life again so that he could perfect his work of setting up his church.

Verse 19. *Keys* is from KLEIS which Thayer defines, "a key. Since the keeper of the keys has the power to open and to shut, the word is figuratively used in the New Testament to denote power and authority of various

kinds." There is nothing significant about the plural form of the word, but it is a part of the same figure that Thayer uses in his definition. The man who has charge of a building carries a group of keys, hence the word is used in the plural form; literally there is but one key to the kingdom of heaven and that is obedience to the requirements of the Gospel. Jesus was speaking directly to Peter because he was the spokesman for all the rest. We know it was not meant that Peter alone was to have the keys, for Jesus said virtually the same thing in John 20: 21-23 and he was talking to all of the apostles. *Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven*, etc. This is Christ's own comment on the *keys of the kingdom*. He intended to send the Spirit upon the apostles to "guide them into all truth" (John 16: 13), so that they would make no mistake in telling men what they must do to be saved. Being thus inspired, their teaching to men would be according to the will of heaven and hence it would be ratified there. *Whatsoever thou shalt loose*, etc., means the like thought on the negative side of the subject. No one has the right to bind any doctrine on men that was not required by the apostles. While on this verse it should be observed that in this conversation with the apostles, Jesus speaks of the church and the kingdom of heaven in the same sense, showing that no distinction is to be made today, for the kingdom is afterwards spoken of as being in existence (Matthew 26: 29; Romans 14: 17; Colossians 1: 13; 4: 11; 1 Thessalonians 2: 12; Hebrews 12: 28; Revelation 1: 9).

Verse 20. A command similar to this one is in chapter 17: 9, except that a certain time was set before which the disciples were not to make the specific announcement of the divinity of Christ. The crowning fact that was to prove that great claim of Jesus was to be his resurrection after three days. The public ministry for the general teaching about the kingdom that was at hand was drawing nearer to its close, and Jesus did not wish to release this fundamental truth unto the world prematurely.

Verse 21. See the remarks of the preceding paragraph about the progress of the ministry of Jesus. Since it was in that stage, it was time to begin preparing the minds of the apostles for the tragic events not far

ahead, including the death and resurrection of their Lord with whom they had been so closely associated in the work.

Verse 22. The idea that Peter had in this impulsive speech was that something certainly would be done to prevent the thing Jesus had predicted. His own action recorded in John 18: 10 indicated that he was willing to help prevent the tragedy.

Verse 23. The primary meaning of Satan is "adversary," and when Peter intimated that he would try to prevent the thing that Jesus declared would be done he became an adversary to him. *Savourest* means to be thinking about some subject of personal interest, and in this case it was the idea of an earthly kingdom that occupied the mind of Peter. He wanted such a kingdom to be set up because of what it would mean to him, and certainly such an event would require the living presence of the king. A part of Thayer's definition of the original for *offence* is, "an impediment placed in the way." Were Peter to have his wishes carried out in this matter it would have been an impediment to the great plan that Jesus had in view.

Verse 24. *After* is from *opiso* and Thayer explains the word at this place to mean, "to follow any one as a guide, to be his disciple or follower." *Deny* is from *APARNEOMAI* which Thayer defines, "to deny," and explains the definition to mean in this passage, "to forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and one's own interests." Figures of speech are based upon some literal fact. *Take up his cross* is a reference to the rule of compelling a condemned man to carry his own cross to the place of execution. If the victim became unable to bear it alone, someone would be made to take up the rear part and help carry it, walking after the other to the place of execution. (See Luke 23: 26.) The present verse means that a professed follower of Jesus must be willing to help bear the trials and self-denials that were practiced by him.

Verse 25. This verse is explained at chapter 10: 39.

Verse 26. *World* and *soul* are used in the same sense as the two kinds of life in the preceding verse. The thought is that the things of this world are altogether not as valuable as the soul of man, and that if one were to exchange his soul to gain this world it would be a transaction without profit.

Verse 27. It has been nineteen centuries since Jesus uttered the words of this verse, but he wished his disciples to have something to look for as a reward for their sacrificing everything necessary to save their soul and gain that which is worth more than all this world. They were expected to rely on the promise of Christ because of their faith in him, because the reward would not come in their lifetime.

Verse 28. The preceding verse gives the promise of reward for faithful work at the second coming of Christ. As a guarantee of the surety of that promise, Jesus told them that some of them in his presence would live to see the great event that was to prepare men for that last day of accounts. They were promised the honor of seeing the Son of man in another manner; he was to be seen spiritually in his kingdom. We incidentally may obtain an important truth by this statement. The kingdom was set up in the time of those apostles, and that disproves the heresy taught by some today that the kingdom is still in the future.

### MATTHEW 17

Verse 1. *After six days* means after the last conversation Jesus had with his disciples. There seems to have been a peculiar nearness between Jesus and these three apostles, for they are mentioned as a sort of trio a number of times (Mark 5: 37; 14: 33). Jesus selected them to be witnesses of the unusual scene that he knew was coming, and took them with him into a high mountain.

Verse 2. *Transfigured* is from *ΜΕΤΑΜΟΡΦΩΟ* which Thayer defines, "To change into another form, to transfigure, transform," and he comments on the word as follows: "To be resplendent with divine brightness; used of the change of moral character for the better." It is the word for "transformed" in Romans 12: 2, and for "changed" in 2 Corinthians 3: 18. It is the source of our English word "metamorphosis" which Webster defines, "2. A striking alteration in appearance, character, or circumstances." With all this authoritative information before us, we understand the meaning of our verse is that Jesus underwent a change in his appearance so that his face shone, and even his raiment was glistening white. However, his body was not replaced literally, and the change in his appearance did not

prevent the apostles from recognizing him.

Verse 3. We have a very interesting assemblage here. The apostles had not died and hence represented the fleshly state. Elias (Elijah) had been transferred to heaven without death and represented the eternal state. Moses had died and represented the intermediate state. There were good men from each of the three states of intelligent creatures, thus representing the whole universe of beings responsible to God for their past or present conduct. A person in the flesh cannot see spiritual beings ordinarily, but God can adapt all circumstances to whatever purpose the case demands. He wished the apostles to see these men from the intermediate and eternal states and performed such miraculous changes as were necessary. That was done either upon the eyes of the apostles or the form of the other men.

Verse 4. In Mark's account of this event he states that Peter "wist not [knew not] what to say." He was overcome by the scene, yet had a feeling of reverence towards the three great persons in the group; Jesus, Moses and Elias, and proposed providing a suitable housing place that they might be retained longer.

Verse 5. This announcement was like the one that God made at the baptism of Jesus with the additional word *hear ye him*. (See chapter 3: 17.) At the time of his baptism Jesus had not performed any of his great works nor done any of his teaching. He now was nearing the close of his earthly work and the apostles were supposed to be ready for an authoritative declaration concerning the rank and position of him with whom they had been so closely associated. The setting of the conversation was significant due to the importance of the main characters in the scene. Moses was the lawgiver of the Old Testament system and Elias (Elijah) was one of the great prophets who lived under that system. Those men were not to be regarded as the authorities under whom the apostles will be expected to work, but instead they were to take their instructions from the Son in whom the Father was well pleased; they were to *hear him*.

Verse 6. *Afraid* is from *ΦΟΒΕΟ* and Thayer says the word in this place means, "to be startled by strange sights or occurrences." The appearance of the two men from the other states did

not overcome them, but this mighty voice and its announcement struck them with a feeling of awe so that they prostrated themselves on the ground.

Verse 7. Jesus assured his apostles that nothing would harm them.

Verse 8. The purpose of the great scene was accomplished and Moses and Elias returned to their proper places. *They saw no man.* The last two words are from OUDEN which Strong defines, "Not even one, i. e., none, nobody, nothing." This indefinite form of speech was appropriate in view of the unusual manner in which Moses and Elias had appeared, for they were evidently not just like other men except to such a degree that they could be recognized by the apostles.

Verse 9. For the explanation of this verse see the comments at chapter 16: 20.

Verse 10. The disciples mistook the Elias spoken of by the scribes to be that prophet literally, who was to announce the mission and divinity of Jesus. Now they were forbidden to make a like statement until after that divinity has been proved by the resurrection. If they were not allowed to make statements on that subject, why should Elias be permitted to do so.

Verse 11. *Shall come* is future tense in form but Jesus was only quoting the prophecy of Malachi. To *restore* means to bring about a reformation in the lives of the people of Israel (Malachi 4: 6; Luke 1: 16, 17).

Verse 12. Jesus then explained that it was not in person that Elias was to come. In other words, by describing the treatment that "Elias" received from the people who did not recognize his place in God's plan, the disciples perceived the point of the Lord.

Verse 13. The disciples did the proper kind of reasoning and it gave them the correct conclusion, and was a demonstration of the thoughts offered at chapter 13: 16, 17.

Verse 14. The act of the man kneeling down to Jesus was one form of worship. The reader should see the various meanings of the word in the comments at chapter 2: 2.

Verse 15. Being possessed with a devil did not affect all people alike. That could be caused by either of two things; the peculiar condition of the victim at the time or the kind of devil that had entered into him. In

the present case it caused the son to become a *lunatick* according to the Authorized Version. This word is from SELENIAZOMAI which Thayer defines, "To be moon-struck; to be epileptic," and in commenting on the word he says, "epilepsy being supposed to return and increase with the increase of the moon." Of course the people named the condition according to their theories as to the causes of disease, not knowing that it was the presence of the devil.

Verse 16. *Could not cure him* denotes the belief that the son had some serious disease as was explained in the preceding verse. It is true that the being possessed with a devil would sometimes result in a disease, in which case the casting out of the devil would be equivalent to performing a cure.

Verse 17. This criticism concerning the lack of faith was meant for the disciples as we shall see at verse 20. *How long*, etc., was an expression of displeasure at the amount of long-suffering he was called upon to show towards them. Then addressing the father of the child he told him to bring the afflicted one to him.

Verse 18. When anyone is being dealt with because of some condition brought on by his own sin, he is the person who is rebuked. Being possessed with a devil was not a sin but an affliction, hence the Lord rebuked the devil. The child was cured *from that very hour* which was unlike the performances of professed miracle workers today who insist on having "plenty of time."

Verse 19. When Jesus chose his twelve apostles and sent them out to preach, he told them also to perform certain miracles. Among them was that of casting out devils (chapter 10: 8), hence it was natural for them to be concerned about their failure.

Verse 20. The charge of their *unbelief* means their faith did not go far enough; it did not grow as it should. Jesus then used the mustard grain for an illustration of that subject. It will help us to grasp the meaning of the comparison if we consider the same event as recorded in Luke 17: 6. The apostles asked the Lord to "increase" their faith, and in answer to the request he made the comparison to the grain of mustard seed. We also should remember the comparison between this grain and the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 13: 31, 32. It is clear, there-

fore, that the reference to the mustard seed was on the principle of growth. Their faith should have grown instead of their expecting Jesus to "increase" it by some special means independent of their own part in the matter. Of course a grain of mustard seed or any other seed could not grow had not the Creator furnished it with the materials necessary for that growth in the earth and air. And likewise, Jesus had given abundance of evidence by his miracles and teaching to have caused them to have increase in their faith to the point where they could not only cast out this devil, but also remove a mountain if such needed to be done.

Verse 21. *Howbeit* is an obsolete word meaning "nevertheless," indicating that some special point is about to be made. *This kind* is from GENOS which Thayer defines, "The aggregate of many individuals, of the same nature, sort, species." *Goeth out* is from EKPOREUOMAI which Thayer defines, "To go forth, go out, depart." He explains the definition to mean, "demons, when expelled, are said to go out (to wit from the human body): Matthew 17: 21." Robinson defines the word, "To go out of, to go or come forth," and he explains it to mean, "Spoken of demons, absolutely Matthew 17: 21." We do not know why this class of devils required the special performance of prayer and fasting before yielding and coming out of human beings. We are certain, however, that at some time Jesus had given his apostles the instructions that should have induced them to show the faith necessary to be patient and use the weapons of prayer and fasting against the devil. Their faith had not led them that far and hence they failed to overcome the devil.

Verse 22. Before leaving Galilee Jesus predicted his betrayal.

Verse 23. Not only was Jesus to be turned over to wicked men of the world, but he was to be killed and raised the third day. The apostles were *exceeding sorry* because of the prediction of his death, and that sorrow seemed to blind their minds to the other prediction of his resurrection. When the sad affair had taken place the disciples showed such forgetfulness as we may learn in Luke 24: 13-27.

Verse 24. Capernaum was a city of Galilee and the chosen residence of Jesus (chapter 4: 13). When he and

his apostles entered this city Peter was approached by those who collected the tax that was for the upkeep of the temple. Robinson says this was "the yearly tribute to the temple paid by every Jew," hence Peter was asked if his master did not pay that tax.

Verse 25. Peter answered in the affirmative and intended to speak to Jesus about it. But when he came into the house where Jesus was he *prevented him* which means he could read his mind and hence anticipated what he was going to say. But the Lord changed the subject somewhat and the *tribute* he mentioned is from a word that means custom or taxes that should be levied upon foreigners.

Verse 26. Jesus and his apostles were citizens of that nation and would not rightly be under obligation to pay such a tax.

Verse 27. While not strictly bound to pay this tax, Jesus decided to pay it rather than offend the collectors, and enabled Peter to get the money by a miracle.

## MATTHEW 18

Verse 1. The apostles believed that the kingdom of heaven that Jesus had been announcing was to be a restoration of the old Jewish government with perhaps some additional features suited to the times. They maintained this idea even after the resurrection (Acts 1: 6). With such a system in mind it was natural for them to ask the question of this verse, for in earthly governments there are men of superiority in rank.

Verse 2. *Little child* is from PAIDION and according to Thayer it means a young child somewhat advanced in age beyond infancy; and old enough to have developed some traits of character. Jesus used this child for an illustration of the kind of temperament that would be of the greatest esteem in the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 3. *Be converted* has reference to the general rule that was to apply after the kingdom of heaven was set up, and not especially to these apostles. They had been baptized by John upon repentance and had been converted from their past course of life. But even they were in need of a change of mind on the subject of true greatness, otherwise they would not be fit to become members of the kingdom when the time came. But the verses on this matter state the subject



as it was to apply to all people in their attitude towards Jesus and his followers. *Become as little children* refers to the humility that must accompany any professed belief in Christ and desire for his kingdom.

Verse 4. The comparison is made directly in this verse. Literal children were not to become members of the kingdom, for they do not need it, but men and women must become *as* these children on the matter of humbleness.

Verse 5. *Such little child* means the same as the *little children* of verse 3. To *receive* such a person means to be friendly with him or show hospitality because of his humble character. This is to be done in the name of Christ or because he is a humble disciple of his and is trying to mold his life after his teaching.

Verse 6. To *offend* means to cause to stumble or go wrong, which indicates it has reference to those old enough to be responsible for their conduct and also liable to temptation. Such a person is called a *little one* figuratively because he has complied with verse 3. Physical death by drowning would be a mild fate in comparison with that awaiting one who has caused a humble disciple of Christ to stumble and fall.

Verse 7. *Offences* means causes of stumbling or occasions in which a person meets with temptation. *Needs be* is from ANAGKE and the simple definition of Thayer is, "necessity," and he explains his definition to mean, "imposed either by the external condition of things, or by the law of duty, regard to one's advantage, custom, argument." In a world as large as this with its multiplied hundreds of activities and other circumstances, it would be unreasonable to expect it ever to be free from these temptations. However, that does not justify any man who is responsible for some specific case of offence.

Verses 8, 9. Since each man is responsible for his own conduct, he should overcome the cause of stumbling whatever it may be in his particular case. The lesson taught by the discarding of the hand and eye is explained at chapter 5: 29, 30. *Everlasting* is from AIONIOS which Thayer defines, "without end, never to cease, everlasting." *Hell* is from GEHENNA and is explained at chapter 5: 30.

Verse 10. To *despise* means to belittle or treat with disrespect, espe-

cially to do so because of the humble position in life that the person has. *These little ones* are the same as are described in verse 3. *Their angels* means the guardian angels that God employs in His care for his children. In Acts 12: 15 mention is made of "his angel" when the disciples at a prayer meeting were told that Peter was at the gate. Thayer defines the original word, "angel, messenger of God," and he comments on the word as follows: "Guardian angels of individuals are mentioned in Matthew 18: 10; Acts 12: 15." We have other evidence that God uses his angels in the care and watchfulness necessary for the welfare of righteous people (Psalms 91: 11; Hebrews 1: 13; Acts 27: 23). We do not know how or when these angels work, for that is entirely in God's part of the divine providence. It is enough for us to have the assurance that such holy creatures are serving God in our behalf.

Verse 11. The American Standard Version and some other translations omit this verse on the ground that it is not in the early Greek manuscripts. But the same thought is contained in chapter 9: 13, so we lose nothing either way we consider the passage.

Verse 12. I believe this verse indicates the preceding one is genuine, for it is directly in the same line of thought. If Jesus came to save that which is lost it would be like a shepherd who would leave the sheep that were safely in the fold and go in search of the one that had gone astray.

Verse 13. We should observe that it is *rejoicing* and not merely love that the shepherd manifests over the sheep when it is found. He still esteems the 99 as highly as ever, but there is not the occasion for joyous demonstrations over them that there is for the one just recovered.

Verse 14. This verse goes back to all of the others that speak of the *little ones*. We are sure they mean the humble disciples and not literally the small boys and girls for they are not in any danger, not being responsible for their conduct.

Verse 15. When Jesus was on earth he taught many things that could apply only while he lived, and others that were to become a part of the permanent law of his kingdom. The passage starting with this verse is one of the latter, for it includes mention of the church (verse 17) and that would

have to be after he had gone back to his Father. Furthermore, there is nothing in the teaching of the apostles that disagrees with this passage, hence we are bound to conclude it is a law of the Lord today. The first thing a brother should do if another does him wrong, is to tell him to his face in the absence of any other person, and without having said a word to anyone else. It may be that the brother does not realize what he has done and will gladly adjust the difficulty. In such an event the trouble will be settled and it should never be made known to another one.

Verse 16. If the conversation fails to bring a reconciliation it will be evident that a more public knowledge of the affair will have to come. As a protection against any misunderstanding, the next meeting should have one or two witnesses that all things that are said may be proved in case further dealing becomes necessary.

Verse 17. These witnesses are to be intercessors also, for this verse speaks of the possibility that the offender will not *hear* them. This denotes that it will be proper for them to have something to say in this second meeting as well as being witnesses in case further controversy is necessary. If this meeting is a failure, the matter will have to become a public affair and the offended party should take his case to the church. The church has the right to hear the complaint and the report of the witnesses, and if it concludes the accused is guilty he should be required to make proper amends. If he refuses to do so he should be excluded which is equivalent to placing him in the same class as the heathen (people of the world) in that he will be put into the realm of Satan (1 Corinthians 5: 5).

Verse 18. This verse is explained at chapter 16: 19.

Verse 19. One important function of the church is shown in verse 17 and that was still in the mind of Jesus when he spoke the words of this verse. The apostles are given special attention because they were in the church first (1 Corinthians 12: 28). But some things can be done without the presence of an apostle; the assurance of this verse comes under that class. We know that an apostle could perform his special function without the presence of another (Acts 19: 6), yet this verse requires at least that two shall

be present, hence this passage applies to disciples generally. The reason that *two* of the disciples is mentioned is that is the minimum of them that can compose a unit of the church referred to in verse 17. *Agree* is from *SUMPHONEO* which Thayer defines, "To be in accord, to harmonize, i. e., to agree together." It should be understood that they must agree in the things that are right, which were to be taught in other portions of the law of Christ. In other words, the Lord wishes his church to be united in its activities and perform as a whole while in the doing of things pertaining to the spiritual welfare of all. (See 1 Corinthians 5: 4 and 2 Corinthians 2: 6.)

Verse 20. *For* is from *GAB* which Thayer defines, "Truly therefore, verily as the case stands," which indicates that the conclusion of this verse is based upon the truth stated in the preceding one. *In* is from *EIS* and the passage means for them to gather into the name of Christ. But the name of Christ is confined to his church since all authority and glory must be given him through that body (Ephesians 3: 21). Jesus will always be present in spirit when any group of two or more disciples is assembled according to verse 19 and 2 Corinthians 2: 10.

Verse 21. *Seven* is a prime number and in figurative language means completeness. The question of Peter was equivalent to asking if he should go to the limit in forgiving.

Verse 22. If seven means completeness then it would not be possible to go any further in the extension of mercy. We therefore understand the statement of Jesus here to have been spoken figuratively for the sake of emphasis.

Verse 23. See the comments at chapter 13: 3 on the scope and subject matter of the parables. No one of them was intended to cover everything pertaining to the scheme of human redemption. Some of them were suggested by a special circumstance, and then Jesus spoke a parable to compare the incident or conversation that called for it. The subject of selfishness toward those who have done us wrong, while forgetting our own sins, was suggested by the question that Peter asked of Jesus. The sins of one brother against another are illustrated by a commercial relationship, evidently because that would make the point easier to see. Yes, this parable was spoken

to make the subject easier to understand, but Jesus was talking to his disciples and not to the multitude.

Verse 24. With the material subject as an illustration we would realize that ten thousand talents (\$2,000,000) would constitute a great obligation.

Verse 25. According to ancient laws a debtor and his family could be sold into slavery by his creditor to recover the debt; this master threatened to use that law.

Verse 26. The servant *worshipped* his lord by falling down and humbly asking for mercy. See the long note at chapter 2: 2 for the various meanings of that word.

Verse 27. It was compassion and not financial justice that caused this lord to forgive the debt. He did not deny the existence and justice of the debt his servant owed him, but was willing to forget about it because it was so great.

Verse 28. Gratitude should have prompted this man to show kindness to all others with whom he would have any dealings. Instead, he found a man who owed him a hundred pence (\$1,600) and demanded payment, at the same time handling him brutally.

Verse 29. This servant prostrated himself and made the same plea that the creditor had made to his lord, assuring him of making payment as soon as possible.

Verse 30. Another ancient law permitted a debtor to be put into prison if he failed to make payment. While there he would be induced in some way to make arrangements to pay his debt.

Verse 31. The ungrateful servant may have thought he would not be exposed to his kind master, but fellow-servants were aware of his conduct and reported it to him. Likewise man often thinks he can elude the eyes of the Lord but all things are known to Him.

Verse 32. The only reason the lord of this servant forgave his debt was that he *desired* it, not that it was a favor he had earned. In like manner we are taught that our Master is pleased for us to ask Him for the favor we seek (chapter 7: 7-11).

Verse 33. A simple request brought the remission of a vast obligation in favor of this servant. That fact should have induced him to grant this comparatively small favor that was so

earnestly requested by his fellow-servant.

Verse 34. *Tormentors* is from **BASANISTES** and this is the only place where the word is used in the Greek New Testament. Thayer defines it, "One who elicits [obtains] the truth by the use of the rack, an inquisitor, torturer." It is used here to mean an officer who uses strong pressure to force the debtor into the acknowledgment of his debt and to take some action necessary to meet it.

Verse 35. If unworthy man will not forgive his fellow being, he need not expect the Father to forgive him, but instead to deliver him into a place of endless punishment where he will be "tormented" (Matthew 25: 46).

## MATTHEW 19

Verse 1. Jesus had been in Galilee for some time and then moved into the region on the east side of Jordan. Just across the river was the territory of Judea which is the meaning of the words *coasts of Judea beyond Jordan*.

Verse 2. As usual, great crowds followed him and he healed them *there*. That was different from the way it is done or professed to be done by the false workers of miracles today, who require that the patient have faith and come back for more help.

Verse 3. Jesus answered all questions that were put to him that were of importance, and that of divorce was certainly in that class. The Pharisees were not sincerely seeking information when they asked this question, for the writer says they asked it *tempting him*. But for the benefit of others who could hear him and for those who would read it in the record, the Lord gave his explanation of the delicate subject.

Verse 4. Jesus went back to the beginning of man, and all discussions of this subject should go there for the proper basis of whatever is said. It should be observed that both words *male* and *female* are singular, showing that the Lord intended that one partner only should be engaged with another in this union.

Verse 5. *For this cause* means because God made one man for one woman to reproduce the race. That being true, they must be free from all other human beings in this relationship. That will make it necessary for the man (he being the aggressor and head in all of the social affairs of life

as is evident all through the Bible) to *leave* his parental home in order to form a union with a female and thus establish another family. *Leave* is from KATALEIPO which Thayer defines, "To leave behind; to depart from, leave; to forsake, leave to one's self," etc. Certainly it does not mean that he must desert his parents in other respects, but in the matter of forming a union for the perpetuation of the race, a man must act independently with regard to this physical relationship. Most human laws regarding the "age of consent" have ignored this Biblical law of God. When a male is old enough to perform the marriage act he is instructed that he may leave his parents and contract marriage with a female. *Cleave* is from KOLLAO which Thayer defines, "To glue, glue to, glue together, cement, fasten together; join one's self to, cleave to." This "joining" is accomplished by the act that makes them one flesh according to the closing statement that *they twain shall be one flesh*.

Verse 6. *Are no more twain* is a positive proof that the fleshly union that is formed by the first intimate relationship is permanent, and not that the fact of being *one flesh* applies only at the time the act is being performed as some people teach. It is stated that God has joined this man and woman into one flesh, and the only "ceremony" that was used was the fleshly act. Were there no human laws on the subject, the fleshly act would be the only thing that would constitute marriage in heaven's sight. But as man began to multiply on the earth and social conditions became more complex, the need for laws of regulation to keep the relation between the sexes pure was recognized by human leaders and such laws were enacted. The only thing God has to do in such laws is to recognize them and to require His creatures to obey them. *What God joined . . . no man put asunder*. The Lord would not make a ruling against a sin that could not be committed. The fact that He did forbid *man* to sever this union which He alone had formed by the intimate relation proves that such a putting asunder can be committed. The only conclusion that is possible, then, is that the union will be put asunder when either party to it has relation with another; that act will form another union which will sever the preceding one.

Verse 7. It was natural for them to ask this question, for they knew that

the law which Moses gave did not hold strictly to the foregoing requirements.

Verse 8. Jesus did not say that the original law of marriage had been repealed. Neither did he say that Moses ignored it and "permitted" them to divorce their wives as it is so frequently stated. There is a vast difference between permitting a thing and suffering it. The first is equivalent to an endorsement but the second means only to tolerate something under protest. The people had become so hardened in worldliness that the original law was held off for the time being. But that period of indulgence was over when Jesus spoke and man was to be held to the law of marriage as it existed from the beginning and as Jesus stated it in verses 4 and 5.

Verse 9. This verse names the only ground on which a married man or woman may be divorced and remarry lawfully in the sight of God. Fornication forms another fleshly union and automatically breaks the previous one. By that same token the innocent one is free and may remarry without committing adultery. To say that there is no exception to the law of marriage and divorce is to contradict Jesus, for he plainly says that fornication is an exception. Let it be noted that it is the remarriage where no guilt of fornication exists that constitutes the sin of adultery. There are cases where a person may need a divorce other than because of fornication on the part of the companion. In such instances the legal separation may be obtained but the said person would not have the scriptural right to remarry as long as the other one remained clear morally.

Verse 10. The disciples had heard the conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees and doubtless were given information that was very new to them. See the comments at verse 3 about answering questions for the benefit of the hearers besides those who asked them. This explanation about the strictness of the marriage relation gave the disciples a feeling of hesitancy about contracting marriage. They expressed that feeling with the saying *it is not good to marry*. They meant that the best thing for a man to do is to abstain from marriage altogether.

Verse 11. That was too strong a saying for more than one reason, and Jesus replied that not all men could

receive or adopt *this saying*, meaning the words in italics in the preceding verse. Jesus meant that it would not be a good thing for men generally to adopt that rule of life, and that only certain men could safely refrain from entering the marriage relation and he proceeded to describe them.

Verse 12. The only means God created for the perpetuation of the human race was the fleshly union of the sexes. As an inducement for man to cooperate with Him in this he established the mutual attraction of the male and female for each other. Like most blessings from God, this one was subject to misuse and unlawful enjoyment. For this reason the institution of family relationship was given so that human beings could have a lawful means of gratification and at the same time accomplish the divine edict to "multiply and replenish the earth." From the foregoing truths we may understand that it is a moral risk for a man to decide against entering marriage, for he will be tempted to yield to his sexual inclinations unlawfully. But a eunuch may safely refrain from it and thus adopt the saying of the disciples "not to marry," because such a person is free from this fleshly tendency.

The Lord then named three classes of these eunuchs. The one is a person who was born without this normal function and hence would not have any inclination toward the opposite sex. Another is a man who has been mutilated by others for whatever reason, and by such action has been robbed of his manly powers. The third one is a man who has been able so to subdue this fleshly tendency that the opposite sex makes no appeal to him. The apostle Paul was one of such characters (1 Corinthians 7: 7). Outside of these three classes of eunuchs the only divine safeguard against unchastity is the institution of marriage, and the proper exercise of the function in that relationship of husband and wife. (See 1 Corinthians 7: 5.)

Verse 13. *Little children* is not figurative but means literally a small child. The parents recognized Jesus as an individual who could bestow a blessing according to his own wisdom on these helpless creatures. The disciples were still somewhat confused as to the nature of the work that Jesus intended to accomplish. With this erroneous view of it, they considered this act on the part of the people as

an interruption and rebuked them in the hearing of Jesus.

Verse 14. The key word in this passage is *such*, and if the disciples had recalled the lessons of chapter 18: 1-5 they would not have uttered their rebuke. Jesus did not say that the kingdom of heaven would contain little children, but it was to have men and women who had become *such* persons by repentance and humility.

Verse 15. The Son of God would not have to make a physical contact with a person in order to bestow a blessing. The act of putting his hands on the little children was a form of caress or endearment.

Verse 16. The man who came to Jesus was evidently a Jew in good standing and understood what the law required of its followers. But he also must have learned something about Jesus and his teaching (*Master* is from a word that also means teacher), and had the idea that something very different would have to be done to obtain what he was offering to the world, hence the question stated in this verse.

Verse 17. *None good but God*. Jesus did not deny being a good person, for in John 10: 11 he even affirmed that he was the good shepherd. Since he was a member of the Godhead, he wished this man to know that in calling him good it was equivalent to calling him God, since all goodness comes from Him. He then gave the young man an answer to his question which was doubtless different from what he expected. When he told him to *keep the commandments* he did not understand to what he could have reference since the regular commandments of the law had already been his rule of life.

Verses 18, 19. He asked Jesus to specify the commands that were meant and he repeated the six of the decalogue that pertained to dealings between man and man.

Verse 20. Jesus did not question the statement of the young man that he had kept all of those laws, hence we may conclude that this claim was true. But Jesus was here to set up another kingdom with other laws, and perhaps something would need to be added to the life of this young man who had lived up to the letter of the law. He doubtless asked confidently *what lack I yet?*

Verse 21. We need not think this man was merely pretending to be in-

terested, for there is nothing in the conversation of Jesus that indicated that he had an unfavorable feeling toward him; instead; as Mark's account gives it (chapter 10: 21) he loved the young man. But he could read the minds of men and he knew this man was a rich Jew and that he was devoted to his wealth. It is not necessarily wrong to be wealthy, but it is so when one is attached to his riches as this man was. That would constitute an "emergency" that required special legislation, hence Jesus told him the thing he lacked was the separation of his wealth from personal use and devotion of it to others.

Verse 22. This shaft "hit its mark" for the young man went away sorrowing because of his great possessions. What he ever did about it we are not told.

Verse 23. *Hardly* is from DUSKOLOS which Thayer defines, "with difficulty." The sacrifices that a rich man is called upon to make enter so deeply into his devotion to the business of getting more money, that it is difficult for him to bring about that change in his manner of life.

Verse 24. *Needle* is from RHAPHIS which Thayer defines, "a needle," and he shows that the word comes from RHAPTO which means, "to sew." Donnegan defines rhapsis, "a needle, awl, or other instrument for sewing." The Authorized version renders this verse correctly, for the words are so defined in the lexicon of the Greek language.

Verse 25. The disciples knew that a camel could not naturally go through the eye of a needle, and they took the comparison to mean that few if any persons could be saved.

Verse 26. Jesus supplied the point the disciples overlooked, namely, that a thing impossible with men does not have to be so with God. He could actually take a camel through the eye of a needle, but in doing so there would be some kind of change made in the camel's body that its earthly master could not cause it to make. A rich man can be saved, but it cannot be if he continues in his devotion and trust in his riches.

Verse 27. The apostles then saw the point and understood that the illustration of the camel and needle meant that one must go to the utmost in sacrificing his personal interests in order to secure the favors that the kingdom of heaven offers to the world.

Peter spoke to Jesus on behalf of the other apostles as he was generally the spokesman for them. He stated that they had *forsaken all* to follow Jesus and asked what it would bring to them. We should bear in mind that following Jesus as he meant it was to leave their homes bodily so as to travel over the country *with him*. (See Mark 3: 14 on being "with him.")

Verse 28. *Regeneration* is from PALIG-GENESIA which has a very extensive meaning in Greek literature, but its proper definition is, "new birth, reproduction, r e n e w a l, recreation."—Thayer. It occurs only twice in the New Testament and the other place is Titus 3: 5 where it is used in connection with "washing." Hebrews 10: 22 says that it is our bodies that are washed and the connection there also shows that it applies to persons who have been regenerated by obedience to the Gospel. Hence it is clear that Jesus was speaking of the Christian Dispensation, after the kingdom of heaven was set up and he would be its king, sitting in glory at his Father's right hand. But he arranged his rule of government by delegating the writing of the law to his twelve apostles. That law was to be in force unto the end of the world (chapter 28: 20), and in that figurative way they would be occupying the twelve thrones. *Twelve tribes of Israel* is a figure of speech based on the fact that under the Jewish system God's people were grouped into that many tribes. Under the Gospel system there is only one tribe but the law is administered by the twelve apostles, hence Christians are referred to as twelve tribes. (See Acts 26: 7; James 1: 1.)

Verse 29. These apostles had forsaken all of their earthly interests for the time being that they might be with Jesus literally in his journeys among the people. But it was not to be permanent, for, when the personal ministry of Christ was completed, they could resume their former manner of life, at least to some extent. But even that temporary self-denial was to be rewarded with such good things (Mark 10: 30 adds "now in this time"), and after the judgment it was to bring eternal life.

Verse 30. This verse is a statement of general principles. The words *first* and *last* do not always mean chronologically but sometimes are used with reference to importance. If any specific sense is to be attached to them in



any case, the connection will have to be considered in determining the meaning. But the words usually mean that persons who are expected to be foremost in accepting the truth are often the least concerned, and vice versa.

### MATTHEW 20

Verse 1. Jesus was still talking to his disciples when he spoke the following parable. It was to illustrate the principle mentioned and commented upon in the last verse of the preceding chapter. The application of the parable will come in verse 16, but the whole story had to be told to bring out the point. A vineyard means usually a place where grapes are grown, but the word could be understood to denote any place where plants are cultivated. *Early in the morning* means the beginning of the day, for the next time he went out it was still only the third hour of the day.

Verse 2. The penny was equivalent to about 17 cents in our money. The value of the wages is not important in the parable as it was spoken for another purpose.

Verse 3. The householder found he needed more workers and went out about the third hour (9 A. M. our time) and found *others* unemployed which indicates he had secured the first laborers in this place. *Marketplace* is from AGORA and it is defined in the lexicon of Thayer as follows: "In the New Testament the forum or public place,—where trials are held, and citizens resort, and commodities are exposed for sale." It is easy to see why a man would go to such a place to hire workmen.

Verse 4. No stipulated amount was stated but the laborers were promised whatever was right. They evidently agreed with the terms for it states *they went their way*.

Verse 5. The householder went back for more men at noon and 3 P. M. and made the same bargain for it says *and did likewise*.

Verse 6. The last time he went was about the *eleventh hour* which would correspond with our 5 P. M., an hour before quitting time at least, depending on what part of the eleventh hour it was when he hired them.

Verse 7. He asked them why they were idle and they said that no man had offered them any work. That being a valid explanation, the house-

holder engaged them to work with the same promise he made the ones hired from the third hour and on through the day. The use that is made of the "eleventh hour" item is entirely off of the purpose of the parable, but because of the widespread idea existing concerning it, I think it will be well to give some notice to it. The error to which I refer is the doctrine that a person professing repentance on his deathbed should be compared to these men in the *eleventh hour*. There is no comparison for these men went to work as soon as they had an opportunity while the deathbed man had been offered work by the Gospel ever since he was of responsible age. Also, these men had whatever was left of the eleventh hour and all of the twelfth to work, while the deathbed man has let the whole day of life go by and he has no opportunity to work at all.

Verse 8. There is no special rule in business that caused the paymaster to begin with the ones hired last. However, by telling the parable in that order Jesus brought out the idea of the lesson which is in verse 16. These men were last as to time and the chronology of events but they were first or foremost in receiving the Lord's estimation.

Verse 9. These "eleventh-hour" men did not know how much they were to receive, only that it was to be "whatever is right." They made no complaint and hence showed a willingness to be fair and agreeable.

Verse 10. *They supposed* expresses the basis on which most of the erroneous doctrines of men are formed. There is no scripture for the theories hence they rely on their own judgment and it is usually along the line of what they were wanting to begin with. These "early" laborers did not complain when the wage rate was stated, and neither was the paymaster cutting it short at the end of the day. But they were measuring themselves by others in the laboring group which is an unwise principle to act upon according to Paul in 2 Corinthians 10: 12.

Verse 11. They complained to the very man who made the bargain with them in the morning and with whom they found no fault when they hired to him.

Verse 12. *Made them equal with us* was a false accusation. The householder was only carrying out his con-

tract as he had done with them. The "eleventh-hour" men had gone to work at the first opportunity and the others had done no better than that. When they accepted the offer of employment they knew they would have to do a full day's work which would extend through the hottest part of the work period.

Verse 13. *I do thee no wrong* was a truthful statement for the householder was living up to his contract made at the time of employment.

Verse 14. *That thine is* denotes that these men wanted more than was coming to them. When the paymaster put the penny into their hands he gave them all that was rightfully theirs. That means that had they obtained more than the penny they would have gone home with property that did not belong to them.

Verse 15. This householder could have given his money to anyone he chose regardless of all others and been within his rights since it was his own. *Eye evil because* means they had an envious eye when they saw the good favor bestowed upon the others.

Verse 16. This verse shows the point intended to be made by the parable. The ones who were first in point of time were the last (or least inclined) in showing an attitude of appreciation towards the householder, and Jesus made that application of the circumstances. While on the subject he added a statement that is not always made when the first clause is used. Many called, few chosen. The governments of the world call many men to appear for possible induction into the armed services, but when they are examined only a few pass the test and are chosen. All men are called by the Gospel and many accept the call. But only a few out of that group will qualify themselves for the final test at the judgment by a righteous life. That is why 2 Peter 1: 10 exhorts Christians to "give diligence to make their calling and election [choosing] sure."

Verse 17. *The twelve disciples* always means the twelve apostles.

Verse 18. This is the second time that Jesus made this sad prediction (chapter 16: 21). No reply was made by the apostles this time, the rebuke from Jesus to Peter on the other occasion evidently not being forgotten.

Verse 19. The Jews could condemn a man to death but they did not have

the authority to execute it (John 18: 31). That is why they had to take their cases to the Roman or secular courts (here called *the Gentiles*) to get such a sentence carried out.

Verse 20. In Mark 10: 35 these brethren are identified simply as the sons of Zebedee as they would also be recognized to be in our verse. The reason for the seemingly unnecessary phrase *mother of Zebedee's children* is that she spoke for her sons, whereas the account in Mark tells us only of their desire. The woman first worshiped Jesus before asking her favor. (See the long definition of "worship" at chapter 2: 2.)

Verse 21. Since Jesus knew what was in man's mind it was not necessary for him to ask this question for information. However, it is the will of the Lord for his creatures to show their confidence in Him by asking, although he knows what they need before they ask (see chapter 6: 8). The woman's request was based on the same erroneous idea of the kingdom of heaven that people generally had while Jesus was on earth. She thought it was to be in the nature of an earthly kingdom, and that the persons who were permitted to occupy seats nearest the king would have some special advantages.

Verse 22. There was more than one reason for saying they did not know what they were asking for, one of them being their ignorance of what was in store for Jesus. But they thought they were prepared in mind to take whatever might come in their association with the king and doubtless they were sincere in their answer. While they had not asked for that experience, Jesus asked them the question and got an affirmative reply.

Verse 23. The *cup* and *baptism* are used figuratively and refer to the persecutions that were destined to come upon Christ and his followers. They indeed were to have that experience as Jesus informed them. Since Jesus was to be the king it would naturally fall to someone else to do the seating of him on the throne. That is why he said of it that it *is not mine to give*. However, he did say that the Father would give the honor to them for whom it is prepared.

Verse 24. This conversation between Christ and the two brethren was heard by the ten other apostles. We are not told why they were indignant,

but evidently it was because of the ambition of the two in wanting to be seated above the others in places of authority. Jesus had already told them (chapter 19: 28) that all of them would have important positions in the kingdom which should have made them grateful and satisfied.

Verse 25. It was necessary so often for the apostles to be corrected in their erroneous notion of the kingdom of heaven, because they thought of it in the same light as the governments of the world. Jesus reminded them that in such kingdoms a person who is great is the one who has the most authority, and such a man often uses that greatness to impose upon his fellow citizens.

Verse 26. In the kingdom that Christ was going to set up, phases that would involve greatness and popularity were to be opposite those in worldly kingdoms; in the institution of Christ true greatness was to consist in service to others. *Minister* is from *DIAKONOS* and one meaning of the word in the lexicon is "servant."

Verse 27. *Servant* is from a different word than *minister* in the preceding verse. It is a stronger term and is compared to a slave. Such a word was used because the apostles were so much in the dark as to the character of the coming kingdom that it took unusual language to get them to see the point.

Verse 28. As a proof that the kingdom of Heaven was to be different from others, Jesus cited his own example of condescension. Although he was to be its king, he came among men as the greatest of servants, and crowned that service by giving his life.

Verse 29. As a rule there were many people following Jesus as he went from place to place but they were not all going with the same motive. Some were sincerely seeking for more teaching, some were interested in his miraculous cure of their diseases, and others were following with selfish interests in the temporal favors (John 6: 26).

Verse 30. For the significance of *son of David* see comments at chapter 15: 22.

Verse 31. The multitude did not want the journey interrupted. *Because*, etc., expresses the motive of the multitude and not the opinion of the inspired writer. The persistence of the blind men was like that of the

woman of Canaan in chapter 15: 22-28 and it showed their great faith as Jesus said about the woman.

Verse 32. Jesus halted and asked the blind men what they wanted. He did not ask them to come in to him since they were blind and that would have been a hardship on them.

Verse 33. A man's eyesight is one of the most precious faculties he possesses, and it was the one thing that was uppermost in the minds of these unfortunates.

Verse 34. When Jesus so willed it he made bodily contact with persons he wished to favor. These men showed their appreciation by joining the group following Jesus.

## MATTHEW 21

Verse 1. Jesus usually traveled on foot, but he was now to make a change in his mode of going and sent two of his disciples to secure the means of doing so.

Verse 2. Jesus knew all things that pertained to his activities and hence could tell the disciples what they would find in the nearby village.

Verse 3. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (1 Corinthians 10: 26), therefore it was right for Jesus to "commandeer" these beasts. It was not an act of taking them just because he had the authority to do so, but it was because they were needed. Take note that he needed *them* and not the mother or colt only.

Verse 4. Matthew explains that what is about to take place had been prophesied in the Old Testament and it is recorded in Zechariah 9: 9.

Verse 5. Any statement of an event may include more than is specifically mentioned but it will never take in less than is named. Verses 3 and 4 clearly stated that the mother and the colt were to be loosed and brought to Jesus. Also in verse 7 both colt and mother were brought and the people put their clothes on *them*. And now our present verse cites a prophecy which definitely predicts that Jesus was to ride on an ass *and* its colt. Most commentators believe that Jesus rode the colt only, and that the mother was taken along because of a humane feeling for the mother and her young offspring. It is true that neither of the other three accounts says a thing about the mother, but that could be accounted for by the fact that the use of an unbroken colt was the unusual

feature of this event and hence it only is given notice by them. If it should be questioned how one man could ride two beasts, the explanation is that he would sit on the back of the mother and place his feet on the colt in the place of stirrups. This would identify the rider as the one foretold by the prophet, while the fact of riding only one would not be so rare as to attract attention. Even the riding of an unbroken colt would not be so unusual because somebody had to ride it for the first time, and besides this, the public crowd would not know it was an unbroken animal since it would be under control of this supernatural rider.

Verses 6, 7. This paragraph merely records the doing of the things commanded.

Verse 8. It was an ancient custom to honor an approaching dignitary by making a carpet of garments and the foliage of trees on which he might proceed. It says *a very great multitude* made this display of honor. It was at the season when the Passover was soon to be observed by the Jews, and great numbers were at Jerusalem from all over the world to attend that feast in obedience to the law of Moses.

Verse 9. *Hosanna* is a Greek word and Robinson defines it, "Save now, succor now, be now propitious." He says further that it is from a Hebrew word that means a joyful acclamation." Thayer's definition agrees with this but is more condensed. The passage means an expression of good will to him who is able to save others because he is a descendant of David. *Blessed is he*, etc., is an acknowledgment that Jesus was coming to their city in the name of the Lord.

Verse 10. The foregoing conversation was taking place as Jesus was entering the city. When he reached the inside the people were *moved*. That word is from *σειο* which Thayer defines, "to shake, agitate, cause to tremble; to quake with fear." This means the citizens of the city in general who were not informed upon the state of affairs nor upon the prophecies that were being fulfilled; they were the ones *moved*. In their agitation and fright they asked *who is this?*

Verse 11. *The multitude* means the group that had been witnessing the entrance of Jesus into the city. They were aware of what was going on and what connection it had with the iden-

tity of Jesus, and they gave the information to the citizens.

Verse 12. The reader should see my comments on Deuteronomy 14: 24-26 in Volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary. It was right to sell doves and other creatures to be used in the services at the altar, and it was necessary to have an exchange table to trade local money for the foreign, because the money brought in by foreigners was not good in the markets of Judea. But it was wrong to transact that business in the temple because it was intended for the religious services only. They having committed an outrage against the sacred temple, it was proper for Jesus to treat them as outlaws and force them out of the place they were desecrating.

Verse 13. It is *written* is cited from Isaiah 56: 7 where the prophet was writing about the restoration of the Jews after the captivity, but where he also included some words that referred to the age of the church. Jesus called the temple as it was used then a *den of thieves* because they were taking advantage of the situation to charge undue fees for their transactions; they were profiteering.

Verse 14. This work that Jesus did was far different from that of the "thieves." They were in it for unrighteous gain while Jesus was doing good to the unfortunate people by healing their infirmities.

Verse 15. The original word for *crying* is defined in the lexicon, "to speak with a loud voice," and means the children let themselves be heard in shouting their good wishes for Jesus. The chief priests and scribes were *sore displeased* evidently because they were envious of the attention that he was receiving.

Verse 16. These envious men called the attention of Jesus to the cries of the children as if to suggest that he stop the disturbance, but in reality as an expression of their displeasure caused by their envy. The quotation Jesus made is in Psalms 8: 2, and in both places the words *babes* and *sucklings* have about the same meaning. Both mean small children but the first denotes those who are somewhat the older of the two. The simple, childlike trust that a little one shows in the existence and goodness of God is one of the sweetest things that can be seen in this world. Even those still young enough to be feeding at the breast will

manifest characteristics that can be explained only by the fact that they are the handiwork of a gracious Creator.

Verse 17. Bethany was a small village about two miles from Jerusalem. Although it was an unimportant town from the standpoint of size, it was very noted by the things that took place there. It was the home of Lazarus and his two sisters where Jesus was always a welcome guest. On the present occasion we are merely told that Jesus left the presence of this envious crowd and spent a night in the quiet little village.

Verse 18. The body of Jesus was both human and divine and subject to the needs of bodily maintainance the same as other men. At this time he sought to satisfy his hunger by the use of the fig which is indeed a wholesome food.

Verse 19. In the account given at Mark 11: 13 the statement is added: "For the time of figs was not yet." Our verse says that Jesus found only leaves on the tree when he expected to find fruit also. If it was not the time for figs why would Jesus curse the tree for not having the fruit as well as the leaves? This matter is explained by the editor's note on Josephus, Wars, Book 3, Chapter 10, Section 8, as follows: "It may be worth our while to observe here, that near this lake of Gennesareth grapes and figs hang on the trees ten months of the year. We may observe also, that in Cyril of Jerusalem, Cateches, 18, section 3, which was delivered not long before Easter, there were no fresh leaves of fig trees, nor bunches of fresh grapes in Judea, so that when Mark says (11: 13), that our Saviour, soon after the same time of the year, came and 'found leaves' on a fig tree near Jerusalem, but 'no figs,' because the time of 'new figs' ripening 'was not yet,' he says very true; nor were they therefore other than old leaves which our Saviour saw, and old figs which he expected, and which even with us commonly hang on the trees all winter long."

Jesus cursed the fig tree for having leaves but no fruit, since its opportunity for bearing the one was as good as the other, regardless of whether it was the old or new crop that was expected. Many people have moralized on this circumstance and compared the leaves to the empty profession of righteousness that men make and the

absence of fruit to the failure of doing one's duty to the Lord. We may make our own comparison to it for the purpose of an illustration, but nothing in the text indicates that to have been in the mind of Christ. Rather, it was just another opportunity to perform a miracle for the instruction of the disciples, for that was the only subject they discussed about it afterward. *Presently* is from PARACHREMA which Thayer defines, "Immediately, forthwith, instantly," and Robinson says, "On the spot, forthwith, straightway."

Verse 20. This verse indicates that the disciples made their remark at the time when Jesus pronounced the curse upon the tree, but according to Mark 11: 20, 21 it was the next day. However, our verse does not disagree with that for it only says "when the disciples saw it," meaning the complete withering away of the tree, and that could have been the next day. Hence we should understand the word *presently* in the preceding verse to have been used in a figurative or comparative sense.

Verse 21. For comments on the extent of faith here see chapter 17: 20..

Verse 22. In *prayer, believing* corresponds in thought with chapter 17: 21. In that passage the faith was to be connected with a season of "prayer and fasting." The part that was performed by the disciples in each instance was an evidence of their faith.

Verse 23. *When he was come into the temple* was the day after Jesus had driven the moneychangers out. It was that act the chief priests and elders meant when they called upon him for his authority to perform it.

Verse 24. Jesus never evaded any proper question that was asked of him. However, rather than directly accuse them of insincerity he chose to expose them by a counter inquiry. He promised to answer their question if they would do likewise to his.

Verse 25. The fact of John's baptism was not denied by anyone, the only question being his authority for teaching and practicing it. John either was doing so by the authority of the Lord of heaven or merely as a work of man, and they were asked to say which they thought it was. But the question, although a perfectly fair one, put them in an embarrassing position because of the inconsistency of their general conduct. If they were to admit that John's baptism was from

heaven they could not explain why they did not endorse it.

Verse 26. They were afraid to accuse John of acting on man's authority because of the pressure of public opinion that was favorable to his work. These hypocritical leaders of the Jews did not have much love for the common people, yet they wanted to hold on to their esteem for the sake of popularity.

Verse 27. They refused to answer and falsely stated that they *could not* tell, for they had an abundance of evidence that John was a man of God. Jesus also refused to answer their question but did not misrepresent his position as did the Pharisees; he simply said *neither tell I you*.

Verse 28. This is a parable of two brothers and hence refers to people of the same family group. The contrast, then, is not between Jews and Gentiles as some of the parables apply. The first son was the publicans and harlots of the 31st verse, and the second was the chief priests and elders of verse 23. Both sons were asked to work for their father, likewise all ranks of Jews were invited to accept the work of preparation for the kingdom of heaven soon to be set up.

Verse 29. The publicans and harlots did not actually refuse the favors offered them, but that action of the son was supposed in order to show the better disposition in that they thought better of the offered favors than did the others.

Verse 30. This verse was virtually carried out as stated, for the chief priests and elders made great pretensions of being interested in the work of John and Jesus, but in the final test they refused to work at it.

Verse 31. The kingdom of heaven was not set up in fact in the earth lifetime of John, but his work was that kingdom in preparation, and whatever attitude anyone showed toward his work was counted for or against the kingdom.

Verse 32. *In the way of righteousness* means the way of life that John taught was righteous. But the self-righteous Jews only pretended to accept his teaching and did not actually do so (chapter 3: 7, 8; 21: 25). But the publicans accepted the teaching of John and came to his baptism and so fulfilled the parable.

Verse 33. Unlike the preceding parable, this one has to do with the Jews

and the Gentiles. The Jews were God's exclusive people for 15 centuries but did not appreciate their good fortune and even mistreated the righteous prophets and other teachers who were sent among them. Finally the Gentiles were admitted into the family of God on an equal basis with the Jews. The story of the householder was told in detail to bring out these truths, some of which were still future when Jesus spoke. God was the householder and the services and benefits of the Mosaic system were "hedged" about with the Lord's oversight (Isaiah 5: 1-7).

Verse 34. It takes time to produce fruit, hence the householder did not expect any products until the proper time and then he sent special servants to get them.

Verses 35, 36. This refers to the mistreatment that the Jews showed to the prophets and other righteous teachers who were sent among them by the Lord.

Verse 37. Jesus was a Jew and was sent to that nation as the rightful heir of all that his Father possessed, and he should have been received with great respect.

Verse 38. Being the heir, if he could be removed there would seem to be no one to claim the property, hence the workers planned to make away with him.

Verse 39. The wicked workers carried out their plot and slew the son of the householder. It refers to the treatment that Jesus was soon to receive at the hands of the wicked Jews in thrusting him into the hands of the Gentiles to be killed.

Verses 40, 41. Jesus asked the hearers for their opinion of the case. Still thinking of some literal case of earthly relationship, they answered correctly as to what would happen to such husbandmen.

Verse 42. Jesus began opening their understanding of the parable by referring to a prediction in the Old Testament. They doubtless were aware of this statement and must have begun to see the light that was exposing them.

Verse 43. The Lord made a literal application of the parable to the Jewish nation of which his hearers were members. The nation that was to be given the kingdom was the Gentiles. This does not mean that the Jews would be barred from the kingdom of heaven, but they no longer would be



the sole workers in the Master's vineyard.

Verse 44. *This stone* means Christ who is the stone of verse 42 that had been rejected by the builders, meaning the leaders in the Jewish nation. There are two applications of the illustrations about the *falling* upon the stone and its *falling upon* the victim. It would be bad enough to fall down on a stone for one would be hurt thereby, but it would be far worse for that stone to be elevated and then fall upon that same one. So the Jewish nation had stumbled over this stone and it was complaining about it. The leaders had even tossed it aside as unfit even to be used at all in the building. But it was to be elevated to be the head stone in the building and from that position was to fall (figuratively speaking) upon the nation and demolish it. That event took place in A. D. 70 when the Romans overthrew Jerusalem and disorganized the Jewish commonwealth. The illustration applies also to individuals in general. Those who "stumble at the word" (1 Peter 2: 8) will be offended in this world, and at the judgment they will be crushed by the weight of Christ's authority and sent into eternal ruin in the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels (chapter 25: 46).

Verse 45. The Jewish nation as a whole was to suffer in the fate predicted by the parable, but the *chief priests* and *Pharisees* were especially responsible which truth they realized when they heard the parable.

Verse 46. *Sought to lay hands* means they tried to think of some way they could use to overpower Jesus. *Feared the multitude* is to be understood in the same light as was their fear over John the Baptist in the 26th verse.

## MATTHEW 22

Verse 1. Mark reports the parable of the wicked husbandmen which we have just studied in the preceding chapter. He also tells us (chapter 12: 12) that after the parable the chief priests and Pharisees left the hearing of Jesus, hence the present parable was spoken to the multitudes in general.

Verses 2, 3. This parable was to show the attitude of the Jews toward the kingdom of heaven as it contrasted with that of the Gentiles. The Lord chose a very familiar subject for the illustration, that of a marriage

and the feast that was given to the guests. *Call them that were bidden.* Invitations were sent out some time before the date of the wedding, and as that time approached the invited guests were notified that the date of the wedding had arrived and for them to be present. The Jews were told in the Old Testament that the kingdom of heaven was going to be set up but no definite date was stated to them. *They would not come.* The Jews were not very responsive to the invitation offered to them to partake of the good things provided by Jesus.

Verse 4. Perhaps the invited guests did not take these servants seriously, or they thought there was no need to hurry as the time was not so near. So the king sent out more servants who told the guests that even the animals intended for the wedding feast were killed and prepared for the occasion and that they should come on. Many of these details have no direct bearing on the application but needed to be told to make the story complete. The point is that the Jews were pleaded with to accept the kingdom of Christ but they did not show the interest they should.

Verse 5. \*Some were more interested in their worldly possessions than in the things that pertained to their spiritual welfare.

Verse 6. Others were more active in their opposition to the work of the King and persecuted the servants. They went so far as to put to death the most prominent ones which included John the Baptist, the apostles and even the son (Jesus).

Verse 7. This verse was literally fulfilled by the wars between the Jews and the Romans. That conflict ended with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. I shall quote from Myers Ancient History, page 499, which shows the fulfillment of this prediction: "The accession of Flavius Vespasian marks the beginning of a period, embracing three reigns, known as the Flavian Age (A. D. 69-96). Vespasian's reign was signalized both by important military achievements and by stupendous public works undertaken at Rome. After one of the most harassing sieges recorded in history, Jerusalem was taken by Titus, son of Vespasian. The temple was destroyed, and more than a million Jews that were crowded in the city are believed to have perished. The miserable rem-

nants of the nation were scattered everywhere over the world. Josephus the historian accompanied the conqueror to Rome. In imitation of Nebuchadnezzar, Titus robbed the temple of its sacred utensils and bore them away as trophies. Upon the triumphal arch at Rome that bears his name may be seen at the present day the sculptured representation of the seven-branched golden candlestick, which was one memorial of the war."

Verse 8. *They which were bidden* means the Jews who were first called to the honors of the kingdom of heaven. Were not *worthy* or deserving on account of the way they treated the notice that it was time to come to the wedding feast.

Verse 9. When the Jews had been given the first opportunity of accepting the Gospel and they rejected it, the servants of Christ turned to the Gentiles. This is clearly taught in Acts 3: 26; 13: 46; 28: 27, 28.

Verse 10. *Highways* means the world in general whereas the first invitation was restricted to the Jews. (chapter 10: 5, 6.) *Bad and good*. Even in the world there is a difference between men both socially and morally. But no man is so bad but the Gospel can purify and redeem him, and no one is so good that he does not need its saving qualities in order to be worthy of attending the wedding feast.

Verse 11. The date setting of the parable has been changed and the time is at the end of the world when Jesus will come to claim his bride. (See Revelation 19: 7.) In the Bible an espousal or engagement for marriage is spoken of in the same sense as the actual marriage in many respects (Genesis 19: 14; Matthew 1: 20). The reason is that when two persons have pledged themselves to become husband and wife they are as bound morally as if they had entered into the relationship. In other words, an "engagement ring" would be as much of a bond morally as the "wedding ring," so that if while the first only has been offered and accepted, either party should be intimate or even familiar with a third, it would be considered as an act of unfaithfulness. That is why Paul wrote what he did about the "espousal" of the Corinthians to Christ, in the second epistle, chapter 11: 1, 2. Hence the portions of the parable we have considered thus far pertain to the courtship and engagement only, but

this verse transfers the story to the time of the actual marriage. *Had not on a wedding garment*. For the sake of unity in appearance all the guests were expected to have on a uniform especially appropriate for the occasion.

Verse 12. *And he was speechless*. It was customary for a man arranging a wedding to provide garments for the occasion so that all would be in orderly appearance. It would therefore not be on account of poverty or lack of opportunity to procure the garment that this man was not wearing one, hence he was *speechless* because he had no excuse. The garment to be worn by the guests at the marriage of the Lamb is "the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19: 8). This robe has been provided by the Lord and offered to the espoused bride without money and without price (Isaiah 55: 1; Romans 13: 14), hence there will be no excuse for any professed Christian to appear at the day of judgment not properly adorned.

Verse 13. The figurative or illustrative part of the parable is now dropped and the direct application is made. Those who are found wanting at the day of judgment will be cast into the place of punishment spoken of in chapter 25: 46.

Verse 14. See the comments at chapter 20: 16 for the explanation of this.

Verse 15. *Took counsel* means the Pharisees consulted together to decide upon some plan to *entangle* Jesus in his talk. The word is from PAGIDEUO which occurs in no other place in the New Testament. Thayer defines it, "to ensnare, entrap," and he explains the definition to mean, "of the attempt to elicit [draw out] from one some remark which can be turned into an accusation against him."

Verse 16. *Herodians* is from the Greek word HERODIANOI. Thayer and Robinson define it the same, but the latter gives more information in his historical comments and I shall quote his definition and the comments as follows: "Herodians, partisans [those who take sides] of Herod Antipas, and therefore supporters of the Roman dominions in Palestine; which the Pharisees were not. It was consequently a political rather than a religious party; though it would seem to have embraced many Sadducees." This information explains why the Pharisees sent the Herodians to Jesus. They had no particular love for those people,

but as they (the Herodians) were in sympathy with the political interests of the Romans of whom Caesar was king, they would try harder to get Jesus to say something that would get him into trouble with the government. They made their approach with a series of compliments that were pure flattery as verse 18 shows.

Verse 17. In their ignorance of the nature of the kingdom of heaven they thought that Jesus would be opposed to all other governments. Were that the case he naturally would oppose giving them financial support. Had he answered them to that effect it would have been ground for accusing him of disloyalty to the "powers that be."

Verse 18. Jesus called these men *hypocrites* because they pretended they wanted information, when they knew that was not the case as verse 15 plainly indicates.

Verse 19. Jesus met the situation in a manner that was doubtless unexpected. Instead of answering their question with a direct yes or no, he asked for a piece of the very kind of money that was being used in paying for the government's finances.

Verse 20. *Image and superscription* means the human likeness on a coin, and the words that are stamped on it in connection with the image. The coins of all nations are made with the likeness either of their rulers or other important persons in the government. The key to the difficulty which confronted these hypocrites is in the words of Christ after they handed him the coin, *whose... is this?*

Verse 21. In their answer they committed themselves beyond recall, for they directly said the whole thing belonged to Caesar, the very article that he was asking people to give to him as tribute. No one would say it is not "lawful" to give to a man what belongs to him. They had said this money belonged to Caesar, hence it would be lawful to give it back to him. And by the same token it would be right to give to God what belongs to him, namely, their religious devotion.

Verse 22. Robinson defines the original for *marveled*, "to wonder, to be astonished, to be amazed." Hence we are not to get the idea these hypocrites had any great respect for Jesus, but they were so defeated in their attempt to entrap him that they were capable only of silent astonishment.

That is why they *left him and went their way* with nothing more to say.

Verse 23. See at chapter 16: 12 for more complete details on the doctrine of the Sadducees. *The same day* was the day the Herodians failed in their attempt to entrap Jesus, and the Sadducees thought they would try it. It is a proper argument to confront a man with an actual inconsistency that comes from his teaching, for whenever a man is inconsistent he is bound to be wrong, but the Sadducees either misunderstood or wilfully misrepresented the Lord's position concerning the resurrection. He did not teach that men would resume their earth life after they came from the grave. Neither did he teach that the resurrected righteous (and they are the only ones being considered here) could engage in such a manner of life even if they desired.

Verse 24. They correctly repeated the law of Moses on this subject which is recorded in Deuteronomy 25: 5, which also was a ruling of Judah in Genesis 38: 8, 9 in the Patriarchal Dispensation.

Verses 25-28. The Sadducees described a case (whether supposed or actual does not matter) in which they thought the position of Jesus would find great difficulty. It is evident that if a woman should meet seven men alive, each of whom had legally been her husband, she would be embarrassed to say the least as also would the men. But their supposed problem was based on the theory that human beings were to recognize each other after the resurrection in the same way they did when they lived on the earth. There are some Sadducees now with reference to this matter of future recognition. Such a theory is fathered by the wish which is based on a fleshly desire, and which has to deny the teaching of 1 Corinthians 15: 42-54; Philippians 3: 21; 1 John 3: 2.

Verse 29. *Err, not knowing the scriptures.* At the time Jesus was speaking the New Testament had not been written, hence he had reference to the Old Testament. That book does not say much about the future state, yet had the Sadducees been as familiar with it as they pretended to be they would have understood that in the next world the marriage relation will not be continued because it will not be needed. The beginning paragraphs of Genesis reveal the command given

to the first man and woman to multiply and replenish the *earth*. After the earth ceases to be there will be no need for the marriage relation. *Nor the power of God*. The Sadducees supposed they could disprove the truth of a resurrection by describing a situation that would make it impossible without causing great domestic trouble. They should have understood that nothing is "too hard for the Lord" (Genesis 18: 14).

Verse 30. Note it does not say the saved of earth will become angels, but they will be *as* angels, and that only as regards the marriage relation for they are without sex. It is true that whenever the Bible makes any reference to the gender of angels it is always the masculine. That is due to a rule of language that when reference is made to intelligent creatures by a pronoun, if the gender is not specifically known the masculine is always used.

Verse 31. Jesus was going to make a reference to the Scriptures (which he said they did not know) to prove that another life is taught in them. The Sadducees professed to believe that writing, so they should be impressed with what will be shown to them.

Verse 32. The passage referred to is in Exodus 3: 6. The argument Jesus made was based on two great truths. God is not the God of the dead as the Sadducees would admit; yet Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had been in their graves for centuries. The conclusion is, then, that although the bodies of these patriarchs were dead, something else about their beings was still living. And if their spirits can live outside of their fleshly bodies, there should be no difficulty in believing that they could be reunited with those bodies and thus be resurrected.

Verse 33. No wonder the multitudes were astonished at the doctrine (teaching) of Jesus, for it put the Sadducees to silence.

Verse 34. The Pharisees *were gathered together* for the purpose of consultation as in verse 15. Their object was to plot some way of entrapping Jesus in his talk.

Verse 35. Thayer defines the original for *lawyer* as follows: "One learned in the law, in the New Testament an interpreter and teacher of the Mosaic law." Because of his profession this man could pretend to be interested in

the law, and hence his approach to Jesus would have an outward appearance of being an honest one. However, the inspired writer says his purpose in asking the question was to tempt Jesus.

Verse 36. The question would seem to be prompted by a good motive since it pertained to the law. But it was unfair because the Lord never put any more of His authority behind one commandment than another. (See James 2: 10, 11.) Had Jesus specified one command as being greater than another, the lawyer would have accused him of showing discrimination between things that were equal as to their divine origin.

Verse 37. Jesus stated to him the commandment that requires whole-hearted love for God, against which even this lawyer could not have any objection.

Verse 38. The Lord did not say that even this was the greatest, only that it was great. And it was great because it was the *first* one, which was proper since it pertained to God, and everyone would agree that God comes before all other beings.

Verse 39. If the lawyer thought he had caught something by the word *great* on which to make an ado, he was soon deprived of that motive because Jesus said the next one was *like* it. He then stated the commandment to love one's neighbor as one's self.

Verse 40. The first four commandments pertain especially to man's attitude toward God, and the other six have to do with man to man. (See Exodus 20: 1-17.) If a man loves God with all his heart he will observe the four commandments that pertain to Him; and if he loves his neighbor as himself, he will observe all of the six that pertain to that neighbor. That is why Jesus said that the whole law and prophets *hang* on these two. That word is from KREMANNUO which Thayer defines, "To be suspended, to hang," and he explains it as follows: "The meaning is, all the law and the Prophets (i. e., the teaching of the Old Testament on morality) is summed up in these two precepts."

Verse 41. The Pharisees had been trying to entrap Jesus with questions they thought could not be truly answered. That is, could not without contradicting something in his teaching, but they failed as we have seen. Now the Lord turned and put a ques-

tion to them that was fair, and yet which would be impossible to explain without exposing some of their opposition to him.

Verse 42. The Pharisees did not profess to dislike Jesus (they dared not because of public opinion, chapter 21: 46), but pretended to regard him only as a good man and not divine. When they answered the question of Jesus by saying he was the son of David they only recognized his blood relation to the great ancestor, not that he was anyone higher than a human being.

Verse 43. If Christ was no more to David than an earthly descendant why did he call him Lord. This question was based on a statement in Psalms 110: 1 which the Pharisees would have to accept unless they denied the Scriptures which they would not do.

Verse 44. The first *Lord* is God and the second is Christ. The pronoun *my* in the first instance refers to David and the second to God. Using names instead of pronouns, the verse means that God invited Christ to sit on His right hand until He had made Christ's enemies his (Christ's) footstool. The point at issue is that in this statement David acknowledged Christ to be his Lord.

Verse 45. The argument of Jesus was, how could David recognize Christ as his Lord if he was only his son as the Pharisees claimed.

Verse 46. The verse says that no man could answer the question. The reason is that they either did not know or were unwilling to acknowledge the divine-human character of Christ's being. This put an end to the tempting questions of the multitude, for they were completely defeated in their hypocritical attacks on the great Teacher.

### MATTHEW 23

Verse 1. The audience that heard this remarkable chapter was composed of the *multitude* and the *disciples*. The first 12 verses were addressed to that part of the multitude designated *scribes and Pharisees*, and what should be the attitude of the disciples toward that group.

Verse 2. Moses wrote the law that was to regulate the Jews during that dispensation. After he died it was the duty of others to teach and enforce it upon the nation, and that was a work done by the scribes and Phari-

sees which is the meaning of their *sitting in Moses' seat*.

Verse 3. The scribes and Pharisees had no authority on their own account, but the law which they enforced was just as binding as was the personal teaching of Moses while he was living. The inconsistency of a teacher does not lessen the force of what he teaches if it is according to the law. These scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites and failed to "practice what they preached," yet the disciples were told to obey the law regardless of the unfaithfulness of these teachers; that was because the law of Moses was still in force at the time Jesus was speaking. Note the two words *observe* and *do* that were to be recognized by the disciples. A truth or declaration should be *observed* or respected although it may not contain any direct command for action. But a practical commandment must be not only observed but also must be *done*.

Verse 4. The scribes and Pharisees would apply the duties taught in the law in a severe measure when concerned with others. *With one of their fingers* is a figure of speech, for a burden that could be moved with one finger would not be very heavy. It means they were not willing to exert themselves in the least toward practicing the commandments of the law. One reason they took such an attitude was the fact that they exaggerated the duties actually required by the law in order to oppress the common people.

Verse 5. *Their works* refers to the things these hypocrites did, which were done with a vain motive and that they might be seen of men. "Make broad their phylacteries" may be explained by a quotation from Smith's Bible Dictionary as follows: "Phylacteries were strips of parchment, on which were written four passages of Scripture, Exodus 13: 2-10, 11-17; Deuteronomy 6: 4-9, 13-23, in an ink prepared for the purpose. They were then rolled up in a case of black calfskin, which was attached to a stiffer piece of leather, having a thong one finger broad and one and a half cubits long. They were placed at the bend of the left arm. Those worn on the forehead were written on four strips of parchment, and put into four little cells within a square case on which the letter . . . was written. The square had two thongs, on which Hebrew letters were inscribed. That phylacteries were used as amulets [charms]

is certain and was very natural. The expression 'they make broad their phylacteries,' Matthew 23: 5, refers not so much to the phylactery itself, which seems to have been a prescribed breadth, as to the case in which the parchment was kept, which the Pharisees, among their other pretentious customs, Mark 7: 3, 4; Luke 5: 33, etc., made as conspicuous as they could. It is said that the Pharisees wore them always, whereas the common people only used them at prayers." *Borders* is from KRASPEDON which Thayer defines, "A little appendage hanging down from the edge of the mantle or cloak." He explains his definition, "The Jews had such appendages attached to their mantles to remind them of the law, according to Numbers 15: 37." For more detailed comments on this curious subject, see those at Numbers 15: 37-41 in volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary.

Verse 6. *Rooms* means places at the table while eating, some of them being regarded as more honorable than others. *Chief seats* means the first or front seats in the synagogues that gave the occupants a prominent view of the audience.

Verse 7. *Markets* were places of general interest where men gathered either to buy or to sell their wares, or to converse on various topics. It was usual to see large crowds in such places and they were so public that no one was of any special importance; but these scribes and Pharisees wished to receive special notice by the crowd. The Mosaic system had no officials with the title of *Rabbi*; the term was created by the Jews to mean one of dignity and respect. It carried with it the idea of some great one deserving special attention. Thayer defines the original, "My great one, my honorable sir." The Pharisees wanted it repeated to give it more emphasis.

Verse 8. The titles of distinction could be used with various intent, hence that of *Rabbi* could denote a great leader which was not to be ascribed to private disciples.

Verse 9. By the process of elimination we know this verse does not mean our *fleshly father* for that is a respect all men are commanded to show. Nor can it mean in the sense of one who leads us to be born into the kingdom, for Paul claimed that relationship to Timothy (1 Timothy 1: 1). The conclusion is clear, then, that this verse

means not to call any man *father* as a religious title or one of authority.

Verse 10. The original for *master* not only means a leader, but also denotes a great and authoritative teacher. Christ is the only one in the kingdom of heaven that is deserving of that distinction (chapter 28: 18).

Verse 11. This is explained in comments on chapter 18: 1-4.

Verse 12. We have learned that true greatness consists of sincere humility and a desire to be of service to others. But if a man strives for worldly greatness he will be brought down by the Lord under a state of enforced humiliation.

Verse 13. Up to now Jesus has been talking to his disciples in this chapter, and a part of that conversation has been about the scribes and Pharisees. From here to the close of the chapter he will be speaking directly to them. A hypocrite is one who pretends to be something he knows he is not. (See at chapter 6: 2.) These Jews knew that their pretensions were false as their evasive conversations showed. *Shut up the kingdom*. They not only refused to receive the teaching of John and Jesus and thus get ready for the kingdom that was at hand, but did all they could to keep others from doing so. Eight times in this chapter Jesus pronounces *woe* upon the scribes and Pharisees. The word is an interjection and means a term of grief or dismay, and when spoken by an inspired man means that great calamity is in store for those referred to.

Verse 14. *Devour* is from KATESTHIO which Thayer defines at this place, "To devour i. e., forcibly appropriate." *Houses* is from OIKIA and the same lexicon defines it in this passage, "Property, wealth, goods." They took advantage of the unfortunate widows who were helpless because of the power of the scribes and Pharisees. After enlarging their own estates at the unjust expense of the widows, they came to the places of devotion and uttered prayers that were unusually long. *Greater damnation*. The Bible speaks of only one Gehenna or lake of fire into which the unsaved will be cast after the judgment, therefore the actual punishment will be the same for all who are put into that place. The second word in italics also means condemnation and applies to the estimate that the Lord will place on the wrong deeds of these men. A judge may sentence two men to prison



for life, yet he may utter a severer condemnation upon one while in his speech of pronouncing sentence than upon the other.

Verse 15. The English word "prose-lyte" means one converted or brought over from one faith to another. The word has virtually the same meaning in the Bible, for the Gentiles were permitted to embrace Judaism, and when they did so they were called proselytes. The Jews recognized a distinction between the extent to which some Gentiles made the change which resulted in such classifications as "proselytes of the gate" and "proselytes of righteousness." The latter went farther than the former and conformed to all of the requirements of the law of Moses. But this distinction need not concern us as far as the present verse is concerned. The point is that the scribes and Pharisees professed great zeal in making proselytes, but through their deceptive methods of pressing their own traditions upon the converts ahead of the written law, they confused them and made them worse characters than themselves. *Twofold more the child of hell.* This is plainly a figurative statement, for no one can be any more than once a child of another. The word *child* is used in the sense of one who is worthy of or entitled to a thing. This should be understood in the light of comments on "greater damnation" in the preceding verse.

Verse 16. The point in this verse is their inconsistency of making a technical distinction between things where there was no difference in principle. It was a usual practice of these pretenders to make a show of importance by performing oaths, yet they evaded their self-assumed obligation by naming the temple in their oaths and claiming it was not binding. But they insisted that if others made their vows in the name of the gold attached to the temple they would not dare break it since the gold was holy.

Verse 17. Jesus showed their inconsistency in that if the gold was sacred it was the temple that made it so, being attached to and forming a part of the structure.

Verses 18-22. The same argument is made in these verses as that in verse 17. The attachment between the altar and the gift upon it, or between the temple and Him who dwells therein (who is God), or between heaven and the throne therein with its Occupant—that attachment makes the obligation

equal all around. The word *guilty* in verse 18 means the same as *debtor* in the 16th verse; the person is under obligation to perform the oath.

Verse 23. The Jews were required by the law to give a tenth of the products of their land to the Lord's service. The plants named were small ones of the mint family and of small value commercially, yet these Pharisees were very scrupulous to turn over the *tithe* (tenth) as required. At the same time they were so attentive to those comparatively small matters, they were indifferent about such weighty matters as judgment, mercy, and faith. Notice Jesus did not say for them to replace the one by the other, but to observe both the small and great things.

Verse 24. The point in this verse is the same as in the preceding one but expressed with different terms. Both the gnat and camel were among the creatures classed as unclean by the law of Moses. When the Jews made wine they strained it through a fine cloth to get out all the objectionable objects. Strain *at* should be translated strain *out*, and means they were so particular about having the wine pure they would strain out a gnat, but would swallow a camel (figuratively speaking). The meaning is, they would make a big ado about minor matters but overlook the duties of great importance.

Verse 25. This verse is intended to teach the same lesson as the preceding one by using the figure of a cup kept for drinking purposes. The inside is where the material is placed that is to be consumed, not the outside. By cleansing the outside instead of the inner part, they showed that their pretended care in the cleansing performance was for the appearance only.

Verse 26. The activities necessary for cleansing the inside would also affect the outside if the process should be carried out completely and sincerely.

Verses 27, 28. The inconsistency and hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees is the principal subject of many of these verses, and Jesus uses various figures and comparisons for his purpose. *Whited sepulchres* is the object used in this paragraph for the comparison, and the occasion of their being whited is explained in Smith's Bible Dictionary as follows: "A natural cave enlarged and adapted by excavation, or an artificial imitation of one, was the standard type of sepulchre. Sepulchres, when the owner's

means permitted it, were commonly prepared beforehand, and stood often in gardens, by roadsides, or even adjoining houses. Kings and prophets alone were probably buried within towns. 1 Kings 2: 10; 16: 6, 28. Cities soon became populous and demanded cemeteries, Ezekiel 39: 15, which were placed without the walls. Sepulchres were marked sometimes by pillars or by pyramids. Such as were not otherwise noticeable were scrupulously 'whited,' Matthew 23: 27, once a year, after the rains before the passover, to warn passers-by of defilement."—Article, *burial*. The beautiful appearance of these whitewashed places contrasted with the decayed and unclean bones within, and the fact was used by Jesus to illustrate the outward fair pretensions of the hypocrites that were opposite to the corruptions of their hearts.

Verse 29. The prophets had been dead for centuries and were placed in tombs at the time of their death. The word for *build* is defined at this place by Thayer, "To restore by building, to rebuild, repair." To *garnish* is defined, "To ornament, adorn." There was nothing wrong in the work of these scribes and Pharisees respecting the treatment of the burial places of the prophets.

Verse 30. Neither would there have been anything objectionable about what they said regarding the history connected with those prophets, had the remarks been in harmony with their own conduct in the same matters which were the subject of the history.

Verse 31. The point Jesus made was upon the admission of these pretenders that it was their fathers who had slain the prophets. That fleshly relation would not have placed any blame on them had it not been a prominent practice of them to justify their lives by boasting of their great ancestry.

Verse 32. This verse is partly in a sense of irony. It is as if Jesus had said: "Since you are the fleshly descendants of those murderers, you may be expected to show their traits in their moral and spiritual character. In so doing you will fully measure up to the wickedness of your ancestors."

Verse 33. *Serpents* and *vipers* are virtually the same creatures as to general classification, being slightly different in variety. The outstanding characteristics of both are deception, poison and filthiness. John the Baptist called those people by the term "vip-

ers" in chapter 3: 7. *How can ye escape, etc.* The fire of *hell* (Gehenna) will have been prepared for the devil and his angels (chapter 25: 41), hence it will logically be the final destiny of the offspring of such wicked characters.

Verse 34. Jesus concluded his direct denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, and the rest of this speech is made up of predictions against them soon to be fulfilled. He began it by foretelling how they would abuse the righteous men and prophets that would yet be sent to them in that generation.

Verse 35. See the comments on verse 32. By *filling up the measure* of their wicked ancestors, the scribes and Pharisees brought to a climax the long career of murder beginning with the slaying of Abel and including Zacharias in 2 Chronicles 24: 20, 21.

Verse 36. *All these things* means the predictions and charges of the two preceding verses, together with the judgments that were soon to come upon that generation.

Verse 37. The storm that Jesus just predicted was to have its climax upon the capital city of Jerusalem. Seeing that calamity so near, he uttered the lamentable words of this verse. The many attempts to awaken the city to a sense of its evils and the results to follow are compared to the care that a hen manifests in offering her wings for the protection of her brood. And the refusal of the citizens to accept that warning is compared to a flock of chickens that would not come under the wings spread out for them.

Verse 38. *Desolate* is from EBEMOS which Thayer defines, "Solitary, lonely, desolate, uninhabited." The word is used figuratively and represents Jerusalem as a house that has resisted all attempts to save it. The city had continued in its attitude of wickedness, unmindful of all the offers of mercy that Jesus extended towards her, and he then sadly left her to her fate that was to come in 70 A. D. by the hand of the Romans.

Verse 39. *Blessed is he that cometh, etc.*, was said before (chapter 21: 9), so that we may think of the present statement as if it said "till ye shall AGAIN say." However, the other time it was said to him in person, while the next time it will be said to him spiritually. And that cannot be when he *cometh in his kingdom* on Pentecost, for it was to be after the "house" was left desolate which did not come till 70 A. D. at the destruction of Jerusa-

lem. Hence all conclusions are eliminated except that it means when the Jews accept Christ (Romans 11: 26; 2 Corinthians 3: 14-16). When that time comes the name Jerusalem will be extended to mean the spiritual starting point of the church and hence its citizens (including the Jews), will recognize Jesus as the Messiah of the Old Testament and will thus say "blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

### MATTHEW 24

Verse 1. The speech of Jesus recorded in the preceding chapter took place in the temple that was the pride of the Jews. After going out, the disciples called his attention to the *buildings* (architecture) of the structure, evidently admiring its wonderful appearance which the Jews boasted of requiring "forty and six years" to construct as we may read in John 2: 20.

Verse 2. The remarks of the disciples gave an opportunity that was appropriate for Jesus to make an important prediction. He made the simple statement that not one stone would be left resting upon another. In Luke 19: 43, 44 a more detailed account of the disaster is given, in which it is shown how it was to be accomplished.

Verse 3. The disciples had learned from the teaching of Jesus that the world was someday to come to an end. (See chapter 11: 22, 24; 12: 41, 42; 13: 39.) Because of that teaching they erroneously concluded that the predictions about the destruction of the temple were to be fulfilled at the same time as the end of the world. They also understood that the destruction of the world was to occur when Jesus comes again. With these ideas in mind they asked him to tell them *when shall these things be*. That was the one and only question they intended to ask, and the rest of the verse is only a specification of the things they thought were to happen at the time of the end of the world. However, their intended single question involved two great events, namely, the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world which we now know to have been at least nineteen centuries apart.

Because of the radical conditions and various human transactions to occur in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus knew that ambitious men would take advantage of the disturbed state of affairs to make statements about the coming of Christ the second time and thus de-

ceive the people. In order to prepare the disciples against being so deceived, he gave them the teaching that is in this memorable chapter. He gave a description of things to occur at the destruction of Jerusalem, then went ahead to his second coming and depicted some of the things to happen then. He alternated these two subjects throughout the chapter, going back and forth from one to the other in more or less detail, so that his disciples could see the difference between the two events and thus not be deceived. There are a few intervening verses not directly connected with either of the main subjects which will be explained as we come to them. With those exceptions, the chapter should be marked off as follows. Verses 4-26, destruction of Jerusalem; verse 27, 2nd coming of Christ; verse 28, destruction of Jerusalem; verses 30, 31, 2nd coming of Christ; verses 34, 35, destruction of Jerusalem; verses 36-51, 2nd coming of Christ. Trusting the reader will constantly observe which group of verses we are in, I shall now comment upon the verses in their order.

Verse 4. The warning to *take heed* indicates a condition that might be misunderstood or even unnoticed if it were treated with an attitude of indifference. By heeding the signs Jesus gave, the disciples would be able to detect the false prophets.

Verse 5. *Come in my name* means they will take upon themselves the name of Christ as they come among the people. Just because they will be wearing that name they will deceive many who will not look any farther into the subject than the sound of the name.

Verse 6. The destruction of Jerusalem was brought about by the war between the Jews and the Romans. That conflict did not begin in Judea but was going on farther up in Palestine for some time before. The report of the battles in the distance reached the ears of the people in Judea, and that is why Jesus said they would *hear of wars and rumors of wars. Be not troubled . . . end is not yet*. The first rumors of war will not mean that *the end of Jerusalem is right upon them*.

Verse 7. The Roman Empire was composed of many nations, and when the war against the Jews broke out it threw the whole empire into commotions. These various smaller units of governments in the empire were

thrown into confusion and many of them began fighting each other. A state of war often produces shortages in the necessities of life which brings famine and pestilence. A literal earthquake is never caused by warfare, but God has brought them about at numerous times to mark His concern for the conditions. In the present case it was one of the signs the disciples were given by which they could see the approaching storm.

Verse 8. The word *sorrows* is from ODIN which Thayer defines, "the pain of childbirth, travail-pain, birth-pang." The suffering destined to come upon the nation and city of the Jews is compared to the pangs of childbirth. And as the full development of those pains are preceded by brief and comparatively light ones, warning the expectant mother that her time is near, so these rumors of wars reaching the ears of the people of Jerusalem are compared with the preliminary labor pains.

Verse 9. The preceding verse deals with the conditions a short time prior to the actual suffering in Judea, and the present one brings their history down upon the area itself. *Deliver you up* means the persecutions that were to be imposed upon the Jewish citizens by the Romans, especially those who had become Christians.

Verse 10. There will be several references in this chapter to Josephus' history of the wars of the Jews and Romans. That history is divided into books, chapters and paragraphs or sections. For the sake of brevity and also clearness, the reader should understand that the numbers used in the references will mean those three divisions respectively. The confusion caused by the war resulted in much violence even between the Jews. I shall quote from Josephus, 5-6-1. "Now while the factions fought *one against another*, the people were their prey, on both sides, as we have said already; and that part of the people who would not join with them in their wicked practices, were plundered by both factions. . . . And when the parts that were interposed between their possessions were burnt by them, they left a space wherein they might *fight with each other*; for this internal sedition did not cease even when the Romans were encamped near their very walls . . . for they never suffered anything that was worse from the Romans than they *made each other suffer*."

Verse 11. This is the same prediction that is made in verse 5.

Verse 12. Many people are affected by their surroundings whether good or bad. *Iniquity* means a state of lawlessness, and because that condition was coming upon the country a great number of disciples were going to become cold in their love for God.

Verse 13. *Endure unto the end* first means to remain faithful to the Lord until the end of that war. It would also be true of those who might be slain in the general turmoil provided they were faithful till death.

Verse 14. *World* is from a Greek word that Thayer defines, "The inhabited earth." *The end* means the end of Jerusalem as the climax of the war. That event occurred in 70 A. D., and the Gospel was to have been offered to all the nations of the (civilized) world by that time. Hence the great commission of the apostles (chapter 28: 19 and Mark 16: 15) was fulfilled in the first century, which agrees with Romans 10: 18 and Colossians 1: 23. The Lord was not willing for Jerusalem to be destroyed until the Gospel had been offered to the entire extent of human inhabitants on earth, hence He supervised the whole revolution as far as the dates were concerned.

Verse 15. The prediction referred to is in Daniel 9: 27; 11: 31. *Abomination of desolation* means the Roman army and it is so called, because its presence and effects will bring a state of desolation to the city of Jerusalem. *Stand in the holy place* is referred to by the words *standing where it ought not* in Mark 13: 14. It is so described because the area around Jerusalem was regarded as holy ground, and the presence of a hostile heathen army was considered as a desecration of the place.

Verse 16. However offensive the presence of a Roman army would seem, the Lord used it as a signal for his disciples to flee for safety while it was possible. In the church history of Eusebius, chapter 5, in a foot note is the following. "But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed [guaranteed as safe] to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella."

Verse 17. Houses had flat roofs and the buildings were joined one against another even unto the end of the street

at the wall. If a man had gone up there for some reason and saw the army of the Romans near he did not need to come down, but could go from one roof to another until he reached the wall.

Verse 18. The man in a field should not regard his personal belongings at home of more importance than his safety, and hence it would be better to flee immediately for safety.

Verse 19. Women in the condition described could not well travel.

Verse 20. Wintry weather would not be convenient time to travel. *Neither on the sabbath day.* The law of Moses has nothing to say about a "Sabbath-Day's Journey," but that was a tradition of the Jews based on a strained interpretation of Exodus 16: 29 and Joshua 3: 4. On that ground the pious Jews in the time of Christ thought it was wrong to travel more than two thousand cubits on the sabbath day. A person attempting to go further on that day would be hindered by these Jews who would seek to punish him for what they thought was a violation of the law. Jesus was not endorsing the tradition, but he knew it would be an obstacle against speedy traveling and hence expressed the prayerful wish on behalf of his disciples.

Verse 21. That the predictions of this verse were fulfilled can be proved by a number of historians. However, I shall quote from Josephus only on this point because he was a Jew and hence had a genuine interest in that nation. Moreover, not being a Christian, his testimony as a historian that so completely verifies the predictions of Jesus will be of special value. I will first quote direct from his own estimate of the sufferings of the Jews in Jerusalem in his preface to the history of the war. "Because it had so come to pass, that our city Jerusalem had arrived at a higher degree of felicity [happiness] than any other city under the Roman government, and yet at last fell into the sorest calamities again. Accordingly it appears to me, that the misfortune of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to those of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were; while the authors of them were not foreigners neither." If Josephus had intended to point out the exact fulfillment of Christ's predictions, he could not have used stronger language. That was not his purpose, for he was

not a disciple of Jesus and hence had no personal interest in him. But he was an able and truthful historian and gave us the facts of history. In giving the readers some details of the sufferings endured by the people in the city I shall not quote verbatim as it would require too much space. Instead, I shall make the statements and give the references to his history of the Jewish war, that the reader may find them and see the full account by consulting the volume, *The Wars of the Jews*.

The troubles of the people of Jerusalem during the war were many and great for they were divided into three seditious factions (5-1-1), provisions were wantonly destroyed (5-1-4), they ate corn unground and uncooked (5-10-2), children would snatch the last morsel from the parent, and the mother from the infant. Children were lifted from the ground by the food they held in their mouths. People were beaten who ate their food before the robbers arrived. Those who were suspected of having hidden some food were tortured by having sharp stakes driven up into their lower bowels (5-10-3), and the famine consumed whole families. Many died as they were burying others. There was no lamentation as the famine confounded all natural passions. A stupefying silence and awe overcame them (5-12-3). Some had swallowed their money, and then had their bodies ripped open by robbers (5-14-4). Some searched the sewers and manure piles for food (5-13-7) and ate hay, old shoes and leather (6-3-3). A mother roasted and ate her son (6-3-4); bloodshed was so great as to quench fire in the houses (6-8-5).

Verse 22. If the conditions in Jerusalem that have been predicted should continue indefinitely, no one would be able to survive the ordeal. *Elect* is from EKLEKTOS which Thayer defines in this and many other passages, "1. chosen by God, to obtain salvation through Christ," and other passages teach us that what one gets through Christ is to be accomplished through obedience to his commandments. When the siege and turmoil in Jerusalem came upon the city and surrounding territory, there were many men and women of both Jews and Gentiles who had become Christians and they are the ones meant by *the elect*. For the sake of these persons the Lord decreed to bring the conflict to a close as soon

as the general purpose of it had been accomplished.

Verse 23. *Then* means while these times of tribulation were going on. The false prophets would use the disturbed condition as a pretext for pointing to some outstanding men and calling some one of them by the name of Christ and that the 2nd coming was upon the world. The warning was that such agitators were not to be believed.

Verse 24. These false prophets were to be able to make such an application of the unusual happenings that even the *elect* (the Christians) would almost be misled by it. The faith of these elect of God in the teaching of Christ was so great that it made them easy victims of the shrewd false prophets. *If it were possible* means that the *elect* would really be deceived had not Christ forewarned them.

Verse 25. This short verse is for the purpose of defeating the plots of the false prophets to mislead the elect, by impressing the seriousness of it on them beforehand.

Verse 26. On the basis of the general warning that was given by Christ, the disciples were not to pay any attention to the false prophets. They would think to mislead the multitudes by claiming that Christ had come for a certainty, but that it would be necessary to make a special search for him. They will even announce that Christ is hiding in some secret place or was strolling out in the desert. Jesus warned them not to believe any such statements because that was not to be the manner of his second coming.

Verse 27. Having warned against letting false prophets take advantage of the disturbed conditions at the time of the Jewish wars to announce the second coming, Jesus then goes over to that event to explain how it will be then. That is why this verse was listed in the comments at verse 3 as the "second coming of Christ." The universal and simultaneous appearance of Jesus at his second coming is compared to that of a flash of lightning. It does not appear in spots only and require that one's attention be called to it before it is observed. When Jesus comes he will be seen by all classes at the same time (Revelation 1: 7). There are false prophets in the world today who have been predicting the second coming of Christ, even setting the very date when it was to occur. But the dates all proved to be wrong, so in order to "save face" they

have changed their story and now declare that he did actually come but was seen only by his "witnesses." The prophecy of Jesus and John contradicts the theory and shows that all of these so-called "witnesses" are frauds.

Verse 28. This verse comes back to the destruction of Jerusalem, in which Jesus uses a habit of birds hovering about a dead creature preparatory to devouring it. Were a bird seen flying around over a certain place we would understand that he scented something which he intended soon to attack for food. This very practice of an eagle is referred to in Job 39: 30. The same is used figuratively in the case of our subject, because the eagle was inscribed on the banners of the Roman army. (Josephus, Wars, 3-6-2.) The fact was mentioned as another sign that would indicate the attack of the Romans upon Jerusalem, seeing their ensigns gathering round the city as a flock of eagles would hover, over a carcase.

Verse 29. The most of this chapter is in answer to the inquiry of the apostles which pertains to the two great events, the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ. This verse is not on either of those subjects, but is a prediction of events that would concern the church and the world, beginning *immediately after* the events of the destruction of Jerusalem. Of course it is figurative for the literal sun and other heavenly bodies were not involved in the things predicted. The sun refers to Christ, the moon to the church, and the stars to teachers and other leading men in the church. Soon after the destruction of Jerusalem the influence of evil in the Roman government and the schemes of ambitious men in the kingdom of heaven combined and brought on the period known in religious literature as The Dark Ages, which lasted until the Reformation. During all that time there were faithful disciples in the world, but since the Bible was taken from the common people, it greatly interfered with the light of divine truth that comes from Christ through the church, and taught by faithful men in the church. All this is what is meant by the statements about the sun, moon and stars ceasing to shine. The same thing is meant by the words, *the powers of heaven shall be shaken*, for all of these sources of light were powers that originated in heaven, but they were *shaken* (agi-



tated) by the revolution of the Dark Ages.

Verse 30. *Then* means after the period predicted in the preceding verse. The Dark Ages lasted until the work of Luther and the other Reformers. That was another revolution in the religious and political world that broke up the union of church and state. After that event the Lord took up the second one of the great subjects that he had been describing since the disciples made their inquiry in verse 3. The length of time that was to elapse before the second coming is not important, but what is of much concern is that the second coming of Christ was not to be until after the Dark Ages. But it is also important that it is to be the next major event in the list of those in the present schedule. The mourning of humanity at that time is the same as John predicted in Revelation 1: 7, and the coming in the clouds is the same as was predicted in Acts 1: 11 and Jude 14.

Verse 31. The prediction that a trumpet will be heard when Jesus comes again is also made in 1 Corinthians 15: 52 and 1 Thessalonians 4: 16. We observe also that the second coming of Christ will occur at the same time the world is to come to an end. In this verse the coming of Christ is accompanied with the work of the angels in gathering the *elect* (saved ones) of Christ, and in Matthew 13: 39 we are told that the angels will do this at the end of the world.

Verse 32. This and the following verse are some of the "exceptions" mentioned at verse 3. They are thrown in to suggest to the disciples the use that should be made of the "signs of the times." He referred to the common fig tree that was so prevalent in Palestine. The preliminary appearance of leaves was observed and from the fact a conclusion was formed that a change of seasons was near.

Verse 33. By using the same kind of logic with the signs that Jesus had predicted, the disciples could know when the first of the two great events was about due. We know this verse has the application to that event, for the disciples were to be living so that they could *see all these things*, and of course we are sure that they were not to live to see, bodily, the signs of the near approach of the second coming of Christ.

Verse 34. In keeping with the preceding verse we may conclude that the

present one is in the bracket of the destruction of Jerusalem. *Generation* is from *GENEA*, which Thayer defines at this place, "The whole multitude of men living at the same time." Jesus spoke these words in about 30 A. D., and the destruction of Jerusalem was in 70 A. D. We know that the entire population would not have died in 40 years, so the prediction was fulfilled according to the words of our Lord.

Verse 35. *Heaven and earth* means the objects composing the material universe such as the earth, sun, moon and stars. They are destined to pass away at the day of judgment, but the truths spoken by Jesus will not fail; they will always be the truth.

Verse 36. From this verse through the end of the chapter the subject is the second coming of Christ and things that will take place in connection with it. At the time Jesus spoke these words no angel even, much less any man, knew when the end of the world was to come. *My Father only* might mean that not even Christ knew it, but I would not be too positive about that. The intimacy between the everlasting Father and Son would suggest the possibility of their having this knowledge in common. However, we are sure that no man knows of it, so that men who presume to predict the date must be regarded as false prophets of whom Jesus warned the disciples to beware.

Verse 37. The comparison intimated is shown in the next verse.

Verse 38. None of the things mentioned in this verse were wrong. The great mistake was in being wholly absorbed in their temporal interests and not paying any attention to the admonitions of Noah "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2: 5).

Verse 39. *Knew not* means they were so concerned with the affairs of this life they did not realize their danger until the flood was upon them, and then it was too late to avoid the disaster. So the coming of Christ will be upon the world in a surprise event even as the flood was in the days of Noah. He and his family were not overtaken by the flood because that patriarch believed the warning of the Lord. Likewise when Jesus comes again there will be some righteous people looking for him and will not be overtaken and found unprepared (1 Thessalonians 5: 4).

Verse 40. *Taken* is from *PARALAMBANO* which Thayer defines at this and several other places "To take to, to

take with one's self, to join to one's self." So it does not mean that one man will be taken out of the field and the other left there. That will be impossible since the field will be destroyed with the earth. It means one of the men will be taken to Christ as part of the good harvest, while the other will be rejected and gathered with the tares to be burned.

Verse 41. Grain was ground by rolling one millstone round over another by means of a lever fastened to the stone. The separation of these women will be done on the same basis as that of the two men in the preceding verse. Both cases show that the Lord's people and those of the world may engage together in any honorable occupation while performing work necessary to a livelihood. That is why Jesus said "Let both grow together until the harvest" [end of the world] (chapter 13: 30).

Verse 42. To *watch* means to be alert and thoughtful concerning one's duty to the Lord, and then regardless of when he comes the servant will be ready.

Verse 43. *Broken up* is from DIORUSSO and the definition in Thayer's lexicon, is, "To dig through," referring to the attempt to force an entrance into a house. One difference between the coming of a thief and that of the Lord is that the householder did not have any warning that any such attempt would be made upon his house. But we do have warning that Christ is coming again to judge the world and we are not told when, hence the necessity of being always awake and watching. An incidental bit of information may be obtained from this illustration of Jesus. The householder would have been compelled to use force in protecting his home, and the Lord made a reference to the subject in an approving attitude. That shows that it is right for one to protect his home and family, even though he has to use force against force.

Verse 44. *In such an hour as ye think not*. Unlike the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, the second coming of Christ will not be heralded by specific signs. Instead, the world in general will be going on in the pursuit of earthly interests, feeling a sense of security and satisfaction, and hence will be taken by surprise as it is awakened to a sense of the awful doom just upon it (1 Thessalonians 5: 1-3).

Verse 45. Jesus finished his speech in parable form, likening himself to a householder who took his leave of the members of his house for a season, instructing them that he would return at some date not announced then. This householder appointed one of his servants to have charge of affairs during his absence, in seeing that the members were served their food at proper times. The practical application is to be made to the service that the disciples of the Lord are expected to render in the house of God.

Verse 46. The servant does not know when his lord will return, but if he is always faithful to his duty it will not matter when it occurs, for his faithfulness is what will bring him the blessing of the master of the house.

Verse 47. In the literal procedure of the parable the promotion of the faithful servant would be the thing usually expected. In its application it means that the faithful servants of Christ will be promoted to the higher enjoyment of heaven.

Verse 48. A servant might be attentive to his duties for a while, but if more time went by than was expected, he may conclude that his lord has postponed his coming for an indefinite period. (See 2 Peter 3: 3, 4.)

Verse 49. Under the impression that "there is plenty of time yet" this servant will relax his vigilance and turn the good treatment of his fellow servants into mistreatment of them; he will even join in the unrighteous practices of some of them. Likewise, some professed disciples of Christ often get tired of faithful service in the kingdom and give way to a life of sin.

Verse 50. Such a worldly life has the tendency of blunting the mind with regard to spiritual matters. It even may blot from his mind the memory of all the warnings of the Lord. In such a case his coming will be unexpected to him hence it will take him by surprise and find him not ready for a favorable meeting.

Verse 51. *Cut him asunder* means to sever him from the Lord's household. An unthinking and self-gratifying servant is not as bad in the abstract as a hypocrite, for such a character that professes to be what he knows he is not is among the worst of sinners. But since both of these individuals are to have their portion together, it teaches us that there is only one lot awaiting the unsaved at the day of judgment. We ordinarily think of a gnashing of

the teeth as a much stronger demonstration than weeping. The use of the two is very significant as applied to those condemned in the lake of fire. Gnashing the teeth will be caused by the bodily pain, while weeping (also defined "lamentation") will be the expression of the mind, caused by the realization of what the person has missed of joy, and what he has brought upon himself by his life of sin while in the world.

### MATTHEW 25

Verse 1. *Then* is an adverb of time and applies to the second coming of Christ predicted in the preceding chapter. The word specifies the exact part of the parable that is to be applied, namely, the sudden announcement of the approach of the bridegroom. The whole story had to be told in order to explain the particular point at which the application was to be made.

Verse 2. Wisdom and foolishness are opposite terms which could have numberless applications depending on the connection in which they are used.

Verses 3, 4. The present application is to the ones who took their lamps only (the foolish), and the wise were those who took extra oil in the vessel besides that already absorbed and retained by the wick. The lamps were shallow bowls with a projection resembling the spout of a water pitcher. A wick of twisted flax was placed in this spout extending down into the vessel which was supposed to be supplied with olive oil. The foolish virgins neglected to see that their lamps had oil in them.

Verse 5. *Slumbered and slept*. The first word properly means to be drowsy so as to nod, the last one means to go on into more complete sleep. This happened because the bridegroom was longer than expected in making his appearance. As to the usual hour for the wedding, Smith's Bible Dictionary says, "When the fixed hour arrived, which was generally late in the evening," etc. While it was late it evidently was not often as late as midnight, which explains why *all* of the virgins fell asleep, the wise as well as the foolish.

Verse 6. This *cry* was a strong sound for the original is defined in the lexicon, "a crying, outcry, clamor." That was made necessary by the lateness of the hour and the sleeping state of the virgins.

Verse 7. *Trimmed* is from *KOSMEO*

which Thayer defines, "To put in order, arrange, make ready, prepare."

Verse 8. Putting the lamps in order would include lighting them as well as pinching off the charred end of the wick. Not until after lighting them did the foolish virgins realize they had neglected to "fill their lamps." There would be enough of the oil still retained in the wicks to start the light, but in a short while they would begin to grow dim. *Gone out* is rendered "going out" in the margin which is correct. When the flame began to go down they realized what was the trouble and appealed to the wise virgins for oil from their vessels.

Verse 9. The capacity of the old style lamp was limited and it would have been foolish for the wise to reduce their supply at the last moment.

Verse 10. Ordinary judgment should have told these virgins that it was too late to go on a shopping errand, especially at that time of night. The approach of the bridegroom had been announced with an urgent clamor which indicated that the preparatory period was over and that the event of the hour was about to start.

Verse 11. The word *Lord* is erroneously capitalized which indicates that it means Christ. The person referred to was the one having charge of the wedding activities, and the term as used by the virgins was one of respect only.

Verse 12. *I know you not* denotes he did not recognize them as being entitled to be present at the wedding. The approach of the bridegroom had been announced in no uncertain terms, and these people should have been already there if they were among the invited guests. Coming after the door was closed indicated to this master of ceremonies that they were would-be intruders who were coming out of a wrong motive.

Verse 13. *Watch therefore* are the words that express the lesson intended by the parable. It is the same that was set forth by the parable of the unfaithful servant in the closing verses of the preceding chapter.

Verse 14. Jesus spoke another parable that teaches the duties of the Lord's servants from another angle. Note that the man delivered unto his servants *his* (the man's) goods. In 1 Timothy 6: 7 Paul says "we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." On that basis we should realize that what

is in our hands does not belong to us, but it is delivered to us as a trust which the parable shows.

Verse 15. *Talent* is from TALANTON and Thayer defines it, "The scale of a balance, a balance, a pair of scales; a talent." He also explains it to mean, "a weight, varying in different places and times; a sum of money weighing a talent and varying in different states and according to the changes in the laws regulating the currency." The specific value of the talent is of no importance for the purpose of the parable. It is used merely as a means of expressing the different degrees of responsibility of the servants. Note the different amounts delivered to the servants was based on *his several ability*. The lord knew the abilities of his servants and assigned to them the tasks that corresponded with their ability.

Verses 16, 17. Each of these men did exactly the same thing with the money entrusted to him. By *trading* or making the proper use of the money they doubled it.

Verse 18. The only comment I will make here on the third man, is that he at least did not misuse or lose it; further comments will be made at verse 25.

Verse 19. *Reckoneth with them* means he called upon them for a report.

Verse 20. The only report this man could or needed to make was that he had doubled his lord's money, and had the extra talents to show for it.

Verse 21. *Good and faithful* are the words that signify the lesson in the parable. Jesus combines the application with the telling of the parable by stating the reward awaiting the faithful servant. That reward will be to enter into the joy of his Lord, which means the joy provided by the Lord to be shared together in heaven.

Verse 22. This servant's report was exactly the same kind as that of the first one, namely, that he had doubled his lord's money by trading.

Verse 23. It is significant that each of these two men received the same sentence from their lord, notwithstanding there was a great material difference in the amounts they had to return to him. But each servant was *faithful* to the trust bestowed upon him, which is the basis on which man will be judged at the last day. Some men have more ability than others and hence they will be required

to accomplish more. But if everyone is faithful to the extent of his power and opportunity he will receive the one and only reward in store, which is the entrance into the joy of the Lord.

Verse 24. Every one of the charges this servant made against his lord was false. He made them as a basis for his failure to do anything with the money that was put into his hands. But while they were false accusations, they will be turned against him as we shall see at verse 27.

Verse 25. This verse illustrates what may be called negative goodness in the light of some theories. There are multitudes who think they can expect to be saved by merely abstaining from active wrong doing. That if they avoid doing anything at all they certainly could not be accused of doing any wrong act. The man with one talent seems to have taken that view of the case. But there are many passages that condemn the sin of omission, such as Hebrews 2: 3. This man thought that by burying the money it would be preserved for its owner. Even if that could have been accomplished with literal money, the rule will not hold good in the application. A man's talent will not remain fixed as to quality while in this world. If it is not put to good use, it will be corrupted by contact with the evil elements around it.

Verse 26. This servant was both *wicked* and *slothful*; wicked in making false accusations against his lord, and slothful in being indolent to do something with the money. *Thou knewest*, etc., does not mean that his lord admitted the accusations, but used them as a basis for the condemnation in the following verse.

Verse 27. *Oughtest therefore*. If this lord was as exacting as the servant pretended to think he was, that was one great reason he should have been eager to do something that would satisfy him and hence avoid receiving his severe rebuke and sentence. *Exchanger* is from TRAPEZITES which Thayer defines, "A money-changer, broker, banker, one who exchanges money for a fee, and pays interest on deposits." Such a business in Palestine was occasioned by the coming of people from various countries. Their money was not good in the local markets, which made it necessary to exchange it for current money of Palestine. *Usury* is the interest these exchangers would pay local citizens who

were willing to lay their money on the banker's table to be used in the exchange business. In the spiritual application it means that if we make the proper use of the opportunities the Lord has furnished us, we will become better and improve as the years go by. The third man was not condemned for not having as much to give his lord, but for not having any interest at all. In other words, he was condemned on the principle of being unfaithful to the trust that was given over to him.

Verse 28. The lord wished his money to be put to some use so as to bring him proper returns. The man with the ten talents at hand when the accounting was made had proved his good business judgment and hence was entrusted with this other one.

Verse 29. *Hath not, he hath* might seem to be contradictory terms, but in the language of monetary dealings they are not. The second term is the principal and the first is the interest. Since the man had no interest to show, he was not allowed to retain the principal. In the spiritual application if a man does not make good use of his opportunity while in this life, he will not have another privilege. (Revelation 22: 11.)

Verse 30. No earthly lord ever treated his servants as this verse indicates. It is the conclusion that Jesus makes to the lesson of the parable. For *weeping and gnashing of teeth* see the comments on chapter 24: 51.

Verse 31. Many of the passages of a descriptive character in the Bible are worded like the transactions of men. We know from all the direct teaching of the New Testament that Christ will be the sole judge of the human family (Acts 17: 31) at the day of final accounts. No conversation or other participation will be allowed upon the part of human beings. Therefore all the parables and other passages that speak of such actions are used figuratively. They truly represent what would be the result were the mentioned conversations to be permitted. But aside from such parts of the various descriptions, the direct predictions will take place. For instance, the Son of man will actually come with the angels (2 Thessalonians 1: 7), and will sit upon the *throne of his glory* which means the throne of judgment.

Verse 32. *All nations* denotes that no human beings will escape the judgment bar of God, in which He will have seated his Son as the sole judge.

The people will be divided into only two groups, for all human creatures will belong to one or the other, no third group. The reference to sheep and goats is for an illustration only. It is based on the practice of a shepherd who is getting ready to lead his flock into a fold for permanent shelter. While out over the fields some goats may have straggled in among the sheep, and the shepherd would not want them in his fold.

Verse 33. There is no moral value of a man's right hand over his left, but the separation had to be made and the assignment to these respective hands is so worded for its psychological effect.

Verse 34. While Jesus will be the judge, he will pronounce sentence in harmony with the wishes of his Father who has created and prepared all good things. *Foundation* is from KATABOLE, defined in Thayer's lexicon, "a founding," and that means the starting of something. World means the universe in general, but has special reference to the orderly arrangement of things that were intended for the occupancy of man. God intended from the start to have a place of joy and happiness into which the creature man would be admitted after qualifying himself for it. It will be the inheritance of this place (here called a kingdom) that the royal judge will invite the righteous to have.

Verse 35. See the comments at chapter 13: 3 on the scope of the parables. In the present one Jesus had only one point to impress which will be brought out as the comments proceed. But as it is in most of them, the whole story must be told to make the point of application clear. Administering food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty would be classed among "good works" as that term is commonly used. Hospitality is likewise so considered according to Hebrews 13: 2.

Verse 36. Clothing the naked and visiting ("looking after") the sick are both among good works pertaining to our relation with each other. *In prison* does not mean in the sense of a penal institution; at least it was not being used as such in this case, because it was the disciple of Jesus who was there. It means a guard house in which the enemy was confining a captive for the purpose of persecution. If the disciple was in a regular penal structure he was placed there on a false accusation. The case of Paul in

Rome (2 Timothy 1: 16-18) is not exactly in point, for he was in his own hired house. Yet he was a virtual prisoner because he was chained to an officer, and while in that situation the disciple Onesiphorus "came unto him."

Verses 37-39. The righteous will think that Jesus meant all these things were done for him personally. They did not remember having any such experiences and made inquiry as to when it was to which he referred.

Verse 40. This verse tells us the main object of the parable. Jesus is not on earth in person and hence we cannot show him such personal favors as these good sheep are said to have done. But his disciples who are his and our brethren are here, and we always have opportunities for doing them good. (See Galatians 6: 10.)

Verse 41. The extent of this *everlasting fire* will be explained at verse 46. But for the present it should be noted that it was not originally designed for man, but for the devil and his angels. These angels evidently mean the fallen angels who had sinned and were cast down from heaven (2 Peter 2: 4; Jude 6).

Verses 42, 43. The same list of good works is named in the sentence against the folks on the left hand as was said to the others. It might be well to note that these people were not condemned because of any wicked thing they had done. See the comments on verse 25 about the negative principle in the conduct of life.

Verses 44, 45. The ones on the left will have the same misunderstanding about the personal treatment that the others had, and they will be given the same explanation. They might have sometimes professed an interest in the needs of their brethren, but their expressions of sympathy were not accompanied with anything practical and hence no good was accomplished. In James 2: 14-16 is a statement on this angle of the subject.

Verse 46. *These* means the ones on the left hand of the king and the *righteous* are the ones on the right. *Punishment* is from KOLASIS which Thayer defines, "correction, punishment, penalty." Such words do not indicate a condition where the victim is unconscious or has been annihilated as certain persons teach. *Everlasting* and *eternal* are both from AIONIOS which Thayer defines, "Without end,

never to cease, everlasting." This definition applies to the word that is used to describe the future state of both the saved and the unsaved. Whatever can be said as to the duration of the eternal life of the saved, applies with equal force to the duration of the punishment of the unsaved. No man who professes to believe the Bible will say that eternal life will ever end, so neither can he consistently say that the punishment of the unsaved will ever end. Both classes will exist consciously in their respective circumstances without end.

## MATTHEW 26

Verse 1. *All these sayings* refers to the speeches Jesus made to his disciples following his last visit to the temple. His work on earth was about to come to an end and he turned his attention to the events that were soon to come.

Verse 2. The passover was a feast of the Jews that was instituted in Egypt on the night of the slaying of the firstborn of the Egyptians (Exodus 12). It became one of the annual feasts of the nation at which time all the males were required to go to the city of Jerusalem where it was celebrated in commemoration of the Egyptian event. *After two days* would come the regular date which was Friday, the 14th day of the 1st month. Jesus and his apostles ate the feast two days before the regular time. As proof of this, the italicized words above indicates it, and John 18: 28 records a statement that shows the Jews had not yet eaten of the passover, although it was the day after Jesus and his apostles had eaten theirs. There was a reason for his observing it at this time for he knew that he was to die the next day and hence would not get to partake of it if he waited for the established time. This should not confuse us any in view of the emergency, and also the authority of Jesus. Chapter 12: 8 states that the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath, and he certainly is Lord of other days also.

Verse 3. *Then assembled* means a gathering of the members of the Sanhedrin, the highest court of the Jews in the time of Christ. The word is usually rendered "council" in the New Testament, but it is sometimes referred to as an assembly as it is in this verse. The word is from the Greek, SUNEDRION which Thayer defines,



"Any assembly (especially of magistrates, judges, ambassadors), whether convened to deliberate or to pass judgment; in the Scriptures 1. any session of persons deliberating or adjudicating [judging]. 2. specifically, the Sanhedrin, the great council at Jerusalem." He follows his definition with the following information. "Consisting of seventy-one members, viz., scribes and elders, prominent members of the high-priestly families (hence called . . .), and the high-priest, the president of the body. The fullest periphrasis [wordy description] for Sanhedrin is found in Matthew 26: 3; Mark 14: 43, 53. The more important causes were brought before this tribunal, inasmuch as the Roman rulers of Judea had left to it the power of trying such cases, and also of pronouncing sentence of death, with the limitation that a capital sentence pronounced by the Sanhedrin was not valid unless it were confirmed by the Roman procurator [an agent]. The Jews trace the origin of the Sanhedrin to Numbers 11: 16." All of this information from Thayer is important, and the reader should make a note of it for ready reference, for the subject will be mentioned several times in the New Testament study.

Verse 4. We have learned in the preceding paragraph that the Sanhedrin could not lawfully put anyone to death. That is the reason the Jews had this consultation to devise some plot to kill Jesus by a trick of subtilty.

Verse 5. The Jews were not concerned about disturbing the holy feast, but wished to avoid any conflict with the people. In other words, they were acting on policy more than on principle and wished to retain their popularity.

Verse 6. The writer now goes back a few days to relate some incidents that happened while Jesus was in Bethany. In chapter 21: 17 is the account of his going out to that village nearby where he lodged over night. In John's account (John 12: 1, 2) we are told that when he was there a supper was made in his honor, which our present verse says was in the house of Simon the leper. The law of Moses required a leper to dwell apart from society (Leviticus 13: 46), hence we should conclude that Simon had been miraculously cured by the Lord, and he was designated "the leper" to distinguish him from several other men with the same name.

Verse 7. According to John 12: 3 this woman was Mary a sister of Lazarus. Funk and Wagnalls Standard Bible Dictionary says the following of this box. "Alabaster (origin of the word unknown): Mineral carbonate of lime. A white stone much used in antiquity to ornament buildings and for vases and small bottles for holding precious ointment." Mark 14: 3 says the woman broke the box and poured the ointment on his head. No reason is given for breaking the box, but at least it shows she intended to use all the ointment.

Verse 8. According to John 12:4-6 it was Judas who made the complaint. And the same passage explains his motive to have been a selfish one. John calls him a thief and Jesus calls him a devil in John 6: 70, all of which accounts for his conduct.

Verse 9. It was true that such a product was costly (about fifty dollars' worth) to be used in what might have been considered an unprofitable way. But it was not really his thoughts of economy that caused Judas to make his remark. He was a covetous man and it hurt him to see that much value bestowed upon another.

Verse 10. *Good work* is used in the sense of a good act or deed, not so much as a manual effort which we know it was not. What constituted this a good deed will be explained in the comments on verse 12.

Verse 11. Jesus did not criticize the idea of giving something to the poor. He instructed the rich young man (chapter 19: 21) to give his possessions to the poor. Neither did he question the motive of Judas in making his complaint. He left that subject for some other to do as John did in the passage cited at verse 8. But he made a statement that pertained to the subject of using present opportunities that are soon to pass. He was to leave the world in a short time and that would stop all chances of doing him a bodily favor, while they would never cease to have the opportunity of helping the poor.

Verse 12. *For my burial*. It was an old custom to anoint the dead and use spices at the time of burial. (See 2 Chronicles 16: 14; John 19: 40; Luke 23: 56). Mark 14: 8 quotes Jesus as saying, "She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying." Since it was customary to bestow such treatment on the human body it would be

regarded as a good deed to perform it. Mary evidently believed that she would not have as good an opportunity for this service if she waited until after the death of Jesus. However, whether this tells the motive for her coming beforehand or not, the mere desire to do honor to the body of her Lord was regarded favorably. This subject furnishes us with some suggestions concerning an inquiry often heard as to whether the use of flowers and other items on funeral occasions is right. Of course all good things are liable to abuse, and the extravagant spending of money for flowers is wrong. But we have convincing proof that it is proper to give respectful attention to the body because it is made in the image of the Creator. Any unnecessary mutilation of the body, therefore, would be wrong, which would condemn the desecrating act of cremation.

Verse 13. This means that the deed of the woman would become a part of the Gospel record and hence would be mentioned wherever the sacred book went.

Verse 14. The covetous heart of Judas was evidently stirred by the "waste" of something that would have brought in a goodly sum of money, and since it was bestowed upon Jesus, the thought occurred to him that he could recover some of it by betraying him to the Jews for money.

Verse 15. He asked the priests to make him an offer for which he would carry out the wicked deed. They *covenanted* (contracted) to give him thirty pieces of silver. According to the Oxford Cyclopedic Concordance it would be about twenty dollars today.

Verse 16. Immediately after the bargain was made, Judas watched for an opportunity to fulfill it by pointing Jesus out in the way stated in verse 48.

Verse 17. Matthew resumes his history at the place where he left it at verse 5. *Feast of unleavened bread.* The 14th day of the first month was the time of the passover (Exodus 12: 6), and it was to be eaten with unleavened bread (verse 8). And the seven days following were also days in which they were to eat unleavened bread (Leviticus 23: 5, 6). For more details about these days of unleavened bread, see the comments at Exodus 12: 15 and Leviticus 23: 6, 7 in volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary. Jesus and his apostles ate their passover two days before the regular time

(verse 2), and hence all the other items as to dates were set back correspondingly. The entire eight days beginning with the 14th came to be referred to as the feast of unleavened bread, so that the day of the passover (14th) would be called *the first day of unleavened bread* as we see it here; hence these italicized words apply to Christ and his apostles only in this place and the like statements in the other Gospels accounts. This being a special date for them, the disciples wished some instructions where to arrange for the passover, knowing Jesus would not eat it in any public place with the Jews.

Verse 18. Jesus directed them to go to a certain man in the city and deliver the request of their Master to him. Notice Jesus called it *my time*; that is, his time of crucifixion was at hand and he needed to eat the passover that evening. Also, since it was a special date, he wanted to eat it in a private house and hence made the request for the use of this man's house to be occupied by him and his apostles.

Verse 19. *Made ready the passover.* Jesus and his disciples were under the law of Moses and of course they made this preparation according to the directions recorded. Exodus 12: 5-9 has its first application in Egypt which was before the law was given from Sinai, but the same regulations were followed afterward. That means the disciples prepared the animal as directed, and also procured a supply of unleavened bread.

Verse 20. One of the great advantages of having more than one account of the life of Christ is the fact that the same details are not given in all of them. The things that happened on this last night of Christ before his death are not given in strict chronological order. For the convenience of the reader I shall write a list of references, and if he will read them in exactly the order as given he will have a connected record of what took place on that night. Luke 22: 14-18; 21-23; John 13: 23-30; Luke 22: 19, 20. It is important that the passages be read just as the references show, not taking in a single verse not indicated nor leaving out one. I shall now comment on the verses of this chapter in their order. *Even* is from *opsios* and has a somewhat indefinite meaning as to any exact hour, but all lexicons agree that it means toward the end of the day.

Verse 21. Jesus had divine knowledge and hence was aware of the intentions of Judas.

Verse 22. *They were exceeding sorrowful.* This was a sincere sorrow on the part of all except the guilty one, for he could not have any sorrow (at this time) for something that he was wanting to do.

Verse 23. The apostles had asked Jesus who was going to betray him but he did not answer them all. According to John 13: 22-26 John was leaning on Jesus' bosom and hence was near him. Peter beckoned to him to ask Jesus who it was, and when Jesus told him, Judas did not hear the answer. The answer was accompanied with the act of dipping a piece of bread in the dish containing the flesh and its broth. Jesus reached into the dish at the same time that Judas did, which was the sign to the other apostles that answered their question of who was to be the betrayer.

Verse 24. *Son of man goeth.* The last word is from HUPAGO which Thayer defines at this place, "To withdraw one's self, to go away, depart." Jesus knew that it was destined for him to leave the world through the treachery of one of his professed friends (Psalms 41: 9). However, this decree against him was not to relieve the perpetrator of the deed from the guilt of wrong doing. We have learned that Judas was called a thief and a devil before he had ever performed this evil deed (John 6: 70; 12: 6), hence it did not change his character in the least for God to use him as the agent in the necessary act. *Woe to that man.* Why pronounce a woe upon Judas if he was selected as this agent, is a natural inquiry. It was because of his motive in doing it, which was to obtain some money to gratify his covetous heart. Another thing, even this deed would not need to have caused him to be lost. The Jews on the day of Pentecost were accused of murdering Jesus, yet they were given the opportunity of obeying the Gospel for the remission of their sins. If Judas who was guilty only of betraying Christ, had repented from a godly sorrow and obeyed the Gospel he could have been saved also. But Jesus knew he would not do this, hence he made the prediction of this verse.

Verse 25. Judas could not have asked the question for information, for he had already contracted with the chief priests to betray his Lord. All

of the others had asked the same question and if he kept silent it would be so conspicuous that his guilt would be manifest to all in the group.

Verse 26. *Blessed* is from EULOGEO and Thayer defines it in this passage, "To praise, celebrate with praises." We should understand, therefore, that it does not mean to bestow some miraculous quality upon the bread. The conclusion is strengthened by the giving of thanks for the cup, and we know that the cup is as important as the bread. If the bread required some miraculous quality to be given to it to produce the desired effect on the communicants, then surely the cup would have also required something more than the simple act of thanksgiving. *Break* is from KLAO which is defined by Thayer, "To break," and he then adds the comment, "used in the New Testament of the breaking of bread." He also cites Matthew 14: 19; 15: 36, and other places where we know it refers to the act of dividing a loaf so that more than one person could properly partake of it. Thus we see the word has no religious significance, but states what is a physical necessity in order that the communicants could *eat* of it which is the only religious phase about the handling of the bread. *This is my body.* The Romanists insist that this statement must be taken literally and not to be understood in the sense of the bread as only a representation of his body. That reasoning would make nonsense of the other passages where the language is just as direct. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 10: 4 where Paul is speaking of the Israelites in the wilderness and of their drinking of a rock, he says "that rock was Christ." The record of that event is in Exodus 17: 6 where Moses literally smote a literal rock and thus provided drinking water for the congregation. We know that rock was only a piece of material, so that the statement of Paul means it was a type or representation of Christ who furnishes water of spiritual life. On the same principle, the bread represents the body of Christ because his body had to be given to provide spiritual food for mankind.

Verse 27. It might be asked why the cup was not "blessed" if it is as important as the bread; it was. The definition of "blessed" is, "to praise, celebrate with praises," as may be seen in comments on the preceding verse. In thanking God for the cup one would thereby be praising it. Matthew uses

the two terms, blessed and thanks, as being the same in principle. *Drink ye* all of it means for all of them to drink of it. The priests of Rome insist on doing the drinking for the others, which is a contradiction of the instructions that Jesus gave to his disciples.

Verse 28. *Blood of the New Testament.* Under the Old Testament the blood that was shed was that of beasts, but the blood of the New was that of the Lamb of God. *Shed for many.* None but the Jews received the benefit of the blood shed in the animal sacrifices, while the blood of Christ offers benefits to the whole world (Romans 3: 25; 1 John 2: 2), which includes Jews and Gentiles without distinction.

Verse 29. The passages cited at verse 20 show that when Jesus spoke the words of this verse they were still in the passover feast, and hence he said them before verses 26-28 of the present chapter. Therefore, when the fruit of the vine was served in the institution of the Lord's supper he did not partake. That would be appropriate, for that supper was to celebrate the death of Christ (1 Corinthians 11: 26), and a man would not be expected to memorialize his own death. *Until I drink it new in my Father's kingdom.* Yes, Jesus does partake of the cup, but it is in a spiritual sense only. When disciples are eating and drinking of the Lord's supper he is present in spirit even as he promised that he would be (chapter 18: 20).

Verse 30. According to Thayer and Robinson this hymn was one of the Psalms of David. The mount of Olives was the site of Gethsemane which will be explained at verse 36.

Verse 31. While on their way to the mount of Olives Jesus said many things to his apostles. Chapters 14, 15, 16 and 17 of John were spoken as they were going, but Matthew records only what is in verses 31-35. *Shall be offended* or be caused to stumble. It means that something was going to happen that would cause them to falter in their devotion to Christ. This lack of devotion was to be manifested by the fact of their deserting him and fleeing. Jesus said it was written and we may read the prediction in Zechariah 13: 7.

Verse 32. *After I am risen* explains what Jesus meant in the preceding verse by being smitten. The stroke was to be so severe that it would cause his death, but he predicted that he was to rise from the dead.

Verse 33. Peter was a man of an impulsive temperament and inclined to make rash statements and to perform rash acts, such as that recorded in John 18: 10. The emphatic statement recorded here, therefore, is not surprising or should not be.

Verse 34. Jesus made a specific prediction of what Peter would do; not only specific as to the act but also as to the time of the night in which it would occur.

Verse 35. Even the pointed predictions of Jesus did not calm the rash spirit of Peter, but he repeated his declaration with an added item, that he would die before he would betray Jesus. His enthusiastic vows seemed to affect the other disciples for they all repeated his declaration.

Verse 36. The journey from the upper room and the passover to the garden of Gethsemane was ended. When they reached the border of the garden Jesus instructed the group to be seated while he went on farther to pray. I shall quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary on the item of Gethsemane. "A small 'garden,' Matthew 26: 36; Mark 14: 32, situated across the brook Kedron, John 18: 1, probably at the foot of Mount Olivet, Luke 22: 39, to the northwest and about one-half or three-quarters of a mile English from the walls of Jerusalem, and 100 yards east of the bridge over the Kedron. There was a 'garden' or rather an orchard, attached to it, to which the olive, fig and pomegranate doubtless invited resort by their hospitable shade."

Verse 37. Leaving the most of the group at the place where they first paused, Jesus took with him Peter and the sons of Zebedee (James and John), and went on into the garden with them. The humanity in his nature now began to manifest itself which caused him to be sorrowful and heavy hearted.

Verse 38. Jesus expressed his feelings to the three disciples and told them to tarry there while he stepped aside to pray. *Sorrowful, even unto death.* This is a highly colored figure of speech, meaning that he felt sad enough to die.

Verse 39. Having asked the three disciples to tarry and watch, Jesus wished to be alone with his Father and hence went a little farther away from them before beginning his prayer. He prayed that *this cup* might pass

from him if it was the will of his Father. A common error in the comments heard today is to apply this cup to the suffering and death on the cross. Jesus rebuked Peter for thinking he could rescue him from that cup (John 18: 11), saying that the cup of death was necessary to fulfill the scripture. He certainly would not ask the Father, then, to save him from it. No, the *cup* to which he referred was *this cup*, meaning the present agony through which he was going. That cup of agony is forcefully described in Luke 22: 40-44. Jesus only asked that he be spared the terrible nervous agitation which he was at that time enduring. But it was not God's will to spare his Son even that much, so he was compelled to go through with it, until his agony brought out the great drops of sweat that was likened to thickened blood.

Verse 40. After his first prayer Jesus came back to the three disciples and found them asleep. We might wonder why he did not rebuke them more severely, but Luke 22: 45 says they were "sleeping for sorrow." Even that should have been overcome by the spirit of watchfulness, but at least we are pleased that it was not from indifference.

Verse 41. *Watch and pray* denotes the two sides of the scheme of salvation, the human and the divine. Watching is a duty of man in order that he may not be overtaken or surprised by temptation. (See Galatians 6: 1.) While doing what is humanly possible, it is proper to look for help from God if man goes to Him in prayer. *Spirit* and *flesh* are the two parts of a human being; the first is the inner man and the other is the outer. The first is inclined to the better way of life and the other is more inclined to evil. A good picture of these two is presented in Romans 7: 15-25.

Verse 42. Notice Jesus says *this* cup which denotes something present with him then. See the comments on the subject at verse 39.

Verse 43. The eyes of the disciples were heavy with the fatigue of sorrow.

Verse 44. Jesus prayed three times and each time his prayer was on the same subject. His persistence was on the principle that faith should be enduring and not inclined to give up easily. See the teaching on this subject in Luke 18: 1-8. It should be noted that each of the prayers was made on condition that they were as God willed.

Verse 45. Jesus perceived the depressed condition of his disciples and decided to let them sleep undisturbed for a little while since the critical hour was about on hands. *Is betrayed* is in the present tense as to grammatical form but really means "is to be betrayed." Yet it is put in this form to indicate the event was very near.

Verse 46. We do not know how much time passed between this and the preceding verse. It could not have been long, yet there was enough time for the disciples to get a short but undisturbed nap. Jesus saw Judas and the crowd with him approaching, and roused the disciples from their sleep.

Verse 47. Jesus was concluding his speech to the disciples when Judas arrived in his immediate presence. To avoid confusion as to why he was not with the group of disciples that Jesus left at the border of the garden, the reader should see the passages, cited at verse 20. He should particularly note from John 13: 30 that Judas left them while the passover was still taking place, hence he was never near them again until the present verse. *Staves* is from a Greek word that means "clubs," and the possession of such weapons indicated an attitude of cruelty and disrespect. Even an ordinary policeman usually refrains from using his club (billy) unless there is resistance, but Jesus had never even indicated that he would "resist arrest" as a guilty lawbreaker might do. No wonder he asked them (Luke 22: 52) if they thought they had to deal with him as they would a thief.

Verse 48. *Hold him fast*. Judas had no doubt of the ability of Jesus to escape from the hand of the mob and really expected him to do so. Then if the priests complained of their loss and demanded the recovery of the money on a pretense of fraud, he could remind them of his warning and thus reject their complaint. Had things turned out as he expected, Judas would have procured the money which his covetous heart craved, and at the same time Jesus would not have been any worse off.

Verse 49. *Hail* means a salutation that comes from a Greek word denoting a friendly greeting that includes good wishes. It is as if Judas had said, "Master, I give you my good wishes for your happiness," and then pretended to verify his wishes by a kiss.

Verse 50. *Friend* is from *ETAIROS* which Thayer defines, "a comrade, mate, partner." *Wherefore* is from some Greek terms that virtually mean "for what purpose." The verse denotes as if Jesus said, "Judas, we have been comrades for over three years, then why is it that you come to me in this manner?" Just then the mob took charge of Jesus.

Verse 51. John 18:10 tells us it was Peter who made this attack on the servant.

Verse 52. Some people use this verse to condemn capital punishment, but instead of condemning it the opposite is true. To *take the sword* under the circumstances where Peter did is the act of a private, unofficial man. Had he gone to the limit in his act it would have caused the death of the servant and that would have made him a murderer since he did not represent the law. And if that had occurred, Jesus said that he should himself have perished with the sword, that being one of the means of lawfully executing a murderer under the criminal law of the land.

Verse 53. Had it been right to defend Jesus with force, he could have prayed his Father who would have sent him twelve legions (about 72,000) of angels.

Verse 54. But if that had been done it would have prevented the scripture prophecies of his death from being fulfilled. Jesus knew all through his life that he was to die as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, to replace the animal sacrifices of the Mosaic system and make one offering for all time (Hebrews 10:1-5).

Verse 55. Jesus rebuked the mob for coming out against him armed as if he were a thief. He reminded them of former opportunities of taking him and they did not do so nor even try to. All this showed their evil motive in the present movement.

Verse 56. Matthew is making the statements in this and the following verses. He is telling us that the deeds of this crowd were done in fulfillment of the predictions in the scriptures. The rebuke that Jesus gave Peter, also his submission to the attacks of the mob, seemed to dishearten all the disciples so that they *forsook him and fled*. By that act they fulfilled the predictions in Isaiah 53:3 and Zechariah 13:7.

Verse 57. *Led him away to Caiaphas.*

John 18:13 says they led him to Annas first who was the father-in-law of the high priest. Just what official position (if any) this Annas had at this time is a disputed point. But he was a former high priest and perhaps as a preliminary hearing Jesus was taken before him through respect for his former position, and in view of his relation to Caiaphas.

Verse 58. Peter's curiosity prompted him to follow Jesus as they led him away to the officers. But he also began to show the cowardice which he afterward displayed in the court by following Jesus *afar off*. He wanted to be near enough to see what was going on but not so near as to be suspected of being connected with him in any way that might be embarrassing or endanger his own life and liberty.

Verse 59. The persons referred to here were leading men of the Jews who composed the *council* (Sanhedrin). The description of this court and the extent of its powers may be seen at verse 3. Before they could obtain any action from the Roman court, the Sanhedrin must first try and condemn the prisoner. *Sought false witness* is very significant. They knew that nothing could be said truthfully against Jesus, hence they would have to rely on witnesses who were willing to give false testimony.

Verse 60. *But found none*. That is, no man was willing to testify to any act on the part of Jesus that would have made him guilty of a capital offence under the law of Moses. However, at last two witnesses came forward who said they had something to offer the court about the prisoner.

Verse 61. The testimony of these had nothing to do with any capital offence. Had Jesus said what they claimed, it still would not have made him guilty of anything serious, but only a claim as to what he said he could do if he chose. But even this was false, for he never said anything like what they affirmed. Another thing, according to Mark 14:59, even these two witnesses disagreed with each other, and that would have thrown their testimony out of court had it been even on the subject of capital offences. According to Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15 there must be at least two witnesses who testify to the same thing before a man could be condemned to death.

Verse 62. The high priest was surprised that Jesus did not make any



reply to the testimony of these witnesses. He tried to get him to say something or other but failed.

Verse 63. *But Jesus held his peace.* There is a familiar rule that "silence gives consent" which would mean that if a man refused to deny a charge made against him it was taken as an admission of guilt. Under most circumstances that would be true, but Jesus knew he was bound to be condemned to die regardless of whether he replied or not. Besides, the pretended testimony was so ridiculous and contradictory that he considered it as beneath his dignity, hence he treated their statements with silent contempt. For an officer to *adjure* another person means to place him under oath. The high priest did this to Jesus and placed him under oath *by the living God*. Having bound Jesus with such an oath he asked him *whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God*. This introduced another subject, different from the one for which he was supposed to be brought into the council. The question pertained to his divinity and hence was a vital one, being the central fact of the entire system that Jesus was introducing into the world. Of course he would not be silent on that and his answer will be given in the next verse.

Verse 64. *Thou hast said* is an affirmative answer to the question of the high priest. *Nevertheless* is used in the sense of "moreover, furthermore," etc. It thus is not a restriction on or modification of what was just said, but introduced additional thoughts. Jesus did not stop with merely answering the question about his divinity, but announced some things that were to happen because of his divine Sonship with God. *Ye shall see* agrees with Revelation 1: 7 which says that *every eye* shall see him when he comes to the earth again. The prediction was a blow to the pride of the high priest, not because he was told that he would see Jesus when he comes, but because it predicted that he (Jesus) was to occupy a throne of glory. The high priest was at that very hour presiding in a meeting that was prejudiced against the prisoner, and he as president had manifested his sympathy with the accusers.

Verse 65. Decisions of the Sanhedrin were to be made by the vote of the members who should be uninfluenced by any interested person. The high priest violated the rules of justice

by announcing a conclusion ("he hath spoken blasphemy") before they had voted.

Verse 66. With such a breach of justice to influence them, it is no wonder that the assembly answered the question of the high priest as they did. It was all the more to be expected when their own personal sentiments were previously set against the prisoner because of his frequent rebukes of their wicked lives. *He is guilty of death* means that he is guilty of a crime that calls for the death penalty. Under the law of Moses a man who was guilty of blasphemy against God was to be put to death (Leviticus 24: 16). Jesus was not guilty, but the high priest had pronounced him so, hence the way was opened for the assembly, which was overwhelmingly moved by the spirit of a mob, to agree with the decision of the president and condemn the prisoner.

Verse 67. The Sanhedrin could pronounce a sentence of death but it could not execute it, hence they gratified their wicked hearts by this contemptible treatment of Jesus. According to Numbers 12: 14 and Deuteronomy 25: 9 it was regarded as a disgrace to have another spit in one's face. Thayer says to buffet means "to strike with the fist, give one a blow with the fist," which would be intended to cause pain. To smite with the open hand was not so much to cause pain as it was to treat with contempt.

Verse 68. *Prophecy* is from PROPHETEVO which Thayer defines at this place, "To utter forth, declare, a thing which can only be known by divine revelation." In a crowded condition no one person would be distinctly visible so that the belittling act of slapping with the hand could be done without its being seen as to who really did it. (See Mark 5: 27-31.) This act was an unmanly challenging of Christ's knowledge.

Verse 69. *Sat without in the palace* We should remember that the present session of the Sanhedrin was held in the headquarters of the high priest (verse 57). *Palace* is a somewhat indefinite word in the Bible, but a common view of it is a building surrounded with an uncovered court. Sometimes the word is used to designate the building only, and at others it means the courtyard around it; the session of the Sanhedrin was held in the building. *Peter sat without in the palace* means he was out in the courtyard of

the palace. The text does not tell us why the damsel asked Peter the question, but the same thing was asked him by another damsel, and still one of the crowd asked this question. All of them received the same negative answer, hence it is reasonable to conclude it was a part of the Lord's plan to bring about the threefold denial that was predicted in verse 34. This question about Peter's being *with* Jesus and the cowardly denial is significant, and shows that the fact of association with another makes him a partaker of whatever he is doing. (See Romans 1: 32.) Of course Jesus was not doing anything wrong, and if Peter had been true to his profession so strongly expressed in verses 33-35, he would gladly have admitted his friendly association with the Lord and rejoiced in sharing in his persecutions. (See Acts 5: 41.)

Verse 70. Peter not only denied being an associate of Jesus, but uttered a falsehood by saying he did not know him. The fear of sharing in the persecutions of Jesus caused him to say this and thus added another sin to the ones previously committed.

Verse 71. This *porch* was a place a little further away from the main building. The statement of the first damsel alarmed him and he was induced to move farther away. But even at this place his presence was noticed and a maid connected him with Jesus.

Verse 72. Peter emphasized his denial this time with an oath.

Verse 73. We are not told which person did the speaking this time, only that it was someone of the group standing near. The statement was made in an argumentative mood which shows they had heard his former denials (verse 70). *Bewrayeth* is the same as saying his speech "gave him away" or proved him to be what they were saying. Different communities and groups had their own dialects or brogues in their conversation. These people knew the dialect of Jesus and recognized that of Peter as being the same.

Verse 74. This time Peter thought he should make his denial still more emphatic than he had the first two instances. *Curse* is from KATANATHEMATIZO which Thayer defines, "to call down direct evils on, to curse vehemently." *Swear* is from OMNURUI and the same lexicon defines it, "to swear; to affirm, promise, threaten, with an oath." The sentence means that Peter

expressed the wish that some great misfortune would come to him if what he said was not true. And to give force to his declaration he made an oath in connection with it. As soon as he had concluded his statement the cock crew. Mark 14: 30 says the cock would crow twice, but that Peter would make his third denial before the second crowing. Verse 72 of that chapter says the cock crew the second time after this third denial.

Verse 75. *And Peter remembered the word of Jesus.* Luke 22: 61 says that *the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.* The place where Jesus was being tried was so arranged that he could be seen from the space outside where Peter was. Jesus hence could be seen by the apostle, and when the cock crew the third time he turned and gave him an accusing look that reminded him of what was said in verse 34. This brought him to his better thinking and filled him with genuine sorrow (Godly sorrow, 2 Corinthians 7: 10); his immediate reaction was to go out from the crowd to himself and weep bitterly.

## MATTHEW 27

Verse 1. The Sanhedrin pronounced the death sentence against Jesus and that was as far as it could go under the power that the Roman government granted to it. The members of the court then consulted or planned the next move they would have to make to get this sentence affirmed by the officer who had the necessary power.

Verse 2. They *bound him* which was unnecessary as far as security of the prisoner was concerned, for Jesus had not given any indication of even wishing to escape. But it was customary to put some kind of shackle on a man who was a prisoner, and the feeling of this mob was such that it would certainly not make any exception of Jesus. *Pilate the governor* was an officer appointed by the Romans to represent the empire in parts of Palestine. His presence in Jerusalem at this time, and also some other useful information will be explained by a quotation from Smith's Bible Dictionary. "He was appointed A. D. 25-6, in the twelfth year of Tiberius. His arbitrary administration nearly drove the Jews to insurrection on two or three occasions. One of the first acts was to remove the headquarters of the army from Caesarea to Jerusalem.... It was the custom for the procurator

[governor or agent] to reside at Jerusalem during the great feasts, to preserve order, and accordingly, at the time of our Lord's last Passover, Pilate was occupying his official residence in Herod's palace. Caesarea was the official headquarters for the Roman government in Palestine, which accounts for the mention of Pilate's temporary presence in Jerusalem at this time.

Verse 3. *Condemn* is a legal and judicial term as used in this place. Thayer defines the original, "To give judgment against one, to judge worthy of punishment, to condemn." The word is stronger than a mere accusation and means that the case had been decided officially against Jesus and that no way could be used for him to escape death. Judas had not expected this to happen; see the comments on this subject at chapter 26: 48. The pronouns are to be understood as follows: "When he [Judas] saw that he [Jesus] was condemned." *Repented himself* does not mean that Judas had repented in the sense of "repentance unto salvation" (2 Corinthians 7: 10), for in that case his conduct afterward would have been righteous. Instead, it means he reversed the money part of the transaction by returning the pieces of silver.

Verse 4. Judas knew from the start that Jesus was innocent, but expected him to resort to his miraculous power to escape from the hands of the mob. He had a guilty conscience but it was overruled by the effect of his disappointment so that he did not have the moral courage to do the right thing. *What is that to us* means they were not concerned about the affairs of his conscience.

Verse 5. Casting the pieces of silver down in the temple indicated that Judas was offering the money to the sacred service as "conscience money."

Verse 6. The priests understood the purpose of Judas to be that the money was to be put into the treasury. They pretended to have great respect for the sacredness of the temple, notwithstanding they had treated the one who was "greater than the temple" (chapter 12: 6) with the deepest disrespect.

Verse 7. *Potter's field*. After all the clay suitable for the making of pottery has been taken from a field, the land is of little use and hence very cheap commercially. A plot of such land was bought with this money and devoted to the burying of strangers or persons unknown to the community. From this circumstance comes the name "potter's

field" today, a portion of cemetery grounds where poor people may bury their dead free of charge for the ground.

Verse 8. The *field of blood* was so called because it was purchased with the money that had been paid to Judas for his betrayal of Jesus. The priests had called it *the price of blood* (verse 6), and thought it was not fitting to put such "tainted money" into the treasury of the temple.

Verse 9. *Was spoken by Jeremy [Jeremiah] the prophet*. This prophecy is actually in the book of Zechariah, chapter 11: 13. Various explanations have been offered for this apparent contradiction, but I consider the most reasonable one to be that which is based on the outstanding prominence of Jeremiah. He was so highly respected that he was looked upon as a sort of "dean of prophets," and hence the prophecy was accredited to him in a complimentary or honorary sense.

Verse 10. *Lord appointed me*. The first person of the pronoun is used because the passage represents Christ as the speaker, and *the Lord* would be the Father who had appointed him to suffer this shame.

Verse 11. *Thou sayest* is equivalent to giving an affirmative answer. This conversation is referred to by Paul in 1 Timothy 6: 13 in which it is called "a good confession." This indicates that the confession required of men may be made in any form of speech that amounts to such a profession of faith.

Verse 12. *He answereth nothing*. This fulfilled Isaiah 53: 7, "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

Verses 13, 14. Pilate was surprised at the silence of Jesus in the face of accusations made by the chief priests. This was the same thing that happened in the presence of the high priest (chapter 26: 62).

Verse 15. *Governor was wont to release* means it was customary for him to do so. The feast of the passover was celebrated on the part of the civil powers by releasing a prisoner. There is little or no information available today as to when or how the custom started. Selection of the one to be favored was left to the voice of the people or unofficial crowd, not to the chief priests or other officers.

Verse 16. *They* means the people who had this prisoner in confinement

for the security of the public. He is said to have been a *notable* prisoner. Thayer says this word means "notorious, infamous" [of bad report]. This bad name is explained in Mark 15: 7 which says he had committed murder and insurrection in connection with others.

Verse 17. All of the pronouns in this verse refer to the *people*, described in verse 15. Since they were the ones who must name the prisoner to be released, it was necessary for Pilate to ask them this question. *Barabbas* or *Jesus*. Pilate believed that Jesus was innocent of the accusations being made against him, but he was powerless to make any decision in the matter. However, as a suggestion which he thought would influence the crowd in their decision, he named Barabbas and Jesus. This prisoner was such a wicked character that surely they would not want him turned loose upon society. He thought they would reason that "of two evils it is better to choose the lesser." If they would do this it would result in the discharge of Jesus without any responsibility on his (Pilate's) part. It is possible they would have done as Pilate expected had it not been for the fact that will be explained at verse 20.

Verse 18. *They* in this verse means the chief priests (Mark 15: 10) who had been responsible for the arrest of Jesus. Since that was the case Pilate thought the *people* would not be so prejudiced against him and would certainly vote in favor of his release rather than such a dangerous character as Barabbas.

Verse 19. There is nothing to indicate this to have been a miraculous dream. It is natural for the exciting events occurring in one's presence to make an impression on the mind, and that in turn would cause dreams to come in sleep. The innocence of Jesus was so evident that even this pagan wife of the governor was concerned about what might come to her husband if he should have any part in persecuting such a *just man*.

Verse 20. While Pilate was waiting for the decision of the crowd, the *chief priests and elders* were busy among them, using their persuasive powers to influence the decision. They were not permitted to have any public voice in the selection, hence they accomplished their wicked purpose by working on the *people* who did have such a voice.

Verse 21. Pilate repeated his question to the people. Acting upon the influence of the chief priests and elders, the crowd named Barabbas as the one to be released.

Verse 22. If such a notorious criminal as Barabbas was to be given his freedom, surely as just a man as Jesus would not be dealt with very severely, hence the somewhat challenging question was asked as to what should be done with the man who was called Christ. Their answer that he was to be crucified, was to carry out the sentence imposed by the Sanhedrin but which it did not have the authority to execute.

Verse 23. There is nothing in the text that indicates any knowledge on the part of Pilate as to the charge upon which Jesus had been brought into his court. It is true the crowd accused him of perverting the nation (Luke 23: 2), but that was not any authoritative testimony for it was made by this mob at the moment. According to Matthew 26: 64-66 the point at which the Sanhedrin voted Jesus guilty was when he claimed to be the Son of God. Pilate, however, did not know anything about that (as far as we know), hence it was logical for him to ask the crowd the question stated. They refused to answer Pilate's question although they knew the pretense the Sanhedrin used in rendering its verdict. But they also knew that such a decision would not have much weight in a secular court, hence they ignored the question of the governor and repeated their wicked demand instead.

Verse 24. Although Pilate was a Roman official, he was somewhat acquainted with the Jewish history because of the frequent appearances of the leading men of that nation in Roman affairs. In Deuteronomy 21 is a provision in the law to dispose formally of a case of death for which it was not known who was responsible. The elders of the city nearest the body that was found were technically held to be guilty, or at least to have guilty knowledge thereof. The Lord knew that in some cases this would be unjust toward innocent persons, so a ceremony was ordained that included the washing of the hands which settled the case and cleared them of all responsibility. Pilate thought he could use that ceremony and thus avoid all responsibility for the death of Jesus. He failed to consider, however, that

the Mosaic ceremony was in force only in cases where the elders actually were innocent or did not know anything about the case, while Pilate did have knowledge of the merits of the case and even had pronounced Jesus not guilty (Luke 23: 4). He therefore could not escape responsibility by this misuse of the law intended only for the protection of the innocent.

Verse 25. The people understood from this performance of Pilate that he was hesitating because of a conscientious regard for the possible results of turning Jesus over to crucifixion. In order to remove that obstacle and secure the desired decree, they uttered the awful statement, *His blood be on us, and on our children.* This rash sentence proved to be a prediction that was fulfilled forty years later. In the year 70 A. D. the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans and the Jewish people suffered untold miseries in the siege. That event was a part of the Roman military strategy, but God caused it to come upon the Jews because they had slain His own Son.

Verse 26. It was a custom with the Romans to scourge a prisoner who was to be executed. There were various methods of administering this punishment. Luke 23: 22 reveals that Pilate proposed to chastise Jesus and let him go. That would have been a compromise with the hopes of pacifying the Jews and yet not being so harsh upon Jesus. But the mob would not accept it, so Pilate followed the cruel practice and scourged Jesus, after which he turned him over to the mob to have him crucified.

Verse 27. Of course the people of the Jews could not personally perform this execution since they were not officers of the Roman government. That action was to be done by the soldiers, who took the victim into the *common hall* which the margin correctly renders "governor's house"; here they brought the entire band of soldiers. There was no need for such a military display for Jesus was not showing any disposition to resist. It was done through pomp and to humiliate the doomed man by their show of power.

Verse 28. *They stripped him.* This was after Jesus had been scourged, for that operation required that his clothing be removed first according to Smith's Bible Dictionary. This denotes that after the scourging was performed his clothing was replaced upon

his wounded body. Scarlet was one of the royal colors of Rome, and the placing of this robe on the body of Jesus after it had been stripped the second time, was in mockery because he had said he was a king.

Verse 29. The actions of this verse also were done in mockery of the claim of Jesus that he was a king of the Jews. For a crown they used *thorns*, which comes from the same Greek word as that used in chapter 13: 7. Thayer defines the word, "A thorn, bramble-bush, brier." It means something that was not visible at the time the sowing was done, for it was afterward that the thorns "sprang up." The plant used as a mocking as well as a painful article was the kind that could be *platted* or woven into a crown and then pressed down upon the head of Jesus. Kings usually hold a baton or rod in their hand which was called a scepter when so used, indicating the authority of the throne. For that purpose a *reed* was placed in his hand in mockery of his claim as king. Smith's Bible Dictionary gives the following information on the reed that grew in Palestine. "A stronger reed, *Arundo donax*, the true reed of Egypt and Palestine, which grows 8 or 10 feet high, and is thicker than a man's thumb. It has a jointed stalk like a bamboo, and is very abundant on the Nile." There is something very pathetic about this item of the mocking ceremony. The placing of a crown on the head would require only that Jesus would not resist, but to put a reed *in his right hand* would be possible only by his cooperation, for an object like that would have to be grasped in order for the act to be a success. All of this was in keeping with the prediction of nonresistance that was made in Isaiah 53: 7 and Acts 8: 32, 33. It is fitting that a king would be saluted respectfully in the manner described in this verse, but these wicked men did it in mockery.

Verse 30. Isaiah 53: 3 predicts that Jesus was to be "despised" which means to be treated with contempt or belittled. That was fulfilled when they *spit upon him*, which was done also when he was in the high priest's house (chapter 26: 67). They next took the reed out of his hand and struck him on the head. That indicated that he was to be dispossessed of the authority he claimed to have, and then be punished by the very authority he claimed to represent as king.

Verse 31. After completing their shameful mockery, they replaced the robe with his own clothing and started the "last mile" of his life toward the place of crucifixion.

Verse 32. Simon did not "bear the cross alone," but helped Jesus with the burden. See the comments on this subject with the reference cited at chapter 16: 24.

Verse 33. No genuine believer in Christ would wish to lessen the respect that is so universally held for "the scenes of Calvary," yet it should be understood that most of the sentimental expressions on the subject are prompted by the general facts connected with the crucifixion. Even the poetic term "Mount Calvary" is not justified except figuratively as may be seen by the information now to be offered to the reader. *Golgotha*, rendered "Calvary" in Luke 23: 33," is from the Greek word *KRANION* which Thayer and Robinson define by the simple term "a skull." Smith's Bible Dictionary says the following in an article entitled *Golgotha*. "The Hebrew name of the spot at which our Lord was crucified. Matthew 27: 33; Mark 15: 22; John 19: 17. By these three evangelists it is interpreted to mean the 'place of a skull.' Two explanations of the name are given: (1) that it was a spot where executions ordinarily took place, and therefore abounded in skulls; or (2) it may come from the look or form of the spot itself, bald, round and skull-like, and therefore a mound or hillock in accordance with the common phrase—'Mount Calvary.' Whichever of these is correct, *Golgotha* seems to have been a known spot."

In his comments on the word "Calvary," Robert Young, author of the *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, says the following: "This name occurs only in Luke 23: 33, and is not a proper name, but arises from the translators having literally adopted the word *Calvaria* (i. e., "a bare skull"), the Latin word by which the Greek word is rendered in the Vulgate [a Latin version of the Scriptures]. This *Kranion* is simply the Greek translation of the Chaldee *Golgotha*. The place of crucifixion is by each of the four evangelists called *Kranion*, and is in every case translated *Calvaria* in the Vulgate, and in every place but that in Luke the English version translates the word by 'scull.' There is no

sanction for the expression 'Mount Calvary,' for it is only 18 feet high."

Verse 34. According to both Smith's Bible Dictionary, and Funk and Wagnalls Standard Bible Dictionary, this gall was made from the poppy plant which grew in abundance in Palestine. That, combined with the vinegar which would be somewhat alcoholic, composed a stupefying product that would act as an easement from pain. Jesus would not drink it because he was not willing to do anything to make his sufferings any less severe. Incidentally, we have an important bit of information as to what the verb "drink" means. The passage says that Jesus "tasted" of the mixture but would not "drink," which shows there is a difference between the two. Christians are commanded to "drink" of the fruit of the vine, not just taste of it. There is no need to consume a regular serving of it as one would to quench thirst, but we are expected to partake of it enough that it can be said we drink and not merely taste as is commonly done. Most churches do not provide enough of the fruit of the vine in the Lord's supper to meet the requirement of the ordinance.

Verse 35. The crucifixion of Jesus forms so important a part of the plan of human salvation, that I believe the reader should have some information on the manner of performing the act itself. I shall quote a description of it as may be found in Smith's Bible Dictionary. "The one to be crucified was stripped naked of all his clothes, and then followed the most awful moment of all. He was laid down upon the implement of torture. His arms were stretched along the cross-beams, and at the center of the open palms the point of a huge nail was placed, which, by the blow of a mallet, was driven home into the wood. Then through either foot separately, or possibly through both together, as they were placed one over the other, another huge nail tore its way through the quivering flesh. Whether the sufferer was also bound to the cross we do not know; but, to prevent the hands and feet being torn away by the weight of the body, which could 'rest upon nothing but four great wounds,' there was, about the centre of the cross, a wooden projection strong enough to support, at least in part, a human body, which soon became a weight of agony. Then the 'accursed tree' with its living human burden was slowly



heaved up and the end fixed firmly in a hole in the ground. The feet were but a little raised above the earth. The victim was in full reach of every hand that might choose to strike. A death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of the horrible and ghastly,—dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, traumatic [shock from a wound] fever, tetanus, publicity of shame, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of unattended wounds, all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point which would give to the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. The unnatural position made every movement painful; the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbed with incessant anguish; the wounds, inflamed by exposure, gradually gangrened; the arteries, especially of the head and stomach, became swollen and oppressed with surcharged blood; and, while each variety of misery went on gradually increasing, there was added to them the intolerable pang of burning and raging thirst. Such was the death to which Christ was doomed. The crucified was watched, according to custom, by a party of four soldiers, John 19: 23, with their centurion, Matthew 27: 54, whose express office was to prevent the stealing of the body. This was necessary from the lingering character of the death, which sometimes did not supervene even for three days, and was at last the result of gradual benumbing and starvation. But for this guard, the persons might have been taken down and recovered as was actually done in the case of a friend of Josephus. Fracture of the legs was especially adopted by the Jews to hasten death, John 19: 31. In most cases the body was suffered to rot on the cross by the action of sun and rain, or to be devoured by birds and beasts. Sepulture [burial] was generally therefore forbidden; but in consequence of Deuteronomy 21: 22, 23, an express national exception was made in favor of the Jews. Matthew 27: 58. This accursed and awful mode of punishment was happily abolished by Constantine."

*Parted his garments.* We learn from the aforesaid quotation that the victim to be crucified was stripped of his clothing before the crucifixion. It was a custom that the soldiers performing the execution should have this raiment as extra pay in addition to their wages

as soldiers. According to John 19: 23 there were four of them, corresponding to the four parts to be nailed, the two hands and two feet, and hence there would be four parts to be shared by them. *Casting lots.* Most of the garments were so made that they could be divided into parts without any damage to them. But John 19: 23, 24 says the coat was made by weaving into one piece without any seams, and therefore it could not be divided without ruining it. Accordingly, the soldiers agreed to decide the question by casting lots for the garment. This action fulfilled the prediction in Psalms 22: 18. *That it might be fulfilled.* The bearing on this kind of phrase is explained in the comments on chapter 4: 14.

Verse 36. Consult the preceding verse for the reason why they watched him.

Verse 37. *Accusation written.* It was a custom of the Romans to place a tablet on the cross over the head of the victim on which was written the accusation for which he was crucified. In the present case the "crime" was that he was *Jesus the king of the Jews*. According to John's account (John 19: 21) the chief priests objected to the wording of this inscription, which will be commented upon at that place.

Verse 38. The scripture does not tell us the motive of the Romans for crucifying these thieves at this particular time and in the position with Jesus as stated. But we can understand the part the Lord had in it, for it fulfilled a prediction in Isaiah 53: 12 that "he was numbered with the transgressors."

Verse 39. Thayer says this wagging of the head was "expressive of derision." A similar movement is recorded in Job 16: 4 and Psalms 109: 25. *Reviled* is a stronger term and comes from the same Greek word as "blaspheme." Thus by the movement of their body and their word of mouth, these cruel people showed their contempt for the Lamb of God who was at that very hour making the supreme sacrifice that creatures like them might have an opportunity of being saved.

Verse 40. To blaspheme means to speak evil, whether in direct falsehood or otherwise. The preceding verse says they reviled him which means to blaspheme, and the present verse tells us some of the false things they said. Jesus never said he would destroy the temple (John 2: 19), hence this was

one of the blasphemous falsehoods they uttered against him. If *thou be the Son of God* denotes they understood what was the real issue between Jesus and his enemies. It was not about his personal life nor his knowledge, but it was his identity. That is why the devil dwelt on that question in the temptations (chapter 4: 3, 6), and why Jesus asked the question stated in chapter 16: 13, 15 and 22: 42. All the other questions and facts in the life of Christ are important only in so far as they pertain to the fundamental claim that he is God's Son.

Verse 41. The reproachful sayings in the preceding verse were from the crowd in general. This verse specifies the chief priests and scribes as the ones who were mocking Jesus. They had been against him all through his public work, so it is not surprising that they would join in the mob clamor at this time.

Verse 42. *Saved others* refers to the miraculous cures that Jesus did for people. *Himself he cannot save* means he cannot deliver himself from the cross. This was another falsehood, and it ignored the incident in the garden when Peter thought to defend him against bodily attack (chapter 26: 51-54). They professed that they would believe in him if he would come down from the cross. This was a hypocritical claim for Jesus had done many works in their presence that were as great as this would have been, yet they refused to acknowledge him as the Lord.

Verse 43. *Let him deliver him* means for God to deliver his Son from the cross. This was as insincere as the statement of the preceding verse. They must have known that God would have the same reason for not interfering with the crucifixion as Jesus had for not resisting it.

Verse 44. This reproach from the thieves was as much out of place as any such a thing could be. There was no honorable reason why they were in the difficulty of the hour, for they could have avoided it by the right conduct. But Jesus was so situated from the fact that his conduct was righteous. We are glad that one of them did see the situation in the proper light and so expressed himself. (Luke 23: 39-43.)

Verse 45. The sixth and ninth hours corresponds with our noon and three in the afternoon. This darkness is pre-

dicted in Joel 2: 30, 31 and is referred to by Peter in Acts 2: 19, 20. It seems that nature was draped in mourning during the last hours of this human-divine sacrifice. And to add to the gloom, the Father withdrew his comforting grace so that Jesus made a strong outcry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In order that the Son of God might make a complete sacrifice, that he might "pour out his soul unto death" (Isaiah 53: 12), he was left unattended in his painful solitude, no soothing hand to calm the nervous agitation with a caressing touch, but, deserted by all his friends and mocked by his enemies, compelled to die for the unjust.

Verse 46. *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani* is from Hebrew words as Jesus uttered them. Then Matthew translates them into Greek, which the translators of King James render in English for us, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* This bewailing sentence is recorded as a prophecy in Psalms 22: 1.

Verse 47. The Hebrew word that Jesus used is similar in sound to the Greek for Elias, and that misled the bystanders to think he was calling for Elias who had been predicted to come into the world as his forerunner (Malachi 4: 5).

Verse 48. In John 19: 28, 29 where this part of the event is recorded, Jesus is reported to have said he was thirsty. Thus in our present verse we are told that a person standing near offered him a drink of vinega (sour wine), serving it with a sponge on a reed. That was the most convenient way either of serving or receiving it under the circumstances. This was done merely to quench his dying thirst and not as an opiate since it did not have the gall mixed with it which he had refused (verse 34).

Verse 49. Others, with less sympathy with Jesus in his distress, were willing to let him linger on in pain to see if his friend Elias (as they supposed) would come to his rescue and take him down from the cross.

Verse 50. When a human being is at the point of death from exhaustion, he is generally unconscious, or if not, he is very weak and would not be expected to make a strong cry. An exception to this would be when the patient is in delirium and hence acting with abnormal energy and without intelligent expression. No part of this

description can apply to Jesus at this point. He not only was conscious, but his mind had not entered that stage where it would be acting mechanically, for according to Luke 23: 46 this "loud voice" was immediately followed by the all impressive words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Our present verse says he yielded up the *ghost*, which comes from the same Greek word as spirit. So this outcry was evidently the final expression of one who, though ready to die, being "crucified through weakness" (2 Corinthians 13: 4), was able by the force of the will to make a triumphant shout as he was ready to leave the scenes of death and go to his Father.

Verse 51. This veil separated between the holy and most holy rooms in the temple. Through it the high priest went on the day of atonement to offer a service of blood for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16: 29, 30). Jesus died at the hour that the animal was slain for the sacrifices, and hence it was fitting that this veil be rent at the same time, signifying that the great High Priest was ready to offer himself as a ransom for all. The quaking of the earth and rending of the rocks was God's method of opening the graves, the significance of which will be explained in the next two verses.

Verse 52. *Graves were opened.* The tombs are meant which were in the form of caves that either were natural or were hewn out of a rock (verse 60), and another stone placed at the entrance to close the burial place. The earthquake loosened these stones and made them roll away thus *opening* the *graves* or tombs. A saint is anyone who is devoted to the service of God. These could not have been Christians because the church had not been set up. They were persons from one or all of the following groups of servants of God; those who had lived and died under the Patriarchal or Jewish dispensations, or disciples who had been called by the preaching of John or Christ, and who had died within the three years of their personal ministry. The rising of these saints forms a link in a very important chain of thought, which will be dealt with at Romans 8: 29, 30. For the present, however, I will state that these saints never died again.

Verse 53. One thing that is often overlooked in referring to this event, and that is that it was *after his resur-*

*rection that the saints arose.* That was in order to make Christ the first one to come from the dead to die no more (Acts 13: 34; 26: 23). Also, it was necessary for it to occur this close to the resurrection of Jesus in order that he could be the first "among many brethren" (Romans 8: 29). The *holy city* means Jerusalem because it was the capital of the Jewish nation in its religious system.

Verse 54. The centurion and the other watchers were filled with awe by the demonstration. It was not at the resurrection of anyone for that had not taken place yet. But they saw and felt the shaking of the earth at the same time that Jesus died, and knew that some supernatural power was the cause of it. They were pagans and did not know God as Christians know him, but they did know that Christ claimed to be His son, and the demonstration convinced them that he was what he claimed to be.

Verse 55. These women were faithful to the last, but with feminine timidity they stood some distance away watching. They had come from the same district where Jesus was brought up, Galilee, and had served him on various occasions.

Verse 56. Mary Magdalene was the woman whom Jesus cured of demons (Mark 16: 9); Mary the mother of James and Joses was the mother of Jesus (Mark 6: 3); the mother of Zebedee's children was the mother of James and John (Mark 10: 35).

Verse 57. Luke 23: 50, 51 says that Joseph was a counsellor which means that he was a member of the Sanhedrin. That passage states also that he "had not consented to the counsel and deed of them," meaning the Sanhedrin. Decisions of that body were made by the voice of the members (Matthew 26: 65, 66), and when the case of Jesus was presented, Joseph did not vote with those who condemned him. It should be noted that Joseph was a *rich man*, also that he was "a good man and a just," and that he was a disciple of Jesus. All of this disproves the teaching of some that a man cannot be a true disciple of Jesus and still be a rich man. It is the trusting in riches that will condemn a man (Mark 10: 24; 1 Timothy 6: 17, 18). But if he will "do good" with his riches he will thereby lay up for himself a good foundation against the time to come, and lay hold upon eternal life. Had Joseph not been a

rich man he might not have been able to purchase the burial place that was used to give the body of Jesus the respect that even any human body deserves, much more that of the Son of God. Another thing, by the fact of this man's being rich it fulfilled the prediction that Christ "made his grave with the rich" (Isaiah 53: 9). That same prophecy includes a grave with the wicked which means the people of the world from whom Joseph purchased the place.

Verse 58. Joseph knew he would have to make special provisions and obtain a legal permit in order to take charge of the Lord's body. As an explanation of that subject I shall quote again a part of the statement from Smith's Bible Dictionary. "In most cases the body was suffered to rot on the cross by the action of sun and rain, or be devoured by birds and beasts. Sepulture [burial] was generally therefore forbidden." The statement that *Pilate commanded the body to be delivered* shows that a considerable amount of "red tape" was necessary in procuring the body of one who had been crucified.

Verse 59. Joseph wrapped the body in a winding sheet of clean linen. In the comments at verse 35 it is shown that a person to be crucified was stripped of all his clothing, hence the immediate need for using this linen cloth, for under the circumstances there was no opportunity for getting a burial shroud.

Verse 60. John 19: 38-40 says that Joseph had a helper in this loving service, the man who came to Jesus by night (John 3: 1, 2). This gives us the information that Nicodemus became friendly with Jesus at least, and was willing not only to assist in the work of burying the Lord, but contributed a substantial amount of valuable products to be used in the burying according to the Jewish manner of such a ceremony. The tomb was hewn out of the rock and might well be compared to the burial chambers that are made in the walls of modern mausolems in the public cemeteries. The body was borne by these two men and laid in this cavity as it would be deposited on a couch. To close it a great stone was rolled up against the opening.

Verse 61. The *other Mary* was the mother of Jesus (verse 56). These women found a seat opposite where Jesus was buried and "beheld where

he was laid" (Mark 15: 47), which explains their concern about the stone when they were coming the day after the sabbath with spices, intending to anoint his body (Mark 16: 1-3).

Verse 62. The day before any holy or sabbath day was called a preparation (Mark 15: 42), and this would apply to every holy day, not only the regular weekly sabbath. The day of the passover was a holy day (Leviticus 23: 4, 5), hence the day before it would be a preparation. The passover came on Friday the 14th, thus it would naturally be a day that *followed the day of preparation*, and also the day following the crucifixion. On that day the leading Jews came to Pilate with their request.

Verse 63. The Jews reminded the governor of the claim of Jesus that he would rise from the dead after three days. Yes, Jesus did declare such a thing, and the Jews had no misunderstanding of the words. But when they had a wicked motive prompting them, they perverted them to serve their hypocrisy (chapter 26: 61).

Verse 64. I do not believe these Jews actually feared the disciples would steal the dead body of their Lord; what could they do with it? Besides, they were discouraged and in no mood for trying any rash means of what at best could only have been propaganda that would soon have been exposed. But these Jews were foolish enough to think that a seal over the tomb would prevent Jesus from breaking it, just as there are people today foolish enough to think that by having their bodies cremated they can escape the lake of fire. *Error* and *deceiver* are from Greek words with virtually the same meaning. The *last error* means the last deception, and the thought was that if they let the disciples succeed in their plan, then they (the Jews) would be worse beaten at the game than they were the first time.

Verse 65. Pilate reminded them of the watch in existence already, which consisted of various regulations as to the number of men to be on the watch at a time and the number of hours each group was required to be on duty. In addition to this, Pilate authorized them to make the tomb as secure as possible.

Verse 66. Acting upon the authority of Pilate, they put a Roman seal on the tomb and appointed the watchmen to be on duty at the grave.

### MATTHEW 28

Verse 1. The particular time at which the 24-hour period was supposed to start has been a disputed point, and that is because no absolute and universal rule was observed by all people. According to this verse the period began in the morning. Thayer defines *began to dawn* to mean, "To grow light, to dawn." And Mark 16: 2 refers to the same event as being "at the rising of the sun," all of which indicates that at least in some cases the 24-hour day was from sunrise to sunrise. However, we should not overlook that it was after the sabbath was past for the text says *end of the sabbath* which Thayer defines, "the sabbath having just past." The two Marys were the same as those mentioned in 27: 61; Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus.

Verse 2. There *was* a great earthquake. The marginal renders it "had been," which is correct, for Mark 16: 4 says that when the women arrived at the tomb they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. The angel was not afraid to break the seal that the Jews had caused to be placed upon the tomb, for he did not flee but rather remained and sat upon the stone.

Verse 3. Lightning is very bright and penetrating and a fitting comparison for the counterance of an angel. Snow-whiteness is an emblem of purity and well represents the kind of being who would come down from heaven.

Verse 4. The keepers were the members of the watch who were stationed there to see that no person would disturb the tomb. When this angel ignored the entire setup and removed the stone it was a great surprise to the watchers who were soldiers. No wonder it filled them with fear and trembling and rendered them helpless.

Verse 5. As far as the text shows, the angel paid no attention to the members of the watch, but he addressed encouraging words to the women. Being on a mission from heaven he was endowed with the information that would be useful in his work. By this he was aware of the purpose of the women who appeared at this time.

Verse 6. Not only had Jesus risen, but he had left the scenes of the tomb. As a visual evidence of the Lord's resurrection, the women were invited to come and see the place where he had lain.

Verse 7. After a look at the empty tomb they were bidden to go quickly and tell the good news to the disciples. They were later to see Jesus in Galilee, the district where he had lived until he was ready for his public ministry.

Verse 8. The *fear* of these women was the same as profound respect, and the great joy was caused by the wonderful fact that their Lord was alive again. Their joy would not let them be selfish, but they went running to bring the word to the disciples.

Verse 9. Jesus had left the tomb before the women arrived, and as they were leaving he met them and gave them a joyous greeting. The reader should see the note on the subject of "worship" at chapter 2: 2 and note the various shades of meaning of the word. In our present verse the only outward demonstration indicated was their grasping the feet of the Lord. This act of respectful condescension could very properly be called one of worship and is included in the definition of the word.

Verse 10. This is the same message the angel gave the women at the tomb. Christ's *brethren* means his disciples (John 20: 17, 18), and they were promised to be met by him in his home country of Galilee.

Verse 11. *Some of the watch* means the men who had been on duty at the tomb. They doubtless did their duty in seeing that no man disturbed the tomb, but they were powerless to prevent what the angel did. As faithful watchmen they made a true report of what had transpired. However, this was before they had been approached on the bribery proposition and agreed to make the foolish statement mentioned above.

Verse 12. Gave the money unto the *soldiers* means the men who had been appointed to guard the grave from disturbance by the disciples.

Verse 13. The absence of the body of Jesus from the tomb could not be denied, hence the story of stealing it was made up to account for the empty tomb. There are at least two weak points in this story. If they were asleep they could not know what was going on; also, such a lack of faithfulness as watchers was punishable by death and they would not likely have risked it. But money will do wonders and it seems to have had its effect on these soldiers.

Verse 14. Thayer says to persuade means "to win one's good will." Pilate was a wavering sort of governor as had been shown in this case, and they felt sure they could influence him to let the soldiers off without punishment. Another thing, they said *if this come to the governor's ears; there is no proof that he ever heard the report.*

Verse 15. This foolish report was circulated *among the Jews* which is very significant. They were the ones who wanted to believe it and pretended to do so. There is no account of any knowledge of it among the people in general.

Verse 16. The women were told by the angel (verse 7) to give the disciples the word, and in verse 10 Jesus gave them the same message. Hence this verse reports the journey to Galilee, the very mountain spot for the meeting having been designated. *Eleven* disciples were in the group because Judas had taken his own life before the crucifixion of his Lord (chapter 27: 5).

Verse 17. All we can say of this *worship* is that what they did comes within the definition of the word as given at chapter 2: 2. Thayer defines the original of *doubt*, "to doubt, to waver." It indicates a frame of mind that might be expressed by a familiar saying, "it is too good to be true."

Verse 18. In the Authorized Version the word "power" comes from two Greek words, with only a few exceptions, which are DUNAMIS and EXOUSIA. There is a partial blending of these words in their meaning so that they are used somewhat interchangeably, but each has its main or proper meaning. According to Thayer the first word means, "strength, ability, power; inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature." He defines the second word, "power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission." For convenience the first may be defined as "personal strength or ability," the second as, "the right or privilege bestowed on one." The word in this verse is EXOUSIA, which means that God bestowed upon Christ full right to rule over his kingdom.

Verse 19. *Teach* is from MATHETEUEO and is defined by Thayer, "to make a disciple; to teach, instruct." Its main application is to bring persons into a relationship with Christ that they never had before. *All nations* is equiva-

lent to "every creature" in Mark 16: 15. The Mosiac system was given to the Jews only, while the Gospel was given to both Jew and Gentile. To do this teaching among all nations would require ability to speak in every language, and none but the apostles had that ability. It is a perversion of scripture, therefore, to apply this commission to preachers of today. *In* is from EIS which means "into" as used here. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost are a unit in the Godhead and hence "name" is singular. Whoever is baptized into one is baptized into all three, therefore one baptism is all that is necessary and right. The scripture in no place presents this as a formula to be spoken by the administrator of baptism, and when he says these words he is merely announcing to the hearers what he is doing.

Verse 20. *Teaching* is from DIDASKO and means to instruct in general. The ones to be instructed were those that Christ had commanded. In order that no mistake would be made, the Comforter (Holy Spirit) was to be sent to "bring all things to their remembrance" (John 14: 26). *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* The authority of the apostles was to be in force to the end of the world. Christ is not with them in person any more than he is with all Christians in person. But the words of the apostles are written in the New Testament and they are as binding on us now as if they were here in person and as if Jesus also had remained on earth in person. So there can be no successors to the apostles in this world because they are still in their own proper place of authority under Christ and will be until the end.

## MARK 1

Verse 1. Mark was not one of the apostles, but was inspired to write an account of the life of Christ. He is mentioned a few times in the New Testament which will be noticed as we come to them. *Beginning of the gospel* is his introduction to the story of Christ, indicating the point in the history at which he was to begin his book.

Verse 2. This verse states the beginning point that was referred to in the preceding verse, that it was the time when Jesus was ready to start in his public work. But since that was to be preceded immediately by the work of the forerunner, John the Baptist, the author opens his story with



several verses about that great man. This verse cites a prophecy in Malachi 3: 1, referring to John the Baptist as a messenger to go before the face of Christ to prepare the way for him.

Verse 3. See comments on Matthew 3: 1 for the explanation of *wilderness*.

Verse 4. *Baptism of repentance* denotes that baptism was caused by sincere repentance. (See Matthew 3: 7, 8.) *For* is from EIS and means in order to remission of sins.

Verse 5. *All the land of Judea* means that people came to John from all that country, not that every person was baptized. *Confessing their sins* was the verbal evidence that they had repented, and submission to baptism was the active evidence.

Verse 6. See the comments at Matthew 3: 4 for explanation of this verse.

Verse 7. This is John's first mention of the one who was to follow him. The reference to shoes is an allusion to the customs of that time. Loose sandals were worn in foot travel and upon entering a home they were removed and taken charge of by a servant. By way of illustration John regarded himself as unworthy even to unfasten the shoes of the one *mightier* than he.

Verse 8. *With* is from EN and means "in," referring to the element in which the persons were baptized. The baptism of the Holy Ghost was to be performed by the one coming after John and that was Christ. He was to give the Holy Ghost (Spirit) in overwhelming measure to his apostles to "guide them into all truth" (John 16: 13).

Verse 9. The preceding eight verses concludes the introduction referred to in verse 1. This and the next verse includes both John and Jesus, which will be all that Mark will record directly of the work of John, and any reference that may be made to him will be as a matter of history. *In those days* denotes that while John was to come before Jesus, yet their introduction to the world was to be virtually at the same time. Jesus came from Nazareth where he had lived since the return of his parents with him from Egypt (Matthew 2: 23). The reason for his baptism is explained in Matthew 3: 13-15.

Verse 10. If Jesus came *up out of* the water, then he had gone *down into* it. That was made necessary for the body to be baptized which was done by immersion. He (John) saw the

Spirit descending upon him (Jesus). John had been previously told that he would see such a thing take place (John 1: 33).

Verse 11. The voice from heaven was that of God, who openly recognized Jesus as his Son after he had been baptized, and he also added the important truth that he was *well pleased* in his Son.

Verse 12. Having been recognized formally as the Son of God, Jesus would not enter into his work until he had been tested. The word *spirit* always comes from the same Greek word, whether good or evil spirits, human or divine spirits, are meant; the connection here shows it means the *Holy Spirit*. *Driveth* is from EKBALLO which Thayer defines at this place, "to command or cause one to depart in haste." This is virtually the same in meaning as Matthew's statement that Jesus was "led up of the Spirit" (4: 1).

Verse 13. This verse gives a general summing up of the different things that took place with Jesus in those forty days: for the details see Matthew 4: 1-11. *Gospel of the kingdom* means good news that the kingdom of heaven was about to be set up.

Verses 14, 15. *Time is fulfilled* means the predictions of the start of the kingdom of God as to time had been fulfilled. On that ground Jesus commanded them to *repent and believe the gospel*. Why did he put repentance before belief? A fuller statement on the same subject is in Acts 20: 21. The work of John and Jesus was among the Jews only. They were still under the Mosaic system in which God was the only personality they were supposed to serve. But they had become slack toward God and were obligated to repent on behalf of Him, then come with clean hands to the new system and believe the Gospel. It was like telling a debtor to pay up his old debts before asking a new creditor to accept him.

Verse 16. This Simon was Simon Peter according to Matthew 4: 18, who, with his brother Andrew, was the first man called from his secular occupation to travel with Jesus bodily over the country and to be with him constantly.

Verse 17. Using their own occupation as a basis for his figures of speech, Jesus compared the proposed work of these men with what they had been

doing. They were still to be fishers, but were to fish after men with the bait of the Gospel.

Verse 18. They could not use their temporal nets in the new business and hence had to forsake them. Their interest was indicated by their *straightway* forsaking the nets.

Verse 19. James and John were the ones elsewhere called "Zebedee's children."

Verse 20. All of these men were only required to come along with Jesus. No initiation act was required of them because John had already baptized them. We know that he was to prepare a people for Christ, and Jesus accepted these men as they were which shows that they had been made ready for his service. John had but one method of preparing men for Christ which ended with baptism. So we must conclude these men had been baptized by John the Baptist to await service under Christ.

Verse 21. Capernaum was a city on the shore of Galilee, and Matthew 4: 13 tells us that Jesus made it his dwelling place. He entered the synagogue on the sabbath because there would be people there whom he could teach. For more information about synagogues see the information offered in connection with Matthew 4: 23.

Verse 22. This verse is explained at Matthew 7: 28, 29.

Verse 23. The man with an *unclean spirit* was possessed with a devil. This subject is considered at length at Matthew 8: 28.

Verse 24. Of course we must understand that the devil did his talking with the mouth of the victim which is signified by the expression "possessed with the devil." Note that references to this devil are in both the singular and plural numbers. That is because though there might be a legion of them within a man (chapter 5: 5-13), there would be one as spokesman. The devil knew Jesus because he had once been with him in heaven but was cast out because of sin (2 Peter 2: 4; Jude 6; Luke 10: 18). It was not surprising, then, that they did not want anything to do with Jesus.

Verse 25. *Jesus rebuked him* and not the man, for the being possessed with a devil was an affliction and not a fault. The devil not only was commanded to come out of the man, but to make no remarks about the situation.

Verse 26. *Cried with a loud voice* may seem to contradict the statements in the preceding paragraph. No, this cry was forced from the victim by the injury which the devil inflicted on him as he was coming out.

Verse 27. People had been known to be possessed with devils for some years, but until the time of Christ no one was able to expel them. And notice that it was not done by any bodily contact, but solely by the authority of Jesus which was so great that when he commanded the devils they obeyed. No wonder the people were amazed and started to talk about it among themselves.

Verse 28. An event like the casting out of devils without any apparent means would be reported by everyone who heard about it. As a result the fame of Jesus spread at once throughout Galilee which was the district in which Capernaum was located.

Verse 29. Jesus and the first four disciples whom he called entered into the home of Simon and his brother.

Verse 30. Simon Peter was a married man for mention is made of his wife's mother. This does not harmonize with the doctrine of Rome which denies the right of marriage to all of the clergy. It is replied that Peter left his wife so that he could be qualified to serve in the capacity of head of the church. That also contradicts the scripture, for 1 Corinthians 9: 5 tells us that he was leading his wife about with him, and that was in Paul's day. *Anon they tell him of her* means they told him of the case of sickness as soon as he entered into the house.

Verse 31. The only physical thing that Jesus did was to lift up the woman with his hand. But that act alone would not have recovered her, for any man could have done that. And the encouraging act of lifting her from the bed did not merely give her an imaginary impulse as a "shot in the arm" might cause, but she was able to minister to the group which would require something more than nervous will power.

Verse 32. This verse includes regular diseases and also the being possessed with devils which shows there was a difference between the two kinds of afflictions. The presence of devils sometimes caused diseases similar to those to which mankind was always

subject, but such cases could be cured only by casting out the devils.

Verse 33. Jesus was still in the home of Peter and his brother where he had healed the mother of Peter's wife, also had recovered others of their afflictions. This caused such a stir throughout the city that great crowds gathered at the door.

Verse 34. *Divers diseases* means many kinds of diseases. *Suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.* These devils would not have deserved any credit for proclaiming the divinity of Christ; that is, it would not have been an act of faith but of knowledge. They made such a declaration once and were rebuked for it (verses 24, 25), and Jesus still was not willing to be upheld by such characters.

Verse 35. Jesus was human as well as divine, and therefore he preferred to be alone with his Father at certain times. There is a foolish theory that Jesus and God are one in person. If that were true, to whom did he pray in that solitary place? The theory breaks down under the weight of its own absurdity.

Verse 36. Jesus was not allowed to be alone very long. Since he went out there *a great while before day* it is reasonable to say that as soon as it came the usual hour to arise, Peter discovered his absence and he took his group and went in search of him.

Verse 37. They did not know exactly where he was for it says *when they had found him.* They told Jesus that all men were seeking for him, but the motive for their search is not revealed by the text.

Verse 38. The main purpose of Jesus in his personal ministry was to preach the good news of the kingdom. The working of miracles was one of the "side lines" of his mission, performed to give testimony to the genuineness of his teaching. Because of that he stated that they should go into other towns to preach, and that he had come out into the world for that purpose.

Verse 39. The Jews would be gathered in their synagogues to read the Scriptures and perform other acts of worship. That gave Jesus an opportunity to preach the good news, then back up his authority by casting out devils or other miraculous works.

Verse 40. Leprosy was an incurable disease and a man afflicted with it was

required to live apart from society (Leviticus 13: 45, 46). This leper had been convinced by the other miracles of Jesus that he could also heal him of leprosy if he was willing.

Verse 41. Leprosy was contagious only by physical contact, therefore when Jesus touched the leper he proved his faith in the power that the Father had given him. In connection with the physical contact he also uttered the word of cleansing.

Verse 42. *As soon as he had spoken* the man was cleansed from his leprosy. This denotes that his physical contact would not have been necessary as far as the healing was concerned. We should note that Jesus did not require a period of time for his accomplishment but did it *immediately*. Modern so-called faith healers must have an indefinite period, telling their patients that "it takes time," and that if their faith "holds out" they will be healed. This proves that all such "faith-cure" persons are frauds.

Verse 43. The next verse will show what this charge was and why it was given.

Verse 44. Leprosy was incurable by any natural means, but it could be cured by miracle, such as the case of Naaman in 2 Kings 5. And when a Jew had been cured of the disease physically, he was still required to perform certain services for his ceremonial cleansing which included the offering of sacrifices and other materials. That is what Jesus meant that this man should *offer for his cleansing.* (See Leviticus 14: 1.)

Verse 45. This verse indicates why the man was told not to report his case to any man. The people were so worked up over it that they interfered with the work of Jesus and caused him to go into desert places which were those not populated.

## MARK 2

Verse 1. Jesus did not remain in the desert indefinitely, but returned to Capernaum which was his last residence. Of course he would not escape the knowledge of the crowd for the word passed around that he was in a certain house.

Verse 2. The crowd filled the house to capacity and then kept coming until they could not all get in hearing distance of the door. But to all who were within that limit Jesus did his preaching.

Verse 3. The palsied man was *brought* to the place, which shows he was helpless and had nothing to do with the affair as far as the text states.

Verse 4. The *press* means the crowd that had gathered about the door. Matthew records this event but says nothing about their going down through the roof. In Luke 5: 19 they are said to have made an opening through the roof by taking up the tiling. Houses were made with flat roofs which were covered over with roofing tile. These could be taken up without any damage to the building just as many styles of roof tiles can be handled today. After making this opening through the roof, they let the couch bearing the sick man down right into the immediate presence of Jesus.

Verse 5. Jesus saw *their* faith; nothing said about the faith of the patient.

Verses 6, 7. These scribes were *reasoning in their hearts* but Jesus knew what they were thinking, for he always knew what was in man.

Verse 8. Jesus let them know that he knew what they were thinking about.

Verse 9. *Whether is easier* means to ask them which would be easier for him to do, for if he had authority from God he could do the one as readily as the other.

Verses 10, 11. Jesus demonstrated his power to perform miracles of the invisible kind by doing the visible. He told the palsied man to arise and carry his bed.

Verse 12. Again the result of Christ's word was *immediate*. When the man arose and carried his bed in their presence the people were amazed and declared they had never seen such a deed before. A more detailed discussion of this case is at Matthew 9: 2.

Verse 13. The *sea side* was that of Galilee where Jesus spent a great part of his time. The crowds were generally interested in his teaching and followed after him for that and also for the physical benefits obtained by his hands.

Verse 14. This man was Matthew Levi, one of the apostles and writer of the book with that name. *Receipt of custom* means the place where taxes were received, and this identifies him as a publican. Jesus told Levi to follow him which he did without any preparation further than what John

the Baptist had done. (See chapter 1: 20.)

Verse 15. These *publicans and sinners* were not some special sects as were the Pharisees and Sadducees, but were people who were regarded as being in the lower ranks of society. They were thus classed especially by the Pharisees who made such a claim of righteousness. (See comments at Matthew 9: 10 about the publicans.)

Verse 16. These self-righteous people were not fair enough to speak to Jesus directly, but satisfied their envy by attacking his disciples. Eating with another in old times was regarded as a strong recognition of social rank, hence this particular criticism was hurled at Jesus over the shoulders of his disciples.

Verse 17. If these critics were as righteous as they claimed, then they did not need the presence of Jesus any more than a man in health would need a physician. It is the sinner who needs the services of a Saviour and that would call for the attention that Jesus was giving to these "sinners." This does not mean that Jesus regarded the Pharisees as righteous men, but he was merely using their own claims against them.

Verse 18. Fasting was never commanded as a general practice, but it was customary to do so in times of distress or anxiety. John the Baptist was dead and his disciples were fasting in his memory. *They* (the Pharisees) came and criticized the disciples of Jesus for not fasting.

Verse 19. This verse has reference to some customs in connection with marriages. *Children* is used figuratively and refers to some invited guests who took pleasure in the presence of the bridegroom. After the wedding he would leave and these special friends would lament his absence which would be appropriate.

Verse 20. This verse applies the illustration to the disciples who were destined finally to mourn the absence of their Lord. (See chapter 16: 20).

Verses 21, 22. The lesson here is one of doing things in an appropriate manner and at the proper time. A full treatment of the whole parable is given at Matthew 9: 14-17.

Verse 23. Deuteronomy 23: 24, 25 gave the Jews the right to make personal use of the grain in the field but not to take any away. Thus no complaint could be made for their eating

this corn which was a small grain such as wheat or rye.

Verse 24. The Pharisees pretended to object because they were doing this on the sabbath day. But Jesus will show them that one law is no more sacred than another.

Verse 25. *Have ye never read* implies that they had read that account, but were ignoring the event for the time being because it would condemn them for inconsistency.

Verse 26. The bread that David ate was that which had been on the table in the tabernacle for seven days, then was set back for the use of the priests. But it had served its religious purpose and therefore it was no desecration of it for David to eat it, especially as it was an emergency.

Verse 27. *The sabbath was made for man* means the day was set aside for man's benefit in providing him a time for relaxation from labor. But since the use of food is as important as rest, it is right to provide that food even if it must be done on this day in an emergency.

Verse 28. No law is any greater than the authority behind it. Christ and his Father worked together in giving to man the law of the sabbath, therefore this Son would have the right to adjust that law to any condition suggested in his wisdom.

### MARK 3

Verse 1. *Withered hand* means that something had shut off the circulation from that member and it had pined away for lack of moisture, rendering it useless.

Verse 2. The Pharisees were always pretending to be zealous about the law, though they did not keep it themselves. Jesus was performing his good deeds on every day of the week, but they knew they could not object to what he was doing, hence they pretended to be offended because he did some things on the sabbath day. So they had their eyes set upon him with a wicked interest, hoping he would heal this man on that day and thus give them a pretext for accusing him.

Verse 3. Jesus knew their thoughts but proceeded to heal the man.

Verse 4. Before going further with the case, Jesus anticipated their accusation with a question they were not expecting. He put the matter on the basis of doing good or evil, saving life

or destroying it, and asked them which should be done on the sabbath day. They would not answer because either way they answered would have condemned them.

Verse 5. Another word in Thayer's definition of the Greek for *anger* is "indignation," and it means that Jesus was greatly agitated over the hardness of their hearts. However, it did not keep him from performing the good deed for the man. He was told to *stretch forth his hand* which shows that his arm was not affected. As soon as he stretched forth his hand it was cured without any bodily contact from Jesus that we know of.

Verse 6. Having been defeated in their attempts to convict Jesus under the law, the Pharisees decided to try some other plan, which was to get him to say something that would set himself against the government. For the account of how they did this and my comments on it, see at Matthew 22: 16-21. The *Herodians* were some Jews who were favorable to Herod's family relations and the Romans.

Verse 7. Jesus went to the Sea of Galilee and that drew the crowds after him again, both from the immediate vicinity and Judea.

Verse 8. Jerusalem was in Judea, but the writer thought it good to specify some of the important centers of population in that district as well as others. *Idumaea* was the same as Edom, a country east of the Jordan. *Tyre* and *Sidon* were important cities of Phoenicia, a country bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. The fame of Jesus reached into all these places and people came from them to see him.

Verse 9. *Small ship* means a small boat that could take Jesus from the pressure of the crowd, and yet permit him to be seen and heard by the people.

Verse 10. This verse explains why the people thronged about Jesus.

Verse 11. *Unclean spirits* is another name for devils that afflicted the people.

Verse 12. See chapter 1: 34 on why the unclean spirit was forbidden to preach Jesus.

Verse 13. Jesus called these men out of the group of disciples following him.

Verse 14. This is the appointment of the twelve apostles. They were expected to *be with him continuously* ex-

cept as he would send them out on missions.

Verse 15. The word *power* is from *EXOUSIA* which means authority primarily, and Jesus bestowed it upon his apostles. In so doing he enabled them to heal sicknesses and cast out devils which would make their authority effective.

Verse 16-19. There are three of the Gospel accounts that give the list of the twelve apostles. The persons are the same but the names not always, since some of them had more than one name. For the sake of space the reader is asked to see the complete treatment of this subject at Matthew 10: 4. *Which also betrayed him* was said prospectively as the betrayal of Jesus had not yet taken place.

Verse 20. Jesus was kept so busy teaching the people and administering to their afflictions that there was no opportunity for him and his apostles to have their meals.

Verse 21. *His friends* is rendered "those belonging to him" by the "Englishman's Greek New Testament," and that agrees with the marginal reading that says "kinsmen." When they said *He is beside himself* they meant they thought he was carried away with the intensity of the situation. But Jesus continued his teaching and good work in spite of the apparent protest of his relations.

Verse 22. The scribes are explained at Matthew 13: 52. They would not deny the fact of his casting out devils, but pretended to believe that he got his power for the work from Beelzebub (Satan).

Verse 23. The foolishness of their theory was shown by this question. Even a wicked being like Satan would not be working against himself.

Verses 24, 25. The same point is made by supporting a kingdom that divided itself into opposing groups, for such a kingdom would soon be overthrown by the internal strife.

Verse 26. This is the same as verse 23.

Verse 27. The illustration is this. A man must overthrow another in order to plunder his house, and to do that he would have to be stronger than the man of the house. If Satan casts out Satan, then we have the foolish conclusion that Satan is stronger than Satan which is so absurd that no reply was possible.

Verse 28. This verse takes in every

manner of sin that could be named except the one that will be designated in the next verse.

Verse 29. To blaspheme means to speak violent and evil things against another; it implies things said with the intention of insulting or injuring another. To be guilty of such a sin against the Holy Ghost (Spirit) meant to be without a chance of pardon.

Verse 30. The sin against the Holy Ghost was charged against these Jews because *they said he hath an unclean spirit*. This narrows the subject down to one item, thus ruling out all human efforts to imagine something that "surely is the 'unpardonable' sin if ever there was one." For a complete discussion of this subject see Matthew 12: 24-28, and the comments that are made upon those verses.

Verse 31. *There came then*. Verse 21 tells of the "friends" of Jesus who wanted to take charge of him but were not able to do so. Whether these family relatives were the ones meant in the former verse I cannot say, or perhaps they were anxious to attempt what the other relatives failed to accomplish. At any rate, they came as near as they could and tried to get the attention of Jesus.

Verse 32. The multitude tried to help them get his attention by telling him that it was his mother and brethren who wanted to talk to him.

Verse 33. The reply of Jesus was not intended as a slight upon his family but a mild rebuke for the crowd. It is as if he had said, "why should my mother and brethren be allowed to alter my work of salvation?"

Verse 34. Jesus prepared to point out the persons deserving more attention just then than his family relatives, and called attention to the crowd that had gathered closely about him, to whom he had been preaching the truth.

Verse 35. The same person (notice it is in singular number) could not be both sister and brother at the same time. The idea is, then, that doing the will of God is more important than being the fleshly relations of Christ.

#### MARK 4

Verse 1. This chapter corresponds with Matthew 13.

Verse 2. A parable is the placing of one thing beside another for the purpose of an illustration. The reader should see the precautionary com-



ments offered at Matthew 13: 3 as to the right use to make of the parables.

Verse 3. *Hearken* means a special call to attention.

Verse 4. Seed was sown by hand only, in Bible times, and that would make it natural for it to fall into various places as the parable shows. *Wayside* was a beaten path where the ground was hard so that the seed could not find any opening to bury itself.

Verse 5. The soil over the *stones* would be scarce and the seed would soon use up all the strength in the ground, and that would force it to spring up at once toward the sun and atmosphere for sustenance.

Verse 6. However, the full strength of the sun would be too much for the tender plant because it did not have a completed root, as a result it would be scorched and die.

Verse 7. These *thorns* were a plant defined in the lexicon as "a bramble-bush, brier." The plant was not in sight when the sowing was done, but at the growing time it sprang up and choked out the good seed, it being a hardier plant.

Verses 8, 9. The good ground brought forth various amounts of the good seed which was the only difference; the quality was the same in all.

Verse 10. *Asked of him the parable* signifies they did not understand the meaning of it. See the comments on Matthew 13: 11 as to why the apostles needed to have the parables explained to them aside from the crowd.

Verse 11. *Them that are without* refers to the people who were not disciples. This also is explained in the comments referred to in the preceding verse.

Verse 12. This unusual language means that the people did not use the opportunities they had been given to grasp the truths of Heaven. That refusal to open their eyes and ears to the things offered them is likened to a man who has eyes and ears, but refuses to use them for fear he will see and hear things that will condemn his manner of life.

Verse 13. The parable of the sower is so natural that the apostles should have seen the lesson in it. The question of Jesus is a mild rebuke and implies that they should bestir themselves a little more and not lean so heavily on him for instruction.

Verses 14, 15. Jesus loved his disciples, and notwithstanding their apparent dullness he wished to give them the information they desired. *The sower soweth the word* is very brief, but it indicates that the things that happened afterward were no fault of the sower. As seed remaining on the surface of the ground would soon be picked up by the birds, so if men do not take the good seed into their hearts, Satan will have a chance at it and will soon take it away with his many subjects of worldly interests.

Verse 16. These people were more enthusiastic over the newly-found subject than they were serious. Hence what they did was done somewhat in the spirit of excitement.

Verse 17. Excitement is momentary and such an interest is not very deep-seated. When the real test comes of facing the attacks of worldly enemies, such people become offended which means they stumble over the word.

Verse 18. As far as the text shows, these people gave attention to what was said and understood it. If they failed to produce any fruit from it the reason was something else besides not knowing about the value of the word which they had heard.

Verse 19. This verse explains why the word did not produce a crop with these people even though they understood it. *Cares of this world* denotes that concern and anxiety that some people have over the things of this life. They give so much attention to those things that it crowds out their consideration for the word. *Deceitfulness of riches*. Many people think that if they can accumulate a large amount of wealth that it will bring them happiness. But they are being deceived, for the so-called pleasures that can come only through money are temporal and at best are uncertain. Solomon says of this, "For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" (Proverbs 23: 5).

Verse 20. The good ground illustrates those who not only *hear* the word but also receive it; not only that but go to work with it to make it reproduce. The different amounts that were produced merely denotes that some good people have more ability to produce than others, but the Lord asks us only to be faithful and do what we can.

Verse 21. In purely temporal or ma-

terial things, men will act with better judgment than they do in things moral and spiritual. A man would not make a light for the accommodation of his guests, then put something over it that would prevent them from benefiting by it. Neither should we allow some careless conduct keep our possible influence for good from being seen by those about us. (See Matthew 5: 15, 16.)

Verse 22. All evil deeds will some day be exposed by the Lord. Our good deeds, therefore, should be permitted to be a benefit to others, and not be lost upon them by some unwise conduct on our part.

Verse 23. This verse means for men to make use of their opportunities to hear the truth as the Lord provides it for them through his servants.

Verse 24. The admonition as to what we hear is connected with the statement about the measure. The thought is that the more and better attention we give to what is said to us, the more benefit we will receive from what is said.

Verse 25. To take from one which he does not have is explained at Matthew 25: 29.

Verse 26. This short parable has an important lesson. What we do becomes an influence that lives and acts even when we are not aware of it. How necessary it is, then, that we guard our every act.

Verse 27. *Knoweth not how.* We do not understand how God makes things grow in the material kingdom, yet it makes its development notwithstanding our lack of that knowledge. Likewise, our work in the kingdom of God will have its reward in its proper time and in the Lord's own way even though we cannot always understand how it is.

Verse 28. This shows that everything in God's creation is accomplished by growth.

Verse 29. The lesson should be grasped that it takes faith and patience to accomplish the desired results in the service of the Lord. (See Galatians 6: 9.)

Verse 30. These questions were asked to get the attention of the hearers.

Verse 31. According to historical information the mustard seed that was produced in Palestine was the smallest of all those that grew in that country.

Verse 32. The physical growth of the little seed is like that which is

expected to be made in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. From small beginnings the work of the Lord may grow on until it is of service to many around us.

Verse 33. *As they were able to hear it.* Jesus did not wish to deliver his teaching in greater amounts or depths than they would be able to grasp. (See John 16: 12.)

Verse 34. This verse is explained at Matthew 13: 11.

Verse 35. The multitudes sometimes were so great that it made a hindrance to the work of Jesus. He never actually refused to serve them when in their midst, but would move to other parts of the country. Thus he told his disciples they would pass over to the other side which meant the other shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Verse 36. Jesus dismissed the multitudes which is the meaning of the phrase *sent them away*, for they would not all depart. *They took him* denotes they would not leave him entirely alone, but some of them found the *other little ships* nearby. Just how far they tried to accompany him is not stated. Doubtless most of them remained on the same side of the sea until he returned, for verse 21 states that when he came back "much people gathered unto him."

Verse 37. After starting across the sea a violent storm arose. *It was now full* is a figure of speech meaning that the boat was filling, and unless something could be done it would soon be literally filled and sink.

Verse 38. Jesus was asleep which shows that the water had not yet reached to him as he lay *on a pillow*. In their fright they awoke him and cried for him to rescue them.

Verse 39. Jesus was more severe in his language to the storm and sea than he was to the disciples. He rebuked both storm and waves and commanded them to *be still*. Both of them were dumb objects and could not render intelligent obedience, hence their response proved the authority of the Master to rule as his wisdom directed.

Verse 40. The disciples were intelligent beings and hence Jesus gave them a mild rebuke, charging them with having little faith.

Verse 41. One meaning of the original word for *feared* is, "To be filled with awe and amazement." They wondered what manner of man it would be

who could regulate dumb objects of creation with his mere word.

### MARK 5

Verse 1. Gadarenes (also called Gergesenes) was situated near the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, and it was there that Jesus went ashore.

Verse 2. The *tombs* were caves in the rocks that were used for the burial of the dead. They were generally open so that persons could enter and leave them as occasion suggested. It was at this kind of place that the Lord met the man with an *unclean spirit*.

Verse 3. *No man could bind him*. The effect of being possessed with an unclean spirit (devil) was not always the same. Sometimes it produced great prostration, at others it caused insanity, and in the present case it brought abnormal strength together with manifestations of insanity at times.

Verse 4. Attempts were made to bind this man but the chains would not hold. No man could *tame* him means he could not be subdued because of his strength.

Verse 5. This shows that he was not only unnaturally strong, but he was vicious and wild and showing the traits of an insane man.

Verse 6. However, it was the outward or human part of this creature that was performing the things described and that was because he was possessed of this devil and had to do as the evil spirit directed him. The devil himself was perfectly intelligent, for he caused the man to run and meet Jesus and perform some act of respect that is called *worship*. (See the note on that subject at Matthew 2: 2.)

Verse 7. *What have I to do with thee* is the same as asking Jesus what he is about to do. To *adjure* means to put a person under oath, which would be an unauthorized act on the part of the devil. The demand was that Jesus would not torment him.

Verse 8. This verse explains the demand of the preceding verse. If the devil is required to leave the man he may have to return to his former place in Hades which would mean the torment that he adjured Jesus not to inflict upon him.

Verse 9. The pronouns *he* and *we* are not the same in grammatical number. That is because one devil was the spokesman for the others. It is orderly for one or more beings interested in

the same thing to let one do the talking. The apostles observed that practice according to Matthew 17: 4; Acts 2: 14.

Verse 10. Speaking on behalf of the other devils, he requested Jesus not to send them *out of the country*. That was the main point of interest, not so much the idea of remaining in the man. (See the comments on verse 8.)

Verse 11. The swine was one of the unclean beasts under the law of the Jews, but we do not know whether they were interested in them commercially or not.

Verse 12. *All the devils besought* denotes the same thought set forth in verse 9 concerning a spokesman who represented the others.

Verse 13. The devils did not gain any advantage by entering the swine, but Jesus granted their request without volunteering any information. Whether they were suffered to enter other human beings or had to return to their former place in Hades we are not told.

Verse 14. The feeders saw what the swine did, but the text does not state if they knew what caused it. What happened when the people came out afterward, however, shows that they understood that Jesus had something to do with it.

Verse 15. The mentioning of seeing Jesus and the man at the same time indicates the people connected Jesus with the whole event. *They were afraid*. This man had defied all attempts to subdue him even with a chain, now he was seen sitting quietly and in his right mind. The situation was so overwhelming that it filled the people with terror and confusion.

Verse 16. The feeders explained what was done and what happened to the swine.

Verse 17. No harm had been done to the unfortunate man, hence the only conclusion possible is they were afraid some more of them would lose their swine.

Verse 18. It was natural for the man to make such a request as this verse states.

Verse 19. Jesus had more important things for the man to do, and that was to tell the good news to his friends. He was to relate it in connection with the thought that the Lord *had compassion* on him.

Verse 20. Decapolis was a district east of the Jordan, and it was in that

region that the grateful man spread the news of his recovery which caused the crowd to gather.

Verse 21. Jesus returned to the western shore of Galilee, and, as usual, the crowds began to gather about him, doubtless with various motives.

Verse 22. *Ruler* is from ARCHISUNAGOGUE, and Thayer's explanation is, "It was his duty to select the readers or teachers in the synagogue, to examine the discourses of the public speakers, and to see that all things were done with decency and in accordance with ancestral usage." *Fell at his feet* manifested great respect and much anxiety.

Verse 23. The simple ceremony of laying his hands on the daughter would not have been necessary had Jesus seen fit to accomplish the cure without it, but the request was the ruler's way of indicating his faith in the great Healer.

Verse 24. It was nothing unusual for the crowds to follow Jesus, but the statement is added that they thronged him. That is an introduction to the event that is to follow soon, especially as to certain parts of it.

Verse 25. This woman was afflicted with a chronic hemorrhage of 12 years' standing.

Verse 26. This verse is one of the passages that are perverted into meaning just the opposite of their real teaching. The woman had grown worse in spite of her being treated by physicians. The fact is used by many "drugless healers" to prove that physicians are useless, even though Jesus said in Matthew 9: 12 that the sick need a physician. But the very statement that this woman had not been benefited by the physicians is proof that others had been helped by them.

Verse 27. This woman touched the garment of Jesus on the same principle that the ruler wanted him to touch the body of his daughter.

Verse 28. *For she said* means that she said it to herself.

Verse 29. The woman obtained the relief she sought and it was *straightway*. That was the manner of miraculous cures and not a requirement that much time be given as in the case of the fraudulent "faith-cure" workers of today.

Verse 30. *Virtue* is from DUNAMIS and is one of the words for "power." It says that Jesus knew of the virtue going out of him, not that he felt the

loss of the power. He knew it because he had divine knowledge of what was being done. His question was for a test of the woman, but the disciples thought it was for information.

Verse 31. *Thou seest the multitude* means that the whole crowd was touching him (see the comment on verse 24), and it seemed strange to them to ask such a question.

Verse 32. Jesus was continuing his test of the woman's trust in him.

Verse 33. The woman thought she had unintentionally committed some wrong. She came trembling and prostrate before Jesus and told him the truth.

Verse 34. The statement Jesus made to the woman denotes that it was not the contact with the garment that cured her, but the faith that was manifested by the act. *Go in peace* was said to assure her that she had not done anything wrong.

Verse 35. One miracle is no harder to perform than another but these people thought there was a difference. There are some things the Lord cannot do because they are not right, but no miracle is impossible merely because it is too hard.

Verse 36. Jesus overheard the word that was brought to the ruler, and he gave him an assurance of favor if he continued to have faith.

Verse 37. The group had neared the ruler's house when the message of death was brought. Jesus stopped the crowd at that place and permitted the trio of apostles to accompany him, the same ones specified on other occasions (Matthew 17: 1; 26: 37).

Verse 38. When Jesus arrived at the house a tumultuous crowd had gathered and the people were weeping and wailing as was the custom upon a death in a home.

Verse 39. *Not dead, but sleepeth*. This is figurative language, and the reader is cited to the comments on this subject at Matthew 9: 24.

Verse 40. They laughed at Jesus because they did not understand the two kinds of language. No reason is stated for putting the group out of the house, but it was appropriate to treat the people so in view of the hasty and undignified attitude they showed toward Jesus. He then took the parents of the girl, together with the three apostles, and entered the room where the body lay.

Verse 41. Jesus took the damsel by

the hand because it was his plan in this case. However, that fact alone was not the power that was to bring the dead to life, otherwise any man could bring a dead person to life again.

Verse 42. The girl was twelve years old and hence was able naturally to walk after her illness was gone. The astonishment was caused by the fact that a dead person had been brought back to life.

Verse 43. The Lord permitted Mark to record this case in his Gospel, hence there was nothing wrong in the case being known. But it was the practice of Jesus to be humble and not glory over his miraculous deeds, so he gave instructions frequently that people should not spread the report of what they had received.

### MARK 6

Verse 1. *Open country* means that where Nazareth was located (Matthew 4: 13). The reference cited tells that Jesus adopted Capernaum as his residence and many of his mighty works were done there, but he occasionally paid a visit to his boyhood home. Let it be noted that his disciples (apostles) followed him to Nazareth.

Verse 2. *From whence hath this man these things.* Jesus had lived in this town until he was thirty years old and they were intimately acquainted with him. It had been but a little while since he went away, and when he came back and they saw his deeds and heard his teaching it was somewhat puzzling to them.

Verse 3. The remarks in this verse were said by way of assuring themselves of the identity of Jesus. A peculiar trait of the human mind has produced a well-known saying, "Familiarity breeds contempt." The citizens seemed to think that one with whom they were so intimately acquainted would be unable to accomplish such a great work. (For comments on *brethren* see Matthew 12: 46.)

Verse 4. In this verse Jesus merely states the fact commented upon in the preceding verse, without expressing any opinion on it either for or against.

Verse 5. *Could* is from DUNAMAI which Thayer defines, "to be able, have power," and he explains his definition, "whether by virtue of one's own ability and resources, or of a state of mind, or through favorable circumstances (emphasis mine, E. M. Z.), or by permission of law or custom." The words emphasized explain in what sense

Jesus could not do much in this place; the circumstances were unfavorable. The fact that he did heal "a few sick folks" shows it was no lack of ability in Jesus.

Verse 6. Jesus was divinely inspired and knew all that was in man, hence nothing could surprise him that was done by human beings. The word *marvel* means that Jesus took special note of the gross unbelief of the people of Nazareth and decided to go elsewhere to do his work.

Verse 7. This is sometimes referred to as "the first commission," in contrast with "the great commission" of chapter 16: 15, 16. The wisdom of working in pairs is shown by the plan Jesus used in this case. Paul frequently had one or more brethren with him as he went out into the field. *Power* is from EXOUSIA which means authority or right. It was fitting to use such a word because the unclean spirits were intelligent beings and could logically be addressed by commands.

Verse 8. The staff was a walking stick and would be needed from the start, hence they were permitted to provide that. A *scrip* was the same as a modern lunch basket. They were supposed to be given their necessities by the people among whom they worked on the ground that "the workman is worthy of his meat" (Matthew 10: 10).

Verse 9. Sandals were needed immediately, like the walking stick, therefore they were permitted to provide that before starting, and one coat was placed on the same basis.

Verse 10. They were to make only one house stop in each city.

Verse 11. Shaking off the dust was an old custom practiced to indicate a feeling of disgust against a person or place; I have no information as to its origin. *More tolerable . . . in the day of judgment*, not afterwards. To use some everyday language, some people will have a harder time in getting past the judgment than others. The reason is that some have more and better opportunities than others.

Verse 12. *They* means the twelve apostles who went out under the commission as stated in verse 7. Matthew 10: 7 tells us also that they preached the news that the kingdom of heaven was at hand and that repentance therefore was necessary.

Verse 13. They cast out devils by the power or authority that Jesus gave

them (verse 7); and performed the other miracles by the same means. Anointing with oil is connected with healing the sick. The significance of that is expressed by one writer by saying, "Its use implied that God was the healer." That is correct, but it does not explain how it does so. The idea is that oil of olives is no active medicine and could not effect a cure of sickness alone. The conclusion would be, then, that a greater power was working in connection with the oil. (See James 5: 14.)

Verse 14. This was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. His remarks about Jesus are explained in the note at Matthew 14: 2 on "transmigration."

Verse 15. The writer interrupts his story of Herod to report what some others were saying about Jesus. The same is given in the conversation Jesus had with the apostles when they came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16: 13, 14).

Verse 16. This verse repeats verse 14 with the added statement that Herod beheaded John.

Verse 17. The persecution began with the imprisonment of John which was spite work, caused by Herodias whom he had unlawfully married, she being the wife of his brother.

Verse 18. John told Herod it was not lawful for him to have this woman. The law that he violated by that marriage is in Leviticus 18: 16; 20: 21.

Verse 19. John's rebuke especially angered Herodias who would have killed John if she could have done as she felt about it.

Verse 20. The original word for *feared* has a twofold meaning, depending on the way it is used. This entire verse shows a friendly attitude toward John hence it means that Herod respected him. It was this kind of fear that was in the way of the wicked designs of his wife. But as vicious a person as she can plot and accomplish her wickedness by indirect methods as we shall see.

Verse 21. *Convenient* is defined, "seasonable, timely, opportune." The verse means that Herod's birthday furnished a convenient time for the woman to carry out her plot.

Verse 22. Herodias knew the lustful character of Herod, a character that explains his willingness to take his own brother's wife unlawfully, and she therefore conceived a plan to capture him. She instructed her daughter

to go into the party and dance before the eyes of the men. It is not reasonable to suppose that Herod was a judge of "art" so that the performance of the girl impressed him from that standpoint. Besides, if that were his motive, just an expensive personal gift would have been all that she would have expected. The eastern dances were of a licentious character, displaying the figure in a way to appeal to the lustful eyes of the witnesses. Herod's baser nature was so inflamed that he exceeded all the customs and promised to give the girl anything she might ask.

Verse 23. The man was so overcome in his passion that he did not stop with a mere promise, but backed it up with an oath, and also specified the maximum limit to which she could go in her wish which was the half of his kingdom.

Verse 24. The damsel had accomplished the satanic effect that her mother planned, and she then went to her for further instructions, and was told to ask for the head of John the Baptist. This verse states the wish in general terms and the next will be more specific to suit the horrible designs of the revengeful woman.

Verse 25. Following her mother's instructions the girl came back into the presence of Herod and requested the head of John *in a charger* or large dish. By having the head in this way the wicked woman would know that she had been successful in her plot.

Verse 26. The king was sorry because he knew that John was a righteous man. But his pride of position under the eyes of the guests, together with a false notion of the sacredness of oaths, prevailed over his better judgment and feelings.

Verse 27. The executioner went to the prison and beheaded John, which was done with a sword, that being before the days of other mechanical means.

Verse 28. The head was brought in a large dish and given to the girl. That would seem to make the deal regular since she was the one who had earned the gift by her immoral performance. Of course she could do as she pleased with the award, hence she gave it to her mother who had plotted the affair.

Verse 29. *His disciples* means the disciples of John. All that was left for them to do was to give respectful and loving attention to the headless body.



I have been unable to find any information on what became of the head of this righteous man.

Verse 30. The apostles made this report under the commission of verses 7-13.

Verse 31. The crowds were so dense that it interfered with their meals. The people kept coming and going until Jesus instructed his disciples to get away for a while.

Verse 32. They slipped away from the crowd and took a boat for a desert place.

Verse 33. But they did not escape from the eyes of all the people. They saw and recognized Jesus and were determined not to let him get entirely from them. They could not follow him in boats, but went on foot with such speed that they were at the place ahead of him and met him as he landed.

Verse 34. *When he came out* denotes when he left the boat and came ashore. The compassion of the Lord was always one of his ruling principles. His opinion of this mixed throng that had come *out of all cities* is compared to a flock that has been deserted by the shepherd. Such a group of people would furnish the kind that was hungry and thirsting after righteousness (Matthew 5: 6), hence it says *he began to teach*.

Verse 35. The disciples finally became concerned about the comfort of the multitude. It was a desert place, which merely means it was not inhabited and hence contained no markets of any kind where food could be purchased.

Verse 36. They suggested that Jesus dismiss the people that they might go into the villages *round about* to buy some food, for they had not brought any such supplies when they came out there.

Verse 37. The disciples did not understand how Jesus meant for them to feed them.

Verse 38. These few loaves and fishes would not supply even a taste for all the multitude, but the lesson should be gathered that the Lord expects man to do what he can in accomplishing desired results.

Verse 39. *Sit down by companies* means to form groups for the orderly passing of food. *Green grass* does not grow where there never is any moisture, so the desert does not mean an infertile spot.

Verse 40. *By hundred and fifties*. This was according to the uneven condition of the land, making it more convenient to have smaller groups in some places and larger groups in others, adapting the size of the groups to the surface conditions.

Verse 41. Jesus blessed the bread by giving thanks to God for it. The reason for breaking the bread was the same for breaking it in the Lord's Supper, and that was only because more than one person was to partake of it. Jesus handed the pieces of bread to the disciples so they could serve the multitude.

Verse 42. Jesus did not satisfy their hunger by performing a miracle on their appetite, for it says they were all *filled*. The miracle was in multiplying the bread as it was being passed through the crowd.

Verse 43. Another proof that no miraculous effect was given to the bread so as to satisfy the hunger, is the fact that they found all these scraps left after the meal.

Verse 44. *Five thousand men*, and Matthew 14: 21 adds "besides women and children."

Verse 45. Bethsaida was a town of Galilee, and Jesus gave his disciples instructions that they were to return by boat to that region, while he remained to dismiss the people so they could return to their homes.

Verse 46. Having sent the multitudes away, Jesus retired to a mountain to pray.

Verse 47. The boat had been making its way for several hours until evening overtook it. Still later in the night a severe wind came down upon the sea, blowing against the boat so that the rowers were having difficulty with the vessel. Jesus saw the situation and went to their rescue the *fourth watch* which was 3 A. M.

Verse 48. While it was night, it was possible to discern a form coming towards them and they were frightened. They thought it was a *spirit* which is from PHANTASMA which means some kind of disembodied being with a visible form.

Verses 49, 50. The familiar words, "It is I; be not afraid," assured them of their safety.

Verse 51. The presence of Jesus in the boat had a quieting effect on the storm. The disciples were baffled by the event and overwhelmed by amazement.

Verse 52. *Heart was hardened* means it was stunned to the extent of inaction, forgetting for the time being that Jesus had only a few hours before fed the thousands.

Verse 53. Gennesaret was a narrow strip of country on the east shore of Galilee.

Verse 54. *They* means the people of Gennesaret who had seen Jesus before and knew about his great works of compassion on behalf of the unfortunate.

Verse 55. The people began at once to gather up the sick folks and carry them in beds to wherever they knew that Jesus was pausing.

Verse 56. *Streets* is from a word that means marketplaces, not an ordinary thoroughfare as one might think. They were centers where people in all the walks of life gathered, and they expected Jesus to be there a part of the time. When he did come he was requested to let the sick people touch his clothing. Such a request was a sign of their faith and Jesus rewarded it by healing them of their diseases.

## MARK 7

Verse 1. The Pharisees were a religious sect of the Jews, and the scribes were those whose business it was to copy the law of Moses and expound it unto the people. Both of these groups were constant foes of Jesus because he rebuked their hypocrisies.

Verse 2. These people were always watching to find a cause of complaint. They thought they had found something when they saw the disciples eating without washing.

Verse 3. This did not refer to ordinary cleansing but to a tradition of the elders.

Verse 4. The tradition required that they wash their hands as a ceremony under certain conditions, regardless of whether the act was necessary or not.

Verse 5. They based their criticism on the fact that the disciples had disregarded the tradition of the elders, not that they had gone contrary to the rules of sanitation.

Verse 6. Jesus directly called those people hypocrites and said that Esaias (Isaiah) had prophesied about them. They spoke one way and their heart was interested in another.

Verse 7. Regardless of the apparent goodness of the worship that is offered to God, if it is based on the command-

ments of men the worship is vain or useless.

Verse 8. A person would have the privilege of maintaining his own notions about such things as ceremonial washing of hands and service vessels, provided that was as far as it went. But these people exalted those practices above the commands of God, even to the extent of substituting them for the divine law.

Verse 9. *Full well* applies to the truthfulness of the statement and not to what the Pharisees were doing; truly, ye reject, etc. *That ye may keep* denotes they could not keep such traditions as theirs in the way they desired without disregarding the commandments of the Lord.

Verse 10. The kind of traditions Jesus was condemning is specified in this and a few following verses. First, he cited one of the positive commandments God gave through Moses, that a man should honor his parents. And this honor included the obligation of administering to their needs.

Verse 11. *Corban* is defined in the lexicon, "a gift offered to God." These Pharisees pretended to have put their money into the Lord's treasury instead of using it to provide some benefit for their parents.

Verse 12. On the pretense that they had put their money into the treasury, they claimed exemption from considering their parents as dependents.

Verse 13. In the aforesaid practice they made their traditions more important than the inspired law that had been delivered to them by the hand of Moses.

Verse 14. Jesus next turned his attention to the people in general. He wished them not to misunderstand what he had said about washing the hands.

Verse 15. He did not mean to belittle the importance of cleanliness. The Pharisees were dealing with the subject in a ceremonial way only, as if the soil on one's hands would cause some moral or spiritual bad effect. Jesus was denying that and then stating what would in reality defile one. This is as far as he went in his explanation to "the people." (See the reason why at Matthew 13: 11.)

Verse 16. This means for every man to use his opportunities for hearing the truth.

Verse 17. After getting to themselves, the disciples asked Jesus to

explain the parable to them. He did so as explained by the note cited at verse 15.

Verse 18. Jesus repeated the statement about the outward filth entering a man.

Verse 19. The reason it does not defile a man is because it is not retained, but is eliminated from the body along with other waste matter. A *draught* was similar to our modern sanitary stool.

Verse 20. The mere fact of its coming out is not what defiles a man. The idea is that such things as will soon be named are what makes a man defiled, and the issuing forth of them reveals what the defilements are.

Verse 21. The things named in this and the following verse are not done "on the spur of the moment," but are the deliberate intentions of the heart, and that is why they are said to defile a man. *Adulteries* can be committed first in the heart (Matthew 5: 28). Fornication is virtually the same in the eyes of the Lord, but human laws make a difference and the scripture condemns both so there will be no doubt. *Murder* is taking human life unlawfully after it has been premeditated which is done in the heart.

Verse 22. A man does not *steal* accidentally but plans to do it. *Laciviousness* is filthy desire and they are begun in the heart. *An evil eye*. Thayer says, "Since the eye is the index of the mind, the following phrases have arisen," then he includes the one italicized. *Blasphemy* is wicked speech that is prompted by the heart.

Verse 23. These things defile a man because they corrupt his heart and then his life through the manner of conduct they induce him to practice.

Verse 24. Jesus left the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee and went on across the country to that lying near the Mediterranean Sea in which were the cities of Tyre and Sidon. He wished to have some privacy and entered into a house for that purpose. *Could not be hid*. Jesus did not wish to be always performing miracles to accomplish his purposes, but often took the same course that other men would take under the same circumstances. In the present case the shelter of a house was not enough to hide him.

Verse 25. This woman's daughter had an *unclean spirit* which means was possessed with a devil. This daughter was *young* and ordinarily would not be unrighteous in her man-

er of life, but the possession of a devil was an affliction and not a fault.

Verse 26. In the time of Christ all persons who were not Jews were regarded as Gentiles whatever their nationality might be, hence this woman being Greek is rendered Gentile in the margin. By nation she was a Syro-phenician which is a compound word meaning a mixture of the Phoenician and Syrian territories. The writer mentions this as an explication of the attitude that Jesus at first maintained in testing her faith.

Verse 27. The Greek word for *dog* is not the one ordinarily used for that animal, but one that Thayer defines as "a little dog." It refers to a creature that would be like a child's pet and allowed to play about the table while its master was eating. The crumbs that fell would not be denied the dog and the circumstance was used for an illustration. Jesus purposely used that story to suggest the humble speech the woman made.

Verse 28. The woman did not resent the comparison, but was willing to accept the temporal healing of her daughter as crumbs, and leave the bread of the Lord's teaching to the children of his Father's family, namely, the Jews.

Verse 29. The woman said just what Jesus wished her to say, and as a reward he assured her that the devil had been driven out of her daughter.

Verse 30. She found it as Jesus stated upon her return home. After such an experience as the girl had suffered (Matthew 15: 22 says she was "grievously vexed"), she would be somewhat prostrated, so the mother found her daughter lying on a bed.

Verse 31. Decapolis was a region on the east side of the Jordan. So Jesus left the western part of Palestine, crossed the country and over Jordan and on to the coast of the Sea of Galilee.

Verse 32. This man was suffering with a bodily ailment of his hearing, and that had caused him to be defective in his speech. People learn to talk from childhood by hearing others, and if they cannot hear they may not learn to talk.

Verse 33. This physical contact was the plan that Jesus saw fit to use in this case, not that he could not have healed the man otherwise.

Verse 34. EPHPHATHA is a Greek word and the King James translators retained it in the text, then gave the definition of it which is the same that

is in Thayer's lexicon, namely, "be thou opened." *Looking up to heaven* indicated that he was looking to God for cooperation as he always worked as a partner with his Father.

Verse 35. As usual, the cure was *straightway* and not a prolonged affair.

Verse 36. *Charged them tell no man.* Jesus did not want the people to think that he was working miracles just with the motive of becoming famous.

Verse 37. The proof these people had that Jesus did all things well was the fact that visible changes came to the man with whom they were so well acquainted.

### MARK 8

Verse 1. Jesus did many of his works through cooperation with his disciples.

Verse 2. The compassion of Jesus was caused by the lack of food among the multitudes. That would be emphasized by the motive that had kept them there for three days, which was that they might hear the teaching He was giving.

Verse 3. For comments on this verse see those on Matthew 15: 32.

Verse 4. It is strange the disciples forgot the occasion of chapter 6: 35-44.

Verse 5. Jesus never had to ask questions for information (John 2: 24, 25), but he often asked them as a means of drawing the disciples into the matter at hand, to let them feel a sense of responsibility concerning the welfare of others.

Verse 6. They were to sit down for the sake of orderliness. The bread was first handed to the disciples who then *did set* ("place near"—Thayer) the bread before them.

Verse 7. *He blessed* is equivalent to "gave thanks" in the preceding verse.

Verse 8. Having the baskets of scraps left denoted that their being filled was not just an imagination. This is especially significant in view of the fact that they had been fasting for three days and must have been very hungry.

Verse 9. Matthew 15: 38 says this many men besides women and children.

Verse 10. After dismissing the people Jesus got into a boat and came to the region of Dalmanutha, a town on the west side of the Sea of Galilee.

Verse 11. It is honorable to ask questions for information, but the Pharisees asked them as a temptation of

Jesus, thus acting in their usual hypocritical manner.

Verse 12. *Sighed deeply* means Jesus made a deep groan over the perversity of those people. He did not consider them worthy of much attention. In Matthew 16: 4 he did tell them about Jonah, but that was not what they really wanted.

Verse 13. Leaving the crowd, Jesus again recrossed the sea.

Verse 14. They were about to enter a region where public markets were scarce at best, which ought to have prompted the disciples to make special provision for it. Jesus knew they had forgotten about it and used the circumstance to test them.

Verse 15. The disciples knew that the Pharisees and Herod were in an unfavorable light with Jesus, but they did not grasp the comparison that was made to leaven.

Verse 16. "A guilty conscience needs no reproof" is an old saying, and it about describes the state of mind the disciples were in. There was scarcely any connection between what Jesus said and the fact of their having forgotten to take bread.

Verse 17. They had done their reasoning to themselves but Jesus knew about it and rebuked them for their dullness of heart which almost amounted to unbelief.

Verse 18. This verse means they did not use their faculties to arrive at just conclusions, even when they had visible facts on which to base their reasoning.

Verses 19, 20. To show that it was not a lapse in their memory, Jesus specified that part of the previous feedings that especially demonstrated the greatness of the miracle (the amount of scraps left) and they remembered both instances.

Verse 21. Jesus rebuked them with a question as to their understanding. Matthew 16: 12 states that the disciples then did understand what Jesus meant by leaven.

Verse 22. The request for Jesus to touch the man showed their faith in his power.

Verse 23. Jesus anointed the man with saliva and touched his eyes.

Verse 24. Men looked like trees walking to this man; that is, he saw that much but the vision was indistinct.

Verse 25. Jesus next touched the man's eyes and he saw clearly. This

circumstance has been referred to by some as an answer to our claim that miraculous cures were instantaneous. But it is no valid argument, for Jesus just saw fit to perform two miracles, and each was instantaneous. To be like the modern so-called miracles, the man should have been receiving repeated treatments and the sight returning gradually, little by little, until he could see clearly. Instead, as soon as Jesus touched the man's eyes the first time he could see objects. Had nothing more been done he would always have seen that well. So that each of the miracles was complete and instantaneous.

Verse 26. See the comments on Mark 7: 36 for the present verse.

Verse 27. The origin of the name Caesarea Philippi is explained at Matthew 16: 13. The question Jesus asked his disciples was for the introduction to the more important subject of the faith they had in him.

Verse 28. These opinions were based on the doctrine called "transmigration," which is explained by a note at Matthew 14: 2.

Verse 29. *Whom say ye* was addressed to all the apostles, but Peter usually was the spokesman and he made the confession of faith on behalf of the others.

Verse 30. This charge was not like the one in verse 26 and others as it had nothing directly to do with his miracles. It meant that it was not time to "release" the fundamental claim of his divinity to the whole world.

Verse 31. It was near enough to the end to introduce the sad information of how Jesus was to be treated by the Jewish leaders. This one verse covers the persecution, death and resurrection of Jesus. But it seems that Peter noticed only the bad part of it and overlooked the glorious assurance of the resurrection. Doubtless that was because he was still under the delusion that Jesus was to set up an earthly kingdom, which he could not do if he died a violent death.

Verse 32. With that error in mind Peter spoke against the prediction of Jesus.

Verse 33. Satan accomplished his purpose in the garden by contradicting the saying of God. Peter contradicted the statement of Jesus and hence he called him by that name. *Savourest* means to be interested in a thing, and Jesus meant that Peter was

interested in a temporal kingdom instead of the spiritual kingdom of God.

Verse 34. *Cross* is used figuratively and means that following Christ requires one to make sacrifices. Many things must be denied to a man who tries to serve Jesus.

Verse 35. Two kinds of life are considered in this verse. The passage would read that whoever seeks to save his temporal life at the expense of righteousness will lose his spiritual life. And of course the opposite is true of the man who puts spiritual things above everything else.

Verse 36. *Profit* means to obtain from an investment more than was put into it. If a man buys the whole world with the price of his soul he will be a loser, for the price paid is many times more valuable than the thing purchased.

Verse 37. This verse has the same thought as the preceding but with a different figure. It is compared to a man pawning his soul for the pleasures of this world. When he would wish to redeem his soul from the "pawn shop" of the world he will not be able because the things of the world will then be gone out of existence.

Verse 38. *Whosoever therefore*. Since a wasted life will have nothing with which to redeem the soul, it is folly to disregard Jesus (be ashamed of him) in this world. Such a man will be disregarded by Jesus when he is in his presence and that of his angels.

## MARK 9

Verse 1. This statement of Jesus denotes that the kingdom of heaven was not yet set up, and also it was to come in the lifetime of some men then living. Since all of the people living then are dead, we know that the kingdom of heaven has been in existence for centuries and that much teaching on that subject today is false.

Verse 2. *Six days after* the conversation of the preceding verse is what is meant. These are the three apostles whom Jesus frequently took with him on special missions. To be transfigured means to take on another appearance.

Verse 3. White raiment indicates purity and heavenly splendor. A *fuller* is a cleanser of cloth and no man in that occupation could put a garment into the condition of whiteness that appeared upon the body of Jesus.

Verse 4. *Elias* is the same as Elijah of the Old Testament who went to

heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2: 11) and hence never died. Moses was the lawgiver of the Old Testament and died (Deuteronomy 34: 5). Peter, James and John had not died and were therefore still in the flesh. So at this event the three states of man were represented, the fleshly, the intermediate and the eternal.

Verse 5. Peter had a feeling of hospitality and wished to provide for the guests, which indicates they had the appearance of men who could be cared for in earthly housing.

Verse 6. *Wist* is an obsolete word meaning he knew not what to say, or, he did not realize what he was saying. *Sore afraid* means they were exceedingly amazed.

Verse 7. The announcement from the cloud was like the one heard at the baptism of Jesus except it had the words, *hear him*. The earthly work of Jesus was virtually completed and the authority of the Son of God over Moses and the prophets was thus announced in this important assembly.

Verse 8. The purpose of the visit of the special guests was accomplished, and when the apostles rallied from their amazement they noted the absence of Moses and Elias.

Verse 9. This vision was so special that the public in general was not yet ready for its announcement. (See the comments on chapter 8: 30.)

Verse 10. The restriction Jesus placed on them which was connected with the resurrection confused the apostles. They discussed the subject among themselves and then decided to ask Jesus a question.

Verse 11. The apostles did not realize that *Elias* was used figuratively only.

Verse 12. Jesus affirmed the prediction that *Elias* was to come *first* and *restore all things*, which means to get things in readiness for Christ.

Verse 13. Jesus then explained that the prediction had been fulfilled. This matter is explained in more detail at Matthew 17: 10-12.

Verse 14. *Came to his disciples* means the ones Jesus left waiting while he was in the mount. The scribes were generally at hand with their critical questions, and when they could not approach Jesus they contacted his disciples.

Verse 15. *The people* means the crowd in general who were usually in a favorable frame of mind toward

Jesus. Their attention was called to him and they were *greatly amazed* or surprised. But they were favorably impressed by his sudden appearance for they came and saluted him.

Verse 16. Jesus asked the scribes why they were questioning the disciples. As far as the text goes they never answered the question put to them by Jesus.

Verse 17. One of the multitude (not one of the scribes) announced to Jesus that he had brought his son unto him. That denotes that he came with his son expecting to meet Jesus. But as he was not with the disciples the father had turned the case over to them. A *dumb spirit* is stated because it had that effect on the boy. We know it does not literally mean the devil that was dumb for when Jesus commanded it to come out (verse 26) it *cried* which shows the spirit itself was not dumb.

Verse 18. These symptoms were the effects this particular spirit had on the boy. The possession of evil spirits did not always work the same, the reason for which is not made known in the text. The father then stated that the disciples could not cast the evil spirit out of his son.

Verse 19. This charge of faithfulness was meant for the disciples (Matthew 17: 20).

Verse 20. These terrible symptoms were the results of being possessed with a devil. The devils knew Jesus and feared him, but as a desperate piece of vengeance when this one saw Jesus he overcame the boy and inflicted the injuries mentioned.

Verse 21. This son had been possessed with the devil most of his life.

Verse 22. The child evidently would have lost his life had it not been for friends.

Verse 23. *All things are possible* as far as the Lord's power is concerned, but he does not bestow that power unless the case is regarded worthy, and that point is frequently (not always) determined by the degree of faith manifested.

Verse 24. *Believe* and *unbelief* seem like opposite terms. The man said he did believe, so the request meant that his faith should be made stronger.

Verse 25. Jesus did not want the commotion to become too great so he did his work promptly. The devils are intelligent beings is the reason the Lord could command them.



Verse 26. The spirit *cried* which shows it was not dumb, but it had produced dumbness at times in the boy. Having suffered these attacks from early childhood the boy was exhausted when the devil was cast out so that he appeared to be dead.

Verse 27. Jesus then cured the boy of his weakness so that he arose.

Verse 28. The disciples were baffled over their failure to cast out the devil, and when they had a chance alone they asked Jesus to explain this failure.

Verse 29. The account that Mark gives is very brief. For a fuller treatment of the subject see the text and my comments at Matthew 17: 20, 21.

Verse 30. This verse means that Jesus wished to have as much privacy as possible. His public work was about over and it was unnecessary to meet the public as he had.

Verse 31. Jesus warned his disciples of what was coming, and the same things had been prophesied in the Old Testament.

Verse 32. The language of Jesus was plain and he used words that were in common use. The reason the disciples did not understand them was their delusion of an earthly kingdom they thought he was going to set up.

Verse 33. Jesus did not need to ask questions for information (John 2: 25), but this was his way of bringing the subject before the disciples, for he knew they had been disputing about it as they were going to Capernaum.

Verse 34. *They held their peace* because they felt ashamed as well as surprised that he could read what had not been intended for him even to hear. They had an earthly form of kingdom in mind that Jesus was to set up, and were contending among themselves about who should be in the highest position as a member of it.

Verse 35. True greatness is the subject of this speech of Jesus. In earthly kingdoms it is usual for men to seek prominence and try to become great from the standpoint of authority over others. In the kingdom of heaven it is just the opposite of that. One reason is that this kingdom is an absolute monarchy, and in such a government any attempt of the citizens to attain to greatness in the nature of authority must be interpreted as an infringement upon the king.

Verse 36. This child was small for Jesus took him in his arms, after he

had placed him in full view of the apostles.

Verse 37. Receiving a little child in the name of Christ means to do so because of the comparison between them. A man who will do that is bound to have a humble attitude, and humility is what constitutes true greatness in the kingdom of Christ. *Receiveth not me, but him, etc.* This denotes the close association between Christ and his Father. No person can obtain any favor from one of them if he ignores the other.

Verse 38. We notice that no denial was made as to whether the man actually was casting out devils. The complaint was that he was not walking along bodily in the same crowd with Jesus and the twelve. John did not understand that only the apostles were required to "be with him" in that sense. (See chapter 3: 14.)

Verse 39. The fact the man was actually casting out devils proved that he was a true disciple. Had he been a mere pretender he would have failed as did the men reported in Acts 19: 13-16 who were brought to such shameful defeat.

Verse 40. There is no actual neutrality with regard to matters pertaining to Christ. A man may not be very active in an unrighteous life, but unless he is active in the service for Christ he is counted as being "on the other side" (Obadiah 11).

Verse 41. This is to be understood in the same light as verse 37.

Verse 42. When a man becomes like a little child he is then classed as a *little one* in the sense of the word here. This is evident from the truth that he can be *offended* which means to stumble or do wrong, and that is possible only with a person of responsible age and mentality.

Verse 43. *Offend* means to cause to stumble or do wrong. The hand is a valuable member of the body and is used to illustrate anything one might be cherishing but that causes him to do wrong. One would give up the hand if it became diseased and endangered the whole life of the man. Likewise, we should sacrifice any practice or associate however dear, if our spiritual welfare should be endangered by it. A description of *hell* as it is defined in the lexicon may be seen with comments on Matthew 5: 30.

Verse 44. All of the illustrations that are ever used here or elsewhere as to the duration of punishment, must

be interpreted to mean that the unsaved will be in punishment that will be conscious and endless. *Their worm dieth not* is commented upon by another writer in better language than I can produce as follows: "The awfully vivid idea of an undying worm, everlastingly consuming an unconsumable body." The reason the worm will not die is that the body will not be consumed, even though in the midst of an unquenchable fire, and hence there will always be something to keep the worm alive.

Verse 45. The foot is used instead of the hand, otherwise the lesson in this verse is the same as that in verse 48 on the subject of making self-denials.

Verse 46. *Worm dieth not* is explained at verse 44.

Verse 47. This is the same lesson as in verses 43 and 45.

Verse 48. See verse 44 for the explanation of this.

Verse 49. *Salted with fire*. Here we see fire used figuratively for salt. Salt, through its preserving qualities, tends to perpetuate an object brought into contact with it. It is thus connected with the fire of perdition because of the perpetual duration of that fire. Salt is used with the idea of perpetuation in Numbers 18: 19.

Verse 50. Just as salt is used to illustrate the perpetuation of the punishment of the wicked, so it also can preserve and perpetuate the good qualities of man. Jesus exhorted the disciples not to let the salt of their good lives lose its strength. They could *have peace one with another* by using the salt of brotherly love.

## MARK 10

Verse 1. *Arose from thence* refers to Capernaum where Jesus had been teaching, and started on the journey toward Jerusalem. *By the farther side* is the same as saying *by way of* that region; the route traveled was along the eastern side of the Jordan. As usual, the crowds gathered about Jesus and he taught them.

Verse 2. In Matthew's account of this conversation (chapter 19: 3) the Pharisees add the words "for every cause." Mark says they asked the question for the purpose of tempting Jesus. They hoped he would say something that would disagree with the law and thus give them an occasion for accusing him.

Verse 3. Instead of answering di-

rect, Jesus asked them to repeat the law of Moses on the subject of the question they professed to have in mind.

Verse 4. They stated the law correctly as far as they went, and that law may be seen in Deuteronomy 24: 1.

Verse 5. Jesus did not deny their citation but explained the reason for the law; the people were not in the favorable attitude for the strictness of enforcement, and as an emergency some tolerance was extended to them.

Verse 6. Jesus also informed them that it was not always that way, and his teaching soon indicated that a return to the original ruling would be required after the kingdom of heaven was set up. The original order was that God made them *male and female*; singular on both sides, not male and females.

Verse 7. *For this cause* means for the cause soon to be stated, a man should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. The word *cleave* means that he should join his body with hers in the fleshly relationship.

Verse 8. The result of that cleaving was to be that the two bodies would become one in the flesh. Not only would they be one flesh at the time of the union, but it was to be permanent, for it says they would be *no more twain, but one flesh*.

Verse 9. It says that God joined these two, and that was because the ordinance was authorized of God. The fleshly union made them one and the unfaithfulness of either would be the way that the union could be *put asunder*.

Verse 10. The disciples wished to have further information.

Verse 11. The wish was granted by the statement of this verse. The simple fact of divorcing a wife does not constitute adultery, but the remarriage to another (except when the wife has been unfaithful, Matthew 19: 9) does.

Verse 12. The same rule applies to a wife that does to a husband.

Verse 13. It is natural for people to want their children admired and even to be fondled. These children were brought to Jesus for that purpose, and it is not any surprise that such a desire would exist, especially in view of the importance of this great "friend of man." The disciples evidently thought that Jesus had more important things to do than to notice children.

Verse 14. Jesus overheard the objections of his disciples and concluded it was an appropriate time to give them a lesson touching the principles of his kingdom soon to be set up. *Of such* should be noted, for it is very significant. Little children were not to become members of the kingdom, for they do not need it. The point is that the spirit of those who are acceptable members of the kingdom of heaven must become like that of a little child.

Verse 15. *Receive the kingdom of God as a little child* means they must become as the child in spirit, otherwise they will not be welcomed into the kingdom.

Verse 16. Jesus then gave an example of his own teaching by taking the children in his arms and bestowing upon them a caressing touch. *Blessed them* means he pronounced his good wishes upon them.

Verse 17. The teaching of Jesus had given the impression that something special would be required in order to have eternal life. No doubt this man (who Matthew says was young, chapter 19: 20) sincerely desired eternal life, but he had no idea what he would be required to do in obtaining it.

Verse 18. *None good but one* is explained at Matthew 19: 17.

Verse 19. These six commandments of the Decalogue are the ones that pertain to man's dealing with man. Jesus knew that in this man's case the extra law he would give would also be in that class.

Verse 20. The man claimed to have kept all of these and Jesus did not deny it.

Verse 21. A part of Thayer's definition of the original for *love* is "to regard the welfare of." Knowing the situation with the young man, Jesus considered that his spiritual welfare was at stake. He decided to show him what would be necessary to assure him of that welfare, which was to dispose of his riches.

Verse 22. The man's attachment to his riches was the occasion of this *grief*.

Verse 23. *How hardly shall they . . . enter the kingdom of God*. The reader should see the comments covering this whole event at Matthew 19: 20-27.

Verse 24. The words *trust in riches* gives the key to this subject, which is expressed also by Paul in 1 Timothy 6: 17, and is virtually the same as "the love of money" in the same chapter and verse 10.

Verse 25. This needle is explained in the comments cited in verse 23.

Verse 26. The disciples were taking a purely physical view of the subject.

Verse 27. With God all things are possible as far as power is concerned.

Verse 28. *Have left all* meant they had literally left their homes in order to travel with Jesus in his journeys through the country.

Verse 29. Many things had to be left behind if they went with Jesus in this kind of a journey, for they would have been encumbrances to the work.

Verse 30. *Now in this time* refers to the life on earth with these apostles, but after their bodily association with Jesus had been fulfilled. They were to have their homes and families for their personal use again (such as Peter rejoining his wife, 1 Corinthians 9: 5), but would be required to endure persecutions for the sake of their religion. *World to come* means the age after the judgment in which the righteous will enjoy eternal life.

Verse 31. This important language is commented upon at Matthew 19: 30.

Verse 32. Jesus had told his disciples that he was to be mistreated (chapter 8: 31), and they seemed to think he should not voluntarily go to Jerusalem. When they saw that he was even foremost in the journey they were amazed. Although they followed along after him they were under a feeling of terror.

Verse 33. Instead of trying to lessen their fears by painting the picture in some favorable colors, Jesus repeated what he had said to them before. *Deliver him to the Gentiles* was to be because the Jews could not execute the death sentence.

Verse 34. Jesus usually included the resurrection in his predictions of his death.

Verse 35. This request was for the sake of James and John, but Matthew 20: 20, 21 states that their mother made the plea to Jesus.

Verse 36. The Lord knows what we need or want before we ask him, but he desires that we ask him (Matthew 6: 8).

Verse 37. This request was based on their idea of an earthly kingdom.

Verse 38. The disciples did not realize what was involved in their request. They thought only of the glory that was supposed to come upon those in positions of authority in the kingdoms of the world. The cup and bap-

tism that Jesus mentioned were figurative, referring to the trials that were in store for those who were associated with Christ in the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 39. Without realizing what it meant, the disciples indicated they were ready to accept the cup and baptism. Even in a spiritual kingdom, such a cup and baptism as Jesus meant were to be expected, hence he told them they would have that experience.

Verse 40. *Is not mine to give* is explained at Matthew 20: 23.

Verse 41. The other apostles were displeased with James and John. It evidently was because of their desire to be seated above the others in places of authority.

Verse 42. Jesus found it necessary so many times to explain the fundamental difference as to true greatness between his kingdom and those of the world. In them the strongest are the ones who exercise the rule of authority and domination.

Verses 43, 44. It was to be the opposite of that in the kingdom of heaven. In it the truly greatest citizens will be the ones who render the most service to others.

Verse 45. The principle of service as a sign of true greatness was practiced by the Son of man notwithstanding he was to be the king. He devoted his life on earth to service unto others, then crowned that service by giving his life for the benefit of the whole world that all might be saved who would serve him.

Verse 46. Jesus came to Jericho after crossing the Jordan on the way to Jerusalem. As he and his disciples with a great number of other people were leaving that city, they passed a blind beggar sitting by the wayside.

Verse 47. This man had been asking for the necessities of life only, for he did not expect any of the people to be able to do anything for his blindness. But the fame of Jesus had reached his ears, and learning that he was passing by it prompted him to ask for a more important favor.

Verse 48. The crowd thought the blind man was interrupting the work of Jesus, but he was made more persistent by the attempt to quiet him.

Verses 49, 50. Whoever was given the command to call the blind man gave him a kindly greeting. Upon information that Jesus had heard his plea he arose and went to him. He

cast away his outer garment that he might move more easily.

Verse 51. Jesus knew the nature of the man's affliction, but wished him to express his request as an indication of his faith. (See comments at verse 36).

Verse 52. For the sake of his faith the Lord granted the unfortunate man his sight. Notice that it was *immediately* as all truly miraculous cures were done.

## MARK 11

Verse 1. The mount of Olives was near Jerusalem (Acts 1: 12) and the towns named were on or near the mount. They are mentioned to indicate *how* "nigh" they were.

Verse 2. Jesus usually traveled on foot, and being so near the city he would not change his mode of travel just from being tired. But he wished to prepare for the fulfilling of a certain prophecy by procuring this animal. He instructed his disciples to bring him a colt tied in a nearby village, one that had never been "broke to ride."

Verse 3. They were given the authority to take the colt, equipped with the all-sufficient explanation to its owners that *the Lord hath need of him*.

Verse 4. They found the colt tied at an intersection of two streets, or rather, where they came together as "a fork in the road."

Verse 5. The inquiry was made of them that Jesus had anticipated. It was quite natural to ask for an explanation when others besides the owners were taking possession of this untrained colt.

Verse 6. Their explanation was accepted as Jesus said it would be.

Verse 7. *Brought the colt . . . he sat upon him*. Jesus rode the mother of the colt also although Mark does not say so. For an explanation of this subject see the comments on Matthew 21: 5.

Verse 8. When a dignitary was approaching, it was customary to make a carpet on which he might proceed. These people did so with the materials at hand, namely, their outer garments. Some found the *branches* or leaves of palm trees to use for a carpet.

Verse 9. *Hosanna* is defined in the comments on Matthew 21: 9.

Verse 10. *Our father David*. These people were Jews who had come to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the Passover. They were acquainted with

the prophecies that David was to have a descendant who was to sit on his throne and here recognized Jesus as that person. (See Psalms 132: 11).

Verse 11. This verse mentions only in general terms the visit of Jesus to the temple. In Matthew 21: 12, 13, is the account of his casting out the moneychangers, and it is also mentioned in verse 15 of this chapter. Having purged the temple, Jesus went out to the nearby village of Bethany to stay over night.

Verse 12. In the morning they returned from Bethany and Jesus became hungry.

Verse 13. See the comments at Matthew 21: 19 for the explanation of the fig tree.

Verse 14. *No man eat fruit of thee* is the *curse* pronounced upon the fig tree.

Verse 15. This verse describes what is referred to at verse 11 and in the passage in Matthew. The chronological order of the events is not quite the same in Mark as it is in Matthew, but the facts are the same so that no contradiction exists.

Verse 16. This verse means Jesus stopped all commercial activities in the temple.

Verse 17. The place where this saying is written is Isaiah 56: 7. Jesus called it a *den of thieves* because they were taking advantage of the situation to charge undue fees for their transactions; they were profiteering.

Verse 18. The scribes and chief priests *feared him* in the bad sense of that word. They were afraid of an uprising among the people if they did any harm to Jesus.

Verses 19, 20. On the return to Jerusalem they observed the fig tree that Jesus had cursed. So completely did this "curse" affect the fig tree that it had withered from its top to its roots.

Verse 21. Peter called the attention of Jesus to the fig tree, evidently in a manner that indicated his astonishment.

Verse 22. The first reply of Jesus was that it requires faith in God.

Verse 23. No miracles were performed by Jesus or his apostles for the mere gratification of curiosity, or just to make a show of power. If any good reason appeared for removing a mountain in this way it could be done, for one miracle is as easy as another as far as power is concerned.

Verse 24. Even miracles that are right and needed cannot be performed without the proper degree of faith. (See Matthew 17: 19-21.)

Verse 25. The word *stand* does not refer to the posture of the body, but is a term that applies to the established practice of praying. Besides, the things Jesus instructs to be done in connection with praying to God are just as necessary in any other position of the body as they are in that of standing.

Verse 26. The duty of forgiving others in connection with our plea for pardon, mentioned in this and the preceding verse, is taught in Matthew 6: 12-15.

Verse 27. The old foes of Jesus were these men who met him in the temple.

Verse 28. *These things* means the driving of the moneychangers out of the temple.

Verses 29-33. For an explanation of this passage see Matthew 21: 24-27.

## MARK 12

Verse 1. See the comments at Matthew 13: 3 as to the right use of Parables. For other comments as to the householder see Matthew 21: 33.

Verse 2. *At the season*. It takes time to produce fruit, hence the householder did not expect any products until the proper time when he sent a special servant for them.

Verses 3-5. This refers to the mistreatment that the Jews showed to the prophets and other righteous teachers who were sent among them by the Lord.

Verse 6. Jesus was a Jew who was sent to that nation as the rightful heir of all his Father's possessions, and he should have been received with great respect.

Verse 7. Being the heir, if he could be removed there would seem to be no one to claim the property, hence the workers planned to make away with him.

Verse 8. The wicked workers carried out their plot and slew the son of the householder, which refers to the treatment that Jesus was soon to receive at the hands of the wicked Jews.

Verse 9. According to Matthew's account (chapter 21: 40, 41), this answer to the question of Jesus was made by the Jews. Having in mind some literal case of an earthly vineyard, they answered correctly, not realizing that their own answer would

condemn them for their wicked attitude towards the servants of God.

Verses 10, 11. Jesus began opening their understanding of the parable by referring to a prediction in the Old Testament.

Verse 12. They doubtless were aware of this statement and must have begun to see the light that was exposing them. But they were restrained from doing anything to Jesus because of their fear of public sentiment that was favorable to him.

Verse 13. *Herodians* were a family party among the Jews who favored the Romans. This is described more extensively in the comments on Matthew 22: 16.

Verse 14. After some expressions of pure flattery these hypocrites came out with their question. They had the delusion that the kingdom which Jesus was soon to set up would be a temporal one, and hence a rival of the Roman Empire. In that case he would logically disapprove of any financial support of Caesar. If they could get him to say so, they would have a basis for accusing him of being an enemy of the lawful government.

Verse 15. Knowing their hypocrisy, Jesus did not answer directly by "yes" or "no," but asked to see a piece of money.

Verse 16. The coins of about all countries have the image of some important person on them, and also some saying or motto is inscribed thereon. Jesus took the critics by surprise by asking to whom the coin belonged. They answered correctly that it was the property of Caesar. Incidentally, this very coin was the kind that was used in paying the tribute to Caesar's government.

Verse 17. Anyone would have to say it is right to give back to a man that which is rightfully his. They just had said the coin belonged to Caesar, so it was natural that Jesus would tell them to give it back to him. In so doing they would be performing the very thing they asked Jesus if it was lawful to do. *They marveled* means they were amazed and so stunned that they had nothing more to say.

Verses 18-23. To save space let the reader see comments on Matthew 22: 23-28.

Verses 24, 25. For the explanation of this paragraph see Matthew 22: 29, 30.

Verse 26. *Book of Moses* is so called

because God inspired him to write it. God declared himself to be the God of these patriarchs whom the Sadducees professed to love.

Verse 27. God is not a God of the dead (which these Sadducees as well as everyone else admitted), yet these patriarchs had been in their graves for centuries. That proves there is something in man that lives after the body is placed in the grave.

Verse 28. In Matthew's account of this conversation (chapter 22: 34-40) it is stated that the purpose of this question was to tempt Jesus, while the present passage says nothing about that. Instead, the latter part of the conversation indicates a favorable attitude toward Jesus. Both phases of it are true and explainable on a reasonable basis. After the scribe put the tempting question to Jesus, the reply was so unanswerable that he was drawn over to the better view of it and brought forth the good remarks reported of him. The question asked of Jesus was unfair because no one of God's commands is any more important or greater than another.

Verse 29. The one great difference would be the contrast between God and man. Logically, then, a command to love God would come first in the sense of priority.

Verse 30. This command requires that God shall be loved with all the powers of man.

Verse 31. The preceding command is first in priority, but the second one is like it in the sense of authority that is back of it.

Verse 32. The scribe was affected by the answer of Jesus and verified it. He went farther and stated the reason why we should love the Lord wholeheartedly, and that was because there is only one God.

Verse 33. The scribe summed up in this verse what constitutes the entire Decalogue, in that he cites the two commandments on which all the law and prophets hung (Matthew 22: 40). The reason he assigned for his conclusion was that it was better than burnt offerings. A man might offer whole droves of animals for the outward show, but not actually be moved by genuine love for God or man.

Verse 34. The kingdom of God had not been set up when this conversation took place, hence no actual distance could exist between it and any person as to specific items required



for entrance into it. But the scribe expressed a principle of life that was so different from that of the Pharisees, that Jesus meant he was advocating ideas that were much like what would be required of persons in the kingdom when it did become a fact on earth. This conversation silenced the critics so that none of them asked Jesus any more questions.

Verse 35. Many of the Jews admitted that Christ was an actual descendant of David according to the flesh, but denied that he was divine or related to him spiritually.

Verse 36. Jesus then quoted Psalms 110: 1 where David referred to him as "my Lord."

Verse 37. The question put to them was how Christ could be both a son of David and also his Lord. *Common people* has been referred to from a sentimental motive as if it was a contrast between the humble folks and the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees. We may say these people were of that type if we offer our remarks as a comment, but the word does not mean that. It is from *POLUS* which means "the masses."

Verse 38. *Long clothing* was worn to attract attention and obtain special salutations in public such as the market places where many people resorted.

Verse 39. *Chief seats* means the front pews that faced the audience, and uppermost *rooms* at feasts means the highest seats, those that gave an advantage of display.

Verse 40. *Devour widows' houses* means they took advantage of them to obtain their property. For more detailed comments on this verse see the comments on Matthew 23: 14.

Verse 41. This money was a voluntary offering made for the upkeep of the temple. The rich cast in *much* in actual count of the money.

Verse 42. This widow cast in *two* mites instead of "one" as generally stated.

Verse 43. Jesus stated in literal language what he meant comparatively.

Verse 44. Jesus explained his statement to mean that the widow made the sacrifice in that she gave all that she had. The rich gave much and yet had much left and hence did not make any sacrifice.

### MARK 13

Verse 1. The Jews admired the temple because of its apparent firmness, being remodeled and reinforced

through forty and six years of work (John 2: 20).

Verse 2. Notwithstanding the seeming indestructible form of the building, Jesus predicted that the time was coming when it not only would be wrecked, but the destruction would be so great that all the stones would be scattered out over the ground.

Verse 3. The mount of Olives was near Jerusalem (Acts 1: 12), and Jesus went from the temple to that place and sat down. The usual trio of disciples, Peter, James and John, was joined by Andrew, and they asked Jesus privately for information.

Verse 4. The subject matter of this and the remaining verses of the chapter is the same as that in Matthew 24. It has been dealt with in much detail at that place and the reader is urged to consult those comments. In view of saving space, the comments in the present chapter will be brief and the reader may supplement the information obtained in this chapter with the more exhaustive remarks in Matthew.

Verse 5. The false prophets would purposely confuse the destruction of Jerusalem with the second coming of Christ, and he warned his disciples to beware.

Verse 6. It was known that a great person to be hailed as the Christ was predicted by the prophets, and these impostors would take advantage of the disturbed conditions to make a claim to the prophecy before the readers of the Old Testament.

Verse 7. These *wars* were the conflicts going on in the northern parts of Palestine and Syria between the Romans and Jews and other people.

Verse 8. The Roman Empire was made up of various small nations, and they were set in motion of war activities against each other by the general disturbance between the Romans and Jews. *Beginnings of sorrows* is commented upon in Matthew 24: 8.

Verse 9. *They shall deliver you up* refers to the false teachers who were to come among the people. When the disciples resisted they were persecuted and put to death.

Verse 10. By the time the wars ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, the Gospel was preached in all the countries of the world. (Romans 10: 18.)

Verse 11. The apostles were assured of moral and spiritual victory even though they were brought before the

courts. The things necessary to be said would be given them by inspiration from the Father.

Verse 12. These family troubles would be caused by the fact that some of the members would be true followers of Christ and others would not. (Matthew 10: 34-37.)

Verse 13. *All men* would hate the true disciples for the same reason that their own family relations would turn against them. *Endure unto the end* means to the end of the turmoil caused by the Jewish wars.

Verse 14. *Abomination of desolation* means the Roman army that was a heathen group. *Standing where it ought not* refers to the territory of Jerusalem which was considered as holy ground. *Flee to the mountains.* (See Matthew 24: 16.)

Verse 15. Houses had flat roofs and the buildings joined one against the other. The roofs were used in much the same way that a veranda is today. If a man was on the roof of his house when he saw the Roman army, he should go from one roof to another until he reached the wall of the city and then get down and flee.

Verse 16. The man in the field should not wait to recover anything.

Verse 17. A woman in the condition described here could not travel very well.

Verse 18. Winter would be a difficult time to travel, hence the prayer suggested.

Verse 19. See particularly the long historical quotation at Matthew 24: 21.

Verse 20. The elect means the people who had elected or chosen to serve the Lord. For their sake the Lord was going to bring an end to the Jewish wars.

Verse 21. The scene is changed here and Jesus is talking about his second coming. The disturbances of the Jewish war about Jerusalem would give a pretext for the false prophets to say it was the end of the world, and would announce some certain person to be the Christ who was predicted by the prophets.

Verse 22. *Signs and wonders* would be in the form of some kind of trickery, and even the elect (verse 20) would be deceived were they not warned beforehand.

Verse 23. This verse is to emphasize the warning already given.

Verses 24, 25. This paragraph is explained in detail at Matthew 24: 29.

Verse 26. *Then* means that after the long period of the Dark Ages which is the subject of the preceding paragraph, the next great event which the Lord was considering in this broad space of centuries was the second coming of the Son of man.

Verse 27. This verse denotes the day of judgment, when the heavenly reapers, the angels, would gather up the people of God from all over the world.

Verse 28. Jesus interrupts his main subject to make an illustration. People judge the nearness of summer by the appearance of the fig tree.

Verse 29. The presence of the Roman army and other conditions would indicate that the things predicted of Jerusalem were about to be fulfilled.

Verse 30. The original word for *generation* is defined, "all of the people living at one time." The persons living when Jesus was speaking would not all be dead before *these things* (the destruction of Jerusalem) would be fulfilled.

Verse 31. It was intended that the universe was to pass away, but the sayings of Christ were to hold firm until they had been fulfilled.

Verse 32. The verse corresponding with this in Matthew 24: 36 says nothing about the Son directly. Our present verse specifically mentions him and hence the comments here are to be more decisive than the ones at the former passage. But whether the Father has seen fit to tell him about it since then is another question.

Verse 33. If we are always watchful and living right, it will not matter when he comes, for we will be prepared to meet him with joy.

Verse 34. This short parable has the important lesson of the necessity of being faithful to the trust bestowed upon the servants of Christ.

Verse 35. The periods named are parts of the 24-hour day when people are usually the least active. That would be the special reason for being watchful.

Verse 36. *Coming suddenly* shows that the second coming of Christ will not be a drawn-out affair. That is taught also in 1 Corinthians 15: 52; 1 Thessalonians 4: 16.

Verse 37. The duty of being watchful is on the shoulders of everyone.

## MARK 14

Verse 1. *After two days.* See the comments on Matthew 26: 2 on this unusual circumstance. *Passover and of unleavened bread.* The Passover was a day on which all leaven was put out of the houses, and the seven days following had the same restrictions.

Verse 2. The Jews were more concerned about the condition of society than they were about the killing of Christ, even though it might have been on a holy day.

Verse 3. See the comments on Matthew 26: 7 for the explanation of this verse.

Verse 4. The word *some* has specific reference to Judas (John 12: 4).

Verse 5. Judas pretended to be concerned about the poor, but his real motive was covetousness (John 12: 6).

Verse 6. *Good work* is explained at length at Matthew 26: 12.

Verse 7. *Poor with you always* denotes we will always have poor people with us.

Verse 8. *She hath done what she could* is a significant statement. No special amount of service is required of us but we are expected to do what we can for Christ.

Verse 9. This means that the deed of this woman would become a part of the Gospel record and hence would be mentioned wherever the sacred book went.

Verse 10. Judas was peeved because the ointment was "wasted" on Jesus and he conceived the idea of counteracting the deed through the cowardly betrayal.

Verse 11. By the transaction for money at the expense of the freedom of Jesus, the traitor hoped to "recover" what he thought was lost by the act of the woman.

Verse 12. It was the *first day of unleavened bread* for Jesus and his apostles. See again the comments on Matthew 26: 2.

Verse 13. The pitcher of water was merely an item by which the disciples were to contact the right man, who would be going to a certain house.

Verse 14. The man with the pitcher seems to have been used as a guide for the apostles. When they followed him into the house they were to speak next to the householder and ask to be shown the guestchamber to be used for the Passover.

Verse 15. The Lord had caused the

householder to have a room reserved for their use.

Verse 16. The preparation for the feast was done by the apostles.

Verse 17. Let it be noted that the twelve (apostles) were still with Jesus.

Verse 18. The prediction as to the one to betray Jesus was not made yet.

Verse 19. *They began . . . to say . . . Is it I,* which includes Judas, for had he not joined in the inquiry, his silence would have been significant.

Verse 20. The *dish* means the vessel containing the flesh of the lamb used in the Passover. It was customary to dip a piece of bread in the broth and then eat it. Jesus did this at the same time with Judas so as to answer the question they all had asked.

Verse 21. Judas refused to repent after his dark deed and therefore he went to perdition (John 17: 12). This is why Jesus said it would have been good for him not to have been born.

Verse 22. The events of this last night are not all given in any one place, and the ones that are given are not in chronological order. See the note and references on this point with the comments at Matthew 26: 20. I shall now comment on the verses as they appear in the present chapter. Jesus *blessed* the bread by giving thanks for it. He broke it as an act of decency because more than one person was to eat of it. Otherwise the breaking of it has no religious significance to us.

Verse 23. Instead of "blessing" the cup he *gave thanks*, which shows that the two terms mean the same and that nothing supernatural was done to the "emblems."

Verse 24. The Old Testament used the blood of beasts, while the blood of the New Testament is that of Christ. *Shed for many* which means the whole world, although many will reject its benefits through unbelief.

Verse 25. The passage cited at verse 22 shows that our present verse was spoken while they were still engaged in the Passover feast.

Verse 26. According to Thayer and Robinson this *hymn* was a Psalm of David.

Verse 27. *To be offended* denotes that one falters or stumbles in his devotions. The prediction quoted is in Zechariah 13: 7.

Verse 28. Jesus always included his resurrection in the predictions of his

death. He not only was to arise but would come into the presence of his apostles again.

Verse 29. Peter was always sincere in his general principles of life, but he was rash and did things from impulse as he did in this declaration.

Verse 30. Jesus was specific and predicted Peter's third denial would be before the second cock crowing.

Verse 31. This pointed prediction only caused Peter to be more positive in his assurance of faithfulness, even to the point of dying with Christ. The emphatic attitude of Peter seemed to stir up the others so that they agreed to the same promise of loyalty.

Verse 32. On this verse see the comments at Matthew 26: 36.

Verse 33. Leaving most of the apostles where they first paused, Jesus took with him Peter, James and John and went on into the garden. The humanity of his nature now began to manifest itself which caused him to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy.

Verse 34. *Exceeding sorrowful unto death* is a highly-colored figure of speech, meaning he felt sad enough to die. Wishing for still more privacy he left them here.

Verse 35. Jesus went still farther from the three so as to be alone with his Father. He prayed that if possible *the hour* might pass from him. This is the same prayer that is termed "cup" in Matthew 26: 39. The crucifixion was not to take place until the next day, so we know that the prayer about this "cup" and "the hour" could not refer to the cross. (See also the comments at Matthew 26: 39.)

Verse 36. This prayer had to do with *the hour* just commented upon.

Verse 37. Their sleeping was not from mere indifference. (See Luke 22: 45).

Verse 38. The flesh is what gave way and caused the apostles to fall asleep. Jesus admonished them to let their spirit or better part of their being have more influence over them and lead them into a more watchful attitude.

Verse 39. The prayer in this instance was the same as that in verses 35, 36.

Verse 40. *Eyes were heavy* because of their grief and worry over the situation.

Verse 41. Jesus had gone away<sup>ed</sup> the third time and now when he came back he found them sleepy as before.

In his great compassion he bade them go on and take a nap. But it was not for long because the mob was seen coming toward the garden.

Verse 42. Jesus then roused the apostles with the announcement that the one who was to betray him was at hand.

Verse 43. Jesus had no sooner said the words of the preceding verse than the mob approached with Judas in the lead. *Staves* is from a word that means "clubs," as if they were hunting for some hardened criminal who was a foe of society.

Verse 44. The sign agreed upon was a kiss and they were to watch for that demonstration. *Lead him away safely*. (See the comments at Matthew 26: 48.)

Verse 45. The mere act of kissing Jesus would have seemed too cold, hence Judas added warmth to the salutation by recognizing him as *Master*.

Verse 46. *They* means the mob composed of the chief priests and scribes.

Verse 47. The one who used the sword was Peter (John 18: 10). See the remarks that Jesus made to Peter and my comments on the same at Matthew 26: 52.

Verse 48. Jesus charged the mob with coming out against him as if he had been a thief who deserved to be taken with the unrefined weapons like clubs.

Verse 49. It was rather late for them to be showing such concern on behalf of public safety. Jesus was in the temple and other public places daily before this. When a dangerous person is at large (such as these clubs would imply), it is the custom not to "stand on ceremony" but to take such a person at once. Jesus then explained the seeming contradiction in their conduct by saying that it fulfilled the scriptures.

Verse 50. *They all* means the apostles. Seeing Jesus was being taken without any resistance, they concluded that all was lost and in their fright they fled.

Verses 51, 52. Mark is the only one of the writers who records this event. There is no information as to the identity of the young man. *Linen* is from the Greek word *SINDON* which Thayer defines, "thing made of fine cloth." He then explains it by saying, "so of a light and loose garment worn at night over the naked body." Robinson gives virtually the same definition and explanation as that of Thayer. That accounts for the fact that the young

man had nothing else on. It was night, and the commotion had attracted his attention so that without taking time to dress he went to the scene of excitement. The apostles had just fled while the young man still followed along after Jesus. The men of the mob thought he was sympathizing with Jesus and decided to arrest him. This frightened him so that he escaped by giving up his nightrobe.

Verse 53. The chief priests assembled to discuss what to do about the case.

Verse 54. Peter was afraid to be known as a friend of Jesus so he followed *afar off*.

Verse 55. *And found none* means they could not find anyone who was prepared to testify as they desired. They wanted to get some person to affirm some word or act of Jesus on which they could secure the death sentence.

Verse 56. There were plenty of men who would have been disposed to give such testimony, but since they were falsifying their statements did not agree and hence their pretended testimony was rejected.

Verse 57. Other pretended witnesses told what they had heard Jesus say.

Verse 58. A look at John 2: 19 will show how grossly these men falsified.

Verse 59. No wonder these so-called witnesses did not agree. When men conspire to bear false testimony they are sure to overlook something that will expose them.

Verse 60. The high priest was surprised that Jesus did not reply.

Verse 61. Jesus said nothing in reply to the falsehoods of these men; in that way he fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 53: 7. The high priest then asked Jesus a question touching his personality which was the same as his divinity. That was important and we will see that he answered it.

Verse 62. Jesus not only answered the question of the high priest, but added a prediction that was in line with his divinity and authority as a king.

Verse 63. Decisions of the Sanhedrin were made by vote, supposed to be based on the testimony of valid witnesses. The statement of Jesus agitated the high priest so that he declared there was no need for witnesses.

Verse 64. The high priest called for the vote of the assembly and *they all*

condemned Jesus to death. This means that all who voted at all did so. There were some who did not take part in the voting (Luke 23: 50, 51).

Verse 65. The Jews could pass a sentence of death but could not execute it. But they gratified their wicked feeling against Jesus by gross personal mistreatment. The things they said and did to him would not be permitted today in any responsible court, regardless of what sentence might have been pronounced.

Verses 66, 67. The point to be noted is that being *with Jesus* was regarded as significant. Association indicates fellowship or participation.

Verse 68. Peter understood it that way, for he denied it very emphatically, then moved out farther in his fearfulness and stopped at the porch. At that instant the cock crowed the first time.

Verse 69. This maid spoke to the people standing by and not to Peter. She made the declaration on her own information (indicating Peter), "this is one of them."

Verse 70. Peter denied her statement which made his second denial. The next time it was the people standing near who made the statement, and they supported their claim by referring to the similarity of speech used by Peter and Jesus and his disciples.

Verse 71. *Curse* and *swear* are explained at Matthew 26: 74. This made the third time that Peter denied even knowing Jesus or having been with him.

Verse 72. Matthew says this second crowing was immediately after the third denial (chapter 26: 74). This fact, (together with the look that Jesus gave him, Luke 22: 61), recalled the specific prediction of Jesus about his denials. *When he thought thereon, he wept*, or, upon considering the whole event, he was overwhelmed with remorse. Matthew 26: 75 says "he went out and wept bitterly." The conduct of Peter was different from that of Judas. Both men were disappointed over the way matters were going with Jesus, and the things they had said or done. But Judas destroyed his own life while Peter repented through godly sorrow.

## MARK 15

Verse 1. *In the morning* was the day after the scenes in the garden, and the meeting in the palace of the high priest. The Jews had gone as far as they could under the law, so the

next step was to take Jesus before Pilate who was the Roman governor.

Verse 2. To be a king under the Romans might imply some rivalry, but Pilate restricted his question to the Jews, which would not mean any necessary opposition to the law of the land. To the question of Pilate Jesus merely said *thou sayest it*.

Verse 3. To the accusation of the chief priest Jesus made no reply, not even to the extent of denying them, although they pertained to his alleged conduct.

Verse 4. Pilate called the attention of Jesus to the accusations, doubtless thinking that he had not noticed them, or at any rate had not observed the nature of them.

Verse 5. It is usual for a prisoner to deny the charges made against him, whether he cares to defend himself or not. Jesus did neither which caused Pilate to wonder.

Verse 6. It was customary to celebrate that feast with the release of a prisoner to be selected by the people, not the officers or priests.

Verse 7. Pilate knew about the situation, and he therefore was aware that Barabbas was a noted criminal whom no good society could tolerate.

Verse 8. While the governor was delaying his action the *multitude* began clamoring for him to follow up with the usual practice.

Verse 9. Pilate thought this would give him an opportunity of releasing Jesus without clearing him of the sentence the Sanhedrin had pronounced against him.

Verse 10. The chief priests had no voice in selecting the prisoner to be released. They had caused Jesus to be delivered into the hands of this court with an envious motive. In view of that, Pilate thought the people would take a better view of the case and call for the release of Jesus.

Verse 11. It is possible that they would have done so, had the chief priests not *moved* or influenced them to call for the release of Barabbas.

Verse 12. Pilate was evidently surprised at the selection of the people. If they were willing to have so wicked a prisoner as Barabbas turned loose upon the community, they certainly could not wish for anything severe to be done to as harmless a person as Jesus, hence he asked them directly for their verdict concerning him.

Verse 13. They cried out *again*. Mark does not tell of their having made this demand before, but Matthew 27: 21 gives that instance.

Verse 14. According to Mark's account the Jews would not state any *evil* against Jesus, but John 18: 30 reports that they accused him of being a "malefactor," which merely means an evildoer, so that they evaded the governor's question.

Verse 15. It was a practice of some of the courts to scourge a condemned prisoner before delivering him to the executioners. It was a harsh ordeal imposed on his bare body.

Verse 16. *The whole band* means a part of the army to be used as executioners.

Verse 17. Purple and scarlet were the royal colors, and this kind of robe was put on Jesus in mockery. The crown of thorns was for the same purpose because he had claimed to be a king, and also in order to torture him in his humiliation.

Verse 18. This was a salutation of mockery and contempt.

Verse 19. These men did not *worship* Jesus in any proper manner as we may well conclude. (See the note on "worship" at Matthew 2: 2.)

Verse 20. After these acts of mockery were concluded, the soldiers replaced the robe with his own clothing. Matthew, Mark and John mention the crown of thorns and also the robe of royal colors. They tell of the removal of the robe but neither of them says a word about removing the crown of thorns. We can reasonably conclude that our Lord was compelled to wear the instrument of mockery and torture throughout the six long hours of the scenes of the cross.

Verse 21. *Compel Simon . . . to bear his cross*. (See notes at Matthew 16: 24.)

Verse 22. See a full explanation of *Golgotha* at Matthew 27: 33.

Verse 33. This mixture is explained in the comments at Matthew 27: 34.

Verse 24. The act of crucifixion is so cruel that a detailed description of it, as given by the works of reference, is given in the comments at Matthew 27: 35.

Verse 25. The *third hour* corresponds with our nine o'clock A. M.

Verse 26. *Accusation is defined*, "The crime of which one is accused." Hence those who passed by would see that



Christ was crucified for being The King of the Jews!

Verses 27, 28. The scripture referred to is in Isaiah 53: 12.

Verse 29. Again the mob misquoted Jesus, for he never said he would destroy the temple. What he did say is recorded in John 2: 19.

Verse 30. There can be no question that Jesus had the power to come down from the cross. Had he done so, however, the scriptures could not have been fulfilled (Matthew 26: 24; Isaiah 53: 7-10).

Verse 31. This remark of the chief priests fulfilled Luke 4: 23.

Verse 32. *That we may see and believe* was a hypocritical statement. They had known of miracles that Jesus performed that called for as much power as this would have required, yet they were still in unbelief. *They that were crucified with him* means the thieves. According to Luke 23: 40-42, one of them repented of his saying and appealed to Jesus for mercy and asked to be remembered.

Verse 33. Jesus had been on the cross three hours when the darkness started (verse 25). It lasted until the ninth hour which was three o'clock P. M.

Verse 34. See the comments at Matthew 27: 46 for use on this verse.

Verse 35. This is explained at Matthew 27: 47.

Verse 36. In John 19: 28, 29 is the record of why this vinegar (sour wine) was served to Jesus. He had expressed his condition which was one of thirst, the kind that so often comes upon one at the approach of death.

Verse 37. *Cried with a loud voice.* This is commented upon at some length at Matthew 27:50. *Gave up the ghost* (or spirit), which proves that man possesses something besides his flesh which leaves the body at death.

Verse 38. A description of the importance of this veil is at Matthew 27: 51.

Verse 39. According to Matthew 27: 54, the earthquake and other demonstrations in the natural creation, helped to convince the centurion that it was no ordinary person who had just died and was thus accorded such distinction.

Verses 40, 41. These women were faithful to the last, but with feminine timidity they had stood some distance

away watching. They had come from the same district where Jesus was brought up, Galilee, and had served him on various occasions.

Verse 42. *The day before the sabbath* is a general explanation, meaning that every sabbath or holy day is preceded by a preparation day. Whatever manual exercise would be needed in preparing food and other necessary articles for life must be done on these preparation days. The regular Passover came on Friday the fourteenth. Jesus was crucified on the day before, which was the reason for saying this was *the preparation*.

Verse 43. Being a *counsellor* means he was a member of the Sanhedrin. For extended comments on this man see those at Matthew 27: 57.

Verse 44. Pilate was surprised that Jesus was dead. Crucifixion causes a slow death and the victim usually has to suffer on and on for hours until late in the night, and this was the cause of Pilate's surprise. To make sure that Joseph was not planning to recover Jesus alive, the governor sent the centurion to see if Jesus had died.

Verse 45. The centurion reported that Jesus was dead, and Pilate then gave the body to Joseph. This good man had made special provision for the care of the body. For further comments on this phase of the subject see at Matthew 27: 58.

Verse 46. John 19: 38-40 tells us that Nicodemus assisted Joseph in this service of Love. He was the man who had come to Jesus by night (John 3: 1, 2).

Verse 47. The women witnessed the burial of Jesus and the rolling of the stone against the door of the sepulchre, which explains their concern in chapter 16: 3.

## MARK 16

Verse 1. The word *sabbath* is singular in number and Thayer defines it, "The seventh day of each week." It corresponds with our Saturday which also is the seventh and last day of each week.

Verse 2. *Early in the morning* and *rising of the sun* are phrases used in the same sense. This agrees with Matthew 28: 1, and shows that the 24-hour period of time began and ended in the morning; not at sundown or midnight.

Verse 3. This verse is referred to at chapter 15: 47.

Verse 4. Matthew 28: 2 says the

angel rolled the stone away from the sepulchre.

Verse 5. *Entering.* It will be well again to quote the description of a sepulchre as given by Smith's Bible Dictionary. "A natural cave enlarged and adapted by excavation, or an artificial imitation of one, was the standard type of sepulchre." Hence we understand the sepulchre as a whole was a spacious cavity, in the far side of which would be a specific spot arranged for a body; the outside entrance would be closed with a stone. This *young man* is called an angel by Matthew which is not strange. Angels often appeared on earth in the form of men, and the long white garment of this person agrees with that idea.

Verse 6. The angel spoke encouragingly to the women, and let them know he was aware of their purpose in coming to the tomb. As an evidence for their eyes that Jesus was gone he led them to the spot where he had been laid.

Verse 7. *Tell his disciples, and Peter.* This does not mean that Peter was not a disciple; but he had denied Jesus three times, and it was fitting that his attention be especially called to the evidence that his Lord was alive again as he had predicted.

Verse 8. The whole scene was so unusual and solemn that the women were virtually overcome, and were speechless for the time being.

Verse 9. The first few verses of this chapter pertain to the scenes at the sepulchre. This verse begins to tell of things that took place elsewhere after the resurrection. The *seven devils* had nothing to do with the character of Mary Magdalene (it being an affliction), for she was a good woman and was interested in the work and fate of Jesus (Matthew 27: 61; 28: 1; Mark 16: 1; John 19: 25; 20: 14, 15).

Verse 10. *They mourned and wept* fulfills chapter 2: 20.

Verse 11. It was somewhat on the principle of a phrase "too good to be true" that the disciples *believed not*. But according to Luke 24: 25 Jesus rebuked the disciples for such unbelief.

Verse 12. *Appeared in another form.* Luke 24: 16 explains that the disciples' eyes were *holden* (restrained) so that they did not know him. Doubtless the unusual character of the report so overcame them that they were confused. Under such conditions a

person whom they well knew would not look natural.

Verse 13. These disciples reported what they had seen and heard, and the ones to whom they told the story were as doubtful as themselves.

Verse 14. *The eleven* means the apostles except Judas who had hanged himself. We should note that these apostles at this time *believed not*. Jesus rebuked them for their unbelief in the face of testimony of those who had seen him after his resurrection.

Verse 15. This and the following verse corresponds with Matthew 28: 19, 20. It is commonly referred to as The Great Commission, although the New Testament does not so name it. *World* is from *KOSMOS* which has a wide range of meaning, but its usual sense is, "the inhabitants of the earth." *Preach* is from *KEBUSSO* which Thayer defines, "to be a herald; to officiate as a herald; to proclaim after the manner of a herald." He then explains his definition, "always with a suggestion of formality, gravity, and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed." The word may be used occasionally in a general sense, but its primary meaning is to tell something that is new. That is why an apostle had to be inspired because he would be expected to publish the Gospel for the first time, and to the people of various languages. *Creature* is from the same original word that is used in Colossians 1: 23 where Paul says that the Gospel had then been preached to every creature which is under heaven. Whatever Jesus meant by *every creature*, Paul says it had been done, and hence the "great commission" was carried out by the apostles. That means that when a preacher says he is preaching under the "great commission" he is perverting the scripture.

Verse 16. *He that believeth* necessarily means to believe what is preached which is the Gospel; the good news of the death and resurrection of Christ for the sins of mankind. The believing must be followed by being *baptized*. That word is from the Greek word *BAPTIZO* which Thayer defines, "To cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water; to overwhelm." *Saved* is from *sozo* which Thayer defines, "To rescue from danger or destruction," hence it does not cover all that may follow in a person's life. A man might be rescued from drowning, and afterwards he could

carelessly fall into the water again and perish. If a man does not believe the Gospel he will be condemned regardless of whether he is baptized or not, hence it was not necessary to mention baptism on the negative side.

Verses 17, 18. *Them that believe* are the believers of the preceding verse. It cannot be restricted to the apostles on the ground that "believe" is in the present tense, for verse 14 says that even the apostles did not believe at the time Jesus was speaking. *Follow* means to attend or accompany one, and refers to the spiritual gifts that were bestowed upon Christians in the first years of the Gospel age (Acts 6: 8; 19: 6; 1 Corinthians chapters 12, 13, 14; Ephesians 4: 8-14; James 5: 14, 15). Matthew then names some of the miracles that Christians were enabled to perform in that period.

Verse 19. The ascension is reported also in Luke 24: 51 and Acts 1: 9.

### LUKE 1

Verse 1. I have consulted a great number of works of reference, such as histories, Bible Dictionaries, encyclopedias, lexicons and critical concordances; also a number of commentaries, and all agree that Luke is the author of the book we are now studying. For the sake of saving space, I do not think it necessary to list all of these works, in view of the unity in their statements making the conclusion well founded. Many of them state also that Luke was not a born Jew, and that he was a doctor of medicine. He was not an apostle but was inspired to write a record of the Gospel.

Verse 2. Luke was not an eyewitness of the things on which he writes, but they were told him by those who were. In copying down the things told him he would be qualified by inspiration, even as the Spirit guaranteed the accuracy of the memory of the apostles which was promised by Jesus before he left them (John 14: 26).

Verse 3. So thorough was the report these witnesses gave Luke that he says it caused him to have *perfect* ("exact"—Thayer) understanding of the whole story. The book of Luke was addressed to Theophilus who was an outstanding, educated Christian, according to the Bible Dictionaries. Being addressed to one individual does not affect its importance for others, any more than does the fact that Paul wrote four of his epistles to individuals do so.

Verse 4. The special purpose Luke had in writing to this man was that he might be assured of the instructions he had already received.

Verse 5. Luke, like Matthew, begins his record at the time just prior to the birth of Jesus. However, unlike Matthew, he first gives us the history concerning the parentage of John the Baptist. It was in the days of Herod (The Great) who was king of Judea. *Course of Abia* is explained at 1 Chronicles 24 in volume 2 of the Old Testament Commentary. All priests had to be descendants of Aaron but that was not required of their wives, hence Luke gives us the added information that Elizabeth was also from Aaron.

Verse 6. This couple lived up to all requirements of the law, which proves that it was not physically impossible to do so as some teach. Paul was another who did this according to Philipians 3: 6.

Verse 7. *They had no child, because that Elizabeth was barren.* This is a significant statement that contrasts with the practice of some professed Christians who are childless from choice. Such people treat with contempt the first object of marriage by practicing birth control. Not only was Elizabeth barren, but she and her husband were in advanced age as were Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 11: 30; 17: 17), yet they did not give up hope (verse 13).

Verse 8. *Order of his course.* (See the comments at verse 5).

Verse 9. This *custom of the priest's office* is described in Exodus 30: 7-10.

Verse 10. The *whole multitude* were obeying Leviticus 16: 17.

Verse 11. The altar of incense was in the first holy room of the temple, and incense was burned on it daily. *Right side*; on Zacharias's right hand as he stood facing the altar in the service.

Verse 12. The people were not permitted to accompany the priest in this place (verse 10), hence the appearance of an angel there caused Zacharias to be disturbed.

Verse 13. *Prayer is heard and bear thee a son* are phrases that are related; he had been praying for a son. This was one thing that caused Luke to say this couple was righteous. Had they been opposed to children and tried to avoid having them, they would not have been righteous. The promise of a son included instructions for his name.

Verse 14. Not only was Zacharias to rejoice over this son, but many others would have reason to be glad for his birth because of the great work he was to do in preparing a people for the king of heaven.

Verse 15. *Great in the sight of the Lord* whether the world admired him or not. *Drink neither wine nor strong drink* was a qualification of a Nazarite under the law (Numbers 6: 1-4). During his entire life he was to be under the guidance of the Spirit.

Verse 16. This verse shows the fulfillment of Malachi 4: 6.

Verse 17. Elias (Elijah) was a powerful prophet in the Old Testament, and John was to be given a spirit of power like his. *Turn the hearts of the fathers*, etc., refers to the same as at verse 16. *A people prepared for the Lord* means the people whom John baptized in preparing a people for Christ.

Verse 18. The promise of a child under the conditions seemed so nearly impossible that Zacharias overlooked the evidence of the miracle already before him, that of the presence of an angel in that exclusive spot.

Verse 19. This was not merely an angel, but was one of the two who only are named in the Bible. This one was from the immediate presence of God where he usually stood, ready to do the bidding of the occasions as they came up.

Verse 20. Zacharias was to receive a sign that would be both an evidence and a mild punishment, *because he believed not the words*. This dumbness that was to come at once would start the evidence, and when it was completed it would strengthen the meaning.

Verse 21. The people waited according to the law, but Zacharias was detained longer than the regular service usually required which caused them to wonder.

Verse 22. A *vision* is defined as something that appears to one either while awake or asleep. As Zacharias had become speechless since he entered the temple, the people realized that something supernatural had occurred.

Verse 23. *Days of his ministration were accomplished*. The priests took turns in the service which is explained in the comments at 1 Chronicles 24: 6, volume 2 of the Old Testament Commentary.

Verse 24. *Hid* is from PERIKRUPTO which Thayer defines, "to conceal on all sides or entirely, to hide," and he explains his definition, "to keep one's self at home." It is the usual custom for expectant mothers to keep in retirement the last months of the period, but Elizabeth did the reverse. Nothing is said about her continuing the retirement after the five months, hence we would not think the other was done out of false modesty. A reasonable conclusion is that she was still under the feeling that it was "too good to be true," and before telling the good news to her friends, she decided to await the five months which would be the time for life to be evident.

Verse 25. After the five months had shown that she was to become a mother, she then commented by *saying* (last word of the preceding verse) that it was the Lord who had dealt thus with her. In bestowing this upon Elizabeth she commented that it would take away her *reproach*. To be unable to bear children in those days was considered a *reproach*, and it is still so considered with those who respect the first commandment regarding the divine object of marriage.

Verse 26. *Sixth month* means the sixth since the conception by Elizabeth. The same angel who appeared to her at the first was sent on a similar mission to Nazareth.

Verse 27. A virgin is a person who has not had any relations with the opposite sex. The connection must show in each case whether the virgin is a male or female. Since this one was *espoused* (engaged) to a man we know it means a female. *House* is from OIKOS and Thayer defines it at this place, "stock, race, descendants of one," which denotes that Joseph was a descendant of David.

Verse 28. *Hail* is a friendly greeting, indicating that some good news is about to be given to the person addressed. This was to be given to Mary as a special favor peculiar to women, and it was to be from the Lord.

Verse 29. *Troubled* means "agitated," and it was caused by the unexpectedness of the situation, and she was wondering what it all meant.

Verse 30. Seeing the disturbed condition of Mary, the angel assured her there was nothing to fear, but that God had selected her as an object of His favor.

Verse 31. *Womb* is from GASTER, and this is the only place where it

comes from that Greek word. Also, this is the only place in the Bible where a statement of conceiving is joined with the word womb; this is significant. Matthew 3: 9 says that God could raise up children even from the stones. To promise Mary (a single girl) a son might have been taken to mean that God would give her a son in some miraculous way independent of her own body. Hence it was necessary to tell this virgin that she was to conceive *in her womb*. The name of the son also was selected for her at this time.

Verse 32. Verses 28 and 30 contain all that the angel said by way of praise for Mary. After that he spoke of the greatness to be bestowed upon her son. *Son of the Highest* is the same as calling him the Son of God. *Throne of David* means the throne which David (his great ancestor) had prophesied should be given him (Psalms 132: 11).

Verse 33. *House of Jacob* is a phrase often used to mean the Jewish nation in general, and later referring to the people of God spiritually whether Jew or Gentile. The kingdom of this "son of David" and of Mary was to stand for ever. (See Daniel 2: 44.)

Verse 34. *I know not a man*. This cannot mean that Mary had no male acquaintance, for she was even engaged to one. The word *know* is from GINOSKO, and Thayer says at this place the word means, "the carnal [sexual] connection of male and female." Robinson says virtually the same thing, except that he gives it as his definition of the word at this place. Mary meant that she was not being intimate with any man, which she thought would be necessary to conceive in her womb. We are taught an important lesson in morals here. The fact of being engaged was as binding in Biblical times as the actual marriage as far as obligations towards each other were concerned, but it did not authorize any intimacies until the time of marriage.

Verse 35. The Holy Ghost (Spirit) is an invisible, though personal being, and that is why he could enter into and take charge of the womb of Mary without any conscious participation on her part. The germ of life necessary to fertilize that of the female was thus deposited in the proper place by this holy Being, sent directly from God and authorized to represent Him in this union. Therefore, the angel concluded, the person to be brought

forth from this union was to be called the Son of God. This is the only instance in which God ever did a thing like this, and that is the reason Jesus is called the *ONLY* begotten Son of God. From the conception and ever afterward through the period of expectancy, the experience of Mary was like that of all mothers.

Verse 36. The Greek word for *cousin* has an indefinite meaning, and may apply to any relative not as near as brother or sister. Mary had not expressed any doubt of the miracle that the angel just promised. However, he supported the promise by reporting another one along the same line, that her cousin was already six months along in her expectancy, notwithstanding she was *called barren*.

Verse 37. This verse is the angel's explanation of the two miracles of conception. God cannot do anything wrong, but nothing is impossible with Him because it is too hard.

Verse 38. This speech of resignation of Mary is one of the sweetest passages ever made. There is no sign of exultation over her special favor, but a meek submission as a handmaid, unto the word of the Lord. The angel delivered his message and departed.

Verses 39, 40. It was a sweet and confidential meeting these happy women had with each other. This joy was mutual, but Mary's evidence was only the word of the angel for as yet there was no physical evidence of her conception, while Elizabeth had that of the living child within her own body.

Verse 41. It is usual for an unborn babe at that period to manifest a movement of life, but this was a miraculous instance since it not merely moved but *leaped*. Besides, it occurred as an immediate result of the voice of Mary acting through the ears of Elizabeth. The explanation is in the closing sentence, *Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost*.

Verse 42. The entrance of the Spirit into Elizabeth inspired her so that the words she spoke from here through verse 45 are those of inspiration. The blessing pronounced on Mary was emphasized by the one upon *the fruit of thy womb*.

Verse 43. *Mother of my Lord*. Elizabeth could have known this only by having been filled with the Holy Ghost, for the angel said nothing about it as far as we are told.

Verse 44. An unborn babe is uncon-

scious, so the physical movement of this one was a reaction to the effect produced in the mind of Elizabeth; it was *for joy* of hers that caused the stirring of the babe in her womb.

Verse 45. *She that believed* refers to Mary who had no physical evidence as yet. (See the comments at verses 39, 40.) Elizabeth then gave Mary an assurance of the fulfillment of the promises, and that was an expression of her inspired mind.

Verses 46. To *magnify* the Lord denotes a desire to "esteem highly," not that any human being can contribute anything to the greatness of the Lord.

Verse 47. Mary is not making any technical distinction between her soul and her spirit. Her entire inner being was filled with praise for the greatness of the Lord.

Verse 48. *Low estate* refers to the humble station in life she had occupied; now she will receive the good esteem of all generations, but not that she would be worshiped.

Verse 49. Mary attributes her *great* favor to the One with a holy name.

Verse 50. The mercy will endure continuously to all who fear Him.

Verse 51. Since we know that Elizabeth was enabled by the Spirit to speak with supernatural wisdom, we may properly conclude Mary to have been doing the same thing.

Verse 52. *He hath* is general as to tense, and means that God always recognizes humility and rewards it with His favor, but deposes those who exalt themselves.

Verse 53. These statements are figurative in form, but teach the same principles as those in the preceding verses.

Verse 54. *Holpen* means helped Israel *in remembrance* or in view of his wonted mercy.

Verse 55. Abraham was the father of the Jewish race, and God had promised him an heir who should bless the world, which Mary was recalling to mind.

Verse 56. Mary visited with Elizabeth until the time for the birth of her son, then she returned to her own home in Nazareth in Galilee.

Verse 57. Elizabeth gave birth to a son at the usual time after conception.

Verse 58. *Shewd great mercy* refers to the former condition of barrenness that had been overcome. Rejoiced with her is an example of Romans 12: 15.

Verse 59. The covenant with Abraham as well as the law of Moses required this rite (Genesis 17: 12; Leviticus 12: 2, 3). The law did not specify the age when the child should be named, but custom had established the time of circumcision for it. It happens frequently even today that people outside the family will presume to name the new baby. It was understandable why they would suggest the name of his father as that had long been another custom.

Verse 60. Elizabeth did not resent their wanting to pick a name for her baby, only they did not have the right one.

Verse 61. These people even argued the question which reminds us of 1 Peter 4: 15.

Verse 62. It is strange that the father had not been consulted in the first place, instead of waiting until they wanted him to decide a dispute. *Made signs* means they beckoned by a nod or something similar what they wanted him to do.

Verse 63. Zacharias had been dumb since the appearance of Gabriel (verse 20), hence his calling for a *writing table* which means a tablet. *They marveled* because Zacharias said the babe's name is John, indicating that the matter had been previously decided, which it had been by the angel (verse 13).

Verse 64. *Mouth was opened immediately* fulfills verse 20. He had two reasons for praising God; the birth of a son and the recovery of his speech.

Verse 65. *Fear* means a general feeling of respectful consideration for the wonderful things that had occurred. *These sayings* or happenings were reported extensively all through the country of Judea.

Verse 66. *Laid them up in their hearts* denotes that they kept them in mind. *What manner of child shall this be!* This remark was caused by the unusual circumstances connected with his conception and birth.

Verse 67. Being filled with the Holy Ghost made Zacharias' prophecies inspired.

Verse 68. This was said in view of the work of John in reforming the Jewish people, preparing them for the work of Christ (See Malachi 4: 6).

Verse 69. This whole speech of Zacharias was on a theme that combined the work of John and Christ, with the weight of it in favor of the



latter. This priest was happy to be the father of the forerunner of the Saviour of his people. *Horn of salvation* refers to the power that Christ would have to be able to save the people.

Verse 70. Christ had been foretold by the prophets through Old Testament times, in places too numerous to mention at this place.

Verse 71. *Saved from our enemies* has reference to the suffering the Jews were undergoing from the heathen powers, as well as from the influences of sin.

Verse 72. *This holy covenant* pertains to the promise of Christ.

Verse 73. This oath to Abraham is recorded in Genesis 12: 3; 18: 18; 22: 18.

Verse 74. This is the same in meaning as verse 71.

Verse 75. Zacharias places salvation on condition of lifelong righteousness.

Verse 76. *Thou, child*, has specific reference to his own son who had just *been born*. *Called the prophet* was done by Jesus in Matthew 11: 9. *Go before . . . to prepare his ways* pertains to the work of John in preparing a people for Christ.

Verse 77. *Knowledge of salvation* means to let the people know what would be necessary for salvation. It was to be the *remission of sins* upon repentance and baptism (Matthew 3: 11). This was preached by Jesus also (Mark 1: 15).

Verse 78. *Day spring* is a comparison of the coming of Jesus into the world with the sunrising that ushers in a new day for the inhabitants of the earth.

Verse 79. *Light and darkness* are figurative terms to represent truth and error. The teaching of Jesus was to show mankind the way of peace.

Verse 80. This *child* refers to the babe John, whose birth had occasioned this interesting speech of Zacharias. As the child grew he lived in *the deserts*. That was appropriate since he was to do his work there, when the time came for him to appear among the people of Israel as the forerunner of Christ.

## LUKE 2

Verse 1. Caesar Augustus was the head of the Roman Empire at the time John and Jesus were born. *World* is from a Greek word that means the inhabitants of the earth. Virtually all of the civilized people of the world

were under the power of this empire (it being the fourth of the world empires predicted in Daniel 2: 36-40). *Taxed* is from APOGRAPHO which means to be enrolled. The purpose of this enrollment was to obtain a list of the citizens to be taxed, which is the reason the translators rendered the word as they did.

Verse 2. Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18, Chapter 1, Section 1, verifies this statement of Luke. The reader may consult this historical passage for his own information, which I will not take the space to copy here.

Verse 3. *His own city*. Most countries are divided into smaller units, each with a center of jurisdiction at which the birth lists of citizens are kept on record, such as the county unit in the United States. The Jews had a similar custom of keeping their records according to the family groups to which one belonged, and such records were stored in the city that was attributed to that family.

Verse 4. Joseph descended from David, hence he went to Bethlehem to register because that little city was known as the city of David. (See 1 Samuel 16: 1.)

Verse 5. A wife would not have to leave home to pay her taxes, but she would need to appear in person to be placed upon the enrollment of citizens according to the Roman procedure. *His espoused wife* is explained at Matthew 1: 25. Her condition of expectancy though engaged only to Joseph is explained at Matthew 1: 18-20.

Verse 6. *While they were there*. Many of the Lord's plans seem to have been done just "as occasion suggested." They may look that way to man, but God knows all about the future and can regulate it as He sees fit. It had been determined that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem and the prophets predicted the same (Micah 5: 2; Psalms 132: 6). The Lord foresaw this edict of Caesar and planned the conditions with Joseph and Mary to coincide with it for the birth of the royal babe.

Verse 7. *Laid him in a manger*. The birth had taken place elsewhere on a birthstool, a seat so constructed that the mother could be seated while giving birth; this is what is meant by the "stools" in Exodus 1: 16. When Rachel proposed to let her maid "bear upon her knees" (Genesis 30: 3), she meant that her knees could be used instead of the birthstool. After Jesus was born, the mother found no suit-

able place for him as a crib, hence she put him in a manger. The lodging places in that country were combinations of bedrooms for people and stalls for their beasts of service, just as some hotels are provided with garage space for the automobiles. The word "inn" should be rendered "guestchamber" (the same word is so rendered in chapter 22: 11), where the guests would be gathered usually as they do in the lobby or waiting rooms in hotels. It was a time of large crowds on account of the decree of Caesar calling for all the people to come to the proper headquarters for registration. So the words *no room for them in the inn* have no reference to the attitude of the public towards these "humble, poor people," as a popular but erroneous statement of sentimentality represents.

Verse 8. The shepherds were guarding their flocks from robbers and wolves.

Verse 9. *Sore afraid* means they were greatly frightened by the unexpected appearance of a person out there in the darkness of the night.

Verse 10. The angel calmed their fears by telling them he was there to bring them good news. The thing he was going to tell them was a matter that concerned *all people*, not merely any certain race or nationality.

Verse 11. *Unto you* denotes that it was for their benefit the birth had occurred. The announcement of it was about the same as was predicted in Isaiah 9: 6.

Verse 12. All newborn babes look very much alike, hence some mark of recognition was necessary for the information of the shepherds. This was done by two unusual facts; the way the babe was clothed and the place used for his crib. He was bound round with a strip of cloth only, indicating that the birth had very recently taken place, and a manger was not the place where babes were generally placed as a crib.

Verse 13. The "shock" was eased by the appearance of only one angel. Then suddenly a multitude of the angel band of the heavenly army appeared shouting praises to God.

Verse 14. Moffatt renders *in the highest*, "*in high heaven*," and *good will toward men*, he renders, "for men whom He favors."

Verse 15. *Let us go even unto Bethlehem*, shows the shepherds understood

that the "city of David," which the angel named, meant that place.

Verse 16. They found the parents near the babe that was lying in the manger.

Verse 17. That circumstance verified what the angel had told them. Doubtless they were well pleased at the combination of circumstances and reported it publicly.

Verse 18. The people wondered about the coincidence. These shepherds could not have merely guessed at what had taken place for there were too many details in the case.

Verse 19. To *ponder* means to think or meditate, wondering over the great happiness that had been poured down upon her.

Verse 20. The shepherds praised God for the combination of events with the statement of the angel, thereby constituting a verifying weight of evidence. It was such a strong evidence of divine truth they could not refrain from rejoicing.

Verse 21. See the comments at chapter 1: 59 as to naming a child at the same time with the rite of circumcision. According to Smith's Bible Dictionary, "the name *Jesus* signifies *saviour*," which made it an appropriate one to give this child.

Verse 22. See the law on this subject in Leviticus 12: 1-6.

Verse 23. To be called *holy to the Lord* means to be regarded as His, hence the reason for presenting him to the Lord at Jerusalem where the temple was located.

Verse 24. In verse 8 of the chapter in Leviticus cited, it can be seen that a woman was permitted to offer these birds only in case she was not financially able to offer a larger sacrifice, such as a four-footed animal of the clean description.

Verse 25. Various men were inspired in Biblical times when God wished to have some message spoken, and this good man Simeon was one of those persons. *The consolation* means the blessing that God had promised to Israel (and all the world) through the seed of Abraham (Genesis 12: 3; 22: 18).

Verse 26. A special promise had been made to Simeon that he would live to see the Lord's Christ, which means the Anointed One.

Verse 27. The Spirit in this verse is the same as the Holy Ghost in the preceding one. It was by this Spirit

that Simeon was caused to come into the temple at the same time the parents of Jesus came in.

Verse 28. Simeon blessed God for letting him live to see Jesus.

Verse 29. Simeon was willing to die since the great wish of his last years had been realized, and if he had been called to die then he would have had "a peaceful hour to die," for his last thoughts would have been on the Saviour of the world.

Verse 30. *Have seen thy salvation* means the salvation provided of God.

Verse 31. *Hast prepared* denotes the plans and prophecies that had been formulating through the centuries, and now brought to a climax in the birth of this child.

Verse 32. *Gentiles* is from a Greek word that means "nations," and that was what God promised to Abraham as recorded in Genesis 18: 18. While all nations were to be blessed through Jesus, the people of Israel were especially honored since he was a Jew.

Verse 33. *His mother* means the mother of Jesus; she and her husband looked on and listened to the many things being done with the admiration of fond parents.

Verse 34. Simeon then directed his prophecies toward Mary concerning the child. To be *set* means "to be destined or appointed," indicating that Jesus would be the cause of the results about to be mentioned. This *fall* and *rising* is the same as Jesus taught in Matthew 23: 12. *A sign spoken against* refers to the opposition that Jesus would encounter among the people who would not like his teaching.

Verse 35. *Sword shall pierce through thy own soul* refers to the sorrow that Mary was to have at seeing her son suffering on the cross (Matthew 27: 56; Mark 15: 40; John 19: 25). Jesus was to exalt or abase men according to whether the *thoughts of their hearts* were good or evil, for he would be able to read and expose those thoughts.

Verse 36. *From her virginity* means from the time she was of marriageable age. She married at that time but her husband lived only seven years after this marriage. Women were inspired in Old Testament times as well as in the New. (See Exodus 15: 20; Judges 4: 4; 2 Kings 22: 14.)

Verse 37. This woman was a good example of the widow described in 1 Timothy 5: 5.

Verse 38. *Spake . . . looked for redemption in Jerusalem.* Only an inspired person could speak on this subject with any authentic assurance, hence this good woman used her qualification as a prophetess for that purpose.

Verse 39. Luke omits the flight into Egypt from Judea before the return to Nazareth. Matthew 2: 13-15 should be read in connection with this verse.

Verse 40. The body of Jesus was human as well as divine, and was subject to the same law of growth or development as that of any other child. His spiritual or inner man, therefore, would have to develop in accordance with his body. However, since the work to be accomplished by him was of such special importance, his Father favored him with wisdom that was "beyond his years." This will account for the beautiful story we are about to read in some following verses.

Verses 41. The law required all the males of the Jews (others might if they wished) to appear at Jerusalem at the three yearly feasts (Exodus 23: 14-17; Deuteronomy 16: 16).

Verse 42. Joseph took his wife and child Jesus with him on the occasion when the child was twelve years old. Whether they always went with him we are not told.

Verse 43. *Fulfilled the days* refers to the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month and the seven days immediately following (Leviticus 23: 4-8). Jesus began to manifest the "special wisdom" referred to at verse 40, and he remained at Jerusalem after his parents departed. There being a large group traveling together toward Galilee, the child was not missed for a while.

Verse 44. It was the next day before the parents of Jesus observed that he was not in their family unit. They next made a search for him among acquaintances and relatives but did not find him.

Verse 45. The parents returned to Jerusalem where they had last seen their son.

Verse 46. It was three days before they found their son. The *doctors* were the teachers in the law of Moses. *Hearing* and *asking* questions shows that Jesus was conducting what is sometimes termed a "forum" in which questions and answers may be exchanged between the people in the assembly.

Verse 47. *Understanding* refers to his ability to ask proper questions, for

a person needs to know something about a subject to be able to ask intelligent questions about it. His *answers* refers to the questions these doctors (teachers) were asking Jesus about the things that pertained to the *business* of God.

Verse 48. The mother of Jesus told him that she and his father had been searching for him. She meant his earthly foster father, for he it was who would need to search.

Verse 49. *About my Father's business* is rendered "in the affairs of my Father" by the Englishman's Greek New Testament. The wisdom mentioned in verse 40 taught Jesus that he was destined to perform some special work in the world that pertained to God. The temple was the official headquarters of the system of religion then in force for the Jews, hence Jesus was found in that building where his parents should have looked first.

Verse 50. This verse will help to explain why the parents were so disturbed about the disappearance of their son. *They understood not* because they did not have that special wisdom that he had, mentioned and commented upon at verse 40.

Verse 51. Whatever object God wished to accomplish in the temple at this time by this 12-year-old boy, was done, and he was then left to accompany his parents to their home. Jesus furnishes an important example of obedience to parents that all other children should imitate. Although he possessed wisdom that was given him in a special manner (which no boy or girl today can have), yet he realized his duty to his parents. All of the things that were happening were wonderful to his mother, and she *kept them in her heart* or held them as a cherished subject of meditation in her young motherly affections.

Verse 52. This verse is virtually the same in thought as verse 40.

### LUKE 3

Verse 1. According to some facts of history it would seem that the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar is too late for the other things mentioned in this verse. The difficulty is made clear by a statement in Webster's Ancient History, page 447. "Of the successors of Augustus, the first, and by far the ablest, was his stepson, Tiberius. His merits as a soldier and administrator were well known to Augustus, who, even during his own lifetime, granted

Tiberius a share in the government." The fifteen years of Tiberius mentioned by Luke includes the three years he reigned jointly with Augustus.

Verse 2. John 18: 13 calls Annas the father-in-law to Caiaphas the high priest. There was no provision made in the law of Moses for more than one high priest to be in office at the same time, but in the days of Christ the secular government was taking much part in the affairs of the Jews. In that arrangement Annas was president of the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas was high priest for religious activities. Chapter 1: 80 leaves John in the wilderness, and the present verse says the Lord called him by His word.

Verse 3. At the Lord's call, John came out of his retirement and began preaching in the region of the Jordan. *Baptism of repentance* means baptism that is preceded and prompted by repentance or a turning away from the practice of sin. *For remission of sins* denotes that repentance and baptism was in order to the remission of sins.

Verse 4. *Esaias* is the same as Isaiah, and this prophecy is in that book, chapter 40: 3, 4. *Make his paths* straight is explained at Matthew 3: 3.

Verse 5. This verse is a figurative description of preparing the path mentioned in the preceding verse, which was to be accomplished by adjusting the conditions in the lives of men to suit them for the service of Christ who was to follow soon.

Verse 6. *All flesh* signifies that the Gentiles as well as the Jews were to receive the benefits of salvation through the work of Christ.

Verse 7. This verse is explained at Matthew 3: 7.

Verse 8. *Fruits worthy of repentance* means to show by a reformation of life that they had repented. For further comments on this verse see those at Matthew 3: 9.

Verse 9. *Ax is laid* means it will be done at the proper time which will be at the judgment day. However, the way for them to avoid that "ax" was being pointed out by John, and it required the people to bring forth a life of righteousness.

Verse 10. John had been preaching in general terms, now the people wished him to specify some of the things they would be expected to do.

Verse 11. This verse pertains to the duty that one owes to another, in

sharing his good things of life with those who do not have them.

Verse 12. The publicans are described by comments on Matthew 9: 10.

Verse 13. The quotation cited at the preceding verse shows that the publicans were assigned the duty of collecting the taxes from the people. Many of them had taken advantage of their appointment to demand more than the government levied, then putting the difference in their own pockets.

Verse 14. A soldier has no right to oppress the citizens just because he is a military man. To *accuse falsely* means to extort money from the people to be used on their own gratification. *Be content with your wages*. Dissatisfaction with one's wages does not make it right to use violence against the government or other employer.

Verse 15. *Mused* is properly rendered "reasoned, or debated" in the margin. The people were considering the reasons for and against the question whether John were the Christ predicted in the Scriptures.

Verse 16. *John answered*. The people had done their reasoning *in their hearts*, hence John had to be inspired to answer them. He did so by telling some of the differences between himself and "the Christ." The first one he gave was the baptism each performed. John baptized with water only but the one coming next would baptize with the Holy Ghost (Spirit) and with fire. The first one by Jesus took place on the day of Pentecost and the subjects were the apostles. The second one will take place after the judgment and the subjects will be the disobedient persons of the earth. What he says about the shoes is to illustrate his sense of inferiority to Christ.

Verse 17. *Fan* is explained by the comments on Matthew 3: 12.

Verse 18. John not only preached the truth to the people, but he exhorted them, which means to "insist on doing a known duty."

Verses 19, 20. For the information on this see Matthew 14: 3-5 and comments.

Verses 21, 22. The reader should see the comments on Matthew 3: 13-17.

Verse 23. *As was supposed* is from *NOMIZO* and is defined by Thayer, "to hold by custom or usage, own as a custom or usage." The people in general did not understand the whole story of Jesus and Joseph, hence Luke inserts the clause in order to make his

record conform to the facts. Matthew (chapter 1) records the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham, down through David's son Solomon until he gets to the same Joseph of our chapter, who was the son-in-law of Heli, the father of Mary. Then, beginning his genealogy of Jesus on his real mother's side, Luke records it from her and her father Heli up on that side and joins the genealogy with that of Matthew when he gets to Nathan who was the full brother of Solomon. From there on Luke records the same genealogy as Matthew until he gets to Abraham, the place where Matthew begins his, but Luke goes on up until he gets to Adam who was the first man. Before going any further here, the reader should carefully consult the comments on Matthew 1: 1, 2.

Verses 24-38. I have grouped these verses into one paragraph because they have been virtually all considered in the preceding one. In ancient times certain names were used even by more than one person in the same family. If the reader observes some that he thinks he has read elsewhere he should not become confused. To clarify the subject for a final comment, let it be understood that Matthew gives the genealogy of Christ on his foster father's (Joseph) side of the house, while Luke gives it on his mother's side, both blood streams being joined in David.

#### LUKE 4

Verses 1-13. This paragraph is really a repetition of Matthew 4: 1-11, and to conserve space I shall request the reader to see that place in connection with this group.

Verse 14. *Power* is from *DUNAMIS* which means might or ability that belongs to an individual as a part of his own personality. Jesus possessed such a faculty which he exercised through the instrumentality of the Spirit. This enabled him to perform many miracles which caused him to become famous throughout all Galilee.

Verse 15. *Synagogues* is explained at Matthew 4: 23. To *glorify* is defined in the lexicon, "to praise, extol, magnify, celebrate." This honor was bestowed upon Jesus because of his wonderful teaching. (See Matthew 7: 28, 29.)

Verse 16. Nazareth was the "home town" of Jesus to which he was paying a visit. When he *stood up* in the synagogue it was a signal to the one in charge that he was ready to do

some reading, that being the main purpose of the synagogues.

Verse 17. Observing the position of Jesus, the ruler of the synagogue handed him the book of Isaiah. Being divinely inspired, Jesus did not need the copy to know what it said, but it was a mark of respect for "the written word" for him to read it, and he had no trouble in locating the place he wished to read which is quoted next verse.

Verse 18. This passage is in Isaiah 61: 1-3, and is a prediction of the spiritual mission of Jesus into the world. However, some of the statements have reference also to the miraculous cures he was to perform.

Verse 19. *Acceptable year* denotes one in which the most desirable and beneficial experiences would be offered to all who would accept them.

Verse 20. Thayer defines the original for *minister* as "an attendant." It was customary, after the reading had been done, for the reader or someone else to offer some comments if it was his desire (Acts 13: 14, etc.). *All eyes were fastened on him.* They were wondering if this famous man would also become their "guest speaker."

Verse 21. He did, and this verse is the introduction to his remarks. By applying the passage to himself, Jesus raised a stir within the audience, at least in their minds, to begin with.

Verse 22. The first reaction was not so unfavorable but it caused them to begin to wonder in their minds. *Is this not Joseph's son?* The idea was whether this humble native could speak such wonderful things.

Verse 23. Jesus was aware of the reasoning the people were doing, whether he heard them with his fleshly ears or not. He knew they would wonder why he did not perform the same amount of wonderful deeds there that he was reported to have done in other countries such as that in the vicinity of Capernaum. *Physician, heal thyself* was a prediction that was fulfilled at the cross (Matthew 27: 40), but the other words of the verse were being fulfilled while Jesus was speaking.

Verse 24. This verse explains why he did not go any farther with his work while in the neighborhood of Nazareth. It was because the people would not appreciate it on the principle that *no prophet is accepted in his own country.*

Verse 25. This verse merely shows that the condition of dependency was

very general in the days to which Jesus will soon refer in remarks about who was favored.

Verse 26. *Elias* is the same as Elijah in 1 Kings 17: 8-16.

Verse 27. *Eliseus* is the same as Elisha in 2 Kings 5: 1-14.

Verse 28. The people saw the point that Jesus was making. If those old prophets passed over so many people and bestowed their favors upon a few humble cases, it was because they were considered worthy of the benefits. Hence, these people in the home community of Jesus were not going to receive very much attention from him because they were not considered as being entitled to it, having given him "the cold shoulder" because he was an old home product. When they saw this lesson in the teaching of Jesus it made them to be *filled with wrath.*

Verse 29. Jesus did not resist their force until it was necessary to preserve his life. It was not time for him to die and hence he used his superior might to escape his enemies. However, he did not use force but escaped by a miraculous movement.

Verse 30. This movement enabled him to go on his way without harming them.

Verse 31. Capernaum was the other city which Jesus had previously adopted as a residence (Matthew 4: 13).

Verse 32. This verse means exactly the same as Matthew 7: 29, because the word for *power* is EXOUSIA, which is the word for "authority" in that passage.

Verse 33. *Unclean* means in regard to moral character, and this was one of the fallen angels that sinned and were cast down to hell (2 Peter 2: 4), which is explained in the notes at Matthew 8: 28, 29.

Verse 34. The note cited in the preceding paragraph explains why the devil said *I know thee who thou art,* and also why he asked to be *let alone.*

Verse 35. These devils had superhuman power and could injure human beings unless restrained. Jesus suffered this one to throw the man down but not hurt him otherwise.

Verse 36. An interesting feature of this verse is the use of both *authority* and *power* in one connection. The first comes from EXOUSIA and its first definition is the word by which it is here rendered; the second is from DUNAMIS and is properly rendered in this place. The thought is that Jesus had the



right to give orders to the devils, and also had the ability to execute the orders.

Verse 37. Jesus was not performing his deeds merely to gain notoriety, but such a result was inevitable because of the natural trait of interest in the unusual things.

Verse 38. This was Simon Peter (Matthew 4: 18) whose mother-in-law was sick. We observe that Peter was married, although the Romanists forbid their clergy to marry, and yet claim that Peter was the first pope.

Verse 39. All miraculous cures were *immediate* as this one was.

Verse 40. By evening the fame of Jesus had reached so far that many afflicted persons had been gathered together, and when they were brought to him he healed them all.

Verse 41. Jesus would not suffer the devils even to confess him, because he did not want to be supported by such unworthy characters. Besides, their confession would not have been a matter of faith for *they knew that he was the Christ*.

Verse 42. Wherever Jesus went the crowds followed. *Stayed him* means they detained him; not by force to be sure, but by earnest requests.

Verse 43. Jesus was kind and did not want to disappoint the people, so he explained that other places should have the preaching of the kingdom given them also.

Verse 44. With such an explanation, Jesus left this eager crowd and preached in the same general territory, but in the synagogues where other people would be assembled.

## LUKE 5

Verse 1. Gennesaret was another name for the Sea of Galilee. *The people* were the ones meant by *the common people* in Mark 12: 37. They were not prejudiced as were the priests and scribes, and manifested a hunger to hear the teaching of Jesus.

Verse 2. When a boat is said to be standing it means it is stationary in a certain spot. These two ships were thus being held while their owners were out washing their nets after a night's use in the sea.

Verse 3. Simon's full name was Simon Peter (verse 8). By moving the boat a little distance from the shore, the people could see and hear Jesus better.

Verse 4. The water was too shallow for fishing with a net where Jesus had been speaking. In bidding Simon to let the net down *for a draught* (for a "catch"), Jesus assured him that he would not be disappointed.

Verse 5. Simon's remarks indicated that his lowering of the net would be through faith in Jesus, even though the appearances were unfavorable.

Verse 6. The word *brake* is from an original that means a complete rending of the net. However, since the fish were not lost, the idea is that a full loss would have occurred had not something been done to prevent it.

Verse 7. The loss of the fish was prevented by the help of their partners in the business. *Began to sink* means the weight of the fish caused the boats to begin lowering, not that they were being submerged as yet.

Verse 8. Peter already had expressed faith in Jesus, but the success of the event was far beyond his expectation. *Depart . . . I am a sinful man*. He was so overawed by the power and wisdom of Jesus that he felt unworthy to be in his presence.

Verse 9. Doubtless the net had come into contact with a shoal or school of fish and no equipment would be able to withstand such a mass. But it required the wisdom of Jesus to know when and where to find such a group, hence the people were astonished.

Verse 10. This is the same event given notice in Matthew 4: 18-21, but that passage omits the items of the net and mass of fish.

Verse 11. *Forsook all* includes their father, who is mentioned by Matthew.

Verse 12. Lepers were under perpetual quarantine by the law of Moses (Leviticus 13: 45, 46), which accounts for the earnestness of this unfortunate man.

Verse 13. Leprosy was an incurable disease by any natural means, hence it was cured miraculously by Jesus and the recovery was *immediate*.

Verse 14. *Tell no man*. He was not to take the time for publishing the event to the people, for he had a personal duty yet to perform in connection with his recovery. The ceremony still remaining for him is described in Leviticus 14: 1-32.

Verse 15. In spite of the request, the leper spread his report to the deed until it caused the crowds to gather about Jesus to receive his favors.

Verse 16. This was the occasion when he walked on the sea towards the apostles to their terrified astonishment (Matthew 14: 23-33).

Verse 17. These Pharisees and doctors (teachers) of the law were present for the purpose of finding fault with Jesus as we shall soon learn.

Verse 18. *Sought means* refers to the crowd that was in the way about the door.

Verse 19. See the comments at Mark 2: 4 for the explanation of this verse.

Verse 20. A distinction is made between *their* and *him*. As far as the passage states, the palsied man did not have any faith to begin with.

Verse 21. This verse proves the statement made at verse 17 about the Pharisees.

Verses 22-24. For comments on this paragraph see those on Matthew 9: 5, 6.

Verse 25. *Immediately* is the important word here. Professed workers of miracles today require patients to have the faith that "holds out" long enough to effect a cure. The true miraculous healing did not call for a prolonged period of time.

Verses 26. For ordinary human beings to *glorify* God means for them to give Him the credit for the wonderful things accomplished.

Verse 27. Levi's other name was Matthew (Matthew 9: 9). The *receipt of custom* was the tax office, and Levi was there because he was a publican whose business was to receive the taxes on behalf of the government.

Verse 28. At the bidding of Jesus, Levi left his work and followed.

Verse 29. Since Levi was a publican by occupation, it was natural that many of his guests at the feast would be from that class.

Verse 30. See the notes on Matthew 9: 11 about *eating with others*.

Verse 31. If the Pharisees had been as righteous as they claimed, that would have been the very reason for Jesus to associate with the others, on the principle that the sick are the ones who need a physician.

Verse 32. This verse continues the same thought set forth in the preceding one. The sinner is the one who needs to be induced to repent.

Verse 33. John was dead and his disciples were fasting and mourning his absence. The disciples of Jesus still had him with them and hence had no occasion for mourning.

Verses 34, 35. Children of the bride-chamber were the close friends of the bridegroom. After the wedding the bridegroom would leave and then it would be appropriate for them to mourn. In the illustration Jesus likens himself to the bridegroom.

Verses 36-38. This paragraph is explained by the comments on Matthew 9: 16, 17.

Verse 39. This verse has the same lesson that the preceding paragraph teaches, which is one of appropriateness. Incidentally, it also overthrows the theory referred to, that the illustration applied to the Old and New Testaments. According to that notion, Jesus teaches that every man would prefer the Old Testament as being the better.

## LUKE 6

Verse 1. *Second sabbath after the first* has something to do with the relation between the religious and the civil year. It does not have much significance to us with such a translation, and most versions give it simply as "on a sabbath." For comments on taking this corn see those at Matthew 12: 1.

Verse 2. The Pharisees would not accuse the disciples of stealing, for they knew what the law said on the subject of taking the corn, but pretended to object to their doing so on the sabbath because it was a holy day.

Verses 3, 4. This paragraph is explained at Matthew 12: 4.

Verse 5. God and his Son are one in purpose and were together in giving the law. Therefore Jesus had the right to apply his own law as he saw fit.

Verse 6. Jesus was busy every day and taught the people whenever the opportunity came. His reason for entering the synagogue on sabbath days was because on that day the Jews assembled there to read and hear read the law. The man's hand was withered as a result of some obstruction in the circulation of his blood.

Verse 7. The scribes and Pharisees pretended to be zealous for the sanctity of the sabbath. That was only a screen for their envy of Jesus because of his teaching against their hypocritical life.

Verse 8. Jesus could read their thoughts and decided to head them off from their intended criticism. The man was told to stand, he being normal except the condition of his hand. This brought him into full view of the people in the building.

Verse 9. See the comments on Mark 3: 4 for the questions Jesus asked.

Verse 10. Jesus looked round to make sure of the attention to his work. The man's hand only was afflicted, hence he was able without miraculous help to stretch out his arm. With that act came the complete restoration of the afflicted hand.

Verse 11. *Madness* is from ANOIA which Thayer explains to be a condition in which they were "expressing themselves in rage." This was because they were completely baffled by the unexpected way in which Jesus handled the case. They *communed* or consulted with each other as to how they might destroy him.

Verse 12. Jesus had an important problem to solve, which was the selection of men to appoint over his kingdom that was at hand. It was fitting that he should spend the preceding hours of night in prayer to his Father.

Verse 13. Jesus had many disciples, but out of them he chose twelve only to be his apostles, to be sent into the world with the message of salvation through the Gospel.

Verses 14-16. See the notes at Matthew 10: 2-4 in connection with this paragraph.

Verses 17, 18. This paragraph corresponds with Matthew 4: 23-25, which see.

Verse 19. *Virtue* is from DUNAMIS, one of the words rendered by "power" in many places. The crowds sought to touch Jesus to obtain this power to cure their diseases.

Verse 20. Luke's account of the sermon on the mount begins with this verse. That sermon is related with more detail by Matthew, likewise my comments are more extended at that place, which are to be found in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. The reader should consult that account in connection with this chapter of Luke.

Verse 21. There is some slight variation in the way Luke words these several verses, from the way Matthew gives them, but the thoughts are the same.

Verse 22. Another word for *blessed* is "happy," and the original is so rendered in many passages. These evil treatments must have been inflicted because of their devotion to the Son of man, in order for the disciples to be given this blessing.

Verse 23. The blessing was not to be in this life but after reaching heaven.

In suffering for the sake of righteousness, the disciples were classed with the prophets.

Verse 24. This is somewhat figurative, meaning to be enjoying the pleasures of this world by neglecting the obligation of a righteous life.

Verse 25. *Full and hunger, laugh and weep*, are figures used for the purpose of contrast. The thought is the same as expressed by comments on the preceding verse.

Verse 26. A righteous man is not popular with the majority of mankind. If he does his duty he will condemn sin, and that will cause the guilty ones to speak against him.

Verse 27. *Love your enemies*. See the long note at Matthew 5: 43 on "love."

Verse 28. To *bless* means to wish for something beneficial to happen to one. It does not mean anything merely for pleasure, but that which will actually do him good.

Verse 29. See the comments at Matthew 5: 39.

Verse 30. This is explained at Matthew 5: 42 with its comments.

Verse 31. This verse is popularly spoken of as the "golden rule." It is commented upon at length at Matthew 7: 12 which the reader is urged to consult.

Verse 32. See the long note on the word "love" at Matthew 5: 43.

Verse 33. This verse refers to men who bestow favors on others with a selfish motive, thinking chiefly of their own personal gain they hope to get in return.

Verse 34. This verse deals with the same selfishness as the preceding one.

Verse 35. *Love, do good*, and the other terms of service to others, are used in the sense of unselfish ministrations for the chief purpose of doing good. If gratitude returns some reward it is right to accept it, but that should not be the motive. The Highest bestows the blessings of creation on all mankind, and His example is cited as a rule for the disciples to follow.

Verse 36. To be *merciful* means to be more lenient toward an offender than his conduct would entitle him to expect, but not to the extent of encouraging him in wrong doing.

Verse 37. *Judge not*, etc. See the comments at Matthew 7: 1.

Verse 38. Almost every rule has some exceptions, but usually if a man is kind and generous with others, they will remember him when he gets in need. That is the meaning of Proverbs 18: 24 that has been erroneously applied to Christ. That passage is explained in volume 3 of the Old Testament Commentary. The phrases in our verse are figurative, drawn from the act of crowding out unnecessary space in measuring produce.

Verse 39. A parable is a comparison. One blind man following another is like a person closing his mental eyes and letting a false teacher tell him how to go.

Verse 40. A disciple is a learner, and such a person could not know more than his teacher. *Perfect* means complete; if the disciple will absorb all of his master's teaching he will be like him which should satisfy him.

Verses 41, 42. See the comments on Matthew 7: 3-5.

Verses 43, 44. Trees and shrubs are used to illustrate the lives of men. When we see a man practicing evil we know he has an evil heart. (See Matthew 15: 19.)

Verse 45. Words as well as deeds spring from the heart, whether good or bad.

Verse 46. The word "lord" means ruler. It is inconsistent to call Jesus by a name that means one who is in the rule, but then refuse to obey what he commands.

Verses 47-49. This paragraph is explained at Matthew 7: 24-27.

## LUKE 7

Verse 1. *His sayings* refers to the ones in the preceding chapter. Capernaum was the city that Jesus adopted as his residence after leaving Nazareth (Matthew 4: 13).

Verse 2. A centurion was a man having charge of a hundred soldiers.

Verse 3. The centurion was a Gentile, but was in good standing with the Jews, for they had their elders to take a message of request to Jesus from the officers.

Verse 4. Jesus had taught the principle of favoring those only who were worthy (Matthew 7: 6), hence that point was stressed in their appeal for his help.

Verse 5. Synagogues were places built for assembling to hear the law read. Strangers are not to be solicited for contributions to the Lord's cause,

but their voluntary offerings may be accepted. Paul accepted help from non-Christians (Acts 28: 2, 7, 10).

Verse 6. This Gentile felt unworthy to have Jesus in his house.

Verse 7. He did not even think he was good enough to make a personal contact with the Lord, but sent others to speak for him. He expressed faith in the power of Jesus to heal his servant by just speaking the work.

Verse 8. This reasoning was to show that his remarks were not in flattery. (See the comments at Matthew 8: 9.)

Verse 9. The Jews had not produced any example of faith that was as great as this. Jesus announced this truth to the people who were following him.

Verse 10. The faith of the centurion was rewarded with the immediate healing of his servant, for the messengers found him well upon their return.

Verse 11. Nain was a village of Galilee, the same district that contained Capernaum. As usual, as Jesus journeyed toward this place the crowds followed him.

Verse 12. The death of this young man was especially saddening by the circumstance that he was the only support of his widowed mother; this explains *why much people was with her* and thus showing their sympathy for her.

Verse 13. *Compassion* means pity, and Jesus felt that way toward this sorrowing mother. (See Isaiah 53: 4.) In his sympathy for her he bade her cease weeping.

Verse 14. Jesus touched the bier (casket) to indicate he wished the pallbearers to stop. He then spoke to the dead man, showing he had power over inanimate objects.

Verse 15. In response to the command of Jesus the man came to life and sat up. It was not merely a mechanical performance upon a dead body for the young man spoke to them and then rejoined his mother.

Verse 16. This *fear* was that of deep respect, for they glorified God which means they gave Him credit for the deed performed by Jesus. It meant to the people that he was a great prophet, else God would not have enabled him to perform this deed.

Verse 17. This *rumor* means the report of what had been done for the dead.

Verse 18. John's disciples reported

this deed to him, which would be of special interest to him in view of his preparatory work for Christ.

Verses 19-22. This paragraph is so much like Matthew 11: 2-5 which is commented upon at length, that I shall ask the reader to consult that place in explanation of this.

Verse 23. This is explained with the lexicon definition at Matthew 11: 6.

Verse 24. The importance of John and his work will be the subject of some verses, all of which will show that Jesus had a high regard for him. A *reed* is a tall and slender stem that would be swayed easily by the wind. Such would illustrate a man with little stability and one who could be easily influenced. The question of Jesus implies that John was not that way.

Verse 25. A man who was accustomed to the soft and luxurious life of royal palaces would be unsuited for work out in the wilderness. But the prophets had predicted the forerunner of Jesus was to operate in the wilderness, hence no surprise should be felt over the rough outdoor raiment of the Baptist.

Verse 26. *More than a prophet*. John not only uttered prophecies, but his life and work in preparing a people for Christ constituted a fulfillment of the sayings of other prophets, which made him more than a mere prophet.

Verse 27. This prediction is recorded in Malachi 3: 1.

Verse 28. See the comments on Matthew 11: 11.

Verse 29. *Justified God* means they acknowledged God to be just in authorizing John to baptize the people. They expressed their belief on this subject by being baptized.

Verse 30. To reject an ordinance of God is interpreted as rejecting Him. The lawyers were men who were acquainted with the law of Moses and interpreted it to others.

Verses 31-35. This paragraph is explained at Matthew 11: 16-19.

Verse 36. The Pharisees were a sect of the Jews who were prominent in the time of Christ. See a description of them in the comments at Matthew 16: 12.

Verse 37. All people are *sinner*s in a general sense, but there were certain outcasts who were called thus as a class. This incident must not be confused with the one in Matthew 26: 7; that woman was Mary a sister of Lazarus (John 11: 2).

Verse 38. Kissing the feet of Jesus was an act of worship (Matthew 2: 2) that was prompted by the spirit of humility. It also indicated reverence for Jesus as a holy man. Another custom of those times was the washing of the feet of a guest. This will be explained when we come to John 13.

Verse 39. Jesus knew the thoughts of men, whether they were expressed or not. This Pharisee was thinking of the woman in the light of the class she supposedly represented.

Verse 40. Jesus called for the attention of his host. The word *master* is from an original that properly means "teacher," and Simon used it in that sense.

Verse 41. A *pence* would be worth about sixteen cents in our money. The value of the individual coin is unimportant, the illustration being drawn from the difference between fifty and five hundred.

Verse 42. The question was based on the comparative favors each debtor received.

Verse 43. Simon answered the question correctly that Jesus asked.

Verse 44. Simon had other guests (verse 49), and evidently they were "rating" a little higher than Jesus, and had received the regular attention usually paid to visitors. For some reason, Jesus had been neglected and he decided to make a lesson of it.

Verse 45. The kiss was the customary form of greeting in those days. But Simon did not give Jesus the usual kiss on the mouth, while this woman kissed his feet often.

Verse 46. As a matter of refreshing, a guest was anointed on the head with olive oil. Jesus had been neglected in that by his host, while the woman anointed his feet.

Verse 47. Jesus did not deny that the woman was of the lower class and had many sins. But she was given a higher rating than the debtor who owed five hundred pence. He gave his love after receiving the favor of being forgiven the debt, but the woman loved Jesus because of her sincere faith in him even before having received any favor. In return for that attitude Jesus gave her the great reward of complete forgiveness.

Verse 48. No further condition was mentioned, for she was forgiven her sins as a reward for her loving service and her simple trust in the grace of Jesus.

Verse 49. This is the question raised by the people in Matthew 9: 1-6.

Verse 50. Her faith saved her, but it does not say faith *alone*. She had performed the works for which her sins were forgiven.

### LUKE 8

Verse 1. *Shewing the glad tidings* all comes from the Greek word EUAGGELIZO which occurs many times in the New Testament, and the universal meaning is to tell any good news. The connection has to be noticed to learn what particular good news is meant in any given case, and in the present one it is the news that the kingdom of God is at hand. The *twelve* means the apostles (Matthew 10: 2-4; Mark 3: 14-19).

Verse 2. The closing sentence of the preceding verse is continued in this to include *certain women*, etc. One of them was Mary Magdalene who had been possessed of seven devils until Jesus relieved her of them. She was present at the cross when Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27: 56).

Verse 3. The women had been favored by Jesus miraculously, and they showed their appreciation by ministering to him *of their substance*, which means necessities of life.

Verse 4. These parables were spoken to the people, not his disciples. The reason for teaching them in this manner is explained at Matthew 13: 11.

Verses 5-15. This is the beginning of the parables, and the full explanation is given in Matthew 13 which will not be repeated in detail here. However, a few of the items of this passage will be noticed. *Thorns* means a bramble, and is the same plant of which the soldiers made a crown and placed upon the head of Jesus in mockery (Matthew 27: 29). *Devil* is from DIABOLOS which is applied to Satan as the chief of demons. *Good ground* is defined as an honest heart that causes good fruit to be produced.

Verse 16. The teaching of this verse is that a man should not hinder the influence of righteous deeds by some unwise action otherwise. (See Romans 14: 16.)

Verse 17. As a candle is not supposed to be covered, so the good things learned from Jesus should be permitted to go out for the benefit of others.

Verse 18. *That which he seemeth to have*. (See Matthew 13: 12; 25: 29.)

Verse 19. The *press* means the crowd that pressed about the door.

Verse 20. The *brethren* means the same as the word ordinarily denotes. Had Luke meant his spiritual brethren (as the Romanists teach), there would have been no reason for mentioning his *mother*, for that is a fleshly relationship.

Verse 21. See the comments at Matthew 12: 47, 48.

Verse 22. This *lake* means the Sea of Galilee which Jesus wished to cross, where he was going to do more teaching and perform his great deeds.

Verse 23. *Filled with water* is explained by the closing words, *were in jeopardy*. We know that if the boat had been literally filled they would have perished then, but instead of that they were in danger of perishing.

Verse 24. *We perish* means the same as the preceding verse about being in great danger. *Rebuked the wind* indicates control over inanimate objects by miraculous power.

Verse 25. They had heard him command intelligent creatures such as the demons, but were astonished to see him control things that have no consciousness.

Verse 26. Gadarenes (also called Gergesenes) was situated near the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, and that is where Jesus went ashore.

Verse 27. These tombs were cavities in the rocks, such as were sometimes used as burial places. This man was possessed with devils, which made him abnormally strong.

Verse 28. The devils knew Christ because they were fallen angels and had seen him before they were cast out of heaven. (See 2 Peter 2: 4; Jude 6.) *Torment me not*. The devils knew that if they had to leave this world they would have to go back to the place of torment into which they were cast when they first sinned.

Verse 29. The man was under the control of the devils. (See the note at Matthew 8: 28.) It explains the condition of being possessed with the devil.

Verse 30. *Legion* means an indefinite but great number of beings. But one of the devils was spokesman for the others is why the pronoun is in singular number sometimes.

Verse 31. *Deep* is from ABUSSOS which is defined by Thayer as follows: "Bottomless, unbounded; the pit; the abyss." He also explains it to mean,



"The immeasurable depth; a very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest of the earth; the common receptacle of the dead, Romans 10: 7, and especially as the abode of demons, Luke 8: 31; Revelation 9: 1; 11: 7; 17: 8; 20: 1, 3."

Verse 32. The devils did not know the swine would perish, so they requested to be let go into them rather than go back to this *deep* where they had been tormented.

Verse 33. The possession of devils made the swine mad and induced them to destroy themselves by drowning, thus forcing the spirits out of the world.

Verses 34-37. It will be well to read the comments on Matthew 8: 28-34.

Verses 38, 39. Gratitude prompted the man to wish for the privilege of accompanying Jesus, but the Lord preferred to make a messenger of him among the people of his own house. He did so and even extended his report throughout the whole city.

Verse 40. After the miracle of casting out these devils, Jesus entered the boat again and recrossed the sea, when he found people waiting for him with joy.

Verses 41-56. For detailed comments on this paragraph see the ones on Matthew 9: 18-26. For the reader's convenience, I shall make some remarks on various specific items in the present paragraph. A *ruler* was one presiding over a synagogue. The woman had a chronic hemorrhage of twelve years' standing. She was cured *immediately* which was always the case with miraculous healing. *Not dead but sleepeth* is explained in the passage cited above at Matthew 9: 24.

### LUKE 9

Verse 1. *Power* means the ability to control the devils, and *authority* means the right to do so. The *twelve* were the apostles, given ability also to cure diseases.

Verse 2. The primary object of the work was to preach the news of the kingdom; the miracles were to prove the apostles were genuine.

Verse 3. A *scrip* is a provision bag, used as a modern lunch basket. No extensive provision needed to be made while Jesus was in the world to insure their care.

Verse 4. *There abide and thence depart* means for them to make only one house call in each city, except where the first one proved to be unworthy.

Verse 5. After finding one proper house for their work, they were to leave for another city. As they were leaving, they were to shake the dust from their feet. That was an ancient custom of showing disapproval of the place where they had got the dust.

Verse 6. The *gospel* they preached was the good news that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. They did the healing to prove they were not false prophets.

Verse 7. This *Herod* was a son of Herod the Great. A *tetrarch* was a ruler over a division of a general territory. *John was risen from the dead* is explained at Matthew 14: 2.

Verse 8. *Elias* is the same as Elijah in the Old Testament. Nothing is said about his rising again for he had not died (2 Kings 2: 11).

Verse 9. The beheading of John is reported in Matthew 14: 1-12 and Mark 6: 17-29. *Desired to see him* was accomplished as recorded at chapter 23: 8.

Verse 10. There were times when Jesus wished for private consultation with his apostles. Bethsaida was a city on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Verse 11. It was not long until the people knew of the presence of Jesus and followed him. In his compassion he received them and gave them both spiritual teaching and physical cure for their ills.

Verse 12. The desert was on the east side of Jordan, but the country in general was unsettled and not equipped with many markets at which to buy food.

Verse 13. Jesus opened the exercises of the occasion by telling the apostles to feed the multitude. They explained how small was their supply of food at hand.

Verses 14, 15. Jesus prepared to feed the multitude by a miracle of the food. For the sake of orderliness he had them sit down in convenient groups.

Verse 16. *Looking up to heaven* was in recognition of the source of all blessings. (See James 1: 17.) The breaking was necessary because more than one person was going to partake, which was the only reason that Jesus *broke* the bread in Matthew 26: 26.

Verse 17. The twelve baskets of fragments remaining proves that being *filled* was not imaginary on the part of the multitude.

Verses 18. See Matthew 16: 13 on why Jesus asked them this question.

Verse 19. These statements of the people were made on the basis of an erroneous theory called "transmigration of souls." (See Matthew 14: 2.)

Verse 20. Peter's confession means "the Anointed one of God."

Verse 21. This is explained in the comments at Matthew 16: 20.

Verse 22. Luke's account omits the conversation about the church, but he mentions the vital fact on which it was to be built, which was to be proved by His resurrection.

Verse 23. To *deny* one's self means to disown one's earthly interests. *Take up his cross* is figurative and is based on the practice of compelling a doomed man to carry his own cross to the place of crucifixion.

Verse 24. Two kinds of life are considered here, the temporal and the spiritual. The temporal is the one meant first. If a man neglects his duty to Christ for the sake of his temporal or worldly life, he will lose his spiritual or eternal life.

Verse 25. The thought is that the things of this world altogether are not as valuable as the soul of man. If he exchanges his soul to gain the world it will be a transaction in which there will be no profit.

Verse 26. To be ashamed of one means to feel humiliated at the thought of associating with him. Christ does not expect us to become his equal in the degree of our goodness and dignity, because we are human while he is divine. But if we will obey him and do him the honor of fashioning our lives after his, he will regard it as a compliment and hence will not feel humiliated in associating with us even in the presence of his Father and the angels in the glory world.

Verse 27. If the kingdom of God has not yet been set up (as certain people teach), then the world has in it somewhere a number of persons who are many centuries old!

Verse 28. See comments at Matthew 17: 1 in connection with this verse.

Verse 29. *Fashion* is from EIDOS which Thayer defines, "Properly that which strikes the eye, which is exposed to view; the external appearance, form, figure, shape." Matthew (chapter 17: 2) says Jesus was "transfigured," and the definition is given at that place. The words used by each

of the evangelists were true of Jesus then.

Verse 30. See the description of this scene at Matthew 17: 3. Elias was the Elijah of the Old Testament, and a faithful prophet of God.

Verse 31. Matthew does not tell what these men talked about, but Luke gives the subject of their conversation. *Decease* is from EXODOS which Thayer defines, "Exit, i. e., departure; departure from life, decease." This word is interesting from being the name given to the second book of the Bible. *Accomplish* is from PLEROO and the lexicon of Thayer defines it, "To make full, to fill, to fill up." The idea is that in his death Jesus completed the sacrificial service that was allotted to him by his Father. That is why he declared "it is finished" just as he was dying (John 19: 30).

Verse 32. Peter and his group were under an oppressed feeling during the conversation between Jesus and his distinguished visitors. But upon being aroused they saw the trio of glorified beings.

Verse 33. *As they departed*. That is, the conversation was ended and the guests were preparing to leave. Peter wanted to detain them and proposed that provision be made for housing them. *Not knowing what he said*. He did not realize that beings from the unseen world would not dwell in material tabernacles.

Verse 34. The word *cloud* is used a great many times in the New Testament but seldom in connection with rain. Instead, it is used to represent something that has nothing to do with moisture which would form an object that is dark. True, this verse says the cloud *overshadowed* them, but the same event is recorded in Matthew 17: 5 where it is called a "bright cloud," which would not suggest one that was laden with condensed vapor and ready to drop rain. The idea is that something of a miraculous character was used to indicate the presence of God.

Verse 35. The words *hear him* are in addition to what was said at the time of his baptism (Matthew 3: 17; Mark 1: 11). They were said because the life's work of Jesus was nearing completion and he had proved his worthiness of the distinction.

Verse 36. *They told no man* was because of the instruction that Jesus gave them as they were coming down from the mountain (Matthew 17: 9; Mark 9: 9).

Verse 37. *Hill* and *mountain* are used in the same sense in the New Testament. The people were generally on hands whenever Jesus reappeared from his places of privacy.

Verse 38. The word *master* means "teacher," a term Jesus acquired among the people because of his many talks to them upon the subject of his kingdom. This son is the same case explained at Matthew 17: 15-18.

Verse 39. *Spirit* is from a Greek word that could apply to any disembodied being. In the present case it applies to the devil that had taken possession of the child.

Verse 40. See the comments on Matthew 17: 20, 21 for the present verse.

Verse 41. The *faithless generation* was said about the disciples, according to the statements in the verses cited at 38 and 40.

Verse 42. This *devil* is the same *spirit* mentioned in verse 39 and so termed in this. It had supernatural power and *tore* the boy. The original word for this and also in verse 39, means he was thrown into convulsions. It was an affliction, hence the Lord rebuked the unclean spirit, not the lad.

Verse 43. The words *mighty power* are from a Greek original that means "majesty," and it is so translated in 2 Peter 1: 16. This impression of *amazement* was caused by the powerful circumstance of the boy's recovery from so distressing an ailment.

Verse 44. *The sayings* include what Jesus had been expressing, also the one about his expected betrayal into the hands of men.

Verse 45. The disciples had thought from the start that Jesus was going to set up an earthly kingdom. Such a government would require the bodily presence of the king, hence they were confused over this prediction that he was to be delivered unto men.

Verse 46. Their mistaken idea of the kingdom explains why they could have these thoughts about the different ranks in it, for such distinctions exist in earthly powers.

Verse 47. Jesus could always read the thoughts of his disciples.

Verse 48. Jesus loves little children because they are pure and humble. To receive such a child *in his name* is to do so because Jesus loves him. But no one will do that as long as he is filled with the pride of his own importance. While the man who will thus humble

himself is great in the true sense according to the mind of the Lord.

Verses 49, 50. See the comments on Mark 9: 38, 39.

Verse 51. *The time was come* means it was getting near the time when Jesus was to leave the earth and ascend to heaven. That made it necessary for him to be in Jerusalem, hence he turned his steps in that direction.

Verse 52. Jesus was in Galilee at this time which would make it necessary to go through Samaria. He sent some ahead to find a place for him to stop on the way.

Verse 53. The Samaritans were not on good terms with the Jews (John 4: 9), and for that reason they had a prejudice against Jerusalem. Hence they did not welcome Jesus when they learned that he was heading in that direction.

Verse 54. The brothers, James and John, were angered over the slight and suggested some physical destruction for them, citing the case of Elias (Elijah) in 2 Kings 1: 10, 12. What they suggested would have been the action that is meant by pulling up the tares in the parable of the tares. (See Matthew 13: 28.)

Verse 55. This means the brothers did not realize what kind of a spirit they were manifesting. It was just the reverse of what they should have shown.

Verse 56. The kind of spirit they should have manifested was that of Jesus, desiring to save men from spiritual destruction. And that could not be done if their lives were destroyed by physical death as these brothers wished to do.

Verses 57, 58. See the comments at Matthew 8: 19, 20.

Verses 59, 60. This paragraph is explained at Matthew 8: 21, 22.

Verse 61. Following Jesus here means the bodily traveling as explained in verse 57. This man was at that very time absent from his "loved ones," and hence had not shown any great concern for them. His sudden interest in them betrayed at least a divided state of mind between them and Jesus.

Verse 62. *Ploughs* were made with one handle according to Smith's Bible Dictionary, hence the mentioning of a single handle. To make a success of the work a farmer should keep his eye on the ground ahead of him. The work is used to illustrate what should

be the attentive devotion of those professing to follow Jesus.

### LUKE 10

Verse 1. The words *other seventy* are arranged as "seventy others" in the Greek text, and means seventy besides the twelve apostles. This was a special mission and intended as a hasty work of immediately preparing the people for the reception of Jesus. His work was nearing its close and he wished to accomplish as much as possible in the time. To help towards that end these disciples were sent ahead of him. He sent them in pairs, which had many advantages in that each could encourage the other.

Verse 2. There were so many people who needed help that neither Jesus or any other man could be bodily present with all of them. That is what he meant by saying *the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few*, and prayed that they might increase.

Verse 3. A lamb among wolves would be in great danger. But by great care he might not attract needless attention to himself and so would escape harm.

Verse 4. A *scrip* was a provision bag used as a lunch basket, and a *purse* was a money bag. Note they were not to carry these, which is also said about shoes. It means not to take any "spares" as will be explained at verse 7. *Salute no man* might seem unfriendly. Thayer explains the word for *salute* as follows: "As a salutation was made not merely by a slight gesture and a few words, but generally by embracing and kissing, a journey was retarded by saluting frequently."

Verse 5. Their call at a house was to begin by offering their peace to it.

Verse 6. *Son* (of peace) is from *HUION* which Thayer defines, "One who is worthy of a thing." The Lord was with these disciples in spirit, and if the people in a house were not worthy of the favors that were offered them, the Lord would see that none would come to them and the wishes of the disciples would return to them.

Verse 7. The work of the disciples in spreading the news of the kingdom entitled them to their living. That explains the instructions in verse 4 about not taking along their own provisions. *Go not from house to house*. They were to make only one call in each city because of the shortness of time. (See Matthew 10: 11, 23.)

Verse 8. *Eat such things as are set before you*. This is similar to Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 10: 27. Conscientious Jews were often afraid to eat of things unknown to them because of the restrictions of the law of Moses. Jesus did not overlook the law, yet he was about to give a new one to the world, and certain parts of the old one were to be discontinued.

Verse 9. The disciples were to preach the news of the approaching kingdom of God. By healing the sick they would prove they were true prophets.

Verse 10. A city that would not give the disciples a welcome was to be considered unworthy. The disciples were to get out of the house and into the street.

Verse 11. Shaking off the dust was an ancient custom and was used to indicate disapproval of a place. *Notwithstanding*. Even though they rejected the teaching of the disciples, that would not stop the program of the Lord, for the kingdom of God was going to come into their midst in due time.

Verse 12. *In that day* is indefinite as to date, but the same subject is handled in other passages in which the day of judgment is specified. (See Matthew 10: 15; 11: 22, 24; Mark 6: 11.) It should be noted that the tolerance is to be shown on that day, not afterward.

Verse 13. This is the same as Matthew 11: 21.

Verse 14. *At the judgment* is explained at verse 12.

Verse 15. *Exalted to heaven* is a figure of speech, based on the fact that Jesus was an inhabitant of Capernaum by choice (Matthew 4: 13), and hence it had the advantage of his presence. See the comments on Matthew 11: 23 for the meaning of *hell*.

Verse 16. Jesus ordained the apostles and the seventy and hence whatever attitude was shown to them was equivalent to showing it to Jesus. On the same principle, that attitude also pertains to God since he sent Jesus into the world. To *despise* Jesus and God means to disrespect them or belittle their authority.

Verse 17. The disciples looked upon their work of controlling the devils as an exploit of which to boast. It was much like the spirit of the Corinthians which they exhibited over the possession of spiritual gifts.

Verse 18. *I beheld Satan as light-*

*ning fall from heaven.* Moffatt renders this, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning." John refers to this event in Revelation 12: 9. The thought is that Jesus would have more to boast of than the disciples, since he saw the chief of devils fall from heaven. But he was not making any such use of it as a personal advantage.

Verse 19. Jesus had given his disciples the ability to perform these miracles so they could prove they were not a group of false teachers.

Verse 20. This power was not intended for their personal distinction over which to rejoice. What counted the most was a spiritual favor, that of having their names written in heaven. (See Hebrews 12: 23; Revelation 21: 27.)

Verse 21. See the comments on Matthew 11: 25 for the present verse.

Verse 22. The complete mutual knowledge of the Father and Son of each other was not shared by the world. But such information as would be deemed necessary for others was to be revealed by the Son in his own manner.

Verse 23. The disciples were enjoying some bits of information that had not been granted to preceding generations, and for this Jesus called them *blessed* or happy.

Verse 24. It was not the time for those ancient prophets and kings to receive that information, although they had a desire for it. (See Ephesians 3: 9-11; 1 Peter 1: 10-12.)

Verse 25. A *lawyer* was a man informed in the law of Moses and who taught it to the people. The question he asked was a proper one as far as its form was concerned. But the inspired writer tells us the man's motive was wrong, that he wished to tempt Jesus.

Verse 26. *How readest thou?* This was a direct allusion to the profession of the lawyer. That being his business he should have known what he was expected to do to be saved if he had been reading the law carefully, hence the question Jesus asked him.

Verse 27. The lawyer correctly cited the requirements of the law.

Verse 28. *Thou shalt live* is equivalent to inheriting eternal life, the thing the lawyer inquired for. Under whatever dispensation people lived, if they did the things required by its law they were promised salvation.

Verse 29. The young man of Matthew 19: 20 affirmed he had kept all the commandments from his youth. The lawyer did not make that claim which he evidently could not do truly. To *justify* means to show one's self to be righteous. The lawyer thought he would clear himself of coming short of his duty by the use of a quibble over the interpretation of terms, so he asked *who is my neighbor?*

Verse 30. This entire story is told in answer to the lawyer's question, but there are some bits of information incidental to the main subject that will make it worth while to consider. The misfortune of this traveler could happen to any man, so that part of the story is not unusual.

Verses 31, 32. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests (Exodus 29: 9; 40: 12-16; Numbers 4: 1-4), which is the reason for using the terms *priest* and *Levite* separately. But they were both Jews and considered themselves as being followers of the law which this inquirer also professed to follow.

Verses 33, 34. The Samaritans were a mixture of Jew and Gentile blood, the origin of which is recorded in 2 Kings 17: 24-33. The Jews had no dealings with them (John 4: 9), and thought that very little good ever came from them. That is what makes this part of the story significant; for the Samaritan was the one who showed a neighborly feeling toward the injured man.

Verse 35. The assistance given by the Samaritan did not consist in words of sympathy only, but he assumed the full expense of the case.

Verses 36, 37. *Which . . . was neighbor?* Jesus switches the direction of the subject from the neighbor to be loved to the one acting the part of a neighbor. Upon the lawyer's answering the question of Jesus correctly, he was told to go and do likewise.

It all sums up the matter by answering the lawyer's question stated in verse 29 by showing that whoever needs our help is our neighbor.

Verse 38. This *certain village* was Bethany, the town of Lazarus and his sisters (John 11: 1). Martha seems to have been head of the house as to domestic affairs.

Verse 39. The teaching of Jesus absorbed the attention of Mary.

Verse 40. The original for *cumbered* is defined by Thayer as "distracted."

Martha was so interested in the entertainment of her guest that she let it crowd out her attention to spiritual things. Frequently today professed Christians will actually plan to be absent from the assembly of the saints in order to prepare a meal for expected guests. Such women are in the same class as Martha and deserve the same rebuke as she.

Verses 41, 42. Jesus does not teach that it is wrong to perform the duties of the home, but he does frown upon one's allowing them to overwhelm him with undue care. *Needful* is from a strong word meaning very necessary. The food that sustains the body will cease to exist at the same time that the fleshly body is destroyed (1 Corinthians 6: 12, 13), but the spiritual nourishment will *not be taken away*.

### LUKE 11

Verse 1. *Teach us to pray*. Some people would disapprove the idea of exercises for the training in prayer, yet Jesus endorsed the request of this disciple by doing the very thing he asked for. If disciples of Christ would put in some time studying and preparing themselves for prayer, there might be fewer unscriptural efforts performed.

Verses 2-4. For comments on this prayer see those at Matthew 6: 9-13.

Verses 5-7. This parable compares an earthly *friend* with the disciple who wanted to know how to pray. The outcome of a proper prayer is the lesson of the illustration.

Verse 8. No illustration is intended to apply at all angles. God is not to be regarded as this householder is described, for that is not the point of the parable. The comparison is in the word *importunity* which means persistence. We are taught to have a faith that will not shrink because we do not receive what we think we need, or do not receive it as soon as desired.

Verses 9-13. This paragraph is explained in detail at Matthew 7: 7-11, which is a part of the "sermon on the mount" delivered to the disciples.

Verse 14. *It was dumb* means the devil had caused the person to be dumb, for after it was cast out the *dumb spake*. Being possessed with a devil did not affect all people alike, the reason for which is not given in the scripture.

Verse 15. See the comments at Matthew 12: 24.

Verse 16. These people were clamoring for some miracle that they imagined would be a test of the power of Jesus. Their motive was a desire to tempt the Lord.

Verses 17, 18. This is explained at Matthew 12: 25, 26.

Verse 19. See the explanation at Matthew 12: 27.

Verse 20. Explained at Matthew 12: 28.

Verses 21, 22. See the comments on Matthew 12: 29.

Verse 23. There is no "neutral" ground in matters of right and wrong. Regardless of how inactive a man may be, if he is not active for Christ he is his enemy.

Verses 24-26. This unusual passage is explained at Matthew 12: 43, 44.

Verse 27. This woman meant that the mother of Jesus was to be considered in a special sense. The Romanists make a great ado about the Virgin just as this woman did, except she did not even suggest that any worship should be offered to her.

Verse 28. Jesus did not go even to the extent of endorsing what the woman said, but stated what he would *rather* be done, which was to keep the word of God.

Verse 29. Because it was an evil generation, Jesus refused to perform any miracle at the time. However, he was willing to stake his reputation as a true prophet on an event yet to come.

Verse 30. Thayer defines the original for *sign*, "A sign, prodigy, portent," and he explains his definition to mean "an unusual occurrence, transcending [going beyond] the common course of nature." Jonah lived three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, which was certainly something unusual. And Jesus predicted that he would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12: 40) and live again.

Verse 31. See the comments on Matthew 12: 42.

Verse 32. The point of the verse is one about responsibility based on opportunity. See the comments on Matthew 12: 41.

Verse 33. The common judgment shown by a man after lighting a candle, is used to compare that which disciples should show about their influence.

Verse 34. The natural eye is used for the same purpose as the candle in



the preceding verse. A man has but one means of seeing and that is by his natural eye. If it is *single* (not defective) the owner will be able to see. Likewise, a man has only one life that he can live, and he should so conduct it that it will shed spiritual light upon the world about him.

Verse 35. This verse denotes that by an improper life, a man's influence will be turned into one that is for evil or spiritual darkness. (See Romans 14: 16.)

Verse 36. This verse has a thought similar to verse 23. A man is counted either for or against Christ. His influence is either one of darkness or of light.

Verse 37. Jesus accepted the invitation to dine with the Pharisee, which was not considered strange since they both were Jews. *Went in and sat down to meat*, indicates that he did this without any previous ceremony.

Verses 38, 39. The Pharisee was surprised that Jesus did not wash before coming to the table. This does not refer to ordinary cleanliness, but to a ritual the Jews had that was a mere formality. Jesus knew the mind of the Pharisee and accused him and his class of hypocrisy in the exercise of their formalities.

Verse 40. It is true that God made the outward man and wants him to be kept clean. But he also made the inner man and requires that he be kept clean, which means that he should not be defiled with pride of tradition and with acts of hypocrisy.

Verse 41. If we are helpful toward others with our good things of life, we will be edifying the inner man and will need have no fears of harm from imaginary defilement.

Verse 42. See the comments at Matthew 23: 23 for explanation of this verse.

Verse 43. These *uppermost seats* were the front pews that faced the audience. The *markets* were public gathering places, and these Pharisees craved special attention there.

Verse 44. *Appear not* means that the use being made of them is not apparent. Men walking *over* or about them do not realize that corruption is contained within. Jesus used the fact to compare the hypocrite trying to hide his wickedness.

Verse 45. *Thus saying* refers to the general denunciation Jesus has been uttering against leaders among the

Jews. The lawyer may have thought he would bring an apology from Jesus by complaining in this way, relying, perhaps, on the dignity of his profession.

Verse 46. *With one of your fingers* is a figure of speech, for a burden that could be moved with one finger would not be very heavy. It means they were not willing to exert themselves in the least toward practicing the commandments of the law.

Verse 47. The Jews were influenced much by the traditional respect for their forefathers. The devotion to their sepulchres indicated a sentimental feeling for them, and this notwithstanding their guilt of having murdered the prophets.

Verse 48. Jesus verifies the remarks on the preceding verse.

Verses 49-51. This is explained at Matthew 23: 34-36.

Verse 52. *Key* is from KLEIS, and Thayer explains it to mean, "the ability and opportunity to obtain knowledge." Robinson gives virtually the same comment. *Entered not in*, etc. They were not willing to accept the truth nor let others have it.

Verse 53. *Urge him* means to irritate him in the hope of provoking him to say many things in reply to them.

Verse 54. Their motive was to lead Jesus into saying something that would be subject to criticism. Had he done this, they would have gone to the authorities with it.

## LUKE 12

Verse 1. *Trode one upon another* indicates the extent of influence that Jesus was having through his teaching. On another occasion (Matthew 16: 6-12) Jesus warned his disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees, and afterward they had to have it explained. In this instance he specifies that he means the *hypocrisy* of the Pharisees. Thayer defines the original for *leaven* by the single word "*leaven*." He then explains his application as follows: "It is applied to that which, though small in quantity, yet by its influence thoroughly pervades a thing; either in a good sense, . . . or in a bad sense."

Verse 2. The persecutors perform their evil work in an underhanded and cowardly manner. But their deeds will finally be exposed and all false accusations be disproved.

Verse 3. See the comments on Matthew 10: 27 for this verse.

Verse 4. Men can cause physical death but can do nothing against the soul of the man who serves God with a righteous life.

Verse 5. God is the one who can cast the entire being into *hell*, hence our conduct should be such that He will not regard us as deserving that awful doom. The full definition of the word *hell* is quoted at Matthew 5: 30.

Verse 6. The thought is that God is mindful of everything He has created, even to the comparatively unimportant case of the sparrow. He certainly will not overlook the being made in His image.

Verse 7. The thought in the preceding verse is continued in this. Each hair (a small portion of man's being) is counted by the Creator, which denotes that the whole person is of more value than the sparrows.

Verses 8, 9. See the comments on chapter 9: 26.

Verse 10. This refers to what is commonly referred to as the "unpardonable" sin. For a full discussion of this subject see the comments at Matthew 12: 24-32.

Verse 11. This does not mean they were to be unconcerned about the matter, but they were not to be planning what they were going to say.

Verse 12. The reason for the preceding verse is shown here. The Holy Ghost was to dictate the speeches as the case demanded, hence it would be *in the same hour*.

Verse 13. The subject of personal rights is an important one, but not one that should be regarded as worthy of absorbing the main interests of a man's life; certainly not worthy of claiming the attention of the busy Son of man, who was here in the interests of the kingdom of heaven and the salvation of the souls of men.

Verse 14. Jesus rebuked the man by this question which amounted to the refusal to "take the case" as a wise judge might say if asked to interfere in an outside affair.

Verse 15. A man with only a proper interest in his temporal possessions would not have thought of disrupting the work of Jesus by the subject. Therefore the Lord accused him of covetousness, and told him that the things a man possesses do not constitute the main part of his life.

Verse 16. Jesus frequently emphasized his lessons by telling a story that was adapted to the case. The man in the present instance had an unusually large crop.

Verse 17. The yield was so great that his graneries were not sufficient.

Verse 18. It was necessary to build larger facilities for the crops.

Verse 19. Up to this point there was nothing wrong in what the farmer did and said, for it is not only right but necessary to care for the product of the soil that it may not be wasted. But his mistake was in the use he was proposing to make of his crops. He thought to relax and live an indolent and luxurious manner of life, as if that were the main purpose of the good things of nature.

Verse 20. *Soul* is from *PSUCHE*, and Thayer's first definition is, "Breath, i. e., the breath of life; the vital force," and he adds by way of explanation, "which animates the body and shows itself in breathing." The verse does not necessarily mean that God performed a special act to take the man's life from him because of his selfishness. But the uncertainty of this life is a result of the edict of God after the sin of the first man. It was in that sense that God took the rich man's life from him that night.

Verse 21. *So is he* verifies my comments on the preceding verse, and shows that no special miracle was done to punish the farmer. The lesson of Jesus applies to all men who hoard their riches, or who trust in them for selfish enjoyment (1 Timothy 6: 17-19.)

Verses 22, 23. See the comments on Matthew 6: 25.

Verse 24. This is explained at Matthew 6: 26.

Verses 25, 26. Undue anxiety will not add the slightest amount to one's size, hence it is useless to be concerned to the extent of unreasonable worry about life.

Verse 27. See the comments on this thought at Matthew 6: 29.

Verse 28. God's care for comparatively unimportant things such as the flowers, and hence His greater care for man, is the lesson of the verse. (See Matthew 6: 30.)

Verse 29. *Seek ye not* means not to be overanxious about it.

Verse 30. The *nations of the world* have only the temporal things in mind, but the disciples of Christ should make such interests secondary.

Verse 31. This is commented upon at Matthew 6: 33.

Verse 32. *Little* is from MIKROS, which Thayer defines, "small, little," and at our verse he explains it to mean, "of quantity, i. e., number or amount." Jesus was speaking especially to his apostles who were only twelve in number, hence would constitute the *little flock*. The promise that the Father would give them the kingdom proves that it was not yet in their possession at that time, and hence was still in the future although near ("at hand").

Verses 33, 34. See the comments at Matthew 6: 19-21.

Verse 35. *Loins be girded* is an allusion to the practice of soldiers who put a belt around their body as a brace for their strength. (See Ephesians 6: 14.) *Lights burning* is a figurative admonition to be prepared. (See Matthew 25: 1-13.)

Verse 36. In the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25) the waiting was for the lord to come to the wedding. In this one the waiting is for him to return from it. The lesson is the same in both, which is the necessity of being prepared.

Verse 37. If a servant is watching he will not be caught with surprise, but will be ready to open the door to let him in. The happy bridegroom will regale his faithful servants by serving them with the wedding feast.

Verse 38. The second and third watches were at nine and twelve o'clock. If the servants do not go to sleep, they will be ready for their lord when he gets back home.

Verse 39. This verse is given for the same purpose as the preceding one; the necessity of watching. Incidentally, however, another lesson is taught here. Jesus speaks favorably of this householder who would resist having his house attacked. But the only way he could do so would be to oppose force with force, which shows it is right to use force if necessary in defending one's home and family.

Verse 40. This verse is the lesson of the preceding ones.

Verse 41. Much of the teaching of Jesus was to the apostles only, hence Peter asked for the application of the parable.

Verse 42. Instead of a direct answer, Jesus replied in a manner that made it apply to all who profess to be his servants. The activities described per-

tain to some customs in connection with weddings, but the point is in reference to the favors that Jesus will bestow on his faithful servants when he comes back to the earth.

Verses 43, 44. This is still figurative as in the preceding verse.

Verses 45, 46. This paragraph is explained at Matthew 24: 48-51.

Verses 47, 48. It would be impractical not to consider these two verses in one paragraph. A popular notion is that it teaches different degrees of punishment after the judgment. By the process of elimination we know it cannot mean that. The ones on the left of the judge (Matthew 25: 45) were guilty of only neglecting their service to needy disciples, yet they are to be cast into the same fire that is prepared for the devil and his angels. So if the mildest and strongest classes of evil will get the same punishment, it is foolish to talk about "degrees" for any of the intervening classes. The Bible speaks of but one Gehenna; one lake of fire; one hell; into which the devil and his angels and all other unsaved persons will be cast after the judgment. Being beaten with many or few stripes has nothing to do with the punishment after the judgment, but refers to the judgment itself. Jesus makes his own application of the figurative stripes and begins it with the word *for*. Then he says *unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required*. Nothing said about what will be given to the man after the judgment, but it is what was already given to him before the judgment. Upon the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the servant in making the required use of these goods (talents) will depend the decision as to which of the TWO sides (not several) he will be assigned at the judgment. After that is done, only one sentence will be pronounced upon all in whatever group a man is placed.

Verse 49. *Fire* is from PUB. Thayer defines it in this place by, "dissension," and he explains the definition to be because "fire disorganizes and sunders things joined together and compact." Robinson says the word symbolizes "strife and disunion." These definitions and comments agree with the statements of Jesus in verses soon to follow. He does not mean that he wished people to be divided among themselves, but he did come to bring the teaching he knew would cause the dissension. *Already kindled*. Even as Jesus was speaking, there were con-

flicts among the people over his doctrine.

Verse 50. It might be asked why Jesus would persist in his teaching when he knew it would bring opposition: this verse answers that question. Baptism is used figuratively and refers to the sufferings he was destined to experience in order to fulfill the scripture (Matthew 26: 54). That is why he says *how am I straitened* (made completely to suffer), (according to the predictions), *until it* (the baptism of suffering) *be accomplished*.

Verse 51. Jesus continues the same line of thought but is more literal or direct in his language. Not that his motive was to cause division just for the sake of division, but he did mean to put his teaching out among people although it was bound to bring division.

Verse 52. House means household and it was destined to be divided.

Verse 53. The division was not to come between comparative strangers only, but the closest of relatives would be arrayed against each other. That would be because a father would accept the truth while his son would not, and so on through other relatives.

Verses 54, 55. Jesus referred the Jews to their own study of the conditions in nature, in which they professed to know how to figure out the future by present signs.

Verse 56. The signs of the times were as clearly portrayed in the Scriptures as were the weather signs, yet they pretended there was nothing on record to indicate the work and purposes of Jesus.

Verse 57. *Right* is from ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ and Thayer's definition at this place is, "rendering to each his due; passing just judgment on others." Robinson gives virtually the same definition. The verse reflects on the three preceding this one. If they would treat the teaching of the Scripture with the same reasoning and fairness they did the weather signs, they would be able *of themselves* to decide their duty without any miraculous signs from Jesus.

Verses 58, 59. See the comments at Matthew 5: 25, 26.

### LUKE 13

Verse 1. There was more or less friction between the Jews and the Romans, although the former were suffered to carry on their religious practices. Something had occurred that

angered Pilate, and he enforced his penalties upon them even while they were engaged in their sacrificial devotions. The reporters came to Jesus with the news, thinking the incident was a sort of "judgment" sent upon them by the Lord.

Verse 2. Jesus informed them that the Galilaeans were not any worse than other sinners in God's sight, even though this misfortune had come to them.

Verse 3. *Likewise* does not mean they were to meet the same fate, but that they would perish just as surely if they did not repent of their sins.

Verse 4. Jesus then added another event which they doubtless knew about, though we have no other account of it. He then asked them the same question as in verse 2.

Verse 5. He gave the same answer as he did to the question about the Galilaeans. All sinners look alike to God, when it comes to dealing with them concerning their future after their stay on earth is ended. (See comments at chapter 12: 47, 48.)

Verse 6. This *certain man* in the parable represents God, and the fig tree and vineyard is the Jewish nation (Isaiah 5: 1-6).

Verse 7. The *dresser of the vineyard* is Christ to whom God announced his determination of destroying the nation, meaning he would disown it.

Verse 8. The Jews were given many opportunities to render acceptable service to God. They were given the assistance of prophets and other teachers of truth.

Verse 9. When they proved unworthy of the favor of God, they were given over to the outside forces who laid them even with the ground. This has reference to the overthrow of the nation by the Romans.

Verse 10. The use of synagogues is explained at Matthew 4: 23.

Verse 11. *Spirit of infirmity* means the woman was bent over from weakness to such an extent that she could not straighten herself up.

Verse 12. *Her to him* is not in the original text. The passage means Jesus called to her and told her that she was released from her infirmity.

Verse 13. The woman was cured *immediately* as all miraculous cures were done. People who demand "plenty of time" for their so-called divine performances are frauds.

Verse 14. The Jews pretended to be offended at the desecration of the sabbath. But note that the ruler did not have the fairness to attack Jesus direct, although he was the one who had done the work, but condemned *the people*. This was cowardly, for there was no evidence that they had *come to be healed*.

Verse 15. Jesus had respect for the sabbath and for all other items in the law. But he knew that it was not reverence for the day that prompted the ruler to criticize him, but a desire to have a pretext for condemning him. Because of this Jesus called him a hypocrite. He further exposed the insincerity of the critic, by reminding him of his own practice of attending the care of his beast even on the sabbath.

Verse 16. *Satan hath bound*. The devil has supernatural power when God suffers him to exert it. The reader should see the comments on this subject at Exodus 8: 16-19, in volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary. Yet there is no evidence that the present case of infirmity was a direct act of Satan. Diseases are in the world because of the sin of Adam, and it was the devil who induced him and his wife to commit it and thus bring disease and death into the world.

Verse 17. The argument of Jesus was unanswerable, which caused his critics to be ashamed. The people were truly glad to see the afflicted woman relieved.

Verse 18. To be *like* or *resemble* a thing does not mean identical in every particular. That is why the precaution was offered at Matthew 13: 3.

Verse 19. See the comments on Matthew 13: 32 for the present verse.

Verses 20, 21. *Leaven* has been misunderstood by many readers of the Bible. The same parable is discussed at Matthew 13: 33.

Verse 22. *City* and *village* are often used interchangeably in the New Testament. When named together as in this place, the former is somewhat the larger.

Verse 23. We are not told just why this question was asked Jesus by the man in the audience. It is reasonable to conclude it was because of the strict teaching he had been doing.

Verse 24. *To enter in* all comes from one Greek word, and the meaning is "to be among or of the number." That is, to be among the saved ones, since

that is the question asked of Jesus. *Strive* is from AGONIZOMAI which Thayer defines, "To enter a contest; contend in the gymnastic games. To contend with adversaries, fight. To contend, struggle, with difficulties and dangers. To endeavor with strenuous zeal, strive." The word originated with the athletic performances in which opposing persons engaged against each other. It is used by Jesus with reference to the struggle for salvation, because Satan and his followers are arrayed against the man who wishes to serve the Lord. *To enter in* is the same as in the beginning of the verse, and means that many will seek to be among the saved but will not be able. There is no account of a case where sinners tried to obey the commands of the apostles or other evangelists of the Gospel, and found it impossible. Hence we must look further for the date when this disappointment will befall human beings.

Verse 25. This verse tells when the disappointment will come that was spoken of at the preceding verse. It will be when Jesus closes the door to salvation which will be at the judgment day. This is proved by the passage of Matthew 25: 31-46. *I know you not* is explained at Matthew 25: 12.

Verse 26. They thought Jesus meant he would be literally unacquainted with them, hence they made the argument about their personal association with him.

Verse 27. *I know you not* is used in the same sense as in verse 25.

Verses 28, 29. Abraham and the others named had been dead for centuries, and the kingdom on earth had not been set up when Jesus said those words, hence we know he meant the kingdom after the judgment. This paragraph is discussed at length at Matthew 8: 11, 12.

Verse 30. *First* and *last* are explained at Matthew 19: 30.

Verse 31. The Pharisees were enemies of Jesus and wanted to get him out of the community. They thought they could frighten him by a threat about Herod (Antipas).

Verse 32. Jesus disregarded the insincerity of the warning, because there was no doubt that Herod would be disposed to do the very thing the Pharisees suggested. He therefore proposed sending him a message to let him know that the good work being done would continue regardless of any supposed danger. *Fox* is used figuratively

and when so used is explained by Thayer to mean, "a sly and crafty man."

Verse 33. Jesus announced that he had a three-day journey to make soon in order to arrive at Jerusalem. And that was necessary because it was determined by the Lord that he should die by violence (Acts 2: 23), yet the Jews could not lawfully condemn a man until he had been brought before the Sanhedrin which was in that city. (See Josephus, Antiquities, Book 14, Chapter 9, Section 3.)

Verses 34, 35. This is a fundamental statement and prediction. It occurs almost verbatim in Matthew 23: 37-39, which is commented upon quite fully at that place.

### LUKE 14

Verse 1. The Pharisees were ever on the alert to discover something in the work of Jesus for which to condemn him. Their most convenient pretext usually came on the sabbath day. Since Jesus was always busy, it was not unusual to see him performing some act of kindness on that day.

Verse 2. Sure enough, there was a man in the group who was afflicted with *dropsy*. That word is from *HYDROPS*, meaning "water." It is related to the word from which we get our English word "hydrant."

Verse 3. *Jesus answering*. The text says nothing about whether the people said anything openly, but Jesus could read the thoughts of men, and he knew they were thinking of criticizing him. He anticipated them by speaking on the very subject of their wicked motives. But he did not put the question in the form they would have wished. He could have asked if it was lawful to do anything on the sabbath, but that form of question would have implied its own answer which would have been negative. So he put it on the humane basis of healing a man on the sabbath day.

Verse 4. The Pharisees were too wise to say that it would ever be wrong to heal an afflicted person, and they were too prejudiced to say yes to the question of Jesus. He then proceeded to heal the man and release him cured.

Verses 5, 6. Referring to their own practice, Jesus asked them another question which they *could not* answer. It means they could not harmonize their practices with the criticism they made against Jesus in their hypocritical hearts.

Verses 7, 8. *Chief rooms* means the same as *highest rooms*, the expression used in this verse. *More honorable* means from a social standpoint, not in the sense of character.

Verse 9. The host might wish to prefer the *more honorable* in assigning a seat. It would be humiliating to be directed to step down with the other guests looking on.

Verse 10. A guest would be running no risk of embassament to take a low place voluntarily, even should he be left there; instead, he would stand a chance of being promoted. *Worship* in this place means "honor" according to the note at Matthew 2: 2.

Verse 11. This verse states a principle that applies to human beings in general, whether in their relation to each other, or to that under the Lord and His treatment of human servants. (See Esther 7: 9, 10; Daniel 4: 37; James 4: 10.)

Verse 12. We recall that Jesus spoke the present group of parables while at the feast mentioned in verse 1. We know Jesus did not condemn showing hospitality to persons who were not actual cases for "charity," for he was at that very time enjoying a meal given for the sake of sociability and friendship. *Lest a recompense be made* denotes he should not restrict his feasts to those who would be able to repay him.

Verse 13. The classes named could not "return the call," hence if a man offered them a feast, it could be for no selfish motive as to temporal things.

Verse 14. It is right to do good to the unfortunate with a view of reward after the resurrection, for that would mean one is expecting his reward from the Lord.

Verse 15. Jesus had just spoken of the future reward for one giving a dinner to the poor. This fellow guest thought it was to be in the form of another meal in the kingdom of God, meaning a spiritual feast in heaven. With such an idea in view, he pronounced a blessing on whomsoever would have that privilege.

Verse 16. This group was evidently of the Jewish race since it was by invitation of a chief Pharisee (verse 1) that the meal was being served. Knowing the attitude the Jews as a nation were going to take toward the Gospel, Jesus saw the need for an important lesson in which a spiritual meal (the Gospel) would be served long before the one this guest had in



mind, and he spoke a parable in the form of a *great supper*.

Verse 17. *Them that were bidden* means the Jews to whom the invitation was first given. (See Matthew 10: 5, 6; Acts 13: 46; Romans 1: 16.)

Verse 18. In an illustration some items need to be told to make the story intelligible, even though they are not literally applicable. *Make excuse* is rendered "excuse themselves" in the Englishman's Greek New Testament. Much speculation has been done over these "excuses," but we should see in them only a part of the parable that was intended to portray the unfavorable attitude of the Jews to the Gospel.

Verse 19. If I cared to moralize on this subject, I would say this man was more interested in his temporal products than in the good things offered by the "certain man."

Verse 20. Marriage is a divine institution, but a man should not let love for his wife be greater than the things offered him by the Lord.

Verse 21. The servant who was sent to call the invited guests was one of the preachers of Christ. He reported the cold reception he had been given by the ones originally invited. It made the master of the house angry, and he decided to extend the invitation to others who had not been previously favored. They would be Jews, but of the lower class, such as the "publicans and harlots" (Matthew 21: 31).

Verse 22. There is room enough in the plan of salvation for the whole world, hence the servant told the master that *yet there is room*.

Verse 23. *Highways and hedges* means the regions of the Gentiles. *Compel* means to use the force of truthful persuasion in bringing them into the house of the Master, which means the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Verse 24. This is explained at verse 17.

Verse 25. The crowds that walked after Jesus did not all have the same motives (John 6: 26), and that called forth the teaching of several verses following.

Verse 26. *Hate* is from *MISEO* which Thayer defines at this place, "to love less, to postpone in love or esteem, to slight." It is clear, therefore, that Jesus does not contradict other passages that require us to love our parents. He means for us to love the Lord above all earthly beings.

Verse 27. This is explained at Matthew 10: 38; 16: 24.

Verse 28. The lesson of the parable, beginning with this verse, is that following Christ should not be a matter of carelessness or light concern. Whoever thinks of being a disciple of Jesus should realize it will cost him many sacrifices.

Verses 29, 30. In temporal matters a man usually manifests the good judgment expressed in the preceding verse. That is not only because it is good business, but to avoid the belittling remarks that might be made by the observers. They would criticize a man for starting something before he learned whether he would be able to finish it.

Verse 31. This parable teaches the same lesson as the preceding one. A wise commander would not declare war against another until he had studied the comparative strength of the two armies and other military resources.

Verse 32. Even after hostilities have started, if he realizes that the outcome may be doubtful, he will not rashly proceed without first trying to make a settlement with the opposing forces.

Verse 33. We need not speculate on all the details of the story. Jesus gives us his own interpretation of the parable by repeating what he had previously taught, namely, that one who proposes to follow Him must sacrifice everything that would hinder.

Verses 34, 35. This is commented upon at Matthew 5: 13.

## LUKE 15

Verse 1. *Publicans and sinners*. See the notes on Matthew 9: 10; 21: 28.

Verse 2. *Pharisees and scribes*, as well as the publicans and sinners, were all Jews but in different classifications according to the social castes devised by the self-righteous Jewish leaders. On the significance of *eating* with others, see the quotation from the works of reference at Matthew 9: 11.

Verse 3. *This parable* and the others in this chapter were occasioned by the complaint of the Pharisees and scribes in verse 2. The reader should bear in mind as he studies these three parables, that the lesson pertains to the two classes of Jews designated above, and not to the Jews and Gentiles. All have the same lesson, that of the Father's love for his wayward or otherwise unfortunate creatures. It is the

same subject as that shown by the physician and the sick in Matthew 9: 12. However, since the stories needed to be told to make the point of application clear, I shall comment upon the verses in their order.

Verse 4. The 99 sheep, like the Pharisees and scribes (according to their pretensions), were not needing any special attention because they were within the care of the shepherd. The one that was lost (as the Pharisees considered the publicans and sinners), was the one that needed and received the attention of the shepherd.

Verse 5. *Layeth it on his shoulders* indicates a tender regard for the wandering sheep, also a willingness to help it get back to the flock.

Verse 6. It is natural for one to wish others to share with him in the event of good fortune. Paul tells Christians to "rejoice with them that do rejoice" (Romans 12: 15).

Verse 7. *Joy* does not mean love or esteem. God and the angels will always love the righteous with a divine affection. Joy denotes a spirit of active gratitude for some satisfactory event or truth, such as the recovery of an article of value that was lost.

Verses 8-10. Substitute a lost sheep for the piece of silver, and this parable is identical in thought with the preceding one.

Verse 11. The remainder of this chapter, beginning with this verse, was spoken for the same purpose as the two preceding parables, and none of the details were intended to teach any special lesson besides. Yet it will be necessary to consider the parts of the story, especially since so much speculative use has been made of it. It is commonly called "the parable of the prodigal son," but it is not so named in the text. The word "prodigal" means extravagant or wasteful, and that characteristic is given to this younger son in verse 13.

Verse 12. The younger son did not want to wait until the usual time for settling up of the estate of his father, for he did not intend to remain at home that long.

Verse 13. True to the indicated plans, the son left home with all of his part of the estate. *Riotous* is from *ASOTOS* and this is the only place in the New Testament where the word occurs. Thayer defines it, "dissolutely, profligately," which has the same meaning as "wastefully."

Verse 14. The famine came just after he had spent all his money.

Verse 15. Employment became scarce as it commonly does in hard times. This young man accepted a very humble job, that of a swineherd.

Verse 16. His wages evidently proved insufficient for he became hungry in spite of his job. *Husks* is described by both Thayer and Smith's Bible Dictionary as the podded fruit of a locust tree. They also say this product was used for fattening swine, and for food among the poor people. This "prodigal son" was so hungry he would gladly have supplemented his own scanty diet with this article, but due to the famine it was denied him because the owner reserved it for his swine.

Verse 17. *Came to himself* is rendered "came to his senses" in Moffatt's translation. The meaning is that he was made to realize his true condition. He recalled that even the servants at home had plenty of the good things of life.

Verse 18. He knew he could not justly request more of his father's estate for he had already received his full share. He would have to return and throw himself upon the mercy of his father. *Sinned against heaven*. When anyone does wrong, the sin is an offense against the Lord regardless of who may be affected among men.

Verse 19. This is an expression of one who realizes his unworthiness of favors.

Verse 20. The father observed his son at a great distance before he arrived at the home and ran to meet him. This detail truly represents God's attitude toward sinners. He is always casting a loving glance toward them. *Fell on his neck* is an expression that denotes affectionate feelings for another, instead of the formal kiss upon the mouth merely as a salutation that was the custom in old times.

Verse 21. This act of affection encouraged the repentant son to go on with the confession he had decided upon when he *came to himself*.

Verse 22. The father did not assign him to the low position he so humbly suggested. Penitence brings forth forgiveness instead of strict justice from the offended parent. The robe and other articles to be worn would not satisfy the hunger of the famished son, but it indicated the fullness of the father's forgiveness. The hunger will be cared for in another way.

Verse 23. It was usual for families to keep a fattened animal in readiness for any occasion of a feast that might arise, and the arrival of the "lost" son furnished one.

Verse 24. These words may have been used figuratively only, and yet this son had been dead to his father's home, since death means "separation."

Verse 25. The *elder son* represents the Pharisees and scribes in verse 2, and their envious attitude toward the younger son who represents the publicans and sinners of the same verse. As the elder son was coming in from his work he heard the *music and dancing*. Some have tried to see a significance in the mention of dancing. It has no moral application in the least since that is not the subject of the parable. It is put into the story only because it indicates the condition of joy being felt in the household.

Verse 26. When the elder son went to work, the return of the "prodigal" had not occurred, hence he did not understand the cause of the merriment.

Verses 27, 28. This *elder son* (the Pharisees and scribes) began to pout and refused to go into the house. That was not because he objected to the things being done as though they were wrong, but because of his jealousy against his brother. Ordinary human nature would have prompted the father to be "independent" and just ignore his son's action. But since this father represents the Father of mercies, the parable shows him manifesting his love for the son by making a move toward pacifying him.

Verses 29, 30. The elder son had no just ground of complaint. His brother had done wrong, but it was against his father and God only. This son was not being deprived of anything that was due him, so his attitude could be explained only on the basis of jealousy. He made two comparisons in his protest; they were between the conduct of himself and that of his brother, and between what his father had done for each son. He had always been at home and faithful, while his brother had been away living a life like that of a spendthrift. Also, his father had never as much as given him a kid (a rather inferior animal), but had given this wasteful son the choice of food animals.

Verse 31. The favors being shown the returned son did not deprive the elder one of a single possession, hence

his objections were the result of his jealousy only.

Verse 32. It was meet or fitting for the father and his household to be glad. But it was not on the ground of the worthiness of the younger son for he had no just claim to the favors being accorded him. The reason assigned by the father was that a son that was lost had been found. Likewise, the Father in heaven is concerned about the spiritual safety of the lowest of human beings and is always ready to receive them as soon as they repent.

## LUKE 16

Verse 1. The first seven verses of this chapter constitute another parable. Like others, it has a specific point in view, which is to show the importance of using present opportunities to prepare for the future. Keeping this in mind, let us consider the details of the story. The *rich man* in the parable represents God, and the *steward* means human beings to whom God has entrusted the use of talents and good things of life.

Verse 2. *Give an account* stands for the warning that all mankind will have to give an account of personal conduct to God (Romans 14: 12).

Verse 3. The anxiety of the steward about how he could meet the accounting, represents the concern that men should feel over the coming judgment before God and Christ.

Verse 4. The pronoun *they* in the application of the parable, refers to God and Christ as we shall see farther down in the chapter.

Verse 5. The steward still had charge of his lord's goods and the accounting of them, and he decided to manage the bookkeeping in a way to be an advantage to himself.

Verse 6. Upon payment of half the debt, this man was given full credit as if he had paid off his entire indebtedness.

Verse 7. This man's bill was marked "paid in full" upon his producing 80 per cent of the real account. The way the steward handled these accounts was wrong, but that was not the subject that Jesus had in mind when he spoke this parable as we shall see at the next verse.

Verse 8. The Lord (Jesus) did not commend the steward for his unjustness, but because he had *done wisely*. And that wisdom was shown by using his present opportunities to prepare

against future needs. By favoring these debtors in this way, the steward won their good will; and when he was finally thrown out of a job and home, they would gratefully give him a place in their houses. *Children of this world are wiser* means the people of the world generally manifest more good judgment than professed Christians in many cases.

Verse 9. In this verse Jesus makes his application of the parable. The *friends* are God and Christ, and *mammon of unrighteousness* means the talents and opportunities bestowed upon men in this life. The exhortation is for us to make such use of these things that we will gain the favor of these friends by being friends to them ourselves. (See John 15: 14.) Then when we *fail*, which will be when the earth and all things therein pass away, we will be invited to enter into the mansions that are in the Father's house (John 14: 1-3).

Verse 10. We will not be judged by the *amount* of good we can do, but by whether we are faithful in doing what is within our power and opportunity.

Verse 11. *Unrighteous mammon* means the temporal things of this life. If we have misused these things, we will not be regarded as worthy of those in the next life.

Verse 12. If a man is careless in handling the goods of another, he would be still more unappreciative of his own, and would feel free to do as he pleased with them.

Verse 13. See the comments on Matthew 6: 24.

Verse 14. The Pharisees had not been named in the preceding parable, yet they applied it to themselves and hence they *derided* (sneered) him. They could not make any just reply to the teaching of Christ without exposing their own covetous heart, therefore they only made fun of him.

Verse 15. To *justify* means to declare or make it appear that one is just. The Pharisees did this and deceived the public into thinking they were benevolent men by their apparent deeds of kindness. But these things that men admired (because they did not know the motive back of them), God regarded as abominable, knowing their hearts.

Verse 16. *Law and prophets until John*. After the last prophet (Malachi) laid down his pen, the world heard no more revelation from God until John broke the silence by his preaching in

the wilderness. Since then the kingdom of heaven was *preached*, but that does not say it was set up by him. *Every man presseth into it*. The kingdom of God existed in preparation before it was in existence in fact. (See Matthew 11: 12.) *Presseth into it* means those who accepted the preaching of John did so under the pressure of conscience, and in spite of opposition.

Verse 17. The reference to heaven and earth is for comparison, to indicate the permanence of the law until it had accomplished its purpose under God.

Verse 18. This is discussed in detail at Matthew 19: 9.

Verse 19. I do not deny this story being a parable on the ground that it says a *certain* rich man. The word *certain* is used elsewhere where we know a parable is being spoken (chapter 20: 9). A parable requires a comparison while there is none in this case, not even any words that necessarily have to be taken figuratively. Furthermore, there are so many facts of a circumstantial nature that it shows Jesus had some particular case in mind. It was a literal fact that rich men lived in such luxuries as are described of this one.

Verse 20. *Sores* is from a Greek word that is defined "ulcers" in the lexicon. Lazarus was afflicted so badly he had to be carried to be laid at the gate of the rich man. He was placed there as an object of charity, even as beggars today seek a prominent place on the streets where they can be seen by the public.

Verse 21. In addition to what he might receive from the crowds that would be passing in and out of the gate of such an estate, he might be given the *crumbs* or scraps taken up from the table of this rich man. *The dogs licked his sores*. That was no discomfort to the afflicted man, but the fact indicates his helpless condition. There was no one to treat and bind up the sores, but they were left to run openly, else the dogs would not have cared for it.

Verse 22. *Abraham's bosom*. In old times people reclined while eating, at tables only a few inches higher than the floor. The diners would lie on their sides and rest the head on one hand while serving themselves with the other. They lay at a 45-degree angle with the table, which placed the head of one person virtually in the

bosom of the one behind him, and in very intimate cases the two would be very near each other. (See John 13: 23.) Since the situation of Lazarus on earth pertained to food, it was fitting to represent him as lying in the bosom of Abraham, where he could partake with him of the good spiritual things in Paradise. Nothing is said of what disposition was made of the body of Lazarus, but the rich man was buried, which is to remind us that his body remained on the earth after his spirit was placed in Hades.

Verse 23. We have just read that the rich man was buried after his death. People are buried in the earth only, hence this man had something in his being besides his body that went elsewhere, and that could feel the sting of torments. For information about *hell*, see the note at Matthew 5: 30. *Abraham's bosom* is explained in the preceding verse, and *afar off* will be considered at verse 26.

Verse 24. *Father Abraham* was said because he was a descendant of that patriarch. The rich man's brothers had Moses and the prophets (verse 29), which were given to the Jews only, hence we know he was of that race. Objectors criticize this verse on the ground that the rich man's body was buried on the earth, therefore he had no *tongue to be tormented*. The objection shows the utter lack of considering the subject fairly. The only part of a human being that has any feeling is the inner man. While body and soul are united, the latter exercises itself through the former as a vehicle only, for the body itself has no feeling. If it did have, a dead man, or one under an anesthetic would flinch from pain caused by contact with any disagreeable object. Therefore, when the inner man is freed from the incumbrance of the flesh, it will still maintain its ability to experience feelings.

Verse 25. Abraham addressed the rich man as *son* on the same basis as the latter called Abraham his father, as was explained at the preceding verse. Abraham told the rich man to *remember* some things that he had experienced while living on the earth. This indicates that persons in Hades or the intermediate state, will be able to recall their experiences which they had on the earth. Whether the same will apply when they enter the eternal state after the judgment, is not revealed in the Scriptures.

Verse 26. *Gulf* is from CHASMA, which Thayer defines, "A gaping opening, a chasm, gulf." He then explains the definition to mean, "Equivalent to a great interval." Since this gulf is impassable, it separates the objects on each side virtually as much as if they were a great distance apart. This explains the phrase *afar off* in verse 23. Another truth that is taught here, is that no change can be made in the spiritual classification of human beings after death; this agrees with Revelation 22: 11.

Verses 27, 28. There is nothing said about what the five brothers were to do as to their manner of life. Lazarus was to be asked to testify, which means to bear witness as to the kind of place in which their dead brother was being tormented, to the end they might so live that they would avoid it. The rich man took for granted his brothers would know what changes they would have to make in their lives; also, that if they heard from one who had seen the fate of their brother, they would take warning and make the necessary reformation.

Verse 29. The brothers had the law of Moses which would lead them in the right way of life, if they would *hear* (heed) its teaching.

Verse 30. The object the rich man thought of accomplishing was the repentance of his brethren. The evidence shows that here was a family of the prosperous ranks of society, abusing their wealth and being unconcerned about the less fortunate ones.

Verse 31. *Neither will they be persuaded*. Again there is nothing said about being convinced of facts already taught in the Scriptures, but that the brothers might be induced to do what they knew was their duty. *Rose from the dead*. The rich man understood that in going back from Hades to the earth, one would need to be raised from the dead, and Abraham endorsed that idea by repeating it without any correction. This all proves that no communication ever takes place between men on earth and the spirits in the unseen world, hence the theory of spiritualism is a fraud. Even those who have been permitted to rise from the dead never said anything about information gained while dead. God expects men to be convinced by the testimony furnished them by living persons; that was verified by the miracles performed before their eyes.

## LUKE 17

Verse 1. *Impossible* is from ANENDEKTOS which occurs in no other place in the Greek New Testament. However, the same thought is expressed in Matthew 18: 7. (See the comments at that place.) There is nothing that God cannot do as far as power or strength is concerned. But He would need to be continuously performing miracles if all *offenses* (causes of stumbling) could be avoided, and that would prevent man from developing the kind of characters fit for the kingdom of heaven. Because of this, the Greek word should be rendered "inadmissible," which is one word in Thayer's definition.

Verse 2. The foregoing paragraph does not excuse any particular man who causes another to stumble. Being drowned will not exempt a guilty man from the punishment that will otherwise be due him after the judgment. The statement is used only as a contrast, to give an idea of the severity of that punishment. Little children, in the ordinary sense of that word, are not responsible and hence cannot stumble over wrong doing. Therefore the *little ones* are those described at Matthew 18: 5, 10.

Verse 3. This verse corresponds in thought with Matthew 18: 15.

Verse 4. This verse means the same as Matthew 18: 21, 22.

Verse 5. From the strictness of the law that Jesus just gave the apostles, they realized it would require a strong faith to comply with it, and hence made this request.

Verse 6. This verse is explained at Matthew 17: 20.

Verse 7. The question Jesus asked was an introduction to an important lesson.

Verse 8. The question in the preceding verse implied a negative answer; this verse states the positive answer.

Verse 9. The servant would not even expect to be thanked for what he had done, knowing it was in line with his regular duty. *Trow* is an obsolete word for "think."

Verse 10. *Unprofitable servants* means they did nothing beyond their duty. To be profitable, one must contribute more to another than he receives from him. That could not be done by any human being in rendering service to an infinite God.

Verse 11. Galilee and Samaria were between where Jesus was and Jerusalem. The significance of Samaria will be brought out at verse 16.

Verse 12. *Which stood afar off* is explained at Matthew 8: 2.

Verse 13. Since they were standing off at the proper distance, the lepers had to raise their voices in order (as they thought) for Jesus to recognize their cry for mercy.

Verse 14. *Show yourselves to the priests*. This was in accordance with a law of Moses, and it is commented upon at Matthew 8: 4.

Verse 15. One of the lepers, all of whom were healed, showed his gratitude by returning to Jesus and attributing to the Lord the credit for his recovery.

Verse 16. In eastern countries, to fall at the feet of another was an expression of humility and respect. *He was a Samaritan* is a significant phrase. The Jews had a dislike for the Samaritans, and thought they were about incapable of performing anything of importance. The mere mention of this man's nationality, in connection with his exceptional conduct of gratitude, was intended as a rebuke for the Jews.

Verses 17, 18. Jesus then called this lone thankful one of the group a *stranger* because he was from an "outside" nation, that being the meaning of the word stranger.

Verse 19. *Made thee whole* included his spiritual salvation. The ten were all healed, but this blessing was not pronounced upon the nine.

Verse 20. The Pharisees thought Jesus was going to set up a kingdom like those of the world, and they were curious to see the signs of its approach. *Observation* is rendered "outward show" in the margin, which is correct.

Verse 21. It not being a kingdom with literal boundaries and material symbols, it would not be possible for any man to point to such evidences. *Is within you*. This phrase has been perverted by those who maintain that the kingdom was set up in the lifetime of Christ, because the present tense (*is*) was used by Jesus. The kingdom as a government in fact was not built then, but one phase of the word did exist as Jesus was speaking. (See the long note at Matthew 3: 2.) The heart of man is the territory of the king from heaven, and that territory was and still is *within* or on the



inside of human beings. Just when that territory was fully taken over by the king is another question. That fact took place on the day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2.

Verse 22. From this verse through the end of the chapter the subject matter corresponds with Matthew 24, except it is much more brief. It will be well for the reader to examine that chapter with the comments, before going further in the present place. Like the chapter in Matthew, this one considers the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ as two separate events, and he warns his disciples not to get the two mixed. During the siege of Jerusalem the distresses were to be so great that the disciples would long for the days when Jesus was with them. That is what is meant by *one of the days of the Son of man* which they would remember and long for.

Verse 23. Some would take advantage of the disturbances to declare it to be the approach of Christ in his second coming.

Verse 24. The comparison between lightning and the second coming of Christ is commented upon quite fully at Matthew 24: 27.

Verse 25. The preceding verse predicts the second coming of Christ, an event many centuries in the future when Jesus was here. Like it is in Matthew's account, Jesus alternates between the two periods. In the present verse he drops back from the second coming to predict another important fact to occur *first* (or before the second coming), which was his own personal sufferings. That experience was to end in his crucifixion and death, all of which would be a factor in the distress referred to above. (See Matthew 27: 25, with the comments.)

Verses 26, 27. These verses are identical in meaning with Matthew 24: 37, 38.

Verse 28. The remarks about what the people were doing in the days of Lot, receive the same comments that are cited from the preceding verses.

Verse 29. From this verse through 32, the Lord is speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem. He is making the point that, when the evidences of that event are apparent, the disciples should lose no time in "fleeing to the mountains" (Matthew 24: 16), because there would not be much more time for escape. As an argument on that point, he states that the raining of

fire on Sodom came *the same day* that Lot escaped from the city.

Verse 30. *Son of man is revealed* means when Jesus will be represented by the fulfillment of his predictions against the wicked city of Jerusalem.

Verse 31. *In that day*, etc., means the day of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Verse 32. The preceding verse closes with the words *not return back*, and the present one recalls the fate of Lot's wife because she was too much interested in the city from which she had just escaped. Likewise, when the disciples see the destruction of Jerusalem is virtually at hand, they should flee without delay, lest a fate overtake them as serious as that of Lot's wife; not just like it, but as bad.

Verse 33. The Saviour here has in mind the spiritual preparation for the second great event, so that it may not find a man among those that will *be left*. The two kinds of *life* are explained at Matthew 10: 39.

Verses 34-36. For the meaning of this paragraph, especially on the words *taken* and *left*, see the comments at Matthew 24: 40, 41.

Verse 37. Jesus comes back to the destruction of Jerusalem. The significance of the *eagles* in connection with the event is explained at Matthew 24: 28.

## LUKE 18

Verse 1. The phrase *to this end* is in italics, but the thought is justified by the Greek text. *Always* and *not to faint* means to be always a praying disciple, and not hesitate or falter just because one's prayer is not answered as soon as expected. Since the inspired writer tells us this parable was spoken for this purpose, we should not make comparisons of any other parts of it; they were spoken only to connect the story.

Verse 2. The character of this judge was revealed to show why the prayers made to him had to be persistent.

Verse 3. The justness of this widow's complaint was not questioned.

Verses 4, 5. The judge was not prompted by any regard for any being, human or divine, but because he did not want to be troubled by the widow's persistence.

Verse 6. The strength of this verse will be better realized by emphasizing *unjust*. Even that kind of a judge was finally moved to action because the widow insisted.

Verse 7. The just Judge will certainly be moved to regard the prayers of His children in the proper time, if their faith does not weaken and they continue to pray.

Verse 8. *Shall he find faith on the earth?* We must not interpret one passage in such a way that it will contradict others. It is clearly taught in the New Testament that the church with its faithful members will be here when Jesus comes. (See Matthew 24: 40, 41; 1 Corinthians 15: 24, 51; 1 Thessalonians 4: 15, 17.) Therefore the question of Jesus should be understood as a kind of warning, stirring up his hearers to beware lest their individual faith should fail them.

Verse 9. *Trusted in themselves* denotes they considered themselves *righteous* on the ground of the great display they were making of their deeds. On the same principle they would *despise* (belittle) others who could not boast of such actions.

Verse 10. It was perfectly in order for both Pharisees and publicans to pray, and to go into the temple for the purpose of prayer (Isaiah 56: 7; Matthew 21: 13).

Verses 11, 12. This paragraph contains the prayer of the Pharisee. Even if all of his claims were true, his prayer would have been objectionable because it did not include a single request; only a boastful statement of his deeds.

Verse 13. There were generally many people in the temple at "the hour of prayer" (Acts 3: 1). The publican modestly stood away from the crowd, feeling that his presence might be objectionable to them, due to the common opinion of that class. He made no claim of goodness, but instead, he classed himself with sinners and prayed for mercy.

Verse 14. *Rather* is printed in italics in the King James Version, but the American Standard Version and Moffatt's translation both use the regular type. That is evidently correct according to the reasoning of Jesus. He follows his statement about who was justified, with the declaration that *he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*. If the publican was not justified, then no one in the verse was exalted.

Verses 15-17. This paragraph is explained at Matthew 19: 13, 14.

Verses 18-27. This group of verses is almost identical with Matthew 19: 16-26. To conserve space, let the reader

examine those verses and the comments.

Verse 28. This is commented upon at Matthew 19: 27.

Verses 29, 30. See the comments on Matthew 19: 28, 29.

Verse 31. The prophetic writings referred to are in Psalms 22 and Isaiah 53.

Verse 32. Spitting on one was to show the greatest of contempt.

Verse 33. It was customary to scourge all prisoners before executing them or otherwise disposing of them. The victim was stripped of all his clothing and a thong of leather was lashed across his back.

Verse 34. The apostles were baffled over these predictions about the death of Jesus. That was because they had a temporal kingdom in mind, and that would require the king to live and be present upon his throne.

Verse 35. Being blind, this man was depending upon alms for a living.

Verse 36. This wayside was a common place for people to travel, else the blind man would not have been occupying such a place to be seen by the people. *Asked what it meant* indicates that some unusual commotion was going on.

Verse 37. The fame of Jesus was frequently connected with his humble home life. It was surprising that the product of such a community could perform the deeds attributed to him. (See John 1: 46.)

Verse 38. The people told the blind man it was "Jesus of Nazareth" who was passing by, while he called him the son of *David*. This shows that at least some persons understood the Scriptures, that a descendant of David was to be called a Nazarene. (See the notes at Matthew 2: 23.)

Verse 39. As to why they rebuked him, see the notes at Matthew 20: 31.

Verse 40. It would have been a hardship for the blind man to get into the immediate presence of Jesus unaided, therefore the people were commanded to lead him to the spot.

Verse 41. A large gift of money or some regular income would have relieved the blind man of his financial worries. But instead of requesting such a favor, he asked for the restoration of his sight, which would enable him to care for himself afterwards.

Verse 42. *Saved* is from *sozo*, which Thayer defines at this place, "To make

well, heal, restore to health." This favor was given the blind man because he believed in Jesus.

Verse 43. The recovery from blindness was immediate, which was always the case with miraculous healing.

## LUKE 19

Verse 1. A traveler would come to Jericho soon after crossing the Jordan from the east side; it was not far from Jerusalem (verse 11). Jesus passed through the city on his way to the capital where he was soon to close his earthly career.

Verse 2. The publicans had access to the money of the people, and by reason of that fact they could increase their own possessions. This prominent group of citizens is described at Matthew 9: 10.

Verse 3. The *press* means the crowd, which was so great that Zacchaeus could not see Jesus, he being *little of stature*, which means he was not very tall.

Verse 4. Zacchaeus knew the usual path of travel, hence he found a tree along the route and climbed up into it. The sycamore tree was planted by waysides because it had wide-spreading branches which afforded a good shade.

Verse 5. Since Zacchaeus was a Jew (Verse 9), he was a proper subject to be commanded by Jesus, for He was sent to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15: 24).

Verse 6. *Received him joyfully.* Zacchaeus evidently was surprised (and honored) to be called upon to entertain the great Teacher, knowing the general estimate that was placed on publicans as a class.

Verse 7. The thing that happened was usual under such circumstances. The people *murmured* (among themselves after Jesus had gone with Zacchaeus) because Jesus went to be a *guest* of one whom they classed as a sinner. That was because he was a publican, most of whom were justly charged with taking unlawful amounts of taxes from the people.

Verse 8. The speech in this verse was made after reaching the home of Zacchaeus, for in his response (next verse) Jesus refers to *this house*. This helps us to understand the phrase *Zacchaeus stood*, the second word of which is defined by Thayer, "To place one's self, to stand." He evidently took a position where all that were in the

house could see and hear him as he made his promises to the Lord. It is significant that he was to give half of what he had to the poor first, and then reimburse any who were wronged after the division. That adjustment would hence be made out of his half of the original stock. *False accusation* means, "To exact money wrongfully; to extort from, defraud." Such a practice was commonly done by the publicans. As this agreement was made in the hearing of the group, any man who had a complaint was given opportunity to state it.

Verse 9. *Salvation is come to this house.* Not that every member of the household was saved, for Zacchaeus was the only one who repented; it means that salvation had come to a member of that household. A *son of Abraham* entitled him to salvation on the basis of the statement of Jesus to the woman (Matthew 15: 24).

Verse 10. This verse states a truth that will apply generally.

Verse 11. People are inclined to go to extremes with their conclusions. Jesus had frequently told them that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. They concluded, therefore, that it was just upon them, especially because He was headed toward Jerusalem and was even then very near the city. *Immediately* is from PARACHBEMA, and Thayer defines it, "On the spot; immediately, forthwith, instantly."

Verse 12. The inspired writer tells us why Jesus spoke this parable, that it was because the people thought the kingdom was to be set up as soon as Jesus reached Jerusalem. Were that to be done, virtually all of the preliminary details showing true devotion to the King would be over. That would be possible only under a worldly kingdom like what they expected. Jesus considered it necessary, therefore, to give this parable that would show it was to be a spiritual kingdom, and that its citizens would be placed under strict responsibility. The *nobleman* is Jesus, and the *far country* is Heaven. If he must go to that far country in order to *receive a kingdom*, it follows that he would not set it up in a few days, or as soon as he arrived at Jerusalem.

Verse 13. The specific lesson intended by this parable is the same as that of the talents in Matthew 25, namely, individual responsibility. The details of the story should not be strained into any other meaning. When

Jesus or his apostles select any particular subject for the purpose of illustration, they will give the details in order to make the main point stand out, but no other use should be made of such items. However, the items that are properly related to the principal subject under consideration will be explained accordingly. The *pounds* corresponds with the "talents" in Matthew 25, and *occupy till I come* is the same as developing one's talents.

Verse 14. This verse applies to people in the kingdom who deny the authority of King Jesus. Such persons will not make the proper use of their opportunities.

Verse 15. This verse refers to the day of judgment, when all mankind will be held to account for the way they have lived and used their talents.

Verses 16, 17. This corresponds with Matthew 25: 20, 21. In that place the faithful are told to "enter into the joy of their Lord." In our present passage it is expressed by having authority over ten cities, but the meaning is the same.

Verses 18, 19. This is equivalent to the man with two talents and the reward is to be based on the same principle, namely, faithfulness.

Verse 20. This man is in the same class as the one who buried his lord's talent, and he will be condemned for his unfaithfulness. (See Matthew 25: 24-28.)

Verses 21-26. The paragraph preceding this somewhat overlaps it, but it will be well to consider the present paragraph in connection with Matthew 25: 25-26.

Verse 27. This corresponds with Matthew 25: 30.

Verse 28. *Went before*. He took the lead in journeying toward Jerusalem.

Verses 29-35. See the notes on Matthew 21: 1-7.

Verse 36. This is explained at Matthew 21: 8.

Verses 37, 38. See Matthew 21: 9-11.

Verse 39. Evidently these Pharisees were envious of Jesus because he was receiving so much honor from the disciples. Their suggestion that He rebuke his disciples was on the pretense that it was an unnecessary disturbance, but in reality it was because of their envy. (See Matthew 21: 15, 16.)

Verse 40. The reference to the stones is figurative, to illustrate the worthiness of Jesus to be thus honored. John

told the Jews that God was able to make the stones give birth to offspring for Abraham (Matthew 3: 9), and if necessary we are sure He would cause the inanimate stones to express praises for Jesus, should the devoted disciples be forced to maintain silence.

Verses 41-44. See the notes on Matthew 23: 37-39; 24: 1, 2. *Visitation* as used here means "inspection, investigation," and applies to the time when Jerusalem was to be visited with distress, as an investigation into her history would justify.

Verses 45, 46. See Matthew 21: 12, 13.

Verse 47. *He taught daily*, also the *chief* of the leaders *sought to destroy him*. The connection between these statements is not revealed here. We know, however, it was because Jesus rebuked them for their hypocrisy.

Verse 48. The people had great respect for Jesus, and these priests and scribes did not want to lose the esteem of the public lest they fail in their own popularity.

## LUKE 20

Verse 1. The *priests* were a religious group, the *scribes* were those who copied the law for the people, and the *elders* were the seniors, members of the Sanhedrin.

Verses 2-8. This paragraph is explained at Matthew 21: 23-27. We should remember that Jesus never evaded answering any proper question, but He knew these people were insincere in their questioning; it was prompted by an evil motive.

Verses 9-17. The reader will find this explained at Matthew 21: 33-43.

Verse 18. The *stone* is Christ who had been rejected by the Jewish leaders. The significance of *falling on* or being *fallen upon* is explained at Matthew 21: 44.

Verse 19. The priests and scribes properly applied the preceding parable to themselves. They would have tried to do bodily harm to Jesus but for public sentiment.

Verse 20. The priests thought they could mislead Jesus into saying something that would get him into trouble with the secular government. *Spies which should feign* means men who were hired to act the hypocrite in pretending to be *just men*. That means they were supposed to be concerned about the dignity of the government.

Verse 21. These spies really did

know all the things they claimed to know, and their statements were the truth. But their motive in saying them was to flatter Jesus, which they should have known would be a failure.

Verse 22. In their ignorance of the nature of the kingdom of heaven, they thought Jesus would be opposed to all other governments. Were that the case he naturally would oppose giving them financial aid. Had he answered them to that effect, it would have been ground for accusing him of disloyalty to "the powers that be."

Verse 23. *Craftiness* means trickery which Jesus recognized to be their purpose in the question they asked him.

Verse 24. Jesus met the situation in a manner that was doubtless unexpected. Instead of answering their question with a direct yes or no, he asked for a piece of the very kind of money that was being used in paying for the government's financial support. He then asked about the image and wording on it, as to whose it was. They said it belonged to Caesar, the ruler involved in their question.

Verse 25. In their answer they committed themselves beyond recall, for they directly said the whole thing belonged to Caesar, the very thing he was asking people to give him as tribute. No one would say it is not "lawful" to give to a man what belongs to him. They had said this money belonged to Caesar, hence it would be lawful to give it back to him. And by the same token it would be right to give to God what belongs to him, namely, their religious devotion.

Verse 26. *Could not take hold* means they had no reply they could make to the reasoning of Jesus. *Marveled* is defined by Robinson, "To wonder, to be astonished, to be amazed," not that they were favorably impressed with the wisdom of the Teacher.

Verse 27. The Sadducees are described at Matthew 16: 12.

Verse 28-36. See the comments on Matthew 22: 23-30.

Verses 37, 38. This is explained at Matthew 22: 31, 32.

Verse 39. Since it was the Sadducees who had been baffled in their attempt to entrap Jesus, the scribes doubtless found much satisfaction in complimenting Him.

Verse 40. See the comments about the end of their questioning, and the reason for it, at Matthew 22: 46.

Verses 41-44. See Matthew 22: 41-45.

Verse 45. *The audience* included the masses of the people and the disciples, but in this part of his speech Jesus was speaking to his disciples.

Verse 46. *Long robes* were worn to attract attention, and obtain special salutations in public, such as in marketplaces where many people resorted. *Highest seats* were the front pews that faced the audience. *Chief rooms* means favorite places at the table.

Verse 47. *Devour widows' houses* is figurative, referring to advantages those hypocrites took of the needy and helpless among the people. (See Matthew 23: 14.) *Greater damnation* is explained at the same passage in Matthew.

## LUKE 21

Verse 1. This money was a voluntary offering, made for the upkeep of the temple. The rich men were casting in much in actual count of the money.

Verse 2. The widow cast in *two mites* instead of one as is generally stated. According to Robinson's lexicon, a mite was equal to about one fifth of a cent. The widow contributed about one half of a cent to the good work. The actual amount of money was not the main point as Jesus explains.

Verses 3, 4. Jesus stated in literal language what he meant figuratively. Our contributions to worthy causes are valued in the Lord's sight on the basis of our ability to give, not in literal "dollars and cents." (See 2 Corinthians 8: 12.)

Verse 5. This adornment of the goodly stones was by way of "remodeling," which was done at various times through a period of 46 years (John 2: 20).

Verse 6. The Jews were vain in their admiration of the temple. They had the idea that it was "titanic" and hence indestructible; but Jesus rebuked their pride by predicting its utter destruction. The completeness of this destruction and the manner in which it was to be accomplished, is related in chapter 19: 43, 44.

Verse 7. According to Matthew 24: 3, it was the disciples who asked Jesus the question. But in that passage it may be seen that they really asked two questions, although they had in mind what they thought would take place as one event. It will be well for the reader to reexamine the comments on that entire chapter.

Verse 8. This corresponds with Matthew 24: 4, 5.

Verse 9. The conflict between the Jews and the Romans did not begin in Judea. Hence the people of Jerusalem would hear about wars in the farther territories, some time before it reached the capital of the nation against which Caesar was at war.

Verse 10. The Roman Empire was composed of many nations, and when the war against the Jews broke out, it threw the whole empire into commotions.

Verse 11. A state of war often produces shortages in the necessities of life, which brings famine and pestilence as a natural consequence. A literal earthquake is never caused by warfare, but God has brought them about at various times to mark His concern for the conditions. In the present case it was to be one of the signs the disciples were given by which they could see the approaching storm.

Verse 12. Many of the Christians were Jews and others were Gentiles. The disturbances of the time stirred up the Romans against them which led to persecutions.

Verse 13. This means that when the disciples undergo these persecutions, it will turn out to be a testimony for them. They will recall that Jesus foretold it and thus it will prove to them that He was a true prophet. When a prediction becomes history, it amounts to a verifying evidence. (See Exodus 3: 12.)

Verses 14, 15. See the comments on this kind of assurance at chapter 12: 11, 12.

Verse 16. Some members of various families were disciples of Christ and some were not. In the disturbed conditions, these individuals would be arrayed against each other.

Verse 17. Some would blame the war on the influence of the teaching of Christ, and in spite would persecute the disciples.

Verse 18. *Not an hair perish* is a figurative form of speech, meaning that not the least harm would come to the disciples who heeded the instructions of Jesus. A note on Josephus, Wars, Book 2, Chapter 19, Sections 6, 7, shows how it came about that an unexpected retreat of the Roman forces from Jerusalem, for a brief period, gave the Christians an opportunity to escape from the city. "This

they did on this occasion and were preserved."

Verse 19. Christians should not let persecutions or other trials cause them to lose patience. If they will endure through to the end they will possess or save their souls. It means the same as Matthew 24: 13; endurance and patience are the same.

Verse 20. *Compassed with armies* will mean the siege is on.

Verse 21. Those who are outside of Jerusalem will have no difficulty as far as the hostile army is concerned, in escaping to the mountains, for the war will be directed against the cities only.

Verse 22. *Things . . . may be fulfilled.* It was predicted in Daniel 9: 27.

Verse 23. An expectant or nursing mother would find it very difficult to make a hurried escape out of the land. Jesus was not pronouncing a woe, just predicting it.

Verse 24. *Times of the Gentiles.* Jerusalem was the capital of the Jewish nation, both for its political and religious government. It continued to be such for the political government, and when the church was set up the Jews first accepted the Gospel, then they recognized it as their model (not capital) for religious government. But the Jews as a nation turned against Christ and the church, having already rejected Him and had him crucified. As a punishment, their city was doomed to be overthrown and they deprived of the possession of it. *Until* would imply that when the *times of the Gentiles* had been completed, the Jews would again come back to Jerusalem. But, they were to come back as Christians, which is predicted in Romans 11: 25.

Verses 25, 26. This paragraph is figurative and is to be explained in the same way as Matthew 24: 29; referring to the period called the "Dark Ages" in history.

Verse 27. See the notes on Matthew 24: 30.

Verse 28. *Your redemption draweth nigh* is equivalent to the gathering of the elect (the faithful) predicted in Matthew 24: 30, 31, at the second coming of Christ.

Verses 29-31. This corresponds with Matthew 24: 32, 33.

Verses 32, 33. This paragraph refers to the destruction of Jerusalem. See the notes on Matthew 24: 34, 35, giving



special attention to the word "generation."

Verse 34. *Surfeiting* is from **KRAI-PALE** which Robinson defines, "A seizure of the head; hence intoxication, debauch, giddiness; reveling and drunkenness." The verse is a warning to disciples not to be absorbed in loose and worldly living, so as to let the day of Christ slip up on them. (See 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-8.)

Verse 35. A snare is something that takes a victim unexpectedly. The day of Christ will come upon the masses of human beings in the same way.

Verse 36. If Christians lead a prayerful and watchful life, they will be looking for Christ and will be ready to stand before him in peace.

Verses 37, 38. This was a "series" of meetings, something like some that are conducted today. An incidental difference is that ours generally are conducted in the nighttime, while that of Jesus was in the day.

## LUKE 22

Verse 1. In Mark 14: 1 the passover and unleavened bread are spoken of as separate feasts. That is because there was no leaven allowed in their houses on the 14th day of the first month, nor on the seven days immediately following. Because of this, the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably. (See Leviticus 23: 4-6.)

Verse 2. *Sought how* means they wanted to plan the death of Jesus in some way that would avoid a riot among the people. (See Matthew 26: 4, 5; Mark 14: 1, 2.)

Verse 3. *Then entered Satan*. This does not mean that Satan here for the first time began to influence Judas, for he was called a devil by Jesus before this (John 6: 70, 71). But Judas had been rebuffed in his covetous attitude toward the woman with the ointment (John 12: 3-6), and began at once to plan a wicked scheme against Jesus, which was under the impulse of Satan. (See notes on Matthew 26: 14-16.)

Verse 4. Judas began his wicked plan by contacting the chief priests and captain, making a proposition to betray Jesus into their hands.

Verse 5. *They were glad* because they hated Him for his exposure of their hypocrisy.

Verse 6. *In the absence of the multitude*. This was because they did not want to get the multitude stirred up

in protest against the persecution of Jesus (Mark 14: 2).

Verse 7. *Day of unleavened bread* means the first day of the entire eight, during which no leaven was to be used. This 8-day period began with the day on which the passover was killed. (See the notes at verse 1.)

Verse 8. *Go and prepare*. Special arrangements had to be made because Jesus and his apostles were to eat their Passover two days before the regular time (Matthew 26: 2, 17).

Verses 9, 10. Jesus gave the two disciples instructions about preparing for their Passover, which they did according to Matthew 26: 18: 19.

Verses 11-13. Jesus was divine and knew just what conditions the disciples would find in the house, and also what the disposition of the men would be who were concerned in the appointment. *Guestchamber* is from the same word as "inn" in chapter 2: 7.

Verse 14. The events of this night are not all recorded in any one of the Gospel records, nor in strict chronological order. Before going any further at this place, I urgently insist that the reader see the comments at Matthew 26: 20, and keep his book open for frequent reference as he follows the comments at this verse and on through verse 23. I shall now comment on these verses as they come, making my remarks in view of the paragraph in Matthew cited above. *He sat down*. This phrase is from **ANAPIPTO**, which Thayer defines, "To lie back, lie down; to recline at table." (See the comments at chapter 16: 22.)

Verse 15. This was the fourth Passover Jesus ate after his baptism, according to John 2: 13; 5: 1; 6: 4; 13: 1.

Verse 16. Jesus predicted that when he ate the Passover again, it would be of a spiritual nature, for it would be in the kingdom of God (the church).

Verse 17. *Took the cup*. According to Smith's Bible Dictionary, and Funk and Wagnalls' Standard Bible Dictionary, the Jews added the drinking of wine to the celebration of the Passover. It was this cup that Jesus took in this verse.

Verse 18. *Not drink* takes the same comments as *not eat* in verse 16.

Verse 19. Jesus is now instituting his supper that is to become the weekly "breaking of bread" in the church (Acts 20: 7). *This is my body* was not said while they were in the Passover activities (see the notes in

Matthew cited above). *This do in remembrance of me* could not apply to the Jewish feast.

Verse 20. *After supper* means after the Passover supper. "A testament is of force after men are dead" Hebrews 9: 16-18. As the animal sacrifices constituted the testament under the Mosaic system, so the blood of Christ (which will have been shed in his death), was to constitute *the new testament in my blood*.

Verse 21. The writer now goes back to the activities of the Passover. (See the notes and comments cited in Matthew 26, from verse 14 here.)

Verse 22. The betrayal and slaying of Jesus had been determined upon by the counsel of God (Acts 2: 23), to which the reference is made here.

Verse 23. *Began to enquire*. See the comments at Matthew 26: 22.

Verses 24-27. See the notes on Matthew 20: 25-28.

Verse 28. Throughout the public ministry of Jesus, he was subject to the trials of his life which he overcame completely. (See Hebrews 4: 15.)

Verse 29. See chapter 12: 32.

Verse 30. The privilege of eating at the table of another was regarded as a great favor. Jesus used the circumstance figuratively to designate the close relationship the apostles were to sustain with Christ in his kingdom. See Matthew 19: 28 for comments on *judging the twelve tribes*.

Verses 31-34. While the wording is a little different, the thoughts and subject matter of this paragraph are the same as Matthew 26: 31-35.

Verses 35, 36. See the comments on Matthew 10: 10. *Sell his garment and buy one* [a sword]. Jesus never did forbid the use of force in defence where life or home was threatened, but rather spoke favorably for it (chapter 12: 39); hence He advised his apostles to provide themselves with the necessary weapon. It might be objected that Jesus rebuked Peter when he used his sword (John 18: 10, 11). That is true, but that was not an act of defence, for no one's life was being even threatened by the use of weapons, hence Peter's act was an aggressive one. Besides, he proposed to use his sword in defence of the plan of salvation, while in our verse it was only for the purpose of defence against bodily harm. (See again the passage in chapter 12: 39.)

Verse 37. This verse was to show

why the apostles would have to go on without the personal presence of Jesus; he was going to be taken from them. *Things concerning me hath an end*, means the things predicted of Him (including his death) were to be fulfilled to the end, or to be fully accomplished.

Verse 38. This is an incidental item. Jesus had instructed them to procure a sword, and they told him they already had two, which was found to be sufficient.

Verse 39. *As he was wont* denotes it was a regular practice for Jesus to go out to this mount, which was the location of Gethsemane (John 18: 1, 2).

Verse 40. On this particular occasion there was a special event about to take place, the betrayal of Jesus into the hands of the chief priests and elders.

Verses 41, 42. See the comments at Matthew 26: 41, 42.

Verse 43. After Jesus had resisted Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4: 11), God sent an angel to minister to him. Now an angel comes to his assistance in the garden.

Verse 44. *Agony* is defined, "Severe mental struggles and emotions." It was a part of the "cup" of which Jesus prayed to be relieved in verse 42. *As it were* is from HOSEI, which Thayer defines, "As if, i. e., as it were, as though, as, like as, like." Jesus did not "sweat blood" as it is so often said. His sweat was gathered upon the surface of the body in great drops that were compared to clotted blood. The condition was caused by the intense nervous agitation over the experiences He knew were soon to be thrust upon him by the powers of darkness.

Verse 45. *Sleeping for sorrow*. It was wrong for the apostles to be sleeping even for this cause, but it was not as bad as if it was from pure indifference. A like situation existed once with the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus 6: 9).

Verse 46. This verse gives an admonition that would be good for general guidance. In other places it is worded "watch and pray" (Matthew 26: 41).

Verse 47. Judas had left the company of Jesus and the other apostles just after eating of the Passover. See the comments at Matthew 26: 47.

Verse 48. The salutation of a kiss was a common practice in old times,

hence there should not have been any surprise at the mere fact that Judas kissed Jesus, under ordinary circumstances. But it had been but a short time since he left the upper room where Jesus was with the other apostles, so the usual occasion for salutations was wanting. Besides, a salutation as an act of social courtesy would have been appropriate for the apostles also, for Judas had been absent from all of them the same length of time. But Jesus exposed the hypocrisy of the traitor by this statement, in question form, but really in order to show him that his Lord knew what he was doing.

Verse 49. Neither of the other records says anything about this conversation.

Verse 50. John 18: 10 tells us it was Peter who did this.

Verse 51. In this account Jesus said to Peter, "Suffer ye thus far," meaning that he should not resist the crowd that was coming to take his Master. The event is the same as recorded in Matthew 26: 52.

Verses 52, 53. This paragraph is the same in meaning as Matthew 26: 55, 56.

Verses 54, 55. See the comments at Matthew 26: 57, 58.

Verses 56-62. This paragraph has to do with Peter's threefold denial of Christ according to predictions made by Him. The sad affair is explained at Matthew 26: 69-75.

Verse 63. These actions against Jesus were to show their disrespect of Him.

Verse 64. *Prophecy* is used in the sense of a test for the superior wisdom of Jesus. If He was divine, he should be able to know who did the striking.

Verse 65. *Blasphemously spake* means they said many things in a way that would injure the good name of Jesus, were they to be heard and believed by others.

Verse 66. The *council* was the Sanhedrin, which was the highest court the Romans permitted the Jews to have in the time of Christ and the apostles.

Verses 67, 68. Jesus let the men in the council know that He regarded their question as being insincere, and not from a desire for information.

Verse 69. Jesus made a prediction they were not expecting.

Verse 70. Taking the remark of Jesus in the preceding verse as an indirect answer to their question, they

repeated it in a slightly different form. *Ye say that I am* is a Biblical form of an affirmative answer.

Verse 71. This verse is explained at Matthew 26: 65, 66.

## LUKE 23

Verses 1, 2. See Matthew 27: 1, 2.

Verse 3. *Thou sayest it* is the "good confession" referred to by Paul in 1 Timothy 6: 13, showing there is no set form in making the confession.

Verse 4. *I find no fault in this man*. This is virtually the same thought that is worded in Matthew 27: 23.

Verse 5. According to Thayer, Jewry means "all Palestine."

Verses 6, 7. This was Herod Antipas, who was governor over the territory of Galilee, but was in Jerusalem at this time because of the Passover. If he could turn Jesus over to him, Pilate thought he might get rid of the problem that was worrying him, which was that of disposing of the case against Jesus. He did not believe that Jesus was guilty of any wrong, yet was hesitating about declaring him free because of political reasons (John 19: 12).

Verse 8. The desire of Herod to see Jesus was prompted largely by curiosity about His miraculous works; in chapter 9: 9 this desire is mentioned the first time.

Verse 9. Jesus knew that Herod had no just reason for his curiosity, hence He maintained the same silence before him that Pilate had received.

Verse 10. The chief priests and scribes had followed Jesus as he was escorted into the presence of Herod. But their clamor against Jesus did not have much effect on Herod, at least it did not induce him to attach any legal charge against Him.

Verse 11. The actions listed in this verse were for the purpose of belittling Jesus, not to constitute any formal accusation against Him. (See verse 15.)

Verse 12. The usual interpretation of this passage is that Pilate and Herod dropped their personal differences, in order to unite against Christ. They did not unite because of any common enmity against Christ, for neither of them had any such a feeling. But Herod wanted to see Jesus, and Pilate granted the courtesy of a personal interview with his noted prisoner. It was this judicial recognition that broke down the long-standing feud between the two political rulers.

Verse 13. This group which Pilate called together was composed of all the persons who were interested in the case. The chief priests were the ones to get Jesus into the courts (Mark 15: 10), and the people were those who had the voice about what prisoner was to be released under the custom (Matthew 27: 15), hence it was a representative audience to which Pilate was preparing to speak.

Verses 14, 15. A brief reference is made to this paragraph at verse 12. Here were two court rulers, former personal enemies, but agreeing on the innocence of Jesus.

Verse 16. It was customary to chastise all prisoners before being released, regardless of whether they were considered "guilty as charged," or not.

Verse 17. *Of necessity* denotes it was an established custom to release a prisoner at that time (Matthew 27: 15), and Pilate thought it would furnish him a way out of his problem of guarding his political interests, without directly upholding Christ.

Verse 18. *They cried out* means the people, for they alone had the legal right to speak on that subject. However, their choice was influenced by the priests and elders and scribes (Matthew 27: 20).

Verse 19. *Sedition* is from the same word as "insurrection" in Mark 15: 7. The meaning is an uprising against a legal government, of which Barabbas had been guilty.

Verse 20. *Willing to release Jesus* means his personal feelings were favorable to Jesus. He wished the people would call for His release, so that Caesar would not blame him as a disloyal officer in the Roman government.

Verse 21. This cry was the demand of a mob.

Verse 22. It is an established rule of justice that no man should be punished who is not guilty of doing wrong. Pilate realized that nothing could truly be charged against Jesus, hence his personal conclusion was that he should be discharged, after the customary *chastisement*, which means the scourging mentioned in other places.

Verse 23. The two classes in the audience (priests and people), united in the demand for the crucifixion of Jesus. The inspired writer says their *voices* prevailed. There was no addi-

tional evidence produced; just the pressure of public sentiment.

Verse 24. It is bad enough to punish a person when a court is only doubtful of his guilt; but Pilate never expressed a single doubt as to the innocence of Jesus. Not only that, but three attempts to get an expression from the audience as to His guilt had failed. So this unworthy judge condemned Jesus to the cross on the sole motive that it was *as they required*.

Verse 25. A seditious murderer was released on the same motive that Jesus was condemned, namely, he was the one *whom they desired*.

Verse 26. *After* is from OPISTHEN, and Thayer defines it, "Adverb of place, from behind, on the back, behind after." It is clear, therefore, that Simon and Jesus carried the cross together, Simon bearing one end of the instrument but walking after Jesus. See the notes at Matthew 16: 24.

Verse 27. These persons following toward the place of crucifixion were genuine sympathizers. They were not ashamed to be seen showing deep sentiments on behalf of Him, even to the extent of going with him to the place of shame. (See Hebrews 13: 13.)

Verses 28, 29. This shows a case of misplaced grief. Jesus was going to suffer the ordeal of the cross, which would be the last of all his sufferings. These people were destined to meet with distress unequalled by any case in history (Matthew 24: 21). *Blessed are the barren*, etc. When parents are forced to see the suffering imposed upon their children, they will wish that no children had been born to them.

Verse 30. *Mountains, fall on us*. This is figurative, meaning it would be a milder fate to be crushed by a mountain, than suffer the distress caused by the Romans.

Verse 31. *Green and dry* are used figuratively, meaning trees that are alive or dead. In the application, they represent a righteous and an unrighteous person. If such distress will be imposed upon a righteous person (Christ), what may be expected to be done to a wicked nation, and its helpless citizens were destined to share in the general calamity, brought about by the wicked leaders.

Verse 32. These malefactors (criminals) were thieves (Matthew 27: 38).

Verse 33. *Calvary* is explained at length at Matthew 27: 33.

Verse 34. This ignorance of which Jesus speaks, applies to the Jews as

well as the Gentiles (Acts 3: 17). Such ignorance, therefore, does not mean they were to be excused at that time regardless of any repentance on their part. In Acts 2: 23, Peter still held the murder of Jesus against this same people. But no forgiven sin is ever "remembered against" a person who has been forgiven. The meaning of the prayer of Jesus, therefore, is that even His murderers were to be given the same access to the benefits of His death that the rest of the world would have. That prayer was answered on the day of Pentecost when hundreds of them were promised "remission of sins" upon repentance and baptism (Acts 2: 38). *Parted his raiment.* (See Matthew 27: 35.)

Verse 35. Had it been a matter of power or strength only, Jesus could have even prevented their nailing him to the cross. But the deed had to be performed in order to fulfill the scripture predictions (Matthew 26: 54).

Verses 36, 37. The soldiers were the executioners for the government; four of them (John 19: 23).

Verse 38. *Superscription* is explained at Matthew 27: 37.

Verse 39. *One of the malefactors.* This is more definite than the account in Matthew 27: 44, and it should be used as a guide in interpreting that one.

Verse 40. The fact that the one thief rebuked the other indicates he had not joined in the reproaching of Jesus. However, we can be certain that one of them took the right view of the situation at the last.

Verse 41. *This man hath done nothing amiss.* The thief who spoke the above words knew that truth when he was first placed on the cross, as well as he knew it when he made the statement. That is one of my reasons for believing he was not partaking in the reproachful language against Jesus at all.

Verse 42. This man had been leading a sinful life, yet all the circumstances indicate he had known something of the work and plans of Jesus. They both were on the cross and soon were to die, yet he believed that both would live again. The request he made of Jesus was based on his faith of a resurrection. The wish was to be granted at some date farther in the future than the one at hand.

Verse 43. Jesus granted the penitent a promise to be fulfilled sooner than the favor he requested. *Paradise* is from PARADEISOS and Thayer's general

definition is, "A garden, pleasure ground; grove, park." In our passage he defines it, "That part of Hades which was thought by the later Jews to be the abode of the souls of the pious until the resurrection." Robinson, Groves and Hickie define it virtually in the same way. We have previously learned (notes at chapter 16: 26) that persons who are assigned to this place will always be among those who are "comforted" or saved. The conclusion is, then, that the thief was saved on the cross. That does not affect the subject of baptism or any other of the specific requirements of the Gospel. The Jewish Dispensation was still in force, hence the things that are now required through the apostles were not then binding. While Jesus was living, he had the right to forgive and save people on any terms He saw fit, or without any terms at all as far as the sinner was concerned. He forgave the woman of chapter 7: 47 because of her great love, and we have no evidence that the palsied man of Matthew 9: 1, 2 even had any faith, yet the Lord forgave him. But after the church was set up in Acts 2, no case is recorded where anyone was saved except upon obedience to the Gospel.

Verses 44, 45. The sixth hour is the same as our noon, which was the hour that darkness settled over the land. The event was prophesied in Joel 2: 30, 31.

Verse 46. See the comments on Matthew 27: 50.

Verse 47. In this account the centurion describes Jesus as a *righteous man*. The account in Matthew 27: 54 describes him as the Son of God; both statements are true.

Verse 48. Smiting the breast was an ancient custom in times of mourning or humble anxiety. (See chapter 18: 13.)

Verse 49. The women were faithful to the last, but with feminine timidity they stood some distance away watching. They had come from the same district where Jesus was brought up, Galilee, and had served Him on various occasions.

Verses 50-53. The notes on Matthew 27: 57-60 are pretty full, covering the subject matter of the present paragraph. To conserve space, I request the reader to see them.

Verse 54. *The preparation* is explained at Matthew 27: 62.

Verse 55. These women saw the manner of burying for the body of

Jesus, including the rolling of a "great stone" up to the entrance (Matthew 27: 60). That explains their concern about the stone as they were going to the sepulchre (Mark 16: 3).

Verse 56. *Returned and prepared spices.* That is, they made such preparation that same day, for the next day was a sabbath or holy day, it being the regular Passover day (Leviticus 23: 4, 5), which explains the statement about resting the sabbath day according to the commandment.

## LUKE 24

Verse 1. *They came* means the women mentioned in the last verse of the preceding chapter. For additional comments on this verse, see those at Matthew 28: 1.

Verse 2. *They found the stone rolled away* because the angel had descended from Heaven and removed it, to open the way into the sepulchre (Matthew 28: 2).

Verse 3. *They entered in.* The description of ancient sepulchres may be seen in the notes on Matthew 23: 27, 28. They entered the main cavity and looked for the spot where the body had been laid. They had seen when Joseph placed the body there (Matthew 27: 61; Mark 15: 47), and were disappointed at not seeing it as they entered.

Verse 4. *These men* were angels in human form (Matthew 28: 2).

Verse 5. *Living among the dead.* This was the angel's way of saying the One who was dead was then living, to assure the women they need not be afraid any longer.

Verses 6, 7. The conversation referred to is in Matthew 17: 22, 23.

Verse 8. *They remembered.* This is more significant than might be at first realized. One form of evidence relied upon in the Bible, is the accomplishment of predictions that were made some considerable time previously. (See Exodus 3: 12 with 24: 12, 13; Matthew 3: 11 with Acts 11: 15, 16.)

Verse 9. *The eleven* leaves out Judas who had killed himself.

Verse 10. *Mary the mother of James* was also the mother of Jesus.

Verse 11. *They believed them not.* See the comments at Mark 16: 17, 18.

Verse 12. This event will be commented upon at John twentieth chapter.

Verse 13. The most important item in this verse is the words *that same day.* Verse 1 shows it was the first

day of the week, the day of the resurrection of Christ.

Verse 14. *These things* refers to the report about the disappearance of Jesus from the tomb, that had been reported by the women returning from it.

Verses 15, 16. *Holden* is from KRATEO, which Thayer defines at this place, "To hold in check, restrain." In Mark's account of this circumstance (chapter 16: 12), he says Jesus appeared in another "form." That word is defined in the lexicon, "The form by which a person or thing strikes the vision; the external appearance." The two passages considered together makes the matter clear. The person of Jesus was not literally changed, but since the eyes of the disciples were restrained, it caused Him to look like some other human being with whom they were not acquainted.

Verse 17. The changed "form" of Jesus did not make him appear as any unusual creature, for there is no indication that his speaking to them confused them.

Verse 18. A *stranger* is one from the outside, or one lately arrived at any place. Cleopas thought a regular resident would have known about these things.

Verse 19. Jesus never had to ask men for information, for He knew all about what was in man (John 2: 24, 25). By asking this question He induced the disciples to express their belief in the One from Nazareth.

Verse 20. The disciples correctly placed the blame for the death of Jesus on the chief priests and rulers. They had caused Him to be brought into the Sanhedrin, and there the rulers pronounced a sentence of death upon Him.

Verse 21. The disciples still had a temporal kingdom in mind regarding the plans of Jesus. *Third day since these things were done;* meaning the condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus (verse 20). *Since* (or after), gives us an important key to the day on which Jesus was crucified. The disciples said *today* (the day of the resurrection, verse 1), was the third day *since* the crucifixion. Then Saturday would be the second day *since* the crucifixion; Friday would be the first day *since* the crucifixion, and hence, Thursday would be the day of the crucifixion. This disproves the Romanist doctrine of Good Friday as being the day of the crucifixion.

Verse 22. *Certain women* are the ones mentioned in verse 10.



Verse 23. These disciples were gradually unfolding their story as it was told by the women. They seemed impressed with the idea that it was a report that could not be questioned, yet was a puzzling circumstance.

Verse 24. The story of the women had been confirmed by *certain* ones who went to the sepulchre afterwards, namely, Peter (verse 12), and John (John 20: 2; 21: 20, 24).

Verses 25, 26. Jesus then chided them for being so unmindful of what had been foretold, and for speaking as if the whole event was unheard-of.

Verse 27. *Expounded unto them in all the scriptures*, means He cited them to the Scriptures which predicted those things concerning Himself. The pronoun is the word of Luke, for the disciples did not yet recognize Him.

Verse 28. Jesus did this to test their spirit of hospitality.

Verse 29. Their kindness was from a pure motive of hospitality, and not just because of the importance of the person, for they still did not know Him.

Verse 30. One part of Thayer's definition of *bless*, is "to ask God's blessing on a thing, pray Him to bless it to one's use." This act of Jesus was the same as any one of His disciples can do for the good things of life. The main point in this verse is the fact that Jesus changed from being a guest, and took the position of host. The purpose of it will be seen in the next verse.

Verse 31. *Eyes were opened*. This reversed the condition that had been over their eyes which "restrained" them. No physical miracle was performed by the act of Jesus as host. But it was such an unusual procedure for a guest, especially one who had seemed reluctant to visit with them (verses 28, 29), that it aroused their attention and stirred up their memory. They doubtless had been with Him before his death, on various occasions, and had beheld just such a performance. This, together with His conversation on the way, in which the prophecies were cited, brought them "to themselves" and they recognized Him. Having accomplished the purpose of the visit, Jesus disappeared.

Verse 32. Robinson defines the original for *burn* at this place, "to be greatly moved," and Thayer gives virtually the same explanation. These disciples turned to each other after Jesus disappeared, and recalled how they had been impressed by the re-

marks which he made to them *by the way*; and that was before they realized the identity of the speaker. The whole subject flowed over their minds and filled them with a restlessness that was born of genuine interest. Under such a condition they could not be still, but must go and contact others with the interesting news.

Verse 33. Yes, these happy disciples arose the *same hour*, and leaving the village of Emmaus, they returned to Jerusalem where they found the eleven (apostles) and others gathered together, engaged in earnest conversation.

Verse 34. The two disciples arriving from Emmaus found this group talking about the great subject of the hour, namely, the resurrection of Jesus. They related to the two new arrivals the same news they had themselves heard from the report of the women.

Verse 35. Then *they* (the two) joined in with their story of how Jesus had appeared to them in the way. There could be no mistake about it, for He had sat down with them to a meal, at which He was made known to them.

Verse 36. It required only a miracle for Jesus to appear in this way among them, even as a similar feat was performed when he disappeared unobserved (chapter 4: 29, 30).

Verse 37. The human mind does some strange things. This group had just been rejoicing over the report that Jesus was alive and had been seen of a number of disciples. Now when He actually appeared in their midst they were frightened. In John 20: 19 is this same event recorded, and it states the doors were closed for fear of the Jews. They evidently had the doors fastened for safety, hence when Jesus appeared in spite of the secured shutters, they considered it was a spirit that entered.

Verse 38. Jesus knew their minds and that they thought He was a spirit.

Verses 39, 40. The body of Jesus came out of the grave in the same condition it had when it entered therein. That was necessary to furnish evidence that He was the same person who was crucified. An instance of this truth is what is recorded in this paragraph. And He retained that form as long as he was on earth because the disciples were in the flesh and could profit by association with Him only in that form. But we know it was changed before He reached heaven, for Paul says (1 Corinthians 15: 50) that

flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. (See notes in the following paragraph about his having no blood.) Also, 1 John 3: 2 says, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," and later in the verse he says that when He appears we shall be like Him. John knew what His appearance was like while on the earth, which shows that Jesus was changed between the time of the ascension from Mount Olivet and that of His arrival at the gates of heaven. From the above considerations, we know the popular theory about knowing Him "by the prints of the nails in his hand," is an erroneous notion, which should be classed with the materialistic heresies of the Sadducees.

Verses 41-43. *Believed not for joy* is an accommodative expression, used in the same sense as a familiar phrase, "too good to be true." He called for food and partook thereof, as a further proof that He was in the same form that went into the grave. This raises the question as to how He could live and make use of food when verse 39 indicates He had "flesh and bones" only, but not blood. It is true the Bible teaches that "the blood is the life," and we know also that animal creatures cannot normally live without air. But Jonah lived three days and nights in the body of the whale without normal air conditions; likewise the Father saw to it that the Son could live forty days and forty nights without blood. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Verse 44. Some commentators think this verse goes over the interval of forty days, to the time of the ascension. That idea seems reasonable to me as it applies to most of the remaining verses. However, Acts 1: 3 tells us He was with his apostles throughout the forty days, during which time He spoke to them about these great subjects. Doubtless Jesus concluded His 40-day period of teaching with the verses from this through the end of the chapter, and I shall comment upon the verses in their order, with our minds centered on the last hours of the Saviour with the apostles. The *law* and *prophets* and the *Psalms* is one classification of the parts of the Old Testament, all of which contained prophecies of Christ. (See Deuteronomy 18: 18-20 for the *law*; Isaiah 53 for the *prophets*, and the *Psalms* 16: 8-10 for the *Psalms*.)

Verse 45. *Opened he their understanding*. This statement does not re-

quire any miracle upon the minds of the disciples. The *scriptures* referred to were the Old Testament, with which they were familiar as to its wording. The means Jesus used to get the disciples to understand them consisted in quoting them in connection with facts which they knew had been and were happening. Such an effort was accomplished in John 2: 22; Paul used this method in Acts 17: 2, 3, and Apollos used it in Acts 18: 28. The specific passage that Jesus used for this purpose will be considered in connection with the following verse.

Verse 46. *Thus it is written*. We know this refers to Psalms 16: 8-10, for Peter quotes it in Acts 2: 25-32, and applies it in the same way that Jesus does in our verse. Since this is the only place in the Old Testament where the prophecy of *the third day* is said to be *written*, the question would be raised about how that phrase is connected with it, when the words are not found in that text. The answer is found in the statement that Jesus was not to remain in the grave long enough for his body to begin decaying, or *see corruption*. In John 11: 39 we learn that a body would begin to decay after four days, hence Jesus must rise before that many days to prevent his body from decaying. And the other requirement of scripture was that He be in the grave three days and three nights. All of this brings the conclusion that Jesus was to rise from the dead the third day, according to the present verse. *Behoved* is from a word that means, "it was necessary and proper." In order to fulfill what was written, it was necessary for Christ to accomplish these things.

Verse 47. *Repentance and remission of sins* could not have been preached in the name of Christ, had He not met all the requirements of this important prophecy. *Among all nations* signifies that Jesus died for the whole world, not the Jews only. *Beginning at Jerusalem*. That city was the capital of the Jewish kingdom, both religiously and politically, and it was to be the model and beginning place (but not the capital) of the kingdom of Christ.

Verse 48. This work of being witnesses for Jesus is stated more fully in Acts 1: 8. The territory of their operation was to include Jerusalem as the beginning place, then reach unto "the uttermost part of the earth." According to Romans 10: 18 and Colos-

sians 1: 23, that commission was finally carried out.

Verse 49. The *promise of the Father* pertained to the outpouring of the Spirit, and it had been made in Joel 2: 28-32. The exact date of that event was not stated to them, hence it was necessary to tarry in Jerusalem until it came. *Be endued* is from *enduno*, and means "to be clothed with." *Power* is from *DUNAMIS*, and means might or strength. This qualification was to be upon the apostles so they would be able to "preach the Gospel to every creature," as Mark 16: 15 words it. This is why it must be said that none but the apostles were able to carry out the "Great Commission."

Verse 50. Mathew says nothing about the ascension; Mark merely mentions it, and our passage precedes it with the name of the location, which was Bethany, the home town of Lazarus and his sisters (John 11: 1).

Verse 51. Before starting his journey toward heaven, Jesus lifted up his hands to bless the apostles, thereby adding dignity and solemnity to it. *He was carried up*. Jesus could have soared through space independent of any visible vehicle, but this phrase indicates He did not do so. Acts 1: 9 states "a cloud received Him out of their sight."

Verse 52. *They worshiped Him*. This was after He had disappeared, which reminds us of the various meanings of the word "worship." (See the note at Matthew 2: 2.) *The great joy* was not over the disappearance of Jesus, of course, but for the assurances of the angels that are recorded in Acts 1: 11.

Verse 53. The temple was the headquarters of the Jewish system, and the place where the national worship was conducted. It was natural for them to be spending the time at that place, waiting for the coming of the power promised by Jesus. Their activities consisted in praising and blessing God, because they believed He was the One "From whom all blessings flow."

## JOHN 1

Verse 1. *In the beginning*. It should be asked, beginning of what? The almost universal answer would be, "the beginning of time." That answer would be wrong, not only from the context, but also because time never had a beginning any more than did God. The Bible makes no distinction between "time" and "eternity." The sec-

ond word occurs once in the Bible (Isaiah 57: 15), and the definition is, "duration," and that quality belongs to the word "time" as well. The popular notion is that "time" means the period before the judgment day, and "eternity" means the period afterward; the Bible makes no such distinction. The English word "time" occurs several times in the New Testament, and it comes from 12 different Greek words, but in no single place is it used as an abstract name of the space this side of the day of judgment, as distinguished from that afterwards. In the Septuagint (Greek) version of the Old Testament, the first three words of Genesis are exactly the same as the original for the italicized words in this paragraph, and have exactly the same meaning. The reader should consult the first paragraph in volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary.

The entire context shows the writer is considering the work of creation of the heavens and the earth, which is the subject of Genesis first chapter. The Being whom we call the Son of God was in existence before the creation of the universe, but He is here designated as the *Word*. *The Word was God* is said on the basis that God is the family name of the Deity, hence any member of that family would rightfully take that name, just as any member of the Smith family is a Smith. That is why Jesus is called God in Isaiah 9: 6; Matthew 19: 17; Acts 20: 28. And it explains why the terms "church of Christ" and "church of God" means the same, and are used interchangeably in the New Testament.

Verse 2. This verse does not change the meaning of the preceding one, but it is a significant passage, showing that while the term "God" applies to each of the Beings considered, yet they are to be understood as two separate personalities, else one of them could not be "with" the other.

Verse 3. The pronoun *him* means the Word of verse 1, and whom we know as the Son in the New Testament. *All things were made by Him*. That accounts for the plural pronoun "us" in Genesis 1: 26; 3: 22; 11: 7. In all of the domain of creation, providence and redemption, God the Father and God the Son, worked together in perfect unison although they are separate personalities.

Verse 4. A careful attention to the language of this book, will show us that John was especially impressed with the divine character of Christ,

and that He has been present, either apparently or otherwise, in all of the movements and influences pertaining to the works of God. *In him was life*, then, applies from the very "beginning" which is explained above. When God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of *life*, the Word contributed to that life. Of course, the writer is not especially thinking of that fact as he writes this verse, but is viewing the subject more directly as it pertains to His influence upon the spiritual lives of men as he lived upon the earth. Thus we hear Jesus saying, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12).

Verse 5. *The light shineth* refers to the general favors of a spiritual character that Christ has offered to the world. What John says about the attitude of men in darkness toward the light has been and always will be true. (See chapter 3:19, 20.) *Comprehended* is from KATALAMBANO, and Thayer defines it, "To lay hold of so as to make one's own, to obtain, to attain; to appropriate." The thought is that even though the Lord has offered the benefits of divine enlightenment to the darkened world, the men groping in darkness (as a rule) refuse to take advantage of the light.

Verse 6. The preceding 5 verses may be considered as John's preface to his account of the Gospel. The importance of the light of heaven, as it was to be shed on the world by the personal life of Christ, was of such great proportions, that God deemed it well to send a forerunner among men, to prepare a people for the reception of the Light. That man's name was John (the Baptist).

Verse 7. It is customary, when some notable person is about to appear before an audience, for another to present or introduce him. And even this temporary speaker is supposed to be a man of some importance. He will usually make a brief reference to the timeliness of the subject to be discussed before the audience, and always bears testimony of the qualifications of the speaker to handle the matter. Likewise, it is stated that the forerunner of the Light bore witness of Him, and the purpose stated is, *that all men through him might believe*.

Verse 8. *He was not that light*. John was always attentive to keep the people informed about his relation to Christ in his work, and did not want them to confuse the one with the other. (See verses 15, 20, 27.)

Verse 9. The spiritual light that Christ had to offer was for the whole mass of mankind, not just for the Jews or any other special group. The word *world* is from KOSMOS, and with the exception of chapter 9:32, every occurrence of the word "world" in this book is from that Greek word. It has a wide range of meanings, but the one that Thayer gives for its most general application is, "The inhabitants of the earth."

Verse 10. *He was in the world*, means he was among mankind as a citizen. *Knew* is from GINOSKO, and Thayer's first and "universal" definition is, "To learn to know, get a knowledge of; passive, to become known." Robinson defines it in virtually the same words. We might recognize a certain man to be John Doe, and yet not know, or care to know much about him. In that way the people of the world did not care to know much about Christ. (See the definition of *comprehended* in verse 5.) *The world (mankind) was made (caused to be) by him*. The words in parentheses are according to lexicon definitions. Verse 3 declares that all things were made by Him; also the definition of "us" in that verse is important and should be consulted again by the reader.

Verse 11. *Came unto his own*. Luke 1:17 says of John that he was to precede Christ, "To make ready a people prepared for the Lord." These people were Jews, and had been all of their lives, but had to be reformed before they could become a part of the "people prepared for the Lord." That is why chapter 3:25 makes a distinction between the Jews as such, and the disciples of John. *Own received him not*. The same "own" is meant in both instances in this verse. The meaning is, that the disciples of John as a group did not receive Jesus. According to Matthew 3:5, 6; Mark 1:5, great multitudes from the regions named were baptized by John. However, according to Acts 1:15, only about 120 disciples, which would include the ones made by both John and Christ, were accounted for on that day of Pentecost. This explains the words *received him not*, stated in verse 11.

Verse 12. *As many as received him*. There is a familiar saying, "All rules may have some exceptions." In the preceding verse we learned that the disciples of John, as a group, rejected Christ. That was the "rule," and the exception is indicated by the italicized words here. For instance, the apostles

had all been baptized by John, and were prepared for the work of Christ as soon as He called upon them. (See the comments at Matthew 9: 9.) Hence the apostles, at least, were among "his own" who "received him." *Power* is from EXOUSIA, and its first meaning is, "right or privilege." *Sons of God* or children of God, is a term denoting family relations. While Jesus was on earth with the apostles, the spiritual family of God had not been formed. But as soon as that was done (which was on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2), all of the faithful disciples of both John and Christ became "charter members" of the new family, and in that sense they became children of God.

Verse 13. People became members of the Mosaic system by fleshly conception and birth. Being born into the spiritual family of God is accomplished according to His will, that was made known through the Gospel of Christ. However, the persons specifically referred to at first in the present passage, were those who had been baptized by John. The principles involved in their birth, though, were the same as pertain to all others who afterward were to become members of the divine family. John's disciples were baptized upon their repentance, after having believed on Him (which should come after him, Acts 19: 4), while all others were to be baptized upon believing on Him who has come.

Verse 14. The *Word* was wholly spiritual until the time for God's great "will" (Hebrews 10: 7, 9) to be carried out, the purpose of which was to have a Son begotten by His own bodily vitality, but clothed upon by the flesh, so that He could become a complete sacrifice for sin. (See the comments on Luke 1: 34, 35.) *Full of grace and truth* denotes that through Christ we are furnished completely in those blessings.

Verse 15. *Of whom I spake*. (See Matthew 3: 11; Mark 1: 7; Luke 3: 16.) The word *before* is used twice, but it is from different Greek originals. The first means before in the sense of being previous; therefore it denotes being before in the sense of rank or importance. The second means previous in time, or in any succession of things. John's reasoning is based on the priority of Christ. Since He existed before John did, he (John) felt that he ought to accord to Him the place of seniority. Christ was six months younger than John in the flesh, but

existed before the beginning of the world spiritually.

Verse 16. *Grace for grace* is the outstanding phrase in this verse. *For* is from ANTI, and Thayer explains it to mean, "grace (or favor) succeeding grace perpetually, i. e., the richest abundance of grace, John 1: 16."

Verse 17. The law of Moses was truthful, and many favors were bestowed on the Jews by it. But in contrast, the system given by Jesus Christ was far superior, because it bestowed one favor upon another in more complete measure, as the preceding verse with its comments shows.

Verse 18. No man with fleshly eyes has ever seen God, for that would have caused his death (Exodus 33: 20). Yet God wished to give man some kind of glimpse at Him that he could endure, hence the Son of God came among man in the form of flesh, who then declared, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14: 9).

Verse 19. For comments on *priests* and *Levites*, see at Luke 10: 31, 32.

Verse 20. The messengers the Jews sent to John asked him about his identity. He was the most unusual person who had come among them in that generation, and it had raised questions and suggestions in connection with some historic characters of the Old Testament. Many knew it was predicted that *the Christ* (the Anointed) was to come into the world, and perhaps John was that person. The inquiry was doubtless prompted by both curiosity and genuine interest. *Confessed* often implies some unfavorable charge having been made; it does not in this case. The first definition of the original shows it to mean simply, "to declare." It had been the attitude of John all along, to be humble and to show deep respect for the One who was to follow him, hence he wished to leave no uncertainty as to his position.

Verse 21. The inquirers became specific in their questioning. By *Elias*, they meant the person predicted in Malachi 4: 5. *That prophet* was their reference to a prediction of Moses in Deuteronomy 18: 15-20. To all of these questions, John gave a negative answer which left the inquirers without the desired information.

Verse 22. The negative answers did not furnish these messengers with a satisfactory report to take back with them. They insisted that John take the affirmative line and give them a specific answer as to his identity.

Everyone knew the personal and family name of John, and hence this inquiry did not pertain to that. What the messengers wanted to know pertained to his connection with the vital affairs of the Jews.

Verse 23. John's answer must have been a surprise to these men, for he had nothing to say about himself personally. *The voice of one*, etc., was to direct their attention to what he was saying to the people in the wilderness, and not to anything pertaining to him as an individual. He verified that "voice" by referring to a prediction of Esaias (Isaiah), chapter 40: 3, 4, of that prophet's book.

Verse 24. The Pharisees were a prominent sect of the Jews in the time of Christ, and they had been so for several years before. They were very formal, and made great pretensions to righteousness. For a more extended description of them, with the Sadducees, see the notes at Matthew 16: 12.

Verse 25. It is uncertain as to when the practice of baptism began among the Jews. History reveals that it became a part of the ceremonies that introduced Gentile proselytes into the religion of the Jews, and in some particulars admitted them to the privileges of the same. But since those cases were performed upon Gentiles only, and John performed his baptism on Jews only (Luke 1: 16), the Pharisees thought the work he was doing was for the purpose of introducing some new system (which was true). And such a radical movement, as they thought, should properly be initiated by some note-worthy person, such as the ones they named to John.

Verse 26. John did not say anything to lessen the importance of his work, neither did he wish them to think he regarded it as the most important. Hence he stated that his ceremony consisted of water baptism only. He further told them that an unknown (to them) person was standing among them.

Verse 27. See comments at verse 15.

Verse 28. *These things* means the conversations just reported. There is some uncertainty with the works of reference, as to the exact identity of Bethabara, but all agree that it was a town on the east shore of the Jordan, near a spot where John was baptizing at that particular period in his work.

Verse 29. *The next day* means the day after the conversations mentioned above. John saw Jesus coming to-

wards them, and he recognized him from the events recorded in verse 33. *Behold the Lamb of God*. This should be understood as John's presentation of Jesus to his (John's) disciples, and his speech corresponds with the opening of the sheepfold in chapter 10: 3. *Taketh* is translated "beareth" in the margin, and the lexicon agrees with it. The whole sentence is worded in view of the use made of the scapegoat to "bear upon him" the iniquities of the congregation of Israel (Leviticus 16: 22). Yes, Jesus became the scapegoat for the whole world, but that does not relieve sinners of their personal obligation to appropriate the benefits of that arrangement by proper conduct of life. The ceremony with the scapegoat was for the congregation as a whole, but the individual members of the congregation had their personal duties to perform in order to benefit by the national sacrifice. Likewise, men have their individual duties to obey, in order to obtain any benefit from Christ's sacrifice.

Verse 30. This is the same as verse 15.

Verse 31. John knew some person was to come among the people of Israel, but did not know what particular man it was. He was given a cue (stated in verse 33) whereby he would have the promised one pointed out, and it was to take place while performing an act of baptism. *Therefore* signifies that because of the part water baptism was to play, John engaged in that kind of baptism, as well as to be preparing a people for that special One.

Verse 32. Luke 3: 22 says the Spirit descended in a *bodily shape* like a dove, while the other three records say the Spirit *descended like a dove*. The point is in bringing out the idea that the Spirit had to be in some visible form, in order that it could be seen by John. Not only did John see this form descend, but it alighted on Him and remained for the occasion.

Verse 33. *And I knew him not*. John means that up to that instant he did not know this person as the promised Messiah, and the One for whom he was baptizing penitent Jews. There was to be no mistake, or confusion caused by a mere incident. It might not be regarded so strange for a dove to alight momentarily, but such a timid creature would not ordinarily be seen "remaining" on the head of a man. Hence that item was added to the circumstance to give it the force of evidence. Just how long before this



verse it was that the baptism had taken place, we do not know; but it was prior to the "presentation" of verse 29.

Verse 34. After John *saw* the evidence so strangely demonstrated, he became a witness in person. The subject of his testimony was the great fact that the person he baptized under such unusual circumstances, was the Son of God.

Verse 35. This was the *next day* after the presentation in verse 29.

Verse 36. *The Lamb of God.* This phrase was significant especially to the Jews, because they were familiar with the national practice of offering animal sacrifices.

Verse 37. The two *disciples* were the ones mentioned in verse 35, to whom John repeated his presentation phrase in verse 36.

Verse 38. *Saw them following.* These disciples had hitherto been disciples of John. He had told his converts they should believe on the one who was to come. Now that One was in sight, and when John bade his disciples to behold Him, it meant to them that from then on they would desire to be in His company. That is why they asked Jesus where he dwelled, which meant for the time being, for the permanent residence of Jesus had been established in Capernaum (Matthew 4: 13).

Verse 39. Jesus invited the disciples to go with him and see where he was staying. As it was about the tenth hour (our 4 o'clock), they visited the rest of the day.

Verse 40. One of the two evening guests of Jesus was Andrew, brother of Peter. He had been a disciple of John, but upon introduction to Jesus, followed Him.

Verse 41. *First* is from PROTOS according to the commonly-used Greek text, but Moffatt says it is really from PROI. Thayer's definition of that word is, "in the morning, early," and it is so translated in Matthew 16: 3, and Moffatt so renders it in our verse, making it read, "In the morning," as being the time when Andrew went in search of his brother Peter. That is a reasonable conclusion, for we have seen that it was near the end of the day when the two disciples made their call upon Jesus with whom they spent the rest of the day. Then early the next morning, Andrew went in search of his brother, and told him the good news of finding the Messiah.

Verse 42. This verse corresponds in thought (but not necessarily in chronological order) with Matthew 16: 18. In that passage Jesus is reported to have said, "Thou art Peter," while in our present verse he said, "Thou shalt be called Cephas." The two statements are identical in thought, because the Greek words for "Cephas" and "stone" have virtually the same definition.

Verses 43, 44. *Day following* means the day after the one on which Jesus had the conversation with Peter. Jesus left his place of lodging and started to go to Galilee. Upon arriving there he came to the home town of Andrew and Peter. There Jesus met Philip who was told to follow Him, and he became one of the 12 apostles.

Verse 45. I have consulted half a dozen standard works of reference, and all of them say Nathanael was another name for Bartholomew, one of the apostles. The information will be useful when we get to verse 51. Philip told Nathanael the news of finding the person whom the prophets and Moses had predicted. This announcement would have been unmingled good news for Nathanael, had it stopped there. But Philip next specified the person he meant, by saying he was *Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*

Verse 46. The information almost dashed the interest of Nathanael, for Nazareth was not a very popular town. The question Nathanael asked was not prompted by prejudice as against some territory besides his own, for he was himself a Galilaean. The origin of the lowly repute of that district is not known with certainty. Philip made a fair and logical reply to the question; *come and see.* He believed (and rightly), that no one could come under the influence of Jesus without being convinced that He is not only a "good thing," but the best that ever lived among men.

Verse 47. *Guile* means "deceit," and Jesus described Nathanael as an Israelite who was free from that evil. He made that announcement as Nathanael approached, but after he was near enough to hear it.

Verse 48. Nathanael was surprised that Jesus knew him, even though they were in the bodily presence of each other. Then his astonishment was increased when Jesus mentioned an apparently trivial circumstance such as standing under a fig tree. If Jesus knew of that circumstance while not present nor in sight of it, it would

prove Him to be the very person whom Philip described in verse 45.

Verse 49. Upon the aforesaid evidence, Nathanael acknowledged Jesus to be all He had claimed to be, namely, the *Son of God* and *King of Israel*.

Verse 50. Jesus made a remark about Nathanael's belief in Him, based on the incident of relating an experience he thought no one knew. He then notified him that he was destined to see greater things than such circumstances.

Verse 51. This verse names the "greater things" referred to in the preceding one. *Upon* is from EPI, and Greenfield defines it to mean, "On account of, because of." This prediction was fulfilled at the ascension of Jesus in Acts 1: 9-11. Here the "two men" were angels, and they were seen coming down in the sight of the apostles (of whom Nathanael was one, verse 45). Their descending from heaven, then ascending thereto again, was brought about by the ascension of Jesus. They conducted this mission "upon" or "on account of" the performance of the Son of Man who had just disappeared in a cloud.

## JOHN 2

Verse 1. *Third day* means after the conversation with Nathanael in the preceding chapter. Cana was a town not far from Capernaum, and it was the home of the apostle Nathanael (chapter 21: 2). The text does not state whether the mother of Jesus was there by personal invitation, or that she was a relative of the parties.

Verse 2. The disciples of Jesus would mean those he had made after entering upon his personal ministry. It was appropriate to invite the disciples along with the Master.

Verse 3. *Wanted* is from HUSTEREO, and Thayer defines it at this place, "To fail, be wanting." It indicates that they had wine provided in the beginning of the feast, but the supply had run out. The mother of Jesus very naturally appealed to her son to help them out of their embarrassment.

Verse 4. Such an appeal indicated that she expected Jesus to perform some kind of a miracle, since the occasion was too far advanced to go to a market. But Jesus had not intended launching upon his public miraculous works in full scale degree yet. Moffatt renders the question Jesus asked, "What have you to do with me?" It was a mild protest against her attempt

to press Him into his work before he was ready.

Verse 5. The statement of Jesus to his mother must not have been very severe, and there was doubtless something in the conversation (not recorded) that indicated a willingness on the part of Jesus to help the group out of their difficulty. Mary instructed them to follow whatever directions He gave to them.

Verse 6. Moffatt says these waterpots could hold about twenty gallons each.

Verse 7. It required no miraculous power to fill the pots with water, hence Jesus bade the attendants do that. The lesson of human cooperation with the Lord is taught frequently throughout the Bible, showing that He will not do for us what we can do for ourselves. Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from death, but commanded the people to feed her (Mark 5: 43). He brought Lazarus from the grave, but told the people to remove the grave clothes (John 11: 44).

Verse 8. *Governor* in this verse, and *ruler* in the next, are from ARCHITRIK-LINOS, and Thayer defines it, "The superintendent of a dining-room, a table-master." He then explains it as follows: "It was his duty to place in order the tables and couches, arrange the courses, taste the food and wine beforehand, etc." That is why Jesus told them to bear this wine to the governor of the feast.

Verse 9. The foregoing information explains why the ruler of the feast tasted the wine. He thought it had been provided by the bridegroom for the use of his guests. He was so well pleased with it that he decided to compliment the host.

Verse 10. When a man is drunk, his mind is rendered dull so that his ability to make distinctions is weakened. Hence an entertainer would reserve his worst wine until the guests were drunk, after which they would not know the difference. Attempts have been made by some commentators to explain away the seeming objection to this circumstance, by referring to the various kinds of wine that were made in Palestine. They explain that some varieties were not as strong as others, and that when men are said to be drunk on it, it only means they are filled to the point of being stupefied. But the theory does not agree with the original language. *Drunk* is from METHUSKO, which has some variety of forms in the Greek New Testa-

ment, but all have virtually the same meaning. Thayer defines the word, "To intoxicate, make drunk; to get drunk, become intoxicated." Strong defines it, "To drink to intoxication, i. e., get drunk." Greenfield defines it, "To intoxicate, inebriate, make drunk; passively, to be intoxicated, make drunk." *Good* and *worse* wine are used in the sense of superior and inferior, meaning that after wine has been fully "aged," it is more satisfactory. Of course it would be no difficult task for Jesus to put this water through all the processes that nature does in bringing it to a state of clarification.

The attempts of friends of the Bible to meet the so-called objection to this event by appealing to the meaning of the word "drunk," are not justified by the original Greek words. But the whole effort is unnecessary, for Jesus did not claim to be attempting a general reformation of the whole world all at once. (There is no evidence that the related guests were disciples either of John or Jesus.) He once told his disciples, even, that he had many things to say to them which they could not bear then (chapter 16: 12), and certainly the world in general was not yet ready for the more advanced teaching on the subject of wine as a beverage. Another thing to note in the case, is that it does not say that a single person present had actually drunk enough to make him intoxicated. In those days, people did not have any process of preserving grape juice unfermented, hence the various passages on the subject only rule against drinking enough of the wine to become drunk. (See Ephesians 5: 18; 1 Timothy 3: 3, 8; Titus 1: 7.)

Verse 11. Jesus had not planned to open his public work of performing miracles yet (verse 4), but the appeal of his mother prompted him to act. It is noteworthy that the "beginning of miracles" was enacted in the district where he was brought up. *Disciples believed on Him*. This does not denote they did not believe previously, for they could not have become disciples of Jesus without first believing; but their faith grew.

Verse 12. Jesus went on down to the city that he had adopted as a residence (Matthew 4: 13), which was not far from Cana where he had performed his first miracle. Note that his *brethren* and *disciples* are mentioned in the same sentence, which refutes the Romish theory that the "brethren" of

Christ always means his disciples. The doctrine is used to support their unscriptural notion of the perpetual virginity of His mother.

Verse 13. John's record of the Gospel is the only one of the four that refers to all the passovers Jesus attended while on earth. These events give us the Biblical basis for saying that His earthly ministry lasted between three and four years. The present verse gives the first one, and the next is in chapter 5: 1.

Verses 14-16. See notes on Matthew 21: 12, 13.

Verse 17. The saying referred to is recorded in Psalms 69: 9. See my comments on that verse in volume 3 of the Old Testament Commentary.

Verse 18. The Jews were questioning the right of Jesus to "take the law into his own hands," so to speak, and inflict this physical punishment on the dealers in necessary articles for the service of God. They challenged Him to stake his standing as an unusual person by uttering some *sign*, which means some kind of event that was to come.

Verse 19. The Jews pretended to think Jesus meant the literal temple that was the capitol of their national service. But their conversation with Pilate, recorded in Matthew 27: 62, 63, shows they fully understood what temple was meant.

Verse 20. *Forty and six years* was the length of time that Herod had used in *building* (remodeling) the temple. But even if Jesus had meant that structure, it would not have been any more difficult a task for him to have reconstructed it in three days, than to perform the other miracles recorded.

Verse 21. Jesus compared his fleshly body to a temple because it was the structure in which his spirit was dwelling. Paul makes the same comparison in 1 Corinthians 6: 19 and 12: 12-26.

Verse 22. *Believed the scripture* refers to the prediction in the Old Testament that Jesus was to rise from the dead the third day. That prediction is recorded in Psalms 16: 9, 10, and commented upon by Peter in his discourse in Acts 2: 25-27.

Verse 23. This is still the first passover, mentioned in verse 13. *Believed when they saw the miracles*. That was the primary reason why Jesus per-

formed the miracles according to chapter 20: 30, 31.

Verse 24. *Commit* is from ΠΙΣΤΕΥΩ, and as used in this verse, it means to put trust in another. Jesus did not put any confidence in mankind in general, and the reason is stated in the next verse.

Verse 25. Jesus knew all about the innermost thoughts of men, and regarded them as unreliable; he knew they were not to be trusted.

### JOHN 3

Verse 1. *Ruler* is from ΑΡΧΩΝ, which Thayer defines with the simple words, "A ruler, commander, chief, leader." I have examined four other lexicons, and they give virtually the same definition. It does not necessarily mean one with official authority, although it is so used in some cases. It generally means a man of outstanding prestige among the people, in whatever position he may be found; whether religious or civil, official or unofficial; a person of much influence. Nicodemus was thus respected because of these qualities, and not merely because he was a member of the Sanhedrin. Being a Pharisee in religion, he occupied a noted position in that group. See the long note at Matthew 16: 12 for the description of the Pharisees.

Verse 2. The scripture does not even intimate why Nicodemus chose the nighttime for his visit with Jesus, hence it would be speculation for me to attempt an explanation. Had it been worth-while for us to know the reason, doubtless John would have been inspired to tell us. However, there are indications that he left the presence of Jesus with a favorable attitude toward him and his disciples. (See chapter 7: 50, 51; 19: 39.) *Rabbi* is a Greek word, and has been transferred into the text of the New Testament by the King James translators in its original form. Thayer defines it, "my great one, my honorable sir." It has been used as a proper noun 8 times, and translated by the simple term "master" 9 times. The complimentary things Nicodemus said were not mere flattery, for he gave a logical reason for his statement. In truth, the very reason he gave for saying that Jesus was from God, was the one that John states to be the purpose for performing the miracles (chapter 20: 30, 31).

Verse 3. Baptism, which is the final act in the process of the spiritual

birth, is not the only important subject connected with salvation under the Gospel Dispensation, yet it is the principal one considered in this conversation with Nicodemus; there is a good reason for it. The Jews placed much of their dependence upon their fleshly birth, being in the blood line from Abraham (Matthew 3: 9), which fact entitled them to be members of the Jewish Dispensation of religion. The text does not give us any of the introductory conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, further than the complimentary words of this verse. Perhaps that is all that was said to begin with, but Jesus knew what was in his mind (chapter 2: 25), and hence the following conversation was on the subject uppermost in the mind of this Jewish teacher. He evidently thought his birth through the blood line from Abraham would entitle him to consideration in connection with the kingdom that Jesus was reported as being on earth to set up. Jesus took that idea away by a sweeping statement that meant his fleshly birth would not be even considered as a factor in entering the kingdom of heaven. *See* is from the Greek word ΕΙΔΩ, which has such a wide range of meanings that space would forbid attempting to quote all of them. The context has to be considered in each case to determine its specific meaning. The definitions of both Thayer and Robinson that apply in this verse and others like it, are condensed to the simple phrase, "To experience." A sinner may see the church as an institution of which he is not a member, but he cannot have the experience as a member without being *born again*.

Verse 4. With a fleshly birth still in mind, Nicodemus asked the question stated in this verse. He evidently was not a believer in the theory of "Transmigration of souls" (Matthew 14: 2), or he would not have thought that even that kind of a new birth would be impossible, the only difference being the said theory did not teach that a man would enter his mother's womb, but that of another woman.

Verse 5. The necessity of a new birth in general was the form in which Jesus opened up this subject to Nicodemus; He then entered more into the details of the process. The Greek New Testament uses the same word in the process of reproduction, whether the time of begetting or that of the birth is considered. The word is ΓΕΝΝΑΩ,

and Thayer gives us the two definitions, "To be begotten; to be born." If the entire process is referred to in our language, it is proper to use the word "born," such as saying a child was born to Mr. and Mrs. John Doe. But if the parents are referred to separately, the correct form of speech is that a child is begotten by his father, and born of his mother. Having only the one Greek word on the subject, the King James translators often give us "born" when it should have been "begotten." A more exact wording of our passage would be, a man must be born of the water, having been begotten by the Spirit. This begetting takes place when a man believes the words of the Spirit (1 John 5: 1), because that word is the seed (of reproduction) of the kingdom (1 Peter 1: 23). After a man believes this word, he is then put under the water, and as he comes out of it he is being born of that water, because the literal meaning of "being born" is, "to come out of." The person has then been born into the kingdom of God.

Verse 6. This verse is a simple statement of the difference between things fleshly and things spiritual. The kind of birth Nicodemus thought Jesus was speaking of is fleshly only, while he was speaking of a spiritual birth. It is true the fleshly body must be acted upon even in the spiritual birth, but that is because the inner man that is being renewed or regenerated, is living within the fleshly body.

Verse 7. Jesus is still reading the mind of Nicodemus, and sees him in a state of confusion over the things that have been said. He is inclined to question the conclusions that Jesus has presented to him, because he cannot understand all about them. As an argument by way of comparison, Jesus intends to remind Nicodemus that he accepts other conclusions in the domain of his experiences, many of which are as mysterious as this one about a spiritual birth that seems to puzzle him. Yet he will accept them on the strength of the evidences, even though some phases of the cases might seem mysterious. One of those circumstances will be presented in the next verse.

Verse 8. The religious world in general is overwhelmed by erroneous ideas about the Spirit, as it is involved in the process of the new birth. Then in trying to refute those ideas, the friends of truth may go to extremes and invent other notions that

are likewise erroneous. One of such performances is the strain that is put on the present verse, which is only an illustration which Jesus draws from nature, to prove to this bewildered Jew that he is inconsistent in faltering over the new birth just because some features of it may seem mysterious to him, when he will accept the fact that the wind blows, even though he cannot tell (from any evidence of his senses) from where the wind comes nor to where it goes after it passes him. *So is every one* means that every person who is born of the Spirit is supposed to accept the proposition on the evidence of God's teaching, even though some things about it seem strange.

That the passage means just what the common translation makes it say, and that it does not call for some labored interpretation to rescue it from the hand of "sectarians," I shall give the definitions of the original words in Thayer's lexicon for this verse. *Wind* is from PNEUMA, and the definition is, "1. a movement of air, (gentle) blast; a. the wind . . . hence the wind itself, John 3: 8." *Bloweth* is from PNEO, and the definition is, "To breathe, to blow: of the wind, Matthew 7: 25, 27; Luke 12: 55; John 3: 8; 6: 18, Revelation 7: 1; Acts 27: 40."

Verse 9. Nicodemus was still confused about the subject in general. It is as if he said, "I do not see how all of this can be, or what the action of the wind has to do with the Spirit in the new birth."

Verse 10. The word *master* is from a Greek word that means "teacher." Being a teacher of Israel would not be a reason why he should understand the new birth under the Gospel system, therefore we know that *these things* refers to the subject of the temporal wind that Jesus described in verse 8.

Verse 11. Jesus gives Nicodemus a mild rebuke for stumbling over what was said to him about the things in nature, which were matters that should be accepted as facts by every person who has made any observation.

Verse 12. The only verse that has any *earthly things* in it as far as this conversation is concerned, is verse 8, the one about *the wind*. This again shows that passage refers to the literal wind, and is used to illustrate the point stated in verse 10.

Verse 13. The thought in this verse is that the Son of man had previously

been in Heaven, and hence was in a position to speak on heavenly subjects, such as the new birth. This passage closed up the discussion on the subject of the new birth into the kingdom of God that Jesus was about to set up on the earth.

Verse 14. The account of the serpent is in Numbers 21: 9. There were no curative qualities in the brasen serpent, but those who looked upon it were cured by the Lord as a reward for their faith. The serpent was placed on a pole so all could see it.

Verse 15. The literal sight of Jesus on the cross is not what saves sinners, for only a few men of the world could see it. Hence the Lord makes his comparison on the principle of believing, for the death of the Son of God on the cross will benefit no one who does not have faith in that great sacrifice.

Verse 16. The word *so* is from *HOUTO*, and means, "in such a manner." The point is not how much God loved the world, but what kind of love He had. The answer is stated by telling how God manifested it, which was by the sacrifice He made for the sins of the world. God is the maker and owner of all that is in the universe, and no sacrifice could have been so costly that He would have been unable to produce it. But the value of the sacrifice (from the standpoint of its price or cost) is not the question. It is the fact that God gave up His *only begotten* Son. There was only one being in the universe who possessed that qualification. The subject is explained in detail at Luke 1: 35, and I urge the reader to see and carefully consider that place, then come back to the present paragraph. *Perish* and *everlasting life* are put as alternatives for the responsible members of the world. There is no middle ground; every creature that God has formed is destined to experience one or the other of these lots endlessly, after the judgment.

Verse 17. The world was all under the guilt of unbelief before Jesus came into it (Romans 11: 32), therefore his coming was not for the purpose of pronouncing condemnation upon it; that had already been done. But the condition called for something to counteract it, and the Son of God was sent among mankind for that purpose.

Verse 18. *He that believeth on him is not condemned*, since faith in Christ leads to obedience which lifts the condemnation from him. (See Romans 8:

1.) *He that believeth not is condemned already*. That is because it leaves him in the state he was in before Jesus came into the world. (See the preceding verse.)

Verse 19. The condemnation that rests upon the world is not an arbitrary decree of God, but is based on the truth that men prefer darkness to light. The reason for their unwise choice is in their wanton manner of life, which is an evil one.

Verse 20. It is a bad indication when men prefer darkness to light, for it shows they are practicing evil deeds. If they were to operate under the light, it would expose them and show them to be guilty of evil practices.

Verse 21. On the other hand, if a man is a lover of truth, he will want his life to be revealed in order to see if it is correct. A sincere man, even though he may be in error, will wish to be sure of himself, and he knows he can never be certain as to what is right, except as his conduct is regulated by the divine truth.

Verse 22. Jesus had been in Jerusalem which is in the province of Judea. *Land of Judea* means the rural or outlying territory of the district. The purpose for going out there is indicated by the statement that he tarried with his disciples and baptized, all of which could be conveniently accomplished in the country.

Verse 23. Salim was a town not far west of the Jordan, and near it was a smaller place called Aenon. John the Baptist made that his headquarters at one time, because his business was to baptize people, and there was *much water* in that locality. According to some information in Funk and Wagnalls Standard Bible Dictionary, the water supply in that vicinity was in the form of springs.

Verse 24. This is the only place where John mentions the imprisonment of John the Baptist. The manner of the injection of the subject into the story, indicates that John's work was about over, and that his imprisonment was in the near future.

Verse 25. A distinction is made between *John's disciples* and *the Jews*, although John did not baptize any but Jews (Luke 1: 16). This shows that while all of John's disciples were Jews, not all of the Jews as a nation became his disciples, and hence were not the people whom he prepared for Christ.

Verse 26. This association between John and Jesus, and John's witness



that he bore for Jesus, are recorded in chapter 1: 19-29. *They* denotes John's disciples who are referred to in the preceding verse. They seemed to be concerned because their teacher was not drawing the crowds that Jesus was having.

Verse 27. John was always unselfish, and appeared pleased over any good news about Jesus. Instead of being envious, he always taught that it was expected for Jesus to increase, while he (John) would decrease. He went further and told his disciples that the success of Jesus was given him from Heaven.

Verse 28. John also reminded his disciples that he had previously predicted this very turn of affairs. Such predictions and instructions are in chapter 1: 15, 27.

Verse 29. John continued his exaltation of Jesus and the diminishing of his own work and importance. He did it under the figure of a social custom regarding weddings. The superiority of a bridegroom is manifested by the fact that he it is who possesses the bride. However, the friend of the groom finds satisfaction in hearing the voice and seeing the happiness of the bridegroom. In the illustration, John is the friend and Jesus is the bridegroom, which causes him (John) to have full rejoicing.

Verse 30. John once more makes the prediction that the difference of importance between him and Jesus was to continue and widen.

Verse 31. John was an inspired man, and his teaching was directed by the Holy Spirit. But he was a man only, and his origin was wholly through the natural laws of reproduction. Jesus was both human and divine, and hence John said he was *from above*. That is why John was to decrease while Jesus was to increase.

Verse 32. As Jesus was from above, he was able to speak from personal knowledge. Notwithstanding, *no man* (comparatively speaking) seemed willing to receive the testimony of such an infallible witness.

Verse 33. *Hath set to his seal* is all from SPHRAGIZO, which Thayer defines at this place, "To confirm, authenticate, place beyond doubt." It means that when a man receives the testimony of a personal witness like Jesus, he is thoroughly convinced that the testimony is from God and must be true.

Verse 34. *Measure* is from METRON,

and Thayer's first definition is, "An instrument for measuring." It means that God did not use any measuring instrument in bestowing the Spirit on his Son. His possession of the Spirit was total; unlimited. From this we may gather further information on the much discussed subject of receiving the Spirit. The fact of John's stating that Christ received it without measure, implies that various measures of it may be given to men. Thus the apostles received that amount required to baptize them, and empower them to bestow spiritual gifts upon Christians. Then those Christians in the days of miracles possessed that measure that enabled them to perform miracles, but not enough of it to transfer it to others. And by all these considerations, we can understand how a person could be in possession of the Holy Spirit, but in a lesser measure than would enable him to perform any miracle. Further comments will be offered on this subject as the various occasions may suggest in our study of the New Testament.

Verse 35. A part of this verse was prospective, for not until Jesus had risen from the dead did God give unto his Son this complete authority. (See Matthew 28: 18.) But the unmeasured possession of the Spirit was given to him at his baptism (chapter 1: 33), and it abided with him throughout his work while on the earth.

Verse 36. For the first part of this verse, see the comments on verses 17-19. For the word *see*, read the comments at verse 3.

#### JOHN 4

Verse 1. *When* is from *hos*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "II. as a particle of time; a. as, when, since." The Lord always knew what men were thinking and saying (chapter 2: 25), so this word means that Jesus did a certain thing because he knew, etc. The report that He knew about was what the Pharisees had been told; namely, that Jesus was making more disciples than John. That report was true, and it harmonized with what John had been telling his audiences about how Jesus was to increase over him.

Verse 2. Things done by the disciples of Jesus and under his supervision, are said to be done by Him. The original word for *disciples* has the nominative inflection, giving it the meaning as if it said, "Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples did."

The validity of baptism never did depend on the one doing the baptizing (except in the case of John the Baptist), therefore it was not necessary for Jesus personally to do this work. His first disciples had been baptized by John, who had come among the Jews to baptize them and prepare a people for the Lord. When Jesus took charge of these people prepared for him, it was proper that they should do the physical work of baptizing the new converts made under the teaching of Jesus. On the same principle, it was proper for the new disciples to assist in the work of baptizing the believers.

Verse 3. Envy is a terrible condition of the mind. The Pharisees did not have any great love for John, although they pretended to be interested in his work (Matthew 3: 7), yet they could not bear to see Jesus having any special success. Rather than come out into an open conflict with them at this time, the Lord decided to leave Judea and go to Galilee, which was the home of his childhood and early manhood.

Verse 4. Samaria lay between Judea and Galilee, which is the reason this verse says *he must needs go through Samaria*.

Verse 5. The history of this transaction of Jacob may be seen in Genesis 33: 19; 42: 22; Joshua 24: 32. When the Israelites took possession of Palestine, the territory later called Samaria was allotted to the sons of Jacob.

Verse 6. Wells were important improvements in ancient times, because it required much manual labor to produce one. Jacob either dug this well, or obtained it otherwise, and left it to his posterity. These wells had a curb extending above the ground for the protection of animals. It was on this curb that Jesus sat in his journey. Being *wearied*. This word is from ΚΟΡΙΑΟ, which Thayer defines, "to grow weary, tired, exhausted." We should always think of the Saviour as possessing a body that was just like ours as far as the laws of the flesh are concerned. It is true that he was the Son of God and possessed miraculous power, but there is not a single instance recorded where he used his supernatural power to relieve his personal needs. In all the trials and necessities of life, he met the circumstances in the same way that other righteous people are expected to do. (See Hebrews 4: 15.) When Jesus became tired from walking, he sat down

to rest for the same reason that other men would do it. It was about noon, so we may expect to see some people coming to the well for water. And since it was this time of the day, the disciples had gone to the city to buy food.

Verse 7. The city of Samaria was the capital of the region of Samaria (mentioned previously in this chapter). It was near this city where the well was located where Jesus was resting. The woman of Samaria was a resident of the city with that name, and she came to the well for water. Jesus was not too tired to use the opportunity for giving this woman some spiritual instructions. He always adapted his teaching to the circumstances of the occasion. Coming to the well for water indicated the woman was needing that necessity of her temporal life, and that would find her mind prepared to appreciate some thoughts on the subject of spiritual water of life. Jesus opened the subject by asking the woman for a drink.

Verse 8. This fact is referred to at verse 6.

Verse 9. The woman was so surprised at the friendliness of Jesus that she seemed to overlook the subject of water for the moment. She expressed herself to Jesus accordingly, giving as the basis of her astonishment the attitude of the Jews toward the Samaritans, that they had no dealings with them. One of the reasons the Jews had such a dislike for the Samaritans, was their inconsistent claims about their relation to the Jewish nation. Josephus gives us a description of this subject in his *Antiquities*, Book 9, Chapter 14, Section 3, as follows: "When they [the Samaritans] see the Jews in prosperity, they pretend that they are changed, and allied to them, and call them kinsmen, as though they were derived from Joseph, and had by that means an original alliance with them. But when they see them falling into a low condition, they say they are no way related to them, and that the Jews have no right to expect any kindness or marks of kindred from them, but they declare that they are sojourners, from other countries."

Verse 10. Jesus did not make any direct reply to the woman's remarks, but continued his own line about water. He went a little farther into the subject, and suggested that she would have been the one to ask for

water, had she realized who it was who was talking to her.

Verse 11. The woman is still thinking of literal drinking water. It was evidently the practice for people to bring their own cord with which to draw water from the well. Seeing that Jesus did not have such, she could not understand how he would perform the act of courtesy for her.

Verse 12. *Art thou greater.* The last word is from MEGAS, which has a wide range of meaning. As it is used in this passage it means, "stronger or more able or better equipped." Jacob was certainly as well prepared as anyone need be to get water from this well, for he used it to supply his family and also his cattle. Yet even he had to use some means such as a cord to obtain the water. *Father* is from PATER, and Thayer's first definition is, "Generator or male ancestor," and it was in this sense the woman used the word, for the Samaritans claimed to have blood relation with the Jewish race. This was true to a limited extent, which may be learned from 2 Kings 17: 24-33, which is commented upon in volume 2 of the Old Testament Commentary.

Verse 13. We have an excellent example of the proper way to approach a subject figuratively. Jesus did not launch upon the theme with the full comparison, for the woman would not have been able to understand it; instead, he unfolded it little by little. The woman needed only to be reminded that such water as the well furnished would not give permanent relief, but must be drunk of time after time.

Verse 14. The Bible does not contradict itself, and when it may seem to, there is always a fair explanation if we will search for it. Jesus pronounced a blessing on those who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5: 6), but here he says that if a man takes a drink of the water He provides, he *shall never thirst*. The word is from DIPSAO, and Thayer's first definition of it is, "To suffer thirst; suffer from thirst." A person can have a healthy desire for a drink of water, which will cause him to relish the water and feel satisfied afterward, and yet not have to be in actual suffering for it; such is the meaning of the statement of Jesus. The person who accepts the provision offered by Jesus need never be famished and suffer for the want of a drink, for he will have that well always with him, so that he

may keep his desire constantly satisfied. That is what Jesus meant by the beautiful statement that it will *be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life*.

Verse 15. The woman was still somewhat in the dark as to the kind of water Jesus was offering her. She had the idea it had such qualities that it would take the place of that in the well. It is no wonder, then, that she requested the water from Jesus.

Verse 16. Having conducted the figurative comparison to the point where the woman was ready to make some personal application, Jesus concluded to arouse her to a sense of her own moral and spiritual defects. The subject of water will not be mentioned again. Jesus opened the next phase of the lesson by telling the woman to call her husband. This was not because He thought the man should receive some teaching also, for there is no evidence that he was ever called or appeared on the scene. It was the Lord's way of stirring up her conscience.

Verse 17. The woman said she had no husband, and Jesus agreed with her.

Verse 18. In this verse Jesus gave the reason for verifying the woman's statement in the preceding verse. This has been a stumbling block for many who have been in confusion over the Biblical position on the marriage relation. The only marriage "ceremony" that God ever gave for the institution is the fleshly union of one male with one female. That law is stated in Genesis 2: 24, and verified by Jesus in Matthew 19: 5; Mark 10: 6-9, and by Paul in Ephesians 5: 31. But the objector says this woman was thus joined to the sixth man, yet Jesus said he was not her husband. That is because the laws of man came in and required certain ceremonial regulations before a union would be recognized as legal. While the Lord did not originate this ruling, yet He recognized it, and requires his creatures to obey it.

The confusion is caused largely by the term "husband," which is a legal one and not a natural one, and has been used by the translators to distinguish between a man who has complied with the legal regulations for marriage, and one who merely has relations with a woman without having done so. The terms "husband" and "man" are from the one Greek word ANER, and mean the same as far as the language is concerned. "Husband" is the wrong word to emphasize in this

passage, for the word "man" would be as correct a translation as the other. So that, it would be just as correct for the verse to be translated, "Thou hast had five *men*; and he whom thou now hast is not thy *man*." All of these persons were *men*, but the one the woman was living with was not hers, because they had not complied with the laws of the land that would give her legal possession of this man. So if the reader will place the emphasis on the words "had" and "hast," which is where it belongs, showing ownership, he will be saved the confusion so prevalent over this subject. (See also my comments on Matthew 19: 5, 6.)

Verse 19. By a *prophet* the woman meant that Jesus possessed super-human knowledge, and as such he belonged in the rank of Biblical persons who could interpret spiritual matters. She was convinced of this by what He said concerning her domestic life. To use popular language, she was secretly living with a man "to whom she was not married."

Verse 20. When the woman concluded that Jesus was a Jewish prophet, she also believed he would be informed in all the matters pertaining to the history and religious teaching of the Jews, which explains her remarks in this verse. *Our fathers* means the early ancestors of the Samaritan race and nation. The mountain referred to by the woman was Gerizim, about 25 or 30 miles north of Jerusalem. Smith's Bible Dictionary says, "Gerizim was the site of the Samaritan temple, which was built there after the captivity, in rivalry with the temple at Jerusalem." In the article "Samaritans," the same Bible Dictionary says the following: "The animosity of the Samaritans became more intense than ever. They are said to have done everything in their power to annoy the Jews. Their own temple on Gerizim they considered to be much superior to that at Jerusalem. Toward the mountain, even after the temple on it had fallen, wherever they were they directed their worship. . . . The law (i. e. the five books of Moses) was their sole code; for they rejected every other book in the Jewish canon" [accepted list of books]. This information from the authentic work of reference, explains the woman's reference to the two places of worship, and what the Samaritan "fathers," and the Jewish prophets (of whom she thought Jesus to be one) said about them.

Verse 21. Jesus did not enter into

the controversy between the Samaritans and Jews as to which place was the more important. It was not worth while to do so, because He was going soon to set up a system of worship that would not depend upon any particular spot, geographically speaking, for its genuineness. That is why Jesus said, "*neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem*. Not that men would not be allowed to worship God in those places, but their services would not be accepted on the basis of where they were performed.

Verse 22. The Samaritans rejected most of the Old Testament, which ruled out all of the prophetic writings except the few passages to be found in the five books of Moses. With such a partial basis for their guide, Jesus declared they did not know what they were doing when they professed to perform their services. *Salvation is of the Jews*. Every writer of the Old Testament was a Jew except Job, and he had some of the blood of Abraham in his veins. (See notes on page 351, volume 2 of the Old Testament Commentary.) Since the entire volume of religious revelation from God was given through the Jews, they would certainly know something of the subject. (See Romans 3: 1, 2.)

Verse 23. Notwithstanding this advantage the Jews had, the time was near when all previous modes and places for religious activities were to be replaced with the final system of God, unto which and for which all those forms were instituted among men. The outstanding feature of the new system was to be its spiritual character, in contrast with the formal rituals and material requirements the old law provided.

Verse 24. *God is a Spirit*. This does not mean that He is not a personal God, but his personalities are spiritual, hence He expects the worship offered to him to be spiritual. Such worship would not depend upon literal mountains or walled cities as proper situations in which to perform it satisfactorily to the Lord.

Verse 25. Although the Jews and Samaritans had no dealings with each other, and notwithstanding the latter rejected all of the Old Testament except the five books of Moses, yet they had a belief that a great person known as the Messiah or Christ was to come. This belief would be in harmony with a passage in their own document; namely, the prediction that a prophet was to come like Moses. (See Deuter-

onomy 18: 18-20.) They believed this Messiah was to be a very wise person, who would be able to explain all of the points that pertained to the Scriptures. The woman must have partly suspected Jesus to be that great One, from the wisdom that he had been showing through the conversation. Doubtless she began to think along that line as far back as verse 19, when she recognized him as being a "prophet." But she finally brought Jesus to a personal acknowledgment of his identity by her remark about the Messiah to come.

Verse 26. Jesus made this "good confession" to the woman, that he virtually made later to Pilate (chapter 18: 37), and that others are asked to make of Him.

Verse 27. The disciples marveled for the same reason for which the woman was surprised at the beginning of the conversation recorded in verse 9. There is no evidence they knew anything about her personal character, but they did know she was a Samaritan. The disciples were shocked, evidently, yet their respect for their Teacher held them back from criticizing him.

Verse 28. Having been convinced that the expected Messiah had come, the woman turned into a messenger, and left her original purpose that brought her to the well, and went into the city to speak to the citizens therein.

Verse 29. *Told me all things.* This is obviously an accommodative phrase. We have the conversation on record, and the part of the woman's secret life that Jesus told her is in verse 18. But if he knew the facts about her domestic life, something that she supposed no one but the man and herself knew, then certainly He could read her entire life as if it were an open book. And such a person, in her mind, had all of the essential qualifications of the one to be anointed, which means the Christ.

Verse 30. The people of the city accepted the invitation of the woman to meet the man who had told her so much. The result of the meeting will be seen later.

Verse 31. The disciples had gone to the city to buy food, hence it was natural for them to expect Jesus to eat. Apparently he did not show much interest in the food, after they had made the trip to the city for it, hence their insisting that He should eat.

Verse 32. Doubtless, the arrival of the people from the city, presented another opportunity before Jesus to en-

gage in something more important than partaking of temporal food. That is what He meant by the indirect or figurative remark about his having food of which they had no information.

Verse 33. The disciples thought Jesus meant temporal food, and that someone unknown to them had served it to him while they were in the city.

Verse 34. Jesus used *meat* (food) in a figurative sense. The word is from BROMA, which Thayer defines, "That which is eaten, food." He explains the way it is used in this passage to mean, "That which delights and truly satisfies the mind." The context justifies his explanation, for it would certainly satisfy the mind of Jesus to do the will of his Father. To *finish* His work meant to carry through to the end all that was in the mind of God when he sent his Son into the world.

Verse 35. Again Jesus uses some things in the temporal realm, to illustrate those in the spiritual. Temporal harvests are possible only after certain waiting periods, while the spiritual harvest is always ready to be gathered. That is because the souls of men are always subject to being gathered into the service of God.

Verse 36. *Wages* is used to represent the reward that all men will receive who do faithful work for the Lord. The production of a crop requires both a sowing and a reaping, but these are not always done by the same man. However, if they are working in harmony with each other, both will be benefited by the fruit produced.

Verse 37. Jesus only repeats the facts that are discussed in the preceding verse. It is a general principle, and the explanation will come in the next verse.

Verse 38. The *other men* means the Old Testament prophets and the work of John the Baptist. All of these servants of God had done much to prepare the way for the apostles to gather up the results. Paul teaches the same lesson in 1 Corinthians 3: 6-8.

Verse 39. The Samaritans were a mixed race, and thus were "part Jew," hence they were not regarded strictly as Gentiles. Jesus made a distinction between them in Matthew 10: 5, when he sent the apostles forth on their first mission. It also explains why the Gospel was offered to and accepted by the people of Samaria (Acts 8: 5-12), when it is generally believed (and correctly so) that it was offered to the

Gentiles for the first time when it was offered to Cornelius in Acts 10.

Verse 40. The Samaritans were so much interested in Christ, they urged him to spend some time with them. He did so, delaying his journey for two days.

Verse 41. The delay was profitable, for *many more believed* on Him.

Verse 42. There is no evidence that Jesus performed any miracle among these Samaritans. They explained their conversion on the ground of hearing His word. Jesus was able by his teaching to convince these people that he was the great One that was promised in the Scriptures and had been taught them by their leaders.

Verse 43. Galilee was an extensive territory, so that Jesus could go into that district, and yet not go into the immediate vicinity of Nazareth, which was originally considered his own country. (See Matthew 4: 13; 13: 54-57; Luke 4: 23.)

Verse 44. Because of the truth stated here, Jesus came into that part of Galilee that contained Cana (verse 46), instead of that where Nazareth was located.

Verse 45. The Galilaeans (those not in the region of Nazareth) received Jesus, because they had seen his works at the feast of the Passover in Jerusalem.

Verse 46. Smith's Bible Dictionary says Cana was not far from Capernaum, and the arrival at Cana was soon known at Capernaum. The miracle of making wine out of water had doubtless been reported generally, and the people of the neighboring towns were convinced that Jesus was able to accomplish miraculous cures. A *nobleman* was an officer serving next to a king, and therefore was an important person.

Verse 47. The nobleman went in person to Cana, and begged Jesus to come heal his son who was at the point of death from a serious fever.

Verse 48. As a test of the nobleman's faith, Jesus intimated that he would first perform some miracle, as evidence that he was able to accomplish healing the boy.

Verse 49. The nobleman was already satisfied about the ability of Jesus to work miracles. Of course Jesus knew his mind, but it is the Lord's will that people express their faith outwardly, and this was the way that Jesus brought forth the remark

of the nobleman. It was natural for him to feel anxious, because it was his son who was seriously ill, hence he pressed his request very earnestly.

Verse 50. Jesus did not accompany the father back to his home, but bade him go on his way, with the assurance that his son would live. The nobleman was satisfied to leave for home alone, because he believed the word of Jesus. Had he lingered to repeat his request for Jesus to go with him, it would have indicated that he was in doubt.

Verse 51. The nobleman did not reach home until the day after his conversation with Jesus. His servants saw him coming and went to meet him with the good news.

Verse 52. He did not question the word of his servants, but wanted to check on the saying of Jesus; he asked them when the son began to improve. The seventh hour would be the same as our 1 P. M., and it explains why the nobleman was not able to reach home until the next day.

Verse 53. The report coincided with the hour in which Jesus assured him that his son would live. We note the servants said the fever *left him* at that hour, but his full recovery was a matter of some time. This should not disturb us, for Jesus only said "thy son liveth," and to start his improvement, He caused the fever to leave him immediately. His convalescence could be taken care of by nature, without any miracle. The case caused the whole household to become believers in Jesus.

Verse 54. *Second miracle* means in Cana; the first is in chapter 2.

## JOHN 5

Verse 1. This feast was the Passover, and the second one that Jesus attended after his baptism. The next one is recorded in chapter 6: 4.

Verse 2. *Sheep market* is from the Greek word PROBATICOS, which Thayer defines, "the sheep-gate." The Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) uses the same word, and Donnegan defines it, "Pertaining to sheep, or to cattle, especially sheep." This spot is mentioned in Nehemiah 3: 1, 32. *Porch* is from STOA, which the lexicon of Thayer defines, "a portico, a covered colonnade where people can stand or walk, protected from the weather and the heat of the sun."

Verses 3, 4. The greater part of this paragraph is omitted from some translations, on the ground that some early



Greek manuscripts do not contain it. I have consulted the information that is available to me, with the result that the subject is left in an indefinite state. Perhaps it is because there is little evidence of importance on the controversy. Various kinds of miracles were performed in ancient times, and the one described in this passage would not be entirely out of line with the Lord's manner of doing things. However, whether the miracle actually occurred as stated, or that the people had a tradition on which they relied, is immaterial as far as the work of Jesus is concerned. That some periodical disturbance of the water took place need not be disputed. Jesus did not make any controversy about the doctrine of "Transmigration of souls" (Matthew 14: 2), but healed the blind man independently of it. The writer does not show Jesus as even referring to the question of this agitation of the pool, therefore I shall comment on the remaining verses in their order.

Verse 5. This man's case was chronic, for he had been afflicted 38 years.

Verse 6. Of course Jesus knew the history of the case, but his approach to the patient was made in the spirit of a sympathetic well-wisher. The patient did not know the identity of Jesus (verse 13) until sometime afterward.

Verse 7. The impotent (weak or feeble) man had confidence in the curative properties of the water, whatever was the basis of that belief. He explained to Jesus why he was compelled to lie there from time to time, not getting any relief from his illness.

Verse 8. Jesus made no reference to the proposition in connection with the pool, but bade the man not only to arise, but to carry his bed as he walked.

Verse 9. A nervous person might be induced to bestir himself momentarily, by the influence of suggestion. But it would require something more than "mind over matter" to enable a man who had been physically helpless for 38 years, not only to walk, but to carry a bed that was large enough to support a man. His recovery was complete and immediate, because that was what Jesus willed to be accomplished in this case. In that of the nobleman's son (preceding chapter), Jesus only professed to start him on the road to recovery, which was done by causing the "temperature" to drop to normal. That feat was also immediate, for it

was done the "same hour" that Jesus spoke the word.

Verse 10. The Jews were not candid enough to object to the curing of the impotent man, but pretended to be opposed to breaking the sabbath.

Verse 11. The man did not express any conclusion, but the facts he related implied one that could not be disputed. Anyone could tell a man to get up and carry his bed, but not everyone who might say that could enable the patient to do so. This combination of facts was the strongest kind of evidence that it was no ordinary person who had befriended the impotent man.

Verse 12. We are not told whether the Jews suspected who the man's benefactor was, but it is reasonable to suppose they did, in view of their hatred for Him.

Verse 13. After Jesus cured the weak man, He took advantage of the crowd to disappear. Hence the former victim of the affliction told the truth, if he stated he did not know who it was who told him to carry his bed.

Verse 14. *Sin no more.* We are not informed what sin the man had committed, that brought on him the chronic case of physical prostration. And it did not have to be a miraculous punishment, although God did sometimes send physical judgments upon people in the days of miracles. But there are some sins of a moral nature, that can result in serious consequences to a man's health. But if this man should be so ungrateful as to sin again, the Lord would not wait for nature to inflict a penalty upon him, but would send one Himself, that would be worse than the affliction he had this time.

Verse 15. The meeting of Jesus and the man in the temple, and the conversation which they had, revealed to the former impotent man who his benefactor was. He seems to have thought the Jews had asked him the question about the identity of his friend, for the sake of information. Now that he has learned who he was, he felt that he should give them the information he could not before.

Verse 16. The Jews evidently knew that Jesus was going about doing good to the people, and that he was likely the one who had healed the impotent man. But their envy of Him was made more bitter because the man had learned about the identity of his friend, and seemed to be interested in His

work. The envy of the Jews became so active they had a desire to kill Him.

Verse 17. The Jews were so bitter against Jesus that they accused him of breaking the sabbath. Jesus made his reply by asserting his relation with God as his Father, and his cooperation with Him in the good work. The Jews made great claims of respect for God, and would never admit that He would violate the very day that he had declared to be holy. Now that Jesus claimed his work (even on the sabbath) to be as a co-worker with God, it was more than they could stand.

Verse 18. A new cause for murderous hatred was furnished the Jews by the answer of Jesus. They pretended to be outraged at his claim of being the Son of God.

Verse 19. This verse expresses a situation that is generally true in principle. A dutiful son will logically imitate the actions of his father. Since God does not hesitate to bestow works of mercy on the unfortunate, even on the sabbath day, so the Son may properly do the same without being condemned as a breaker of the holy day.

Verse 20. On the principle set forth in the preceding verse, a loving and divine Father will take his Son into his confidence, and inform him of the great things that are being done through Providential benevolence. And there were to be still greater things done than the healing of an afflicted man on the sabbath day.

Verse 21. One of the works that are greater than healing a sick man, is that of raising a man from the dead. The Son was destined also to perform that great work of quickening the dead by the sound of his voice.

Verse 22. *Hath committed all judgment unto the Son.* This was said in prospect, looking to the time when the Son would complete the test. (See Matthew 28: 18.)

Verse 23. Men are required to recognize the close relationship between the Father and the Son, in order to receive the favor of either of them.

Verse 24. The subject in the preceding verse is continued in this as to the close partnership between the Father and the Son. The passage adds the results for those who recognize that union, by showing a practical belief in the same. *Death and life* refers to spiritual matters, because all who refuse to accept God and Christ and obey their law will be condemned to everlasting death.

Verse 25. This passage pertains to the same death and life as that in the preceding verse. To *hear* the voice of the Son of God in the sense of this statement, means to heed and obey His requirements; a dead faith will not save.

Verse 26. A father transfers his characteristics to his offspring as an established rule. This relation between God and Christ is no exception to the rule, for Jesus is able to impart spiritual life to those who will accept it, because He is the Son of the life-giving God.

Verse 27. This inheritance that Christ received from his Father, entitled him to be the executioner of the divine judgment upon the world.

Verse 28. Jesus passes from figurative and spiritual language, to literal or physical. The graves are the enclosures for the bodies of those who have died, through separation of soul and body. These dead shall be brought out of their graves literally by the call of Jesus on the day of the general resurrection.

Verse 29. There will be only one literal resurrection day, on which all of the dead will come forth. The fact of coming from the dead will not depend upon character or conduct, for the whole human family that has died will come forth. *The hour* that the voice of Christ calls is the one instant when the tremendous event will occur. But as to what will be awaiting them after coming to life again, that does depend on their conduct, as stated in this verse. This resurrection and what will follow is predicted in Daniel 12: 2.

Verse 30. This is the same teaching as that in verse 19.

Verse 31. *Bear witness of myself.* This means if His testimony is by itself, and not in harmony with that of his Father. That is why Jesus always worked in harmony with God, so that their united efforts would verify each other.

Verse 32. Not only did God verify the Sonship of Christ (Matthew 3: 17), but there was another among men who added his testimony to the divine witness, to be named soon.

Verse 33. John the Baptist was the other witness referred to above. The time the Jews sent to inquire of John is recorded in chapter 1: 19-27.

Verse 34. *I receive not testimony from man.* This denotes that Jesus did not depend on human testimony

for his authority. *That ye might be saved.* The standing of Jesus did not depend upon human testimony. However, the salvation of men does depend on their faith, and Jesus was willing to cite them to any truth that would strengthen their faith. The corroborating testimony of John was a help in that direction.

Verse 35. The Jews had once shown much admiration for the work of John. If they became cool toward that testimony, that would not weaken its truthfulness.

Verse 36. The works to which Jesus refers are those mentioned in chapter 20: 30, 31. Had he been an impostor, he could not have performed these deeds.

Verse 37. No man in normal flesh ever saw the form or person of God, for to do so would mean his death (Exodus 33: 20). But God wished human beings to have the testimony of Him, hence he furnished it by aiding the Son to perform the miraculous works.

Verse 38. The gist of this verse, is that all who will nourish the word of God in their hearts, will signify it by accepting that of His Son, whom he hath sent into the world in the form of human flesh.

Verse 39. As the King James translators word this verse, it sounds like a command or directive, telling the Jews to go and search the scriptures. Several other versions have the pronoun "ye" before the word "search," and the inflection of the word in the Greek composition justifies it. The context also bears out that form of rendering. Jesus was showing the Jews another of their inconsistencies. They professed to have so much confidence in the Old Testament that they would search its pages to find the conditions on which they could obtain eternal life. And yet, that very document had told the Jews that a person like Christ was to come.

Verse 40. The one person that their Scriptures predicted should come into the world to save it, these Jews refused to accept that they might be saved.

Verse 41. This could not mean that no man honored Jesus, for even the "common people (the crowds) heard him gladly" (Mark 12: 37). It denotes that Jesus was not depending on human support for his standing.

Verse 42. This accusation that Jesus made was logical, and based on the

close relationship and attachment that God and his Son have for each other. If they loved God from the heart (and not merely from the lips), they would necessarily love his Son, which the Jews did not, or they would not be wanting to kill him.

Verse 43. It is hard to understand why false teachers can have more success in leading people than the true. Perhaps it is because such characters are unscrupulous about the means they will use to put over their theories.

Verse 44. Those who receive honor from men are selfish, and also feel obligated to "return the favor" to the others. Such worldly-minded persons cannot have much respect for the testimony of God, which requires them to disown themselves.

Verse 45. The thought in this verse is that Jesus is not alone in condemning these Jews. The giver of the law of which they boasted to be followers, already accused them by his predictions. In Deuteronomy 18: 18-20, Moses predicted that a prophet was to come among the Jews, and we know that was Christ. In that prophecy, a condemnation is uttered against the man who would not hearken to the words of that prophet.

Verse 46. When the Jews rejected Jesus it was the same as rejecting Moses.

Verse 47. Reasoning back the other direction, Jesus concludes they are bound to disbelieve his words, when they reject the words of their boasted lawgiver.

## JOHN 6

Verse 1. John gives us two names for the same body of water, and in Luke 5: 1 it is called the "lake of Gennesaret." Jesus spent much time near this body of water.

Verse 2. Curiosity as well as genuine interest, drew great crowds after Him.

Verse 3. According to Mark 6: 31, Jesus took his disciples and went into the mountain for relief from the crowds, for they interfered even with their meals.

Verse 4. This is the third occurrence of the Passover in the course of Christ's public ministry. The fourth and last is in chapter 13.

Verse 5. The diversion from the crowds was never very long. The compassion of Jesus was always present, and at this time he realized that the people would need food, being out in the unpopulated place. Jesus aroused

the interest of one of the apostles by suggesting that they provide food for the multitude.

Verse 6. *Prove* is from PEIRAZO, and Thayer's definition at this place is, "to try, make trial of, test." He then explains his definition to mean, "For the purpose of ascertaining his quality, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself." Jesus did not have to use any such means for his own information (chapter 2: 24, 25), but wished to make it a test for the sake of an example. It was a test of faith, for the apostles had previously seen Jesus perform miracles as great as feeding a multitude.

Verse 7. Philip's remark showed that the "proof" Jesus used was testing him.

Verses 8, 9. Another apostle was being as sorely tested as Philip. He spoke as if the Lord expected them to feed the multitude with their personal supplies. John does not record any of the conversation that Jesus had on the merits of the test. But on another occasion, where this event along with another took place, He accused them of having little faith. (See Matthew 16: 8-10.)

Verse 10. *There was much grass.* This fact is mentioned to show the propriety of asking the people to sit down. It would have required another miracle to provide seats for five thousand people, hence it was perfectly reasonable to have them sit down, when there was an abundance of the green grass on which to be seated.

Verse 11. Jesus gave thanks, which was equivalent to "blessing" the bread.

Verse 12. *That nothing be lost.* This is the only instance of feeding the multitude, where the reason is given for gathering up the scraps. Jesus would never need them in his future service to the people, for even these materials had been miraculously produced. The reason for the instruction was to teach a lesson of economy.

Verse 13. People who are still hungry do not stop eating as long as there is yet something to eat at hand. The fact of having this much left after eating, proves that the multitude had a sufficiency of food.

Verse 14. The miracle served two purposes; it satisfied the hunger of the people, and also presented a proof of the personality of Jesus. This was one of the purposes of all miracles performed by Jesus. (See chapter 20: 30, 31.)

Verse 15. *Take him by force* sounds as if mere human beings could overpower the Son of God by superior strength. Of course we know that is not the idea, for He who could calm the storm and the raging sea, could certainly prevent any physical effort to take Him. But the people meant well in their intention to "draft" Jesus for the position of king. However, that was not the manner in which He was to come into his kingdom; besides, it was not the time for such a move. But rather than offend their good motives by overpowering force, Jesus quietly moved out and went into a mountain.

Verses 16-21. See the comments at Matthew 14: 22-34.

Verse 22. The people did not see when Jesus got out of the crowd to go into the mountain (verse 15), yet they realized He was not among the passengers on this boat.

Verse 23. These other boats came after the event of feeding the multitude. John mentions this to make the story clear to the reader. The people knew that Jesus did not get into the boat with the apostles. It might have been thought that Jesus was probably in one of these other boats. This is why John explains that the other boats came there *after* Jesus had given thanks, which would mean that He disappeared in some manner unknown to the crowd still remaining at that place.

Verse 24. Seeing that neither Jesus or his disciples were at that spot, they made use of these boats that had just come, and went across the sea to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. They had no direct information that Jesus would be in Capernaum, but went to that city as the place most likely to find him, that being his residence.

Verse 25. The surprise indicated by these people in their question was doubtless sincere. However, Jesus knew their chief motive in following, and rebuked them for it.

Verse 26. The leading motive of these people was their temporal appetite. Jesus did not mean it was wrong for a person to seek to satisfy his desire for food, for such a desire is natural and needs to be gratified.

Verse 27. The Bible does not contradict itself, hence an apparent conflict in its language will be understood when all the passages involved are considered. Ephesians 4: 28 directs men to labor for the necessities of life, so we are to understand our

present passage to mean that our desire for them must not be our chief purpose in the world; it should all be regarded in the light of Matthew 6: 33. *Sealed* is from SPHRAGIZO, and Thayer defines it at this place, "To confirm, authenticate, place beyond doubt." The idea is that we should seek the food that the Son of man offers which will lead to everlasting life. This is assured since the Father has placed his seal or stamp of approval on his Son's work.

Verse 28. The people were interested to the extent of making inquiry about carrying out the advice of Jesus that he had given for their benefit.

Verse 29. Much of John's account of the Gospel shows Jesus using temporal meat and drink to illustrate the spiritual. *Work . . . that ye believe.* Jesus meant that if a man really believes in Him, he will do the work that is required of him.

Verse 30. These Jews were still thinking of literal food, and were somewhat confused about how any improvement could be made over what God had provided for them in the wilderness. They called for some evidence that Jesus had anything better for them.

Verse 31. The Jews specified the provisions from God to which they referred in the preceding verse. They meant the manna that came down from heaven, a phrase quoted from Nehemiah 9: 15. The Hebrew Old Testament has but one word for the English word "heaven," whether the writer means the place of God's personal abode, or that in the material universe that surrounds the earth. It is true that the manna came literally from the latter heaven, but its true source was the Heaven of God. All of this led these Jews to think that no better food could be offered them.

Verse 32. In this verse Jesus distinguishes between the two kinds of bread. He does so by terming that from the Father as the *true bread*.

Verse 33. Jesus was presenting his comparisons in such a highly figurative form, that he drew the terms toward the application very gradually. In this verse the spiritual food is referred to as a person, without stating who that person is.

Verse 34. *Give us this bread.* This request seems to by-pass the highly figurative personal pronoun, and hold to the thought that the bread Jesus was talking about was something to

be given and received, which indeed it was, except they appeared not to suspect what it was.

Verse 35. The Jews should have been prepared by this time for the direct application of the figures of which Jesus has been speaking, hence he came out with the unusual statement, *I am the bread of life.* However, this only brought the comparison far enough along to tell them for whom he of verse 33 stood. As to what sense in which He could be called the bread of life is still to be seen. For the meaning of *never hunger* and *never thirst*, see the comments at chapter 4: 14.

Verse 36. All through the years that Jesus was in his public ministry, the controversy between him and the Jews revolved about His divinity. They professed to have great love for God, yet were averse to the idea that Jesus was the Son of God. That is the thought in this verse, for Jesus accuses them of refusing to accept the testimony of their own eyes.

Verse 37. The manner in which the Father gives people to his Son will be brought out further on in the chapter. The point to be noted now is that being given to Jesus, and coming to him, are virtually the same. *I will in no wise cast out.* These words express the perfect cooperation between Jesus and God.

Verse 38. This verse is more along the line of cooperation between Jesus and his Father. Jesus came into the world to do that very thing (Hebrews 10: 9).

Verse 39. Whatever was included in the Father's will was included also in the purpose of the Son when he came into the world. That comprehended not only the replacing of animal sacrifices (referred to in the quotation from Paul), but the personal interest in the salvation of those who were persuaded to come to Christ. That personal interest is to continue even unto the resurrection day, when the dead in Christ shall be raised in His likeness, never to die again.

Verse 40. Man cannot see God and live, but he can see the Son, and if he will follow up that seeing with sincere belief, Jesus will bring him out of the grave to enter into life everlasting.

Verse 41. The Jews continued to stumble over their literal interpretation of the statements of Jesus. He used several terms that should have taught them that something besides

material bread was meant by the subject under consideration. All of these were ignored, and they went back to the introductory sentences of the conversation.

Verse 42. The Jews could see no one in Jesus but the Galilaean, whose family relations they knew. Considering Him as a man like all others, they were in a critical mood over the claim that he came down from Heaven.

Verse 43. *Murmur* is from *goguzo*, and Thayer defines it, "To murmur, mutter, grumble, say anything in a low tone." That explains why Jesus added the words *among yourselves*. On many occasions Jesus read even the minds of his objectors and told them about it. It is perfectly right to hold certain subjects in confidence, but when people are making complaints against what they regard as wrong doing in another, the fair thing to do is to approach that person openly.

Verse 44. Advocates of the theory of unconditional predestination make much of this verse, but they do it by perverting it, and ignoring the rest of the teaching in connection with the subject. Verse 37 is virtually on the same thought, but the scriptural explanation is not given as directly as it is in the following verse.

Verse 45. *It is written*. The prophecy may be seen in Isaiah 54: 13 and Micah 4: 2. God *draws* mankind to his Son by teaching them about the ways that He would have them live. But the teaching offered to man will not avail anything unless he *hears* or heeds the things taught. This is the explanation promised the reader at verse 37.

Verse 46. See the comments on verse 40.

Verse 47. *Verily, verily*, has the idea of "most assuredly." To believe on Jesus so as to obtain life everlasting, one's faith must be proved by good works. (James 2: 26.)

Verse 48. See comments at verses 33, 35.

Verse 49. The argument of Jesus in this verse, is that the manna which their fathers ate in the wilderness was not the bread that would produce everlasting life, seeing that all of those ancestors were dead.

Verse 50. The pronoun *this* means the kind of bread Jesus was talking about. *Not die* is said in the same sense as *never hunger* in verse 35.

Verse 51. In this verse the Lord

takes another step in his application of the figures that he has been using. Here the statement is made that man must eat of bread that is called the flesh of the Son of man.

Verse 52. The preceding verse makes the first move toward introducing the very important matter of eating the flesh of Jesus. Of course Jesus knew the Jews would make a literal application of the statement. That would call for the true explanation of the subject, which will include several verses because of the deep spiritual significance of the topic in hand. The reader should patiently follow the comments through this interesting group of verses.

Verse 53. When people persist in making a literal application of some declaration, it may help them to see their error to repeat the statement, but do so in a still more unusual form. The Jews should have known that it would be impossible to drink literally of the blood of Christ. That was true for two reasons; namely, that blood was to be poured out on the ground beneath the cross and never recovered. The other reason was the fact that the blood of Christ was that of a dead man when it was shed, and such blood will produce death instead of life. (See Revelation 16: 3.)

Verse 54. Literal flesh and blood will not produce endless life, hence they should have begun to understand that Jesus was not talking of that kind of material.

Verse 55. This is the same thought as the preceding verse, but in another form.

Verse 56. There is an old saying that "man is what he eats." That is true, and it applies to this verse, for if Christ dwells in the man who eats of his flesh, then the adage means that if a man eats the flesh of Christ, part of that man is Christ.

Verse 57. In this verse the general thought pertains to the merging of three beings into one; the Father, the Son and the devoted partaker of Them.

Verse 58. Jesus intersperses his speech with contrasts between the literal manna in the wilderness, and the bread that he was really considering. This is done to keep their minds alive to the main thought that it was considered necessary to impress on them.

Verse 59. The synagogues were structures erected by the Jews, and used principally for the reading of the law, and for teaching and exhortation.



Verse 60. Not only the Jews in general, but even the disciples were puzzled over this strange (to them) speech that Jesus was making. *Who can hear it.* By this the disciples meant they could not understand it.

Verse 61. The disciples did not make their complaint audibly, but Jesus always knew what was in the mind of men. He let them know about it by asking them if they were offended or caused to stumble at what they heard.

Verse 62. See the comments on verse 53. The same principle is carried out in this verse, except it is in a still more baffling form. By suggesting an event that would make it impossible to eat of the literal body of Christ, the disciples ought to see the point finally, that their Lord did not mean his fleshly body. Hence he indicated that he was going to ascend to Heaven, and that they would see it occur.

Verse 63. Many brethren use the latter part of this verse as if Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are the Holy Spirit." Such a use of this passage is not only a perversion of it, but it misses the very point that Jesus was making all through the chapter from verse 26. The Bible is nowhere spoken of as the Holy Spirit. It has been given by the work of the Holy Spirit, and it is the sword of the Spirit, but it is not the Holy Spirit itself. Jesus has been patiently laboring to show the disciples and the other Jews, that man must eat bread or die. But he wishes them to understand he does not mean temporal bread. After a number of statements along the same line, he concludes it is time to come out with the direct conclusion to his discourse on the subject of spiritual food, and he does so in this verse. It is as if he had said, "I have not been talking to you about literal flesh or literal bread, for that 'profiteth nothing.' I was meaning spiritual food; and to make you know just what I mean by that kind of food, I will inform you what it consists of. It is my words or teaching, for they are spirit (ual) and will sustain your spirit in the life for me."

Verse 64. *But . . . some . . . believe not.* This shows that eating the kind of food that Jesus had been discussing, meant to believe the words he had been saying. Jesus had specific reference to Judas, for he knew that he was going to be his betrayer. Judas had

the same opportunity of hearing the words of Christ as the other apostles, but he did not heed and believe them, therefore he was considered as an unbeliever.

Verse 65. Jesus then went back to the forepart of his speech (verses 44, 45), and made a specific application of that passage to Judas. It is not given to any man by the Father to come to Christ who will not accept the words of his Son. Judas refused to believe them in the sense of heeding them, therefore God would not permit him to be attached to his Son in the great work of human redemption.

Verse 66. The disciples who *went back* were not very much interested in spiritual matters. They were the kind described by Jesus in verse 26.

Verse 67. This pathetic question that Jesus asked the apostles doubtless was intended as an inducement to obtain an expression from them. The all-important discourse that Jesus delivered was for the benefit of all hearers, but it was especially needed by the twelve. They were the ones expected to take the same teaching to the world.

Verse 68. Peter's answer showed he had caught the point in the speech of Jesus. *Thou hast the words of eternal life.* This was the very thought with which Jesus concluded according to verse 63. The words received from the Lord constituted the spiritual food that he offered as the meat that would sustain mankind unto life everlasting.

Verse 69. In this verse Peter was speaking for the group of apostles, and as far as he knew, all of them were favorable to the teaching of Christ.

Verse 70. Jesus knew that Judas was going to betray him, but he did not point him out to the others yet. A man with the kind of heart that Judas possessed, deserved to be called by the term which Jesus used.

Verse 71. *Should betray him* is worded, "was to betray him," by Moffatt.

## JOHN 7

Verse 1. *After these things* refers to the happenings unfolded in the closing verses of the preceding chapter. *Jesus walked in Galilee* means he continued to walk there, for he was already in that territory. *Jewry* is another form of "Judea," and Jesus avoided going there, at least for the time being, because of danger from the Jews.

Verse 2. This feast is described in Leviticus 23: 34-43. It brought many Jews to Jerusalem, hence the risk to his life caused Jesus to remain in Galilee for a while.

Verse 3. His *brethren* means what the word usually does, and not his disciples as the Romanists teach, for the *disciples* are mentioned also in the same verse. He was in Galilee, the home territory of his family, and thus it is clear why his own fleshly brethren would be near him.

Verse 4. His brethren made their suggestion in a critical mood. They implied that Jesus was inconsistent in avoiding publicity. If he wished to be known by mankind as the Saviour of the world, he should not be acting in such a secret manner.

Verse 5. John explains the criticism of these brethren by saying they did not believe in him. It doubtless was on the principle stated in chapter 4: 44.

Verse 6. Jesus explained his plans on the ground that it was not time yet for him to come out entirely in the open. Jesus was never afraid of man as far as his own comfort was concerned, but in his wisdom he never did anything prematurely. The brethren were not in any danger, hence their time (to appear in the gathering) would be whenever they wished to go, without waiting for the feast even to get started.

Verse 7. *Cannot hate you* does not mean it was literally impossible for the fleshly brethren of Christ to be hated. But it was wholly unlikely to occur, because all of the conditions were against it. They were regarded as ordinary citizens along with other men and were not "out on the firing line" as teachers against sin as was Jesus.

Verse 8. This verse has the same thought as verse 6, and states the reason why Jesus was not in any hurry to attend the feast.

Verse 9. Having explained his reason for not going to Jerusalem with the others, Jesus continued his stay in Galilee for a short time only.

Verse 10. After the brethren of Jesus were gone, he could go up unnoticed, being alone. This secrecy was maintained for the reason expressed in verses 6 and 8.

Verse 11. It was natural to expect Jesus at the feast, for it was a national occasion for the Jewish race. *Where is he* is explained by the state-

ment in verse 10. Jesus did not intend to be prominently visible for a while.

Verse 12. The people were divided in their sentiments about Jesus; some for and others against him. While his presence was still generally unknown, the conflicting sentiments created an atmosphere of unrest among the crowd. The *murmuring* was as far as those sentiments exhibited themselves which is explained in the next verse.

Verse 13. The undercurrent referred to in the preceding verse was caused by fear of the Jews. Not knowing just what course they would take as to the treatment of Jesus, people did not commit themselves on the subject, for fear of finding themselves in an embarrassing situation when the issue came out entirely into the open.

Verse 14. The feast was about four days along when Jesus came out of his "hiding" and appeared first in the temple. It being the capitol of the Jewish religious system, it was proper for Jesus to show up there in order to do his teaching, which was the main purpose he had all the time he was among the people. *Taught* is from DIDASKO, which Thayer defines at this place, "To hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic [instructive] discourses." So Jesus did not merely utter some single sentences, but continued his speech to the extent of displaying a general knowledge of important subjects pertaining to the salvation of man in the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 15. *Letters* is from a Greek word that means something that has been written by an educated person. Jesus had never taken a course of instruction in any of their institutions of learning, hence it baffled the Jews to hear him speaking like an educated man on matters of such great concern pertaining to human conduct.

Verse 16. This verse answers the questions of the preceding one. Jesus was teaching the doctrine of his Father, and did not need the instruction coming from man.

Verse 17. The construction of this verse might seem to have things backward. We would think it to be necessary to *know of the doctrine* before one could *do his will*. That is true; however, if a person is not disposed to do the will of God, he will stumble and waver and be so unfavorably disposed toward the truth, that he will fail to grasp it when it is presented to him.

Verse 18. A man might be found who claimed to be from God, yet if he depended on the instruction given in human institutions, it would show his desire to make a display of his attainments for his own glory.

Verse 19. The particular part of the law of Moses that Jesus refers to, is the sixth commandment which is the one against murder. The sabbatarians try to make a distinction between the law of God, which they say is the Decalogue or ten commandments, and the law of Moses which is the "ceremonial law" as they call it. But here is Jesus referring to one of the ten commandments and calling it the law of Moses. All of this shows how inconsistent people will be when they wish to defend an unscriptural theory.

Verse 20. *Thou hast a devil* was their way of saying that Jesus was possessed with a devil (demon), and it had rendered him demented; they denied any desire or attempt to kill Jesus. Their memory seemed to fail them, for chapter 5: 16 says that the Jews "sought to slay him." That was after he had cured a man on the sabbath day, which they claimed was a violation of the law. But the law about the sabbath was a part of the same Decalogue that contained the commandment against murder, the very crime they sought to commit against Jesus.

Verse 21. Jesus was soon to remind them of the occasion when they sought to kill him. He first comments on the case by referring to their astonishment at the *one work* that he had done, while they also would do something even on the sabbath day that was as certainly a *work* as curing a sick man would be.

Verse 22. The Jews pretended to have great respect for Moses, whose law they accused Jesus with violating. In specifying a work they did on the sabbath, Jesus mentioned circumcision which also came from Moses. However, lest they misunderstand the real history of that ordinance, he interposed an explanation that it had been given to the fathers of old before the time of Moses. Notwithstanding this, they professed to regard the law of Moses so highly, that they insisted on performing his ordinance of circumcision, even though it should be done on the sabbath day.

Verse 23. The act of performing circumcision, which was a surgical one, was certainly as much a manual

labor as was that of curing an invalid. Yet they condemned Jesus for doing that, while they persisted in doing the other.

Verse 24. There are people who resent being penalized or even criticized for their wrongs, and then will try to make a defense for their acts by quoting Matthew 7: 1. If they wanted to be fair in the matter, they would consider all that Jesus said on the same subject. In the present passage, the Lord gives more specific information on the act of judging others. *Appearance* is from *opsis*, and Thayer defines it in this passage, "The outward appearance, look." Robinson defines it, "External appearance, show." The Englishman's Greek New Testament translates it by the single word "sight." The outward or mere appearance of a situation does not always provide all the facts in the case, hence the honest thing to do is to investigate and get the whole truth. Then a judgment rendered on that basis will be a *righteous judgment*, and not the kind the first part of this verse says not to do, and the kind that Matthew 7: 1 says not to do.

Verse 25. These people of *Jerusalem* were local citizens, who knew about the plans of the rulers to kill Jesus. They thought they recognized Him as the victim who was to be slain, and were puzzled that he was still at liberty.

Verse 26. These people observed that Jesus was speaking *boldly* without being molested. They wondered if the rulers had concluded that Jesus was actually the Christ who was predicted by the Scriptures, and that they better not interfere with him.

Verse 27. There is a vein in the human mind that discounts a "home product" as being of little special value. That is why Jesus said what he did in chapter 4: 44 and similar passages. It was true these people were acquainted with the earthly surroundings of Jesus as a man, and there is no information that anything of a supernatural or even unusual nature occurred in his home life. That was because his divine personality was not to be manifested until the proper time, which would be after his baptism and he was ready to enter upon his public ministry. Another thing, these people had an idea that is not explained in any work of reference that I have, that the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament was to make his entrance into

this world in some mysterious manner (which was true, but not in the way they meant), and that he would come from some unknown territory.

Verse 28. In the first part of this verse Jesus agrees with their statement, that they knew him and whence he had come. However, that applied only to his earthly family life, which is commented upon in the preceding paragraph. But as to his divine origin and personality, they did not know him because they did not know his Father.

Verse 29. The reason Jesus knew God was that he had sent his Son into the world. When Jesus came he was not in the dark as to why he had come. (See Hebrews 10: 5-9.)

Verse 30. It seems that any reference to the divinity of Christ always stirred up the anger of the Jews. Jesus asserted again that he had come from a source with which the Jews were unacquainted. That could only mean to them that the one they were hating was claiming to be of a higher origin than they. It was more than they could stand, but they were not able to do anything about it. The explanation for it is in the words *his hour was not yet come*. As long as the work of Jesus was unfinished, the Father saw to it that nothing would seriously interfere with it.

Verse 31. The people were not all as prejudiced against Jesus as were the Jewish leaders or rulers. Seeing the miracles that he was performing, they could not understand why there was any reason for looking for another to come as the Christ. On the strength of this, many of the people believed on him.

Verse 32. *Heard that the people murmured*. The last word usually means to complain in a low or undertone kind of voice, but it does not have that meaning always. One phrase in Thayer's definition of the original word is, "say anything in a low tone." The people had actually expressed themselves favorably toward Jesus, but they were doing it in a subdued voice. But the Pharisees heard about it and were envious of the kindly attention that Jesus was receiving, and decided to stop his work by arresting him. The outcome of this attempt will be learned near the close of the chapter. In the meantime Jesus delivers one of his wonderful discourses, the several verses whereof will be commented upon in their order.

Verse 33. This was a notice that the work of Jesus on earth was about to end.

Verse 34. As Jesus expected to return to his Father, he meant those unbelievers would not be able to follow him, even though curiosity might prompt them to desire to.

Verse 35. Since these Jews did not believe that Jesus came from the presence of God in the first place, they now would not grasp the thought that he was going back to Him. They wondered, therefore, if he meant he was going to disappear among some people that were beyond their visible association. *Dispersed* refers to the Jews who were scattered throughout various Gentile countries. Smith's Bible Dictionary says the following on the subject: "The Dispersion was the general title applied to those Jews who remained settled in foreign countries after the return from the Babylonian exile, and during the period of the second temple."

Verse 36. The whole subject was baffling to the Jews of Jerusalem.

Verse 37. *Last day, great day of the feast*. The day is described in Leviticus 23: 36. It is called a great day because certain religious activities were done on that day that were not done on the seven other days. Also because the closing day of any important period is regarded with special attention. The Jews had been engaged for a week, having a time of rejoicing, and enjoying the good things produced by their fields and flocks. It was hence an appropriate time for Jesus to call their attention to something else of which they might partake, that was of vastly more importance than these temporal blessings. Jesus offered to give the blessing of spiritual drink to any man who would come to him for it.

Verse 38. The original word for *belly* is defined by Thayer in this place, "The innermost part of a man, the soul, heart, as the seat of thought, feeling, choice." Robinson defines it virtually in the same way. The pronoun *his* refers both to Christ and to anyone who accepts the living water that he offers. Christ is the source of living water, and if a man opens his heart or inner being (here translated *belly*), that stream of living water will enter therein. Then such a man in turn will become a source of that precious water, supplying both himself and those he influences, with that which will contribute to his spiritual

life and growth. This verse is the same in thought as the teaching of Jesus which he gave the woman of Samaria at the well. (See the comments on that instance in chapter 4: 14.)

Verse 39. The living water to which Jesus had specific reference, was the spiritual instruction to be given through the kingdom of heaven that he had been promising. That instruction would require a means of delivering it to the members of the kingdom, which was to be the Holy Ghost or Spirit. But that gift was here spoken of in prospect only, for it was not the will of God that it be sent upon the disciples until Christ was glorified, which was to be after he returned to his Father.

Verse 40. Jesus fills so large a place in the scheme of human redemption, that it takes many terms to comprehend the various parts that he was to play. Hence he is referred to as Christ which means "anointed," because he was to be a king. He is called Jesus which means "saviour," because he was to save the people from their sins. And he is termed a prophet, because he was to teach and prophecy. All of these functions and characteristics were predicted of Him, in one form or another in the Old Testament. The Jews knew about these various predictions, but did not realize they referred to the same person. For that reason we read about their mention of the different offices of Jesus as referring to separate persons. In the present verse they speak of him as the prophet, meaning the one predicted by Moses in Deuteronomy 18: 18.

Verse 41. Others thought of Jesus as the Christ or anointed One which means king, who had been prophesied to sit on David's throne (Acts 2: 30). But some of them rejected this idea on the ground that such an important person should have a more dignified residence than one located in Galilee.

Verse 42. They supported their idea against Galilee by citing the scripture that said Christ was to come out of Bethlehem. Their application of this scripture was correct, but they evidently did not know that while Jesus was generally known as a Galilean, yet he was born in Bethlehem according to the prophecy.

Verse 43. There was a division (in sentiment) among the people. That means with regard to their attitude toward Jesus; some for and others against him.

Verse 44. The sentiment of some who were against Jesus was so strong they would have *taken* him. The original Greek for that word is defined by Thayer at this place, "To take i. e., apprehend." He then explains his definition to mean, "a man, in order to imprison him." Among those whose sentiments were against Jesus were doubtless the officers who had been sent out by the chief priests and Pharisees. They would have acted upon authority as far as these Jewish leaders were concerned, had they arrested Jesus. They did not do so, and their excuse to their "superiors" will be stated in verse 46. However, the Lord in Heaven was watching over his Son, and was not going to permit any actual interference with his work until it was accomplished. Hence the inspired reason why these officers did not take Jesus is given in verse 30; *because his hour was not yet come.*

Verse 45. The officers who were sent to arrest Jesus returned without him. The chief priests and Pharisees doubtless were disappointed, and called for an explanation.

Verse 46. The brief but significant answer was, *never man spake like this man.* *Spake* is from LALEO, and it has such a wide range of meanings that the definitions will not be quoted in full. The word includes the act of speaking with authority, information, impressiveness, and on all of the subjects pertaining to human conduct. It is no wonder, then, that these officers said what they did.

Verse 47. The Pharisees concluded their officers had been captured by the teaching of Jesus, instead of capturing him as they were sent to do.

Verse 48. It was bad enough for their officers to be thus influenced by the hated Teacher, but they thought it would be a great misfortune for any of the religious leaders to be "deceived" by him.

Verse 49. *Knoweth not the law.* The statement of Nicodemus (next verse), and their reply shows the chief priests had Jesus in mind when they used the indefinite phrase, *this people.* It was not Jesus, but the chief priests who did not know the law, for it was the document that made favorable predictions of the very person whom the leaders of the Jews were condemning. (See the comments on chapter 5: 39.)

Verse 50. *Being one of them.* This means that Nicodemus was one of the

Pharisees. Chapter 3: 1 says the same thing in so many words.

Verse 51. All that Nicodemus insisted on was that the justice of the law be carried out in the case of Jesus. The question he asked would have been fair, regardless of whether Jesus was a good man or not.

Verse 52. This verse denotes that the Pharisees accused Nicodemus of siding with Jesus. The preceding verse only called for the regular procedure of the law, therefore their objection proves they did not want to do the fair thing about Jesus. The only thing they mentioned as a basis for their condemnation of Jesus, was his humble home territory of Galilee which was usually referred to unfavorably from a social standpoint.

Verse 53. The meeting "broke up" without any formal action being taken against Jesus, and the people all went to their places of stay.

### JOHN 8

Verse 1. The Mount of Olives plays such a prominent part in the affairs of Palestine, especially in the time of Christ and the apostles, that I believe it will be well to quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary on the subject. "This mountain is the well-known eminence on the east of Jerusalem, intimately connected with some of the gravest events of the history of the Old Testament and the New Testament, the scene of the flight of David and the triumphal progress of the Son of David, of the idolatry of Solomon, and the agony and betrayal of Christ. It is a ridge of rather more than a mile in length, running in general direction north and south, covering the whole eastern side of the city . . . on the east the mount is close to the walls, parted only by the narrow ravine of the Kidron. It is the portion which is the real Mount of Olives of the history." The brief statement is made that *Jesus went unto the mount of Olives*, but in Luke 21: 37 it is stated that "at night he went out" and abode there.

Verse 2. The people evidently understood where Jesus spent the nights, and that he would return in the morning. In the early morning the people were on hands to greet Jesus. He did not disappoint them, but sat down and taught them.

Verse 3. The Jewish leaders had made a number of unsuccessful attempts to entrap Jesus in his teaching. They concluded to try the plan of play-

ing upon his great compassionate nature, in the hopes of having him try to set aside one of the ordinances of Moses. They brought a woman who had been taken in the act of adultery and placed her in their midst.

Verse 4. Since the woman was taken in the act of adultery, they had the same chance of bringing the guilty man as they did the woman. The fact they did not is proof they were not concerned about the law of Moses. Leviticus 20: 10 and Deuteronomy 22: 22 is the law referred to, and it required that both the man and woman should be stoned. But they brought only the woman, because they thought the natural leniency of a man for the feminine sex would cause Jesus to set the law aside unconditionally.

Verse 5. The Pharisees made the correct interpretation of the law in the case, but their use of the word *such* condemned them, for that applied to both the man and woman. *What sayest thou?* This direct question was said in the tone of a challenge, thinking Jesus would say, "it would be harsh to stone a woman, so turn her loose." Such a statement would have furnished the Pharisees a pretext for accusations.

Verse 6. The inspired writer tells us these Jews said this to Jesus to tempt him. He knew all of that, and delayed giving them any answer at all. *As though he heard them not.* No one of these words is in the Greek text, but have been added by the King James translators as their comment on the action of Jesus in writing with his finger and saying nothing. He certainly did not pretend not to hear the accusers, for that would have been unreasonable for One who had been able even to read the minds of men before they said anything. My comment on the circumstance is that Jesus thereby showed his distaste for the whole thing. Another thing that was accomplished by ignoring them, was to force them to repeat their cowardly remarks, which would render their humiliation all the more evident when the time came. He finally stood before them and made a statement that must have surprised them. He did not advise releasing the woman (as they desired), neither did he give direct instruction to slay her. Another thing, even had Jesus directed that the woman should be stoned, they did not stop to think that they would have to be the executioners, having forgotten the stipulations in Deuteronomy 17: 7.



*He that is without sin.* This could not mean one who was absolutely sinless in every respect, for that requirement would have made it impossible for anyone to be punished, seeing their own Scriptures declare there is no man who "doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7: 20). The only conclusion possible is that Jesus meant the one who casts the stone must be innocent of the sin for which he wished the woman to be slain. That doubtless put them out of the right to act, for Jesus had called that generation of Jews an "adulterous" one (Matthew 16: 4).

Verses 7, 8. Jesus placed the termination of the case at the feet of these hypocrites, then stooped down and resumed his writing to let them think upon the proposition.

Verse 9. *Conscience* is from SUNEIDESIS, and the lexicons give a various description. The outstanding definition of the word as Thayer gives it is, "The soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other." These accusers were convicted by their conscience, which means it condemned their own conduct. That was because they knew they had done that which was bad, and hence were not qualified to be the executioners of the law at hand. *Went out* means they left the temple where they had been in their pretended attempt to enforce the law, leaving Jesus and the woman yet together.

Verses 10, 11. Jesus asked the woman if no man *condemned* her. This could not mean whether any man accused her, for they had already done that. The word is from KATAKRINO, and Thayer defines it, "To give judgment against one, to judge worthy of punishment, to condemn." Jesus did not excuse the woman's act, but he would not require that the ordinance be executed upon her. The accusers failed to execute it, which is what she meant when she said, *No man, Lord.* Jesus said, *neither do I condemn thee*, and immediately admonished her to *sin no more*. It was somewhat like a case where a judge hears evidence against a prisoner. He might consider all the facts in the case, and decide he would give him another chance. He would probably say, "I will let you off this time, but don't be guilty again." Another thing, the witnesses were the only ones who could lawfully execute this ordinance, and

they had left the assembly. Jesus did not care to act the part of executioners, hence bade the woman go, giving her an admonition concerning her future conduct.

Verse 12. After disposing of the incident with which the Pharisees interrupted his main work, Jesus resumed his teaching pertaining to spiritual matters. When Jesus said *I am the light of the world*, he only repeated what John the Baptist said of him in chapter 1: 6-9. Walking in this light means to conduct one's self according to the teaching that Jesus gives.

Verse 13. It is a commonly-accepted principle that one's personal testimony is lacking in force unless there is something or someone else to support it. The Pharisees knew this, and thought they could apply it to the assertion of Christ concerning himself.

Verse 14. Jesus did not call in question the rule to which they alluded, yet he maintained the truthfulness of his own testimony. He was speaking from personal experience and did not have to rely on other facts for its support. This truth gave Jesus a distinction above the situation of the Pharisees, for they did not have any "inside information" at all. But Jesus was soon to show that his own personal information was confirmed by that of another, and that therefore he was not alone.

Verse 15. *Flesh* is from SARBX, which Thayer defines in this passage, "Man as he appears, such as he presents to view, man's external appearance and condition." No doubt the bodily appearance of Jesus was like that of the ordinary Jew, and the Pharisees classed him among the others on that account. Jesus did not judge any man on that basis, for he was able to see through the veil of flesh and read his mind.

Verse 16. Here Jesus states the reason for his assertion in verse 14 as to the assurance of his testimony, that it was verified by that of his Father. He testified to the divinity of his Son at the baptism (Matthew 3: 17), and also enabled him to perform miracles which no man could do on his own human strength.

Verse 17. Jesus often referred to the Old Testament for proof of his statements, because the Jews professed to have great respect for that document. (See the comments on chapter 5: 39.) In our present verse they are reminded of an established rule concerning the

force of testimony that their law contained. That rule is written in various places, and one outstanding passage is Deuteronomy 19: 15.

Verse 18. Jesus and his Father would make two witnesses testifying to the same truth. According to the ordinance of their own document of law, that would establish the divinity of Jesus, the fact that was especially offensive to these Jews.

Verse 19. The Pharisees would not deny the principle that Jesus just uttered, but thought to weaken it by pretending to be unacquainted with one of his witnesses, hence they asked, *where is thy Father?* To know a person in the practical sense, meant to acknowledge him and give full consideration to all his claims. This the Pharisees refused to do with Jesus, consequently they did not know him nor his Father.

Verse 20. The *treasury* was one of the departments of the temple where the people came who wished to make certain financial contributions. It would be where a great many could see and hear Jesus as he was teaching. That teaching did not suit many of them, but they kept hands off because *his hour was not yet come*. (See comments on chapter 7: 30.)

Verse 21. *I go my way* refers to the return of Jesus to his Father. *Shall seek me* does not mean they will seek to find Jesus as their Saviour, for he did not intend ever to get out of reach of any man who was honestly disposed unto eternal life. It refers to the desire for the benefits that had been bestowed upon man while Jesus was in his personal ministry. (See the comments on Luke 17: 22.) With only such a selfish motive for seeking Jesus, they would fail to find him and would die unsaved, which would make it impossible for them to go into his presence.

Verse 22. *Will he kill himself?* This was not said in seriousness, for had Jesus meant that, he would not have said they could not follow him; any man can commit suicide. They took this method of "changing the subject," for they knew Jesus had predicted his own death at the hands of the Jews, but they were unwilling to recognize their connection with the sad deed.

Verse 23. The human side of the person of Christ was from beneath, but otherwise he was from above the earth. This verse is another statement of the divinity of Jesus.

Verse 24. The thought in this verse is the same as that in chapter 3: 16, for one must believe in the "Only Begotten Son of God" to have everlasting life. These Jews were persisting in their unbelief, hence Jesus warned them that they would die in their sins.

Verse 25. *Who art thou?* This question was asked in pretense of interest, for they had been told in plain terms about the personality of Jesus. He understood their motive, and only referred them to what he had said to them previously.

Verses 26, 27. Jesus could have said many things truthfully against these Jews, that he knew from personal association among them; however, he was supported in all this by his Father. But the hardness of their hearts prevented the Jews from "catching on" to what Jesus meant.

Verse 28. This lifting up refers to the crucifixion, which Jesus had predicted in chapter 3: 14. The fulfillment of that prediction, and the Gospel facts that immediately were to follow, would convince some of them that Jesus was a true prophet and teacher. Having proved that he was true, the people would have reason to believe that He was the one sent to the earth from God.

Verse 29. God was not with Jesus in person, but was in spirit, and gave evidence of it by supporting him in his great works. Jesus did not come into the world to do his own will, but to do that of his Father. (See Hebrews 10: 7.)

Verse 30. *Many believed on him*. The evident fairness of Jesus in leaving the truthfulness of his claims to rest on proposed facts to come, had its effect on some of the people, so that they professed confidence in it.

Verse 31. A mere profession of belief is not enough to satisfy the Lord. That profession must be followed up with adherence to his teaching.

Verse 32. This verse was still addressed to the believers directly, but it was in the hearing of all those present, so that its application was general.

Verse 33. *They answered him*. This means the ones who had not become believers. They interpreted the statement of Jesus to mean the bondage enforced upon people by man, in the social and political realm. But even from that standpoint, their claim was not correct if they were speaking of Abraham's descendants as a whole.

They had spent four centuries in bondage in Egypt, and 70 years in captivity in Babylon.

Verse 34. Jesus explained that he was considering another kind of bondage. *Servant* is from a Greek word that means "slave." Many people who boast of their personal liberty, are slaves under the cruelest of all masters, that of sin.

Verse 35. Passing from the moral and spiritual phase of the subject, to the social and political for the purpose of illustration, Jesus shows these self-righteous Jews that they are destined to be thrust out unless they change.

Verse 36. A favor backed up by a servant might be of short duration, for that servant could be put out of the household at any time, and hence that favor would go out also. But a son's place in a home is permanent, and favors brought about by him would be permanent also. That is why the favor of being made free would be lasting (*free indeed*) if the son had caused it to be given.

Verse 37. Jesus did not deny the fleshly relationship of these people to Abraham, but that did not excuse their resistance to his word. Instead, it should have inclined them to think favorably upon the teaching of Jesus, for Abraham had been informed of this very great seed of his, and his belief in that promise had obtained for him the title "friend of God" (James 2: 23).

Verse 38. A rule is for a son to speak as his father speaks, and to walk in his footsteps. Jesus applied that rule to himself and to these self-important Jews.

Verse 39. *Abraham is our Father.* All that could be meant by this was their blood relationship to the patriarch. *If ye were Abraham's children.* In this phrase Jesus meant to question their true relation to Abraham in faithfulness. Had that been the case they would have shown those traits of the worthy ancestor.

Verse 40. These Jews had sought to kill Jesus for telling them the truth, which was something that Abraham would not have done. On that account, they were not worthy of being considered the children of Abraham.

Verse 41. The Jews would swing back and forth from one position to another, as they felt the need to keep up their defence. When they thought it was to their credit to be the children of Abraham, they were inclined

to boast of it. They knew that Jesus would not say anything against Abraham, yet he implied by this last statement that they were begotten of some unknown man; one among the morally promiscuous. Then they changed their base and denied any parentage but that of God.

Verse 42. Jesus made the same kind of reply to this claim that he did when they boasted of being children of Abraham (verse 39). Their conduct toward Jesus indicated they were not of God, for he was the Father of Christ whom they did not love.

Verse 43. As long as people are devoted to the devil (as these Jews were) they cannot hear (heed) the words of Christ. By the same token they would not understand his speech when he spoke to them upon the matters of correct living.

Verse 44. The Greek word for *father* is PATER, and it is used 417 times in the New Testament. The definitions are so numerous that lack of space forbids copying them all. The first definition of Thayer is, "Generator or male ancestor." As a secondary definition he gives, "The founder of a race or tribe, progenitor [ancestor in the line] of a people, forefather." In his comments or explanations of one of the secondary definitions, Thayer says, "The originator or transmitter of anything . . . one who has infused his own spirit into others, who actuates [causes to act] and governs their minds." The last sentence Thayer applies to the verse of this paragraph. That is true, for it was the spirit of the devil that caused Cain to slay his brother, then lie about it when he said he did not know where he was. It is the same spirit that has caused men to lie and commit murder all down through the centuries. Hence it was perfectly just for Jesus to call these wicked Jews the children of the devil.

Verse 45. This short verse is a logical deduction from the description of the devil as given in the preceding verse. The reason the Jews would not believe what Jesus told them was because it was the truth, for the devil does not want the truth, neither do his children who are following after his principles.

Verse 46. *Convince* is from a word that means to convict or prove one to be guilty of sin. The question of Jesus was a challenge which amounted to a denial beforehand. Since they knew

they could not convict Jesus of sin, that would mean that all he said was the truth. On that basis, the only correct answer to his last question would be that their unbelief was due to their relation to the devil.

Verse 47. *Of* is from EK, and Thayer uses three whole pages in his lexicon in defining and explaining the word. The reader may thereby form some estimate of the importance of the term. But his first and general definition is, "From out of, out from, forth from, from." He also explains that it is the opposite of the terms "into" and "in." In composition such as our verse, it means one whose character and principles of life originated with God. Jesus affirmed that all whose character came from God would hear his words. These Jews were refusing to hear them, therefore it proved they were not of God, which is the conclusion which Jesus charged against them.

Verse 48. *Thou art a Samaritan.* This was said to show their contempt of Jesus, in view of the low estimate the Jews had of the Samaritans. A description of that subject is given with the comments on chapter 4: 9. *Say we not* refers to chapter 7: 20 where they first charged Jesus with having a devil. See that passage for comments on their charge as they said *thou hast a devil.*

Verse 49. A sober denial of their charge was the first reply of Jesus. He then made a logical statement, based on his relation to God. Jesus honored his Father and they dishonored Him (Jesus). That was the same as accusing them of dishonoring God also, although these Jews made great claims of respect for God.

Verse 50. The outstanding thought that John stresses in his record of Jesus, is his divinity or close relationship with God. And that seems to have been the point on which the Jews showed their bitterest feeling for Him. And that explains why Jesus so often referred to that relationship, which is the thought in the words, *I seek not mine own glory. There is one.* It is stated in many places that Jesus came into the world to do his Father's will, therefore the *one* in this phrase is God.

Verse 51. *Shall never see death.* The Bible recognizes two kinds of death, the physical and the spiritual. The man who accepts the words of Jesus and keeps them will never suffer the spiritual death. (See chapter 11: 26.)

Verses 52, 53. The Jews either did

not know or they deliberately refused to recognize the two kinds of death. With that as the basis for their speech, they repeated the charge they first made at chapter 7: 20, and pretended to ascribe His statement about dying to the effects of the devil in him. Adhering to their notion of there being only the physical death, they referred to the death of Abraham and the prophets as proof against the statement of Jesus.

Verse 54. This verse has the same reasoning Jesus gives in verses 14-18.

Verse 55. The Jews made a great profession of knowing God, yet they constantly refused to recognize his Son. In rejecting Jesus they were also rejecting God, which is a principle that is taught in numerous passages throughout the New Testament. If Jesus had denied any knowledge of God, it would have been untrue, and that would have placed him in the same class as the Jews who were guilty of falsifying.

Verse 56. God told Abraham that he was to have a seed or descendant in whom the whole world would be blessed. (See Genesis 22: 18.) That promised seed was Christ, and Abraham believed the promise that was made concerning him. That is the sense in which he *rejoiced to see* the day of Christ on the earth.

Verse 57. The Jews were still thinking of Jesus as an ordinary human being only, who had been born less than fifty years before. Abraham had been dead for more than 20 centuries, hence they denied that Jesus could ever have seen him.

Verse 58. *Am* is from EIMI, a Greek verb whose fundamental meaning is, "to be." The word is used in the Greek text without inflection (suffixes), therefore it has its full original meaning. As Jesus used the word in this verse, it means that Abraham had a definite time at which he came into being, that is why he used the word *was*. Jesus existed always, hence he says *I am* with reference to himself. A noted writer has worded this much better than I can, hence I shall give the reader the benefit of it. "Divinity has no past tense, nor future tense, but always the present."

Verse 59. This assertion was completely beyond the comprehension of these Jews, and in sheer desperation they thought of stoning Jesus. But "his time had not yet come," hence he miraculously passed from their midst.

## JOHN 9

Verse 1. The appearance of a man would not indicate how long he had been blind, hence they had other information concerning this case.

Verse 2. The question the disciples asked Jesus could only have been on the theory known as the "transmigration of souls." This notion is explained at Matthew 14: 2. Jesus did not endorse the theory, because it was untrue and foolish, but he did not take time to deal with every kind of error he met. However, both he and the apostles sometimes used the popular notions to illustrate a point or expose some inconsistency among the people. The present instance is one of them, which was used by Paul when he spoke of "eternal judgment" in Hebrews 6: 2. And being "baptized for [in place of] the dead in 1 Corinthians 15: 29, is another instance where the apostle used an erroneous practice without endorsing it, but to expose the inconsistency of those who did it.

Verse 3. No special act of God had been done to cause this man to be born blind. However, the misfortune will furnish the Lord an opportunity of manifesting divine power. Jesus was always able to turn unfavorable conditions into good account.

Verse 4. *Day* and *night* are used figuratively as we will see in the next verse.

Verse 5. *As long as I am in the world.* This phrase is directly connected with the words *while it is day* in the preceding verse. This would mean that *night* as used in the present instance refers to death. It was never intended that man should work day and night to make a living. Therefore, when language is used figuratively, day (the proper time for work) is likened to a life on earth, because that is the only period in which a man can work for the Lord. It is appropriate that we often sing, "Work, for the night is coming." But Jesus did not mean to teach that after he left this world all spiritual light would cease. He was considering only that light which he personally could shed upon the human beings with whom he came into contact.

Verse 6. Sometimes Jesus used certain things in connection with his miracles that could have no logical effect in the case. There was an important point in such performances. Had something been used that might have a physical relation to the result

desired and obtained, it might have been claimed that such was the cause. But since these things could have nothing to do with the actual problem, the conclusion is clear that the result was obtained through divine power.

Verse 7. Jesus never needed the help of any man in accomplishing his work, but it was well to teach the lesson of cooperation between man and God. Hence Jesus required the people to feed the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5: 43), and directed others to remove the cover from the tomb of Lazarus (John 11: 39). Had this blind man not washed the clay from his eyes he would not have been healed of his blindness.

Verse 8. In the mean time, Jesus had moved on out of the throng, and when the man was returning from the pool with his sight given to him, the people were surprised at his appearance. The absence of eyesight often makes more difference in a man's general appearance than may be thought. Yet in spite of the change wrought by the restoring of that function, some thought they recognized the former blind man.

Verse 9. Some of the people seemed to be very certain of the man's identity, while others professed only to see a resemblance. But the man settled the discussion by informing them that he was the man who had been blind.

Verse 10. This question was asked for the simple purpose of information, as they were not present at the time Jesus talked with the man.

Verse 11. *A man that is called Jesus.* All this blind man knew was what he heard, for he was blind and had to get his information by hearing only. Hence this verse is a statement of facts, without any reasoning or conclusions upon those facts.

Verse 12. While the man was going to the pool, Jesus passed on, so that up to the time of this questioning he had never seen his benefactor. The method Jesus took in this case served a purpose other than requiring the man to go wash in the pool and thus cooperate in his favor of being healed. It left him free to reason on the case without being prejudiced favorably by the appearance and personal presence of the one who had healed him. Under the circumstances, it was all the man could do to say he did not know where the person was then. We should bear in mind that all this conversation was between the man and the people who

had no prejudice especially in the case, it not having been called to the attention of the Pharisees.

Verse 13. The text does not tell us why the man was brought to the Pharisees. We know, however, that they were the leading sect of the Jews, and were supposed to be interested in anything especially pertaining to miracles. The man said he was directed in his case by the one called Jesus, to go wash at the pool, with the result that he was made able to see. So it was logical that the case should be taken to these religious leaders since the very name *Jesus* brought up the subject for religious consideration.

Verse 14. There is no evidence in the life of Christ that he made any distinction between days, when he had opportunity for working a beneficial miracle. But John knew what was coming up over this case, and made the statement of this verse as an explanation beforehand, of the disturbance soon to be thrust into the work of Jesus. *Made the clay* was a manual act, and that was sufficient to give the Pharisees an excuse for their quarrel with the man for whom the work had been done.

Verse 15. The Pharisees asked this man how he received his sight, and were given the same answer that the people had received. We should note that the man said *I washed*, which was as much of a manual act as what Jesus had done. But in all of the controversy over this case, not one word will be said against the man for what he did on the sabbath day. This shows the Pharisees were not caring anything about the holy day, but were showing their hatred of Jesus and took this circumstance as a means of repeating their old hypocritically-inspired complaints.

Verse 16. This *division* was between the friends and enemies of Jesus. The former reasoned rightly, that if Jesus were a "sinner," (which means one of that particular class as listed in those days), he would be unable to work miracles, for God would not grant miraculous power to such a character. The others were merely using the question of the sabbath as an excuse for their hatred of Jesus.

Verse 17. The *blind man* did not have any more positive knowledge in the case than did the others, for he had not even seen Jesus up to this time. But the crowd wished to get him to commit himself on the subject; es-

pecially that part of the group which was Jews. Had the man expressed an unfavorable opinion of Jesus, it would have been used by the Jews as a significant circumstance. If the very man who had been benefitted by the performance was unfavorably impressed with Jesus, then surely there must have been a reason for it. But he replied with a direct and favorable verdict, *He is a prophet*. That meant not only that Jesus was a good man, but one endowed with supernatural talents to be able to do such a miracle as the one at hand.

Verse 18. The Jews failed to get any satisfaction from the man who had been blind. Their next move was to show that the whole thing was a fraud; that the man had never really been blind. Perhaps the parents can help them in their wicked design.

Verse 19. They asked the parents two questions concerning their son. One of them pertained to fact and the other to theory.

Verse 20. They answered the first question very positively, saying *we know*, etc. It would have been useless for them to deny the facts, for such as the birth of a child without eyesight, and suffering that handicap for all the years up to manhood, would be too well known to be denied.

Verse 21. The parents could literally say *we know not* on the question of how their son was healed as far as personal knowledge was concerned. But if they had been willing to show friendliness for Jesus, they would at least have referred to the case as it was reported by eyewitnesses. They therefore evaded that point for the reason mentioned in the next verse and told them to ask the son himself. *Of age* is from a Greek term defined by Thayer, "Adult age, maturity."

Verses 22, 23. *Put out of the synagogue* is all from APOSUNAGOGOS, and Thayer defines it, "Excluded from the sacred assemblies of the Israelites; excommunicated." The privilege of assembling with the Jews in their religious gatherings was indeed a valuable one. For that reason it was a strong means of punishing a man who became objectionable to the Pharisees, to cast him out of the synagogue and withdraw the fellowship from him. (See chapter 16: 2.) The parents of this man chose rather to deny to Jesus the credit due him, than lose their privilege of entering the synagogue. They took the cowardly way out of



the embarrassment by referring the question to their son.

Verse 24. The Jews did not accomplish what they expected from the parents, so they thought they would make another effort with the son. But this time they did not trust the case to an unbiased question, but tried to prejudice him beforehand by framing the answer for him. It was similar to a case of our day where a judge will deliver a "directed verdict" instruction to a jury, when that jury had been sworn to decide the case themselves according to the evidence as they understood it.

Verse 25. But this blind man was not one to betray his conscience as a jury sometimes does. He did not pretend to decide for the present whether his benefactor belonged in the class known as "sinners," but he was not afraid to affirm what he did know. That statement was the simple truth that he was blind but now was able to see.

Verse 26. This question was entirely unnecessary if the Jews were honestly seeking information. The blind man had already stated all the facts in the case as he understood them, and had nothing more in that line that he could say.

Verse 27. The useless question caused the blind man to realize that his questioners were not sincere in their inquiries. Or if they were, it was just their way of pressing the investigation further in order to learn what they could of Jesus. As a means of testing whether that caused their persistence, he asked them if they were interested in becoming the disciples of Jesus.

Verse 28. The Jews realized they had committed themselves a little farther than was intended. They showed their bitterness by accusing the man of being a disciple of Jesus. That would not have been anything of which to be ashamed, but his remarks were purely logical and could have been properly uttered regardless of his personal feelings or intentions. The Jews showed their ignorance of the very document and writer they pretended to respect. Any true disciples of Moses could be disciples of Jesus also, for Moses prophesied favorably of Him. (See Deuteronomy 18: 15, 18.)

Verse 29. Jesus had shown fully as much evidence of having been inspired of God as did Moses. Therefore the statements made by these Jews were

unfair and amounted to a false accusation against the doer of this good deed to the blind man.

Verse 30. The man thought it was strange they did not know from where or whom Jesus had come. He thought they ought to have known the kind of source that produced him, judging by the works he was doing. It is a law of cause and effect that is recognized by everybody, that a tree is known by its fruit. Here is a man who has given sight to a man born blind, a feat equal in principle to a creative act, and the Jews pretended not to have any evidence by which they could figure out the background of his operations and general work among mankind.

Verse 31. This verse has been misused by many well-meaning disciples. They may be discussing the question of "who has the right to pray," and they will quote this passage to show that only the children of God have that right. That sinners are outside the family of God and hence are not on "praying ground" before God. All such statements are true and are abundantly taught in the New Testament, but this passage cannot be used as a proof text. This man was uninspired and could not speak with authority, therefore his words cannot be used to prove the idea stated above. But the man could make the statement as an argument, just as one of us could do, knowing that the Word of God teaches it in various places.

Verse 32. This verse is a statement of truth that is backed up by the history of mankind, but it did not require inspiration to say it, for any person could say the same thing on the strength of history.

Verse 33. Since these were all statements of truth that could not be denied, the blind man could freely make them in his argument against the Jews. And on such a basis, he reasoned that *this man* (Jesus) must have come from God, else he could not do the wonderful things accredited to him and which were known to the public in general.

Verse 34. The truth of history agreed with the statements of this man, or the Pharisees would have confronted him with some case of healing that had been done. They knew they could not do that, so they tried to dodge the issue and call in question his right even to reason on the truth. *Born in sins* was a phrase that the Jews used

to show their contempt for a truth which they could not otherwise meet. Referring to the theory of "Transmigration of souls" (see at verse 2), they wanted to weaken the force of the man's teaching by implying he was of a low origin among men. On the pretense that such a person was unworthy of their fellowship, they *cast him out*. This phrase means they excommunicated him as explained in the comments at verse 22.

Verse 35. This verse gives the first meeting of Jesus and the man after receiving the use of his eyes. The man had been insisting with the Jews that his benefactor must have been a man of God, but that was as definite as he professed to understand it. The question Jesus asked him was for the purpose of advancing him in his spiritual growth. His reasoning with the Jews before they cast him out, was evidence that he would appreciate a fuller insight pertaining to Jesus.

Verse 36. This question asked by the man is clear when we remember that he had not seen Jesus, and hence did not recognize his person. In other words, he evidently had learned that the one talking to him was a good and great man, but did not know of his Sonship with God.

Verse 37. The conversation had continued far enough for Jesus to make his claim. *Thou hast both seen him* must have been a thrilling reminder for one who had been blind all of his life until that day. How gracious it was in Jesus to seek for the man on whom he had bestowed the blessing of sight, and make it a point that among the first, if not the first, real friend he was enabled to see, was the very One who had healed him and who was his Lord in the form of man.

Verse 38. The man who had been blind made the good confession. The miracle of opening his eyes convinced him that his benefactor was a man of God, and that would mean that any claim he would make would be true. Now that they have met personally and Jesus claims to be the Son of God, the man sincerely confessed his faith. We are not told in what manner he *worshipped* Jesus, and since that word has such a wide range of meaning, it will be well to see the note in connection with Matthew 2: 2.

Verse 39. A man who has been blind physically all his life and then been given sight, would certainly be a good subject to address concerning spiritual

light. In this verse Jesus speaks of both kinds. After the man had been enabled to see physically, he gladly accepted the opportunity to see spiritually, which he manifested when he professed his faith in Christ. The last sentence of the verse refers to the Jews who had normal sight physically, but their stubbornness against the spiritual light made them as blind spiritually as the man had been physically.

Verse 40. The Pharisees felt the force of the teaching of Jesus and knew it applied to them. *Are we blind also?* This is in the form of a question, but Jesus knew it was their way of denying being blind. It could have been indicated either by the tone of their voice, or it was what they were thinking in their heart. Whichever it was, Jesus was able to read their motives and so expressed it in the next verse.

Verse 41. *If ye were blind . . . no sin*. Jesus is not teaching that ignorance of one's duty will justify him in sin; the general teaching of the New Testament is against that. (See Acts 17: 30.) But if a person is actually uninformed on the matter of his duty, he would not be guilty of "sinning against light and knowledge," which is the sin Jesus meant these Jews might not have been guilty of. *Ye say, we see*. These Jews were really blind to the truths they so much needed, but their pride of self-importance kept them from giving the spiritual light a chance to shine into their heart. That caused them to be just as responsible for the obligations imposed by the spiritual enlightenment as if they actually possessed the knowledge of it.

## JOHN 10

Verse 1. The first five verses constitute a certain sheepfold, the flock of which consisted of the Jews whom John baptized for Christ the "Good Shepherd," and I shall comment on the verses from that standpoint. Some people apply this verse to the church, which is incorrect for more than one reason. No one can steal into the church, for even if he does act the hypocrite in his confession, and get the local congregation to accept him into the fellowship, that will not make him actually a member of the church. Acts 2: 47 says the Lord adds to the church those that are being saved, and that can be accomplished only by sincere obedience, hence no person can get into the church as a robber. But

in our case, certain ones actually get in though unlawfully. So the necessary conclusion is that it refers to men who succeeded in deceiving the people and actually gained entrance into the confidence and fellowship of the Lord's people. The cases in Acts 5: 36, 37 will serve as illustrations of this kind of deception.

Verse 2. The person entering the door into the sheepfold would thus be denoted as the true shepherd for two reasons. First, none but the true shepherd would attempt to gain entrance at that place. Second, even if anyone should try to get through it who was not entitled to enter, he would not be permitted to do so. (See next verse.)

Verse 3. When a flock was taken from the pasture in the evening, it was led through the gate into the fold. A gatekeeper was employed to guard the entrance until the shepherd was again ready to lead his sheep out for pasture. When he appeared at the gate, the keeper or *porter* as he is called here, would recognize him and open the entrance to the fold. But if a stranger should appear, claiming to be the shepherd, the porter would know he was a fraud and would not admit him, which was referred to in the preceding verse. A sheep is naturally adapted to affectionate relationship with his master, and it is stated in history, that shepherds in the east had the practice of naming each individual animal, very much as a child will name his pets.

Verse 4. The sheep recognized the voice of their master because he was the one who called them by name. It is characteristic of pets to notice when their name is mentioned. One may see an advertisement in the press for a lost animal, and probably the ad will state, "he recognizes the name," and then follows the name of the animal.

Verse 5. On the basis of the foregoing, if a stranger should come near a flock of sheep, they will flee from him instead of following. His voice will be strange to them which would make them fearful, hence they would flee in their fright.

Verse 6. *Parable* is not from the same Greek word that is generally used for the English term, but its practical purpose is the same. It means an illustration that is expressed in figurative language, where the comparison is to be discovered in the facts and truths that pertain to the subject.

Since the Jews were not informed in all those facts, it is stated that they *understood not* what Jesus spake. With the record of the case as we have it in the work of John and Jesus, we should be able to see the comparison implied in this group of verses. The fold is the ones John prepared for Jesus as explained at verse 1. John is the porter, and he *opened* the door into the confidence of his disciples when he introduced Jesus as the "Lamb of God" in chapter 1: 29. The door does not apply to that through which the sheep were to pass, but it was the shepherd who was to enter it. That door is the prophecies that had described him, and as soon as John learned the truths about Jesus he knew He was the one predicted, and then he opened the door to his disciples by the statement in chapter 1: 29.

Verse 7. Up to this point the speech of Jesus pertained exclusively to his relation with the disciples of John who constituted the "sheepfold," and to John who acted as the "porter" for that group of his disciples. From here through verse 18 Jesus enlarges the subject, and will make remarks that pertain to the church as another fold. For this reason we shall see many changes in the implied comparisons, which can be understood only by considering what the New Testament teaches about the church, and what Jesus means to those who desire salvation through the great institution. However, he will continue to use many of the same terms since they are as true in many respects in the second case as in the first. There will be one distinct reference to the first fold which will be pointed out and commented upon when we reach that verse. The word *again* is what introduces the second line of thought just mentioned a few lines above. In the second fold Jesus is the door as well as the shepherd. That is because no one can enter a saved condition now except through Christ (chapter 14: 6), and after entering thereat he must still be subject to him as his great Shepherd.

Verse 8. This verse was true from a general standpoint. It would include the cases mentioned in Acts 5: 36, 37, and also the false prophets and false Christs who rose up from time to time and claimed to be the fulfillers of the law and the prophets. To the extent of their success in misleading people, they were robbers. But others were well enough acquainted with the Old

Testament that they were not deceived, and they "turned a deaf ear" to the impostors.

Verse 9. The terms or expressions used in an illustration, are generally drawn from the characteristics of the subject, concerning which the comparison is made, and the application cannot always be made literally. One such expression is *go in and out*. Jesus had already selected a shepherd and his work for his illustration, and that made such a phrase appropriate. A shepherd will lead his flock into the fold in the evening for the night, then lead them out the next morning for pasture. In its application it simply means that if a man accepts Jesus as his Shepherd, he will be saved from the wolves of sin, and also will be abundantly supplied with spiritual pasture or food.

Verse 10. A thief attempting to get possession of a flock not belonging to him, could have no good motive for his action. He would count on slaughtering the animals, either for food or material for clothing or for both. The true shepherd would love the flock and would be interested in its growth in numbers and increase in weight.

Verse 11. *Good shepherd giveth his life*. Smith's Bible Dictionary says the following which will explain why a shepherd would run the risk of losing his life in defending the sheep: "The office of the eastern shepherd, as described in the Bible, was attended with much hardship, and even danger. He was exposed to the extremes of heat and cold, Genesis 31: 40. . . . He had to encounter the attacks of wild beasts, occasionally of the larger species, such as lions, wolves, panthers, and bears, 1 Samuel 17: 34; Isaiah 31: 4; Jeremiah 5: 6; Amos 3: 12; nor was he free from the risk of robbers or predatory [destructive] hordes."

Verse 12. A man who is hired to care for a flock of sheep would have no personal or affectionate interest in them. Such a person would not be expected to risk his life in defence of the flock, for he is acting only because of his financial interests. This would illustrate a man in the religious world who pretends to be laboring in behalf of the people of God, but who is in the business only because of personal interest in the form of money or popularity. Neither should he be expected to endure persecution or other disadvantages on account of the profession he is making. *Catcheth them and scattereth the sheep*. That is, the wolf

gets hold of some of the sheep which he mangles, while the others will flee in terror, the shepherd having already deserted them.

Verse 13. See the comments on the preceding verse about hirelings.

Verse 14. This mutual recognition is due to the affectionate relation between a shepherd and his flock, in which each sheep has its own name. See the comments on this point at verses 3 and 4.

Verse 15. The Father and Son are interested in the same flock, hence their mutual knowledge of each other is manifested in their common care for the flock. If the shepherd is called upon to give his life in defence of the sheep, the Father will give that life back to Him.

Verse 16. This is the verse that was referred to in the comments on verse 7. *This fold* means the one described in verses 1-5, consisting of the Jews whom John baptized in preparation for Christ. There was a special need for that group to be ready for Jesus, because the Jews as a nation had become so corrupt that none of them would have been good enough for the personal use of Him. But that was not because they alone were to be given a chance to save their souls. In the course of time the people of every race and nation were to be invited to come into the one fold which is the church. These are the *other sheep* of this verse. The term *I have* is in the present tense as to grammatical form, but it was spoken prospectively because Jesus knew that the Gentiles would hear his voice and come into the church. It was on the same principle that the Lord told Paul, "I have much people in this city" (Acts 18: 10). He knew that many of the Corinthians still in sin would accept the truth when they heard it, and by divine inspiration he could say, "I have." Jesus used the term *other sheep I have* in this verse in the same inspired prediction. *One fold and one shepherd* means there was to be one church, and that all of the Lord's sheep whether Jews or Gentiles would be in it.

Verse 17. Had the death of Christ been involuntary, his Father would not have raised him to life again. This willingness on his part caused God to love his Son.

Verse 18. Yes, man was the instrument through which Jesus died. But had it not been the will of the Son to die, no man would have been able to

slay him. (See Matthew 26: 53.) Because of his willingness to carry out this part of his Father's will, he was given the *power* (EXOUSIA, authority) to lay his life down and then take it up again. *This commandment* refers to the will of God that his Son should come into the world and die as a sacrifice for sin. When Jesus came it was for the purpose of doing that very thing. Paul wrote about this in Hebrews 10: 5-7 in connection with the new covenant.

Verses 19-21. These verses are explained at chapter 7: 20 and 9: 16.

Verse 22. This *dedication* was not any part of the law of Moses. A wicked king of Syria named Antiochus Euphianes, drove the priests from the altar of sacrifices at Jerusalem and burned the flesh of swine on it. After some years of struggle, a zealous Jew by the name of Judas Maccabaeus got possession of the altar. He cleansed it and dedicated it anew to the lawful service. In honor of that event the Jews established a feast that was celebrated annually. John refers to it only as a matter of date, indicating the occasion on which the things took place of which he was writing. This sacrilege by the wicked king is predicted and commented upon at Daniel 8: 9-12, in volume 4 of the Old Testament Commentary.

Verse 23. *Solomon's porch*. Thayer explains this as follows: "A porch or portico built by Solomon in the eastern part of the temple (which in the temple's destruction by the Babylonians was left uninjured, and remained down to the times of King Agrippa, to whom the care of the temple was intrusted by the emperor Claudius, and who on account of its antiquity did not dare to demolish and build it anew)." It is elsewhere described as a covered walk where people would be protected from the weather and sun. All of this explains why we read of various gatherings of the people at this place.

Verse 24. These Jews were not really wanting information, for Jesus had already furnished an abundance of evidence that he was the Christ. They hoped that by repeated demands they would catch Jesus unawares, and that he would say something on which they could base some accusation of disloyalty to Moses or to Caesar.

Verse 25. Jesus made a very brief reply to their demand. He referred to what had previously been said and

done concerning his works in the Father's name.

Verse 26. All who accepted the teaching of John became sheep for the fold that was being prepared for Christ. If they refused to accept that work of the forerunner, they naturally would not believe the teaching of the shepherd when he came. That is why Jesus told these Jews the reason they did not believe his word was because they were *not of my sheep*.

Verse 27. Jesus made more believers through his personal teaching and that of his apostles. These became sheep also and came under the same rules that regulate a flock with its shepherd, whose voice the sheep had learned.

Verse 28. *They shall never perish* is on the condition that the sheep hear the voice of the shepherd. He will give them eternal life, whereas a temporal shepherd leads his flock into temporal pasture. This verse does not teach the false doctrine known as "once in grace always in grace." But if a man is faithful to the law of Christ, then it is true that no other person can pluck him out of the hand of the Shepherd.

Verse 29. The Father will not hold a sheep regardless of whether it is faithful and satisfied with the spiritual pasturage which He provides for him. But if the sheep is thus true to the Father, then no man can get that sheep out of His grasp.

Verse 30. The Father is greater than all other beings in existence. Since He and his Son *are one* (in spirit and purpose), the security of a sheep that is true to them is established and is based on the unfailing power and goodness of the Lord.

Verse 31. At every climax of the arguments of Jesus, the conclusion was so unanswerable that the Jews were enraged. Instead of acting in a fair manner and accepting the teaching, they would threaten him with violence.

Verse 32. In reality it was the good works of Jesus that angered the Jews. They did not like to see the favor that he was receiving from the multitude, but were not honest enough to admit it. As a screen for their envious hypocrisy, they pretended to object to some of his personal claims.

Verse 33. The specific grievance they put forward was that Jesus made himself God. He did not make such a claim directly (although he could have

done so justly if taken rightly) but only had claimed to be the Son of God.

Verse 34. In reply to the charge of the Jews, Jesus made a quotation from Psalms 82: 6. Incidentally, let us note that Jesus called the book of Psalms *your law*, which tells us that the writings of Moses do not contain all of "the law" of the Jews. In this citation are the words *ye are gods*; they were addressed to the Jews of old to whom the law was sent, and in such a form of speech they were called *gods*. There is nothing strained in attributing such a title to God's people. The name God is a family one and includes every member of that family. Every member of the Jones family is a Jones, and likewise every member of the family of God is a God in the sense of relationship. It was in that sense the passage in Psalms was used.

Verse 35. The mere fact of being the ones to whom the word of God was sent, entitled them to the family relationship and the right to its name, which was God. *The scripture cannot be broken* denotes that these Jews had no right to speak of Jesus in a way that would criticize the scripture just quoted.

Verse 36. *Sanctified* is from HAGIAZO. It has such varied applications in the New Testament, sometimes pertaining to man and at others applying to the Lord, that I think it will be well to copy the definitions (the parts in italics) of Thayer. The reader should acquaint himself with these different clauses, and when using them in any given place in the scripture, always use the one that is appropriate. "1. To render or acknowledge to be venerable [worthy of high regard], to hallow. 2. To separate from things profane and dedicate to God, to consecrate. 3. To purify, to cleanse externally. To purify internally by reformation of soul." Jesus never had any impurities in his character, hence the definitions 1 and 2 should apply to him. The Father acknowledged the Son as being worthy of high regard, when he said he was his beloved Son in whom he was well pleased (Matthew 3: 17), and he dedicated him to the great work of God when he gave the command, "Hear ye him" (Matthew 17: 5). If the people who were honored only by having the law sent to them were entitled to be called gods, then certainly the One on whom God bestowed all these latter honors has the right to be called Son of God.

Verse 37. Jesus was willing to rest

his reputation upon the works that he did. The Jews would not have been able to name a single thing that Jesus performed that God condemned in the Scriptures. That would indicate the works were of the Father and it should have caused them to become believers.

Verse 38. The gist of this verse is the willingness of Jesus to pass over his personality for the time. Yet he insisted that the Jews should at least accept him as a worker of good things.

Verse 39. Again the Jews were baffled by the reasoning of Jesus. Instead of acknowledging their inability to meet the issue, they were inclined to take bodily possession of him. He escaped because his time had not yet come. (See chapter 7: 6.)

Verse 40. Since it was not yet time for Jesus to be taken in hand by the Jews, he moved out of the territory of Jerusalem. It was his desire to continue his good work, and he selected a community where John had done work before he was slain. His preaching had doubtless sown the seeds of truth that prepared the soil for Jesus.

Verses 41, 42. This paragraph confirms the comments on the preceding verse. The people saw in Jesus the fulfillment of many of John's sayings, and it made believers of them. *John did no miracle*. These people used the word in its physical sense, and there is no account of any such a work done by him. However, the predictions that John made of Christ and which were fulfilled, required supernatural knowledge, and such a manifestation could rightly be called miraculous.

The word *miracle* fills such a prominent place in the New Testament that I shall explain it in detail, with the hope the reader will make a note of it for reference, as it will not again be given in full. It comes from two different Greek words, and they have also been rendered by several other English words in the King James Version. Before giving the lexicon definitions of the original words, I shall state how each has been translated and how many times. One of the Greek words is DUNAMIS, and it has been rendered ability 1 time, abundance 1, meaning 1, miracle 8, power 77, strength 7, violence 1, virtue 3, wonderful work 1. The other Greek word is SEMEION, and it has been rendered miracle 22 times, sign 51, token 1, wonder 3.

Since the last word is the one from which the significant words "miracle" and "sign" come usually, I shall give



the lexicon definitions of it only. Thayer defines it, "A sign, mark, token; A sign, prodigy, portent." He also explains his definitions, "That by which a person or thing is distinguished from another and by which it is known. . . . An unusual occurrence, transcending [going beyond] the common course of nature." From the foregoing information, it can be seen that the word "miracle" has a very wide range of meaning, and the specific definition to apply in any given place must be determined by the connection in which it is used. Any unusual or great or wonderful thing that is done, whether by the Lord or man, may rightly be called a miracle. But the rule is that a miracle means something that only God can do, whether he does it directly or through the agency of man.

## JOHN 11

Verse 1. Bethany was a small town a short distance from Jerusalem. Though small, it was a noted place because of the frequent visits Jesus made to it, and because of the famous sisters who lived there. The importance of Lazarus was due to the relation he had with these sisters, and that importance was increased by the miracle performed upon him described in this chapter.

Verse 2. There were several Marys in those times, and John wanted his readers to know which one he was writing about, so he specified by referring to her deed of wiping the feet of Jesus with her hair. That event had not occurred at the time of Lazarus' sickness, but it had been done at the time John wrote his record. He knew it would be read, and mentioned the incident as a mark of identification. Note that John did not merely say "it was that woman which anointed the Lord," etc., for that deed was performed by another woman also (Luke 7: 36-50), and the cases were different in some respects. The other woman was classed as a "sinner" which did not apply to Mary. That woman washed the feet of Jesus with tears (of penitential sorrow), while Mary only anointed his feet before wiping them with her hair. Hence the writer says it was that *Mary* which anointed the Lord with ointment, etc.

Verse 3. *He whom thou lovest*. We are taught that Jesus was a friend of publicans and sinners, and that he loved everybody. That is true, of course, but Jesus was human as well as divine, and he could have his per-

sonal favorites as well as other human beings could have. There is nothing wrong in such affection as long as one does not allow that sentiment to influence him in the wrong direction, which we know it did not do with Jesus. But the word *love* is so much used in the New Testament, and has so many applications because of the definitions of the original Greek, that I insist the reader see the long critical note given at Matthew 5: 43.

Verse 4. *Not unto death* means the death of Lazarus was not to be permanent. Jesus knew he was going to die, but that he would be restored to life after a few days. The purpose of the event was that the Son of God might have an opportunity to be glorified by performing the miracle upon Lazarus.

Verse 5. This is commented upon at verse 3.

Verse 6. *When he had heard* has virtually the same meaning as "when the Lord knew" in chapter 4: 1; see the comments at that place. At the time the news was sent to Jesus, Lazarus was still living but nearing death. In order to have an unquestionable proof of His power, he remained two days longer where he was (verse 6), which place is named in chapter 10: 40.

Verse 7. Going into Judea did not necessarily mean going to Bethany. When Jesus proposed going into that general territory, the disciples did not know that the conditions with Lazarus had anything to do with it.

Verse 8. This intended stoning of Jesus is recorded in chapter 8: 59 and 10: 31. Having escaped the wrath of the Jews, the disciples wondered why Jesus would expose himself again and thus give them another opportunity to carry out their evil intentions.

Verse 9. Jesus used the hours of literal daylight to illustrate the idea of acting according to the light of truth and right doing. It was necessary for him to go even into Judea, in order to perform the righteous deed of raising Lazarus in the presence of witnesses. That being a proper act, it would be like a man working while he had the light of day so that he could see what he was doing. It would follow, then, that the Father would see after the safety of his Son.

Verse 10. This verse is to be understood in the light of the comments on the preceding one. That is, the *night* is just the opposite of the *day* in that passage.

Verse 11. Having given the disciples the preliminaries of the great subject, Jesus named that subject in a manner that will need further information.

Verse 12. All the disciples knew about Lazarus' condition so far was that he was sick, and they thought that since "sleep is the best medicine," it would be well not to disturb him. They did not realize the uses of figurative and literal language, which the Bible as well as other compositions uses. The reader may see a full explanation of these forms of speech in the comments at Matthew 9: 24.

Verse 13. The literal fact about Lazarus was that he was dead. The figurative appearance was that of sleep, and that is what the disciples had in mind.

Verse 14. *Plainly* is the same as saying that Jesus spoke literally.

Verse 15. This verse explains why Jesus tarried the two days in verse 6.

Verse 16. Thomas was one of the apostles, and is the one who is popularly referred to as "doubting Thomas," on account of the incident in chapter 20: 24-29. He was called Didymus as a surname, but the word in the Greek means "a twin." Why the title was applied to him as part of his name is not very clearly stated in the reference works I have seen. *Die with him* was said according to verse 8. He was so certain that Jesus would be slain as soon as he reached Judea, that he proposed to the other apostles that they share in his fate.

Verse 17. This verse with verse 39 indicates that people were buried the same day of death. When Martha suggested that the body of Lazarus was decaying, she based it on the fact that it had been dead four days. That cause for the decay would have been the same whether the body had been put into the cave or retained in the home.

Verse 18. This verse gives us about two miles for distance from Bethany to Jerusalem.

Verse 19. Jerusalem being so near to Bethany explains how *many of the Jews* could come to the home to show their sympathy for the sisters.

Verse 20. No specific reason is given why Martha only went to meet Jesus. It was not for any lack of interest or confidence in Jesus on the part of Mary, for each of them expressed the same belief in his ability to prevent death. However, from the account in Luke 10: 38-42, it seems that Martha

was the head of the house and generally more forward in social and personal demonstrations.

Verse 21. Martha presumed that Jesus would have prevented the death of her brother had he been there. Whether he would have seen fit to prevent it is another matter, for he would have been able to prevent it though absent. He prevented the death of the nobleman's son though absent (chapter 4: 46-53). But the remark of Martha showed her faith in Jesus, and the feeling of friendship on which she based it.

Verse 22. Her faith was not put to any strain even by the death of her brother. Yet she recognized the cooperation that existed between Jesus and his Father, and based her expectation on their joint wills.

Verse 23. This statement was so indefinite that it did not satisfy the sorrowing sister. But Jesus took that plan of introducing the subject.

Verse 24. Martha thought Jesus had reference to the general resurrection at the last day. She spoke of that as if she had previously been informed of its truth and had fully believed it. Doubtless it was often the subject of conversation between Jesus and these dear personal friends as he was passing the time in their humble home.

Verses 25, 26. It would be difficult to do justice to these verses without including them in one paragraph. In thought or subject matter they correspond with Revelation 20: 5, 6. In the forepart of the chapter we are studying, Jesus spoke of the physical death of Lazarus in both figurative and literal language. In this paragraph the language is partially figurative, but Jesus is speaking of spiritual death and life. *I am the resurrection* means that Jesus is the giver of life. It is true of him in two senses; in him all mankind will be brought to life physically at the last day whether good or bad (chapter 5: 28, 29; 1 Corinthians 15: 22). But the spiritual death is that of men in sin, referred to by the words *though he be dead*. Such a person will be brought to spiritual life, saved from his past sins, if he will believe on Christ. After he has thus been made alive through belief in Christ (which includes primary obedience to the commands of the Gospel), he becomes one of the persons designated by the word *liveth*. But he must be faithful to the rest of the commands and so continue to show that he *believeth*, by a faith-

ful life as a Christian. Such a person has the assurance that he *shall never die*. This death means the second one, when those who are not faithful to the end of life will be cast into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels, which is the second death (Revelation 20: 14).

Verse 27. In answer to the question of Jesus, Martha made the good confession of the divinity of him as the Son of God. She coupled her confession of faith with the fact that it had been predicted of him as the one to come into the world.

Verse 28. We did not hear when Jesus made the request for Mary to come, but the statement of Martha gives us that information.

Verse 29. How sweet it was for Mary to go *quickly* to Jesus.

Verse 30. Jesus was not far from the town, but tarried until Martha could return with her sister.

Verse 31. Verse 28 says Martha called her sister "secretly," which explains why the others in the house did not know why she left the room. *Goeth to the grave to weep there*. While that was not the reason Mary left, yet the remark shows it was a practice in those times to manifest sorrow for a departed loved one in such a manner. It is natural and right for us to sorrow for our dead friends, but it is worse when we have to sorrow as those without hope. In the case of the sisters of Lazarus it was the sorrow that was lightened by their hope for the resurrection of the just.

Verse 32. Mary expressed the same faith in the power of Jesus to control disease as did Martha. See the comments on the subject at verse 21.

Verse 33. *Groaned* is from EMBRIMAOMAI, and Thayer defines it, "To be very angry, to be moved with indignation." *Weeping* is from KLAIO, and Thayer's definition is, "To mourn, weep, lament." It has the idea of outward and audible demonstrations. We should note that Jesus not only saw Mary weeping, but also the Jews that were with her. Mary's actions were genuine and prompted by true sorrow for her dead. The Jews were merely going through it as the usual formality of mourning for the dead. Jesus knew the hearts of all of them and could see the coldness therein, notwithstanding their outward show of sympathy. It was this fact that moved him to indignation. Yet he restrained himself

from expressing his feelings, but *groaned in the spirit*.

Verse 34. Jesus never had to ask a question for information, but he wished to show a sympathetic interest in the case, and asked where they had laid him. Have you ever visited a home where death has entered? You asked to see the form of their dear dead and were told to "come this way." The look of utter dejection on the faces of the relatives as they said this, then started toward the silent chamber where lay the loved one, could not be described in words.

Verse 35. Such a look as the preceding verse describes was doubtless on the faces of these sisters as they led Jesus to the tomb of their brother. There could be no question as to the sincerity of that look or of the tone of voice when they bade the Lord to "come and see." *Jesus wept*. The second word is different from the one in verse 33. It is from DAKRUO, which Thayer defines, "To weep, shed tears." This is the only place in the Greek New Testament where this word is used. It does not indicate any audible expressions. Jesus had restrained himself from such demonstrations, even when he saw Mary convulsed in sorrow, because he wanted to ignore the hypocritical performances of the Jews. But the sight of these sorrowing sisters, and the pathos in their sweetly-sad voices, was so overwhelming that he burst into tears that were so generous that they could be seen.

Verse 36. The Jews missed the point as to why Jesus wept. It is true he loved Lazarus, and that feeling blended with his sympathy for the sisters. Yet he had as much love for him at the time of his death, although he was many miles away; but there is no indication that he wept then. This flow of tears was caused by his sympathy for the sisters. (See the comments on Verses 33-35.)

Verse 37. The Lord did not see fit to prevent the death of Lazarus, and the people implied that it was because he *could not* do so.

Verse 38. *Jesus therefore*. Because of these cruel words of the people, it caused Jesus to have a renewal of the feelings described in verse 33. Moffatt's rendering of this place is, "This made Jesus chafe afresh." By this time he had reached the grave or tomb, and found it closed by a stone.

Verse 39. Jesus told them to take the stone away. "The Lord helps those

who help themselves," is an old and true saying. The people could not restore Lazarus to life, but they could remove the stone. The statement of Martha about the condition of Lazarus' body was a mild protest against opening the tomb. We are not given any explanation of this, in the light of her great faith as expressed in verse 22. She could not have doubted the ability of Jesus to raise him even out of his state of decay, when she had already affirmed belief in his ability to resurrect him out of death at the last day (verse 24), at which time the entire body will have returned to dust. Her statement was a suggestion that Jesus restore her brother to life before removing the stone, to save those present from the offensiveness due to decomposition of the body.

Verse 40. Sometimes people will propose faith in the Lord's power to do the greater things, and then manifest doubt concerning the lesser ones. For instance, they will ascribe to Him the power necessary to create the universe with its millions of items, then question his ability to cleanse a man's soul by washing his body in water. Not that one miracle really is greater than another, only it might appear to be so. Martha professed to believe that Jesus could raise the body of Lazarus out of the grave long after it had been absorbed by the elements of the earth, but manifested doubt about his ability to care for the sense of smell over a decaying body after but four days since death.

Verse 41. In obedience to the instruction of Jesus, they removed the stone from the grave or cave that was being used for burial. Before proceeding with the act of resurrecting the dead, Jesus first went to God in prayer, thereby setting a good example for others who claim to be children of God. This also was to demonstrate to the ones present that He was accomplishing his great works in cooperation with his Father. If the prayer is answered, it will show also that God is recognizing that cooperation. It was appropriate to express gratitude for the past support his Father had given him.

Verse 42. Jesus never had any doubts of his Father's assistance, but the people might have had some questioning in their minds about it. This thought is suggested by verse 37, where they intimated that Jesus had been unable to prevent the death of Lazarus. Now if these same people

hear him appeal to his Father, and then see the favorable response to that appeal, they will know they were wrong in their accusation as to his failure to intervene and prevent Lazarus from dying.

Verse 43. *Loud* is from MEGAS, and in the King James Version it has been translated by "loud" 33 times, and by "great" 145 times. It means here that the voice was not only of great volume as to degree of tone, but was one that indicated authority.

Verse 44. Even after reviving Lazarus from death, it required miraculous power to enable him to come out of the tomb, for he had been bound hand and foot. That is why Jesus instructed them to *loose him, and let him go*.

Verse 45. This miracle caused many of the Jews to believe on Jesus. That was one of the purposes for which the deed was done. (See chapter 20: 30,31.)

Verse 46. While many of the Jews believed, some of them did not. And of that class, some went to the Pharisees in the spirit of talebearers and reported the event of the resurrection of Lazarus.

Verse 47. This *council* was the Sanhedrin, the highest court the Jews were allowed to have in the time of Christ. Upon the report brought to the Pharisees from the tomb of Lazarus, they became alarmed and called a special session of the council. For detailed information about the Sanhedrin, see the note with comments on Matthew 26: 3.

Verse 48. The Jews finally lost their place (Palestine, with Jerusalem as the capital) and nation as a governmental unit. But it was because they persecuted Jesus, and not because they allowed him to teach the people. (See Matthew 23: 38, 39; 27: 25.) The first reference in the parentheses is a prediction of the desolation of Jerusalem, and the second is the rash proposition of the Jews for that very thing to happen, although they did not realize what their mad statement would mean to their people.

Verse 49. *Ye know nothing at all* means the same as if Caiaphas had said: "You have not gone far enough in your suggestion." The speakers in the Sanhedrin had suggested only that something should be done to stop the miraculous works of Jesus.

Verse 50. The proposition the high priest had to offer was the very thing that God intended should come to pass. However, the motive Caiaphas had

was only that it would be a short and sure way of stopping the work of Jesus. But God used the mouth of the high priest to deliver this weighty speech to the Sanhedrin.

Verse 51. Such a use of the high priest as stated in the preceding verse was nothing new. (See Leviticus 10: 11; Deuteronomy 17: 9; Malachi 2: 7.) As time went on after the writings of Moses were completed, it was necessary occasionally to give the people further revelation of truth. That was done through the words of prophets or the lips of the priests as the passages cited show. That is why it says he spake this not of himself, which means it was not something that originated with him. The Holy Ghost (Spirit) was guiding him in this lofty speech, just as it had done to the prophets in Old Testament times. (See 2 Peter 1: 20, 21.)

Verse 52. No mere human being, especially a wicked man like Caiaphas, would or could make such a grand statement as this verse. *Not for that nation only* denotes that Jesus was to be the sacrifice for all nations of the world. *The children of God* is spoken prospectively, just as Jesus spoke of his "other sheep" in chapter 10: 16, referring to the Gentiles who would accept the Gospel when it was offered to them.

Verse 53. The Jews accepted the proposition made by the priest, and began at once to plot the death of Jesus. In so doing they would not only gratify their wicked personal designs upon the Lamb of God, but would unconsciously carry out the great work of Jehovah in "providing for himself a Lamb" for the atonement of the human race.

Verse 54. Jesus knew the Jews were plotting to kill him, but his time for death had not yet come, hence he maintained some privacy in his walk. He went to a city called Ephraim that was near the wilderness, and thus evaded the evil schemes of his enemies.

Verse 55. *Nigh at hand* is a comparative phrase, for the first verse of the next chapter shows that it was at least six days before. *To purify themselves*. The law of Moses required all persons to be both physically and ceremonially clean before participating in the passover. (See Leviticus 22: 1-6).

Verse 56. When these Jews gathered in the temple in the days before the feast, they became curious as to

whether Jesus would come to it. He had disappeared sometime previously and gone into the region of the wilderness. This fact led some to intimate that he would be afraid to attend the passover.

Verse 57. This was like an official advertisement for the whereabouts of some wanted criminal. The Jews did not realize that whenever his "time had come," Jesus would be at hand and not make any effort to escape from them. The truth of this statement is clearly shown in chapter 18: 4-11. Jesus fully intended to let his presence be known as soon as it was the proper time. In the meantime he associated with his disciples and personal friends, making his last visit in the town of Bethany near Jerusalem, as the next chapter shows.

## JOHN 12

Verse 1. Bethany was about two miles from Jerusalem, and was the scene of some of the most personal experiences of Jesus. The significance of mentioning the case of Lazarus will be seen later in this chapter.

Verse 2. According to Matthew 26: 6, this supper was in the house of "Simon the leper," who evidently had been healed by Jesus. *Made him a supper* denotes that Jesus was the honor guest, but his disciples also were present. *Martha served*, even as she did in her own house on another occasion (Luke 10: 38-40). *Lazarus was one of them*. The supper was had in honor of Jesus, but Lazarus was given special mention because of the miracle that had been performed upon him.

Verse 3. This anointing should not be confused with the one in Luke 7: 37-50. That was done by a woman from the outcast ranks and was known as a "sinner," but the present case was by the sister of Lazarus, who was one of the personal friends of Jesus.

Verse 4. *Should betray him* is translated, "was about to deliver him up," by the Englishman's Greek New Testament. The statement was made to explain the actions of Judas here and elsewhere as they pertained to money.

Verse 5. *Three hundred pence*. Weights and measures, as well as money values, changed from time to time and in different places. But in any way it is estimated, the value Judas placed on this ointment was great, which agrees with the statement of John (verse 3) that it was *very costly*.

Verse 6. No doubt Judas sincerely regretted seeing this valuable product used in this way, but it was not because of his interest in the poor. He was covetous and it hurt him to see that much value bestowed upon another. *Had the bag* means Judas was the treasurer for the group, and hence he was especially interested in anything that looked like money value. *Bare* is from BASTAZO, and Thayer defines it at this place, "To bear away, carry off." The general meaning of the word is to have charge of the money, but the more specific meaning applies to Judas according to Thayer's definition. In chapter 13: 29, 30, the bag was still in the hands of Judas just as he was ready to leave the group. He went out with the bag and was never again with Jesus and the other apostles, so that he truly "carried off" the treasury as the specific definition states, and verifies the charge of John that he was a thief.

Verse 7. *Against the day of my burying*. It was an old custom to anoint the dead and use spices at the time of burial. (See 2 Chronicles 16: 14; John 19: 40; Luke 23: 56.) Mark 14: 8 quotes Jesus as saying, "She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying."

Verse 8. *Poor always . . . with you*. Jesus did not criticize the idea of giving something to the poor, for he regarded that as a good work. He instructed the rich young man (Matthew 19: 21) to give his possessions to the poor. But this statement was about the idea of using present opportunities that are soon to pass. He was soon to leave the world and that would stop all chances of doing him a bodily favor, while they would never cease having opportunities for helping the poor.

Verse 9. The presence of Jesus only would have brought the people out to Bethany, but they had a special interest in seeing Lazarus alive, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. This was a visible evidence of the power that Jesus possessed, for the deed had been done in that very place where Lazarus had lived, and there could be no question about his identity.

Verses 10, 11. It would be difficult to form a just description of minds as wicked as those possessed by the chief priests. We frequently hear of witnesses being slain or otherwise removed to prevent their testifying in an important case. But generally it is done on behalf of a felon who is about

to be brought to trial for his crimes. Lazarus was only enjoying his natural right to live after having been restored from the dead by the Lord. And the motive for removing him was to destroy a visible but silent testimony in favor of Jesus, who had incurred the wrath of these priests by exposing their hypocrisy. No wonder such people could find it in their hearts finally to cause the death of the Teacher they hated.

Verse 12. Bethany was near Jerusalem, and the movements of Jesus were being made known in the city. The news evidently came back by the ones who had gone out to Bethany, mentioned in verse 9.

Verse 13. It was an ancient custom to honor an approaching dignitary by making a carpet of garments and the foliage of trees on which he might proceed. The season of the Passover was at hand, and great numbers of Jews from all over the world were at Jerusalem to attend it. That is why the preceding verse mentions *much people*. *Hosanna* is a Greek word and Robinson defines it, "Save now, succor now, be now propitious." He says further that it is from a Hebrew word that means "a joyful acclamation." Thayer's definition agrees with this but is more condensed. The passage denotes an expression of good will to Him who is able to save others because he is coming in the Lord's name.

Verse 14. *Found a young ass*. The accounts of Mark, Luke and John, leave out all mention of the mother of the colt, and the reader may be somewhat confused over it. The subject is fully discussed in the comments on Matthew's account (chapter 21: 1-7), and I urge him to see that place.

Verse 15. The passage cited is in Zechariah 9: 9. The prophet not only predicted the triumphal entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, but said he would come "having salvation." It would be useless repetition to say this means "saving himself," as the margin renders it, for that truth is included in the fact of his riding triumphantly into the city. But Jesus was coming into the capital of the Jewish nation to bring salvation to all people in the world, whether they be Jew or Gentile.

Verse 16. The word *glorify* has several shades of meaning, and the one to apply in any given place must be determined by the context. In verse 23 it is stated that *the hour is come*



(is at hand or very near), when the Son of man was to be glorified. This denotes that as yet He had not been glorified in the sense the word is used in this passage. Furthermore, chapter 7: 39 says the reason the Holy Ghost was not yet given, was because Jesus was not yet glorified, and chapter 16: 7-13 shows that the Holy Ghost was not to be given until Jesus had gone to his Father. All of these truths give us the meaning of *glorified* in this verse to be the eternal form of Jesus in Heaven; the form referred to in 1 John 3: 2. After that great circumstance of the glorification of Jesus, the disciples recalled the many things He had said to them, and the meaning of them became clear to their understanding.

Verse 17. These *people* related what they had seen and heard on the occasion of the resurrection of Lazarus. *Bare record* means they made their statements as eye and ear witnesses of the miracle that had so deeply impressed many in the community.

Verse 18. The testimony of the witnesses mentioned in the preceding verse, caused many others to believe on Him, which accounts for their actions described in verse 13.

Verse 19. *World* is from *KOSMOS*, which means the inhabitants of the earth. The statement of the Pharisees was one of envy and fear. Their complaint was among themselves, as if each one thought the other should "do something about it."

Verse 20. The question may arise why these Greeks (who were Gentiles) were permitted to worship at the feast, which was primarily a Jewish affair. In 1 Kings 8: 41-43 is a part of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple. He predicted that "strangers" (people outside the Jewish nation) would come to the temple to pray, which is one act of worship. Solomon asked God to grant the prayer of these people. Then in chapter 9: 3 of that book, the Lord told Solomon that his prayer was heard, which means it was to be granted, and that included what was asked on behalf of the prayers of the strangers. It will help the reader to understand this matter if he will consult the note on "worship" at Matthew 2: 2. The word has such a wide range of meanings, that it would have been easy for these *Greeks* to perform some phase of it on the present occasion, without infringing upon any ceremony that was the exclusive right of the Jews.

Verse 21. Philip was of Galilee as stated here and in chapter 1: 44. It was natural, therefore, for these Greeks to contact him in their inquiry to see the greatest of Galileans. The fame of Jesus had reached so far that these visitors had heard of it.

Verse 22. I have not seen any account of the previous association of Philip with Andrew, but they seem to have been close personal friends. Philip passed on to Andrew the request of the Greeks, and together they reported it to Jesus.

Verse 23. We have no information as to what was done about the aforementioned request. However, Jesus stated to Philip and Andrew (perhaps in the hearings of these Greeks), that the hour was at hand when the Son of man was to be *glorified*. The last word is explained in the comments at verse 16. This glorification was to take place in Heaven, which had to be preceded by His death and resurrection. That brought the conversation to the point where it was necessary to say something about the death of Jesus, which will be the subject in the next verse.

Verse 24. The original word for *corn* is defined "grain" in the lexicon. Jesus used the subject to show why his death was necessary. If a grain could be kept alive, it would never be able to grow into another stock of the species. All that its owner would have would be the single grain; no reproduction. Likewise, if Christ had not died, he would never have produced others to share with him in the glorified state.

Verse 25. The meaning of this verse is set forth at some length in the comments on Matthew 10: 39, as it pertains to the two kinds of life. As the word *hate* is used here, it is defined by Thayer to mean, "To love less, to postpone in love or esteem, to slight." Robinson defines it, "Not to love, to love less, to slight."

Verse 26. *Serve* is from a different Greek word from the one that suggests a slave. It means to minister to or wait upon, such as serving one with the necessities of life. No one can render such service to Christ today directly. But that kind of service can be given to his disciples as he taught in Matthew 25: 35-40. On the principle that such service is regarded by Jesus as if it were done for him personally, so the Father will honor that servant for his loving ministry

as having been done for his Son. But this material ministration should be considered only as one phase of our service to Christ. We should be even more concerned with rendering service to Him in the great Cause for which he died and "fell into the ground."

Verse 27. *Troubled* means to be agitated, which was the condition of mind that was upon the Saviour. He was beginning to feel the awful emotions that came to him in greater force later in the garden. *Save me from this hour* was equivalent to his prayer for the removal of the "cup," mentioned in Matthew 26: 39. More will be said on that subject when we come to John 18: 11. Jesus asked his Father to save him from *this hour* (not the cross). When later He prayed "if it be possible" let the cup pass, it meant virtually the same resignation of spirit that is expressed here in the words, *for this cause came I unto this hour*. The human nature of Jesus longed for relief from his mental suffering, but his divine knowledge told him that he must endure it.

Verse 28. The original word for *glorify* as used here is defined by Thayer as follows: "To make renowned, render illustrious, i. e., to cause the dignity and worth of some person or thing to become manifest and acknowledged." God answered the prayer of Jesus in an audible voice but in words the people did not understand. This made the third time God spoke with words that could be heard; at the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3: 17), and at the transfiguration (Matthew 17: 5), being the other two. That voice was not heard in audible form again that we have any account of, but the Almighty demonstrated his majesty on behalf of his Son more than once afterward, particularly when he raised him from the dead.

Verse 29. The voice from heaven was somewhat indistinct so that the people did not understand it, yet sufficiently different from the noise of thunder that some of them knew it was some form of speech addressed to Jesus in answer to his prayer, and they interpreted it to be the voice of an angel.

Verse 30. Jesus did not need the voice of his Father to satisfy Him, but some kind of demonstration was necessary as evidence for the crowd.

Verse 31. *Now* denotes that the time was very near when the great test was

to be made. Jesus was soon to be slain as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and thus counteract the work of the *prince of this world*. Chapter 14: 30; 16: 11; Luke 4: 6; Ephesians 2: 2, shows this *prince* is Satan.

Verse 32. This verse is directly connected with the preceding one, showing that Christ was to be lifted up on the cross to accomplish the sacrifice. *Draw all men unto me*. Jesus never contradicted himself, and since he taught (Matthew 7: 13, 14) that most people will be lost, he would not here teach that all would come to him. The point is with reference to what person was to be the most important drawing power. Hitherto it had been the influence of Satan and his agents, but the lifting up on the cross of the Son of man would draw men to Him and not Satan.

Verse 33. This verse is added to indicate that the lifting up mentioned in the preceding one was to be a literal action upon his body.

Verse 34. As usual, the people failed to recognize in Jesus a person who was both human and divine. As a result, they could not understand how he could die bodily, and yet establish a kingdom that would "stand forever."

Verse 35. Jesus did not give the people a direct reply, for he had already given them many lessons about his great work in cooperation with his Father, and they seemed to be overlooked by most of them. But he intimated that his personal instructions would soon be ended, and they should make use of them while they could.

Verse 36. Jesus gave them one more parting exhortation to walk in the light that had been offered to them, then he disappeared from the crowd.

Verse 37. The hardness of men's hearts prevents them from taking a fair view of the plainest evidences. The miracles that Jesus performed were so many and under such varied circumstances, that it should have been more difficult to doubt than to believe.

Verse 38. God never did force a man to do wrong; but He knows all about the future, and can see the actions of men for centuries before they are born. With such knowledge of the future, God inspired his prophets to write about it. The common phrase "that it might be fulfilled," means the same as if it said, "and in so doing, it fulfilled," etc. The prophecy of *Esaias*

(Isaiah) cited is in chapter 53: 1 of his book.

Verse 39. *Could not.* The first word is from DUNAMAI, and the definitions of Thayer and Robinson agree, but the latter is clearer and I shall quote it as follows: "To be able, I can." He then adds the following explanations: "Both in a physical and moral sense, and whether depending on the disposition and faculties of the mind, on the degree of strength or skill, or on the nature and external circumstances of the case." Upon further consideration, I think it will be helpful to quote Thayer's definition also: "To be able, have power," and his comments are, "Whether by virtue of one's own ability and resources, or a state of mind, or through favorable circumstances." This information from the lexicons teaches us that these people had deliberately closed their eyes and hardened their hearts against the light of God's truth. In such a state of mind they *could not* believe in the sense of the word as explained by the lexicons. *Because that Esaias said* means that Esaias (Isaiah) said it because God knew it would happen, and caused the prophet to write it. (See comments, preceding verse.)

Verse 40. This verse is to be understood in the light of comments on verses 38, 39.

Verse 41. The account of this vision is in Isaiah 6: 1-10. *Saw his glory* is described in the first four verses of the passage cited.

Verse 42. The significance of being put out of the synagogue is set forth at chapter 9: 22, 23. But though it was a great privilege to be admitted to these assemblies, neither that nor any other personal advantage should have been counted above the honor of being a believer in Christ.

Verse 43. This verse states the motive of the conduct mentioned in the preceding one. It is hard to understand, but perhaps it is because the favor of God is connected with requirement that one shall sacrifice some of his selfish practices.

Verse 44. Jesus means that believing on him did not stop there; it includes belief in God also. The truth is that no man can truthfully say he believes on either the Father or the Son without believing on the other.

Verse 45. This verse embraces the same principle as the preceding, but the difference is due to the personalities of the two. In order for man to

see Jesus, he had to take on himself the fleshly body. But in spirit and purpose they are the same, so that seeing Jesus was virtually equivalent to seeing God.

Verse 46. By coming into the world in human form, Jesus was enabled to bring the light of Heaven within the grasp of man, thereby delivering him from spiritual darkness.

Verse 47. The original word for *judge* has several shades of meaning; one of them is, "to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong." The world had already been pronounced wrong or "in unbelief" (Romans 11: 32) before Jesus came into it, hence he did not come for that purpose. Instead, He came to provide a plan whereby the world might be saved from its bondage of unbelief.

Verse 48. If a man rejects the plan offered by Jesus for his salvation, then God will judge him in the last day. When that day arrives, God will bring condemnation upon the disobedient man, finding him guilty under the words that were spoken by his Son, and using him as the acting judge (Acts 17: 31).

Verse 49. It will be consistent for the Father to judge the unbeliever by the words of Jesus, because He has delivered to mankind the words that his Father gave him.

Verse 50. Jesus could speak in this positive manner about the laws of his Father, because he was with Him from the beginning, and had direct and personal knowledge of their eternal character. (See chapter 1: 1, 14.)

## JOHN 13

Verse 1. This was the fourth and last passover that Jesus attended after his baptism. *Before the feast* means just before, for *the hour* of his death was in sight; he was to die the next day. *Loved them unto the end.* Regardless of the many weaknesses the apostles had shown at various times, Jesus never wavered in his love for them.

Verse 2. This chapter corresponds with Luke 22: 1-23 in most respects. There are some items of that last night given in Luke's account that John does not give, and vice versa. The most significant difference being at the point when Jesus instituted his own supper. Not that any disagreement exists, but the items are more detailed in some accounts than in the others, and I shall comment on that

when we come to verse 23. Until then the comments will be made on the verses in their order. *Being ended* is translated "taking place" by the Englishman's Greek New Testament. That is correct, for the passover supper was far from being ended when Jesus did the things that are recorded now. *The devil having put*. This was done when Judas saw what he called the "waste" of the precious ointment. (See the comments at Matthew 26: 14.)

Verse 3. Jesus knew that the work his Father had given him to do was about done, and that he would soon return to Him from whom he had come into the world.

Verse 4. The *garments* Jesus laid aside were the outer ones that were worn over the closer-fitting ones next to the body. They were discarded for the time in order to give more freedom for the manual performance he intended to do.

Verse 5. A great deal of confusion has come upon the religious world over the subject of feet washing. I shall quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary concerning this: "Washing the Hands and Feet. As knives and forks were not used in the East, in Scripture times, in eating, it was necessary that the hand, which was thrust into the common dish, should be scrupulously clean; and again, as sandals were ineffectual against the dust and heat of the climate, washing the feet on entering a house was an act both of respect to the company and refreshing to the traveler. The former of these usages was transformed by the Pharisees of the New Testament age into a matter of ritual observance, Mark 7: 3, and special rules were laid down as to the time and manner of its performance. Washing the feet did not rise to the dignity of a ritual observance except in connection with the services of the sanctuary. Exodus 30: 19, 21. It held a high place, however, among the rites of hospitality. Immediately that a guest presented himself at the tent door, it was usual to offer the necessary materials for washing the feet. Genesis 18: 4; 19: 2; 24: 32; 43: 24; Judges 19: 21. It was a yet more complimentary act, betokening equally humility and affection, if the host himself performed the office for his guest. 1 Samuel 25: 41; Luke 7: 38, 44; John 13: 5-14; 1 Timothy 5: 10. Such a token of hospitality is still occasionally exhibited in the East."

Verse 6. The mere act of having his feet washed would not seem strange to Peter, but he was astonished that his Lord was going to do that for him.

Verse 7. *What I do thou knowest not now*. The customary practice of washing the feet, and the conditions that originated it, were known to Peter. (See the historical quotation at verse 5.) Hence we know that Jesus meant to teach a lesson aside from those facts, that would have a moral and spiritual significance.

Verse 8. Still seeing only the lowly service of hospitality in the act, Peter protested having Jesus wash his feet. This statement opened the way for Jesus to begin the lesson he intended by the performance. He introduced it by the assertion that such a protest was equivalent to rejecting the partnership with Him.

Verse 9. This suggested to Peter that he had missed the point of the whole performance, and that some great benefit was to be derived from his Lord that was not visible in the literal washing. With such a thought about it, he concluded he wanted even a fuller amount of the favor, and asked Jesus for a more general washing.

Verse 10. Jesus understood that Peter still had literal or material washing in his mind, although he seemed to expect some mysterious effects from it. He therefore made his first remarks from that standpoint, meaning that since they were normally clean in the main except their feet, those parts would need washing since they had just come in from a journey on foot. After saying that much on the material side of the subject, admitting them all to be clean in that respect, Jesus immediately added the exception that must be understood from the moral or spiritual standpoint, when he used the short phrase, *but not all*.

Verse 11. John explains in this verse what Jesus meant in the preceding one. The act of Judas in betraying Jesus was planned by an unclean heart, and hence the Lord referred to him in this indefinite way as being unclean.

Verse 12. Jesus completed the feet washing while making the aforesaid speech, resumed wearing his outer garments, and again took his place at the table where the passover supper was still in progress. *Set down* is from

ANAPIPTO, which Thayer defines, "To recline at table." In old times people reclined while eating, at a table only a few inches higher than the floor. The diners would lie on their sides and rest the head on one hand while serving themselves with the other. They lay at a 45-degree angle with the table, which placed the head of one person virtually in the bosom of the one behind him, and in very intimate cases the two would be very near each other. This position explains how Jesus could wash their feet even while they were eating without disturbing them, and without getting into any inconvenient or unbecoming posture, as would have been necessary were they sitting at a modern table with their feet under it. It explains also how the woman could *stand behind* Jesus while he was eating (Luke 7: 36-38). After Jesus had taken his place again at the table, he asked them if they knew what had been done; meaning whether they knew what it signified.

Verse 13. *Master* is from a word that means teacher, and *Lord* means a ruler. The apostles had recognized Jesus as having both of these functions over them.

Verse 14. As the world would look at the matter, each of the aforesaid qualifications would entitle a man to the services of others. Instead of assuming such a superior attitude, Jesus acted the part of a servant in performing a necessary though humble favor. He specified the washing of each other's feet as an example of the kind of spirit they should manifest in their dealings with each other.

Verse 15. This verse is more general and shows Jesus intended his act to be an example of humility, a characteristic that had been wanting so many times in their conduct.

Verse 16. This verse is more teaching along the same line as the preceding ones. In the kingdom of Christ there are to be no great and small members as men count greatness.

Verse 17. This short verse contains a great principle that permeates the entire structure of man's relation to God. No one can serve Him without knowing what will please Him, but even that knowledge is useless unless it is carried out in performance.

Verse 18. *I speak not of you all.* Jesus knew his lesson of humility would not benefit all of his apostles, for a man

like Judas would not be influenced by anything that did not contribute to his selfishness. Jesus did not name the traitor, but cited a prediction about him that is in Psalms 41: 9. *Lifted up his heel* is a phrase based on the ancient manner of reclining at table while eating. (See the comments at verse 12.) In that position a person could receive a morsel of bread from another, and at the same time make the personal attack against him with his heel.

Verse 19. This verse shows another instance where a prediction becomes an evidence after it is fulfilled. (See the comments at Luke 21: 13.)

Verse 20. This verse teaches the relation between God, his Son and the apostles. They all are so connected in the divine plan, that no man can either accept or reject either part of the group, without doing the same thing to the others. Jesus taught this same great truth in Matthew 10: 40, which was just after selecting his 12 apostles and was giving them their "first commission."

Verse 21. *Troubled* is from the same Greek word as that in chapter 12: 27, and the definition is the same in each place. However, the cause of His agitation in the present instance was the thought of being betrayed by one of the group at the table.

Verse 22. When Jesus announced in general terms that one of them was going to betray him, they each gave an inquiring look at the others. There was only one man among them who knew whom Jesus meant, and that was Judas the traitor.

Verse 23. The events of this last night, especially as they pertain to the Lord's supper, are not all stated in any one of the Gospel records; neither are the accounts given in chronological order. Before going any farther with this chapter, the reader should see the notes at Matthew 26: 20. I shall now comment on the verses here in their order. *Leaning on Jesus' bosom.* This act is explained by the comments on verse 12, concerning the position of the body while eating. *Whom Jesus loved.* According to chapter 21: 20, 24, this apostle was John. Jesus was human as well as divine, and had his personal friends as other men do. (See the comments at chapter 11: 3.)

Verse 24. As John was nearest to Jesus, Peter made a sign to him that

he should ask Jesus to point out the traitor.

Verse 25. John then asked Jesus direct whom he meant.

Verse 26. When Jesus answered John's question Judas did not hear it. The answer was accompanied with the act of dipping a piece of bread in the dish containing the broth. He did this at the same time that Judas did, which was part of the sign to the other apostles, that answered their question of who was to be the betrayer. (See Matthew 26: 23.) There was nothing strange in their both dipping into the dish at the same time. (See the comments about hands and feet washing at verse 5.) The unusual thing was that of giving the piece to Judas when he had already served himself with one. According to Matthew 26: 25, when this act was done, Judas asked Jesus if it was he who was to betray him. Judas could not have asked the question for information, for he had already contracted with the chief priests to betray his Lord. But all of the others had asked the same question, and if he had kept silent, it would have been so conspicuous as to manifest his guilt.

Verse 27. *Satan entered into him.* Not that it was the first time (Luke 22: 3), for he had previously made his agreement with the chief priests to betray Jesus. But Satan made another and more insistent demand that he carry out his wicked promise. Jesus knew all about it, and hence he added the words of the last sentence. It means the same as if Jesus had said: "Since you have determined to betray me, do not delay to perform the act according to your agreement with the chief priests.

Verses 28, 29. *Need of against the feast.* Not the passover feast, for that was a one-day affair, and it was about over at this time. But that day was followed immediately with seven more days of unleavened bread which was also called a feast (Leviticus 23: 5, 6). The apostles thought that possibly Jesus meant for Judas to go and attend to that matter, since he was their treasurer and handled the money. They had just learned that Judas was going to betray Jesus, but they did not connect that with the suggestion of Jesus about the promptness to be exercised by Judas.

Verse 30. Judas "took Jesus at his

word" and *went immediately out* after receiving the sop. He went to the chief priests and obtained a band of men for his wicked use. Thayer defines this band as "a detachment of soldiers." The *sop* was used as a part of the passover feast. Judas went out as soon as he had received the sop and never came back. The Lord's Supper was instituted after the passover supper. (See the comments at Matthew 26: 20.) From the aforesaid truths we will see that Judas was not present when the Lord's supper was instituted.

Verse 31. *Now* is accommodative and means the time was at hand when the Son of man was to be glorified, referring to the scenes that were to end with the crucifixion. *Glorified* is from *DOXAZO*, which Thayer defines at this place, "To exalt to a glorious rank or condition." The supreme sacrifice which Jesus was soon to make would exalt him to the highest rank of worthiness, for it would constitute Him the atoning sacrifice for the whole world. It would also glorify God since it was his Son who was to be given to the world in this great loving sacrifice. (See chapter 3: 16.)

Verse 32. This means virtually the same as the preceding verse.

Verse 33. *Little children* was an endearing term, used to indicate the nearness that Jesus felt for his apostles. *Ye shall seek me* means that after Jesus was taken from them, the apostles would long for his presence again, because they would miss his loving counsel. They would not be able to follow him *then* (verse 36), because he was going to die soon, and they must remain in the world to do the work for their Master.

Verse 34. *New commandment.* The people of God have always been commanded to love each other, hence that was not what was new. But the motive for that love was new, namely, because *I have loved you*. This was not an arbitrary reason but a logical one. If I know that Jesus loves my brother, I would conclude that the brother was entitled to that love. And if he is good enough to obtain the love of the Master, surely he is good enough for the love of me who am only a fellow-servant of the Master.

Verse 35. Since such love as the forementioned is so different, then when men see it manifested between



the apostles, they will take it to mean they are disciples of Jesus.

Verse 36. Peter was referring to the statement of Jesus recorded in verse 33. Jesus repeated the statement, then added that Peter would follow him afterwards. He said this with reference to the manner in which Peter would die. (See chapter 21: 18, 19.)

Verse 37. Peter was always inclined to be rash and impulsive. In his eagerness to go with Jesus (wherever that was to be), he made this exaggerating assertion.

Verse 38. This prediction of Jesus is recorded in Matthew 26: 34; Mark 14: 30, and Luke 22: 34. In some of the passages the prediction includes a few more details than the present one. There is a special feature of the fulfillment in Luke 22: 61.

### JOHN 14

Verse 1. Jesus and his apostles are still at the table where they have just concluded the passover supper. We might properly refer to this chapter as an "after-dinner" conversation between the Master and his beloved disciples. He had frequently told them that he would have to leave them, and they were naturally saddened by the announcement (chapter 16: 6). In this speech Jesus wishes to give some words of consolation for their benefit. *Troubled* means "agitated," and Jesus bids them not have such a feeling, and the basis of the opposite state of mind was to be their belief in the relationship between the Father and the Son.

Verse 2. If a dear friend is about to leave us, it would be some consolation to know that his leaving was not to be a permanent separation, and also that he was going away to arrange a special and better place than the one we now occupy. And what is especially cheering is the promise that he will find a place where we and our departing friend can again be together, never to be separated. Such a consolation Jesus offered to his apostles. The *Father's house* means Heaven, the personal dwelling place of God and the holy angels, and the place where Jesus lived before coming to the earth. *Mansions* is from *MONÉ*, and Thayer defines it, "A staying, abiding, dwelling, abode: John 14: 2." There is only one place called Heaven as the dwelling of God, and it was in existence before Jesus came to the earth. He therefore was not going away to build

or create such an institution. But he was going to make arrangements for the residence of his apostles in that celestial city. If a man writes ahead to a hotel for reservations, he does not expect the managers to build some more rooms, but to reserve those already there for the use of the expected guests. That is what Jesus meant he was going to do when he said, *I go to prepare a place for you*. He was going to Heaven to make "reservations" for his apostles (as well as for all others who faithfully serve Him).

Verse 3. This verse sets forth the following truths. Jesus was going away from the world to his Father's house to prepare a place for his apostles. After making that preparation he was coming to get his apostles. The purpose for coming after his apostles was that they might be with Him in the place prepared for them in his Father's house. All of this allows but one conclusion, namely, the *mansions* promised in verse 2 are in Heaven and not on the earth.

Verse 4. This short verse has two important parts, namely, the place to which Jesus was going (to his Father's house in Heaven), and the way to reach that place with reference to those who would go there after Him. The apostles should have known all this from the abundance of teaching Jesus had given them through the past three years.

Verse 5. In spite of all the teaching Jesus had given them, they seemed to be rather confused. Hence Thomas said they did not even know where he was going, much less know the way to it. His memory certainly was dull, for Jesus had just told him he was going to his Father's house. As to the way in which they (and others) could follow him, Jesus had not spoken as definitely on that point, at least not so lately.

Verse 6. In answering the last question of Thomas, Jesus made his speech more general in its application. That is, he laid down the principle on which all must act who would reach that blest abode in the Father's house. *I am the way* was the answer, and he asserted that no man would be able to reach the Father except by the Son.

Verses 7, 8. These were not new subjects, for Jesus had spoken to them many times along that same line. The human mind is sometimes very frail,

especially when it is agitated. The shadow of sorrow over the near departure of their Lord, seemed to dull the thoughts of the apostles. This is directly indicated by what Jesus said in chapter 16: 6. That is why Philip requested to see the Father, although Jesus had previously taught the principle that seeing Him was equivalent to seeing the Father.

Verse 9. *Been so long time with you.* Jesus selected his apostles in the early part of his public ministry (Matthew 10: 1-4), and hence Philip had enjoyed the advantage of that association all that time. It is significant that when Philip asked to be shown the Father, Jesus asked him if he did not know Him. Not that God and Christ are one in person, but they are one in purpose and spirit, and no man can treat or mistreat either one without doing the same thing to the other.

Verse 10. Since a father and his son are of kindred flesh, so the heavenly Father and his Son are thus closely related. In this sense they are *in* each other, though they are not the same person, even as an earthly father and son are not the same person. But if an earthly father and son were as united in character, purpose and spirit, as are God and Christ, than a man would need only to become acquainted with the son to learn the character of the father.

Verse 11. The strongest evidence of the divinity of Jesus was the work he was doing. He could not have accomplished his wonderful works without the aid of his Father. That is why he told the apostles they ought to believe him *for the very works' sake.*

Verse 12. The *greater works* the apostles were to perform were not what are commonly called miracles. Jesus had raised the dead, cast out devils and cured all manner of diseases. No greater miracles of that kind could be performed by anyone. The key to this statement of Jesus is in the words, *because I go unto the Father.* The absence of Jesus did not enable the apostles to do any miracle that was greater than the ones referred to above. But Jesus could not bring men and women into the church, because that institution was not in existence until He had gone *unto the Father.* After that, the apostles could and did bring people into the kingdom of Christ by the preaching of the Gospel. Those were the *greater works* that

Jesus promised they would be able to do after he had gone to his Father.

Verses 13, 14. To ask anything in the name of Jesus means to ask it by his authority. Jesus never asked anyone to do something that would have displeased his Father (chapter 8: 29), therefore when he authorized his apostles to come for a favor or some assistance, the Father would see that it was granted.

Verse 15. This verse words the sentence in the form of a request or requirement. Verse 23 makes it more conclusive; places the keeping of the words of Jesus as proof that the apostles loved him.

Verse 16. This and the next verse contain a promise of the Holy Spirit to be sent to the apostles. This promise was made a number of times in the last hours that Jesus was with his apostles. It pertained to the same Spirit since there is but one (Ephesians 4: 4), but its work through the apostles was so extensive, that Jesus referred to it in different forms of speech. I shall give the reader the several references on the subject which he may form into a chain if he wishes, as follows: John 14: 16, 17, 26; 15: 26; 16: 7-15. I now resume my comments on the present paragraph. It was appropriate to call the Spirit a Comforter, because Jesus was about to leave his apostles and the Spirit would furnish them consolation in the absence of their Lord. *For ever* means "age-lasting," hence the Spirit was promised to abide with the apostles as long as they lived, as a personal guide. It was also to abide in connection with their work to the end of the Christian Age (Matthew 28: 20).

Verse 17. It was called the Spirit of truth because it was to guide the apostles *into all truth* (chapter 16: 13). *Whom the world cannot receive.* None but the apostles were to receive the Holy Spirit in baptismal measure (except the special case of the household of Cornelius, which was temporary), and no one else was ever promised it in any measure until after he had come out of the world into the family of God (Galatians 4: 6; Acts 5: 32). *Seeing him not.* The world does not exercise its mental or spiritual eyes, by which only anyone could see the Holy Spirit.

Verse 18. The Greek word for *comfortless* is ORPHANOS, which is so much

like our English word that a lexicon definition is unnecessary. In its application here it means that Jesus would not desert his apostles whom he considered his "little children" (chapter 13: 33). *I will come to you.* This was to be fulfilled figuratively or spiritually by sending to them His representative, the Holy Spirit. It will be fulfilled personally when He comes to take them with him to the home he has gone to prepare (verse 3).

Verse 19. *See* is used in two senses, literal and figurative or spiritual. Jesus was to be slain the next day, and in a few weeks was to leave the earth. After that the world would lose sight of Him literally. But the apostles were to continue seeing him spiritually through the association made possibly by the Spirit. *Because I live.* This was to be fulfilled for Christ both bodily and spiritually. He was to come forth from the dead to die no more, and also was to live continuously in the church for which he died and in which all of his faithful disciples would live spiritually.

Verse 20. *At that day ye shall know.* The apostles had professed faith in the promises of Jesus, but when the power of the Spirit was bestowed upon them, they would have personal evidence of the divine truth of them all.

Verse 21. This is virtually explained at verse 15.

Verse 22. *Not Iscariot* is inserted to distinguish the two men of the name of Judas. This one was the same whose shorter form was Jude. Judas did not observe the difference between the material and the spiritual manner of being manifested, hence he asked Jesus the question reported in this verse.

Verse 23. *Come . . . make our abode* is explained in the first part of the verse. The spiritual association of God and Christ with the disciples, was to be based on the condition that they keep the words of Jesus.

Verse 24. As the love for Christ is proved by obedience to his sayings, so the failure to keep them requires an opposite conclusion. God and Christ are one in Spirit and purpose, hence to reject the words of Christ is the same as rejecting God.

Verse 25. As long as Jesus was with his apostles, he could keep them informed on the necessary subjects by personal conversation. But they were human and their memory would be

uncertain, therefore they would need some kind of helper that could renew it after Jesus was personally gone. That called for another statement of the promise that Jesus had already made in verses 16, 17. The said statement will be seen in the next verse.

Verse 26. *Comforter* is from *PARAKLETOS*, and Thayer defines it, "A helper, succorer, aider, assistant." He then explains his definition, "So of the Holy Spirit destined to take the place of Christ with the apostles (after his ascension to the Father), to lead them to the deeper knowledge of gospel truth, and to give them the divine strength needed to enable them to undergo trials and persecutions on behalf of the divine kingdom." In view of the meaning of the Greek word, we can understand why the King James translators gave us "Comforter" in these passages. The apostles had been used to leaning on the counsel of Jesus for guidance, and to have that taken from them would give them a feeling of helplessness as well as loneliness. The Spirit would thus overcome this state of mind and really give them comfort. The inaccuracy of unaided human memory would have made the historical reports of the apostles rather uncertain. But with the guidance of the Spirit, they could relate the various conversations of Jesus with infallible accuracy.

Verse 27. The Greek word for *peace* is *EIRENE*, and its proper or general meaning is a state of mind that is satisfied. It does not mean that no trials or hardships were to be expected, for Jesus had frequently told his apostles that such experiences were to be their lot. Notwithstanding such conditions, the assurance that Jesus would care for them was to give them a peace of mind that the world could not give. Hence Jesus again bade them not to be *troubled* or agitated.

Verse 28. They should not rejoice over the fact of His absence, but because of what it would mean for him to be again with his Father. In other words, as a feeling of unselfishness, or "rejoicing with them that do rejoice" (Romans 12: 15), they should be glad for his sake. *Father is greater than I.* Jesus and his Father were perfectly united in spirit and purpose, but there are many respects in which a parent is greater than his child, and Jesus recognized that truth.

Verse 29. *I have told you.* This is a general reference to the instances in which Jesus told his disciples of his departure from them. By telling them beforehand, they would be prepared for the shock. Also, when the sad affair came to pass, it would have the virtue of evidence based on fulfilled predictions.

Verse 30. This was the Lord's way of repeating what he had said before, namely, that his conversations with them would soon be ended. According to Luke 4: 6; John 12: 31; 16: 11; Ephesians 2: 2, the *prince of this world* is Satan. *Hath nothing in me.* 1 John 3: 5 states that "in him [the Son of God] is no sin." There was nothing in the character of Jesus that was of interest to Satan, hence he determined to have Him removed from the world, and thus from the association with his apostles.

Verse 31. The wicked motive of Satan was to drive Jesus out of this world by a shameful and violent death. But the deed was to be turned into a demonstration of the love that Jesus had for the Father, in that he was willing to die to fulfill the will of his Father (Hebrews 10: 7-9). *Arise, let us go hence.* This meant to arise from the table since the passover supper was over. But having given his apostles the consolation speech while still at the table, recorded in the preceding chapter, the Lord concluded to spend the few remaining hours he had left to be with them, by further instructions and admonitions. But while they left the table, there is no evidence that they left the room at once. That movement did not take place till chapter 18: 1.

## JOHN 15

Verse 1. One of the leading industries in Palestine was the production of grapes, which called for the cultivation of the vine. It was fitting that Jesus should use it as the subject of his parable at this time. Only a few minutes before he had partaken of the fruit of the vine while in the passover supper, at which time he said he would not drink of it again until he did so in the kingdom. That product having been before their eyes so recently, the apostles could appreciate a parable along the line of its production. *True vine* means that it is not counterfeit. The word is from *ALETHINOS* which Thayer defines, "In every respect corresponding to the

idea signified by the name, real and true, genuine." The nation of Israel was compared to a vineyard (Isaiah 5: 1-6), but the vine turned out to be a false one, while Jesus asserted that He was the *true vine*. The *husbandman* was the person who planted and cared for the vine, and the Father is the one in the parable who has that part.

Verse 2. *Purge* is from *KATHAIBO*, and Thayer's definition is as follows: "To prune." A vinedresser will observe the branches that are inclined to be productive, and will prune off all unnecessary growths that would sap the life from the vine without producing any fruit. If he discovers a branch that has not produced any fruit, he will remove it entirely from the vine as being detrimental to the growth and productivity of the whole plant. This pruning will be given fuller attention further on in the chapter.

Verse 3. *Clean* is from the same word as "purge" in the preceding verse. Jesus teaches that the pruning is done by his word, and hence that the process is a spiritual one. Even a branch (a human being) that is alive and inclined to bear fruit, may have some useless traits developing that would finally damage the general life of the whole plant. It is the divine Husbandman's purpose to cleanse (prune) away those traits, so that it can bear more and better fruit.

Verse 4. Everyone understands the law of nature that requires continuous connection between a vine and its branches in order to bear fruit. The spiritual law is no less established concerning the relation between Jesus and his disciples. There is no salvation apart from Christ, as taught in too many passages to cite now.

Verse 5. *Ye are the branches.* Much speculation has been done over this statement. It is true that Jesus was talking to his apostles only at this time, but that was because no other disciples were present. It is also true that the apostles were the first branches because of their official place in the great "plant of renown" (Ezekiel 34: 29), but all vines have branches besides the first ones. Most of the things Jesus said about the branches and the necessity of their connection with the vine (Himself), are true of all disciples. *Without me ye can do nothing.* The first word is from *CHORIS*, which Thayer defines, "Separately, apart,"

and he explains his definition at this passage, "without connection and fellowship with one." It is the same truth stated in the preceding verse, of the necessity of being connected with Christ in order to bear fruit. To be connected with Christ today means to be in his body (the church), because if one is excluded from that body he is out in Satan's territory (1 Corinthians 5: 5), where he cannot bear any spiritual fruit.

Verse 6. Observe the phrase, *if a man*, which is too general to be restricted to the apostles. Everything that is said here is true of all disciples of Christ, therefore all of them are branches of one vine. *Cast forth as a branch* means he is rejected because of being separated from the vine and has become withered. As all such dead branches are burned by the men caring for the vineyard, so all disciples who are severed from Christ will be cast into the fire at the judgment day. (See Matthew 25: 41.)

Verse 7. *Ask what ye will* seems unlimited if considered alone. The proviso is in the words about abiding in Jesus, and letting them abide in the apostles. As long as a person's requests are according to the words of Jesus, they will be lawful and will have the assurance of being granted. The line of comparison is still drawn from the vine and its branches. A branch obtains the sap and germinating principles from the vine. Everything that the branch is expected to produce, will be fully supplied for it by the vine. Should the branch call upon the vine to furnish it with the materials necessary to produce apples, the vine would ignore such a request because the branch is not supposed to produce such fruit. Likewise, if a branch of this spiritual vine should *ask* the vine (Christ) for ability to start a wild plant, that request would be denied because the branches (disciples) are not supposed to produce any such fruit.

Verse 8. *Disciples* is a more general term than apostles, although Jesus was talking to the latter. The idea is that what Jesus was teaching was true of all disciples of Jesus. If a person should see grapes growing on a branch, he might not be able to see anything but the branch due to its being uncovered only, while the vine was hidden from view. But later he might be permitted to see a vine only of a

tame variety. From this combined circumstance he would be able to conclude that the branch on which he saw the tame grapes was connected with that tame vine, because no other kind of plant could produce such fruit. Also, when people see certain kinds of spiritual fruit being produced by men and women, they will know them to be disciples of Jesus, seeing that no other relationship can produce that kind of life. That is why Jesus said, *so shall ye be my disciples* in the eyes of the world.

Verse 9. A husbandman supplies his vine with soil and other necessary material for producing fruit so that it can pass on the material to the branches that are still connected. Likewise, the Father has bestowed infinite love on his vine (the Son), so that he can pass that love on to the branches (the disciples), that are still connected with the vine. Hence Jesus here exhorts them to *continue ye in my love*.

Verse 10. The figurative form of speech is discarded now, and Jesus expresses the same thoughts in direct language, and exhorts his disciples to keep the commandments in order to abide in His love. (See chapter 14: 23).

Verse 11. Jesus was about to be crucified, yet he speaks of his joy; Paul refers to this joy in Hebrews 12: 2. Jesus would never pretend having a joy that he could not or did not have, and the joy attributed to him was not the literal experience of the scenes at the cross, for the very anticipation of that ordeal caused his sweat to coagulate while in the garden (Luke 22: 44). The joy was over what He knew would result from the great sacrifice. He wished this joy to be shared by his apostles, and that was why he had taken so much care about giving them an abundance of information.

Verse 12. This is virtually the same as verse 11.

Verse 13. True friendship and love are best manifested by what a man is willing to do on behalf of the ones whom he professes to love. He will be willing even to give up his life for their sake if the necessity arises. Jesus was soon to do that very thing, and hence he wished his disciples to be prepared in mind for the separation.

Verse 14. Jesus did not ask his disciples to give up their lives in the physical sense as he was required to do. Of course, if the enemy should

bring bodily persecution upon them, they should be willing to die rather than betray their devotion to Him. But that would be a result of their services, and not a deliberate part of it according to their own arrangement. What Jesus meant was that the true followers of Him would devote their lives to his service. That is why he said what he did in this verse about showing their friendship for Him. They were to be regarded as his friends *IF* they did whatever he commanded of them. Hence if a man specializes on being a "Friend" of Jesus religiously, yet at the same time refuse to obey the commands of the Lord (one of which is to be baptized), such a man is making a false claim and is not a true friend of Jesus.

Verse 15. There were different kinds of *servants* in Bible times, and the distinction should be considered to avoid confusion. In the present passage the word is from *DOULOS*, and Thayer's definition is, "A slave, bondman, man of servile condition." Robinson comments on the word as follows: "In a family the *DOULOS* was one bound to serve, a slave, and was the property of his master, 'a living possession' as Aristotle calls him. . . . According to the same writer a complete household consisted of slaves and freemen. . . . The *DOULOS* therefore was never a hired servant." It was in that view of the word that Jesus said he would not call his disciples his *servants*. The distinction is set forth by the confidential relation between Jesus and his religious household which was composed of his faithful disciples. A hired servant was not informed about the intimate affairs of his master, while Jesus wishes his disciples to know all about the things that pertain thereto. Of course this was especially true of the apostles, since the Master depended upon them to pass the information on to the unofficial household members.

Verse 16. See the comments on the preceding verse as to the special need for information to be given the apostles. The English word *ordain* occurs a number of times in the New Testament, and does not always have the same meaning. Much confusion has existed in the religious world over this word, and most of it is due to the erroneous principles taught by Rome, and brought over into the so-called Protestant groups by their teachers. It will be helpful to give the reader a

complete view of this word as it comes from the various Greek originals. It will not be quoted in full again, hence he should make note of its location for ready reference. The following table gives all the words in the Greek New Testament that are rendered "ordain" in Authorized Version, together with the references where they are found, followed by the definitions according to Thayer.

DIATASSO. 1 Corinthians 7: 17; 9: 14; Galatians 3: 19. "To arrange, appoint, ordain, prescribe, give order." KATHISTEMI. Titus 1: 5; Hebrews 5: 1; 8: 3. "To set, place, put; to appoint one to administer an office; to set down as, constitute, to declare, show to be." KATASKEUAZO. Hebrews 9: 6. "To furnish, equip, prepare, make ready; to construct, erect; adorning and equipping with all things necessary." KRINO. Acts 16: 4. "To determine, resolve, decree." HORIZO. Acts 10: 42; 17: 31. "To ordain, determine, appoint." POIEO. Mark 3: 14. "To (make i. e.) constitute or appoint one anything." PROORIZO. 1 Corinthians 2: 7. "To predetermine, decide beforehand." TASSO, Acts 13: 48; Romans 13: 1. "To place in a certain order, to arrange, to assign a place, to appoint." TITHEMI. John 15: 16; 1 Timothy 2: 7. "To set, put, place." CHEIROTONEO. Acts 14: 23. "To vote by stretching out the hand; to elect, appoint, create." PROGRAPHO. Jude 4. "To write before." PROETIMAZO. Ephesians 2: 10. "To prepare before, to make ready beforehand." GINOMAI. Acts 1: 22. "To become, i. e., to come into existence." The reader should note that most of these Greek words have been translated also by other words in the New Testament, but I have given only the places where they have been rendered "ordain." The latter part of the verse is explained at verse 7.

Verse 17. This verse is a repetition of verse 12.

Verse 18. It should have been regarded as an honor for a disciple of Christ to be hated by the world. Such hatred began when He attacked the wickedness of the world, and it would be logical for the followers of such a teacher to be accorded the same sentiments. The truth is that one of the evidences of a man's relation to Christ morally is the persecution that is heaped upon him (2 Timothy 3: 12).

Verse 19. The clannish characteristics of the people of the world will



lead them to love their own. See Matthew 5: 43-47.) By the same token, when they see that a man's manner of life is the opposite of theirs they will naturally hate him. Such a sentiment is a form of envy or a feeling of (moral) inferiority complex. It is similar to the motive of a spoiled boy who tries to puncture the balloon of his playmate, because he does not have one himself.

Verse 20. The thoughts of this verse are the same that have been mentioned in preceding ones under different terms of relationship. In this passage the relation of ruler and servant is considered.

Verse 21. *Know not him* is said in two senses. The people of the world did not have an understanding of the goodness and greatness of God. Also, they were unwilling to recognize Him for his greatness and hence would not respect his Son's disciples.

Verse 22. The subject of responsibility is what Jesus is teaching in this verse, especially that which is dependent upon instruction. The Lord will not hold men responsible for not accepting any truth that was never offered to them. Jesus had come personally among mankind and been teaching by word of mouth. It is true that most of them stopped their ears so they would not hear, yet the opportunity for receiving the gracious truths made them fully responsible for all the teaching offered to them.

Verse 23. This is taught in chapter 14: 23, 24 and other places.

Verse 24. This verse teaches the same principle of responsibility as verse 22, but from a different standpoint. No intelligent man should fail to grasp the evidence of his own eyes. The people had seen the miraculous works of Jesus through a period of more than three years, and they should have known that no one like them could perform such deeds. The conclusion which they could not avoid was that Jesus was doing the things by the help of God. That is why Jesus accused them of both seeing and hating him and his Father.

Verse 25. *Their law*. The pronoun refers to the Jews who had rejected the teachings of John and Christ. The Sabbattarians teach that the law of Moses was intended to be perpetual and hence to be in force over all mankind. Had that been true, then the

Old Testament would not have been "their" law any more than it was that of Christ and his apostles. The writing cited is in Psalms 35: 19, and according to chapter 10: 34, the Psalms were a part of the law.

Verse 26. This verse is a link in the chain of passages about the Holy Spirit, that was suggested at chapter 14: 16. Jesus was to send this Spirit as a Comforter, and it was to be obtained of the Father. Everything that the Spirit would say would be according to what Jesus had said, and in that sense he was to *testify of Him*.

Verse 27. The apostles had been personally with Jesus from the beginning of his personal work (Mark 3: 14; Acts 1: 21, 22). That would qualify them to speak as eye and ear witnesses, and the *Spirit of truth* would see that their memory was accurate.

## JOHN 16

Verse 1. *To stumble* is from SKANDALIZO, and Thayer defines it at this place, "To cause a person to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey; to cause to fall away." Jesus warned his apostles of what they would have to encounter in their service for Him. The information was to forearm them so that they would not be surprised into error when it came.

Verse 2. *They* refers to the people, especially the leaders of the Jews, of whom Jesus had been saying much in the preceding chapter. Being put out of the synagogue is explained at chapter 9: 22, 23. Paul was a prominent case of this form of persecution as is revealed in Acts 26: 9-11.

Verse 3. Jesus always emphasized the close relationship between his Father and Himself. He maintained that all treatment that was accorded either of the two, was to be considered as being done to the other. Not *knowing* the Father meant not to acknowledge him and not to accept his truth. The Jews had rejected the teaching of Jesus, and he used that fact as evidence that they did not know his Father.

Verse 4. *That . . . ye may remember*. A prediction becomes evidence after it has been fulfilled. (See Exodus 3: 12 and Luke 21: 13.) *Said not . . . was with you*. Being with the disciples in person, Jesus did not consider it necessary to go into as much detail

with his teaching as he did when he was about to leave them.

Verse 5. Jesus knew about the question asked in chapter 13: 36 and 14: 5, but he meant they were not repeating it; the explanation is in the next verse.

Verse 6. Their great sorrow so overwhelmed the apostles that they did not "have the heart" to inquire into the subject of their Lord's departure.

Verse 7. This verse through 15 forms the final link in the chain that was suggested at chapter 14: 16, 17. This passage gives a more itemized statement of what was to be accomplished by the Spirit through the apostles. I shall comment on the present verse, also the others in their order. *Expedient* means "to help or be profitable," according to Thayer. As long as Jesus was with the apostles in person, the Comforter or Holy Spirit would not come to them, for it was not the Father's will that two persons of the Deity should be working personally on the earth at the same time. That being true, it was necessary for Jesus to "retire" from the scene and give way to the other. The Spirit would come to stay with the apostles throughout their work, which would give Him the opportunity to accomplish certain ends that it was not intended for Christ to do.

Verse 8. This verse is a general statement of the work of the Spirit after it has come upon the apostles. *Reprove* is from *ELEGCHO* and has various shades of meaning, including the conviction of those who are guilty of wrongdoing, and bringing to light what constitutes a life of righteousness. The work of the Spirit (through the mouths and pens of the apostles) that is stated in general terms in this verse, will be considered in its several parts in some verses to follow.

Verse 9. *Of sin*. The Holy Spirit was to convict the world of the sin of unbelief. John 3: 18 teaches that unbelief in Christ constitutes sin, and the apostles were to bring that truth before the attention of the world, inspired by the Comforter which is the Holy Spirit.

Verse 10. We have seen at verse 8 that a part of the definition of *reprove* is to bring to light what constitutes a life of righteousness. While Jesus was in the world personally, he taught such principles orally. But after going back

to his Father, that teaching would have to be done otherwise, and He purposed to do it through the guidance of the Holy Spirit working through the apostles.

Verse 11. The *prince of this world* is Satan (chapter 12: 31; 14: 30; Luke 4: 6; Ephesians 2: 2) who is to be judged. But Matthew 25: 41 states that unsaved men and women will be cast into the same place as the devil and his angels. That denotes the unsaved will be judged likewise, hence the Comforter was to teach and warn mankind of the judgment day and the only way to prepare for it.

Verse 12. *Bear* is from *BASTAZO*, which Thayer defines at this place, "To take up in order to carry or bear; to put upon one's self something to be carried." Things which would be spoken are not literal or material such as would be taken by one upon his body. The meaning of the statement, then, is that their understanding and memory would not be able to embrace all of the things that Jesus wished his apostles to hear. This thought will be verified by the following verse.

Verse 13. With the Spirit to *guide* them *into all truth*, the apostles would not need to be overburdened with the load, but could always have the assurance that no truth would be omitted that was necessary for their work. The Holy Spirit is the third being in the Godhead, and is wholly subject to the authority of God and Christ who are the two other members thereof. That is why Jesus said that he would *not speak of himself*. *Will show you things to come*. Romans 8: 27 and 1 Corinthians 2: 10, 11 teaches us that the Holy Spirit is fully aware of the purposes and desires of God. That is why he was able to tell the apostles *things to come*; he would learn it from God.

Verse 14. The Holy Spirit would glorify Jesus by receiving the truth, then passing it on to the apostles. Jesus called this truth his (*mine*), and by giving it over to the ones whom He had chosen, it would redound to the glory of the Son.

Verse 15. This verse is Christ's explanation of the statement he made in the preceding verse. The Father and Son were so united in the great scheme of human redemption, that what pertained to one was a concern of the other.

Verse 16. *A little while* is uttered twice; the first means the time until Jesus was to be crucified and buried; the second is the time of three days he would be in the grave. After Jesus went to his Father the disciples could not see him, it is true, but in order for him to go to the Father, it was necessary for him to come forth from the grave, and then would come the period that would make the second absence a *little while* also to which Jesus referred in this important conversation.

Verses 17, 18. These remarks were made among the apostles, unknown to Jesus (as they thought), but he always knew what men were thinking about.

Verse 19. Knowing the tension in the minds of the apostles over his remarks, Jesus relieved it by taking up the subject without waiting for them to ask him.

Verse 20. This verse was said in view of the same periods of time that were meant in verse 16. When Jesus was dead, his disciples wept and lamented (Mark 16: 10). At that time the enemies of the Lord were in rejoicing because they thought they had conquered the man who exposed their wickedness. But after the resurrection, and the disciples came to realize that their Lord had risen again, their sorrow was *turned into joy*. (See Matthew 28: 8; Luke 24: 41; John 20: 20.)

Verse 21. The original word for *sorrow* also means "pain," so that it applies to the bodily feeling in this case, as well as the state of nervous anxiety of a woman at such a time. That condition would make the contrast all the more apparent when the joy of the happy termination was experienced. Likewise, the sorrow of the disciples at the death of their Master was more than overbalanced by the rejoicing that came upon his resurrection and reappearance among them.

Verse 22. *Joy no man taketh from you*. The enemies could plunge the disciples into sadness by slaying their Lord, but the joy that would follow could not be taken from them. That was because He would be the final victor over the grave, and ascend to the Father after having filled them with joy over the resurrection.

Verse 23. The ascension of Jesus was soon followed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. That was to guide them in *all truth*,

so that they would not need to ask Jesus personally for information, as they did when he was with them. That was the time meant by *that day*. When that time arrived, instead of asking Jesus for favors and information directly, they were to ask the Father, but were to do it in the name of Jesus or by his authority.

Verse 24. *Hitherto* they had not asked anything *in His name* which would mean by his authority. The time finally was to come when he would have "all power" (Matthew 28: 18), to which he refers here by words *ask, and ye shall receive*.

Verse 25. *Proverbs* means a figure of speech, and Jesus evidently refers to his comparison of the expectant mother. *The time cometh* meant the occasion when the apostles were to receive the Holy Spirit in baptismal measure. As that would guide them "into all truth," they would not require any explanatory passages.

Verse 26. *At that day* still has reference to the complete inspiration of the apostles, at which time they would make their requests *in the name* or by the authority of Jesus. *Say not . . . will pray the father*, yet chapter 14: 16 expressly says that he would pray the Father. We are sure that Jesus never contradicted himself, but the next verse will show he meant that the favor of God upon the apostles did not depend solely on the prayer of his Son.

Verse 27. The love of the Father for the apostles of his Son, would be a sufficient motive for sending the Spirit upon them for their guidance.

Verse 28. The former intimate association of Jesus with his Father, agrees with the idea that God would be inclined to honor his Son's apostles by sending them the Spirit. It also would make it appropriate for the Son to return to his Father, after his work on earth was finished.

Verse 29. The apostles grasped the meaning of the words of Jesus, and they admitted that he had already fulfilled the prediction made in verse 25, to speak to them in direct language, and not depend upon figures of speech.

Verse 30. The apostles did not mean to express any previous doubt. The passage denotes that the conversation of Jesus had strengthened their faith and understanding.

Verse 31. Jesus knew the weakness of the human being. He did not ques-

tion the sincerity of their faith when he asked them *do ye now believe?* But he was using that as an introduction for the sad prediction about to be made when their human weakness would prevail over their faith for a time.

Verse 32. *Every man to his own.* The margin adds the word "home" to the pronoun, and Moffatt's translation does the same. Jesus predicted that the apostles would desert him in his hour of trial, and Mark 14: 50 states the fulfillment of the prediction. *Leave me alone* meant as far as the apostles were concerned Jesus would be alone, but he would still have the comfort of his Father.

Verse 33. All of the foregoing conversation of Jesus was for the purpose of preparing the minds of his apostles for the great crisis that was near. He knew it would be a severe trial of their courage, and he wished to leave them all the consoling assurances they were able to comprehend.

## JOHN 17

Verse 1. The passage in Matthew 6: 9-13 is popularly referred to as "The Lord's Prayer." That is not accurate, but in refuting it we may hear another statement that is likewise not accurate. After criticizing the aforesaid phrase, a speaker may ask, "where do we find the Lord's Prayer," and with an air of finality another person will say, "John 17 is the Lord's Prayer." One would get the impression from the above conversation that Jesus uttered just one prayer while on earth. It is true that this chapter is the longest prayer of Jesus that is recorded, but prayers of Jesus are recorded in Matthew 11: 25, 26; 26: 39, 42; 27: 46; John 11: 41, 42 and Luke 23: 34. Besides these recorded prayers, Luke 6: 12 tells of one instance when he prayed all night. *Hour* is from *HORA*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "The fatal hour, the hour of death." Jesus knew that ere the setting of another sun, he would lie in death at the hands of his enemies. But that very tragedy was to bring glory on both the Father and the Son. *Lifted up his eyes to heaven* means he looked up toward the sky, that being one of the definitions of the Greek word translated "heaven." Heaven as the place where God dwells, is neither up or down, since those words are relative only, and would not

mean anything as to direction were it not for the existence of the earth.

Verse 2. *Power* is from *EXOUSIA*, and its first definition is "authority," and it is the same word that is rendered "power" in Matthew 28: 18. *Over all flesh* means Jesus was to have dominion over the Gentile as well as the Jew, and that he would exercise that dominion for their salvation.

Verse 3. *This is life eternal* denotes that the fruit of knowing (recognizing and obeying) God and Christ is eternal life. There is no way of obtaining such a reward except through a life on earth that is patterned faithfully according to divine law.

Verse 4. The verb *glorify* is from *DOXAZO*, and Thayer's definitions of it include, "1. To think, suppose, be of opinion. 2. To praise, extol, magnify, celebrate. 3. To honor, do honor to, hold in honor. 4. To make glorious, adorn with lustre, clothe with splendor. To cause the dignity and worth of some person or thing to become manifest and acknowledged. To exalt to a glorious rank or condition." The word has such a wide range of meanings, that we need to consider who is being glorified and who is doing it, before we can know which part of the definition should be applied. By *finishing* the work on earth that God gave him to do, Jesus did honor to the name of God.

Verse 5. *Glory* is the noun form of the same word for *glorify*. Before Jesus came to the earth he was wholly divine. In order to fulfill the work his Father had for him to do, it was necessary for him to take upon him the nature of man in the flesh. That required him to "lay aside his robes of glory" and humble himself to the rank of a servant (Philippians 2: 7). Now that his mission was performed, and he was about ready to leave the earth, he prayed his Father to restore him to his former place in the glory world. The passage in 1 John 3: 2 indicates that his prayer was answered, since "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 15: 50).

Verse 6. This refers to the apostles who had been chosen from among the men whom John baptized. *Thine they were.* John did not baptize any of the Jews into the name of Christ; he only baptized them for the remission of sins, and they belonged to God in a special sense as those who had

been reformed according to Malachi 4: 5, 6. The pronoun "I" in that passage refers to God personally, who was to send John into the world. After that great era came, the Jews who came under the influence of John's work were prepared for the service of Christ when he came upon the scene. When he did so and received the men to be his apostles, baptized and prepared for his service, Jesus regarded them as having been given him of God. *Manifested thy name unto the men.* Throughout his association with the apostles, Jesus kept his Father's name and honor before their attention, impressing them with his dependence upon God in all that he did upon the earth.

Verse 7. The apostles were made to know this by the fact that Jesus constantly kept his Father's name before them. By such a procedure, they accounted for the forcefulness of the work of their Master by considering the might of God.

Verse 8. This verse has virtually the same thoughts as the preceding one, but with the application being made specifically to the teaching of Jesus. The perfect agreement between the words of Jesus and those of his Father (as far as they had heard them), was evidence that God sent Jesus into the world. He would not have corroborated the sayings of Jesus had his coming been without the authority of his Father.

Verse 9. *I pray not for the world.* That is, he was not praying for the world in that part of his prayer; that will come later in his petition. *They are thine* is explained by the comments on verse 6.

Verse 10. This beautiful verse shows the complete and affectionate unity that existed between Jesus and God, in all of the affairs concerning the plan of salvation.

Verse 11. *Am no more in the world* is accommodative language. It means that the life work of Jesus was so near the end that his departure from the world was virtually at hand. *These (apostles) are in the world.* They were to live on in the work for which Jesus had chosen them. *I come to thee.* This was true spiritually at that very instant, in that Jesus was coming to God in prayer on behalf of his apostles. It was true personally in that the time was near when He would leave his

chosen ones on earth and go to his Father. Hence Jesus saw the need for the grace of his Father to keep the apostles in the bonds of love that their work required. *One* is from HEIS, and Thayer's definition consists solely of the one word in the passage as we have it, which is "one." But he uses one whole page in his lexicon in discussing and commenting on the many phases of the word as it is used in the Greek Testament, and then indicates that he has not exhausted the subject. That is because the word may be used with regard to its numerical value, or in cases where various persons or things are being distinguished, or in compositions where unity of principle is the subject. Under the numerical phase of the word, it would be considering whether the things being spoken of were one in principle only, or one thing literally and bodily. We know that God and Christ were not one in person, hence the oneness of the apostles which was to be *as we are* could not mean they could be one personally. The only conclusion possible is that Christ wished his apostles to be one in purpose and activities in the Master's service.

Verse 12. *While I was with them* refers to the personal association of Jesus with his apostles. Such direct contact would be a strong preventive against being corrupted by the evils of the world. Jesus offered his good influence to all of his apostles alike, and it was not his fault that one man among them failed to profit by it. But such an event was to be expected because it had been predicted that one of the chosen apostles would betray his Lord. *Son of perdition* means that Judas went to perdition because of his deed of suicide. The first word is from HUIOS and is used figuratively. Thayer's explanation of this Greek word for *son* when used figuratively is, "One who is worthy of a thing." By destroying himself, Judas put it out of his reach to be saved, for there is no provision made for salvation that can be embraced after one has passed from this life. *That the scripture might be fulfilled* means as if it said, "and in so doing, the scripture was fulfilled."

Verse 13. *These things I speak in the world.* While Jesus was still with his apostles in person, he spoke the gracious words of instruction and consolation, so that He could thus leave

with them the benediction of his hallowed memory.

Verse 14. *I have given them thy word.* This is the oft-repeated truth that is so important that it cannot be spoken too often. Everything Jesus said to his apostles he received from his Father, because he was always in communion with Him. Such instructions could be delivered to them orally while he was with them, but he was soon to depart from them, hence they would need more direct instruction from God.

Verse 15. The work of God and Christ for the salvation of the world, required the personal presence and services of the apostles. That is why Jesus did not ask his Father to take them out of the world, but to protect them from the evils of the world, while they were fulfilling their task for the kingdom that was so great.

Verse 16. While the apostles were human beings and hence were creatures of earthly birth, yet their conversion to the cause of Christ had lifted them to a "higher plane" of living, even as He had shown them the better way of life.

Verse 17. *Sanctify* is explained in a full quotation from the lexicon, in the comments at chapter 10:36. If the reader will consult that place, he will see why Jesus asked his Father to sanctify the apostles by *His truth* which is the word of God.

Verse 18. God sent his Son from Heaven into the world in the form of a human being. He accomplished his mission within that part of the world that was in Palestine. The apostles were to accomplish theirs by going into "all the world" (Mark 16:15). The part Jesus was to perform in the scheme of human redemption, did not require his bodily presence anywhere except the country that had been the headquarters of God's nation of Israel. That which the apostles were expected to accomplish required them to contact all peoples and languages in every land.

Verse 19. *Sanctify myself.* Jesus never had any impurities from which to be cleansed, hence the definitions 1 and 2 (at chapter 10:36) should apply to him. *For their sakes* denotes that Jesus consecrated himself to the great work for the sake of the apostles. One result of the consecration of Jesus was the bestowal of divine truth, and

that was to be the means by which the apostles were to be sanctified. (See verse 17.)

Verse 20. Up to this point the prayer of Jesus has been on behalf of his apostles. Of course he was desirous that they should be saved, and also he wished their work for him to be effective. They were to take the words of truth concerning Christ to the people of the earth, and hence he now includes them in his prayer along with the apostles.

Verse 21. See the comments at verse 11 on the meaning of "one." The believers were to be *one* as God and Christ were, which would rule out the idea of their being only one person. It has to mean oneness of purpose and work. Not only must the believers be united in their work, but Christ prayed that they should be one *in us*. If the whole religious world should become a perfect unit in its practices, it would not avail anything unless its people were in Christ and God. The great object of that unity for which Christ prayed was *that the world may believe that thou has sent me*. No doubt many thousands of infidels are made by the divided condition of those who profess to be followers of Christ. It is not enough for the professed disciples of the Lord to insist that "at heart we are united and believe the same things." The *world* cannot see that, but the outward or bodily activities of the religious groups can be seen, and that is what Jesus was counting on as evidence of the truthfulness of the claims of the Gospel.

Verse 22. One of the commonest words in the definition of *glory* is "*honor*." It certainly is among the highest of honors to be in the service of Christ. That honor is emphasized by the fact that Jesus bestowed it upon his servants, having received it himself from the Father. Best of all considerations, is the object of the bestowing such honor, namely, that the whole group of interested persons, God, Christ and his disciples, should form a unit in the great cause of human salvation.

Verse 23. This is an emphatic repetition of verse 21.

Verse 24. This part of the prayer was looking forward to the time after the judgment. It is the same thing that Jesus promised them in chapter 14:3. Again he refers to the glory he had with the Father when he was



wholly divine. In order for that to be possible with the disciples, so that they could also have at least some measure of the same personal glory, they would have to be faithful servants of their Master to the end of life. After the resurrection they will be in the glorified state and fit for the association with Jesus in glory. *World* is from *KOSMOS* which means the inhabitants of the earth. Jesus existed before all other beings except his Father, and enjoyed His love such as a fond parent bestows on his child.

Verse 25. The world in general did not know God in the sense of recognizing and obeying the divine law. *These* means the apostles, who had learned of the Father through their association with the Son and the teaching that he gave unto them.

Verse 26. The general unity of purpose and spirit between God and Christ, including the faithful apostles, makes up this closing verse of Christ's memorable prayer.

## JOHN 18

Verse 1. After Jesus finished his prayer, he left the room where they had eaten the passover supper, in company with his apostles. He took them out of the city and crossed *the brook Cedron*, which is otherwise called Kidron. Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary describes this place as follows: "Kidron: The name of the valley east of Jerusalem, the stream of which is dry during the greater part of the year. Originally the spring Gihon emptied its waters into this part of the valley." Thayer defines the original word for *brook*, "Flowing in winter, a torrent," which agrees with the note from the dictionary just quoted. It shows why it was no barrier against their walking on out to the desired destination. *Where was a garden* means the garden was over or beyond this Cedron. This garden is named Gethsemane in Matthew 26: 36 and Mark 14: 32, and a description is given of it at the first-named passage.

Verse 2. This garden had often been the resting place of Jesus with his disciples. A quiet retreat, he would retire to its shade amid the olive and other fruit trees, and there talk to his beloved disciples about the great work of the future. Had Jesus wanted to evade the mob that he knew would be hunting for him, he would never have

come into this place on the present occasion. He knew that Judas *knew the place*, and would bring his officers to it. But after *his time* had come, he made no effort to escape or to resist his capture, but submitted like a lamb being led to the slaughter.

Verse 3. John omits the events between the arrival of Jesus at the garden, and the coming of Judas with the mob. Those events are recorded in Matthew 26: 36-46; Mark 14: 26-42, and Luke 22: 39-46. *Band* is from *SPEIBA*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "Any band, company, or detachment of soldiers." This force had been delivered to Judas by authority of the chief priests and Pharisees. It was altogether unnecessary to form this posse, for Jesus had frequently predicted his own fate, and there never was any intimation on his part that he would give them any trouble. They were equipped with *torches and weapons*, which means clubs, as if Jesus would be hiding among the trees, and would have to be found with the aid of a torch, and then perhaps have to be taken by force.

Verse 4. The crowd was due a surprise, for instead of having to search for Jesus, he anticipated them and came forward saying, *whom seek ye?* The crowd as a whole was unaware of the person who asked them the question. It was night and they had not been around him enough even to recognize his voice.

Verse 5. When the band announced the name of the person they were wanting, Jesus identified himself as the man they were after. All that John records about Judas' part is that he *stood with them*. But the accounts of the other writers show us that sometime in the course of this conversation, he approached Jesus and gave him the betrayal kiss. It might seem that the kiss was unnecessary since Jesus was making himself known and showing no inclination to evade the crowd. But he had made his contract at a time when he did not know what the circumstances would be, and it was "according to form" for him to go through with his agreement for which he was to receive the money.

Verse 6. Had Jesus said nothing, and let them pursue their man hunt unopposed, they doubtless would have been surprised. But when he took a leading part in the search, even to the extent of boldly announcing himself

as their wanted victim, they were amazed and stunned, and fell prostrate to the ground.

Verse 7. We do not know what they would have done or said next, if Jesus had not aroused them from their daze by repeating his question. They had recovered sufficiently to answer the question as they did the first time.

Verse 8. *Let these go their way* refers to the apostles. Since Jesus plainly identified himself as the man they wanted, it was not necessary to hold the apostles as if the investigation had to be continued.

Verse 9. *Have I lost none* refers to the saying of Jesus in chapter 17: 12. It is true that the Saviour was to be deprived of the company of his apostles for the time being, but they would be free from the clutches of the officers, so they could take up His work when the proper time came, and hence would not be *lost* to Him.

Verse 10. Peter was always impulsive and rash, and seemed ready to defend his Lord as long as he could do so with material force. But he was a coward later when called upon to show moral courage in behalf of Christ.

Verse 11. This is not the same *cup* that is mentioned in Matthew 26: 39. In that instance Jesus meant the mental suffering he was just beginning to feel, which is more fully described in Luke 22: 42-44. Jesus asked to be spared that present suffering if God willed it so. The *cup* in the present verse means the ordeal of the crucifixion, against which Peter thought to defend his Lord. *Put up thy sword* is commented upon at length in the notes at Matthew 26: 52.

Verse 12. It was at this point that the apostles fled from Jesus, which is shown in Mark 14: 50. Binding Jesus was another unnecessary performance as far as actual security of the prisoner was concerned, for the conversation that had taken place immediately preceding it, showed that Jesus was not even protesting his arrest. But that was another routine act in connection with the services of an armed force of officers.

Verse 13. *Led him away to Annas first*. There was no provision made in the law of Moses for more than one high priest to be in office at the same time, but in the days of Christ the secular government was taking much part in the affairs of the Jews. In that

arrangement Annas was president of the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas was high priest. Verse 24 shows that Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas in the bonds put there by the mob.

Verse 14. This speech of Caiaphas with comments is given at chapter 11: 50, 51. John regarded him as an official of some note, hence made the second mention of him.

Verse 15. The *other disciple* evidently was John, judging from the indirect way he is mentioned in other connections. (See chapter 13: 23; 21: 20, 24.) *Was known* denotes that he had some personal acquaintance with the high priest that gave him more freedom in approaching his presence. By reason of this special intimacy, when they led Jesus into the palace of the high priest, John went in also.

Verse 16. Peter lingered at the door while John went on into the palace, doubtless for the purpose of obtaining permission to bring in also his brother apostle Peter. With such authority, he went to the damsel who was guarding the door, and from her he obtained the privilege of bringing Peter on in.

Verse 17. The foregoing conversation evidently called the attention of the damsel to Peter, and she asked him about his relationship with *this man*, meaning Jesus. Peter denied being his disciple, fearing that it might involve him in some trouble.

Verse 18. The reader should refer to the comments on Matthew 26: 69 for information concerning the palace. That will throw some light on how there could be a fire at the place. Being within hearing distance of the immediate presence of the high priest, it gave Peter an opportunity to "see the end" (Matthew 26: 58).

Verse 19. Jesus was never ashamed of his doctrine (teaching), and really wished it to be known. But the question of the high priest included the disciples as well as the doctrine, which opened the way for the next statement of Jesus.

Verse 20. *In secret have I said nothing*. All statements should be considered in the light of all circumstances and the context generally. We know the facts would not admit the conclusion that Jesus never said anything to his disciples away from the public, hence we should look for the explanation in the meaning of the language. *Secret* is from *KRUPTOS*, which

Thayer defines, "hidden, concealed, secret." The idea is that Jesus never tried to keep his doctrine from the public. We know that is what he meant here, for in Matthew 10: 27 he told his disciples to preach upon the housetops what they heard in the ear, which means what they heard from Jesus in their private hours.

Verse 21. An officer does not take a man into court and then ask him to make out a case against himself. If one has spoken things against the government, then certainly someone knows about it, and he would be the proper person from whom to obtain testimony. That is why Jesus told the high priest to *ask them which heard me*. Jesus had stated in the preceding verse that he had done his teaching in the synagogue and temple, which were public buildings in which great crowds generally assembled. It surely should not be difficult to obtain legal witnesses if Jesus had been guilty of criminal activities in his teaching.

Verse 22. *Palm* is from RHAPISMA, which seems to have a rather indefinite meaning. It is rendered "a rod" in the margin, but the lexicons do not require that translation, though they admit that the word sometimes may have that meaning. Both Thayer and Robinson prefer the definition, "A blow with the flat of the hand, a slap in the face." It was intended as an insult and indignity. *Answerest thou the high priest so?* They pretended that Jesus had shown disrespect to the dignity of the court.

Verse 23. Jesus had only exercised his "constitutional right" in demanding that if any charge was to be lodged against him, it should be upon the statements of eye or ear witnesses. In the absence of even any attempt to secure such testimony, he protested that they had no right to smite him.

Verse 24. This is commented upon at verse 13.

Verse 25. This was Peter's second denial of Jesus.

Verse 26. It had not been long since Peter had attacked this servant and cut off his ear, and he surely would recognize him. However, he leaves out mentioning the matter of being a disciple, directly, and treats the same subject by asking if he had not seen him *with him*. This conversation is significant, for it means that in the estimation of this servant, being *with*

Jesus was evidence of his being a disciple. His idea was correct as the scripture elsewhere teaches. (See Obadiah 11; 1 Corinthians 15: 33.) Many professed disciples of Christ today will deny any sympathy with the enemies of the church just because they have not taken any formal stand with them. At the same time, they may be seen often associating with them and thus giving them encouragement.

Verse 27. This was the third time Peter denied his Lord. According to Luke 22: 60, 61, Jesus looked upon Peter at this time which reminded him of their conversation, and in remorse the apostle went out of the crowd and wept bitterly.

Verse 28. *Hall of judgment* is from PRAITORION, which Thayer defines as follows: "The palace in which the governor or procurator [administrator] of a province resided." Smith's Bible Dictionary says of this place, "It is the residence which Pilate occupied when he visited Jerusalem." (See notes on Matthew 27: 2 as to the position of Pilate.) Pilate represented the secular government, and it was necessary to bring Jesus before him to obtain a legal sentence of death (verse 31). The pronoun *they* occurs four times in this verse; the first means the Roman soldiers, the others are the "chief priests and elders of the people" (Matthew 27: 1). The soldiers had the charge of personally handling Jesus when he was turned over into the jurisdiction of the secular court; that is why *they* led him into this *judgment hall*. But *they*, the Jews, would not enter into that place, *lest they should be defiled*. It being a Gentile spot, they imagined it would defile them (ceremonially) to come in contact with such a place, and that would render them unfit to partake of the passover feast that was about due. The law of Moses required the Jews to be ceremonially (as well as physically) clean before they could participate in this feast. (See chapter 11: 55).

Verse 29. The Jewish leaders were waiting outside for the reason stated in the preceding verse. *What accusation bring ye?* Pilate was an officer in the secular government, representing that part of the Roman Empire known as Palestine. It was supposed that when a man was brought bound into a hearing of the penal courts, there was some specific and serious charge to be tried against him.

Verse 30. This verse states a cowardly reply to the question asked by the governor. The word *malefactor* is indefinite, meaning an evildoer of any rank or degree. The statement of these Jewish leaders implied that Pilate should take for granted that Jesus was guilty of lawlessness from the mere fact of their bringing him into court. This was contrary to the usages of all courts in any civilized land.

Verse 31. Their failure to name any specific charge, left Pilate to conclude that Jesus had not violated any ordinance of the Roman government, hence he should have no jurisdiction in the case. That is why he told them to *judge him according to your law*. The Jews stated the truth when they said it was not lawful for them to put any man to death, but that was not the true reason they did not want to act in the case. They did not let that truth keep them from killing Stephen, although they did not have even a judicial sentence of death against him.

Verse 32. The whole transaction was being directed by the Lord, who decreed that Jesus was to die on the cross, and the secular government only would put a man to death in that manner. That is why John says that it would be according to the kind of death Jesus had signified would be imposed upon him. (See Matthew 20: 19).

Verse 33. Luke gives us a fuller statement, which includes some false accusations against Jesus (Luke 23: 2). Pilate concluded that the complaint the Jews had was based on some claims of the prisoner that were opposed to the government of Rome. He therefore thought he could bring the issue to the foreground by asking him directly, *art thou the king of the Jews?* The whole situation was based on the idea that no two governments of whatever kinds, could lawfully exist in the same territory at the same time. That idea would be correct if the two were necessarily opposed to each other. But Pilate did not know anything about the character of the kingdom Jesus was heading, hence he asked the question quoted here.

Verse 34. Jesus never asked questions for his own information, for he knew all about men (chapter 2: 24, 25). He took this method of introducing the important conversation to follow concerning the nature of his kingdom.

Verse 35. Pilate represented the matter correctly by referring to his nationality. He stated the truth when he told Jesus that it was his own people who had brought him into this court to be tried before him as a representative of the government of Caesar.

Verse 36. The reply of Jesus was not evasive, but it was not direct, as yet. He wished to set forth the principle on which he could claim to be a king, and still not be any rival of the government represented by Pilate. That was what Jesus had in mind when he said *my kingdom is not of this world*. Jesus never intended to establish a kingdom of a secular nature, while the government of Rome was that kind. That was the reason why Jesus was making the claim of being a king, yet not admitting any charge of rebellion that was being made by the Jews. This verse has been perverted by extremists among professed disciples of Christ. They make Jesus teach that his disciples have no right to take part in the activities of secular governments, particularly those of doing military services, even in defense of their country. They not only err in their position, but make this statement of Jesus teach the very opposite of what he intended. Jesus plainly shows that citizens of secular governments have the right to *fight* in a defensive war for their country. But that does not make it right for Christians to resort to carnal warfare in defense of the kingdom of Christ. And that also does not touch the question of whether they may be citizens of an earthly government (which we know they may since Paul the apostle was one, Acts 22: 25-28), but that subject was not under consideration at all in the present case of Jesus and Pilate.

Verse 37. The speech of Jesus in the preceding verse was taken by Pilate as an affirmative answer to his question, yet he wished a more direct one. He therefore repeated his inquiry, except he said nothing about what people Jesus was to rule. And the answer of Jesus was also without any reference to the people who were to compose the citizenship of his kingdom. *To this end was I born* is in direct agreement with the question of the wise men, when they asked for him who was "born king of the Jews" (Matthew 2: 2). Very logically, if Jesus was to be born as a king, it

would be necessary that he *come into the world*. Also, the principles that were to rule in his kingdom would be so different from any the world had even known, that the king himself would have to bring the truth about them into the world. The citizens of the new kingdom would be those who showed a disposition to accept this truth. This is why Jesus exhorted men to take his "yoke" (government) upon them and "learn of me" (Matthew 11: 29).

Verse 38. *What is truth?* I do not believe that Pilate asked this question with any evil motive. The entire situation was new and somewhat bewildering to him. Here was a man brought bound into his court with a clamor for the death sentence from his complainants, yet against whom no specific charge was made. The nearest he could get to their grievance was the fact that the prisoner claimed to be a king. Furthermore, he seemed to claim kingship only over those who accepted the truth that he delivered to them. No wonder, then, that he asked *what is truth*. But he did not have time for further details into the mysterious subject, for the plaintiffs were outside waiting for some kind of answer from him. Going out to them, he said *I find in him no fault at all*. In a court where justice is carried out, such a verdict would have been followed by the dismissal of the prisoner.

Verse 39. Although Jesus was found "not guilty" by the court into which he was brought, yet he was not released from custody. Pilate was afraid of public sentiment and wanted to shift the responsibility of terminating the case from his own shoulders to others. He thought of a custom that had been followed, whereby the time of the passover was celebrated by releasing a prisoner. The guilt or innocence of a prisoner did not seem to have any bearing on the selection of the man, except as it might affect the sentiments of the people whose right it was to name the fortunate person. If Pilate could persuade the people to select Jesus for the occasion, it would effect a compromise whereby an innocent man (as Pilate believed Jesus to be) would be let go, without directly denying the clamorous demand of the crowd.

Verse 40. The plan of Pilate did not work. The people did not wish to abandon their custom either, so they

gave their unanimous voice that the release was to be given to Barabbas who was a robber and murderer (Luke 23: 18, 19).

## JOHN 19

Verse 1. Pilate failed in his effort to get Jesus released under the custom of the times in connection with the passover. He then tried to hope that he could work on the sympathy of the Jews, after they saw the appearance of Jesus as the regular procedure was followed. That began by scourging him, which was usually done to victims about to be executed. It was a cruel ordeal which is described by Smith's Bible Dictionary as follows: "Under the Roman method the culprit was stripped, stretched with cords or thongs on a frame and beaten with rods. (Another form of scourge consisted of a handle with three lashes or thongs of leather or cord, sometimes with pieces of metal fastened to them. Romans citizens were exempt by their law from scourging.)"

Verse 2. Matthew 27: 27 should be read in connection with this verse. The scourging had been done in the court, then Jesus was led into the common hall, where the whole band of soldiers was gathered to see the indignities to be imposed on him. He had said he was a king, and in mockery they put a crown of thorns upon his head. The thorns were those of a brier or bramble bush. Purple was one of the royal colors, so they put such a robe on Jesus which was also in mockery of his claim to being a king.

Verse 3. These derisive words were said in mockery with the same motive that prompted their actions in the preceding verse. *Smote him*. See the comments on chapter 18: 22 for the description and significance of this shameful act.

Verse 4. Having put Jesus through these cruel indignities, Pilate announced to the Jews in waiting that he was bringing their prisoner out to them. *That ye may know* was said with the meaning, "Although your prisoner has been treated with such indignities as you can see, yet no final sentence has been pronounced upon him. I am therefore offering him to you because I still *find no fault in him*."

Verse 5. With this "introduction," Jesus appeared on the scene, wearing the crown of thorns with its thousands of prickles having been pressed down

upon his head, and robed in the colors that only belonged to Roman kings. His appearance was plainly visible to all the mob, yet Pilate thought to arouse their pity by a pointed phrase, *behold the man*. The first word is from IDE, and Thayer defines it, "see! behold! lo!" He then explains it, "as the utterance of one who wishes that something should not be neglected by another." Robinson gives the same definition as Thayer, then follows with the comment, "As calling attention to something present."

Verse 6. When the chief priests had their attention especially directed to Jesus, it had the opposite effect upon them to what Pilate expected. They were enraged and caused to repeat their demand that Jesus be crucified. *Take ye him and crucify him*. This was not a judicial sentence; that came later. But it was another effort of Pilate to evade responsibility for punishing a man in whom he still found *no fault*.

Verse 7. *Made himself the Son of God*. This was a new charge as far as Pilate had heard. Up to the present he could get only the idea of a rival against the government, but which was not in any of the evidence so far produced. Pilate was a heathen in religion, and could not realize fully what it would mean to be called by such a title as the Jews named. Yet he was not entirely unacquainted with Jewish history as was indicated by washing his hands (Matthew 27: 24), an act based on Deuteronomy 21: 1-6.

Verse 8. From his knowledge of Jewish history, referred to in the preceding verse, Pilate had some idea of the importance attached to their God. Now here was a man in his court who claimed to be the Son of that God. If such claim was true, then it might be dangerous to mistreat him. All of this in connection with his wife's dream (Matthew 27: 19), filled him with uneasiness so that the record says *he was the more afraid*.

Verse 9. Pilate was still unwilling to let the matter drop, but made another effort to get Jesus to commit himself. The question *whence art thou* was related to the claim just made that he was the *Son of God*. Jesus made no answer to the question, but that was not because he could not do so, neither was it from pure contempt of the court, for he did speak presently. In the appearances of Jesus be-

fore the rulers, he was silent when his personal comfort or safety was all that was involved, and that fulfilled the predictions in Isaiah 53: 7. But when an important issue was called up, he would speak out and give the teaching upon it, as we shall see very soon.

Verse 10. Pilate thought Jesus was maintaining silence in contempt. He thought he would goad him into speaking by a sort of "threat of the law." The self-importance which he felt he possessed was expressed in the words, *I have power*.

Verse 11. Jesus considered it was the proper time for him to speak. He did not deny the power (or authority) that Pilate claimed to have, but informed him that this power was not his directly, but that it had been given him *from above*. It meant that Pilate was acting as the instrument of a Higher Power, and hence that his part in the solemn drama was not purely upon his own motive; he personally did not wish it to be so. But the Jewish leaders, though also acting in fulfillment of the prophecies, were yet carrying out their personal desires. That is why Jesus told Pilate that *he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin*.

Verse 12. It seems that every turn of the conversation and events only confirmed Pilate in his belief that Jesus was an innocent man. But his political interests outweighed his conscience, so that he made only such attempts at releasing the prisoner as would not endanger his standing with the government of Caesar. The Jews realized this situation, and used it with telling effect in this verse.

Verse 13. Pilate yielded to the political pressure which the Jews brought to bear upon him in the preceding verse, and concluded he would pass the sentence of death against Jesus. *Judgment seat* is from BEMA, which Thayer defines, "A raised place mounted by steps; a platform, tribune." He further says it was used as the official seat of a judge. This was the spot where Pilate brought Jesus for the final act in the tragedy.

Verse 14. The meaning of *preparation* will be fully explained at verse 31. The present verse puts the time of the crucifixion *about the sixth hour*, which seems to disagree with the account in Mark 15: 25 which puts it at the *third hour*. There is no contradiction in thought when the various kinds of



calendars that were used are considered. One method of dividing the day was by the single hours, starting in the morning at what corresponds with our six o'clock, which was the first hour in New Testament times. The hours were then numbered from one to twelve, and a reference to any certain hour (such as 3rd or 6th) meant a period of one hour only. Another form of calendar divided the twelve hours into four periods of three hours each and each period was named by the last hour of that period. By that method, the *sixth hour* would mean the period that really began with the hour that was called the *third* in the single hour method. John's statement is based on this calendar. As the source of my information, I will quote from Owen C. Whitehouse, Professor of Hebrew, Chesnut College, near London, on the Hebrew Calendar: "The later division of the day was: *Third hour*, 6 to 9 A. M.; *Sixth hour*, 9 to 12 A. M.; *Ninth hour*, 12 to 3 P. M.; *Twelfth hour*, 3 to 6 P. M." This same information is given by The Oxford Cyclopedic Concordance, under article "Day."

Verse 15. When Pilate asked the Jews to behold their king (in preceding verse), it enraged them still more and made them want the execution performed at once. Pilate gave them one last chance just before giving Jesus over to the executioners, to change their minds and snatch him as it were from the cross. He made the appeal as pointed as possible by asking, "Shall I crucify your King?" This desperate move of his reminds us of the language of Peter in Acts 3: 13, where he says of Pilate's attitude toward Jesus, "he was determined to let him go." The chief priests rejected all of Pilate's suggestions. Their statement, *We have no king but Caesar*, was not made except as a retort to Pilate's question, and not in the spirit of patriotic loyalty.

Verse 16. Pilate regarded the remark in the close of the preceding verse as final, and at once delivered Jesus unto the soldiers, who led him away to be crucified.

Verse 17. *Bearing his cross*. According to Luke 23: 26, Simon was compelled to help Jesus bear the cross. There was a rule that if a victim condemned to the cross was unable physically to carry it alone, someone would be made to take up the rear part and help

carry it, walking after the other to the place of execution. *Place of a skull*. There is a long note on this phrase at Matthew 27: 33, containing information gleaned from the lexicons and other authentic works of reference.

Verse 18. The *two other* were thieves according to Matthew 27: 38.

Verse 19. The *title* also means an inscription, in the form of a placard or poster, placed on the cross in full view of the passers-by. The wording on this poster was, *Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jews*. The inscription was to inform the public of the charge on which the victim had been crucified. This one showed that Jesus was nailed to the cross for the "crime" of being king of the Jews.

Verse 20. The inscription was written in the three languages named, because people of those tongues were present at Jerusalem at that time and thus they could read it.

Verse 21. The title on the cross was such a flimsy reason for having Jesus slain, that the chief priests were ashamed as they saw the crowds reading it. They thought it could be made to seem more fitting if the charge would read so as to represent Jesus as an arch impostor; they requested Pilate to change the wording to that effect.

Verse 22. *What I have written I have written*, was a brief way of saying, "I have written the inscription as I wanted it, and I will not let it be changed."

Verse 23. We may learn from Smith's Bible Dictionary (article—"crucifixion"), that the victim to be crucified was stripped of his clothing before crucifixion. It was a custom that the soldiers performing the execution should have the victim's raiment as an extra pay in addition to their wages as soldiers. According to the present verse there were four of the soldiers, corresponding to the four parts of the body to be nailed; the two hands and two feet. This would call for four divisions to be made of the garments so each soldier could have a share. But the coat was woven in one piece in such a way that it could not be divided without ruining it.

Verse 24. In the case of the one-piece garment, the soldiers agreed to decide the question by casting lots for it. *That the scripture might be ful-*

*Alled* means, "and in so doing the scripture was fulfilled," etc.; the prediction is in Psalm 22: 18.

Verse 25. This verse corresponds with Matthew 27: 56, with some variation in the names of some of the women. Mary the mother of Jesus was the same as the mother of James and Joses (Mark 6: 3).

Verse 26. The disciple *whom he loved* was John, the writer of this book (chapter 21: 20, 24). *Behold thy son*. The term *son* comes from *HYIOS*, which has a great many shades of meaning besides the one commonly used. Thayer says it is sometimes used "of one who depends on another." Jesus used it in that sense as may be seen in the following verse. When he told his mother to *behold* John as her son, he meant for her to depend on him for support.

Verse 27. By the same token as set forth in the preceding verse, when Jesus told John to behold his mother, he meant for him to let Mary depend on him for support. John also understood it that way, for he began at once to take her as a member of his own household. And the arrangement was exactly on the same principle that was taught by Paul in 1 Timothy 5: 4, 16. In that place the apostle was writing about dependent widows, and the obligation of nephews to care for them. The same idea would hold good in the case of others who are able to care for worthy disciples who are dependent.

Verse 28. Not until after *all things were accomplished* did Jesus give expression to his dying desires. In the throes of his feverish last hours, he complained of being thirsty. *That the scripture might be fulfilled* denotes that in his thirst and its quenching he would fulfill the scripture.

Verse 29. The scripture prediction that was fulfilled by this is in Psalm 69: 21. When Jesus expressed his wants by stating the condition of thirst, someone dipped a sponge in vinegar (sour wine) and placed it upon hyssop so as to reach it up to the parched lips of the dying Saviour. This was the most convenient way either of serving or receiving it under the circumstances. It was done merely to quench his thirst and not as an oplate, since it did not have the gall mixed with it which he had refused (Matthew 27: 34). Some confusion might occur over this word *hyssop*,

since both Matthew and Mark say it was put on a reed. I shall quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary on the article in question. "Besides being thus fit for sprinkling, having cleansing properties, and growing on walls, the true hyssop should be a plant common to Egypt, Sinai and Palestine, and capable of producing a stick three or four feet long."

Verse 30. *It is finished*. In chapter 17: 4 as Jesus was praying he said, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." That was said prospectively, because his work on earth was virtually completed then. In the present instance it was said literally, because it was among the last words Jesus uttered before death. *Gave up the ghost* (spirit), indicates that when a man dies, something in his body leaves it, which proves that the human being is not wholly material.

Verse 31. *Preparation*. Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary says of this day, "This term signifies in general any day which preceded a great feast. The usage is somewhat analogous [similar] to that of the English 'eve' (Christmas eve, New-year's eve, etc.)." The call for such a day lay in the restrictions of the law of Moses regarding holy days. On them it was unlawful to perform any manual labor, even to the gathering of sticks for fuel (Numbers 15: 32-36). It was therefore directed that all their baking and boiling be done the day before by way of *preparation* for the sabbath or holy day to come (Exodus 16: 23).

The law of Moses forbade letting a body on a tree (or cross) over night (Deuteronomy 21: 22, 23). The Jews were attentive to such items as this, and especially as it would have caused a dead body to be thus exposed on a *sabbath day*. What was still more important in this case was that it would have been on a *high day*. The word is from *MEGAS*, which Thayer defines at this place, "Of great moment, of great weight, important; solemn, sacred." Even without the definition from the lexicon, the way it is used indicates that the sabbath day referred to was not the ordinary or weekly one.

The explanation is in the fact that the day following the crucifixion was the Jewish Passover. Leviticus 23: 1-7 clearly shows that day was a holy one which made it a sabbath day. The regular sabbath came each week, while

this other came only once a year, and was commemorative of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. No wonder, then, that John called it a *high* day. Crucifixion caused a slow death as a rule, so that the victims might linger on into the night and even up till the following day before dying. It was not lawful to permit them thus to remain there, neither could they take them down from the cross while alive. Hence it was a rule to hasten death before night by breaking the legs with clubs, the shock on top of what they had already endured being the final cause of death. That is why the Jews requested Pilate to have the legs of the three broken.

Verse 32. We are not told why the soldiers came to the thieves before Jesus. It was not because of their order on the crosses, for verse 18 says they were on the sides of Jesus. We might speculate and suggest that a humane feeling prompted them to put off the brutal performance as long as possible, but that would be a guess only, and I merely offer it for what it is worth. But the custom of the occasion was carried out under the authority of Pilate.

Verse 33. Jesus had suffered so much physical shock in addition to his intense nervous strain (Luke 22: 44), that he anticipated the soldiers and died before they arrived at the cross. The fact was unusual, and hence Pilate was surprised when he heard that Jesus was dead (Mark 15: 44). The only reason the soldiers had for not breaking the legs of Jesus was that the purpose for the act (to hasten death) was not present. But their refraining from doing it fulfilled another prediction, that his bones were not to be broken (Psalm 34: 20). The same fact was also typified by the restrictions on observing the first pass-over in Egypt, "neither shall ye break a bone thereof" (Exodus 12: 46).

Verse 34. The scripture does not tell us the motive of the soldier in piercing the body of Jesus with his spear. Doubtless the hand of God was in the act, using the heathen servant as the instrument in producing the greatest event in all history. *Blood and water*. In the very nature of the case, the source of the *water* had to be the circulatory system. The word is from *HUDOR*, and Robinson defines it, "A watery fluid, serum," and explains it at this place, "which flowed

from the wound in Jesus' side." This critical authority will justify another note, in the form of a medical comment, by Henry H. Halley, as follows: "Some medical authorities have said that in the case of heart rupture, and in that case only, the blood collects in the pericardium (the lining around the wall of the heart), and divides into a sort of bloody clot and a watery serum. If this is a fact, then the actual physical cause of Jesus' death was heart rupture. Under intense pain, and the pressure of his wildly raging blood, his heart burst open." Thus the spear of the Roman soldier started the flowing of the most precious stream that ever existed in the universe. In it was fulfilled the prophetic words, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened in the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zechariah 13: 1). And with that amazing circumstance in our minds, we sing the beautifully solemn words, "There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Emmanuel's veins; And sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains."

Verse 35. This verse is virtually the same as chapter 21: 24, which lets us know that it means John. He *knew* that his record was true, not only because he was an eye witness (verse 26), but was one of the inspired apostles and wrote by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 36. This is commented upon at verse 33.

Verse 37. This prediction is in Zechariah 12: 10. The mere act of looking on Jesus might seem as an unimportant item. But Matthew 27: 36 says, "And sitting down they watched him there." This was not from mere morbid curiosity, but it was a part of their duty. Smith's Bible Dictionary says, "The crucified was watched, according to custom, by a party of four soldiers, John 19: 23, with their centurion, Matthew 27: 66, whose express office was to prevent the stealing of the body. This was necessary from the lingering character of the death, which sometimes did not supervene even for three days, and was at last the result of gradual benumbing and starvation. But for this guard, the persons might have been taken down and recovered as was actually done in the case of a friend of Josephus."

Verse 38. *Secretly for fear of the Jews* means that his being a disciple

had been kept secret up to this time. But he maintained that secrecy no longer, which he could not do if he performed the act he planned on doing in taking charge of the body of Jesus. The soldiers would not have permitted him to take the body, had he not been authorized to do so by Pilate, hence the record says that he "commanded the body to be delivered" (Matthew 27: 58)." And the open manner of Joseph's actions is expressed in Mark 15: 43, that he "went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus."

Verse 39. The visit of Nicodemus with Jesus is recorded in chapter 3 of this book. Nothing is said at that place as to the impression made on the ruler, nor of what his attitude was afterward; but the present verse indicates that it left him with a favorable feeling. Also the protest he made against the unfair treatment accorded to Jesus by the Jews (chapter 7: 50, 51) agrees with that attitude. Hence he joined with Joseph in giving the body of Jesus this honorable burial. Thayer says that *myrrh* is, "a bitter gum and costly perfume which exudes from a certain tree or shrub in Arabia and Ethiopia, or is obtained by incisions made in the bark; as an anti-septic it was used in embalming." Of *aloes* he says it is "the name of an aromatic tree which grows in eastern India and Cochin China, and whose soft bitter wood the Orientals used in fumigation and in embalming the dead." The immense weight of these materials that Nicodemus brought would indicate his respect for Jesus.

Verse 40. The products mentioned in the preceding verse were bound to the body of Jesus with the linen cloth, after which it was prepared for burial according to the Jewish custom in practice at that time and in that country.

Verse 41. *A new sepulchre*. This place had become the property of Joseph according to Matthew 27: 60. We are not informed when nor why Joseph had acquired this tomb, but having done so evidently for his own use whenever the occasion came that it would be needed, it was at this time unoccupied. That gave the occasion for the body of Jesus to be placed "wherein was never man yet laid" (stated here and in Luke 23: 53).

Verse 42. *Because of the Jews' preparation day*. Luke 23: 54 says it was

the day of the preparation, "and the sabbath drew on." The preparation day was a busy time for the Jews (see notes at verse 31), hence it was convenient from that standpoint to bury Jesus at this place, *for the sepulchre was nigh at hand*.

## JOHN 20

Verse 1. It is unnecessary to quibble over the particular hour in which Jesus arose from the grave. Neither should any of the indefinite statements about "darkness" be an occasion for confusion. Mark 16: 9 plainly says "Jesus was risen early the first day of the week." No one of the other accounts disagrees with this, hence the conclusion is that the first day of the week was the day on which Jesus arose from the dead. Matthew 28: 1 and Mark 16: 1 shows that Mary Magdalene was not alone in coming to the sepulchre. These women were coming with the intention of anointing the body of Jesus (Mark 16: 1; Luke 24: 1). But when they got to the tomb they saw that the stone was taken away. Matthew 28: 1-6 and Mark 16: 5, 6 adds the information that they found the grave empty, and that Jesus was alive although they did not realize it at first.

Verse 2. Luke 24: 3 tells why the woman ran to meet Peter. She had looked in and seen the empty tomb and thought the body had been removed and laid elsewhere.

Verse 3. The *other disciple* was the one *whom Jesus loved* (chapter 21: 20, 24), who was John. The two disciples started running toward the sepulchre.

Verse 4. John outran Peter and arrived first at the sepulchre.

Verse 5. John went near enough only to see the empty clothes.

Verse 6. Peter reached the sepulchre, and when he did, he did not pause on the outside as did John. *Went into the sepulchre*. This phrase will be better understood by reading the notes at Matthew 27: 60 on the description of tombs.

Verse 7. The order in which the clothes and napkin were neatly folded and laid back, indicates that no confusion or violence was present when Jesus was ready to depart from the tomb. The *linen clothes* was all the clothing the body of Jesus wore as he was laid away in this tomb, as all of his own raiment was taken from him

before he was crucified. (See the notes at Matthew 27: 35.) We are not told how he obtained clothing suitable for public appearances, but we know he was wearing some ordinary kind, for Mary thought he was the gardener when she saw him (verse 15).

Verse 8. By this time John was ready to enter the cave or tomb. The statement is that *he saw and believed*. This may be the origin of an old saying, "seeing is believing." The phrase is not strictly true, for what one sees, he knows, which is not the same as belief. However, the present passage is true, for the thing that John *saw* was not what he *believed*. He *saw* the empty tomb and the unoccupied grave clothes. This caused him to *believe* that Jesus was alive, though at that moment he could not see him.

Verse 9. *Knew not* means they did not realize the meaning of the scripture that predicted the rising from the dead. The writer makes this statement as an explanation of why it took these plain evidences to convince them that Jesus was really alive. The scripture prediction referred to is in Psalms 16: 8-10.

Verse 10. *The disciples* means Peter and John who had run to the sepulchre.

Verse 11. In the meantime, Mary had returned to the tomb, and was weeping in grief for her Lord. Her interest would not let her be inactive, so she stooped down and looked into the tomb.

Verse 12. This gave her a view of the place where the body of Jesus had lain, which was in the same condition it was when she was first at the sepulchre (Luke 24: 3). But this time she saw something she did not see the first time. That was *two angels in white* sitting at the head and foot of the place where Jesus had lain.

Verse 13. Mary still thought that someone had removed the body of her Lord; she told the angels this in answer to their question why she was weeping.

Verse 14. While this conversation was going on, Jesus had returned to the tomb and was standing near Mary. She *knew not that it was Jesus*. One meaning of the Greek word for *knew* is "to perceive." The circumstance here was perfectly natural because of the unexpectedness of the appearance of Jesus. Mary was so positive that

the body of her Lord had been stolen, that it caused her eyes to be restrained from their usual functioning. (See the notes on Luke 24: 15, 16.)

Verse 15. The salutation of *woman* was so formal and distant, that it helped to keep her in the dark as to his identity. She could think of no one who would be addressing her in this unfamiliar way but the man who had care of the garden. In that case he would likely be the one who had removed the body to some spot more convenient to his work. That is why she offered to take charge of it if he would tell her of it.

Verse 16. Jesus pronounced the one word *Mary*, which was so personal and direct that it roused her from her far-away state of mind. *She turned herself* does not mean that her back had been toward him before, for she had looked at him closely enough that she took him to be the gardener. The idea is that she assumed a more direct and deliberate attitude toward Jesus, for she then recognized him. In her surprised joy she saluted him with one of the most reverent title she knew, which was the Greek word RHABBOUNI, which John interprets to mean *Master*.

Verse 17. *Touch* is from the Greek word HAPTO, and Thayer's definition is, "To fasten to, make adhere to; to fasten one's self to, adhere to, cling to." As the word is used in this verse, Thayer explains it, "Do not handle me to see whether I am still clothed with a body; there is no need of such an examination." I believe this explanation is correct, and that Jesus did not mean merely that no personal contact with him would be right. We may be sure of such a conclusion, for a little later (verse 27), Jesus told Thomas to make a very decided contact with him, and his body was then in the same condition it was when he was talking to Mary. A similar use of words is in the instruction of Jesus to the apostles not to "salute" anyone in the way (Luke 10: 4). The explanation given in that place is as follows: "As a salutation was made not merely by a slight gesture and a few words, but generally by embracing and kissing, a journey was retarded by saluting frequently." *For I am not yet ascended to my Father*. This remark is plainly a logical one under the circumstances. Whenever Jesus' went back to Heaven, he would no longer

have the fleshly body and other evidences of the eyes as to his identity. But since he had not yet made that change, her own eyes should tell her that it was the same Lord who was crucified. Therefore, instead of spending time with unnecessary handling of his body, she should *go, to his brethren* and tell the good news to them. She was to tell them also that their Lord would soon ascend back to their God.

Verse 18. Mary obeyed the instructions of the Master.

Verse 19. *Same day . . . being the first day of the week.* This statement is another proof that the first day of the week was the one on which Jesus arose from the dead. The persecuting spirit of the Jews still hovered in the community, causing the disciples to meet "behind closed doors." Luke 24: 33-35 tells us the subject they were discussing was the report that Jesus had risen from the dead. *Jesus stood in the midst.* This is taken by some to mean that Jesus had already undergone a change in his body, since he was able to appear in their midst in spite of the closed doors. However, that act would not require any greater miracle than did his disappearance from them unnoticed before his death (Luke 4: 29, 30).

Verse 20. Jesus knew the disciples were puzzled by his sudden appearance, and Luke 24: 37 says they thought he was a spirit. But he clarified their confusion by showing them his hands and his side, which still had the wounds inflicted on him at the cross. This satisfied the disciples and made them glad to recognize their risen Lord.

Verse 21. Whenever Jesus promised peace for his disciples, it was always the kind that was backed up by his Father. The same is true of the *sending* mentioned in this place. The wording shows that Jesus was sending his apostles out with the same authority by which He had been sent by his Father. The verse is the same in thought as Matthew 28: 18, where Jesus declared that all power (or authority) in heaven and in earth had been given to him.

Verse 22. *Receive ye the Holy Ghost* was a promise, and not a gift bestowed at that moment. It was the same "promise" that is stated in Luke 24: 49, and the same that Luke meant

in Acts 1: 4 when he was preparing to appoint another apostle.

Verse 23. This verse is equivalent in thought and application to Matthew 16: 19. In order for the apostles to be correct in their remitting and retaining of sins, it was necessary for them to be inspired by the Holy Ghost or Spirit, hence the command for them to tarry in Jerusalem until they received the Spirit.

Verse 24. See the notes at chapter 11: 16 on the fact of Thomas' being a twin, also with regard to the popular phrase, "doubting Thomas," applied to him because of the present circumstance. He was not in the group when Jesus showed his hands and side.

Verse 25. The disciples told the story to Thomas, but he demanded to have even more positive evidence of the identity of Jesus than merely seeing the wounds. No severe criticism should be made of Thomas, for he seemed only to be more exacting or cautious than the others, and might not have realized how convincing the very sight of the wounds would be in establishing the identity of Jesus.

Verse 26. In a little more than a week, Thomas had the opportunity he said he would require before he would believe. The disciples were again assembled behind closed doors, and Thomas was present. Jesus came again as he did in verse 19, but his presence did not excite them this time for they understood the situation.

Verse 27. We are not told whether the disciples had reported the statement of Thomas to Jesus, or that it was a part of his general knowledge of all men (2: 24, 25). But he quoted the words of Thomas verbatim as to thrusting his hand in the side wound.

Verse 28. After all the demand that Thomas had made to the other disciples, there is no indication that he took the advantage that Jesus offered him. Instead, the response he made to the invitation was only to *answer* Jesus, and make the full confession of faith, *My Lord and my God.*

Verse 29. Here is the plain statement of Jesus that Thomas believed because he had seen the wounds, which proves the comment above that he did not thrust his hand in the side of his Lord. This passage has the two words *seen* and *believed* in about the same connection they are used in verse 8. That is, Thomas *saw* the wounds which



Jesus only could have exhibited at that time. This identified Him as the one who had been dead but now was alive, and that caused Thomas to believe that he was his Lord and God. Jesus did not condemn Thomas for arriving at his faith from the things he had seen. The point is that he had enjoyed an advantage that few others could have, for the world in general was to be left to believe on the strength of sound testimony. All such were to be *blessed* or be considered happy, because mankind could not all have the bodily presence of Christ for an evidence.

Verse 30. This verse corresponds with the thought in chapter 21: 25, as to the immensity of the things that went to make up the life of Christ.

Verse 31. John wrote these last two verses for the information of the readers, the pronoun *ye* referring to them. The immediate purpose of recording the *signs* or miracles was to make believers by them, as Jesus stated in verse 29. The ultimate purpose was to give the believers spiritual life and salvation through His name.

## JOHN 21

Verse 1. *After these things* means the events of the preceding chapter. *Tiberias* was another name for the Sea of Galilee. It was according to previous appointment that Jesus met his disciples at this place. (See Matthew 28: 7).

Verse 2. Among the men named as *disciples* was *Nathanael*, the same man who figured in the interesting conversation of chapter 1: 45-51. (See the notes at that place.) The other name for him was Bartholomew, which may be learned from the lists given by the Gospel records. Matthew 10, Mark 3 and Luke 6, name twelve apostles including Bartholomew, but never mention Nathanael; while John mentions Nathanael six times, but never refers to Bartholomew by name one time. The verse merely states that these disciples *were together*, but does not tell the exact spot where they were nor what they were doing; the next verse will give us that information.

Verse 3. The disciples named were together somewhere in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee, when Peter proposed going fishing, his original occupation. The others of the group said they would join him, and thus they returned to the secular business they

were in when Jesus first called them into his service (Matthew 4: 18-22). They did their fishing in a boat by using a net, but although they spent the whole night in their efforts, *they caught nothing*.

Verse 4. In the meantime Jesus had come to the sea and was standing on the shore when morning came, or at least as it was getting on towards daylight. But it was still somewhat dark, so that the disciples could not recognize Jesus.

Verse 5. *Children* is from PAIDION, and its literal meaning is "little ones." It is not used literally in this verse, but is spoken "in affectionate address" according to Thayer. The margin renders it "sirs," and Moffatt translates it "lads." *Have ye any meat* meant to ask if they had been successful in their fishing, which they had not.

Verse 6. The word *right* is used in the sense of right-hand, and has no reference to the distinction between right and wrong, or "right" as contrasted with "incorrect." A school of fish was coming along that side of the boat at that moment. Jesus had divine power as well as divine knowledge. He could have caused the school of fish to come to that spot at the appropriate time, or he could have known that it was occurring by ordinary causes. In either case it would have been a miraculous demonstration on the part of Jesus. *Not able to draw it* without help. (See verse 8.)

Verse 7. By this time it was light enough to recognize an acquaintance, especially by the help of hearing his voice. The disciple *whom Jesus loved* (John according to verses 20, 24), was the first to recognize Jesus, and he announced the fact to Peter. *Naked* is from GUMNOS, which Thayer defines at this place, "clad only in the undergarment." The cloak or outer garment had been laid aside for convenience in the activities of fishing. Peter did not feel "presentable" to come into the presence of Jesus, and threw his fisher's coat over the undergarment. He did not wait to come to land by boat, but plunged into the water and either swam or waded out as it was only 300 feet (verse 8).

Verse 8. The short distance from land is mentioned to explain why they came in a *little ship*. At that distance the water would be shallow, so that a larger boat would not navigate so well,

especially when it had to serve as a sort of a "tug" to draw the filled net toward shore.

Verse 9. By having fish on the fire, with bread to eat with them, Jesus taught the disciples that he did not need to depend upon them for the necessities of life.

Verse 10. But the Lord has always taught that man must contribute to his own needs as he is able, hence the disciples were commanded to bring some of the fish they had caught.

Verse 11. The disciples had reached the edge of the water when Jesus told Peter to bring some of his fish. The writer mentions the fact of the net being unbroken notwithstanding the number and size of the fishes, and such reference to it indicates that another miracle was worked to preserve the net.

Verse 12. *Dine* is from *ABISTAO*. Both Thayer and Robinson define it, "To breakfast," and the latter adds, "to lunch, i. e., to take an early meal before the chief meal." *Durst* is a form of "dare." The thought is that none of the disciples would dare or venture to ask Jesus to identify himself, for they all knew it was the Lord. Curiosity, as well as a desire to be doubly certain, would have prompted them to ask Jesus the question, but the evidences of his identity were so great they did not have the courage to ask him.

Verse 13. The fish having been cooked by the fire that Jesus had kindled before the arrival of the disciples, he served them with bread to them.

Verse 14. *Third time . . . to his disciples*, or apostles. The two other times are in chapter 20: 19 and 26. His first appearance was to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16: 9), but she was not an apostle.

Verses 15-17. I believe these verses should be studied as one paragraph for the best results. Some unnecessary labor has been done by some in the way of technical distinctions between certain words, which might cause us to overlook the main point Jesus had in mind. It is true that the Greek originals for *love*, *feed*, *sheep* and *lambs* has each some meanings different from the others. And yet, those distinctions are not great enough to affect the lesson Jesus was giving the apostles. Peter was engaged in the

fishing business when Jesus called him (Matthew 4: 18-20). He left his net and followed the call, and later insisted that nothing could separate him from his service to the Master (Mark 14: 31). Notwithstanding such a profession of loyalty, Peter denied his Lord three times (Matthew 26: 75), and in verse 3 of the present chapter he led the others in returning to their former occupation. Now it was the time and place to make him "take his stand" with reference to his service to the Lord. The masculine and neuter genders for the original of *these* are the same in form, hence the Greek grammar will not help us in determining to what the pronoun refers. Strong defines the word, "Of (from or concerning) these (persons or things)." From all the foregoing considerations, the question of Jesus means, "lovest thou me more than you do this fishing business?" Upon his three-fold assertion that he did, Jesus very logically directed him to prove it by devoting his efforts towards the spiritual business of teaching His people.

Verse 18. The Greek word for *young* has the comparative form, which makes it mean "younger." Jesus is speaking of the days when Peter was in his prime physically and able to care for himself, even to the extent of self-defense if necessary. But the time was coming when he would be subject to the will and strength of others. This prediction is so general that we only could have guessed at its meaning, had the writer not given us the key to it in the next verse.

Verse 19. *By what death* indicates not only that the death of Peter would be to glorify (do honor) God, but that the manner of that death was to be a significant item in the affair. I do not believe it requires me to pay any special attention to the tradition that Peter was crucified with his head downward, nor even that he was crucified at all, though that is probable. The point is that he was to die by violence because of his devotion to God. In that kind of experience he would be imitating the example of his Lord, which is what he was exhorted to do in the words, follow me.

Verse 20. This entire verse is given to identify the disciple of whom Peter was about to ask his question. That disciple was John according to verse 24.

Verse 21. In this verse Peter manifests a very natural curiosity, but which will be interpreted by Christ as an intrusion by Peter into matters that should not have concerned him. Jesus had exhorted Peter to follow Him by faithfulness even to the extent of a violent death. The question of the apostle means as if he had said, "And what do you expect John to do; will he have to die a violent death also?"

Verse 22. Jesus did not answer Peter's question directly. *Tarry till I come* means not only that he would not die a violent death, but would not die at all before Jesus returned to earth. But Jesus did not say that such a thing would happen, only that if it did, it would be no concern of Peter's; his duty was to follow Jesus.

Verse 23. This verse gives a clear example of the disposition of men to formulate rumors with no truth as a basis. Jesus only asked Peter a hypothetical question by way of rebuking him for his meddlesome attitude. Then the gossiping spirit of the disciples made an affirmation out of it, and made Jesus say that John was promised that he would live to see the second coming of Christ.

Verse 24. This verse, together with other passages, shows us that the disciple "whom Jesus loved" was John. (See chapter 13: 23.)

Verse 25. Jesus lived and worked with his disciples and among men for more than three years. It would have made a volume or volumes of immense size had all of His deeds been recorded. *World* means the people of the earth. *Contain* is from CHOREO, and as Thayer defines it, the meaning is, "To receive with the mind or understanding, to understand; to be ready to receive, keep in mind." The entire Bible is very brief, and the Lord has placed before mankind enough only to make the necessary preparation for usefulness in this life, and happiness in the next.

## ACTS 1

Verse 1. The Greek word for *treatise* is LOCOS. The definitions in the lexicon are very numerous, likewise the word is translated by a great variety of terms in the King James Version. I believe it will be well to state the different terms, and the number of times it is so rendered by each, so the reader may form a general idea of the scope

of the original. It has been translated by account, 8 times; cause, 1; communication, 3; doctrine, 1; game, 1; intent, 1; matter, 4; mouth, 1; rumor, 1; saying, 50; shew, 1; speech, 8; talk, 1; thing, 4; things to say, 1; tidings, 1; treatise, 1; utterance, 4; word, 208; Word, 7; words, 4; work, 2. In our present passage it means volume or document, since it refers to the Gospel of Luke. The salutation to *Theophilus* is the same as in Luke 1: 3, which proves that one man is the author of both books. All of the writers in the Nicene Library, a work composed by scholars in the church in the first four centuries of the Christian Era, agree that Luke is the author of the book we are now studying, as well as the Gospel bearing his name. Referring to his former work (his Gospel record), the author says it was a *treatise of all that Jesus began both to do and teach*.

Verse 2. The preceding verse states something of the subject matter of Luke's former book, and the present tells of the event at which it concluded its narrative. *Was taken up* refers to the ascension of Jesus, recorded in Luke 24: 51. These *commandments* pertain to the "Great Commission" given to the apostles, to go and preach the Gospel in all the world. (See Matthew 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 47, 48.)

Verse 3. *Whom* means the apostles referred to in the preceding verse, who were to be the witnesses for Jesus in the nations of the world. In order for them to be qualified as witnesses to the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead, it was necessary for him to show himself to them. *Passion* is from PASCHO, and Thayer's general definition is, "to feel, have a sensible experience, to undergo; to suffer sadly, be in bad plight." As Luke uses it, it refers to the sufferings and death of Jesus on the cross. *Showed himself alive* indicates how long after his death it was that he showed himself, namely, after his resurrection, since he was *alive*. *Infallible proofs* comes from one Greek word TEKMERION, and Thayer's definition is, "That from which something is surely and plainly known; an indubitable [unquestionable] evidence, a proof." A proof that was merely reasonably sure was not enough, but it must be so evident that it would be impossible to misunderstand it, and there were to be *many* of them. That would enable the apostles

to say, "we know that Jesus lived after his death on the cross, for we saw him, heard him speak, and had this experience so often that it could not have been any delusion or imagination. And this kind of experience extended over a period of forty days, which would make it impossible to have been mistaken about it. Another thing that confirmed their recognition of the identity of Jesus, was the fact that he talked with them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, a subject that no stranger would have known anything about, especially if he had been an impostor.

Verse 4. This book reaches back over the last part of the Gospel record, which connects the line of thought regarding Christ. The assembling mentioned in this verse took place before Jesus made his ascension, at which event this book is supposed to begin. The *promise of the Father* was the bestowal of the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth. That promise may be found in Joel 2: 28-29; John 14: 16, 17; 15: 26; Matthew 3: 11. The apostles were *not to depart from Jerusalem* until they had received this Spirit, since it was necessary for their guidance in the work assigned to them.

Verse 5. When John predicted the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3: 11), he also included that of fire. But he was talking to a mixed multitude, in which were some whom John knew would live and die in sin and finally be cast into the lake of fire. And there also were some in his audience who were destined to become apostles, and hence would receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. John's speech was addressed to the multitude as a whole. But when Jesus uttered the promise of this verse, he was talking to his apostles only, so it was unnecessary to say anything about the baptism of fire.

Verse 6. The apostles held to their notion that Christ was going to erect a temporal kingdom like the one the Jews had before, and deliver it to them as a restoration of their power as a nation. They had given up that hope for a time on account of the death of Jesus (Luke 24: 21). But after his resurrection, they seemed to think they had been a little hasty in their despondency, and that now perhaps he would give them the kingdom, hence the question of this verse.

Verse 7. The specific *time* or date of the plans of the Father were not to be announced beforehand to the apostles. That is why they were told to tarry in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit, and then they would know all they needed to know to carry on the work for which they had been called.

Verse 8. *Power* is from DUNAMIS, which means might or ability. The Holy Ghost or Spirit was to impart this qualification to the apostles, so that they could take the testimony to the uttermost parts of the earth. The need for such power was the reason they were told to wait in Jerusalem for the descent of the Spirit as promised through the prophets.

Verse 9. This verse corresponds with the closing ones of the book of Luke. Both places record the ascension of Jesus, but the present one only mentions the cloud; the other merely says he disappeared. The cloud feature in the ascension is significant, because Revelation 1: 7 says that He will come in the clouds. That agrees also with what will be stated in verse 11 of the present chapter.

Verse 10. *Looked steadfastly toward heaven*. The last word is from OURANOS, which is the only word in the Greek New Testament for the English word "heaven." Yet the inspired writers speak of the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12: 2) which means there are a first and second. Hence we have three definitions of the word in Tayer's lexicon, which I will quote in their order: "1. The vaulted expanse of the sky with all things visible in it. 2. The sidereal or starry heavens. 3. The region above the sidereal [starry] heavens, the seat of an order of things eternal and consummately [entirely] perfect, where God dwells and the other heavenly beings." Jesus finally entered the third heaven, but the one the disciples saw Him enter was the first. It was logical that Jesus went "up" to heaven, since that is the only direction that can be realized by human eyes. But the term is accommodative only, for literal directions as to altitude are based on the earth; "up" meaning away from the earth, and down meaning toward it. Were the earth and other material bodies destroyed, there would be no "up" or "down" as we use those terms. Whether Jesus left the earth at noon or midnight, he would still have gone "up"

as we use the word. The *two men in white apparel* were the "angels" of John 1: 51.

Verse 11. Jesus will come in *like manner*, which is why Revelation 1: 7 says he will come in clouds, and also adds that "every eye shall see him." That prediction explodes the heresy that Jesus has come to the earth in such a manner that only the self-styled "witnesses" can see him.

Verse 12. In Luke's Gospel record, he merely states (chapter 24: 52) that the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy. In our present verse he states from where they made the journey, namely, from the mount called *Olivet*, which is the same as the Mount of Olives, a distance from Jerusalem of *a sabbath day's journey*, or about three-quarters of a mile. The law of Moses has nothing to say about "a sabbath day's journey," but that was a tradition of the Jews, based on a strained interpretation of Exodus 16: 29 and Joshua 3: 4. Neither Jesus nor the inspired writers endorsed the tradition, but on account of its common use, the term came to have a secular meaning as to distance.

Verse 13. *Where abode* does not mean they resided there, as the word generally denotes, but that they were remaining or passing the time there. That was in obedience to the command of Jesus that they "tarry" and wait for the coming of the "power from on high" (Luke 24: 49). The word *both* commonly denotes that two things only are being considered, but Thayer explains the Greek as meaning, "things are thus connected which are akin, or which are united to each other by some inner bond, whether logical or real." The men named were related to each other as apostles of Christ.

Verse 14. While waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were improving the time by religious devotions. These exercises included the *women*, for it says they continued thus *with* the women. This is the last time the mother of Jesus is mentioned by name in the New Testament; others are named of that term, but not His mother. *His brethren* means the children of Joseph and Mary; not his disciples, for they were already named in verse 13.

Verse 15. As usual, Peter was the spokesman on this occasion. The *hundred and twenty* disciples means the

ones who were present in this assembly. In 1 Corinthians 15: 6 Paul says that Jesus was seen (after his resurrection) by "above five hundred brethren," most of whom were living when the apostle wrote the epistle. Just where they were when the assembly was going on mentioned in the present verse we do not know, for only the apostles had been commanded to tarry at Jerusalem; the others were there by their own voluntary desire only.

Verse 16. The Holy Spirit had not yet come down, but the divine record afterwards indicates full approval of all the proceedings, hence we must conclude that what Peter and the others said and did was by the guidance of the Lord. Peter began his speech with a reference to Psalms 69: 22-25, pertaining to the conduct and fate of Judas.

Verse 17. This means that Judas had been included among the apostles. The verse also indicates that the purpose of the present session was to secure a man to become an apostle in the place of Judas.

Verse 18. *Purchased a field* refers to the "potter's field," mentioned in Matthew 27: 7. *With the reward of iniquity*. Judas did not personally have any part in purchasing this field, for it was done after his death (Matthew 27: 5-8). The phrase means the field was bought with the money that Judas had received as a reward for betraying Jesus. *Falling headlong*. If two statements seem to disagree, they should not be taken as a contradiction if it is possible for both to be true. The other record of the death of Judas says he "hanged himself." There were no "up-to-date" scaffolds available in those days, so Judas would naturally select a place, such as a tree near a precipice, for clearance of his body when he plunged from the footing under him. Then when his weight pulled suddenly on the limb (as the tradition reports it), his body broke it off and he was ruptured as he fell down upon the rocks below.

Verse 19. There is nothing strange in the general knowledge of the affair of Judas. The suicide of a man prominently associated with Jesus could not escape the attention of the people. And the setting aside of a piece of land that ordinarily was discarded, would naturally bring forth many inquiries,

and that in turn would suggest the title given to the place. *Field of blood*. Judas did not actually shed the blood of Jesus, neither did the crucifixion directly shed it. The law of capital punishment in Genesis 9: 6 says, "He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Nobody would think this is restricted to cases where the veins of another were literally opened and the blood poured out, either in the act of murder or the punishment for it. Were that the case, a murderer could escape the penalty by merely using some other method of slaying his victim besides bloodletting. The origin of the term is in the declaration of God that the blood is the life (Genesis 9: 4). From this truth the term "bloodshed" came to mean any act of violence that would cause one to lose his life. Judas caused Jesus to lose his life by violence, and hence he was properly charged with bloodshed.

Verse 20. The quotation being cited is in Psalm 69: 25. *Habitation* means a house or place of dwelling, and to be *desolate* means that it was to be deserted. There is no information that the home of Judas was ever occupied by others, or that he left any family to take charge of it. *Bishoprick* is from EPISKOPE, and is the word for "office of a bishop" in 1 Timothy 3: 1. Thayer defines the word as, "oversight, office, charge," which explains why it was applied to the apostle Judas. *Let another take* denotes clearly that the man who is about to be appointed as apostle was to take the place of Judas, and should therefore be regarded as an apostle after the Lord has indicated his choice.

Verse 21. One of the qualifications required in the man to be placed in office as an apostle, is that of constant association with the others and with the Lord Jesus. This idea of being "with him" is set forth in Mark 3: 14.

Verse 22. The extent of time when this association was to have been had was from the baptism of John to the ascension of Jesus. Such an experience would qualify him to be a witness of the resurrection of Jesus, because the death and return to life of the Lord took place between those two events. The proper man would be *ordained* to the office of apostle. (See the notes on ordain at John 15: 16.)

Verse 23. *Appointed* is from HISTEMI, which Thayer defines in this place,

"To bid to stand by." It has the same meaning as our modern word "nominate," but not placed in any office as yet. They named Barsabas called Justus, and Matthias, who were to "stand by" and be ready for whatever might be determined upon.

Verse 24. As far as the apostles knew, each of these men named for the office left vacant by Judas' death was qualified. But the Lord could see defects that man could not, or could observe superior qualities of one over the other that could not be known by human beings. That is why they prayed to the Lord who *knoweth the hearts of all men*, to make the final choice between their candidates.

Verse 25. *Ministry* is from DIAKONIA, and its general meaning is "service." The word will apply to anyone and to any activity that is of service to the Cause of Christ. The *apostleship* was a specific service to be administered only by those qualified and authorized to do it. Judas fell from his position as apostle *by transgression*, hence was responsible for his actions. *His own place* meant perdition according to John 17: 12.

Verse 26. The appointment of an apostle was such an important event, that I believe a full explanation should be made of the *lot* as a means of determining the selection. The word is from KLEROS, which Thayer defines, "An object used in casting or drawing lots." He then explains the performance, "which was either a pebble, or a potsherd, or a bit of wood . . . the lots of the several persons concerned, inscribed with the names, were thrown together into a vase, which was then shaken, and he whose lot first fell out upon the ground was the one chosen." *Fell* is used figuratively, as it is used in Romans 14: 4, where Paul uses the statement, "to his own master he standeth or *falleth*." This also is according to Robinson's definition for the Greek word for "fall" which is, "To fall to or upon any one, Acts 1: 26." A natural question would be why such a thing as a "game of chance" would be used in determining the selection of an apostle. That was still in the period when the Lord used "sundry times and diverse manners" (Hebrews 1: 1) to communicate his will to mankind. When He was pleased to use the lot on any matter, he would see that the proper piece would come



out. That is the meaning of Proverbs 16: 33, and it is the reason the apostles prayed that the Lord would "show whether [which] of these two thou hast chosen." The inspired writer is the one who says Matthias was numbered with the eleven *apostles*, which he would not have done, had the proceeding not been in harmony with the divine will. Hence we must understand that Matthias was the man divinely selected to take the place of Judas, and to fill out the original quota of the "twelve apostles."

## ACTS 2

Verse 1. *Pentecost* is from PENTEKOSTE, which Thayer describes as follows: "Properly the fiftieth day after the Passover, the second of the three great Jewish festivals; celebrated at Jerusalem yearly, the seventh week after the Passover, in grateful recognition of the completed harvest." Being a Greek word, it is not found in the Old Testament, but the feast is referred to in other terms. It is called "feast of harvests" in Exodus 23: 16; "new meat offering" in Leviticus 23: 16; "feast of weeks" in Deuteronomy 16: 10. *Fully* does not have any original as a separate word, but *fully come* is from the one Greek word *SUMPLEBOO*, and one phrase in Thayer's definition is, "be fulfilled." After the Passover observance, with the 7-day period of unleavened bread immediately following, the next great event with the Jews was Pentecost. During that space of fifty days, the devoted people of Israel were waiting and looking forward to this feast that was observed for one day only. The phrase *fully come*, then, merely means that the waiting days were over and the important day at last had come. *They* is a pronoun that stands for the "apostles," the last word of the preceding chapter. These men had two reasons for being in Jerusalem at this time. They were Jews who were loyal toward the institutions of the law, and more important, they had been commanded to tarry in that city while waiting for the Holy Spirit or "power from on high" (Luke 24: 49). *All with one accord* includes Matthias, the apostle newly ordained, which gives us the significant information that the entire group of apostles was of one mind.

Verse 2. The *sound* was what filled all the house; not the wind nor the Spirit. The sound came *from heaven*

or the region of the atmosphere, since that is the place where winds originate, being the movements of the air.

Verse 3. There appeared unto *them*, the apostles, these tongues, for none but they had been promised the "power from on high" on this occasion. *Cloven* is from a Greek word that has been translated by such terms as "parted, disparted, distributed, separated," etc. The significance was that the apostles were to speak in various tongues or languages. That was not only for use on this occasion, but they were expected to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," and to do that it would be necessary for them to be able to speak several hundred languages. These *cloven* tongues were *like fire*, but it does not say they were fire. They sat upon *each* of the apostles, indicating that each apostle would be able to speak in as many kinds of tongues as occasion required when he got out into the world.

Verse 4. It was the house that was filled with the sound, but it was *they*, the apostles, who were filled with the Holy Ghost. This enabled them, *each of them*, to speak with other tongues. This refutes the theory that the Lord assigned to each apostle the ability to speak with some specific foreign tongue, giving him the task of speaking to some of the foreigners present. That will not do anyway, for there were fifteen or more tongues represented at Jerusalem, but there were only twelve apostles, and hence there would not have been enough speakers to go round on that plan.

Verse 5. These Jews were *dwelling* at Jerusalem temporarily only. They had come there to attend the feast of Pentecost as required by the law of Moses.

Verse 6. *When this was noised abroad*. I believe the pronoun "this" refers to the circumstance as a whole, not merely to the "sound," for the text states only that it "filled the house," not the whole vicinity. But such a performance as happened on that occasion could not but be reported by those nearest the scene, and that would bring the multitude to the place to see "what it was all about." When they got to the place they were *confounded*, which means they were confused or amazed, to discover that these men could all so speak that each of them in the multitude could under-

stand the speakers, although no two of them spoke the same tongue, whenever they used that of the country where they were born.

Verse 7. *Are not all these which speak Galileans?* It is true that Galilee and its people did not have a very exalted place in the estimation of many in the time of Christ and the apostles. However, that was not the reason the multitude made the remark here. It was in reference to the fact that all of these spokesmen were of that group and generally spoke in a tongue peculiar to themselves. (See Mark 14: 70; Luke 22: 59.) But here they were departing from their own native speech, and using those of the Jews from other countries all over the world "under heaven."

Verse 8. *Wherein we were born* denotes the language peculiar to the country where they were born and where they had acquired the individual speech.

Verses 9, 10. This paragraph with a part of the next, names the various countries from where these Jews had come to be present at the feast of Pentecost. The number of the different places has been given a variety of counts, ranging from 15 to 17, depending on how technically the distinctions are made. The information as to their location is a matter of simple history or geography, and I do not think that space needs to be used here for that purpose.

Verse 11. The pronouns *we* and *our* refer to the people from the several countries named; *them* means the apostles. *Tongues* being plural is significant, and denotes that the apostles were speaking in more than one tongue. All of this was done for the purpose of demonstrating the miraculous power and divine authority being vested in the apostles, and not with the intention of imparting any doctrinal information to the multitude. That was to come later, after the attention or interest had been sufficiently fixed for them to listen thoughtfully. *Wonderful works* as a phrase comes from the Greek word *MEGALEIOS*, and Thayer's definition is, "magnificent, excellent, splendid, wonderful." It does not mean "works" as some physical or material deeds, but that God's ability to enable these apostles to speak in this extraordinary manner was wonderful.

Verse 12. *Doubt* is from *ΔΙΑΠΟΡΕΟ* which Thayer defines, "To be entirely at a loss, to be in perplexity." Some of the multitude had a respectful attitude toward the situation, but were perplexed over it and honestly wondered what it all meant.

Verse 13. *Mocking* means to sneer or make fun, which was done by a different part of the people than the ones who were honestly and respectfully perplexed. *New wine* is from the one Greek word *GLEUKOS*, and Thayer defines it, "sweet wine," and he explains the definition to mean, "The sweet juice pressed from the grape." I have consulted seven other lexicons, and they all agree with Thayer on the meaning of the word. If that be true, then the question would arise, how could the apostles be drunk on such an article? They could not, but it was an indirect and cowardly way these scoffers took of accusing the apostles of being drunk. And Peter took it to mean that, for in his reply he did not deny the accusation on the ground that new wine would not make anyone drunk; he knew they were insincere in the foolish charge.

Verse 14. *Peter, standing up with the eleven.* The apostles all stood up as a token that what Peter was about to say would be the word of all the apostles. They did not all speak at this time, for that would have been disorderly. Besides, the miraculous demonstrations had all been done as far as was necessary for the purpose of evidence. There will not be any further miracle performed except that of inspiration, to enable Peter to preach the Gospel with unerring accuracy and authority. We are not told just what language he used, but we know it was one that the entire multitude could understand. Verse 7 tells us the multitude (assembled from 15 or 17 countries), *said one to another*, etc. This shows they knew some kind of tongue that was common to all of them, else they could not have conversed with each other. Whatever that tongue was, it doubtless was the one the apostle used. Having stood up for a more effective way of addressing that vast throng, Peter urged them to give serious attention to his words.

Verse 15. *These are not drunken.* The unkind critics had only accused the apostles of being *full of new wine*, but Peter knew they were wanting to besmirch them with the charge of

drunkenness, and hence he treated their remark from that viewpoint only. The *third hour* is the same as our 9 A. M. Isaiah 5: 11 indicates that it was not the common practice to begin drinking in the early part of the day. Those people who arose early in the morning for that purpose were of a class that the prophet was condemning. Peter meant that it was too early in the day for these apostles to have become drunken, even if they had been using fermented wine, as that is a slow intoxicant anyway. And that would be especially true of these men who had been in the assembled condition all day, due to the sacredness of the occasion.

Verse 16. The passage to which Peter refers and quotes is in Joel 2: 28-32. The pronoun *this* refers to the entire line of events that was predicted by the prophet, and that had just started with the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. Having made the reference to Joel's prediction, Peter goes ahead and quotes the entire passage, although some of the things will not take place on the day of Pentecost. The things predicted were to begin their fulfillment at that time, and others were to come at the proper time later, which will be explained as the commenting on the verses proceeds.

Verses 17, 18. *Last days* means the closing days of the Jewish Dispensation. That era was still in force until the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, and Peter then introduced the Gospel of Christ and the church was set up. *Upon all flesh* indicated that the Gospel was to be given to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. That was one of the things that Joel saw in the over-all vision that was to start on this day of Pentecost. But that item did not come until the conversion of Cornelius in chapter 10. *Sons and daughters shall prophesy* was another item that came later, but it was actually fulfilled according to chapter 21: 9.

Verses 19, 20. This paragraph refers to the events recorded in Matthew 27: 45; Mark 15: 33; Luke 23: 44, 45. Of course no literal changing into blood and smoke took place, but the conditions were such that the terms were a fitting illustration. *Before* is used as if it said, "just before," or "only a short while before." The darkness that came as Jesus was on the cross came only 50 days before the day

of Pentecost. In a period of time spread out over as large a scale as several centuries, a space of 50 days would be virtually the same date for each of the events predicted. The circumstance is mentioned by way of identifying the noted prediction. Such an event as the failing of sunshine in the middle of a day, that happened as Jesus was on the cross, had never occurred before. And when it did come so short a time before the *day* on which the Holy Spirit came down, the people would easily associate the two events as parts of the same prediction. Another thing to consider, the time of the Passover (which was also that of the crucifixion) was so near the feast of Pentecost that many pious Jews just "remained over," hence among those on this great day now at hand, were many who had personally seen that darkening of the sun, which would help to verify the prediction.

Verse 21. *Call* is from EPIKALEO, and Thayer defines it at this place, "To call upon (on one's behalf) the name of the Lord, i. e., to invoke, adore, worship, the Lord, i. e., Christ." It is the same Greek word for "calling" in chapter 22: 16, where the context shows that calling on the name of the Lord for salvation means to obey His commands.

Verse 22. Having quoted in full the prophecy of Joel, Peter proceeded to recite the story of Jesus, describing briefly the outstanding deeds of his life, which he will do through several verses, bringing the narrative down to His death and resurrection, and even to the very hour then at hand. He asserted that men were not asked to receive Christ merely on the claims of God, but that He had testified to his Son's divinity by enabling him to perform *wonders and signs*. The apostle further reminded them that they knew about these things, and they never disputed it as we shall find. And the fact that Peter accused this very crowd of guilt in the crucifying of Jesus, verifies my remarks on verses 19, 20, that many of these people had been in Jerusalem at the time when Jesus was on the cross and the sun was darkened for three hours.

Verse 23. *Determinate counsel*. It was determined by the Lord God that his Son should die by violence, and it was also foretold through the foreknowledge of God. (See Luke 22: 22; Revelation 13: 8.) Had it not been

the will of God that Jesus should be delivered into the hands of wicked men, they never could have taken and killed him. (See Matthew 26: 53, 54.) But this determination of God did not excuse the wicked Jews, for their motive was an unrighteous one. *Ye have taken* was what the Jews did by their perverted Sanhedrin, and *by wicked hands* means those of the Roman soldiers, because the Jews could not legally put a man to death.

Verse 24. *Loosed the pains of death.* Death does not bring any pain afterward to a righteous man. The statement means that God released his Son who had been bound in a death that had been accompanied by pain. *Not possible.* The impossibility was on the part of the bondage of death, not God, for he determined his Son should rise again.

Verse 25. *David speaketh concerning him* means that David made a prophecy concerning Christ. (See Psalms 16: 8-11.) In this passage David represents Christ as saying the things that are set down in this verse through 28. In these verses all of the pronouns of the first person refer to Christ, while the second and third person pronouns mean God. The present verse expresses the confidence of Christ that God would always be at hand to support and comfort him.

Verse 26. Christ rejoiced because of a hope he had concerning his fleshly body. He knew that he must die, and that his fleshly body would be without its soul for a time. The usual result of such a separation of soul and body is for the latter to decay. Jesus not only had hope that involved his soul (inner man), but also one that was favorable for his fleshly body. That twofold hope will be revealed in the next verse.

Verse 27. When a man dies, his soul (inner man) goes to the unseen or intermediate realm, called Hades in the Greek New Testament, which is rendered "hell" by the King James translators. His body remains on the earth, and after three days it will begin to decompose or *see corruption*. This fact explains the words of Martha in John 11: 39. But this noted passage means that the soul of Jesus was not to remain in hell (Hades) long enough for his body that had been placed in the tomb of Joseph to start decaying. That was why it was neces-

sary for Jesus to be raised from the dead after three days.

Verse 28. *Hast made known* is past tense as to grammatical form, but it is a prediction that God would fully reveal to his Son the *ways of life*, or plan of salvation through his own blood. This assurance filled Jesus with joy because of the agreeable *countenance* or face of his Father.

Verse 29. The listeners might not understand the form of language where one writer would speak as if meaning himself, but was really talking for another. To show them that David was not writing about himself personally, Peter reminded them that he had been dead all these years, because his tomb (still occupied) was yet with them, whereas his prediction concerned a person who was to leave his grave after three days.

Verse 30. Having explained that David was not writing about himself, Peter thought it well to account for his statements. They showed that he was personally interested in Christ because he was to be his (David's) own famous descendant. The most significant item was that this descendant was some day to sit upon the throne (of course in a spiritual sense) left vacant by the change in dispensations.

Verse 31. To do as just predicted, it would be necessary for him to come forth from the grave so that he could establish that throne. "Being a prophet," it was possible for David to make the prediction of the resurrection.

Verse 32. *We* means the apostles who had seen Jesus after his resurrection.

Verse 33. After all these verses from 16, Peter comes directly again to the purpose of his speech; to explain the meaning of what the multitude had seen and heard. That it was according to a promise that the Holy Ghost was to be *shed forth* upon the apostles.

Verses 34, 35. Coming back to David, Peter reminds them again that the prophet had not ascended to heaven and was therefore not at God's right hand. That would explain that another noted prophecy could not have meant him (David), for it says that the Lord (who was Christ) was to sit on the right hand of God, until he (Christ) had become a universal conquerer. This prediction is in Psalms 110: 1.

Verse 36. Peter laid the foundation consisting of prophecy and its fulfillment, citing facts that could not be doubted nor disputed. Upon that foundation he declared that Jesus, the very one they had crucified, had been made by the God of Heaven, both *Lord* and *Christ*. The first word means a ruler, and the second denotes one who is anointed. The sentence means that God had anointed his Son to be the ruler of His people.

Verse 37. *Pricked* is from KATA-NUSSO which Thayer defines, "To pain the mind sharply, agitate it vehemently." They were pained because they were convinced they had killed the very One whom God ordained to be the Saviour of the world. That fact also meant to them that some great condemnation was in store for them unless something could be done about it. In their grief and feeling of guilt, the only thing they could say was to ask the apostles what they should do.

Verse 38. This verse has two distinct parts; command and promise. The command would have to be obeyed at once in order to obtain the desired result, while the promise would be carried out according to the Lord's own plan, to be observed as we consider the conditions connected therewith. *Repent* means to turn from a sinful course and choose a righteous one. *Be baptized* means to be buried in water, the details of which will be discussed at chapter 8: 38. *For* is from EIS, which means in order to, or into, the remission of sins. The gift of the Holy Ghost (or Spirit) was the promise, and it meant that the Holy Ghost was to be given, not that it was to give something to anyone, for it is in no place spoken of as a giver. Besides, in chapter 10: 44, 45, the terms "Holy Ghost" and "the gift of the Holy Ghost" are used in the same sense, proving that the promise that Peter meant in this verse was the Holy Ghost was to be given. The inevitable question that comes up, is what was this gift or when was it to be given? This verse does not answer that question, hence we must look elsewhere for the answer. Chapter 19: 2 shows that men did not receive this Holy Ghost simultaneously with repentance and baptism, else Paul would not have asked the question he did, for he thought he was talking to people who had been baptized with "Christian baptism." The information we are seeking may be

found in chapter 8: 14-17. The people of Samaria had been baptized just as Peter commanded, yet they had not received the Holy Ghost until the apostles came and laid hands on them. Hence the conclusion is unavoidable, that when Peter made the promise in chapter 2: 38, he meant that if they would repent and be baptized, they would be entitled to the gift of the Holy Ghost whenever an apostle laid hands on them.

Verse 39. *The promise* that is meant may be learned from the companion passage in chapter 3: 25, where Peter is speaking on the same subject, but where he calls it "the covenant." It was first made to Abraham (Genesis 12: 3), and concerned both Jews and Gentiles. That is why our present verse says it is to all that are *afar off*. That same phrase is used in Ephesians 2: 17, where the context plainly indicates that it means the Gentiles. The promise was that both Jew and Gentile were to be offered the blessing of salvation through Christ, who was the promised descendant of Abraham.

Verse 40. To *exhort* means to insist on doing one's known duty. Peter had clearly shown the Jews their duty, then it was fitting that he should exhort them to do it. *Save yourselves* means for them to do their part in their salvation by performing the duty mentioned in verse 38. *Untoward* is from SKOLIOS which is defined, "perverse, wicked." To save themselves from that wicked generation, means to escape the fate awaiting it, by obeying the commands the apostle had just given.

Verse 41. *They that gladly received his word were baptized*. This is a very significant statement. Baptism, like all other commandments from the Lord, must be acts of faith in order to benefit one. And when a man has been convinced of the truth, and has been shown his duty as set forth in that truth, he will obey it without hesitation or question. As we proceed in the study of this book, it will frequently be observed that the act of baptism followed the belief of a sinner, and it will be stated in a manner that implies it to be a matter-of-course that if he believes the word he will obey. *Unto them* is not in the original but is supplied by the translators. However, the last verse of the chapter furnishes information that people who were saved (by obedience to the Gos-

pel) were added to the church. We do not know how many of the *three thousand* were baptized on that day, since the text does not deal with that question. But we may properly conclude that ere the day was gone, the "membership" of the newly-founded church had come to be that numerous. And then, as the days passed by, whenever a person obeyed the Gospel, the Lord added him to the church.

Verse 42. *They* means the *three thousand* (and all others daily being saved). *Continued steadfastly*. Both words come from the Greek word ΠΡΟΣΚΑΤΕΡΕΟ, which Thayer defines, "to give constant attention to a thing." That explains how some of the items of the verse could be observed as the Lord expected, even though the nature of them required only that they be done periodically. One such item is the *breaking of bread*, which we know was to be done only on the first day of the week (chapter 20:7). This verse is a historical statement of the general practice of the early disciples, and not a set form or order of worship for the public assembly. Besides, some of the items are too individual in their character to be restricted to the public assembly. *Apostles' doctrine* means the teaching of the apostles. In all of their religious activities, whether private or public, they were guided by the teaching that the inspired apostles had given and were giving them. *Fellowship* is from ΚΟΙΝΟΝΙΑ, which is defined in Thayer's lexicon, "The share which one has in anything, participation." That would include financial contribution, but does not apply to that item exclusively. And of course all true disciples would make their entire life a matter of prayer, in recognition of the need for divine guidance, and as expressions of their love for and devotion to the Lord.

Verse 43. This *fear* was not one of terror, but rather a feeling of profound awe settled upon the vast throng who had seen and heard such great things. They had witnessed the demonstrations that followed the descent of the Holy Spirit. They had also been brought to see the light of divine truth, and made to rejoice in the pardon of their sins. The *wonders and signs* were done by the apostles, not by the ones who had been baptized that day. This is another proof that they did not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost at the time of their bap-

tism, for if they had they would have been able to perform signs and wonders (chapter 10:45, 46; 19:6).

Verse 44. *Common* is from ΚΟΙΝΟΣ, and Thayer defines it at this place with the one word that is used in the text. He then explains it to mean, "belonging to several." Robinson defines it, "common, shared alike by all." This will be more specifically brought out in the next verse.

Verse 45. *Possessions* is from ΚΤΕΜΑ, and Robinson defines it, "a possession, property, estate," which agrees with the definition of Thayer. *Goods* is from a Greek word that has a more general meaning. But since the first word in the passage is shown to apply specifically to real estate, we know the second refers to their personal belongings. Many of these disciples had come from far countries to attend the feast of Pentecost. They had not intended remaining at Jerusalem so long, consequently had not made preparation for such a prolonged stay. In their newfound joy they were loath to leave the community. This induced the resident disciples to create this common fund by turning all their property into money and placing it in one pool, to be drawn from according to the needs of the various members. It should be remembered that no apostle instructed the disciples to start this movement, but it was purely a voluntary action upon the part of the disciples. The Bible in no place teaches or encourages the practice of communism or socialism. On the contrary, it teaches the principle of individual holding of property, granted and guaranteed by the law of the land, with the result that as long as the world stands there will be men who have titles to property, and those who have not; there will be rich and will also be poor people. (See Genesis 23:17-20; Matthew 26:11; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Galations 2:10; James 2:1-5; 4:13, 14.) This arrangement of the community of goods was not instituted in any city outside of Jerusalem that we know of. It was not a divine system, and finally got some people into serious trouble as we shall see in a later chapter.

Verse 46. *Continuing* is from the same word as *continued steadfastly* in verse 42, and has the same definition in each passage. The *continuing* was done *daily*, hence we know the *breaking bread* was not the Lord's Supper, for that was done only on the first day



of the week (chapter 20: 7); it referred to partaking of food for material purposes in this passage. It was a season of general visiting and social happy times together as brothers and sisters in Christ. *Did eat their meat* means they partook of their food. *Singleness of heart* means with humbleness and sincerity.

Verse 47. *Favor* means good will and admiration. It was *the people* who had this feeling for the disciples, when they beheld how they loved each other. The opposition of the rulers had not yet been aroused, hence the general good attitude of the multitude had not been corrupted by the spirit of persecution. *Added* is from *PROSTHEMI*, which Thayer defines, "To add, i. e., join to, gather with." *Should* does not occur in the original as a separate word, but *should be saved* all comes from *sozo*. That word is defined by Robert Young, "To make or keep sound or safe." Robinson defines it, "To save, to deliver, to preserve safe." Thayer defines it, "To save, to keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction." The Englishman's Greek New Testament translates it, "were being saved." The Lord *added* these *saved* ones to the church, which agrees with Ephesians 5: 23, which says that Christ is the Saviour of the body, which is the church (Ephesians 1: 22, 23). Outward forms of church membership are necessary for the sake of order in the divine government, but unless the law pertaining to salvation (which is completed in baptism) is obeyed, all such forms of becoming members of a congregation will be ignored by the Lord.

### ACTS 3

Verse 1. The *ninth* hour was 3 o'clock in the afternoon. There is no ordinance in either Old or New Testament that designates any certain time as *the hour of prayer*. Some pious Jews formed a practice of praying daily at regular hours (Psalms 55: 17; Daniel 6: 10), but it was a voluntary service. The "daily sacrifice" was required by the law of Moses (Numbers 28: 3-6), and this called for two lambs each day. The second one was offered "at even," and the margin words it, "between the two evenings," which was the same as our 3 o'clock, called *the ninth hour* in the present verse. The Jews formed the practice of going into the temple and engaging in a

prayer service at that time, while the priests were out at the altar performing the sacrifice. The apostles were going up to the temple at that time because they knew they would have opportunity of meeting the people, to whom they could preach the Gospel.

Verse 2. As the apostles approached the temple the following events took place. An "object of charity" was lying just outside of the temple, where the people coming and going would see him and perhaps bestow upon him a gift of money. This man was forty years old and had been a cripple from birth. The Old Testament does not give the special name of *beautiful* to any gate of the temple. The passage says it was *called* that, which indicates that the people had come to speak of it in that way, which probably was because of its appearance after Herod had remodeled and adorned the building (Luke 21: 5). Robinson has the following to say of this gate: "Supposed by some to have been the large gate leading from the court of the Gentiles to the court of the Israelites, over against the eastern side of the building, called by the Rabbins the gate of Nicanor, and described by Josephus as covered with plates of gold and silver, and very splendid and massive."

Verse 3. The original word for *alms* means generally any favor or mercy or pity bestowed upon an unfortunate person, but its most specific definition is, "a donation for the poor," and this is what the lame man asked of Peter and John.

Verse 4. When Peter told the lame man *to look on us*, he should have concluded that some kind of favor was in store for him other than a gift of money, for such an action would not have required that he look at them.

Verse 5. But the lame man had never been treated to anything but the kindness of those who carried him to the place daily, and the alms that people bestowed on him. Hence he did not form the conclusion here suggested, but instead he gave the apostles an earnest look, expecting to receive some money.

Verse 6. *Silver and gold have I none*. We are not to suppose that the apostles were paupers, but they had no occasion for carrying supplies of money around with them, for Jesus had assured them that the necessities of life

would be given them. In the present case however, if Peter had possessed an abundance of money, it would not have benefited the lame man physically as to his infirmity. He told the man to *rise up and walk*, but preceded the order with a statement as to the source of the power. We should understand that not only did Peter derive his ability to heal the man from the Lord, but he wished him also to know upon whom he was to trust for his recovery.

Verse 7. Miraculous cures may be performed with or without any outward cooperation on the part of the patient. Jesus required the blind man to go wash the clay off his eyes, but He previously had put the anointment on the eyes of the patient. Peter commanded the lame man to rise up and walk, but he encouraged him by taking the initiative and grasping his hand and helping him to arise. This verse tells us in what way the man was lame; it was a weakness in his feet. The mere act of taking him by the hand did not heal him, for any other person could have done that; there had to be some miraculous power exerted by the apostle. It is stated that the healing was *immediate*, which was always the case with genuine miraculous cures. Professed divine healers of today always require "time and patience" for their cases, which proves they are frauds.

Verse 8. A lame man might use enough will power to come to his feet, but he would not be able to show much energy in the enforced action. This man leaped up, and he did not stop with that; he walked and leaped alternately, and continued his movements along with the apostles, so that he entered with them into the temple. While doing all this he was *praising God*. Why did he do that, when it was Peter who had lifted him up? The answer is in the statement of the apostle that he was to arise in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. The man had been carried each day and laid by the gate. He knew that in that act those men had used more physical force upon him than Peter did, as far as the outward performance was concerned, and yet no improvement in his condition had ever been experienced. The only conclusion he could reach was that it was God working through Peter, and that caused him to give his praise to the right one.

Verse 9. The whole event was so evident and public that all the people saw it, and that means there were a great many who witnessed it, for it was in a prominent spot, and there were thousands of Jews in the city at that time.

Verse 10. *They knew* it was the man who had been seen at the gate of the temple, for he had appeared there daily for a long time, and it was easy to recognize him. The natural effect upon the people was that they were filled with wonder and amazement. They knew it was not their own imagination that was affecting them, nor could it have been a forced action on the part of the lame man, for they were too well acquainted with the nature of his case to allow such a conclusion.

Verse 11. *Held* is from KRATEO, and Robinson defines it in this place, "So to hold one fast, i. e., to hold fast to him, to cleave to him." Thayer defines it in the same way then gives the explanation, "To hold one fast in order not to be sent away." This action was perfectly natural. The man had been a cripple since his birth, and had to depend upon alms for a living. Now he was healed and had become an able-bodied man so that he could be on his own. However, since the condition was another one that might be described by the familiar phrase "too good to be true," he had a feeling of dependency that made him afraid to leave the apostles. Another thing that should be considered about his action, it emphasized the part the apostles had in the recovery. When the people saw this man clinging so firmly to the apostles, it announced publicly that they were the actors in the deed, and that the former lame man knew it. Another result that was natural was the gathering of *all the people* near the scene, for it was an extraordinary thing that had happened. *Solomon's porch* was a convenient and comfortable place for the crowd to gather; a description of this porch is given at John 10: 23.

Verse 12. Peter was able to speak with inspiration, but ordinary reasoning would have brought the conclusion indicated here. The people could see the lame man holding fast to the apostles, and as they were *greatly wondering*, it was because they thought these men had caused the patient to be cured through some mysterious virtue of their own. It would have been easy

for them to obtain a following from this multitude because of the frame of mind that possessed them. But Peter was the faithful apostle of Christ, and humbly told the crowd that it was not in them (the apostles) that the lame man had found his recovery.

Verse 13. The circumstance gave Peter another opportunity for preaching Christ to the people. The crowd was composed of Jews, and they were the people who were responsible for the condemnation of Jesus. They were acquainted with the Old Testament (John 5: 39), and knew about the promise that was made to the fathers that a descendant of theirs was to come into the world to bless the nations of the earth. Now Peter connected that promise with the very man they of this audience had caused to die. Peter showed them as being worse even than Pilate, who would have been willing to let Jesus go. The apostle told them that God had glorified that very man in spite of their intended destruction of his great plans. *Glorified* is from *DOXAZO*, which Thayer defines in this passage, "To exalt to a glorious rank or condition." It was a stinging rebuke to these people, not only to accuse them of condemning Jesus, but to be told that God had over-ruled their malicious attempt and had exalted their victim to a rank in glory.

Verse 14. This verse names two distinct crimes the Jews committed, either of which would have entitled them to the severest condemnation. It refers to the time when they were to name the prisoner to be released under a custom of that season (Luke 23: 16-21). They denied freedom to a holy and just person against whom no charge had been sustained. In their choice of prisoners they did not name one who was even an ordinary evildoer, but called for a man who was a murderer and a member of a seditious gang.

Verse 15. The Jews could not lawfully put any man to death, and did not personally put Jesus on the cross. But Peter told them they had killed Him, and it was because they were the ones who caused it to be done. *Prince* is from a word that means the author or leader in an important movement. That is true of Christ as announced by John, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1: 4). The apostles almost invariably mentioned the resurrection of Jesus when-

ever they told of his death. Many persons have been killed by the people who were objectionable to them for some reason, but none of them ever lived again until the event of Christ. He not only came back to life, but God did the raising of him, thereby defeating the plans of the Jews who pretended to believe in Him, while disbelieving in his Son. Peter was not relating this to the multitude on some mere hearsay, but declared *we are witnesses*.

Verse 16. *Through faith in his name*. The name and power of Jesus would not have caused this man to be healed, had he not manifested faith in that name by making what attempt he could to arise. *The faith which is by him*. Not only was the lame man required to have faith in the name of Jesus, but Peter could perform the miracle only because he also had faith in the name of Jesus.

Verse 17. *Ignorance does not excuse* anyone in wrongdoing, but it may explain how it came about. The word is from *AGNOIA*, which Thayer defines, "Want of knowledge." The idea is different from being lacking in common intelligence, for then they might not have been held so strictly to account. But the information was available had they made use of it; they did not, and were like Israel of old who did not know, simply because they did not consider (Isaiah 1: 3). *Wot* is an obsolete word for "know" as the apostle was considering his own frame of mind. As to the *rulers*, they were the ones in power and who were chiefly responsible for the death of Jesus.

Verse 18. The Jews were condemned for having Jesus slain, because they had an evil motive in the act. But Peter informed them that in doing so, they fulfilled the words of the prophets concerning the fate that was to come upon the Son of God.

Verse 19. The first Gospel discourse is in chapter 2, which consists mainly of the story of Jesus, and closes with an exhortation for the hearers to recognize Him as the Lord. The present passage is the second discourse that is recorded, and consists of the same matter as the first, although the wording is somewhat different. The present verse corresponds with chapter 2: 38 in thought. "Repent and be baptized" is equivalent to *repent and be converted*. "For the remission of sins"

is the same as *that your sins may be blotted out*. "Gift of the Holy Ghost" corresponds with *times of refreshing*, and of course it all comes *from the presence of the Lord*.

Verse 20. Peter then deviates slightly in his subject matter, and speaks of the *sending of Jesus Christ* which refers to His second coming to earth; the same Jesus who was *preached* (prophesied about) before in the Scriptures.

Verse 21. The next phase of this discourse explains some things that must take place before Jesus comes again. *Receive* is used in the sense of giving a guest continued hospitality or reception, until it is the desired and proper time for him to leave. In the case of Jesus, that time will not come until certain things that were predicted of him have been fulfilled. Robinson defines the word in the Greek for *restitution*, "full establishment," and Peter tells us that he refers to the predictions that had been made by the holy prophets, that were to be accomplished by Christ. We understand these things were to be brought to pass through the services of the apostles, while Jesus is still on his Father's right hand in Heaven.

Verse 22. Peter next specifies one of the predictions that Moses made concerning the prophet who was to come up from among the Jewish people (Deuteronomy 18: 18-20). That prediction called upon the people to hear the prophet in whatever he said to them.

Verse 23. The fate of all who refused to hear (heed) that prophet was that he *be destroyed from among the people*. The form of that threat is based on the usages of the times of Moses, when the "law of sin and death" was in force (Romans 8: 2). Its meaning under Christ is that all who refuse to hear him, will be condemned as disobedient in this world, and will be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" when he comes again (2 Thessalonians 1: 9).

Verse 24. *Prophets, from Samuel*. There were other men before the days of Samuel who made prophetic statements, so there must have been a special sense in which he was regarded as one. The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia says: "Samuel was not only a prophet like others, but he was also the first of the regular succession of

prophets." 1 Kings 19: 16 says God spoke to Elijah as follows: "Elisha the son of Shaphat shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room," which verifies the quotation from the Encyclopedia, and shows there was a succession of national prophets. The mention of Samuel by Peter indicates that he was the first of the prophets in that succession. Other prophets after Samuel spoke of the time when the promise made to the fathers would be fulfilled.

Verse 25. *Covenant* in this verse is the same as *the promise* in chapter 2: 39. *Children of the prophets and of the covenant*. How could men be children of a covenant? The word *children* is from *huios*, and Thayer explains that one meaning of the word is, "One to whom anything belongs; those to whom the prophetic and covenant promises belong; for whom a thing is destined." Peter meant that the people to whom he was speaking were intended by the Lord as among those who were to be benefited by the covenant. It is the same as the statement in chapter 2: 39 that "the promise is unto you and your children."

Verse 26. *Unto you first*. Peter was speaking to Jews, and he meant to tell them that they were to receive the blessings of the promised seed of Abraham before the Gentiles. (See chapter 13: 46; Romans 1: 16.) *Turning away every one of you from his iniquities* in this discourse, corresponds with "save yourselves from this untoward generation," in chapter 2: 40.

#### ACTS 4

Verse 1. The first Gospel discourse was delivered in some building suitable for an auditorium, not especially connected with the Jewish institutions. The present one was in the temple, which was the capitol of the religious system that had been established by Moses. That is why the *priests* and other public men became stirred up over the preaching. *Captain* is from *STRATEGOS*, which originally means "the commander of an army." Thayer explains it (citing a passage in Josephus) to mean, "The commander of the Levites, who kept guard in and around the temple." The Sadducees were a sect of the Jews who did not believe in the resurrection. A full description of this sect is given with the comments on Matthew 16: 12. All of the classes named came upon the apostles

as they were preaching to the people in the temple.

Verse 2. *Grieved* is from DIAPONEO, which the Thayer lexicon defines at this place, "To be troubled, displeased, offended, pained, worked up." The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection and would naturally resent any teaching in favor of the subject. The main cause of this displeasure, however, was that the apostles were telling that it was *through Jesus* that the dead would be resurrected. They had already come to hate Him because of His exposure of their sins and inconsistencies (Matthew 16: 1-4; 22: 23, 34), and now to have Him held up to the people as the hope of the resurrection, a doctrine they rejected with all the bitterness possible, was more than they could stand.

Verse 3. *Laid hands on them* means they arrested the apostles. *Hold* is another word for "prison," but they were put there and held "without charge" for the time, because it was too late in the day to have any hearing on the case.

Verse 4. *Howbeit* is not in the original text, and does not serve any important purpose, although it is not out of line with the thought of the passage. The original does justify the statement that *many believed*. That is a frequent expression used by the inspired writers to mean that the people obeyed the commands given them. If the word is used in a restricted sense it will say so, as in the case of the rulers in John 12: 42. *Number of the men was*, etc. The Englishmen's Greek New Testament renders this passage, "the number of men became about five thousand." Moffatt translates it, "bringing up their number to about five thousand." It means that the new believers made on this occasion, added to what they already had, made the total number of disciples in fellowship with the apostles about five thousand.

Verses 5, 6. This paragraph shows a meeting of the *council* or Sanhedrin (verse 15), to see what could be done about the stir that was being caused over the work and preaching of the apostles. According to Thayer, the *rulers* were leading men of the Jews who were members of the Sanhedrin. The *elders* in this case is defined by Thayer, "Members of the great council or Sanhedrin," then explains "because in early times the rulers of the people, judges, etc., were selected from the

elderly men." *Scribes* came to have a very influential position in the time of Christ and the apostles. A full description of the word is given with the comments at Matthew 13: 52. *Annas* and *Caiaphas* are both mentioned in connection with the high priesthood. That was due to some interference by the secular government in the affairs of the Jews. (See the comments at Luke 3: 2.) All we know of *John and Alexander* is that they were leading men in Jerusalem at this time, and related in some way to the high priest. Others of the high priesthood who were not so outstanding are merely referred to as such.

Verse 7. After this meeting of the Sanhedrin was called, they brought Peter and John out of the prison where they had been held overnight, and placed them in the midst of the assembly. The last word of the verse is a pronoun that refers to the healing of the lame man. No attempt was made to deny the fact for it was too well known for them to try that plan in their persecution of the apostles (verse 16). Hence they were foolish enough to think they could oppose the work by showing that it was done illegally. As though any law could be made that would forbid curing a man of a physical infirmity! *Power* is from DUNAMIS and means strength or ability. This was another question that showed how desperate the council was in its desire to punish the apostles. Whatever might have been the power that was used, if it actually healed a man of a life-long infirmity, and without doing anyone else any harm, there could not possibly be any wrong about it. But these persecutors would not depend solely on the one point of attack; they also demanded to know by what *name* they had done the deed, which means by what authority they did it. One of Thayer's definitions of the original word is, "To do a thing by one's command and authority, acting on his behalf, promoting his cause." This was also a foolish question, and could not in any way touch the matter of right and wrong in the deed performed. If a man was pretending to offer remedial services to the public independent of the laws of the land, and was suspected of defrauding people, it would be entirely proper to require him to "show his license." But nothing of that kind was being done, for the actual healing of the patient had been

done without any infringement of authority, either human or divine. However, the apostles did actually perform their deed under authority to act, as we shall soon see.

Verse 8. *Filled with the Holy Ghost.* This does not mean that Peter just then was filled with the Spirit, for he received that in the second chapter in fulfillment of the promise made the apostles by Jesus (John 14: 16), and it was to *abide with them forever*. The writer means that Peter was qualified to speak with authority to this audience, because he was in possession of the Holy Ghost or Spirit. All persons present were expected to hear what Peter said, but the rulers and elders were the ones who had taken the lead in this action against the apostles, hence it was appropriate to make his address especially to them.

Verse 9. *To be examined* means to be questioned and investigated. Peter did not object to being questioned, but he did not consider that they had even accused him of anything wrong, much less been shown any testimony that was claimed to hint at such a thing. Instead, he virtually held his investigators up to shame by the statement that the investigation was over a *good deed done to the impotent (weak) man*.

Verse 10. In all of the circumstances that ever came upon the apostles that concerned their work, they never failed to use the opportunity for preaching Christ to the hearers. Peter not only told them that it was in the name of Jesus that the deed was done, but he reminded them that it was the same person whom they had crucified. This was not said in the spirit of petty resentment, for an inspired apostle would not need to resort to that sort of speech. It was in order to show them that even death on the cross did not prevent Him from accomplishing his intended work for mankind. As definite proof that death could not overthrow the plans of Jesus, Peter reminded them that God had raised his Son from the grave.

Verse 11. While the vital facts concerning the experiences of Christ were under consideration in this "investigation," Peter cited these leading Jews to a prophecy in Psalms 118: 22, which they had fulfilled by slaying Jesus. And when God overruled their wicked deed and brought his Son out from the grave, and seated him on the throne

in Heaven, he caused that Son to be the *head of the corner*.

Verse 12. All of the discourses of the apostles contained the same thoughts, even though they were not always worded alike. This verse corresponds to chapter 2: 36, 38 and 3: 16, 19, and is similar in thought to the "closing exhortations" of evangelistic sermons today. Peter made a strong and exclusive claim for Christ. He not only declared that salvation could be had in Him, but that no salvation could be found in any other. *Under heaven given among men*. There is much truth involved in this phrase, for it designates the only part of the universe where any means of salvation is being offered. *Under heaven* would denote that no salvation is planned (or needed) for beings living in Heaven. *Among men* restricts the realm outside of heaven to the place where men live as human beings, and that would exclude those in the unseen world or Hades, even though they are "under heaven." *Must* is from DEI which Thayer defines, "It is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper." Robinson gives the general definition, "It is binding on anyone, it behooves one to do, i. e., one must, one ought." He then says that in the New Testament it means, "It behooves, it must needs, one must or ought." The passage does not teach that anyone *must* be saved at all, for the matter of accepting salvation is one to be decided by man; "Whosoever *will* may come." The verse means that if a man is saved, it *must* be through the name (or authority) of Christ.

Verse 13. The lexicon defines the original for *boldness* to mean, "Freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech; openly, frankly; free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage." *Perceived* is from KATALAMBANO, which Thayer defines at this place, "To lay hold of with the mind; to understand, learn, comprehend." *Unlearned* and *ignorant* does not refer to their natural intelligence, for even their enemies did not think the apostles were lacking along that line; had they thought so, they would not have been so uneasy about their influence with the people. The phrase means the apostles were not cultured in the art of learning as taught in the public institutions, but were private citizens without what the world would call "education." The leaders in the San-



hedrin *perceived* (realized) that the apostles were without these advantages of learning, yet beheld their boldness and ability of speech, and that caused them to marvel. They had to account for it in some way, which they did by concluding that the men *had been with Jesus*. These Jewish leaders did not know what Jesus had taught his apostles, but many of them had heard Him speak and had known how bold and outspoken he was. Now they conclude that the apostles had been with Jesus so much that they had imbibed the same spirit of courage and force of speech, which made them (the leaders in the Sanhedrin) fearful of the influence they might have over the common people.

Verse 14. *It refers to the boldness of Peter and John*. The reason the Jews could not say anything against their outspoken claims for the power of Jesus by which they were working, was that the man whom they had healed was right there with them, and was *standing*, something no one had ever seen him do before.

Verse 15. *Commanded them* means they ordered the apostles to leave the Sanhedrin while a consultation was being held. It was much like the circumstance where a jury is taken out of the court room, while the lawyers argue over some question of the testimony, as if they feared the men might catch some truth they did not want them to hear.

Verse 16. These Jews knew they could not deny the fact of the lame man's recovery. And it would not have been so bad if only they knew about it; but it was *manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem*.

Verse 17. *Threaten* means an indefinite warning that something very bad will be done, without stating what that will be. It is an intimation that does not have any specific charge, as the word is being used in this case. It is very much like the warning of some irresponsible parent or guardian, "If you do not behave yourself, you will wish that you had." These rulers knew they could not cite any law that was being violated by the preaching of the apostles, hence they thought they could daunt them by their cowardly threats.

Verse 18. The leaders in the Sanhedrin concluded that they did not have any recourse to the law, hence all they could do was to threaten the apostles.

They brought their victims back into the assembly and ordered them to cease speaking in Christ's name.

Verse 19. The apostles made a respectful but firm reply to the order against speaking in the name of Christ. They made no reference to the *threat*, doubtless regarding such a subject such a petty thing that it was beneath their dignity. But they put the issue in its true light by showing that the leaders of the Sanhedrin were demanding more consideration for themselves than they allowed the apostles to show for God.

Verse 20. *Cannot but speak* has a double force as to obligation. The apostles had seen Jesus after his resurrection, and had heard him command them to tell the story to others. Therefore when they preached the Gospel of Christ they were dealing with matters of evidence on which they could speak without any guesswork. They also were under the duty to speak these things to the world, or else they would be guilty of failing in their obligation to Him who had commissioned them for the work.

Verse 21. *Because of the people*. Public sentiment is a powerful influence, and when it is aroused in favor of a good cause, not many leaders are willing to defy it, especially if they are desirous of maintaining a popular standing. The Sanhedrin officials knew there was nothing in the deed of healing a lame man that could call for any punishment, and if they attempted such a thing the public would unite against it, because they had already expressed an attitude of glory to God for the good deed.

Verse 22. It would have been useless to claim the whole circumstance was a delusion, for the man was more than forty years old who had been healed. A mere child or very young man might have been said to be ready for improvement through the course of nature. Such a theory would not be accepted concerning a man forty years old.

Verse 23. *Their own company* means the believers who were assembled (verse 31), no doubt waiting to see the outcome of the action against the apostles. When Peter and John were released they went and joined the gathering of disciples and made a report.

Verse 24. The report did not dis-

courage the believers but strengthened their faith. It did not even cause any dissension among them, for they spoke *with one accord*. They offered a prayer to God whom they recognized to be the Maker of all things.

Verse 25. One reason the disciples were not discouraged, was the fact that what had occurred to the apostles was a fulfillment of one of the prophecies. They were acquainted with the predictions that David made in Psalms 2:1, 2, but acknowledged that it was God speaking through the mouth of the Psalmist. The prediction is in the form of a question, because the prophetic style is not always in the regular form of literal language. *Heathen* is from ETHNOS, which means the nations in general who are not Jews. The leaders of the Sanhedrin were Jews, but they could accomplish their purposes against Christ and the apostles only by resorting to the Roman courts which were Gentile. *Rage* is from PHRUSSO, and its general definition is, "To neigh, stamp the ground, prance, snort; to be high-spirited." *Imagine* is from MELETAO, which Thayer defines, "To meditate or devise, contrive." *Vain* is from KENOS and is defined, "Vain, fruitless, without effect." The idea is that the enemies of the Lord planned and schemed to destroy the work He was doing on the earth, even to the extent of persecuting his Son first, then the servants who were doing His work. But the prediction was that their schemes would prove to be in vain, for God would finally overrule all to the good of the world.

Verse 26. This verse is somewhat indefinite, meaning that the powers of government in various domains among men would be arrayed against the Lord (the Divine Ruler) and his Christ (or Anointed One).

Verse 27. *Of a truth*. It was a true prediction that David made, for such opposition actually took place within the knowledge of these disciples. Herod was in the line set up by the Maccabees, and was supposed to represent the interests of the Jews. Pilate was a governor in the Roman Empire, and represented the heathen or Gentile nations. *Gentiles* and *people of Israel* are named as a general summing up of the forces that worked against the Lord. The Herod who is named in this verse is Antipas, son of Herod the

Great; he is the one mentioned in Luke 23:7-12.

Verse 28. They did not do this planning for the purpose of carrying out the work of God, for they were enemies of Him. The statement means that their schemes were what God had aforetime determined should be done. But although their work was according to the plans of God, they were not justified, for their motive was wicked throughout.

Verse 29. The disciples called the attention of the Lord to the threatenings of the Sanhedrin, but not to ask for any personal relief from persecutions. Instead, they prayed for divine help for the speakers of truth, that they might be able to speak the word *with all boldness*. The last word is from the same original as in 13, meaning to be outspoken and fearless in proclaiming the truth. They were not worrying about what sufferings it might bring on them; they were concerned only in the effectiveness of the truth that was going to be offered to the people.

Verse 30. Knowing that human might alone would not avail, they asked the Lord to confirm the preaching by demonstrations of miraculous power. It should be observed that they wished all of this to be done in the name of Jesus, the very One whose name they had been forbidden by the Sanhedrin to proclaim.

Verse 31. In the days of miracles, God sometimes answered prayers with a physical demonstration, or by something that could be discerned by the natural sense (John 12:27-30), and the present case is another of such an evidence. *Were all filled with the Holy Ghost*. In the book of Acts there are no less than ten places where the expression to be "full" or "filled" with the Holy Ghost is used. It is said of both official and unofficial disciples; sometimes applying to the apostles and at others referring to the ordinary disciples. Since we know that the qualifications of the apostles were greater than those of any other Christians, we should understand that the expression under consideration is one with various shades of meaning, and the connection must always be considered in each instance for determining the force of the term. It would be natural to ask how two people could be "full" of anything, and yet

one of them have more of it than the other. The passage in John 3: 34 should always be remembered when the subject of the Holy Ghost or Spirit is being studied. That statement shows that the Spirit can be measured or limited according to the will of God. But the mistake that is commonly made is to limit the word "full" or "measure" to the one quality of volume. But that is not a correct or necessary conclusion. A room could be "full" of smoke and still be capable of admitting more of it by making it more dense. A disciple could be full of the Holy Ghost, yet the density of it not be such as to enable the possessor to perform the same works as could the apostles. And so in the present verse, they were filled with the Holy Ghost in such measure or density or strength, that it encouraged them to speak the word *with boldness*. In the case of the apostles, the measure was such that they could testify *with great power*, which was what the other disciples prayed for in verse 30.

Verse 32. *Was his own* (personally), but that it was to be deposited in the common stock of money. For a complete discussion of this subject, see chapter 2: 44, 45.

Verse 33. The *great power* came in answer to the prayer of the other disciples in verse 30, and it consisted in the miraculous deeds that they performed upon the people. The question might be asked, what would the miraculous performances of the apostles have to do with the resurrection of Jesus. It confirmed the testimony they were giving that they had seen Jesus alive after his death on the cross. Had they been false witnesses of that claim, they never could have performed the miracles, for God would not work with them in their activities. All of this proved that when they affirmed that Jesus had appeared to them after his resurrection, they were telling the truth.

Verse 34. As to the merits of this community of resources, see the comments at chapter 2: 44, 45. For the present verse and onward, we shall study the outworkings of the system with various kinds of disciples.

Verse 35. The money received for their property was deposited with the apostles. That was logical since no other officials had been designated for any special work.

Verse 36, 37. We might wonder at the purpose of this paragraph, as it seems to be mentioned casually without any connection with the line of narrative being run. But it really does have a related purpose in what Luke knew he was about to report on the subject. There was to be given the sad story of some people who met with disaster because of their dishonesty. The present instance was given first to show that some disciples fulfilled their promise and came up to the agreement without a fault. The details of identity for this man are important because of the prominent place Barnabas occupies later in the work of the Lord. We shall hear much of him while studying this book, and even in one of the epistles of Paul he will be named (1 Corinthians 9: 6).

## ACTS 5

Verse 1. This verse gives the brief but important information that both Ananias and his wife acted in the transaction. I do not know what arrangements could be had in those times as to joint titles to property. However, the fact remains that the husband and wife acted jointly in the disposal of their property.

Verse 2. *Kept back part of the price*. There was no wrong in this for the whole system was voluntary to begin with. This item will be noticed again in a later verse. *Being privy to it*. This phrase is from SUNEIDON which Thayer defines, "To see (have seen) together with others." The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders it, "being aware of it." The husband doubtless took the lead in the transaction, but the wife's knowledge of what was being done made her a full partaker in the deed. The whole family of Achan was stoned because the goods was stored in the tent, so that they had knowledge of it (Joshua 7: 21). If a person has knowledge of an evil deed and does not object to it, he is thereby made as guilty as the actual perpetrator. However, the wife of Ananias went further than guilty knowledge as we shall soon learn.

Verse 3. Jesus said that the devil is the father of lies (John 8: 44), hence Peter told Ananias that Satan had caused him to lie. Keeping back part of the money is mentioned again in connection with the sin of Ananias, but that is still not what constituted his sin. The mere fact of retaining

part of the money would not be a lie, but the cause of his guilt will be shown before the case is finished.

Verse 4. This verse clearly shows that Ananias could have kept possession of his land and not been blamed. And even after he sold it, he could have kept all of the money and still been guiltless, since no divine command had been given for any of this arrangement. Not only so, but Ananias could have brought a part of the money only and have been accepted. The sin is mentioned in the close of this verse, which was the committing of a lie as will be explained soon. And what made it all the more condemnable was their attempt to deceive man, thinking thereby to escape the judgment of God. But Peter informed Ananias that he had not lied to men (only) but unto God.

Verse 5. *Hearing these words.* Even a human court of justice does not sentence and execute a prisoner without first informing him of the crime laid against him. Hence it was just for Ananias first to hear the accusation he was under, after which he was stricken with immediate death. *Great fear* means that a profound feeling of awe came over all the people by the mighty demonstration of the Lord's wrath against sin. Peter never as much as touched Ananias, yet at his words of denunciation of the shameful attempt to deceive the Lord, he fell down dead as if by a stroke of lightning. The crowd was thus made to know that the Lord had sent the punishment.

Verse 6. *Wound him up* means the young men drew his garments up close around him, which was the only burial shroud that was given this unworthy character. He was taken out for immediate burial, as it was sometimes the custom anyway to bury on the day of death.

Verse 7. Had Ananias and his wife come together in the first place, she might have tried to change her story when she saw the fate of her husband. But that would have been a change outwardly only, and one born of terror and not from a godly sorrow. The text says only that she *came in*; nothing said about her having any of the money. Of course it would have been foolish for her to bring it, for her husband had already brought all of the amount they had received for the

land according to the story in their conspiracy. So her presence at this time was only to confirm the statement of her husband.

Verse 8. *For so much.* This phrase is all from *tosoutos* which Thayer defines at this place, "For so much," just as it is in the text. Robinson combines his definition and explanation in one sentence and gives us, "Of a specific amount, so much and no more." The necessary conclusion is that when Sapphira came into Peter's presence, he named the amount that her husband had brought, then asked her if that was exactly the price they had received for their property. She confirmed it by repeating the very word the apostle had used. This was the first time that the lie of which they were accused of doing was directly stated as far as the record informs us. But Peter did not have to hear the falsehood verbally for his own information; he was being informed by the Holy Spirit. The statement was drawn from her so that all could know about the wicked attempt of this couple to practice deception.

Verse 9. It is always bad for men to commit wrong when they act individually, but worse when they conspire with others in the act. The daughters of Zelophehad made this point in their plea for their fathers' estate (Numbers 27: 1-7), and the Lord accepted their reasoning. Peter charged Ananias and his wife with *agreeing together* in their covetous lie. He accused them of trying to *tempt the Spirit of the Lord*, and such a sin was condemned even in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6: 16). The text does not inform us directly as to any instructions previously given to these burial servants. However, the necessary inference is that they were told to "stand by" and complete their task when it was ready for them. In compliance with such an understanding, they were at that very moment *at the door*, waiting to perform their duty in the sad affair.

Verse 10. *Yielded up the ghost* means her spirit left her body as was done in the case of her husband. This gives us another instance that proves there is something in a human being besides his body and that they separate when death occurs. This woman's body was buried in the same tomb as that of her husband.

Verse 11. This was the same kind of *fear* that is mentioned in verse 5, except that with *the church* it would include a feeling of reverence for the majesty of the Lord.

Verse 12. There was a continual need for the evidence of signs and wonders at that time, because the New Testament had not been composed and the people did not have any written instructions. But when the apostles performed the miracles it proved them to be the true servants of God. When they spoke to the multitudes, therefore, they were heard as the authentic representatives of the Lord. At the time of these events the assembly of all the people in general was in Solomon's porch, the same place where they saw the lame man who had been healed (chapter 3: 11).

Verse 13. *The rest* refers to unconverted persons, but not to all such, for it immediately says *the people* magnified them. Hence the *rest* must refer especially to those not favorably disposed toward the apostles and other faithful disciples. They would not *join themselves* to them means they stayed away from the assembly. But some others were sufficiently interested to remain in the gathering, and even *magnified* (lauded or admired) the apostles.

Verse 14. The aforesaid conclusion is justified by this verse which says that *believers were added to the Lord*.

Verse 15. *Insomuch* should be connected with the statement in verse 12, about the "signs and wonders" that were performed by the apostles. Those wonders had produced so much interest among the people that they began to bring their sick folks into the vicinity. They had so much faith in the work of the apostles that even the presence of Peter was thought by them to be sufficient to heal them. Such an act was like those performed by the woman in Mark 5: 27, and the men in Matthew 14: 36.

Verse 16. This verse tells us that the people were not disappointed in their efforts recorded in the preceding one, for they were *healed every one*. The healing was done by the Lord as a reward for the faith that had been shown by their actions. *Vexed with unclean spirits* is the same as being possessed of devils. (See the note on the subject of being possessed of devils at Matthew 8: 28.)

Verse 17. The Sadducees are mentioned especially as being in sympathy with the high priest in opposition to the apostles. That is understandable because they were disbelievers in the resurrection, which was the outstanding fact that the apostles had been stressing in their work in connection with the story of Christ.

Verse 18. It has been a prominent weakness of man from the beginning that if he does not like the teaching someone is giving, the way to stop it is by persecuting the teacher. Jeremiah was put into a dungeon because the king did not like his teaching (Jeremiah 38: 6), and John the Baptist was imprisoned and slain because of his teaching that was objectionable to some wicked people (Matthew 14: 1-11). The Sadducees thought they could stop the preaching of a resurrection by imprisoning the apostles. *Common prison* means one "belonging to the people or state, public." It was the kind of detention place where captives in time of war were locked up.

Verse 19. The tomb of Joseph that had been sealed with a Roman stamp was no hindrance to the act of an angel in opening the place (Matthew 28: 2). Likewise, the Lord's angel was able to open the door of this public prison and free the apostles.

Verse 20. The angel did not tell them to "make good their escape" and flee while they had a chance. That is what he would have done, had his purpose been only to help them to avoid further persecution. Instead, he told them to go into the temple, the most public place in the city, and resume their preaching of the same facts that had got them into trouble in the first place. Life is from *zoe*, which Thayer defines at this place, "Real life after the resurrection." Robinson defines it, "Eternal life, salvation." Since the Greek word generally means life of any kind, we can understand why the angel specified *this* life in his instruction to the apostles. The great issue at that time was the question of the resurrection which the Sadducees denied. That would make it especially appropriate for them to emphasize the truth of the resurrection, even in the face of possible further and more bitter persecution.

Verse 21. This "jail delivery" by the angel was made in the night, and the apostles made no delay in carrying out the instructions of the angel, but en-

tered the temple *early in the morning* and taught. All of this was unknown to the Jews, who called a meeting of the Sanhedrin in the morning to handle the case of the apostles, and sent officers to the prison to bring the captives into court.

Verses 22, 23: In another case where Peter was miraculously released from prison (chapter 12:19), the keepers were put to death; we are not told why it was not done in this instance. An angel may be invisible if he wishes to be, but that was not indicated here, for no uncertainty was manifested by the apostles about whether they had actually seen or heard anyone speaking to them. The only explanation that can be offered is that some kind of miracle was performed that prevented the keepers from seeing what was done. The men were not taken out through some "hole in the wall" at the rear of the building, for the account states that the angel opened the prison doors, the very spot where the keepers were found standing faithfully attending to their duty. It was a demonstration that God is able to care for his own, even in circumstances where "no earthly help is nigh."

Verse 24. *Doubted* is from a word that means to wonder or be perplexed. *Grow* is from *GINOMAI*, which has such a wide range of meanings that it would be hard to settle on a definite one in any one place. Some idea of the word may be gathered from the fact that in the King James Version, the word is translated by 39 different terms; one of them is "be," used 249 times. The verse simply means the captain and chief priests did not know what to make of the situation revealed by the report.

Verse 25. It would be difficult to imagine the surprise these Jewish leaders must have felt upon the news of this verse. They were already perplexed over the mere absence of the apostles from the prison, with the parts of the building intact and the keepers at their post of duty. They might finally have recomposed themselves and made further investigation with a view of discovering some unfaithfulness in the keepers. But before they had time for anything of the kind, here came the officers with this strange report. That would shut out any surmise of crookedness on the part of the keepers, for had the apostles been able and disposed to bribe the

keepers, it would have been from a motive of cowardice, and in that case they would have fled from the city.

Verse 26. In view of the foregoing considerations, they could but conclude that some unseen power stronger than theirs was working on behalf of the apostles, and that it would be dangerous for them to mistreat their prisoners. *Without violence* means they did not use or even threaten to use physical force upon the apostles. Had they done so, public sentiment that was on the side of the apostles was so strong, that the officers would have suffered violence from the people.

Verse 27. The *council* was the Sanhedrin, the highest court the Jews were allowed to have in the time of Christ and the apostles. It had the power to arrest a man and examine him, and pass its own judgment upon the case. But if it passed a verdict of capital punishment, the case had to be taken before the secular court that operated under the Romans before it could be executed.

Verse 28. The faithfulness of the apostles in preaching the Gospel of Christ was proved by the statement of these enemies, that they had *filled Jerusalem* with it. *Bring this man's blood upon us*. These rulers knew that if the people were fully informed of the story of Jesus as he was dealt with in Jerusalem, they would hold them (the Jewish rulers) responsible for His death. In a threatening attitude, they reminded the apostles of their order not to teach in the name of Christ.

Verse 29. *We ought to obey God rather than men*. This is one of the most important sentences in the New Testament concerning the conduct of man. It states a rule or principle that should be observed whenever two or more requirements are made on one that conflict with each other, and yet where they come from sources that are supposed to have authority to command. For instance, children are commanded to obey their parents in all things (Colossians 3:20); wives are commanded to submit themselves unto their husbands (Ephesians 5:22), and Christians are commanded to be subject unto the *higher powers* or laws of the land (Romans 13:1). If any one of these sources of authority should give a command that would interfere with one's duty to God, then that child



or wife or disciple should refuse to obey it, regardless of the possible consequences.

Verse 30. Having made the reply shown in the preceding verse, the apostles began to preach to these wicked Jews the very doctrine they had forbidden them to preach anywhere. As was always the case, they began their story with the resurrection of Jesus. But they also connected that subject with the guilt of their hearers in the death of the One in whose name they were preaching.

Verse 31. *Exalted with his right hand.* Other translations word it "at" or "to" his right hand, and likewise the lexicon so defines it. The word *right* in this place comes from DEXIOS, which never means "right" in contrast with "wrong," but always means the right hand instead of the left, and hence has no moral significance. It is the rule for men to use their right hand in their one-handed manual activities, while it is an exception to use the left. When such an exception exists the writer will generally call attention to it (Judges 3: 15; 20: 16). There is no information in the Bible why God created man thus, we only know it is so. And the fact has been a source of some figurative uses of the word, meaning the more exalted or honorable place with reference to the person of God or Christ or any other being of dignity. God overruled the wicked purposes of the Jews and exalted his Son to be a Prince (leader) and a Saviour for all who would accept him. *Give repentance* means to give Israel the chance to repent (reform) their lives, with the promise that their sins would be forgiven.

Verse 32. *We are his witnesses.* This denotes that the apostles were witnesses to the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. *So is also the Holy Ghost.* Jesus had said (John 16: 7) that if he did not go away (back to Heaven) the Comforter (Holy Ghost) would not come. Therefore, the fact that He did come and was possessed by disciples, was a proof (witness or testimony) that Jesus had arisen from the dead and had ascended to his Father. As to how or when the gift of the Holy Ghost was received, see the comments on chapter 2: 38.

Verse 33. *Cut* is from DIAPRIO, which Thayer defines at this place, "to be sawn through mentally," and explains

it to mean, "to be rent with vexation." This was different from the case in chapter 2: 37, which says they were "pricked in their heart," which means they were overwhelmed with a conviction of guilt. In the present instance the Jewish leaders were overcome with anger, because they realized that everything the apostles said was true, yet they were not in a penitent frame of mind. Instead of wanting to do the right thing as did the ones on Pentecost, they plotted to bring violence upon the apostles. *Took counsel* denotes that they held a consultation to decide on some means by which they could have the apostles slain. They knew they would have to do some kind of scheming to get it done, for they could not lawfully slay anybody (John 18: 31).

Verse 34. Gamaliel was a member of the Sanhedrin, the man referred to by Paul in Chapter 22: 3. He was a *doctor* or teacher of the law of Moses. We know nothing about his qualifications of education in the branches of secular learning. The frequent expressions that represent him as a "professor" in the sense that term is used in connection with schools of literary training are only guesswork. But he did have a good reputation among the people, and his advice was regarded with respect.

Verse 35. Gamaliel advised the council to be careful how they proceeded against the apostles. But he did not ask them to act solely on his general suggestion; he proposed to support it with some facts with which they were evidently acquainted, or at least which they accepted as true due to their respect for Gamaliel.

Verse 36. Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary says the following about this Theudas: "A Jewish revolutionist in the reign of Augustus [Caesar] who instigated a political uprising in Palestine that came to an inglorious end." We may also read the account of Josephus in his Antiquities, Book 20, Chapter 5, Section 1, as follows: "Now it came to pass, while Fadus was procurator [agent] of Judea, that a certain magician, whose name was Theudas, persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet, and that he would, by his own command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it; and many were deluded

by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to make any advantage of his wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen out against them; who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem." Some historians question whether this is the same Theudas as the one Luke writes about, while others say he is the same. All agree, however, that the account in Josephus is true, and we know it corresponds with the description as Gamaliel gave it.

Verse 37. I shall quote from Josephus, Wars. Book 2, Chapter 8, Section 1: "Under his [Coponius, an agent] administration it was that a certain Galilean, whose name was Judas, prevailed with his countrymen to revolt; and said they were cowards if they would endure to pay a tax to the Romans, and would, after God, submit to mortal men as their lords. This man was a teacher of a peculiar sect of his own, and was not at all like the rest of those their leaders." As a further support of the account of Gamaliel touching the downfall of the claims of Judas, I shall quote Josephus, Antiquities, Book 20, Chapter 5, Section 2: "And besides this, the sons of Judas of Galilee were now slain; I mean of that Judas who caused the people to revolt, when Cyrenius came to take account of the estates of the Jews" [for the purpose of taxing them].

Verses 38. 39. Gamaliel based his reasoning on the outcome of the historic cases to which he referred. He was considering the subject very much along the line of some familiar sayings that "history repeats itself," or that "time will tell." On that principle, he thought these Jewish leaders need not be so concerned about the activities of the apostles. He was correct in saying that if their work was of God, they would not be able to overthrow it. This passage has been used by professed disciples today, to show that we should not oppose any new doctrine or institution that might appear among us, but should let time decide whether it is right or wrong. There are at least two phases of this reasoning that shows it to be a perversion. Gamaliel was only a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, and had no special authority that we know of.

The most that could be said about his speech was that it was his personal judgment as to the better procedure to follow toward the apostles, and hence it was no authentic principle on which to handle the question of conduct in the affairs of the church.

Again, even if it had been a statement produced by approval of the Lord, that would not make it a proper rule today. The New Testament was not in existence at that time, and hence there was no written document by which to test new teachers or new propositions. Today we have the completed book given to the church by the inspired apostles. If something appears among us that is new (to us), and that could easily occur, we do not have to wait until experience has tested it, but can learn at once whether it is "of God," by examining it in the light of the New Testament. (See 1 Peter 4: 11.)

Verse 40. The leaders of the Sanhedrin accepted the advice of Gamaliel, not to do anything too rash against the apostles. It was not because of any just feeling of righteousness or fair consideration for the prisoners, for they just could not stand to let them go until they had given them a parting threat accompanied with a beating.

Verse 41. It was and still is an honor to suffer persecution for the name of Jesus (1 Peter 4: 16): it indicates that one is living a godly life (2 Timothy 3: 12).

Verse 42. Their persecutions did not intimidate the apostles, even to the extent of decreasing the amount or frequency of their preaching, but they preached *daily*. Neither did they seek for private spots or places of safety to do their work. They preached in the temple, the most public building, and in every private house, where they ran a risk constantly of coming in contact with some telltale member of the Sanhedrin.

## ACTS 6

Verse 1. *Number of the disciples was multiplied.* This was said as an explanation of how there came to be some difficulty over caring for the needs of the dependent ones. The *Grecians* were Jews who spoke the Greek language; I shall quote from history: "The church, though consisting wholly of Hebrews, comprised two classes of persons; one party under-

stood only the Hebrew and Chaldee languages, which was used in their synagogues at Jerusalem and its vicinity, while the other had been accustomed chiefly to use the Greek language, into which the Old Testament scriptures had been translated (the version which we now call the Septuagint), and which had been for some time in common use, previous to the coming of Christ, in all the Jewish synagogues dispersed throughout the cities of Greece, as well as Egypt. These last were called Hellenists or Grecians." Jones' Church History, Chapter 1, Section 2. The Hebrew-speaking Jews had a feeling of superiority over the others, and the Grecians thought that feeling had crept into the church, so that partiality was being shown in the distribution of food. *Daily ministration* refers to the disbursements that were made out of the funds of the "community of goods" that was introduced in chapter 2: 44, 45 and 4: 34, 35. It should be observed that this distribution was made on the basis of need or dependency. The statement in connection with the work is worded, "according as he had need." This idea is further set forth by the fact that it was the *widows* for whose sake the disturbance of our present verse was caused. And this point should not be overlooked when we come to considering the work of the men who will be chosen later in this chapter.

Verse 2. This is the only place in the New Testament where the work of the deacons is shown. Their qualifications are stated in another passage (1 Timothy 3: 8-12), but the work belonging to men as official deacons is not to be found in any passage but this verse. *The twelve* means the apostles who were busy delivering instructions to the people on spiritual matters. *Not reason* denotes it would not be acting with good judgment. *Leave the word of God* would mean a ceasing of their preaching the word of God. *Serve* is from DIAKONEO, and Thayer's definition at this place is, "To minister, i. e., supply food and the necessities of life." He then comments, "To provide, take care of, distribute, the things necessary to sustain life, Acts 6: 2. Absolutely, those are said to take care of the poor and the sick, who administer the office of deacon in the Christian churches, to serve as deacons." It is interesting to know that the six words "use the office of a dea-

con" in 1 Timothy 3: 10 all come from this one Greek word translated *serve* in our present verse. Incidentally, this shows that we should regard the men whom the apostles appointed as being deacons. In truth, were we to reject them as deacons, then we would be left with the baffling situation of having been given important qualifications of deacons, but no instructions as to what they were to do, for no information on that subject is in any other place.

It is true that the Greek word DIAKONEO in general, without any consideration of the context, could mean unofficial as well as official deacons, and also their work might consist of any manner of service. In that general sense, all members of the church are deacons, both men and women. But we cannot put that meaning unto the word in the present instance, for the apostles stated the kind of service for which they proposed to *appoint* (making them officials) the men; that was shown in the word *tables*. This is from TRAPEZA, which Thayer defines, "a table," then gives his explanation, "a table on which food is placed, an eating table." He gives a specific definition of the word in our verse which is, "To set a table, i. e., food before one." This settles the question of the work belonging to men as deacons, that it is to see that food is provided for those who are needy.

The amount of loose thinking and acting on this subject that has been done is deplorable. Many people think that the work of the deacons is to "pass the emblems." Others even today will insist that it is the place of the deacons to "attend to any of the temporal affairs of the congregation." They will then expose the weakness and inconsistency of their position by allowing those things to be done by almost any member of the congregation, even though they may not possess half of the qualifications required of deacons. If the elders see fit to ask the deacons to perform some of the temporal affairs of the church, that is their right, and these men may comply with the request of the rulers. But they should not do so as deacons, for such things are no part of the office of deacons.

Verse 3. *Look ye out* is from EPI-SKEPTOMAI, which Thayer defines, "To look (about) for, look out." Robinson combines his definition and explana-

tion in one sentence as follows: "To look at in order to select, to look out, to seek out, e. g., persons for office." The *brethren* were to find the men, but the qualifications were stipulated by the apostles. Some of the qualifications that are required of deacons in 1 Timothy 3: 8-12 are not mentioned in the present instance. This was in the beginning of the church, and also was while the apostles were present in person. As time went on and the organization of the institution of Christ was being made more complete, He added other qualifications, but nothing was added to their work as deacons. For the phrase *full of the Holy Ghost*, see the comments at chapter 4: 31. That information will explain why these men could have some measure of the Holy Ghost at the time of their selection, and yet require the laying on of the apostles' hands (verses 6, 8) for them to work miracles. *Wisdom* is from *SOPHIA*, and Thayer defines it in general as follows: "Wisdom, broad and full intelligence." He explains that any particular shade of meaning must be determined by the context in which it is used. Hence in the passage of this paragraph he says it means, "skill in the management of affairs." That is appropriate since these men were to handle the distribution of goods. And being full of the *Holy Ghost* corresponds with the requirement in 1 Timothy 3: 8 that they be "not greedy of filthy lucre." The wording is different in the two places, but both refer to the qualification that would be needed in the work of handling the funds that were contributed by the disciples. A man who is *full of the Holy Ghost* would not be so interested in his own temporal affairs that he would come short of his duty on such a matter.

Verse 4. After completing the arrangements for taking care of the temporal needs, the apostles said they would devote their time to spiritual matters.

Verse 5. A spirit of cooperation prevailed between the apostles and the multitude of disciples. Stephen is mentioned especially in connection with being full of the Holy Ghost. It was fitting to give him special mention in view of the glorious work he did in defending the faith, and sealing his courage in a violent death. But we know the others also had the qualifications, for they were required of them

all and the apostles would not have appointed them had they not been qualified as stipulated. Philip is the same one who became known as "the evangelist," who preached to the people of Samaria. Nothing is said of any of the others that we know about, except what is said of them as a group working in conjunction with the apostles.

Verse 6. Having selected these men according to instructions, the multitude presented them to the apostles who laid hands on them, accompanying the act with prayer.

Verse 7. *Word of God increased*. After the deacons were appointed to handle the temporal needs of the disciples, the disturbances were evidently calmed. That gave the apostles fuller opportunity for preaching the word of God, and this is why the word *increased* is used, meaning increased occasions for offering it to the people. The aforesaid furtherance of the preaching resulted in the increase of disciples in Jerusalem. Another thing that helped the spread of the Gospel, was the work of the deacons who engaged in the preaching as well as attending to their official work. For while the specific function of the deacons is to care for the temporal needs of the congregation, that does not need to prevent them from spiritual activities as their talents and opportunities permitted. The mention of priests becoming obedient to the faith is for the purpose of showing the growing influence that the word of God was having among those who were usually opposed to the work of Christ.

Verse 8. Stephen could do these miracles because the hands of an apostle were laid on him (verse 6). The New Testament was not in existence yet and it was necessary to have men equipped to support their preaching with such special evidence. This is taught in Ephesians 4: 8-14, where Paul is considering both the temporary and the permanent form of the plan of salvation under Christ. But while these deacons could preach the word, and even confirm it with miracles, they could not bestow such power upon others, not having that "measure" of the Spirit. Hence after they would make converts to the Gospel, it required the hands of an apostle to confer miraculous power on them. (See chapter 8: 14-17.)

Verse 9. *Certain of the synagogue.* The first definition in the lexicon for synagogue is, "In the New Testament, an assembly of men." It is used in the same sense as "a congregation." For a full description of the subject, see the notes at Matthew 4: 23. *Libertines.* In his historical comments of this word Thayer gives the following: "Jews who had been made captives by the Romans under Pompey but were afterward set free; and who, although they had fixed their abode at Rome, had built at their own expense a synagogue at Jerusalem which they frequented when in that city. The name Libertines adhered to them to distinguish them from the free-born Jews who had subsequently [afterward] taken up their residence in Rome." *Cyrenians* were Jewish dwellers in Cyrenaica who were in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2: 10), and gave their name to one of the synagogues of that city. *Alexandrians* were Jewish colonists of Alexandria in Egypt, who were admitted to the privileges of citizenship and had a synagogue in Jerusalem. *Cilicia* was a province lying on the northeast shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and was the native country of Paul. The *Asia* that is meant here is a part of the province of Asia Minor (today known as Turkey). Jews from these various places were in Jerusalem on account of the feast of Pentecost, and were displeased with the teaching of Stephen.

Verse 10. One part of the definition for *resist* in the lexicon is "to withstand," and means that although the Jews from all the places named combined in disputing with Stephen, they were not able to meet his claims for the doctrine of Christ. *Wisdom* is from SOPHIA which Thayer defines, "Wisdom, broad and full intelligence." *Spirit* is from PNEUMA which the same lexicon defines in this passage, "The disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of any one; the efficient source of any power, affection, emotion, desire." The personal intelligence of Stephen was backed up by the Spirit that was given him through the laying on of the hands of an apostle. This explains why those envious Jews could not "meet the arguments" that he put before them.

Verse 11. *Suborned* is from HUPOBALLO which Thayer defines, "To instruct privately; instigate, suborn." It means they influenced these false wit-

nesses in an underhanded sort of way that was in the nature of a bribe. The inspired writer says that Stephen spoke with *wisdom* and *spirit*, so we know these witnesses made false statements, even though we do not have any record of what they said up to this point. But his speech that is recorded in the next chapter will show us that they were the ones who had blasphemed, for that speech is made up of a respectful recital of the history of many centuries, and that account was written by Moses whose inspiration Stephen recognized.

Verse 12. Stephen was out before the public where he had a perfect right to be; he was preaching the Gospel, which every Christian has a right to do. *They* means the people from the different countries named in verse 9, who had disputed with Stephen but could not show anything wrong with his teaching. On the strength of the false witnesses of verse 11, they worked up a riotous spirit among the people under their leaders. These men ignored all rules of justice and forced him into the *council* (Sanhedrin).

Verse 13. Once within the grasp of that prejudiced assembly it was not hard to produce false witnesses, for they had already been prepared in mind for such a work by the crookedness mentioned in verse 11. The accusations of this verse are general, and if looked at without any explanation would certainly make an unfavorable impression on any court, and more so on one that was already ill-disposed toward a prisoner. It would be a very wicked thing to *blaspheme* the *holy place* (Jerusalem with its temple) and *the law* (of Moses). To blaspheme means to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate" [falsely accuse.]

Verse 14. These false witnesses pretended to specify concerning the general accusations of verse 13. The falsity of the charges will be realized by all who will follow the teaching of Jesus while he was on the earth. He always spoke respectfully concerning Moses, and censured the hypocritical Jews for not being true to the law. *Change the customs.* Jesus never taught that in the sense those enemies placed in the term. It is true He often announced that a change of rules was to take place among God's people, but he

showed that even Moses predicted such a change. (Deuteronomy 18: 18-20.)

Verse 15. *Angel* is from AGGELOS, and its primary meaning is, "A messenger, one who is sent," according to both Thayer and Robinson. There could be nothing in the face of a man from the physical standpoint that would show any indication of his being a messenger, except when considered on the negative basis. Had Stephen been guilty of the evil things charged against him, his face or countenance would have reflected it, for he certainly would have had "a guilty look." Instead of such an expression, the countenance of this righteous man had the appearance of one who was faithfully delivering the message (the business of an angel) of Him whose truth was offered for man's benefit. Stephen was not cowed or in the least intimidated by the brazen stare fixed toward him by the crowd in the council.

### ACTS 7

Verse 1. We are still in the Sanhedrin where the false witnesses have just made the serious charge of blasphemy against Stephen. *Are these things so?* This was said by the high priest, because under a practice started by the Jews, he was the presiding judge of the Sanhedrin. The act of proposing this question was about the only just thing that was done for Stephen. It was the order in any fair court, religious or otherwise, to permit a prisoner to speak for himself concerning accusations being brought against him. (See John 7: 51; Acts 22: 25.)

Verse 2. From this verse through verse 50 is Stephen's answer to the question put to him by the high priest. A simple denial of the accusations would have been the whole truth, but Stephen's purpose was to give the entire historical background of the issue at stake; not only to show their charges to be false, but also to present a basis of truths and facts for the conclusion he intended to draw in their hearing. We shall see that when all this was done, it showed up these false accusers to be really the ones who could justly be charged with the things they maliciously said against him. The speech will consist of the history that began with Abraham and ended with Solomon. In addition to Stephen's principal reason for reciting these historical matters, I shall com-

ment on the verses in their order because of their general interest. *Fathers* is used in the sense of respect for them as being among the older members of the Jewish nation, and hence those who should be respectfully interested in the history of their race. *Before he dwelt in Charran* (Haran). Genesis 12: 1 says that God *had said* for Abraham to make this move, even before the command stated in that verse, and that is the reason for Stephen's phrase underlined in this place.

Verse 3. *Which I shall show thee* is significant, and denotes that the patriarch was not told even what country it was when the Lord first appeared to him. He was to obey the command purely upon his faith in the wisdom and goodness of God. That is why Paul says, "and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11: 8).

Verse 4. Abraham moved immediately out of his home territory which was the *land of the Chaldeans* (called "Ur of the Chaldees" in Genesis 11: 31). This place was in the general territory of that later containing the city of Babylon. To reach the land of Canaan (where God intended him to go), it was necessary for Abraham to journey up and around the northern extremity of the country, due to the geographical character of the land. (See the historical note given with Isaiah 14: 31, in volume 3 of the Old Testament Commentary.) *When his father was dead*. The necessary inference is that Abraham's father became more infirm on account of old age, so that the Lord suffered Abraham to pause in this land of Haran until his father was dead. We know this pause was not displeasing to God, for Stephen says that after the death of his father, *he* (meaning God) *removed him into this land*, which indicates that Abraham was acting in God's favor.

Verse 5. *Gave him none inheritance*. Let us not become confused over this phrase and the account in Genesis 23: 9-20. Abraham became a possessor of that real estate in the land of Canaan, but he bought it with money, and thus obtained it by his own business transaction; he even refused to accept it as a gift from the owners. But *inheritance* is from KLEBONOMAI, and Thayer defines it, "an inheritance, property received by inheritance." Abraham did not receive a foot of that land in that



way, but it was promised that he would indirectly receive it some day through his descendants. *When he had no child* is mentioned to show Abraham's faith in the promises of God.

Verse 6. This prediction is recorded in Genesis 15: 13, and refers to the hardships of the Israelites in Egypt. *Strange land* means one outside their own promised land.

Verse 7. *Will I judge* refers to the plagues that God brought upon the Egyptians (Exodus 7 to 12). *Serve me in this place* means their service at Mount Sinai.

Verse 8. This verse includes the years from Abraham's 99th to the birth of Jacob's sons in Mesopotamia and Canaan.

Verse 9. *The patriarchs* means the brethren of Joseph who sold him to travelers going to Egypt. *God was with him* denotes that assistance was given Joseph from the Lord because he was righteous and was being persecuted.

Verse 10. This verse includes the events of Genesis 41.

Verse 11. This verse includes the events of Genesis 41: 30, 31.

Verse 12. See Genesis 42: 1-3.

Verse 13. This is recorded in Genesis 43, 44, and 45.

Verse 14. *Threescore and fifteen souls*. For an explanation of this phrase, see the comments on Genesis 46: 26, 27, in volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary.

Verse 15. *Our fathers* means the sons of Jacob and other early ancestors.

Verse 16. The last word in the preceding verse is "fathers," and they are the ones who were buried in Sychem. No explanation is offered by the historians or critical works of reference of the name of Abraham in the place of Jacob, concerning the purchase of this burying place. But all of them are agreed as to the particulars of the transaction, and hence we may be assured that some incidental fact or custom in use at the time of Stephen's speech would explain it if we had access to the literature of those days.

Verse 17. God promised to Abraham that his posterity would become a great nation, and would be delivered from their bondage in a strange land. It was getting along near the time for

the fulfillment of that promise, hence the people were becoming numerous.

Verse 18. *Knew not Joseph*. (See the comments on Exodus 1: 8.)

Verse 19. *Dealt subtilly* means to use schemes or tricks to get advantage of them. One of such was to take the supply of straw from them, when they knew that the crop had been gathered and that nothing but stubble could be found. (See Exodus 5: 10-14.) *Cast out their young children* refers to the decree that all male infants should be drowned.

Verse 20. *Exceeding fair* is explained by Thayer to mean he was fair "unto God," and the Greek text does have those words. The significance of this subject will be realized when we consider the history that will be cited at verse 25.

Verse 21. Read this history in Exodus 2: 3-10.

Verse 22. This information is not given in any other place in the Bible, but Stephen was speaking by the Spirit and his report is authentic.

Verse 23. *Full forty years* is more definite than the account in Exodus 2: 11, which says he "was grown." *Came into his heart*. Moses acted on his own authority only, for there is no information that God told him to take on the work at that time.

Verse 24. There is no question about the injustice of the Egyptian's attack upon the Hebrew. The point is that Moses acted before he was told to by the Lord. The details of this episode are given in Exodus 2: 11-14.

Verse 25. *He supposed his brethren would have understood, etc.* This proves the point made in the two preceding paragraphs; Moses acted on his own supposition. The question will be raised as to why Moses formed this notion. The information is given in Josephus, Antiquities, Book 2, Chapter 9, Section 3. That paragraph is too long to be quoted in full, but I shall give the gist of it and the reader may verify it by consulting the history of Josephus. The father of Moses had gone to God in prayer concerning the danger his people were in and had received assurances that deliverance would be provided. That, as Abraham had been blessed with a son who meant so much to him, so, through the child soon to be born to him and his wife, great deliverance would be experi-

enced by their people. It is reasonable to conclude that Moses' father had told him about that prayer and the promise, and hence Moses "supposed" all of his brethren had heard about it also.

Verse 26. *Them* means his brethren mentioned in the preceding verse. Exodus 2:13 states that it was two Hebrews who were striving. Moses thought he would interfere with the wrangle, and no doubt he was acting on the *supposition* just explained above.

Verse 27. The one who objected to the attempt of Moses was the one who was in the wrong. That is frequently the case today, for when a man is doing what is wrong he will resent any interference with what he says is "his business." However, Moses could not have given a satisfactory answer to the question asked by this Hebrew.

Verse 28. When Moses "looked this way and that way" (Exodus 2:12), he either did not see everybody who was near, or the avenged Hebrew reported the event.

Verse 29. Exodus 2:15 tells us that Pharaoh heard about the deed of Moses and tried to have him slain. That caused him to flee the country in fear, and go into the land of Midian, a country lying between the two arms of the Red Sea. *Where he begat two sons* condenses the history in Exodus 2:15-22.

Verse 30. *Forty years were expired* from the time Moses came into the land of Midian. In the course of this period Moses cared for the flocks of his father-in-law. He was with them when he came into the region of Sinai, where the angel appeared to him.

Verse 31. *He wondered* because the bush was burning but was not being consumed, and decided to investigate the situation. (See Exodus 3:1-3.)

Verse 32. *Fathers* is often used as a general reference to the early ancestors of the race, but here it applied to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses was overawed by the voice and the scene before him.

Verse 33. *Put off thy shoes*. It was customary in that country to remove one's shoes in the presence of a dignitary as an act of courtesy, very much as a man will lift his hat under like circumstances. *Holy ground* did not refer to the essential quality of the earth, for it was the same place where Moses had been taking the sheep for

pasture. But in the present instance it was holy because of the person who was present, and the purpose for the appearance of the angel. A place is holy where and when holy proceeding takes place.

Verse 34. *I have seen, I have seen*. Both phrases are in the original, and the inflection of the terms is somewhat different in each case, showing the purpose of the statement is for emphasis. God was speaking to Moses by the angel in the bush. Having seen the afflictions of his people in Egypt, God proposed sending Moses to deliver them.

Verse 35. Stephen does not include the conversations between God and Moses about his (Moses') fitness for the commission: that record is in Exodus 3 and 4. But he reminds his hearers that the very man whom the Hebrew resented was the one God sent to rule over them. He is getting his speech shaped up for application to his hearers.

Verse 36. This brief verse covers the history from Exodus 7 to Joshua 5.

Verse 37. This prophecy is in Deuteronomy 18:18-20.

Verse 38. *Church* is from EKKLESIA, and Thayer gives its primary meaning to be, "A gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly." In the present passage he defines it, "The assembly of the Israelites." *With the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina*. God gave the law at Sinai through the services of angels (Galatians 3:19).

Verse 39. *In their hearts turned back*. The Israelites could not return to Egypt literally, but their desire to do so made them as guilty as if they had done so.

Verse 40. Moses had gone up into the mountain to receive the law, and the people became restless because of his absence; they demanded of Aaron that he make the idol.

Verse 41. In response to the cry of the people, Aaron made the calf out of the gold they had brought from Egypt.

Verse 42. *Gave them up* denotes that if a man is determined to do wrong God will not use force to prevent it. *Host of heaven* means the sun and other heavenly bodies. *As it is written* refers to Amos 5:25. The statement is

in question form, but the thought is an admission from God that his people went through that form for forty years.

Verse 43. The preceding verse seems to speak well of ancient Israel but the present one shows the other side of the story. It begins with the word *yea*, while the corresponding verse in Amos 5: 26 starts with "but." The point is that Israel was not satisfied to sacrifice to the true God but also took up idolatrous worship. *Moloch* and *Remphan* were heathen gods that the Israelites worshipped by making *figures* (images) of them for that purpose. The last sentence is a prediction of the Babylonian captivity.

Verse 44. *Tabernacle of witness*. The tabernacle was a visible and constant symbol of the wisdom and goodness of God, so that Israel could always have His presence.

Verse 45. *Fathers that came after*. Most of the older men died in the wilderness for the sin at Kadesh-barnea (Exodus 32: 8-11), and it was their descendants who *brought* in the tabernacle to Canaan. *Jesus* is from *IESOUS*, and Smith's Bible Dictionary says it is "the Greek form of the name Joshua," and Thayer's lexicon agrees with it. Joshua was the leader of the Israelites when they crossed the Jordan. *Possession of the Gentiles*. These were heathen nations living in Canaan when the Israelites came, and they were attacked by Joshua and driven out (Joshua 12). *Unto the days of David*. Joshua did his duty in fighting the heathen, but on account of the unfaithfulness of Israel, God suffered some of the nations to remain in the land to harass them for many years.

Verse 46. The preceding verse does not mean that no heathen existed in the land after David's time. The pause in the narrative at him is because of his outstanding importance in the affairs of Israel, the ancestors of these rebellious Jews to whom Stephen was speaking. David was in the favor of God and desired to *find a tabernacle*, referring to his desire to build the temple (2 Samuel 7: 1-3).

Verse 47. The reason that Solomon and not David was permitted to build the temple is shown in 1 Chronicles 22: 6-10.

Verse 48. God permitted Solomon to build the temple to replace the tabernacle. That was not because He wanted

a better building in which to dwell for he does not *dwell* ("settle down") in man-made temples. *Saith the prophet* is reference to Isaiah 66: 1. He uses earthly structures only as a place for people to meet with him spiritually.

Verse 49. God is a personal (though spiritual) Being, and his dwelling place is in Heaven. *What house will ye build me* was quoted by Stephen because these Jews had boasted so often of their temple, and pretended to be offended at anyone who even intimated that it would ever be destroyed. (See chapter 6: 14.)

Verse 50. God was already the Maker of all things in the universe, hence it was foolish for the Jews to think they could build a temple as a permanent dwelling for Him.

Verse 51. Stephen made his long speech to portray the history of the Jews, showing a record of continual rebellion against the law of God and persecution of His true servants. His application was by showing these Jews before him that their conduct was running "true to form." *Stiffnecked* means stubborn, and *uncircumcised in heart and ears* denotes their unconsecrated minds as manifested by resistance against the Holy Ghost.

Verse 52. A man is not to be blamed for the sins of his forefathers, unless he imitates those sins and boasts of his relation to the ancestors. These rebellious Jews had done that very thing, and were following in the steps of their immediate fathers who had slain Jesus as predicted by the holy prophets of God.

Verse 53. The law which the disobedient Jews were resisting had been given through the agency of angels (Galatians 3: 19).

Verse 54. To be *cut to the heart* means to be rent asunder in mind, and caused to *gnash* or grind their teeth in an insane fit of anger.

Verse 55. *Full of the Holy Ghost* is explained at chapter 4: 31. *Saw the glory of God*. No man in normal condition can see God and live (Exodus 33: 20). When He wanted Saul to see Jesus in the glorified state, he performed a miracle for the purpose; he did the same thing for Stephen.

Verse 56. In defiance of their threatening gesture, Stephen declared his vision of the very One whom they had murdered, standing in glory at the right hand of God.

Verse 57. *Stopped their ears* was an admission that the truth being spoken by Stephen was unwelcome to them, but they had no honorable means of meeting it.

Verse 58. The Jews told Pilate it was not lawful for them to put any man to death. That was true, but it was not the real motive for their plea that Pilate have Jesus slain. It did not prevent them from carrying out their murderous rage upon Stephen, who had not even been sentenced by any court, religious or secular. *Witnesses*. The law (Deuteronomy 17: 7) required that the witnesses to a crime must be first in an execution. That is why Jesus said what he did to the men who had witnessed the sin of the woman (John 8: 7). *Laid down their clothes*. When any manual action was to be done, it was the usual practice for the men to lay aside their loose outer garments. As a guard to protect them, they were placed in charge of someone standing by, and this was done by placing the garments at the feet of Saul, of whom we will hear much in later chapters.

Verse 59. Stephen was calling upon God while the Jews were hurling stones at him. *Receive my spirit* shows Stephen had an inner being that was not within reach of these murderers. (See Matthew 10: 28.)

Verse 60. Before his body collapsed, Stephen kneeled in prayer to God. *Cried with a loud voice*. The first word is from *KBASO* which Thayer defines at this place, "to call out aloud, speak with a loud voice." It was not the involuntary outburst of a body because of pain, but an intelligent utterance so expressed that all in the crowd could hear. *Charge* is from *HISTEMI* and Thayer defines it, "to cause to stand." It does not mean that these men were to be declared innocent, for that would be endorsing sin. The prayer meant for God not to hold it against them. Jesus prayed for his Father to forgive his murderers, but that did not mean it should be done before they repented, which they did on Pentecost. Likewise, the prayer of Stephen means for God to forgive these murderers whenever they repented. *Fell asleep* is a figurative way of saying that Stephen died. (See notes on literal and figurative language at Matthew 9: 24.) Stephen's death is the first one on record that was imposed in persecution for faith in Jesus. There will be

others committed to which reference will be made later.

## ACTS 8

Verse 1. *Consenting* is from *SUNEUDOKEO*, which Thayer defines at this place, "To approve together," and Robinson gives virtually the same definition. Paul verifies the definition in his statement in chapter 22: 20. *At this time* is rendered "on that day" by the Englishman's Greek New Testament. Like a ravenous beast that gets a taste of blood, these murderers became infuriated by the case of Stephen and started a general persecution of the church in Jerusalem. The disciples were scattered on account of the danger to their lives. A Christian has the right to save his life when he can do so without compromising any truth. I do not know why the apostles did not have to flee.

Verse 2. The original for *lamentation* is defined by Thayer, "lamentation with beating of the breast," and Robinson defines it in the same way. It was a formal demonstration of grief that such a righteous man should die as he did.

Verse 3. The church as an established organization cannot be overthrown, for it was destined to "stand for ever" (Daniel 2: 44). But it can be hindered in its work, and its individual members can be persecuted and even put to death in certain instances. That is what Saul did, for *havoc* means to "treat shamefully or with injury." It states he was *entering into every house*, which shows he was not attacking the church as an assembled unit. *Haling* is defined "to draw, drag," and denotes that disciples were used roughly while being taken to prison.

Verse 4. *Therefore* indicates a conclusion is to be drawn from facts stated or understood. Saul was persecuting the disciples so cruelly that they fled from the community and went into various territories. *Preaching the word* was not a part of the conclusion from *therefore*, but was added for our information to show that the disciples were not weakening in their love for the word. Their being scattered is the only part that is offered as a conclusion after the word *therefore*. The motive in preserving their lives was that they might be able still to defend the faith in other places. Chapter 11: 19 names some of the places where they went preaching.

Verse 5. Cornelius is commonly referred to as the first Gentile convert to the Gospel, which is correct. This verse says that *Philip* (one of the seven deacons) preached to the people of Samaria. All people who were not full blooded Jews were regarded as Gentiles, hence some confusion might arise here. But the explanation is in the fact that the Samaritans were distinguished from the Gentiles proper because they were a mixed race, part Jew and part Gentile, both in their blood and in their religion. The history of their origin is in 2 Kings 17, volume 2 of the Old Testament Commentary.

Verse 6. *With one accord* denotes that no dissension arose among the people over the preaching of Philip. He was able to perform these miracles by the laying on of the apostles' hands in chapter 6, verse 6.

Verse 7. *Unclean spirits* is another name for devils or demons with which people were possessed. *Palsies* and *lame* were afflictions of the body that were healed by Philip.

Verse 8. This joy was natural, for doubtless the afflictions had been suffered for many years. Both the afflicted and their friends would rejoice over the miraculous relief.

Verse 9. *Used sorcery* is from *MAGEUO* which Thayer defines, "To be a magician; to practice magical arts." In past ages, God suffered Satan to exert supernatural power through the agency of men (Exodus 7: 11, 12, 22; 8: 18, 19). Because of the real existence of such works, it was possible for men to impose on the credulity of the people and thus pass for such supernaturally-endowed performers even though they were frauds. Whether Simon was the former or the latter kind of actor we are not informed.

Verse 10. Any such demonstrations that would seem to be divine would have a profound effect on the people, and cause them to think the performer was a man of God.

Verse 11. *Bewitched* is from *EXISTEMI* which means, "to amaze, astonish, throw into wonderment," hence it refers to some effect Simon had on the mind and not the body.

Verse 12. *When they believed . . . they were baptized*. It will be seen that the inspired writer takes it for granted when a man believes the Gospel he will also obey it. (See the com-

ments at chapter 2: 41.) *Men and women*. We never read in the scriptures that infants or young children were baptized; it is always men or women.

Verse 13. *Simon himself believed*. This is the statement of Luke and therefore must be taken as the truth, and not merely that Simon pretended to believe. *And when he was baptized*. (See the comments on the preceding verse about this form of expression.) *Continued* is from *PROSKARTEREO*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "To adhere to one, to be his adherent; to be devoted or constant to one." We have no reason to think that Simon was not genuinely interested in the work of Philip. The record says that Simon continued with Philip because he saw the miracles that were performed, and John 20: 30, 31 expressly says that the signs and wonders were performed to produce belief.

Verse 14, 15. Philip preached the word of God and even performed miracles in proof of his authority. But he could not confer the Holy Ghost on his converts in the measure necessary to enable them to work miracles; none by apostles could do that. And since converts in those days were promised such a gift (chapter 2: 38), the apostles went down to Samaria to confer it.

Verse 16. These people had obeyed the Gospel but had not received the Holy Ghost, which shows that the gift was not bestowed simultaneously with baptism.

Verse 17. This gift was not to make them Christians or bring them forgiveness of sins; their obedience to the Gospel did that for them.

Verse 18. The inspired Luke says that Simon *saw* a certain fact, not that he only thought he saw it. Hence this verse is inspired authority for saying it was *through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given*. He offered them money. This was what constituted the sin of Simon (see next verse). It does not indicate that Simon's primary obedience was not sincere. (See the comments on verse 13.) Disciples who have been in the church for years are known to commit sin, so it is not to be doubted that a babe scarcely out of his spiritual swaddling clothes might backslide also.

Verse 19. Simon was not asking merely for the power to perform mir-

acles; he might have received that sooner or later as the others did. But he wanted the power that was possessed by the apostles, so he could lay hands on others and give them ability to perform miracles. The sight of the performance of the apostles seemed to arouse his former interest in that which was marvelous, so that he yielded to the temptation and offered to buy that which cannot be valued in "dollars and cents."

Verse 20. *Money perish with thee* is a declaration of solemn truth, not in the sense of a special denunciation. We know that money is destined to pass away some day, and so also will evil men if they do not repent. *Money perish . . . because*, etc. This was an evil thought and constituted the sin of Simon.

Verse 21. *Part* means a share of something that is "assigned" to one, and *lot* denotes something won or "obtained by lot." There is not a great deal of difference between the two words in question, but the use of them together makes a statement that is more emphatic, and rules out both measures of the Holy Ghost. That which the apostles only could possess would not have been given Simon even if he had not been corrupt in heart. But that condition prevented him from receiving even the measure that other disciples were promised to receive.

Verse 22. The original word for *wickedness* often means some very bad bodily conduct, but Simon had not done anything of that kind. One word in Thayer's definition is "depravity," and that would apply in this case. Nothing but a depraved mind would think the Holy Ghost could be bought with money. Hence Peter told him to repent of the *thought of his heart*. *Perhaps* ordinarily denotes a doubt, which would not be a proper sense to attach to the word when thinking of the mercy of God. The original carries the idea of an earnest frame of mind on the part of Simon as if he should say, "Lord, I beseech thee," etc. *Repent and pray* is the law of pardon for a disciple when he has sinned. Chapter 2: 38 gives the law for one who has never been a child of God, and that is to "repent and be baptized." An alien sinner would not avail himself anything to repent and pray, neither would it avail anything for an erring disciple to repent and be

baptized, because baptism is to be performed only once.

Verse 23. *Gall* and *bitterness* are virtually the same in thought, and are used together for the sake of emphasis. It denotes a state of mind that is poisoned with depravity. *Iniquity* is defined in the lexicon, "unrighteousness of heart." The heart of Simon was bound up in a state of depravity, indicated by the sordid estimate that he placed on the value of the Holy Ghost.

Verse 24. Simon wished Peter to pray that he be released from the guilt of *these things*, meaning the state of corruption in his mind and the judgment of God that such a condition of mind would deserve. The scripture does not tell us anything about the conduct of Simon after this, and secular history is uncertain about the subject.

Verse 25. *They* means Peter and John who returned to Jerusalem, but preached in many of the Samaritan villages on their way.

Verse 26. The New Testament was not completed and the apostolic period was still with the world. In that situation God used various means to get his will to men. It should be carefully noted that he never did tell a sinner directly what to do to be saved. But until the plan of salvation was put on record where everyone could read it, the Lord used miraculous means to contact the sinner. In the present instance an angel (in what form he appeared we are not told) appeared to Philip who had just done his wonderful work in Samaria. The only thing the angel did was to tell Philip where to go. God knew where the preacher would meet the man to whom the Gospel message was to be delivered. *Desert* is from EREMOS which means an "uninhabited wilderness," and has reference to the physical condition of the land.

Verse 27. There is no history available that tells us whether this eunuch was a Jew or Gentile. If he was a Jew born in Ethiopia, he would be an Ethiopian by nation. The question that is sometimes raised is how it can be said that Cornelius was the first Gentile convert, if this eunuch was an Ethiopian by race. That need cause no confusion, for there were proselytes to the Jewish religion all through the years, and such persons were regarded



as Jews. That is why this man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, for that was the headquarters of the Jewish system. It also explains why he was reading the book of Isaiah. (For notes on the proselytes, see Matthew 23: 15.)

Verse 28. Chariots were made for two purposes: war, and transportation in times of peace. The eunuch was riding in one of the latter.

Verse 29. The angel was used to direct Philip into the general location of the eunuch, and after arriving there, the Spirit gave him specific instructions about joining the chariot. But it should be noted in each case that the eunuch never learned anything about his duty until he got it from the preacher. (See Romans 10: 14.)

Verse 30. Philip was evidently traveling on foot, for after reaching the chariot (and entering it) he journeyed on with the eunuch. The speed of the chariot also was slow enough that Philip was able to overhear what the eunuch was reading, and also to enter into conversation with him.

Verse 31. In answer to Philip's question, the eunuch said he could not understand what he was reading without a guide. This should not surprise us, for he was reading in one of the prophetic books, and we are told that even the prophets themselves did not know "what it was all about" when they were inspired to do their writing. (See Matthew 13: 17; 1 Peter 1: 10-12). The attitude of Philip indicated his willingness to explain the scripture, and the eunuch asked him to sit with him in the chariot.

Verses 32, 33. This scripture is in Isaiah 53: 7, 8; it is in the past tense as to grammatical form, but that is a common thing in the prophetic writings. It pictures the unresisting attitude of Jesus when he was sentenced and executed upon the cross. *Judgment was taken away* means Jesus was treated with injustice. *Declare* is defined, "to set forth, recount, relate in full," and *generation* means one's family descent. The question is asked in the sense of asserting that no one can declare the family descent of Jesus. The reason is given in the words, *his life is taken from the earth*. Jesus died without having produced any fleshly offspring, because his only purpose in this world was to leave behind him a spiritual family. (See Ephesians 3: 15.)

Verse 34. See the comments on verse 31 for the eunuch's question.

Verse 35. *Opened his mouth*. No sinner was ever induced to accept salvation by miraculous means, but it was always by the use of words. (See chapter 11: 14.) *Began at the same scripture* denotes he explained the passage to be referring to Jesus. But after that start of his speech, the context indicates that he taught the eunuch the acts of faith that Jesus requires of sinners in order to receive forgiveness of sins.

Verse 36. The Old Testament says nothing about baptism, hence the eunuch could have learned about it only from Philip. This proves beyond any question that to *preach Jesus* means to tell of His requirements, including baptism in water. *Certain* is from ΤΙΣ which Thayer defines, "a certain, a certain one." *Water* is from ΗΥΔΩΡ, and the definitions of Thayer and Robinson agree, but the latter is fuller at this passage which is, "A stream, river." Hence *a certain water* means a permanent body of water, and one large enough for two men to enter. (See verses 38, 39.) The only material element necessary for baptism being present, the eunuch wished to know if he might be baptized.

Verse 37. There was just one item in his duty still undone that had to precede baptism, which was the good confession. (See Romans 10: 9, 10.) Philip told the eunuch that if he believed with all his heart *thou mayest*. The last two words are from ΕΞΕΣΤΙ, which Thayer defines, "it is lawful." Robinson defines it, "It is lawful, it is right, it is permitted, one may." Philip meant it would be scriptural for him to baptize the eunuch if he was a believer in Jesus. The contrary would necessarily be true, that it would be unscriptural to baptize a person who is not a believer. That would make it unscriptural to baptize infants since they cannot believe. The confession of the eunuch was his own as far as the wording was concerned, for no one told him just how it was to be made. In 1 Timothy 6: 13 Paul says that Jesus made a good confession before Pilate, yet his words were merely "thou sayest" in answer to the governor's question (Matthew 27: 11.) This shows that no formal kind of confession should be considered necessary. The form the eunuch used is all right,

and so is any other that means that one believes Jesus to be the Son of God.

Verse 38. A chariot is an inanimate object and cannot receive an intelligent order. Hence Philip addressed his command to the driver, for had he been doing his own driving he would not have commanded the chariot either. All of this proves that at least three persons were present at this baptism. The remark and question of the eunuch, also the answer of Philip and the eunuch's confession all took place after they came in sight of the "certain water," and they were still in sight of it when the command was given for the chariot to stop. This is another proof that the water was of some considerable size. *Into* is from EIS and is properly translated in the King James version. They both had to go down *into* the water for the act of baptism. The word *baptize* is from BAPTIZO, and Thayer defines it, "To dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge." Robinson defines it, "To dip in, to sink, to immerse." Groves defines it, "To dip, immerse, plunge." Greenfield's definition is, "To immerse, immerse, submerge, sink." In its noun form, Donnegan defines it, "An object immersed, submerged, soaked."

Verse 39. *Come up out of the water* gives emphasis to the comments in the preceding verse on the necessity of going down *into* the water. *Into* and *out of* are opposite terms, and agree with the necessary movements in performing baptism. However, the purpose for the statement is to inform the reader that no supernatural act was done until the baptismal service was concluded. Philip had to make his way into this territory in whatever manner was available, but now that the object of his journey was accomplished, the Spirit of the Lord used some means of snatching him away suddenly out of the eunuch's sight; but he went on his way rejoicing in his new relation to the Lord.

Verse 40. Azotus was a town north of Gaza, the place to which Philip was told by the angel to go. Going on in his northward journey, he preached in all the cities to which he came until he reached his destination which was Caesarea on the coast.

## ACTS 9

Verse 1. *Breathing out* is from EMPNEO and is defined, "to breathe in or on." When a person has a "bad

breath" it is supposed to come from some undesirable condition within his body. It is used to illustrate the attitude and conduct of Saul towards the disciples. His mental breath was coming from a mind filled with desire to persecute them. He went unto the high priest because he was the president of the Sanhedrin, which was the highest court allowed the Jews.

Verse 2. *Desired of him letters*. Paul says he was "mad" against the saints (chapter 26: 11), but there was "method in his madness." He never acted independently of the authorities whom he regarded as having the right to punish offenders. These letters showed his authority to arrest the disciples, and they designated even the city and circumstances in which he was empowered to act. The original word for *way* means a way of life, and in our passage it refers to the way being professed by the disciples. Saul had the authority to bind disciples as an officer would put irons on a criminal.

Verse 3. The Lord let Saul proceed until he was near his destination (Damascus), then caused the light to envelop him. Saul afterward described this light as being "above the brightness of the sun" (chapter 26: 13).

Verse 4. Chapter 26: 14 says they all fell to the ground, but in Luke's original account of the event we have only *he* falling to the ground. That evidently was because Saul was the only one in the group who was to receive the full effect of the shock. The other men did not even know the source or meaning of the voice. (See comments verse 7).

Verse 5. *Who art thou?* Saul did not know it was the Lord speaking or he would not have asked the question. The word translated *Lord* is rendered "sir" 12 times in the King James version, which means merely a title of respect and was all that Saul meant. It is Luke that tells us it was the Lord speaking, who told Saul that He was the person whom he was persecuting. This charge was made on the principle of Matthew 25: 45. *Pricks* is from KENTRON which Thayer defines, "an iron goad," and explains it to mean, "for urging on oxen, horses and other beasts of burden." If an animal kicks back when his master prods him with the goad, it only makes it pierce him the more. Likewise, if Saul continues

to rebel against the authority of the Lord, it will make his experience that much more disagreeable at last.

Verse 6. Saul then addressed Jesus as *Lord* in the true sense. He was convinced of his terrible error and began to tremble. Unlike Felix (chapter 24: 25) who trembled only, Saul asked what he should do. Of course, that meant with reference to his personal duty to get right with the Lord. But Jesus would not give him that information, and told him where to go for it. (See comments at chapter 8: 26.) However, Jesus did give him some other information, which is written in chapter 26: 16-18.

Verse 7. *Hear* is from AKOUO, and the lexicon gives several distinct meanings, but they may be classified under three heads; I shall quote Thayer's definitions for the three: "1. To be endowed with the faculty of hearing. 2. To attend to, consider. 3. To understand, perceive the sense of what is said." The particular sense of the word in any given place must be determined by the context. Hence we know the word is used with the first meaning here; they merely knew by their ears that a voice was speaking, while in chapter 22: 9 the third meaning is used. *Seeing no man* was because the voice came from Heaven, and no one but Saul was to see Jesus then.

Verse 8. When the remarks of the Lord were concluded, Saul arose from the earth. The dazzling light that struck him to the ground also closed his eyes, and upon arising he naturally opened them. However, he was unable to see on account of what the light had done to his sight. (See chapter 22: 11.) He had to be led by the men who had come with him, who took him into the city of Damascus.

Verse 9. Smith's Bible Dictionary says, "The instance given of individual fasting under the influence of grief, vexation or anxiety are numerous." It was natural, therefore, for Saul to fast in view of the change in his plans, including the strange blindness.

Verse 10. Any disciple has the right to tell the story of Jesus and baptize the believers. We have seen that the Lord never told any man directly what he must do to be saved (chapter 8: 26), hence this disciple was to do that for Saul.

Verse 11. The Lord mentioned the

fact of Saul's praying to assist Ananias in identifying him. Saul was a Jew and would have the right to pray under the Mosaic religion. We are not told specifically the subject of Saul's prayer, but it is not strange that he would be praying under the circumstances. It would also be reasonable to think he was praying for help in his undone condition, and that it was in reply to his prayer that the Lord permitted him to have the vision of Ananias coming to heal his blindness.

Verse 12. All inspired visions are one form of predictions. God had caused Saul to see this vision, now He was sending Ananias to fulfill it for him.

Verses 13, 14. The report of Saul's activities against the disciples was so widespread it had reached the city of Damascus before he arrived. The remarks of Ananias were not made with the idea of giving the Lord any information; so worthy a disciple would know better than that. They were the natural expression of his sincere emotions, and the Lord regarded them as such since he did not give him any rebuke.

Verse 15. The Lord's reassurance consisted in telling Ananias that Saul had been chosen by Him to bear his name before others, both Gentiles and Israelites. Of course, the Lord would not suffer such a chosen servant to harm any disciple sent to him.

Verse 16. The fulfillment of this prediction is described at chapter 20: 23; 21: 11; 2 Corinthians 6: 4-10; 11: 23-28. After such a devoted life filled with persecutions, Paul closed it by shedding his blood upon the block (2 Timothy 4: 6).

Verse 17. It will be well to take another look at the matter of being *filled with the Holy Ghost*. (See the comments at chapter 4: 31.) Also the subject of the "measure" of the Spirit should receive further consideration. The measure that would cause one to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, even, has some variation. The Gentiles in the house of Cornelius were baptized with the Holy Ghost (chapter 11: 15-17), yet all they could do was to speak in tongues (chapter 10: 46). Ananias did not lay hands on Saul for the same purpose that the apostles laid hands on others, for they did that to baptized believers only, while this was done to Saul before he was bap-

tized (as it was done in the case of Cornelius' groups, it being an emergency): that shows it was another emergency or special case. God needed another apostle, and instead of sending the Holy Ghost as it was done on Pentecost, He gave Ananias the special commission and power to install the man Saul into office. Ananias called him *brother Saul* because they were members of the same Jewish race.

Verse 18. *As it had been* means that what fell from his eyes was like scales. The reason Saul was baptized is given at chapter 22: 16. In both passages it should be noted that Saul *arose* to be baptized, because that ordinance is done by immersion.

Verse 19. *Received meat* means he took food after his period of fasting. *Certain days* is really indefinite, and denotes merely that Saul remained with the disciples in the city where he had become one himself.

Verse 20. Saul began at once to discharge his assignment of preaching Christ. He did this in the synagogue where the Jews assembled to read the law.

Verse 21. It should be expected that the people would be amazed at the preaching of Saul. He did not merely subside from his persecution of the disciples, but became an active proclaimer of the faith he had been opposing.

Verse 22. *Increased in strength* denotes that he became more powerful in proclaiming the Gospel. He *confounded* (confused and bewildered) the Jews by showing from their own scriptures that Jesus was the Christ predicted therein.

Verse 23. The preaching of Saul finally roused the Jews to anger, and they plotted to kill him whenever he came outside the city walls.

Verse 24. They lay secretly near the gates, where they expected to attack him as he came through. Saul learned about their plot, which really proved to be to his advantage. Knowing that his enemies were lying near the gates, he was left to feel safe in escaping if he could by-pass those places.

Verse 25. According to 2 Corinthians 11: 32, 33, the secular officers joined with the Jews in their plot by maintaining a military guard near the gates of Damascus. But the disciples helped Saul to escape by lowering him

down the outside of the wall in a *basket*, a vessel made by plaiting reeds or ropes.

Verse 26. *When Saul was come to Jerusalem*. This was after he had been in Arabia and returned to Damascus, a period of three years after his conversion (Galatians 1: 16-18). When he *assayed* (tried) to join the disciples they were afraid of him, thinking he was only posing as a disciple in order to get an advantage of them.

Verses 27, 28. Barnabas was a native of Cyprus (chapter 4: 36) which was not far from Damascus. It was natural that he would be more or less familiar with the events that took place in that city, especially as they concerned the religion he professed. His introduction of Saul to the apostles was satisfactory, so that he was with them in their movements in and out of Jerusalem.

Verse 29. Wherever Saul went, he was persecuted for preaching in the name of Jesus. *Grecians* were Greek-speaking Jews as explained at chapter 6: 1.

Verse 30. Caesarea was a seaport from which Saul sailed for his old home Tarsus. He was not idle while there, but preached "the faith he once destroyed" (Galatians 1: 21).

Verse 31. *Rest* is from EIRENE which Thayer defines, "a state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and havoc of war." Then in its application to our passage he explains it to mean, "of the church free from persecutions." This indicates the extent and success of Saul's persecutions of the church as it pertained to the uneasiness caused among the disciples. *Fear* is used in the sense of reverence for the Lord. It shows us that while persecutions will not take from true disciples their love for Christ (Romans 8: 35-39), yet they may hinder them from advancing in numbers and strength. This will be the last we will hear of Saul until we get to chapter 11: 25, 26.

Verse 32. The condition of "rest" which the churches were enjoying opened up opportunities for the further spread of the Gospel. Peter used this situation to travel among the churches of Palestine and made Lydda one of his stopping places.

Verses 33, 34. *Palsy* was a form of paralysis that rendered the victim helpless from weakness. This man's

case was of eight years' standing and hence was not imaginary. To make his bed was especially appropriate since his ailment was one of weakness. The cure was *immediate* as were all of the cases of miraculous healing.

Verse 35. *Saw him and turned to the Lord.* While the New Testament was in the making, the Lord empowered his apostles and other workers to perform miracles as evidence of their connection with Him. (See John 20: 30, 31; Ephesians 4: 8-14.)

Verse 36. Joppa was a seaport about ten miles from Lydda. The original word for *good works* means the general conduct is good and practical, and *almsdeeds* refers especially to things done for those in need, which is indicated in verse 39.

Verse 37. Thayer defines the original for *upper chamber*, "The highest part of the house, the upper rooms or story where the women resided." Here is where they laid Dorcas after preparing her body for burial.

Verse 38. The miraculous work of Peter had become known to the people of Joppa. Desiring him to come could have been only in the hope of restoring Dorcas to life.

Verse 39. *Widows stood by.* These were the ones for whom the "almsdeeds" of verse 36 were done. Their weeping was a sincere expression of appreciation for what Dorcas had done for them. *While she was with them.* Her body lay in their presence as they did this, which is another proof that there is something in a human being that leaves the body and the world when death occurs.

Verse 40. We are not told why Peter wished to be alone while performing this miracle, but it was not the first time such a thing was done. (See 1 Kings 17: 19-23; 2 Kings 4: 32-36; Matthew 9: 25.) Life was restored to the woman at the voice of Peter, and she opened her eyes only upon hearing it. She had enough physical strength to sit up, but was evidently somewhat weak from her recent illness.

Verse 41. *Gave her his hand.* Peter restored the woman to life independent of any cooperation on her part, as a matter of course, but he encouraged her to "arise" by giving her his hand. The miracle having been performed, he called her friends back into the room and presented her alive to them.

Verse 42. *Many believed.* See notes on verse 35 for the use of miracles in making believers. The case of Dorcas was reported throughout the city of Joppa.

Verse 43. The decision to spend more time in the city is mentioned as a mere incident, but it connects up with the events of the next chapter.

## ACTS 10

Verse 1. This Caesarea was on the coast of Palestine. It was the official headquarters for the Roman government in that province. That is why Cornelius was stationed there, he being a military officer of the government, a centurion or commander of a hundred soldiers. *Italian band* means soldiers recruited from captives out of Italy.

Verse 2. Cornelius was a Gentile and lived under the Patriarchial Dispensation, which made it appropriate for him to worship God in the manner described. That dispensation, like the two others, had its better as well as less devoted members, and Cornelius was one of the best. He was a busy man in practical matters, so his praying to God *always* means he was continually a praying man.

Verse 3. He saw *evidently* denoted it was so plain that it could not leave any doubt as to what he saw. God was about to put an end to the Patriarchial Dispensation, and selected one of the best men in that system for the occasion. That was significant and showed that the change was not made just because the system was an absolute failure. The angel was not to tell Cornelius what to do to be saved, but to direct him to a man who would tell him. (See the comments at chapter 8: 26.)

Verse 4. *Was afraid* means he was overcome with awe at the appearance of this being. It was at the *ninth hour* which is three o'clock P. M., in broad daylight, so that no mysterious condition surrounded the place. He used the word *lord* in the sense of "sir," a title of great respect, and inquired what he wanted of him. Before telling him of his duty, the angel first quieted his fears with some words of commendation for his past life. *Memorial* is from MNEMOSUNON which Thayer defines, "a memorial (that by which the memory of any person or thing is preserved), a remembrance." It de-

notes that God had not overlooked his righteous life, and was going to use him as the first Gentile to be offered membership in the Christian Dispensation.

Verse 5. Up until *now* Cornelius had lived in accordance with the obligations of the Patriarchal Dispensation. That system was for the Gentiles and had been in force since the days of Adam. In the meantime the Jewish Dispensation had been "added" (Galatians 3:19) as the system for the Jews, and that was lifted from them by the cross (Colossians 2:14), leaving the Gentiles still under the Patriarchal Dispensation for a few years. *Now* that, too, was to be discontinued, and Cornelius was to do something else. That placed him under a new obligation, cancelling the authority of the former system. From *now* he was expected to do something else in order to be saved, and he was told to send for Peter at Joppa that he might tell him what it was.

Verse 6. Specific directions were given so that the right Simon would be called for. *Oughtest* is from *DEI* which Thayer defines, "It is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper," and he explains it at this place to mean, "Necessity in reference to what is required to attain some end." It has been rendered "must" 58 times in the King James translation. *He shall tell thee*. This is in keeping with the Lord's plan not to tell sinners directly what to do to be saved. (See chapter 8:26.)

Verses 7, 8. Most public officers have their servants to wait on them in the affairs of the home, and military men who compose a bodyguard. Cornelius sent a group of three from these two classes to go to Joppa.

Verses 9, 10. The story now leaves the three men in their journey but nearing the city of Joppa the following day. Meanwhile Peter went upon the roof of the house to pray. Homes had flat roofs and they were occupied in much the same way as verandas are used today. It was at noon and Peter was hungry, but the meal was not ready, hence it furnished an opportunity for the Lord to add another portion to the story. A *trance* differs from a dream in that it occurs while the person is physically awake, but is lost to the immediate surroundings; a sort of "daydream." When the Lord

uses that plan for making a special revelation, he will cause the person to "draw in his mind from the things around him," and see with his mind's eye the things He wishes him to see.

Verse 11. *Saw heaven opened* refers to the region above him that could be seen with the natural eye under ordinary circumstances. A square piece of cloth could be gathered up by the four corners and thus form a vessel in which objects could be held. The four corners represented the "four corners of the earth," and denoted that God was about to offer an additional opportunity to mankind for salvation, that would include the Gentiles or nations of the whole earth.

Verses 12, 13. The Jews were restricted against eating certain kinds of animals that were considered unclean (ceremonially). They likewise held themselves above the Gentiles and regarded them as "dogs" (Matthew 15:26, 27). The time had come when the Lord was going to consider any of the nations of the world good enough to be offered the Gospel, and he was introducing the subject by this object lesson. It was to be literally true that under the new dispensation no religious objections would be made against any kind of meat (1 Timothy 4:3, 4). Likewise, no discriminations were to be made against any race of mankind, whether Jew or Gentile.

Verse 14. Peter took the language of the Lord to be used literally of these living creatures, and that perhaps He was putting him to the test. *Common* means food that the common classes of mankind used.

Verse 15. *What God hath cleansed* is explained at verses 12, 13.

Verse 16. This (conversation) was done thrice, the second being mentioned in the preceding verse. After the three times, the vessel was taken back out of Peter's sight.

Verse 17. Peter pondered over the vision as to what it signified, and by that time the men sent by Cornelius had arrived at Simon's gate.

Verse 18. The men specified whom they wanted according to the instructions they received from Cornelius.

Verse 19. The Lord was supervising this whole drama and bringing the various parts of it together at just the right time. Peter was still wondering about the vision at the time these men



were making their inquiry. The "voice" of verses 13 and 15 is here seen to have been the Spirit, speaking on behalf of the Lord.

Verse 20. The purpose of the Spirit in speaking was to reassure Peter that the call was legitimate. That would prepare him to receive whatever message they gave him.

Verse 21. Peter identified himself to the three men, which was the only response we have recorded as to their inquiry when they arrived at the gate. The Spirit had not told him what the men wanted, but simply assured him they were there because of Him.

Verse 22. In answer to Peter's question the men told their story. The original for *warned* at this place is defined by Thayer, "To be divinely commanded, admonished, instructed." Admonition always implies that some danger is possible for the one being admonished. Cornelius had been asked to learn his duty from Peter, and should he neglect it his soul would be in danger. This verse adds the information that Cornelius (though a Gentile) had a good reputation among the Jews.

Verse 23. It being evening of the day after the men started from home, Peter procured lodging for them over night; the next chapter will explain about *certain brethren*.

Verse 24. *Morrow after* means the next day after the group left the house of Simon the tanner. By way of tabulating the days, if the men left the house of Cornelius on Monday, they got back on Thursday. Cornelius was not selfish about the good words he expected to hear, but had assembled his relatives and friends who were waiting for Peter.

Verse 25. It was very natural for Cornelius to offer worship to the man who was to show him the way of salvation. We do not know what actions he attempted further than his falling down at the feet of Peter. For information on the various meanings of the word "worship," see the notes on Matthew 2: 2.

Verse 26. Peter's remark that he was himself *also a man* indicates that what Cornelius was attempting to offer was a kind due only to the Lord.

Verse 27. The above conversation took place near the entrance of the house of Cornelius. Peter then went

on in and observed that quite an audience had assembled.

Verse 28. The first part of this verse states the long-standing attitude of the Jews toward the Gentiles. Peter makes his application of this vision of the sheet and the conversation in connection with it. In that instance nothing was said about common or unclean men; only articles of food. But the apostle understood the lesson and stated it to this assembled audience.

Verse 29. Acting upon the lesson as he understood it, he came *without gainsaying*, which means without calling it in question. Being convinced that whatever was the purpose in calling him, it was proper, he asked them what that purpose was.

Verses 30-32. This paragraph corresponds with verses 3-6 in its main thoughts. It adds the information that he was fasting at the time the *man* (angel) appeared.

Verse 33. Cornelius was the spokesman in this reply to Peter's question. He was appreciative of the fact that Peter had come at his request. In the original conversation there was nothing said directly about the commandments coming from the Lord, but Cornelius recognized that He was back of all this, because the angel told him it was God who had remembered his good deeds. *We are all here . . . to hear*. This denotes an audience that was open to the words of the Lord.

Verse 34. *Opened his mouth*. (See the comments at Matthew 5: 2.) God is no *respector of persons* is from PROSOPOLEPTER which Thayer defines, "an accepter." It has the idea of one who can be bribed or induced to show partiality in bestowing mercy.

Verse 35. Through the combination of several circumstances, Peter was convinced that all races were equally acceptable to God if they feared him and lived righteously.

Verse 36. Peter then began his sermon about Jesus, whose life's story was begun among the children of Israel, and which declared that Jesus was Lord (or ruler) of all.

Verse 37. The work for Jesus began with the introductory labors of John in the wilderness, and consisted of his baptism of the people, connected with belief of the story that Jesus was to come.

Verse 38. Literal anointing was

done by rubbing oil over a person being introduced into an office. Figurative anointing was done by bestowing the Holy Spirit upon someone who was expected to have a prominent work under God. When the word is extended to apply to unofficial persons, it means to be endowed with the words which the Holy Spirit gave the disciples through the apostles. (See 1 John 2: 27.) Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost and power at his baptism (Matthew 3: 16, 17). *Devil* is from *DIABOLOS* which means the being called Satan, who is considered responsible for the entrance of sin and disease into the world.

Verse 39. *We are witnesses* was made possible by the arrangement recorded in Mark 3: 14, which also is in line with Peter's statement in chapter 1: 21, 22.

Verses 40, 41. *Openly* does not mean generally, but evidently, "by many infallible proofs" (chapter 1: 3). The *witnesses* were the apostles, who were chosen beforehand for that purpose. Having seen Jesus alive, and eaten with him and handled him, they could testify from personal knowledge that Jesus lived again after his three days and three nights in the tomb.

Verse 42. Unlike his previous speeches, Peter did not accuse his hearers of guilt when he mentioned the death of Jesus, but the event needed to be told in connection with the resurrection. For the meaning of *ordained*, see the notes at John 15: 16. The *quick* are the people who will be living when Jesus comes. The dead will be raised, and all will be judged by this One who was ordained for that work. (See chapter 17: 31.)

Verse 43. *All the prophets witness*. The Gentiles were not expected to be acquainted with the Old Testament prophecies. The purpose Peter had in mentioning this was to show Cornelius and his group that it had long been God's will to offer salvation to all the world who would believe, whether they were Jews or Gentiles.

Verses 44, 45. It is better to consider these two verses together because of their relation to each other. Notice that the terms *Holy Ghost* and *gifts of the Holy Ghost* are used for the same event, showing that the Holy Ghost was the thing given. The gift was not bestowed to make them disciples, for they were told next to be

baptized. The reference to the astonishment of the disciples of the Jewish nation, and the argument Peter makes in verse 47, shows that God bestowed the gift as an evidence that from then on the Gentiles would be acceptable to become converts to Christ. (See Romans 15: 16.)

Verses 46-48. These verses may be bracketed and entitled, "end of the Patriarchal Dispensation." *Speaking with tongues* was necessary as evidence that these Gentiles had received the Holy Ghost. Upon all the accumulated evidence before Peter, which began with his trance on the roof of the house, he proposed baptism in water for these believers. *In His name*. The first word is from *EN*, and means upon the authority of the Lord. It shows Peter's right to command the baptism, and not as a "formula" to be uttered by the baptizer. It was natural for them to wish Peter to spend some time with them.

## ACTS 11

Verse 1. Much of this chapter is a rehearsal of the preceding one, and I shall try to avoid unnecessary repetition of the comments. The brethren around Jerusalem heard the news of the conversion of the Gentiles before Peter returned.

Verse 2. When Peter got back to Jerusalem, they of the *circumcism*, meaning the Jews, had a contention with him.

Verse 3. It was objectionable to them for Peter to have associated with the Gentiles, but it was made worse for him to *eat* with them. In those days it was regarded as one of the strongest signs of social intimacy, to sit down together with others at a meal. (See 1 Corinthians 5: 11.) See the notes at Matthew 9: 11 about eating with others.

Verses 4-11. See the notes on chapter 10: 9-18.

Verse 12. These *six brethren* are the "certain brethren" of chapter 10: 23. They were taken along to be witnesses of the events in the household of Cornelius. Peter referred to them as a verification of what he was reporting.

Verses 13, 14. See the comments on chapter 10: 30-33.

Verse 15. See notes on chapter 10: 44, 45. Also note that Peter says the Holy Ghost fell on them *as it did* on the apostles at the beginning. As to

what "measure" it was that was given them, see the comments at chapter 4: 31.

Verse 16. *Then* is an adverb of time and refers to the moment when the Holy Ghost fell. That event reminded Peter of what John said in Matthew 3: 11. See the comments on that verse as to why Peter does not mention the baptism of fire.

Verse 17. Peter again calls the gift received by them and the Gentiles a *like gift*. Had he even hesitated about baptizing these Gentiles he would have been resisting God, for the bestowal of the Holy Ghost on them was to show that they were acceptable to God upon obedience to the Gospel ordinance.

Verse 18. The brethren showed the right spirit when Peter presented the facts to them. They did not merely give a reluctant agreement, but gave God the glory for what he had bestowed on the Gentiles. *Granted repentance unto life* means God gave the Gentiles the chance to repent (reform their lives), with the promise of forgiveness of sins.

Verse 19. This subject is mentioned in chapter 8: 1, 4, but the places are not named in that passage. *To the Jews only*. That was because they had left Jerusalem before the Gentiles had been accepted into the Gospel work.

Verse 20. The Grecians were Jews who spoke the Greek language.

Verse 21. The Lord blessed the labors of these men by causing their work to be received. The result was that a great number became disciples.

Verse 22. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch (in Syria), because the scattered disciples had carried the Gospel message as far as to that city.

Verse 23. The mission of Barnabas was to encourage the new converts, also to exhort them regarding their responsibility. *Purpose of heart* denotes a service into which one puts his whole heart.

Verse 24. *Full of the Holy Ghost*. (See the notes at chapter 4: 31.) The work and influence of Barnabas resulted in many more conversions.

Verse 25. The last account we had of Saul was when the brethren helped him get started towards this town of Tarsus (chapter 9: 30). The work at Antioch was growing in numbers and influence, and Barnabas believed that

the help of Saul would be beneficial, hence he went to Tarsus to find him.

Verse 26. These two men spent a year with the church, teaching them their duties that follow induction into the Lord's service. *Called Christians*. The second word is defined in the lexicon, "a follower of Christ," hence it is not likely that enemies would attach that title to them as in disrespect, for the disciples themselves claimed to be that, and rejoiced in the thought of being known by that name. The first word is from *CHREMATIZO*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "to assume or take to one's self a name from one's public business." That is exactly what was done in this case, for the (religious) business of the disciples was to work for Christ which made the name Christian an appropriate one for them.

Verse 27. Among the miraculous gifts bestowed upon the disciples in the early period of the church was that of prophesying. Peter cited the prediction of it in his reference to Joel's writings, in chapter 2: 17.

Verse 28. This famine is verified by Josephus; *Antiquities*, Book 20, Chapter 2, Section 5. I shall quote only one sentence from his lengthy paragraph: "Whereas a famine did oppress them at that time, and many people died for want of what was necessary to procure food withal." The context shows Josephus was writing of the days of Claudius Caesar. *All the world* was a common phrase to refer to the Roman Empire.

Verse 29. The disciples at Antioch were in better circumstances than those in Judea, and concluded to send them some relief. This was done on the basis of voluntary contributions, and the giving was according to each man's ability. That is the principle on which all giving is to be done by Christians (1 Corinthians 16: 2).

Verse 30. *Sent it to the elders*. We learned at chapter 6: 2 that the deacons are the ones whose *work* is to distribute the funds for the necessities of life. That was always true, but the work of those officials, like everything else pertaining to the affairs of the church, is under the supervision of the elders.

## ACTS 12

Verse 1. This was Herod Agrippa, I, the grandson of Herod the Great. After a career of "ups and downs" with vari-

ous powers, he was finally placed in a ruling position over Palestine by authority of the Roman Emperor. His idea in vexing persons of the church was to win the favor of the Pharisaic Jews. (See verse 3.)

Verse 2. This James was one of the sons of Zebedee (Matthew 4: 21).

Verse 3. Peter was not slain but was put into prison. *Days of unleavened bread* denotes it was the time of the feast of the Passover (Leviticus 23: 4-8).

Verse 4. A quaternion consisted of four soldiers, and four of them would make 16 soldiers charged with the guarding of the prison, changing their shifts every three hours. Two of the ones on duty were with the prisoner and two watched the gate. *Easter* is from PASCHA. Thayer defines it, "The paschal festival, the feast of Passover." It has no connection with Easter as that term is used today.

Verse 5. *Without ceasing* is from the Greek word EKTENES, and Thayer defines it, "Intent, earnest, assiduous [persistent]." The prayers were continuous and earnest.

Verse 6. *Sleeping between two soldiers*. (See the notes at verse 4.)

Verse 7. An angel of the Lord would be given supernatural power, by which he could perform this service to Peter unknown to the soldiers. (See Hebrews 1: 13, 14.)

Verse 8. Peter had taken off his sandals and outer garment when he was preparing for sleep. The angel meant for him to resume them, tightening his belt about him.

Verse 9. *Wist [knew] not that it was true*. The last word is from ALETHES, which Thayer defines with the same word used in the text, and adds by way of explanation, "an actual occurrence." Peter thought he was in a trance and was seeing a vision only.

Verse 10. *First and second ward* were the two soldiers stationed some distance apart to guard the prison. (See notes at verse 4.) The same supernatural power that loosened the chains unknown to the soldiers in the prison (verse 7), enabled them to pass these other soldiers unseen. The *iron gate* was what closed the outer wall of the entire prison structure. *Opened of his own accord*. The Lord was still working in the case and miraculously

removing all the barriers to Peter's freedom. *Passed through one street*. The angel remained with Peter until they were safely out of reach of the prison officers and guardsmen, then disappeared.

Verse 11. *Come to himself*. After the angel disappeared, Peter observed that he was on one of the streets of the city, out of the vicinity of the prison. He knew that to be there it was necessary to escape the two soldiers lying by him, and the two near the gate, likewise get through the iron gate in the prison outer wall. This is what caused him to come to himself and to conclude that his experience was not "only a dream."

Verse 12. *Considered the thing*. The last two words are not in the original. The phrase means that after Peter had come to himself he considered the whole situation and decided to call at the home of one of the disciples. It was at the home of Mark's mother, where a prayer service was being conducted on his behalf.

Verse 13. *Door of the gate*. The last word refers to the porch in front of a house, and the first is the smaller opening through which to pass into the porch. *Came to hearken* means to inquire or to ask, "who is it?"

Verse 14. When Peter answered her question she recognized his voice. She was so joyously surprised she seemed to forget to open the door. She left Peter standing and knocking and went to tell the group that Peter was at the gate.

Verse 15. We are not told just what the church said in its prayer for Peter. If it was a scriptural prayer, the disciples placed their request on condition "if the Lord will." The favorable answer to the prayer was so gladdening that they thought it was "too good to be true." The girl was so positive about her report they thought some explanation should be resorted to that would harmonize all the phases of the situation. Their solution was that it was *his angel*. After his definition of the Greek word for *angel*, Thayer explains that "guardian angels of individuals are mentioned in Matthew 18: 10; Acts 12: 15." Funk and Wagnalls Standard Bible Dictionary says the following: "There was a popular idea that each person had assigned to him a special guardian angel, and it is to this that Jesus refers in Matthew 18:

10. Peter's escape from prison (Acts 12: 15) is an illustration of the thought that when such guardian angel appeared on earth he took the form of the person guarded." Luke does not say anything for or against such a theory, since in the present instance the expression was that of the astonished group, and their statement had no authority in the nature of inspiration.

Verse 16. The continual knocking made it necessary to open the door. Their amazement caused them to make some kind of clamor. (See next verse.)

Verse 17. Peter indicated with his hand that he wished them to be quiet and listen. He then rehearsed the manner in which he was released from prison. He asked them to tell the good news, first to James and then to the other brethren. This was James the Lord's brother, and the writer of the epistle that bears his name. Special mention is made of him because of his prominence in the work at Jerusalem. (See chapter 15: 13; 21: 18; 1 Corinthians 15: 7; Galatians 1: 19; 2: 9, 12.) After giving the group his request, Peter went into another *place*. That meant some spot in Jerusalem, for in chapter 15: 7 we find him in the city and speaking to the assembly on the issue before it.

Verse 18. By the aid of the angel, Peter had escaped prison unseen by the soldiers, hence the confusion over his absence, but we know that the soldiers were innocent.

Verse 19. *Examined* is from ANAKRINO, and Thayer defines it, "To hold an investigation; to interrogate, examine, the accused or witnesses." The keepers would not be able to give Herod any information as to the escape of their prisoner, hence they were condemned to a death they did not deserve. Caesarea "was the official residence of the Herodian kings," according to Smith's Bible Dictionary, hence we have the statement that Herod went there and abode.

Verse 20. *Highly displeased* is from THUMOMACHEO, which is defined in Thayer's lexicon, "to carry on war with great animosity; to be very angry, be exasperated." Adjoining countries frequently have trouble with each other; we do not know what was the cause of Herod's displeasure. But the country of Tyre and Sidon became anxious for peace because it depended

on Palestine for necessary products. (See 1 Kings 5: 11; Ezekiel 27; 17.) A chamberlain is an intimate servant to a king, and the people of Tyre and Sidon induced this one to use his influence with his master. As a result, Herod agreed to drop hostilities and fixed a date when he would grant a hearing to the interested partisans.

Verse 21. When the set day arrived, Herod put on his royal garments and made a speech (of conciliation) to the people, which aroused them to making foolish compliments.

Verse 22. In their wild joy the people said that Herod was a god.

Verse 23. Josephus, Antiquities, Book 19, Chapter 8, Section 2, says that Herod did not rebuke the people for their flattery. Our passage merely states that Herod was eaten of worms and died. But the passage in Josephus cited above says, "A severe pain arose in his abdomen, and began in a most violent manner. . . . When he had said this, his pain was become violent. . . . And when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his abdomen for five days, he departed this life."

Verse 24. The significance of this verse is that in spite of all the disturbances going on between rival countries, the word of God gained many adherents.

Verse 25. *Fulfilled their ministry*. Chapter 11: 29, 30 shows this mission was to take the contribution collected at Antioch for the famine-stricken disciples in Judea. When they came back to Antioch they brought with them Mark, who is the writer of the book that bears his name.

### ACTS 13

Verse 1. I shall quote from the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia: "Antioch in Syria, the second capital of Christianity, and the third city of the Roman Empire in population (500,000), wealth, and commercial activity, was situated about 300 miles north of Jerusalem, upon the left bank of the Orontes, and 16 miles from the Mediterranean." The importance of this city is indicated by the fact that Paul had it for his starting place for the "missionary journeys" that he made, returning each time to report his work to the church there. It was the place where the disciples first called themselves Christians (chapter 11: 26). The church there was strong in num-

bers and talented men, including the ones whose names are mentioned in this verse.

Verse 2. See the notes on Matthew 6: 16 on the subject of fasting. The Holy Ghost speaks only through men, so this instruction was made through one of the prophets in the church. *Separate* is from APHOBIZO which Thayer defines, "To appoint, set apart, one for some purpose." Barnabas and Saul were to be thus appointed for a special work to which the Lord had called them.

Verse 3. We know from chapter 8: 18 that it required the laying on of an apostle's hands to confer any miraculous gift. Besides, Saul was already an apostle of Christ with the power to confer such gifts, hence no hands were laid on him for that purpose. But since such a manual act was used in those days for that important office, it came to be also a gesture of approval, similar to giving the "right hand of fellowship" (Galatians 2: 9). The church at Antioch *sent them* on this mission, which is one of the meanings of being an apostle.

Verse 4. The Holy Ghost sent them forth by speaking through the church. This was the start of the first "missionary journey." Seleucia was a seaport town, from where they sailed to Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea.

Verse 5. Salamis was one of the two chief cities of Cyprus, situated on its eastern coast. Here the missionaries preached in the synagogue of the Jews because they could meet people there. It was John Mark who was going with them as a *minister*. The original for that word is defined in the lexicon, "Any one who serves with his hands, a servant." John Mark went with them as an attendant to do whatever service that was needed.

Verse 6. Paphos was the other chief city of the island and it was situated on the western shore. *Sorcerer* is from MAGOS which is the word for "wise men" in Matthew 2: 1. See the notes at that place for a fuller explanation of the word. This sorcerer was using whatever talent of wisdom he had to make false predictions and to oppose the truth. Bar-jesus was the proper name given to this man as his personal name. Elymas (verse 8) was a common noun applied to him because

of some special meaning derived from the name.

Verse 7. Sergius Paulus was the *deputy* (acting governor) of the island, which was a part of the Roman Empire. This man was *prudent* (very intelligent) and wished to hear what Barnabas and Saul were preaching.

Verse 8. *Elymas the sorcerer* (See verse 6) was associated with the deputy in some way, and tried to prevent him from believing the Gospel. He was a Jew by race, and feared that if the deputy became a believer it would affect his standing with him.

Verse 9. *Also is called Paul*. A common but erroneous saying is that Saul's name was changed to Paul. The text only says that he was *also* called Paul. Thayer says that Saul was his Jewish name, while Paul (from PAULUS) was a Latin proper name. From here on the name Saul will not be applied to him except historically when referring to his conversion. *Filled with the Holy Ghost*. (See notes at chapter 4: 31.)

Verse 10. *Subtilty* means deceitfulness, which the sorcerer used with a *mischievous* motive. *Child of the devil*. The first word is explained at John 17: 12.

Verse 11. *Hand of the Lord* was said to let the deputy know that he (Paul) was working under Him. A man who is so blind that he cannot see even the sun is certainly very much so, although this was to be on this man only *for a season*. This miracle was *immediate*, as all of them were that the Lord brought to pass. The fact the man sought for someone to lead him proved the genuineness of the deed.

Verse 12. The deputy *believed* when he saw the miracle. That was according to the Lord's purpose for miracles, stated in John 20: 30, 31.

Verse 13. Pamphylia was in Asia Minor, and was a province of the Roman Empire. We are not told why John (Mark) deserted them, but the act was so distasteful to Paul that it later caused a serious dispute between him and Barnabas (chapter 15: 37-40).

Verse 14. Pisidia was another province in Asia Minor adjoining Pamphylia, in which the present Antioch was situated. The Jews assembled in the synagogues on the sabbath day to hear the reading of the law, since copies of it were scarce and only a few people could possess it. The preachers



went into it because it gave them an opportunity to speak to the people about the Gospel. It was the custom to invite persons in the audience to speak, after the reading service was completed.

Verse 15. *Sent unto them, saying.* The first word is from APOSTELLO, which Thayer defines at this place, "to say through a messenger." In a large room and in a numerous gathering of people, it would be more courteous and orderly for the rulers at the front of the auditorium to have a messenger go to the visitor and personally invite him to speak.

Verse 16. Paul *stood up* according to the custom in that community for public speakers. *Beckoning with his hand* was a gesture as an invitation or request for the people to give their attention to him. *Ye that fear God* was not said in flattery, but was an honest comment based on the fact that they were at that place for the purpose of hearing the reading of the law of God.

Verse 17. As a preparation for his main subject, the story of Christ, Paul rehearsed the history of the Jews, beginning with their sojourn in Egypt. *High arm* means one of great might and authority.

Verse 18. *Suffered he their manners* means that God tolerated them, not that He endorsed them. Instead, He frequently punished them for their sins.

Verse 19. The *seven nations* are named in Deuteronomy 7: 1. Joshua conquered 31 kings (chapter 12: 24), but many of them ruled only over single cities. The *seven nations* were important groups in Canaan. The division of the land is in Joshua, chapters 15, 16 and 17, and the division was decided by means of the lot.

Verse 20. This is the only passage that states the entire period of the judges. *Until Samuel* is said because he was the last one of the judges (1 Samuel 7: 15).

Verse 21. This is the only passage that states the length of Saul's reign.

Verse 22. The throne was not only removed from Saul's house but also from his tribe (Benjamin), and given to David of the tribe of Judah. It remained in that tribe as long as the kingdom existed.

Verse 23. The importance of David

was due to the fact that he was to become the ancestor, both fleshly and spiritually, of the Saviour of Israel and all the world.

Verse 24. *John had first preached* refers to the work of John as the forerunner of Jesus, baptizing people in preparation for His service. *Baptism of repentance* means that John baptized those only who repented. (See Matthew 3: 7, 8.)

Verse 25. This verse is explained at John 1: 19-27.

Verse 26. Paul was showing these Jews that they were the ones who were first to be concerned in the promise made to Abraham. (See verse 46.)

Verse 27. The leaders among the Jews did not know (recognize) Jesus nor the prophecies that went before concerning him. Notwithstanding, when they condemned him (Jesus), they fulfilled them (the prophecies that foretold that condemnation).

Verse 28. In spite of there being no charge sustained against Jesus, the Jews called for his death. In so doing they fulfilled the prophecies about him. (See verse 27.)

Verse 29. The pronoun *they* refers to both the enemies and the friends of Jesus, for it was the friends who placed him in the tomb. But the next verse shows that the enemies were still interested in His death, for they placed a guard about the tomb in the hope that he would not be able to come out alive. In this sense *they laid him in the tomb*.

Verse 30. This brief verse means that God overruled the acts and expectations of the Jews, by raising his Son to life.

Verse 31. As a rebuke to the murderers of Jesus, God saw to it that many "disinterested" people would have full opportunity to see Jesus after his resurrection.

Verses 32, 33. *Glad tidings* is another term for "Gospel," and Paul was announcing it to this synagogue audience. *Second Psalm*. The quotation stated by Paul can be found in no other place than the Psalm that is so numbered today. This proves that the Book of Psalms was arranged as to chapter numbers then the same as today.

Verse 34. *No more to return to corruption* means that Jesus arose from the dead to die no more. *Sure mercies*

of David. The second word is from *hosios* which Thayer defines at this place, "The holy things (of God) promised to David." These things included the resurrection of his illustrious descendant, Jesus, to die no more.

Verses 35, 36. Jesus was to be raised from the dead, but God also promised David that his "son" was not to remain in the grave long enough to decay. (Psalms 16: 9, 10.)

Verse 37. *Served his own generation* denotes that David did his duty in serving God in that age or generation. After doing that, however, he died and his body went back to the dust, while the One concerning whom the promise was made to David was raised before His body had time to decay, thus fulfilling the promise made to the patriarch.

Verse 38. *This man* was said to emphasize that Christ and not David—the new law and not the old—is the only means by which one must obtain forgiveness of sins.

Verse 39. *By him* has the same force as the italicized words in the preceding verse. The law of Moses could not bring the justification that is possible by belief in Christ.

Verse 40. Paul referred to a statement in Habakkuk 1: 5.

Verse 41. The prophet was writing about ancient Israel and the judgments that were brought upon them through the Chaldeans. Paul warned the Jews in his audience that a like judgment might come upon them. It was similar to his statements in Romans 15: 4 and 1 Corinthians 10: 11.

Verse 42. The synagogues were public places and came to be attended by Gentiles as visitors. They were less prejudiced than the Jews and wished to hear more of the subject that Paul was preaching. *Next sabbath* would be the next gathering in the synagogue.

Verse 43. *Congregation* is from the same Greek word as *synagogue*. (See the notes at Matthew 4: 23.) The more favorable among the Jews, also the Gentiles who had become proselytes to the Jewish faith, were so well impressed that they accompanied Paul and Barnabas as they went on their way out into the city. Seeing their attitude, Paul encouraged them to continue in the good life they were following. He was not ready to make a direct appeal for them to take their

stand for the Gospel; that will come soon.

Verse 44. In the week following the events just mentioned, the news of them was spread so that a large crowd came the next sabbath to hear the word.

Verse 45. No outspoken opposition was manifested against the preaching of Paul until the Jews saw the great throng of people. Their envy was so bitter that they even blasphemed the work of the preachers, denying the truths they were uttering.

Verse 46. The Gospel was intended for the whole world, but the Jews were to be given the "first chance" for it. Indeed, it was not even offered to the Gentiles until the case of Cornelius. And on that principle Paul made his first appeals to the Jews in his preaching. But when they rejected the favor, Paul considered it as rendering themselves *unworthy of everlasting life*. In turning to the Gentiles he was acting in keeping with the events of chapter 10.

Verse 47. Paul verified his work by quoting Isaiah 49: 6.

Verse 48. *Gentiles heard this* means the announcement of Paul that he was turning to them with the word of God. The Bible does not contradict itself, and the whole of God's dealings with man shows that no person will be either saved or lost by any predestined decree, but that all who will may be saved. The passages on the subject are too numerous to be cited here, but the reader should see 2 Peter 3: 9. All of the words in our verse are correctly translated, but the construction of the sentence is inaccurate. The proper form is, "As many as believed were ordained to eternal life," and the reader should see the notes at John 15: 16 on the word "ordain."

Verse 49. This publishing of the word was due to the conversion of the Gentiles throughout that territory, who repeated the good news to others.

Verse 50. These *devout and honorable women* were of the better class of citizens, who generally had much respect for established law. The Jews worked on their emotions and got them so excited that they became uneasy about the work of Paul and Barnabas. The result of the excitement was a movement of persecution against the preachers. This expelling was not a formal or legal act, but a persecuting one that forced them to leave.

Verse 51. *Shook off the dust.* (See the notes on Matthew 10: 14.) Iconium was a large city in the next province, a place of many wealthy people.

Verse 52. Notwithstanding the opposition of the envious Jews the disciples were happy. (See the notes on chapter 4: 31 on being filled with the Holy Ghost.)

### ACTS 14

Verse 1. As his manner was, Paul went into the synagogue to have opportunity to preach the word. Both Jews and Greeks believed the word, due to the convincing way in which Paul (and Barnabas) spoke the truth.

Verse 2. The Jews ordinarily had little or no interest in the Gentiles, but it grieved them to see these people becoming interested in the work of the brethren. They agitated them so much that it turned their minds against Paul and Barnabas.

Verse 3. *Gave testimony* was done as it was in Mark 16: 20. This was necessary because the New Testament had not been produced, and something was required to prove that the preachers were not frauds.

Verse 4. The multitude was divided in sentiment between the Jews and the *apostles*. The last word will be explained at verse 14.

Verses 5, 6. This *assault* did not reach the stage of actual attack, for the men heard about it and escaped. The word means "a hostile movement" according to Thayer, and would have ended in violence had Paul and Barnabas remained in the city. Lystra and Derbe were in another province nearby, and the preachers stopped at Lystra first.

Verse 7. Persecution did not dampen the devotion of the missionaries, for at every opportunity they preached the Gospel to all who would hear it.

Verse 8. *Impotent* means to be weak, and this man had been too lame in his feet to walk, having been that way since his birth.

Verse 9. *Faith to be healed.* Paul knew the man showed the proper attitude toward the preaching, and that frame of mind would prompt him to cooperate with the apostle.

Verse 10. Paul put that faith to a test by telling the man to stand. Sure enough, he proved his faith by his works by leaping and walking.

Verse 11. Lycaonia was the province where Lystra was situated. This miracle was so unusual that the heathen people of the country thought Paul and Barnabas were gods; that is, the planets (which these people worshiped) in the form of men.

Verse 12. The planets *Mercurius* and *Jupiter* had these characteristics as indicated in the work of Paul and Barnabas, according to the heathen mythology.

Verse 13. True to their opinion of the preachers, the heathen priest of that city was preparing to do homage to them as gods. The oxen were for the purpose of sacrifice, and the garlands were to be used as crowns.

Verse 14. *Apostles Barnabas and Paul.* The first word is from *apostolos* which Thayer defines, "A delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders." The outstanding idea in the word is, "one sent." Both these men had been "sent" out by the church at Antioch (chapter 13: 3, 4), and hence were apostles of that church. It is true that Paul was an apostle of Christ independent of the church at Antioch, but when the two are mentioned together as apostles, it means their commission from that church. They manifested much displeasure at the attempt to treat them as gods.

Verse 15. Some men would be vain enough to enjoy being worshiped, but Paul and Barnabas were true worshipers of the God of creation. A part of their mission among the heathen was to lead them out of such vain worship. Instead of worshiping the planets, men should honor Him who created those planets. (See James 1: 16, 17.)

Verse 16. God *suffered* nations to walk in their own ways. That is different from permitting it, for that would be equivalent to endorsing it.

Verse 17. The *witness* consisted of the blessings of nature. These heathen should know that none of the planets could bestow such things on the world.

Verse 18. It took all of this teaching to prevent the people from performing religious services to Paul and Barnabas.

Verses 19, 20. Persecution is a persistent evil, even following the victims from place to place. Note the inspired writer says only that they *supposed* that Paul was dead. There is no evidence of any miracle having been per-

formed upon Paul to revive him. Neither is there any proof that he was unconscious. A man can be so stunned that he would be unable either to move or speak for a while, and yet retain full consciousness. But this condition did not continue very long, for the disciples were standing about him, and they certainly would not have neglected doing something for his body before long. But without any help, while they were looking on, Paul got up and went into the city, with no sign of bodily injury indicated. Therefore, to connect this incident with 2 Corinthians 12: 1-4 is pure speculation.

Verse 21. Derbe was the farthest city to which they went in this part of their journey, which was given advance notice in verse 6. After preaching here, they retraced their steps and entered the very city where Paul was *supposed* to have been killed, then going on as far as Antioch where they did some work with the disciples they made at the previous visit.

Verse 22. Paul's persecution did not discourage him, but he did not want the disciples to be so either. The work in this city consisted in *confirming* or *strengthening* these brethren. And lest they might think that the things just happening showed that "something was wrong," he told them that entrance into the kingdom of God must be accompanied with much tribulation.

Verse 23. The original word for *ordain* in this place is defined by Thayer "To elect, appoint, create." Notice that they ordained *elders in every church*, which clearly shows that a plurality of elders in each congregation is the Lord's arrangement. Prayer and fasting was a voluntary devotional service performed in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion.

Verse 24. They passed through these places before (chapter 13: 13, 14).

Verse 25. Perga was in Pamphylia, the city where Mark deserted the work. They again preached in that city before going on to the seaport town of Attalia in Lycia.

Verse 26. From Attalia they sailed to Antioch in Syria, the place from which they started out on the work for which the church had recommended them.

Verse 27. The first thing Paul and Barnabas did was to report their work to the church. That gives us a good example of how evangelists should

act toward the congregation that is sponsoring their work. The church has the right to know where their evangelists have been and what they have been doing. The most important item of news was the opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Verse 28. This *long time* of their stay with the disciples will include an important visit to Jerusalem, which is reported in the next chapter.

## ACTS 15

Verse 1. This chapter introduces what is commonly called Judaism. The term is not to be found in the New Testament, but the doctrine is reported at various places. It was the principal error that afflicted the church in the first century, and whole chapters and books had to be written to expose it, which will be commented upon as we come to them in the COMMENTARY. The doctrine is that people under the Christian Dispensation must keep the Jewish law also in order to please God. The men who taught that doctrine are called Judaizers. These *certain men* who came to Antioch with this agitation did not truly represent the church at Jerusalem. (See verse 24.)

Verse 2. Paul and Barnabas understood the subject but could not satisfy the brethren. It was decided that they should go to Jerusalem about the matter, that being the first church, and the place where the other apostles were making their headquarters. Certain brethren from Antioch were to go with Paul and Barnabas.

Verse 3. *Being brought on their way* was done by an escort of honor, similar to the circumstance in chapter 21: 5. Phenice and Samaria lay between Antioch and Jerusalem, and in passing through those regions Paul and Barnabas informed the brethren of the Gentile conversions, which was good news and caused much rejoicing.

Verse 4. The church and its elders with the apostles, gave Paul and Barnabas a favorable reception, and listened to their report of good work done for God.

Verse 5. *Which believed* is said to denote that these Pharisees had accepted the Gospel. These were the kind of *brethren* who had caused the disturbance at Antioch, and they were agitating the same heresy before the group from that city.

Verse 6. The authority of the twelve apostles was universal (Matthew 19: 28; 28: 19, 20), but they were then working especially with the Jerusalem church; at the same time they respected the elders of the congregation and worked with them. It should be noted that this whole matter was in the hands of the church at Jerusalem, and it was thus not a "church council" as Rome uses that term.

Verse 7. After the discussion had gone on for some time, Peter "took the floor" to make a fundamental report touching the issue involved, referring to his own personal experience. The *choice* that God made is recorded in chapter 10: 5, 6, which made it fitting that Peter should "speak up" at the turn of the discussion.

Verse 8. *Knoweth the hearts*. God would not have chosen the household of Cornelius for this initial work of offering the Gospel to the Gentiles, had He not seen in them a heart that was worthy of the great epoch.

Verse 9. He *put no difference* in that both Jew and Gentile could become pure in heart by accepting the faith of the Gospel and not by the law of Moses.

Verse 10. *Nor we were able to bear*. The last word is defined in the lexicon by "endure," and the term *able* does not refer to physical strength, but that it was more than they felt prepared to endure. God never intended the ritualistic yoke of the law to be perpetual, but these Judaizers would have made it permanent.

Verse 11. Instead of that formal, severe yoke of the law, Peter declared that he and the Gentiles could be saved by the grace of God through Christ.

Verse 12. The disturbers of verse 5 were quieted by the speech of Peter, which gave Paul and Barnabas an uninterrupted opportunity to report their work among the Gentiles. They proved the righteousness of their work by detailing the miracles God enabled them to perform among the people.

Verse 13. This James was not one of the twelve apostles, but he was a very outstanding man in the church at Jerusalem. (See the notes and references on the subject at chapter 12: 17.) He was the next spokesman and his advice will be respected.

Verse 14. *Simeon* means Simon Peter,

and James is referring to what he declared in verse 7. *A people for his name* means that the Gentiles were to become a part of God's people and wear His name.

Verses 15-17. James not only endorsed the statement of Peter, but quoted the prophecy that foretold it. (See the prediction in Amos 9: 11, 12).

Verse 18. All of this was according to what God always knew he was going to do. With Him all dates are the same as "now" (Isaiah 46: 10).

Verse 19. *Sentence* is from KBINO, and Thayer's definition at this place is, "To be of opinion, deem, think." But we must bear in mind that this opinion was inspired by the Holy Ghost. (See verse 28.) That opinion was that the Gentiles converted to Christ were not to be troubled with the Jewish ordinances.

Verse 20. The law against eating blood is older than the law of Moses, having been given in Genesis 9: 4. And that against fornication is still older, being implied by the statement in Genesis 2: 24. For if this union makes them one flesh, then no other person can have relations with one of this pair without committing fornication. Hence these two laws are permanent regardless of what Dispensation is in force. But the subject of eating meat that had been offered to idols is a later one, and the law against it is based on special conditions that are more or less local. The Gentiles had practiced it so much that the Jews had an abhorrence for it. For that reason these Gentile Christians were told to abstain from it because of the Jews who were already somewhat prejudiced against the Gentiles; otherwise there would not have been any wrong in itself for them to eat it. That is the reason Paul taught as he did in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 on this subject. *Things strangled* were forbidden because the blood would not have been all removed from the beast.

Verse 21. Because this law of Moses was known wherever there was a synagogue of the Jews, it was not expedient to offend them unnecessarily by eating this meat.

Verse 22. The judgment of James was accepted by the entire group, the apostles, elders and the whole church. Paul and Barnabas were not left to return to Antioch and expect the church there to rely solely on their word for

the decision of the Jerusalem church. They selected two *chief men among the brethren* to go with them, carrying a written document backed up by the apostles and elders.

Verse 23. This document began as a greeting to the Gentile brethren, not only those in Antioch, but also those in the whole provinces of Syria and Cilicia.

Verse 24. *We have heard . . . went out from us.* This shows that the disturbers were acting without the knowledge and consent of the church in Jerusalem. The original word for *subverting* is defined by Thayer, "to unsettle." The agitation of these Judaizers confused the minds of the Gentile Christians.

Verse 25. The *chosen men* were Judas and Silas (verse 22).

Verse 26. *Hazarded their lives* means they had risked their lives for the sake of the Gospel. One notable case was that of Paul at Lystra, chapter 14: 19.

Verse 27. The main purpose of sending Judas and Silas was to confirm the letter by their oral testimony. That would prove the document was genuine as from the church.

Verse 28. This denotes that the letter was inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Verse 29. This is the same as verse 20, with a friendly closing additional.

Verse 30. When Paul and his group reached Antioch, they assembled the multitude to which the epistle was delivered, since all were interested.

Verse 31. *Consolation* is properly translated, for a part of Thayer's definition of the original word is "encouragement." It was reassuring to these Gentile brethren to know they did not have to take up the burdensome ordinances of the Jewish system. They also looked favorably upon the exhortation to abstain from the evils named in the letter.

Verse 32. *Judas and Silas being prophets.* Those were the days of spiritual gifts and these brethren possessed that of prophecy. That was doubtless the reason they were named as *chief men* and sent along with Paul and Barnabas to confirm the letter.

Verses 33, 34. *They were let go.* Silas and Judas were given friendly release so that they could return to Jerusalem, but Silas preferred to remain at Antioch longer.

Verse 35. Paul and Barnabas remained at Antioch for the time, since that was their regular headquarters. They employed their time *teaching and preaching* the word. The italicized words are used interchangeably all through the New Testament because the distinction is slight. The second has special reference to the first announcement of the Gospel, and the first meaning to give further instruction concerning the things preached.

Verse 36. The term "missionary" is commonly used to mean a worker in new fields, but the present verse says they were to revisit the places where they had been. Hence the "second missionary journey" of Paul does not start until chapter 16, verse 10.

Verse 37. Mark was a cousin to Barnabas (Colossians 4: 10). I do not know whether that influenced him in this contention or not.

Verse 38. Paul mistrusted Mark's stability on account of his desertion of the work at Pamphylia. (See chapter 13: 13 for the account of this circumstance.)

Verse 39. The original for *contention* is defined in Thayer's lexicon by the one word "irritation." Robinson defines it, "A paroxysm, sharp contention." It should be noted that no "doctrinal" difference came up between these brethren; it was only a matter of judgment. And after they each went his own way, they preached the same Gospel; neither was there ever any personal ill feeling between them. Instead, Paul made favorable mention of Barnabas afterward (1 Corinthians 9: 6; Galations 2: 9).

Verse 40. Silas had come with Judas from Jerusalem (verses 22, 34) and had remained. That made him available for the work with Paul on the next journey. *Being recommended* means they started on this journey with the good wishes of the brethren. Nothing is said on that subject about Barnabas, either for or against him. That is because the writer is continuing only with his report of Paul's work.

Verse 41. *Confirming the churches* means to strengthen and establish them.

## ACTS 16.

Verse 1. Paul had been in this city before and taught many people (chapter 14: 20, 21). Timothy is the other form of this *disciple's* name, of whom we will hear later.



Verse 2. This disciple had a good reputation at Lystra and Iconium.

Verse 3. Circumcision was a Jewish rite, and the national blood was in the veins of Timothy which made it right for him to be circumcized. *Because of the Jews*. The rite was not necessary to salvation (Galatians 5: 6), but Paul performed it on Timothy on the principle of 1 Corinthians 9: 20.

Verse 4. The *decrees* refers to the requirements stated in chapter 15: 29. Note that they were ordained by the apostles and the elders of the Jerusalem church, hence not a decision of a "council of churches" as Rome teaches.

Verse 5. *Churches established*. The starting of a church is not the same as establishing one. That has to be done by additional instruction concerning Christian duties.

Verse 6. This *Asia* was one of the smaller provinces of Asia Minor. We are not told why the Lord did not want them to do any preaching in that territory.

Verse 7. Mysia and Bithynia were in another part of Asia Minor than the *Asia* of the preceding verse. Paul *assayed* or made plans to do some work in those parts but was not permitted to do so because the Lord had other work for them to do.

Verses 8, 9. In obedience to the divine orders, Paul journeyed on until he came to *Troas*, the Troy of history. This is the time and place where the familiar Macedonian call was made upon Paul in a vision. The Gospel had never been preached in Macedonia, hence this will be new territory and the real start of his "second missionary journey."

Verse 10. *Vision* is from HOROMA which Thayer defines, "That which is seen, a sight, spectacle; a sight divinely granted in an ecstasy, a vision." *We endeavored* means they made preparations for the voyage. The first personal pronoun *we* denotes that Luke was in the group with Paul. *Assuredly gathering* means that they concluded with certainty.

Verses 11, 12. *Samothracia* was an island where Paul made his first stop over night. Next day he sailed on and landed at Neapolis on the coast of Macedonia. He went on to Philippi for the first stop of some days. This place was important because of its being a Roman colony. That means a commu-

nity of Roman citizens located there in Macedonia, but remaining subject to the mother country. (See verse 21.)

Verse 13. The *sabbath* did not mean anything special to Paul except as an opportunity to preach to some people. Out by a river side some women were *wont* (accustomed) to conduct a prayer meeting on the sabbath day. Paul entered into the group and began talking to them about the Gospel.

Verse 14. Smith's Bible Dictionary says Lydia was a Jewish proselyte, which accounts for her being present at the prayer meeting on the sabbath day, and also explains why she *worshipped God*. One meaning of *opened* is to have things explained so that the heart (mind) could understand what is said. The Lord did this for Lydia through the preaching of Paul, and the result was that she *attended* or accepted it.

Verse 15. *When she was baptized*. The wording of this phrase takes it for granted that a penitent believer in the Gospel will obey it. *Her household*. One part of the lexicon definition of this word is, "the inmates of a house"; it does not necessarily mean that they are related to each other. The inmates of Lydia's house were able to *attend* to the things spoken by Paul. *Judged me to be faithful* means that they regarded her as a true convert, and would be pleased to be her guests for some time.

Verse 16. This damsel did not possess anything supernatural as a bestowal from God. She had some kind of faculty by which she bewitched her patrons and made them think she could foretell events. She was somewhat like the modern "fortunetellers," and brought a good income for her sponsors.

Verse 17. All that the girl said was the truth concerning Paul and his group, but the Lord will not accept testimony from such characters as she.

Verse 18. Paul became tired of being hounded by this troublesome person. *Said to the spirit*. Whatever faculty she had of an extraordinary kind was what Paul commanded to leave the damsel, so that she would not have ability to mislead the people.

Verse 19. The love of money is a strong sentiment (1 Timothy 6: 10), and it caused these wicked masters of the girl to plan the persecution of Paul and Silas. They drew them by force

into the *marketplace*, "a place where assemblies are held."—Thayer.

Verses 20, 21. They were not fair enough to state their true grievance, that they had been shorn of their means of unrighteous gain. Instead, they dealt only in generalities, and made false charges against Paul and Silas about their teaching. *Being Romans* is explained at verse 12.

Verse 22. *Rent off their clothes* in order to administer a scourging. That was done by requiring the victim to lie down with his naked back exposed to the scourger, and a heavy thong of leather or ropes was lashed across the body.

Verse 23. *Stripes* means wounds made by blows inflicted with a heavy whip. The original for *safely* is defined "assuredly" in Thayer's lexicon, which denotes to take every precaution possible to prevent the prisoners from escaping.

Verse 24. *Such a charge* indicated that the jailor felt a special responsibility for keeping of the prisoners. *Stocks* is from XULON and the primary definition is, "that which is made of wood." Thayer describes the instrument as follows: "A log or timber with holes in which the feet, hands, neck of prisoners were inserted and fastened with thongs." *Inner prison* means a cell with its own door locked, on the inside of the general prison which is also enclosed with locked doors.

Verse 25. Persecution can torture and hamper the body, but it cannot affect the spirit of a devoted servant of God, except to stir it to greater praises to Him who always hears the prayers of the righteous. Those of Paul and Silas were expressed at an hour of the night when men are usually asleep. The righteous men here were tortured into sleeplessness, but their songs of praise to God rang out into the midnight darkness and awakened the other prisoners.

Verse 26. The power that loosened the doors and bands was the same that released Peter in chapter 12: 7-10. With God one miracle is as easy as another.

Verse 27. The Lord would not interfere with the just operation of secular government. Doubtless the other prisoners were being held lawfully, and God would not perform a "jail delivery" in opposition to the law. Hence

he unfastened all the fetters but saw to it that no one escaped. It was sure death to a jailor to let his prisoners escape, especially after receiving *such a charge* (verse 24). He thought he would prefer suicide to the shame of being executed for failure in his duties.

Verse 28. All was darkness, yet Paul knew the jailor was about to kill himself. *Loud noise* was necessary to overcome the frenzy of the officer. *We are all here* was spoken by divine knowledge, for Paul could not have seen all the conditions naturally.

Verse 29. *Called for a light* was necessary because it was utter darkness in the cell where Paul and Silas were held. *Sprang in* means he rushed in excitedly and with trembling. He fell down before Paul and Silas because the miracle convinced him these men had been imprisoned unjustly.

Verse 30. *Brought them out* indicates the preachers were taken outside the jail. *What must I do to be saved?* The jailor knew that Paul and Silas were religious men, and that their imprisonment was in connection with their religious belief. But being a heathen, he knew nothing of the merits of their teachings. Now the miraculous demonstration on behalf of them convinced him that they represented some great and righteous Being, whose law it would be dangerous to ignore. That also made him realize that he was due to suffer some kind of punishment unless something was done to prevent it, hence the question he asked of Paul and Silas.

Verses 31, 32. The jailor was a heathen and knew only the worship of idol gods. Paul's answer to his question meant only to cite him to the proper source of salvation. It was like telling an inquiring patient to put his trust in Doctor Blank, with the understanding, of course, that he would show confidence by doing what the doctor told him to do. We know that was all the statement of Paul meant, for he immediately *spoke unto him the word of the Lord*, which would have been unnecessary had the answer in verse 31 been all the jailor needed to do to be saved.

Verses 33, 34. Here was a situation similar to that in chapter 8: 35, 36. In one verse Philip preached Jesus and in the next the eunuch asked to be baptized. In our present case the preachers spoke the word of the Lord, then

the hearer arranged to be baptized. All of this shows that "the word of the Lord" means the commandments of the Lord including baptism. Verse 30 says the jailor *brought them out*, and then verse 34 says he brought them into his house. The baptizing took place between the two movements, which is explained by the act of immersion which requires their going to some place where there was plenty of water. *Washed their stripes* means the jailor bathed the wounds that the magistrates had inflicted on Paul and Silas, as a means of giving them some relief from their injuries. After the baptism the jailor served food to the preachers, while he and his household rejoiced in their newly-found religion.

Verses 35, 36. The officers evidently had learned something of the situation, and knew they had violated the law by their brutal treatment of the missionaries. They wished to get rid of them in as quiet a manner as possible. The jailor passed the word on to Paul and Silas and told them they might go.

Verse 37. Paul felt that such an unjust treatment as had been publicly inflicted on them should be reversed in as public a manner also. He refused to go in such a humiliating manner and demanded the responsible officers come in person and release them.

Verse 38. Being a Roman citizen entitled one to special consideration, and Paul and Silas had been denied such favors.

Verse 39. In their anxiety over the unlawful treatment of the prisoners, the officers came in person and very respectfully requested them to leave.

Verse 40. Paul and Silas did not leave the city until they had first visited the church in the house of Lydia, the first convert they had made in the place. It is remarkable that the very ones who had been the victims of cruel persecution were the ones to offer comforting words to others.

### ACTS 17

Verse 1. Amphipolis and Apollonia were cities in Macedonia, but Paul did not pause for any work until he reached Thessalonica, another Macedonian city. The existence of a synagogue made it desirable to stop in this place.

Verse 2. *Three sabbath days*. The Jews would be engaged in their regu-

lar occupations through the week, and on the sabbath days they would assemble to hear the reading of the Scriptures. Paul based his reasoning on things written in that very book.

Verse 3. Thayer defines *opening* as follows: "To explain, expound," and *alleging* is virtually the same, except that it is a somewhat closer application of the statements in the Old Testament. Paul showed these Jews that their own Scriptures set forth the doctrine that he was giving them, namely, the death and resurrection of Jesus (Psalms 16: 8-10). Having proved by their own sacred writings that Jesus was to fulfill such predictions, he declared Him to be the Christ.

Verse 4. *Consorted* means they associated with Paul and Silas because they believed their teaching. The *devout Greeks* were the ones religiously inclined, and *chief women* were the leading persons among the female sex.

Verse 5. The original for *lewd* is defined "bad" and *baser sort* means the loafers around the markets. Such characters would be inclined toward the kind of service these envious Jews needed in their wicked plots. Paul and Silas were staying in the house of Jason (verse 7), but at the present time were not "at home."

Verse 6. Being disappointed at not finding the preachers, they took their spite out on Jason and other brethren by forcing them before the rulers of the city. *Turned the world upside down* was a reference to the success accomplished by Paul's preaching.

Verse 7. *Whom Jason hath received* was said as explanation for having him now in the presence of the rulers. *Do contrary to the decree of Caesar* was a false charge. Paul always taught obedience to the laws of the land, but he did not agree with the contentions of the Jews about the law of Moses.

Verse 8. The *rulers* owed their official position to Caesar, and did not want any condition to arise that might endanger their place in the public affairs. That is why the report of the envious Jews *troubled* them and the people.

Verse 9. *Taken security* denotes that they either required a deposit of money, or found some responsible person to stand good for their conduct toward the laws of the land. Such an arrangement would satisfy Caesar should he hear about the commotion in one of his provinces in Macedonia.

Verse 10. When Paul was chased from one city to another he continued his work for Christ. Berea was another city of Macedonia and contained a synagogue.

Verse 11. *Noble* is from *eugenes* and it means of better breeding; more highly cultured. Such a character caused them to be more reasonable in their attitude toward the preaching of Paul and Silas. Instead of attacking them enviously, they investigated their claims by reading up on the subject. If the preachers made an argument based on the statements of the Old Testament, the Bereans looked into the book to see if they were telling the truth: that was fair for both speaker and hearer.

Verse 12. Finding that Paul was giving them the truth, many were made believers. *Honorable* is from *EUSCHEMON* which Thayer defines, "of good standing, honorable, influential, wealthy, respectable." All classes need and are offered the benefits of the Gospel, but it is well to know that it found those who accepted it among the high ranks of society as well as the lower classes.

Verse 13. The envy of the Jews knew no bounds, so when they heard of the work of the Gospel at Berea they pursued the preachers there. *Stirred up the people* means they worked up a sentiment against Paul which cut off further opportunity for his work there.

Verse 14. The feeling seemed to be more sharp against Paul than against Silas and Timotheus, so that he was induced to leave for other parts leaving them for the present.

Verse 15. An escort of brethren went with Paul on his sea voyage until they came to Athens, which was the chief city of Greece, the province joining Macedonia on the south. From there they returned to Berea, taking back with them an order for Silas and Timotheus to come to Paul as soon as possible.

Verse 16. Paul could not wait until Silas and Timotheus came to him when he saw the conditions. *Given to idolatry* is rendered "full of idols" in the margin, which is correct as may be seen by other verses in this chapter.

Verse 17. *Therefore* is not a conclusion from the preceding verse because the synagogue was a meeting place of the Jews who were not idolaters. But the people in the *market* were a mixed group and contained idolaters. The

verse means that Paul followed his usual practice of preaching the Gospel, first in the synagogue where he could meet the Jews, then in any other place where he could find some hearers.

Verse 18. Athens was the chief city of Greece and the seat of learning and civilization for that province. Hence Paul would encounter various classes of citizens whose ears were alert for any literary or philosophical subject that might be introduced. The Epicureans were a class founded by Epicurus, who taught that fleshly pleasure should be the chief purpose of man on earth. The theory of the Stoicks was almost opposite of the Epicureans, but it was based chiefly on the supposed importance of philosophy. It is easy to see why both these groups would criticize the Gospel which seeks to find true pleasure in humble devotion to the risen Lord.

Verse 19. Areopagus and Mars' hill (verse 22) were names for the same place, which was the highest court in Athens in the days of the apostles. Not only were criminal cases tried in this court, but also any subject thought to affect the public welfare.

Verse 20. Thus far there was nothing particularly objectionable to the Athenians in the teaching of Paul, but he had raised their curiosity by introducing a new subject, or one that was *strange* which means an outside or unknown (to them) matter. They told him they wished to know what it all meant.

Verse 21. The inspired writer throws in this verse by way of explanation of the curious inquiry of the people. Nothing was as exciting to them as the prospect of hearing something that had not been told them before. It will develop that what Paul had to offer the Athenians was *new* to them, but yet did not meet their demands that it must be something new along the lines of philosophy.

Verse 22. Paul was invited to speak before this highest court in Athens. His audience was composed of idolaters and various classes of philosophers and Greek statesmen. His introduction was not intended as a criticism but rather a friendly comment. The adverb *too* is not justified by the Greek original, for it does not have any separate word in the Greek at this place. It is a part of the original for superstitious, so the phrase *too superstitious* should be rendered "very re-

ligious." This extensive religious attitude was indicated by the presence of so many idols or altars. (See verse 16.)

Verse 23. Paul had not seen them engaging in their idolatrous services. *Devotions* is from SEBASMA which Thayer defines, "whatever is religiously honored, an object of worship." An *altar* was an elevated place on which to offer sacrifices. Among the places Paul saw was one that had an inscription written upon it which read *to the unknown god*. The occasion for such an altar is explained by Horne, Introduction, Volume 1, Page 90, as follows: "The Athenians, being afflicted with a pestilence, invited Epimenides to lustrate [purify with sacrifice] their city. The method adopted by him was, to carry several sheep to the Areopagus, whence they were left to wander as they pleased, under the observation of persons to attend them. As each sheep lay down, it was sacrificed on the spot to the propitious [gracious] God. By this ceremony, it is said, the deity was satisfied; but as it was still unknown what deity was gracious, an altar was erected to the unknown God on every spot where a sheep had been sacrificed." It is not known just what actually took place, but since all blessings come from the true God, if any miraculous cure was bestowed upon the community, it was through the goodness of Him; hence the Athenians ignorantly gave the credit for their great blessing to the right One, whose existence and power Paul *declared unto them*. These idolaters actually did *worship* the true God though ignorantly. (See the note at Matthew 2: 2 on *worship*.)

Verse 24. The God who made everything in the universe could not be expected to  *dwell* (be confined) in man-made temples, and certainly not in as small and lifeless a thing as an altar of earth or stone, such as the Athenians had erected for the purpose.

Verse 25. The Athenians offered their worship to God in connection with a supposed case of healing, hence Paul selected a word from their vocabulary that pertains to the art of medicine and healing. *Worship* in this passage is from THERAPEUO which Thayer defines, "to heal, cure, restore to health." The word also means "to serve," but Paul used it in the first sense because the Athenians were worshiping God (unknowingly) in connection with their experience in the healing of the epidemic. Since God

is the source of all the creatures of life and health, it would be foolish for such to think they could grant healing to Him through the works of their hands.

Verse 26. *One blood*. The Lord said that the blood is the life of all flesh (Leviticus 17: 14), and God is the creator of all flesh. The conclusion is that all life originated with Him, therefore it is foolish to think that he can be represented by objects made of metal or stone. *Determined the times before appointed*. Not that the moral conduct of man has been predetermined by the Lord regardless of his own will, for that would rule out any human responsibility. But the statement just means that the universe did not come "by chance," but was the intelligent work of God, who did set a boundary to the habitation of man which is *the face of the earth*.

Verse 27. This restricted location for man's habitation away from the visible presence of God made it necessary *that they seek the Lord*. *If haply*, etc., is said in the sense as if it said, "with the intent that man would seek or feel after the invisible God and succeed in finding Him through the evidence shown in chapter 14: 17."

Verse 28. If we live in Him with all our activities of life, it follows that He is greater than any of us or anything that we can make, which is another argument against man-made images of God. Making reference to their own heathen poets was good psychology. They would be bound to accept their own authors, and finding that they taught the same things as Paul, it would incline them to think favorably of the statements of the apostle. Chief of the quotations was the one that spoke of man as the offspring of God.

Verse 29. It would be inconsistent to think that living, intelligent beings like men could be the offspring of a God who was represented by objects made of stone or metal.

Verse 30. *Winked at* is from HUPEREIDON which Thayer defines, "to overlook, take no notice of, not attend to." The heathen in times past did not have the complete information that was to be given the whole world through the Gospel, hence God did not hold them to strict account. That leniency was to end with the period of the law of Christ, and all men were then required to come to repentance. (See 2 Peter 3: 9.)

Verse 31. *Appointed a day* but not a "date." If God has predetermined just when the judgment day is come, it must be learned from some passage other than this one. It means only that God has made an appointment with the risen One to be the judge of the people of the world whenever the proper day arrives. By raising Jesus from the dead, God not only proved that He is able to manage "all things after the counsel of his own will" (Ephesians 1: 11), but gave notice that all must meet the risen Jesus as the Judge.

Verse 32. The Athenians were interested in philosophical subjects only, as they regarded them, and the resurrection from the dead did not come under that classification in their estimation. Some of them made fun of the matter, but others were a little more polite and promised to give it their attention at some other time.

Verse 33. Paul did not take their promise seriously, but departed from the court and went elsewhere in the city.

Verse 34. The preaching of Paul was not an entire failure as to results, for one member of the Aeropagite court became a believer, also some private persons.

### ACTS 18

Verse 1. Paul is traveling without his companions, Silas and Timotheus, who have not reached him yet (verse 5). Corinth was another important city of Greece, in which was planted what became one of the most noted churches of the apostolic period.

Verse 2. Aquila was not a native of Italy but had resided for some time in Rome. Claudius (Caesar) was the Roman emperor, and for some reason (not very clearly explained by the historians and commentators) had formed a dislike for the Jews and had banished them from the city; Paul met this man and his wife Priscilla.

Verse 3. *Same craft* means the same trade or occupation, which was tent-making. That was Paul's trade also, which naturally caused them to have a common interest in each other, so that Paul made his stay with them. This association gave him an opportunity to instruct them thoroughly in the Gospel, so that they became earnest disciples who were able to teach others. (See verse 26).

Verse 4. *Reasoned* is from the same word as "disputed" in chapter 17: 17.

Paul did this on the sabbath days because the Jews met then to read the law, and the Greeks often attended as spectators.

Verse 5. The original for *pressed* is defined by Thayer, "to urge, impel." Silas and Timotheus finally reached Paul (chapter 17: 15), and their arrival encouraged him to put all the more pressure in his preaching of the Gospel, affirming in the ears of the Jews that Jesus was Christ (the Anointed).

Verse 6. *Opposed themselves* means they set themselves in opposition to the teaching of Paul. *Shook his raiment* was an old custom of expressing one's attitude toward something very evil. *Blood be upon your own heads.* Whatever punishment they suffered would be their own fault because they had refused to hear the warnings of the Gospel. Paul usually gave the Jews first chance in his teaching, but if they rejected it he would turn to the Gentiles. (See chapter 13: 46.)

Verse 7. Paul left the synagogue and went into a nearby house, whose owner was a worshiper of God. (See the note at Matthew 2: 2 on *worship*.)

Verse 8. The audience in the synagogue had rejected Paul's teaching, but the chief ruler was an exception and became a believer, together with the members of his household. *Hearing, believed, and were baptized.* That was the scriptural procedure then and it is so today. A sinner must hear in order to believe (Romans 10: 14), and if he truly believes, he will be baptized in obedience to the One in whom he believes.

Verse 9. *Be not afraid* of the opposition mentioned in verse 6 or any other that might be threatened against him, but preach the Gospel to all he can meet.

Verse 10. *No man . . . to hurt thee.* Paul was to be opposed, but he would not be overcome by the enemy because the Lord assured him that He would be with him. This is the same assurance that he wrote to the brethren in Rome (Romans 8: 31). *I have much people in this city.* This was said in prospect because the Lord knew there were many who would accept the Gospel when Paul reached them with it. It was said on the same principle that Jesus meant when he said "I have other sheep" in John 10: 16.

Verse 11. Verse 8 says that many of the Corinthians became obedient believers, so it was *among them* that



Paul taught the word. And in a period of 18 months many more would hear and obey, so that the church in that city became one of the largest in numbers.

Verse 12. A *deputy* was an inferior officer in the government of Rome in one of the provinces. Achaia was a name given to Greece by the Romans. The ever-envious Jews brought Paul before the secular ruler in a disorderly manner.

Verse 13. *Contrary to the law*. They charged that Paul's teaching was contrary to the law of Moses. That was a false charge, because Paul had shown on more than one occasion that the Gospel system had even been predicted by the Old Testament.

Verse 14. Paul could and would have answered the false charge; but the "judge on the bench" interrupted him. He told the Jews that he would hear their complaints on any matter that pertained to lawlessness against the laws of the land.

Verse 15. The thought in this verse is that the Jews were wanting this man who was a secular judge, to hear a case of theirs that was strictly a religious dispute. He told them that he would not be a judge of such matters.

Verse 16. This verse means that Gallio dismissed the case and cleared the court room of the complainants. This judge set a precedent that should be observed today. No secular court has any business meddling in religious controversies, and professed disciples of Christ ought to know better than to bring religious disputes into such courts.

Verse 17. The Greeks were the Gentile spectators in the court of Gallio and had heard the remarks to the Jews that he made in answer to their complaint. Sosthenes was a Jew and doubtless was a leader in the uprising against Paul. Their sympathy would naturally be for the apostles and against the Jews who had not always shown a favorable attitude toward the Gentiles. Hearing the declaration of Gallio, that he would not interfere with any dispute of the Jews concerning their religion, they decided to take the opportunity of showing their feeling against this would-be persecutor of Paul by this personal attack. While this action was one pertaining to "law and order," yet Gallio knew it was caused by religious agitation, and, being disgusted by the attempt of the

Jews to invade his court with an improper issue, took some satisfaction out of seeing them thus punished, hence he *cared for none of those things*.

Verse 18. Cenchrea was a port of Corinth, from which Paul sailed for the shores of Asia Minor. *Shorn his head*. The Jews had a custom of making personal vows, and at the termination of the period a man was to cut his hair that had been let grow while the vow was in force. This part of the formality was similar to the Nazarite vow in Numbers 6: 5-18, but it was not otherwise bound by the other requirements. For the custom of voluntary vows, see Leviticus 27: 2; 1 Samuel 1: 11; 2 Samuel 15: 7.

Verse 19. When Paul and his companions, Aquila and Priscilla, arrived at Ephesus, he separated from them and went into a synagogue as he was accustomed to do to preach.

Verse 20. Paul's teaching seemed to meet with favor among his hearers, for they asked him to remain longer, which his plans would not permit.

Verse 21. *Keep this feast*. It was the feast of Pentecost, one of the national feasts of the Jews. Paul was a Jew and had a right to observe the national customs of his race. (See chapter 16: 3.) After a brief stay at Ephesus he again sailed.

Verse 22. Paul landed at Caesarea on the coast of Palestine. As a brief "side trip" he went to Jerusalem to salute the church. We are not given any account of this visit further than the present statement. After this incident the great apostle to the Gentiles went to Antioch (in Syria), thus ending his second missionary journey.

Verse 23. This is the beginning of what is commonly called Paul's third "missionary journey." (See the comments at chapter 15: 36.) But he really revisited some churches that had been started previously, to *strengthen* or establish them. A church can be started in a little while, but it takes time and further teaching to establish it.

Verse 24. *Eloquent* is defined "skilled in speech" in Thayer's lexicon. *Mighty in the scriptures* means he was well acquainted with the Old Testament, and had learned something of the early teaching pertaining to the New. He was regarded as a good man and one devoted to the Lord.

Verse 25. Apollos was not a careless

man, and always taught others accurately as far as he had learned, but at this time he knew no baptism except what John preached and practiced. That subject will be explained at chapter 19: 4.

Verse 26. Aquila and Priscilla had been instructed by Paul (verses 2, 3), and were able to supply the points that Apollos lacked. It should be noted that *they* expounded the way of God, showing an instance where a woman helped to get a preacher better acquainted with the teaching of the Gospel.

Verse 27. Achaia was a name that the Romans gave to Greece. After Apollos was through with his work at Ephesus he wished to go over into Greece, and we will find that he stopped at Corinth. He left Ephesus with the recommendation of the brethren. After arriving in Greece he helped the believers who had experienced the *grace* of God.

Verse 28. Apollos approached the Jews with the same kind of arguments that Paul had used, namely, showing them that their own scriptures (the Old Testament) predicted the coming of Jesus as the Christ or the Anointed One.

### ACTS 19

Verse 1. Paul came to Ephesus after Apollos had left that city and gone to Corinth in Greece. (See chapter 18: 27, 28.) The *disciples* he found at Ephesus were evidently the persons whom Apollos had baptized (chapter 18: 25).

Verse 2. Paul knew that in those days a baptized believer was entitled to the gift of the Holy Ghost (see the comments at chapter 2: 38), but he also knew that even their baptism did not automatically bestow that gift until an apostle had laid hands on them (chapter 8: 18). He did not know whether that special favor had yet been given to them, hence the question stated in this place. When they told him they had not heard anything about such a subject as the Holy Ghost, it showed that something was wrong.

Verse 3. In answer to his question about their baptism, they told Paul that they had been baptized unto John's baptism. (See chapter 18: 25.)

Verse 4. The difference between "John's baptism" and "Christian baptism" is indicated in this verse. When John baptized a man he was required to believe on Christ who *was to come*. He had not yet come and hence no

person could be baptized into His name or by his authority. But John was dead and Christ had come when Apollos was preaching, hence it was unscriptural to use John's baptism. Both baptisms were "for the remission of sins," and both had to be preceded by repentance (Mark 1: 4; Acts 2: 38). But the latter was by the authority of Christ which put the believer into His name.

Verse 5. These were rebaptized and it was into the name of Christ. No person but John could use his baptism, but the ones whom he baptized never had to be baptized again, for they were then *prepared for the service of Christ*.

Verses 6, 7. What happened when Paul laid hands on them, was what he was inquiring about in verse 2. Only those who were baptized with "Christian baptism" were entitled to that gift, and even then it required the hands of an apostle.

Verse 8. *Disputing* is from the same word as "reasoned" in chapter 17: 2. By reasoning on the subject, Paul was able to *persuade* some in favor of the kingdom of God.

Verse 9. After three months of effort before the general multitudes assembling in the synagogue, the opposition to the truth became such that Paul concluded he could accomplish more by working elsewhere. *Separated the disciples* means he withdrew with the ones who were truly interested and who were eager to hear more of the truth. *School* is from the Greek word *SCHOLE*. Robinson defines it, "leisure, rest, vacation, attention, devotion, study." He then explains it to mean, "A place of learned leisure, where a teacher and his disciples came together and held discussions and disputations." Thayer defines it, "Freedom from labor, leisure; a place where there is leisure for anything, a school." Moffatt renders it, "lecture-room." This "school," then, was a place maintained by Tyrannus, a kind of public auditorium that was open to the public for the free use of any persons who wished to engage in cultural and recreational activities.

Verse 10. This *school* was frequented by many people of all races and from all over Asia, for in the two years that Paul spent in his teaching there, the word of the Lord was heard throughout that area.

Verses 11, 12. *Special miracles* denotes those that were not commonly

performed even in the days of miracles. God is able to accomplish any kind of wonders and by whatever means He wills. As an encouraging support for the work of the apostle in this center of various thought and activity, the Lord saw fit to use the pieces miraculously that had been in contact with the preacher.

Verse 13. *Vagabond* Jews were some who were wandering around from house to house. An *exorcist* was a person who expelled demons from men by pronouncing some mysterious sentence, or by commanding the evil spirit by some important name. But even evil characters can be imitated and their work be pretended to be done by mere impostors. The present ones were frauds and pretended to be working through the name of Jesus; and to add weight to their pretense, they used the name of Paul.

Verse 14. *Sceva* was a high priest, and he had seven sons who were practicing this fraud, attempting to cast out a devil from an unfortunate man.

Verse 15. *Jesus I know*. This evil spirit was telling the truth, for the devils were originally in heaven and had been cast out because of sin (2 Peter 2: 4), and it was there that they had their acquaintance with Jesus. That accounts for the statements in Mark 1: 24, 34. Since these men were frauds the spirit did not recognize them.

Verse 16. Being possessed with a devil did not have the same effect on every person. In the present instance it produced unusual physical strength and activity. Acting through the man in whom the devil was dwelling, it pounced upon these pretenders and they fled from the house in fright and stripped of their clothing.

Verse 17. The word *fear* is used in the sense of respect in this verse, since it caused the name of the Lord Jesus to be magnified by both Jews and Greeks.

Verse 18. This respectful fear was proved by their confession of evil deeds.

Verse 19. These penitent Jews and Greeks did not stop with mere confessions, for the event about the exorcists convinced them that the business of dealing in trifles was wrong. *Curious arts* is from *PERIERGOS*, which is defined by Thayer as things "impertinent and superfluous," and he explains it to mean "arts of magic." These were

chiefly a system of superstitious performances, and they had their recipes written in books by which they would mislead their victims. When they became penitent over their sinful practices, they proved their sincerity by burning the collection of their evil formulas. Moffatt renders the value of the books to be 2,000 pounds of silver

Verse 20. The word of God grew, because every genuine demonstration of repentance was attributed to the power of that word over the minds of men. The increase of the word means that the number of believers in the word was increased.

Verse 21. *Purposed in the spirit* means that it was Paul's personal plans to accomplish the things stated. While he always intended doing and saying the things that were in harmony with the Holy Spirit, this was not an inspired purpose, for part of it was not carried out as he had *purposed*. He did actually *see Rome*, but not until he was taken there as a prisoner (chapter 28: 16).

Verse 22. Paul's purpose was to leave Ephesus and go through Macedonia and Achaia (Greece), but he did not intend starting at once, for he wished to spend some more time in the city. Timotheus and Erastus usually traveled with Paul as co-workers, but he released them to go ahead and work in the region of Macedonia while he was still in Asia.

Verse 23. *That way* is a phrase applying to the Gospel plan, so used because of its preeminence. (See verse 9; chapter 9: 2.) The original word for *stir* is defined, "commotion, stir, tumult" in Thayer's lexicon. It was because of the interference it was making with many of the evils in the community.

Verse 24. Diana was a heathen goddess and a temple was built for her at Ephesus. Demetrius and his fellow workers made a great deal of money by forming *shrines*, which were small models of the temple, selling them to travelers who wished them for souvenirs.

Verse 25. Demetrius became concerned over the prospect of losing this business and he called a meeting of his partners in the trade.

Verse 26. Demetrius called attention of his fellows to the preaching of Paul, stating that it had extended throughout Asia. The part of Paul's preaching that worried him was that

against idolatry, especially the kind that was the work of human hands.

Verse 27. These men were not concerned about the merits of the religious issue, but feared that financial loss would come to them if people were made to believe in the one living God. That is the meaning of the statement, *our craft* [business or occupation] *is in danger*. It was the old story of men being more interested in their financial than in their spiritual welfare. Yet they pretended to be concerned about the dignity of the idolatrous goddess, that was worshiped by the world.

Verse 28. The inflammatory speech of Demetrius aroused the mob spirit of these tradesmen, causing them to make a boistrous shout in behalf of the goddess.

Verse 29. The cry spread until it affected the whole city, throwing it into confusion. The excited people let their wrath be exhibited against the associates of Paul. They took them by force into a place where public performances were put on.

Verse 30. Paul wished to appear in this public place to reply to the complaints of the mob. Fearing that he might be harmed by the angry populace, the disciples prevented him from entering the theatre.

Verse 31. *Sent unto him* denotes that a general state of confusion existed, so that special means had to be used to communicate with Paul.

Verse 32. This state of disorder made it impossible to discern just what the concourse was about or what the issue was.

Verse 33. A riot is regarded by all civilized nations as something worthy of being condemned. The Jews feared that their people would be blamed by the Greeks for the present uprising. They selected this prominent member of their race to speak in their behalf, and he prepared to make an address for that purpose.

Verse 34. This outcry was the opposite of an ovation. It was a disorderly explosion of anger and disrespect against the attempt of a Jew to make a speech in the public theatre of the Greek people. This raving mob was so worked up and tumultuous that it took two hours to get it quieted.

Verse 35. A *townclerk* was a secretary or public scribe; a man supposed to be informed in matters of law and

order. After two hours he was able to get the uproar subdued so that he could speak to the people. His purpose was to state the legal and fair aspects of the situation. He proposed to show that there was no call for such a demonstration in defense of the temple of Diana. That it was common knowledge that the people were devoted worshippers of their goddess, which it was believed had come down from Jupiter, another god of the Greeks.

Verse 36. The reputation of the goddess in the eyes of the Greek people was not even questioned by them, hence there was no reason for being reckless or unnecessarily hasty in acting against Paul and his companions.

Verse 37. The townclerk was not siding with Paul in his teaching, but wished to show his fellow citizens that they were mistreating him and his friends contrary to the principles of human rights. *Robbers of churches* is from *HIEROSULOS* which means those who commit sacrilege or who rob temples. Paul had not made any vicious attack on the goddess of the Greeks, but had emphasized the authority of the God of Heaven. But these heathen had correctly concluded that if the God whom Paul preached was the only true one, then all man-made objects of worship were false.

Verse 38. The reasoning of the townclerk was that provision had been made by the law of the land, whereby all just complaints could be handled. *Deputies* were men authorized to represent the government in the disputes arising between man and man.

Verse 39. By *other matters* he meant subjects that were differences of opinion only and not involving any personal misconduct. *Lawful assembly* means one called by the proper authorities and in accordance with the law.

Verse 40. The townclerk feared that the higher authorities might bring a complaint against the community because of the riot.

Verse 41. The mob was dispersed without further disorder, because the people had been shown the lawlessness of their actions.

## ACTS 20

Verse 1. *The uproar* refers to the disturbances recorded in the preceding chapter. After some parting words, Paul left for Macedonia which was his

previous purpose according to chapter 19: 21.

Verse 2. Paul spent some time with the churches in Macedonia, such as Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. Greece was the province immediately south of Macedonia.

Verse 3. Syria was a part of Asia, and it contained such important places as Troas and Ephesus. After spending some time in Greece, Paul intended crossing by water over to Asia. Hearing of a plot of some kind being formed by the Jews, he changed his plans and retraced his journey through Macedonia.

Verses 4, 5. These persons were associated with Paul in the good work, but were evidently not involved in the plot of the Jews. They went on ahead across the sea and stopped at Troas where they awaited the coming of Paul and Luke, he being with Paul as the first personal pronoun *us* denotes, and as he is the author of this book (chapter 1: 1).

Verse 6. Having been in Philippi some time (verse 3) on this return journey, he and Luke went aboard a ship bound for Troas, where the group of the preceding paragraph was waiting for them. *Days of unleavened bread* is mentioned only by way of indicating the date or time of year that had arrived.

Verse 7. *Break* is from the same Greek word as it is in other places, regardless of whether a common meal is meant or that of the Lord's Supper. The connection must determine in each case as to what sense is used. In the present passage it could not mean a common meal, for the disciples would not come together for that purpose; they went "from house to house" (chapter 2: 46). Likewise, they would not have done so especially on the Lord's day any more than on some other day. The conclusion, then, is that it means the Lord's Supper. Another unavoidable conclusion is that the Lord's Supper is to be observed by disciples who come together, and not done as a private performance in some convenient place suitable to the personal program of temporal entertainment. The preaching of Paul was incidental because he chanced to be present, not that they came together for that purpose. However, the incident gives us an apostolic precedent for having preaching at the time of the regular Lord's day assembly if a

preacher is present. The long sermon was occasioned by the plans of Paul who intended continuing his journey the next day, and the interest in such a rare opportunity of hearing this great apostle held the services to the late hour.

Verse 8. *Lights* is from the Greek word LAMPAS, which was a device used as a torch and was fed with olive oil. The writer had just stated that Paul continued his speech until midnight, and his mention of the *many lights* was to explain how an assembly could conveniently extend its services that far into the night.

Verse 9. This verse is a simple statement of an event not especially important in itself, but furnishing an opportunity for Paul to work a miracle. The inspired writer is the one who says that the young man *was taken up dead*, so that it was not just the imagination of an excited crowd.

Verse 10. It should be observed that Paul said *his life is in him* after he had embraced him. The act of embracing the young man was when the miracle was performed that brought the life back into his dead body. (See similar acts in 1 Kings 17: 21; 2 Kings 4: 34.)

Verse 11. *Broken bread*. This was not the act for which the disciples had come together, for they did not know that such a lengthy service would be had when they assembled. But having been awake most of the night, and as Paul was soon to leave on a journey, it was courteous for them to set refreshments before him for his support.

Verse 12. This verse is an afterthought upon the event of the miracle of verse 10, showing the joyful effect of the apostle's performance for the young man and friends.

Verse 13. The entire group was making its way in the return from this third missionary journey, but Paul went on foot as far as Assos where the party was to join him.

Verse 14. At Assos the boat landed and took in Paul, then proceeded and came to Mitylene, a town on the island of Lesbos.

Verse 15. Three days after leaving Mitylene the group reached Miletus.

Verse 16. Miletus was 36 miles south of Ephesus, and in the time of Paul it was on the coast. He did not wish to spend much time in Asia (a small district in Asia Minor), because the feast

of Pentecost was near at hand, and he was eager to be in Jerusalem at that time. For information about observing Jewish customs and days, see the comments at chapter 16: 3 and 18: 21.

Verse 17. Paul knew he would lose less time by calling these elders to him while waiting for the ship to resume its journey, than for him to make this "detour" to Ephesus to see them. Chapter 14: 23 states that Paul ordained elders in every church, and evidently that included those at Ephesus.

Verse 18. The Ephesian elders complied with the request of Paul by coming to Miletus to meet him. This was to be a very important occasion, for Paul was to have a heart-to-heart talk with these rulers of the church, in which there will be some outstanding information that will be useful for all of us.

Verse 19. These elders knew about the severe trials the apostles had suffered, for many of them had taken place in their city (chapter 19).

Verse 20. *That was profitable.* The apostle never imposed any obligations or information upon the elders of the churches that would not be of assistance to them in their great work for the Lord. There are no "nonessentials" in the things the inspired writers have left to the world. Paul's teaching was done in the synagogue (*publicly*) and in the homes (*from house to house*).

Verse 21. Repentance here seems to be required before faith, which is really not the order of the items pertaining to the Gospel. (See the comments at Mark 1: 15.)

Verse 22. The original word for *bound* is defined "To put under obligation" by Thayer. Paul was always guided in his teaching and conduct of his office as an apostle, by the Holy Spirit that was sent to "guide him into all truth" (John 16: 13).

Verse 23. The Spirit did not give Paul the details of what was to come upon him, but he was told that he was to have a hard time. This "blanket" information really made a severer test of his faith than a minute statement might have been.

Verse 24. *None of these things move me* means that Paul was not disturbed by the prospect of persecutions, nor did he let it change his purpose to serve Christ faithfully to the end. *Finish my course with joy.* The true servant of God expects to receive his reward at the end of the race, not

while the conflict of this life is going on. *The ministry* refers to the charge delivered to Paul to "fight the good fight" (2 Timothy 4: 7) by testifying for the Gospel.

Verse 25. Paul did not make this sad prediction by inspiration. He did not know what particular experiences were awaiting him, but he knew that he would not be permitted to labor among the churches as extensively as before.

Verse 26. *Take you to record* means he was testifying to these elders with regard to his work among them. *Pure from the blood* denotes that he would not be held responsible for any unfavorable lot that might come upon them in the future.

Verse 27. This verse explains the statement in the preceding one. A preacher of the Gospel may not have the ability or opportunity to declare everything that pertains to the plan of salvation, and if so he will not be held accountable for such lack. But if he shuns or evades to proclaim a single requirement of the *counsel of God* that he could have made known, he will be charged with the full results of such evasion of duty.

Verse 28. *Overseers* is from EPISKOPOS and is the same word that is translated "bishop" in other passages. The word is defined by Thayer, "An overseer, any curator, guardian or superintendent." There is but one class of ruling officers in the church of the New Testament, and they are called by the three words, elders, overseers and bishops. The exception is the case of evangelists who have charge of churches not having elders (Titus 1: 5). *God* is the family name of the Deity, of which Christ is a member, making that word his own name as well as that of his Father. Hence the name *church of God* is equivalent to "church of Christ." It is his church because he purchased it with his own blood. The elders are commanded to *feed* this church which is likened to a flock, and the word in the original is POIMAINO, which is also defined, "To rule, govern." The Holy Ghost makes men overseers by revealing the qualifications and manner of appointment of such officers (1 Timothy 3: 1-7; Titus 1: 6-9).

Verse 29. The warning of this verse refers to false teachers from the outside, who would creep into the congregation and corrupt the members.



Verse 30. *Of your own selves* means that false teachers would arise among the elders. It is a fact borne out by history, that the great apostasy known as the "Dark Ages," was started within the eldership of the church, but this is not the most appropriate place to go into the details of that subject.

Verse 31. The three main duties of the elders are to feed, rule and watch. The first two are commanded in verse 28, and the third is stated here. Hebrews 13: 17 states for what or why the rulers are to watch, namely, for the souls of the flock, because the elders will have to give an account of their work with the members of the flock. The warning of three years included that recorded in chapter 19: 8, 10.

Verse 32. *Commend you to God* denotes that he advised them to look to God and to his word. That word is able to build them up or edify them in their work for Him. Such a life would make them heirs of the reward that is prepared for all who are sanctified or set apart for the service of the Lord.

Verse 33. Paul was not preaching the Gospel with the motive of obtaining the personal possessions of the brethren.

Verse 34. As proof of the preceding statement, Paul reminded them of his manual labor for the temporal support of himself and his traveling companions. (See chapter 18: 3.) Not that it would not have been right for him to receive financial support in his work, for he taught elsewhere that such support would have been right (1 Corinthians 9: 4, 14). But he refers to his own secular work as proof that temporal support was not his purpose in preaching the Gospel.

Verse 35. Another purpose Paul had in his manual labor was to set an example of working to supply the needs of those who cannot work. The words of Jesus quoted are not recorded elsewhere in the New Testament, but Paul could repeat them by inspiration.

Verses 36-38. This paragraph does not require any particular explanation. It is a word picture of a very pathetic leave-taking between Paul and the elders. His conviction that they would never meet again was the saddest item in the circumstance. The labors in the midst of many trials and persecutions for the cause of Christ, had a tendency to bind the followers of the Lord close together. The manner of embracing

upon the neck was a custom of those times. The elders went with Paul as far as they could, then parted from him as he entered the ship.

## ACTS 21

Verses 1, 2. The ship they took at Miletus went as far as Patara only, where the group had to change over to another vessel bound for Phenicia. That was a small tract of country on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

Verse 3. *Discovered Cyprus* means they came in sight of that island, but passing it on their left they sailed on into Syria, the larger territory of which Phenicia was a small part. The ship landed at Tyre, an important seaport of the last named country. Here the ship was to unload its cargo which made a delay in the journey of seven days.

Verse 4. *Through the Spirit* applies to the general condition of persecution that would beset Paul, not that it was an inspired directive for him not to go.

Verse 5. *Brought us on our way* means that they all went with them to "see them off." Leave-taking was often done in connection with a prayer service. It was done when Paul and the elders separated (chapter 20: 36).

Verse 6. After saying good-bye they separated. The disciples went to their homes and Paul and his company went into the ship which was ready to sail again.

Verse 7. Paul and his group ended their sea travel at this town. There were some brethren here with whom they visited for one day.

Verse 8. This traveling was done by land, bringing them to Caesarea which was the headquarters of the Roman government in Palestine. Philip was one of the deacons appointed in chapter 6. He is called the evangelist because of such work as he did as recorded in chapter 8.

Verse 9. These *virgins* were the maidens mentioned elsewhere and their prophesying fulfilled the prediction made in Joel 2: 28, 29 and quoted by Peter in Acts 2: 17, 18.

Verse 10. This is the same *Agabus* who made a prediction in chapter 11: 28. The primary meaning of a prophet is a foreteller, although it is not restricted to that definition, but sometimes is used of those who edify or exhort (1 Corinthians 14: 3). *Agabus*

was a prophet of the former kind, those being the days of spiritual gifts.

Verse 11. See the note on "prophets acting" at 1 Kings 20: 35 in volume 2 of the Old Testament Commentary. Agabus took this dramatic manner of making his prediction to impress its importance upon the group.

Verse 12. The whole group believed the prediction of Agabus, and in their anxiety and love for Paul, tried to persuade him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Verse 13. Paul did not worry over the prediction, but he was vexed because of the attitude of the group. He declared his willingness to go even further in his endurance for the sake of Jesus. He was willing to die for him if need be, although Agabus had not included that in his prediction.

Verse 14. *The will of the Lord be done* indicates their resignation to whatever lot might befall the beloved apostle. His fortitude had the effect of reconciling them to the program that Christ might have mapped out for him.

Verse 15. *Took up our carriages* is all from APOSKEUAZO, which Thayer defines, "To pack up and carry off." We means Luke, Paul and the others of their company.

Verse 16. *Mnason* was formerly of the island of Cyprus but was now living in Jerusalem. He was returning home with this group and arrangements were made for them to stay with him.

Verse 17. *Brethren received us gladly* indicated a friendly attitude toward the brethren of Paul's group. This was not only because of the common interest they had in the cause of Christ, but there were certain questions that had arisen among the Jewish Christians that they wished Paul to clarify.

Verse 18. The prominence of this James has been mentioned before. He is the one called "the Lord's brother" in Galatians 1: 19, and is the one in Acts 12: 17; 21: 18; 1 Corinthians 15: 7 and Galatians 2: 12. It is understandable, then, why Paul sought his company in the presence of the elders.

Verse 19. One of the main subjects of interest in those days was the admittance of the Gentiles to the benefits of the Gospel.

Verse 20. While many of the brethren rejoiced in the conversion of the Gentiles, they were confused as to their proper relation to the national

customs of the Jews under the law of Moses. *Zealous* of the law means they had a desire to continue the aforesaid customs of the law even though they had embraced the Gospel. They had the right to do so (chapter 16: 3; 18: 21), but did not understand why the Gentiles did not also.

Verse 21. Paul taught that no one was to be justified by the law of Moses. This teaching of the apostle was misunderstood and some thought that he also opposed the Jews who observed the old practices even though they did it merely as national customs. These elders understood Paul's position on the subject, but many of the Jewish brethren did not, and they were informing him of the situation.

Verse 22. Paul was told that there would be an assembling of these zealous Jewish disciples in order to inquire into the subject.

Verses 23, 24. As a proof that Paul had not turned against the law as far as the national customs were concerned, they told him of an opportunity just at hand where he could engage in one of those customs, which was in regard to vows and the formalities required. The directions for observing this vow are in Numbers 6th chapter.

Verse 25. This refers to chapter 15: 23-29.

Verse 26. Paul complied with the advice of the elders. When he did so he carried out a principle he set forth in 1 Corinthians 9: 20.

Verse 27. Paul had to be in the temple to perform the custom mentioned in the preceding verse. That attracted the attention of the *Jews of Asia*, a small Roman province in which was the city of Ephesus. They had known of Paul's work in their home city and still had a prejudice against him. They raised a commotion among the people and caused them to threaten Paul with violence.

Verse 28. Like most riotous demonstrations, the motive was a false accusation. The mob accused Paul of opposing the law. (See comments at verses 20, 21.) They even accused him of bringing some Greeks (Gentiles) into the temple for the purpose of corrupting it.

Verse 29. When people have the motive of persecuting a man whose teaching they do not like but cannot meet, they will take things for granted and

form wrongful conclusions. Paul was seen with one Trophimus somewhere in the city, then the people presumed that he had taken him into the temple to corrupt it.

Verse 30. A general uproar was caused and Paul was forcibly taken out of the temple. The doors were closed to prevent him from returning should he get loose.

Verse 31. *Went about to kill him* means they were actually beginning their acts of violence, and intended to continue until they had him killed (verse 32). Word of the riot reached the ears of the captain of the military.

Verse 32. The captain took a crew of soldiers with him to the scene of the riot. The appearance of this company caused the mob to cease beating Paul.

Verse 33. The captain partook of the mob spirit and mistreated Paul, although the apostle had not even been accused by any officer.

Verse 34. The riotous clamor of the mob confused the captain so that he concluded to remove Paul from them for further investigation, all the while treating him very roughly. The *castle* was the place that contained the barracks of the soldiers.

Verse 35. The mob spirit was so violent that Paul had to be carried by the soldiers to get him through the crowd to a place of personal safety.

Verse 36. *Away with him* was an outburst of rage prompted by the spirit of murder, for Paul had not even been accused by any legal witness.

Verse 37. While this military police was pushing Paul along, he asked permission to make a speech to the people in his own behalf. This request was made in the Greek language, which surprised the captain who thought Paul was an Egyptian.

Verse 38. The only fact that was present in both the case of the Egyptian and that of Paul, was that there was an uproar among the people. But the apostle was not to blame for the present riot, a truth seemingly unknown to the chief captain.

Verse 39. Paul did not answer the captain with a direct "no," but stated in brief his identity. Instead of being an Egyptian he was a Jew. Tarsus was *no mean city* which means it was no insignificant place. Paul's nativity, then, was an honorable and noted one.

On that basis he again asked permission to speak to the people.

Verse 40. After being given *license* or permission to speak, Paul stood on the stairway to be in sight and hearing of the people, making a signal with his hand requesting their attention. When talking to the captain (verse 37) who was a Gentile, Paul used the Greek tongue. Now that the crowd was mostly Jewish, he used their own language which he knew they could understand and would respect.

## ACTS 22

Verse 1. Paul's *defence* was to meet the charge, that he was trying to influence the Jews to disrespect the customs of the Mosaic system.

Verse 2. *The more silence.* An audience will be more willing to listen to a speaker if it knows that the language to be used is one that can be understood. As soon as Paul began to speak the people realized that he was using the dialect that was being spoken in that territory.

Verse 3. A part of Paul's *defence* consisted in answering the question of the chief captain in chapter 21: 33 as to "who he was." He was a Jew of Tarsus, which was recognized even by the Romans as an important city, to the extent that Augustus had made it a "free city," which means that all of its population would be classed as Roman citizens with all the privileges and honors accorded to such residents. As to Paul's cultural training, he had been instructed in Jerusalem by Gamaliel, a great teacher of the law. As to his religious attitude, he was as zealous toward God as were these Jews before him.

Verse 4. *This way* means the Gospel system of living. Paul's mention of persecuting its followers was to show that he had once shared the same opinion of them that was now being held by his hearers. That should at least suggest that he must have good reasons for his present position.

Verse 5. Paul referred to the facts mentioned in this verse to show that his former opposition to the *way* was done under the recognized authorities of the Jews, and that he was not merely a fanatic acting for the purpose of acquiring personal notoriety.

Verse 6. The original account of Paul's conversion is in chapter 9, and it is repeated here to show the background of his activities that had

brought him into conflict with the Jews. He had almost reached Damascus, the destination in the commission authorized by the Sanhedrin, when his progress was halted by a light from heaven over which neither Jews nor Gentiles had any control.

Verse 7. The account here and that in chapter 9: 4 mentions simply that Paul fell to the ground, while chapter 26: 14 says they *all* fell down. Both accounts are true, but Paul was the only one who heard the question from the *voice*.

Verse 8. Paul (or Saul) knew that the person to whom he was talking was not on the earth. When he was told that it was the person whom he was persecuting, he did not express any surprise or question as to how he could be persecuting anyone who was not among men. He understood the subject of responsibility and association to mean that "he that despiseth you [the disciples] despiseth me" [Jesus].

Verse 9. For comments on *heard*, see chapter 9: 7.

Verse 10. See the comments at chapter 9: 6.

Verse 11. The glorious power of the light was due to the personality of Jesus, who was then at his Father's right hand in the glory world.

Verse 12. Ananias was a disciple of Christ as well as having been devout under the regulations of the law. (See chapter 9: 12.)

Verse 13. Ananias called him *Brother Saul* because they were both Jews, and had been servants of God under the Mosaic system.

Verse 14. Saul had to *see the Just One* in order to be a witness of his resurrection. It was the wisdom of God that Saul should also hear the voice of Jesus, which would add weight to his testimony for the divinity of the risen Christ.

Verse 15. The testimony of Saul was to be based on seeing and hearing.

Verse 16. Both in this instance and in chapter 9: 18, Saul is said to have risen to be baptized. That was because the rite had to be performed by immersion. *Wash away thy sins*. The first word is used literally because the act of baptism really washes the body, and that act is necessary for the remission of sins. (See Titus 3: 5; Hebrews 10: 22). *Calling on the name of the Lord* is associated with the act of

obedience to the command of the Lord, which shows how such *calling* is to be done.

Verse 17. *Come again to Jerusalem* was three years later (Galatians 1: 17, 18).

Verse 18. The Lord knew the stubbornness of the people of Jerusalem, that they would not receive Paul's preaching, and hence he should not waste it on them.

Verses 19, 20. Paul refers to his former persecution of the disciples as an argument that the people of the city would certainly believe him to be sincere now. A man who had taken as active a part as he in opposition to the cause of Christ, would certainly leave no doubts of the genuineness of his conversion.

Verse 21. The Lord still knew best and was not willing for Paul's labors to be given to these inappreciative people. The apostle was to be sent away to preach the Gospel among the Gentiles.

Verse 22. *Gave him audience unto this word*. The Jews had an envious feeling against the Gentiles, and when Paul made his remark of being sent to this hated race by the Lord, they could not stand it any longer.

Verse 23. This verse manifests a state of mind that is disordered, and it explains why they cried out in the preceding verse that Paul should be destroyed. They did not even intimate any specific reason for their demand against the apostle, but instead they acted like madmen.

Verse 24. The chief captain was a Roman and a Gentile, and did not understand what that commotion was all about. He ordered Paul to be brought into the *castle* (the place that contained the soldiers' barracks) for bodily protection from the rage of the crowd. He also intended to torture (scourge) him in order to force him to tell the truth, which was an ancient practice that served as a form of "lie detector." As if the great apostle Paul had to be forced into telling the truth!

Verse 25. The centurion was the military officer assigned the duty of taking Paul into custody. Being a *Roman* will be explained at verse 28.

Verse 26. It was a serious offence to claim falsely to be a Roman. The mere statement of Paul, therefore, made a deep impression on the centurion.

Verse 27. Again Paul's word was all that was required, yet the captain wished to have the word personally from the lips of the apostle.

Verse 28. *Freedom* is from *POLITEIA*, which Thayer defines, "Citizenship, the rights of a citizen," and Robinson defines it in the same way. Being born within the territory of the Roman Empire did not always confer upon one the full rights of citizenship. Some special favors might be conferred upon a region that made all of its population full citizens of the Empire. That had been done for Tarsus, the city where Paul was born, which made him a full citizen of the nation. Sometimes a man could bribe the officers in charge and buy his citizenship, which was the way the captain obtained his.

Verse 29. *Examine him* means to make a judicial investigation, and it was to have been done in connection with a scourging. (See verse 24). The persons who had been called to carry out the scourging were dismissed. The captain was afraid because he had acted rashly in his rough handling of a Roman citizen. He felt that he might be called to account for improper conduct of his office.

Verse 30. On the morrow the captain concluded to take a more orderly course and "sift the case to the bottom" by calling in the accusers of his prisoner. He loosed him from his bonds and summoned the Sanhedrin to take charge of the situation.

### ACTS 23

Verse 1. No specific charge had been made against Paul, hence he had none to deny. It was appropriate, therefore, for him to make a statement to the effect that he was not conscious of any wrong ever having been committed. Paul had caused Christians to be slain and had committed general persecution against the church, yet his *good conscience included* that time. This proves that a man can be conscientious in doing wrong, which also gives us the conclusion that a good conscience alone will not justify one before God.

Verse 2. Ananias had the common but erroneous idea that if a man is conscientious he is right. To him the statement of Paul meant that he had never done anything wrong. He thought that such an assertion from one who had been opposing Judaism so persistently was one of arrogance. Smiting one on the mouth was an act of con-

tempt and humiliation, and not one especially considered as a physical punishment.

Verse 3. *Whited wall* was a figure of speech that meant Ananias was a hypocrite. It was similar to the words of Jesus in Matthew 23: 27. The hypocrisy of Ananias consisted in his posing as an administrator of justice under the law, and then directing an unlawful action against a prisoner who had not so much as been legally accused. It was like a judge in the courts of our land who will swear a jury to decide a case according to the law and evidence, then require it to bring in a "directed verdict." *God shall smite thee* was doubtless an inspired prediction. Smith's Bible Dictionary says Ananias was assassinated at the beginning of the last Jewish war.

Verses 4, 5. Paul agreed that the rulers of God's people should not be spoken against, and even cited the law that forbids such a speech (Exodus 22: 28). But the history of those times shows that Ananias was an evil character, who had been in difficulties with the civil authorities and had once been deposed from his office. Afterward, however, he assumed the place as president of the Sanhedrin, which is the meaning of Paul's words "sittest thou to judge" (verse 3). Knowing him to have been a usurper, the remark of the apostle, *I wist* [knew] not, etc., was the apostle's way of ignoring his assumption, thus showing him not to be entitled to the usual judicial courtesy.

Verse 6. Having disposed of their quibble over the highpriesthood of Ananias, Paul used the divided condition of sentiment in the Sanhedrin to bring to the fore the fundamental principle of the Gospel, the truth of which was the basis of his difficulties with the Jews. (See the note at Matthew 16: 12 on the differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees.) With regard to the most important difference between these sects, the belief in the resurrection, Paul declared he was a Pharisee.

Verse 7. Paul's declaration of faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, divided the multitude and set them at variance among themselves.

Verse 8. See the comments at verse 6.

Verse 9. Paul's declaration of faith had the effect he expected. The Pharisees believed in the existence of angels and spirits (verse 8), hence they were

prepared to listen to Paul as an inspired man. Moreover, they have given us a point on the subject of authoritative teaching, namely, to oppose the word of an inspired man is the same as fighting against God.

Verse 10. In the riot among the two sects of the Jews, their attention was turned upon Paul who was regarded as the cause of the disturbance. There was even so much indication of violence against him that the chief captain feared for his bodily safety. The reader should note that this act of soldiers under lawful direction was solely for the purpose of protecting Paul from mob violence. This should be remembered when considering the falsehoods of Tertullus in chapter 24: 6, 7. Paul was removed from the Sanhedrin by the soldiers and taken into the *castle* for his bodily safety.

Verse 11. The imprisonment of Paul in the soldiers' barracks was a friendly act as it pertained to his personal safety, but the whole situation was one of apparent danger, and one that had many discouraging phases. It was an appropriate time for the Lord to speak words of cheer to him. *Bear witness also at Rome.* See the comments at chapter 19: 21 as to when he would bear this testimony at Rome.

Verses 12, 13. A *curse* means some kind of harm to be wished upon one. This harm was to come upon these Jews if they ate or drank until they had killed Paul. It was a rash proposal, but there is no evidence that they stuck to it though Paul was not killed.

Verse 14. They notified the chief priests of their curse, thinking it would impress them with the genuineness of their determination.

Verse 15. Paul was in the castle or barracks, and these Jews suggested that the priests ask the captain to bring the prisoner before the Sanhedrin again on the pretext of a fuller hearing. That would have given them an opportunity of killing him.

Verse 16. Paul's nephew heard of the plot and told him of it.

Verses 17, 18. Paul arranged a meeting of his nephew with the captain.

Verses 19, 20. The young man first told the captain of the request that was soon to be made of him by this wicked band of 40 Jews.

Verse 21. The young man then told him of the plot to kill Paul if he should be allowed to appear outside

the castle, and he urged him to deny their request.

Verse 22. The captain bound the young man to secrecy and then dismissed him, but he intended to act on behalf of Paul's safety.

Verse 23. This was a military escort to conduct Paul to Caesarea, the headquarters of the Roman government in Palestine. Altogether there were 470 military men in the escort, some of whom had special services to perform. The horsemen were included to continue the guarded journey after the others returned to Jerusalem (verse 32). This journey was begun at 9 P. M. according to our time.

Verse 24. *Felix the governor* was a ruler at Caesarea on behalf of the Roman Empire.

Verses 25, 26. Claudius Lysias was the chief captain at Jerusalem. As a judicial courtesy, he wrote a letter to Felix explaining why he was sending Paul to him.

Verse 27. This part of the letter is a truthful report of the rescue of Paul by the soldiers of the captain, recorded in chapter 21: 32-34.

Verse 28. The captain understood that the *council* (Sanhedrin) was a place where the Jews held their examinations of accused persons.

Verse 29. The captain regarded the dispute between Paul and the Jews to be mostly a religious one and not such as he should try.

Verse 30. The court of Felix also was a secular one, but the captain felt that Paul's personal safety required that he appear there. Besides, the Jews had intimated that Paul was a general disturber of the peace (chapter 21: 28), and hence it seemed proper for the court at Caesarea to hear what the accusers had against him, they having been commanded also to appear at Caesarea for that purpose.

Verses 31, 32. Antipatris was about halfway between Jerusalem and Caesarea. The entire military escort went that far, at which place it was thought that most of the danger was over. The day after leaving Jerusalem they reached that place, from which all of the escort except the horsemen started back to Jerusalem, and the horsemen conducted Paul the rest of the journey to Caesarea.

Verse 33. Upon arrival, the horsemen presented Paul to the governor,



and also delivered the epistle that was sent by the chief captain.

Verse 34. This inquiry was to learn whether he should have jurisdiction in the case. Cilicia (the province containing the birthplace of Paul) was in such jurisdiction.

Verse 35. While waiting for the accusers to appear, Paul was to be kept in a place built by Herod, but now being occupied by Felix. Some one of the buildings attached thereto was Paul's prison, pending the arrival of his accusers.

## ACTS 24

Verse 1. The word *descended* is used with reference to direction, as to or from Jerusalem, in view of its importance. Thayer defines the original word, "To come down," then explains it to mean, "as from the temple at Jerusalem, from the city of Jerusalem." Tertullus was a professional speaker whom the Jews employed to argue their case against Paul before Felix. What his nationality was is not clearly shown in the history, but he was acquainted with the procedure of courts.

Verses 2-4. Tertullus, like many court lawyers of our day, was not scrupulous in handling the truth, or in his manner of treating a serious case that pertained to the personal rights of a citizen. This paragraph is devoted to pure flattery of the governor, for the purpose of prejudicing him against Paul. I do not think this part of his speech needs any further comments.

Verse 5. An orator is supposed to make his speech before a court after the accusers and witnesses have said their part. But Tertullus acted both as accuser and witness, before the legal accusers were even present, like the unprincipled lawyer that he was. The most of this verse is false, but the part pertaining to Paul's leadership among the *Nazarenes* is true. And that was the chief grievance the Jews had against Paul, because they had previously had that feeling against Jesus, the founder of the *sect of the Nazarenes*. The last word was applied to Christians by the Jews, in reference to Jesus who had lived at Nazareth.

Verses 6, 7. This was a falsehood. (See chapter 21: 30-34.)

Verse 8. *By examining of whom* was an admission that the court had not heard any testimony furnished by Paul's accusers, thereby convicting

himself (and the court) of gross injustice.

Verse 9. *Assented* means the Jews agreed with what Tertullus had said; yet they did not even pretend to have any witnesses to present to Felix.

Verse 10. Paul began his speech with remarks that were respectful and complimentary, but not in the nature of flattery. Having been in a public position over Judea for many years, Felix could appreciate the truths Paul intended stating before him.

Verse 11. *But twelve days*. The events to which Paul refers had occurred so recently, that it would be easy to find testimony to the contrary if any doubt was felt by Felix.

Verses 12, 13. This paragraph is a general denial of all the charges of disorder made against Paul, and he challenged his accusers to present their testimony.

Verse 14. To *confess* does not mean to admit any wrongdoing; it is only an admission of certain facts of which he was not ashamed, but which were objectionable to his critics. Paul does not admit that he is worshiping God through heresy, but that he is serving Him with the system that his accusers called by such a name. He further states that the law (of Moses) and the prophets had taught that same system to be coming sometime.

Verse 15. In this verse the apostle expressed the real subject that was the motive for their objection to him, namely, a belief in the resurrection. *Which they themselves also allow*. The Pharisees professed to believe in the resurrection, but denied that it was through Jesus whom they had crucified (chapter 4: 2).

Verse 16. *Conscience* is from *SUNEIDESIS* and Thayer's main definition is, "The soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other." This definition states the action of the conscience, but it can act on improper information as well as proper. When Paul was persecuting Christians his conscience commended him for it, because his information (which was erroneous) was to the effect that the disciples of Christ were evildoers. In our present verse he means he had always exercised himself in a way that he thought would be right regarding both God and man. His good conscience while persecuting

Christians was due to the improper information that he had received. The popular idea is not true that the conscience is "A creature of education," for it is a part of every human being. However, it is true that the conscience may be educated, and it depends on the character of that education whether it will commend or condemn what it should.

Verse 17. The *alms* refers to the collections that were made by the various churches (Romans 15: 25-31; 1 Corinthians 16: 1-4). The *offerings* were according to some Jewish customs that Paul still had the right to perform as a Jew, since they were both secular and religious, and Paul did them as the former.

Verses 18-20. This paragraph is explained at chapter 21: 27-29.

Verse 21. See the comments on verses 14 and 15.

Verse 22. Felix now had a somewhat clearer view of the situation, to the extent that he wanted to see the case through after the other parties to it appeared. He promised Paul to hear the whole matter when the captain arrived. It might be stated, however, that so far as the record shows, neither Lysias nor witnesses ever appeared.

Verse 23. Paul was detained as a prisoner, but the soldier who was made responsible for his keeping was commanded to let him have many liberties usually not given.

Verse 24. *Felix came*. He was not residing outside the community; the second word means, "to make a public appearance," according to the lexicons. His interest had been aroused by Paul's speech to the extent he wished to hear more about the faith he was preaching. We will hear more about his wife in the next verse.

Verse 25. The subjects of this verse are in response to the request in the preceding one, to discuss *the faith in Christ*, which shows that the Gospel contains more than just the "first principles." These subjects were especially appropriate at this time, for both Felix and his wife were very unrighteous people. He had induced her to desert her former husband to marry him, for no other motive than lust on the part of each. Thayer defines the original word for *temperance*, "Self-control," then explains it to mean "the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual

[fleshly or carnal] appetites." *Judgment to come* is defined by Thayer, "The last or final judgment." Being a judge himself and acquainted with the dignity of judicial sentences, Felix could feel the weight of Paul's prediction and was made to *tremble*, which is defined in the lexicon "to be terrified." *A convenient season*. The second word does not appear in the original Greek as a separate term. The phrase is from KAIROS which Thayer defines "opportune or seasonable time." The word has been translated in the King James Version by the single word "time" in 63 places.

Verse 26. The "convenient season" never appeared as far as the record informs us, for the same purpose that Paul had been called the first time. However, Felix was so depraved as to think the apostle would try to bribe the court into releasing him, and for that purpose he did call for him frequently.

Verse 27. After two years Felix was replaced by Festus because he had incurred the displeasure of the Romans. During those two years Paul was kept as a prisoner, his accusers never having appeared. In spite of this situation, to gratify the hatred of the Jews toward him, Felix kept Paul bound when he relinquished his office to Festus.

## ACTS 25

Verse 1. Caesarea was the political headquarters of the Roman Empire in Palestine, but Jerusalem was the chief city of the province from many standpoints. Hence when Festus had been in his own official city three days, he went to Jerusalem to acquaint himself with conditions in that metropolis.

Verse 2. The leading Jews lost no time in approaching Festus with their complaints against Paul.

Verse 3. *Desired favor* means they asked Festus to grant them the favor of having Paul brought from Caesarea to Jerusalem. The inspired writer is the one who is telling the purpose of the Jews to lie in wait and kill Paul in the journey.

Verse 4. Festus evidently knew nothing of the murderous intent of the Jews, but supposed they preferred having Paul tried in their own court; it was in keeping with court form to refuse their request under the circumstances.

Verse 5. Festus invited the proper persons to accompany him to Caesarea

and press their complaint against Paul. *If there be any wickedness* indicates he thought the Jews had some serious charge against the defendant.

Verse 6. After spending ten days in Jerusalem, Festus returned to his own jurisdiction at Caesarea. He did not delay the matter at hand, but summoned Paul to be brought before him the next day after arriving from Jerusalem.

Verse 7. The Jews had never appeared at Caesarea while Felix was in office, though they had two years to do so. For some reason they seemed to think they would succeed better with their case before Festus. *Many and grievous complaints* were doubtless general, and it was not definitely shown whether Paul was accused as an offender against the secular or the religious laws, or both.

Verse 8. Whichever they meant, Paul denied having transgressed against either.

Verse 9. For reasons of political policy, Festus changed his attitude toward the request of the Jews. He proposed to try Paul at Jerusalem as they had requested.

Verse 10. In view of the twofold phase of the complaints made against him, Paul insisted that he should stand trial before Caesar, the secular ruler.

Verse 11. *If I . . . committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die.* This sentence is against the sentimentalists who oppose capital punishment, and who claim the New Testament does not endorse it. If that penalty is wrong in God's sight, then it would be impossible for a man to commit anything worthy of death, and Paul would not have admitted such a possibility, which he did by the words "if I have." Also, if capital punishment is wrong, then Paul would not have given his consent to it, which he did by *not refusing to die.* But since he denied any guilt whatsoever, and was a Roman citizen entitled to the rights of such a standing, he appealed his case to the highest secular court in the world, whose headquarters were at Rome.

Verse 12. This *council* was not the Sanhedrin, but a consultation with the advisers of Festus. After the consultation, Festus, as the "lower court," granted the appeal.

Verse 13. The full name of this man was Herod Agrippa II, who was a ruler in another part of the Roman

Empire, and who came to make a friendly judicial call upon Festus. He was accompanied by his sister Bernice, with whom he was suspected to be living in the intimacy of husband and wife.

Verses 14, 15. Festus told his royal guest of Paul, and of the circumstances that brought him as a defendant before him.

Verse 16. In this verse Festus states the just procedure of the Roman government in the case of one facing trial for life. The present "recess" in the case was caused by the absence of Paul's accusers who were supposed to appear soon.

Verses 17, 18. The preliminary hearing showed to Festus that the charges against the defendant were nothing like what was expected to be offered.

Verse 19. In the opinion of Festus, the issue between Paul and the Jews was only a matter of superstition with Paul; that he was affirming the resurrection of a man by the name of Jesus who had died. As far as Festus could see, such a question was not worth all the bother the Jews were making, and hence there certainly must be something more serious that had not been brought out.

Verse 20. The above opinions are all that Festus stated to Agrippa as his reason for proposing moving the case to the Jewish courts in Jerusalem, there to be tried by him. However, verse 9 gives us another motive he had for the proposal.

Verse 21. When Festus granted the appeal of Paul, that took the case out of his hands, and he was waiting to get the "appeal papers" ready to send up to the higher court. *Augustus* is from a Greek word that was one of the titles of the Roman emperors, not a personal name as in other cases.

Verse 22. Doubtless it was curiosity mainly that prompted the request of Agrippa, but verses 26, 27 show the real motive of Festus in granting it.

Verse 23. This verse describes the important audience that gathered in the official auditorium to see and hear the speech of Paul.

Verse 24. Festus gave Paul a respectful introduction to his audience.

Verse 25. Agrippa had not been asked to listen as a trial judge, for Paul had already taken his case to another court. The statement of Festus, therefore, in declaring Paul innocent

of any capital crime, was not an effort to prejudice Agrippa.

Verses 26, 27. *My lord* means the Roman emperor, whose personal name was Nero. Here was a strange situation; Festus had agreed to send a prisoner up to the highest secular court in the world, and yet had no charge of any importance on which to send him. He thought that if Paul were allowed to speak, something might be said as a basis for a charge.

## ACTS 26

Verse 1. Agrippa was courteously invited to share the judicial "bench" with Festus. Under such a privilege, he bade the defendant to make a speech in his own behalf. *Stretched forth his hand* was a gesture of respect for the court, and a call to attention.

Verse 2. Paul made a complimentary speech to Agrippa, but it was not flattery as we shall see. He had good reasons for his happy feelings over the situation.

Verse 3. Paul here states the reasons for his happiness expressed in the preceding verse. Agrippa was not of pure Jewish blood, yet he was brought up under the influence of Jewish teaching, and was acquainted with the law of Moses. This would qualify him to appreciate the things that Paul would say.

Verse 4. Paul was brought up in Jerusalem (chapter 22: 3), so that the leaders of his own nation had full opportunity for knowing about his manner of life.

Verse 5. *Most straitest* is a double superlative and hence is an improper translation. The two words are derived from אַרְבִּיבֵּס (by superlative inflection), and Thayer defines it "most exact." Paul means that he was a member of the Pharisees who were the most exacting of the Jews in their adherence to the law of Moses. They should have known, therefore, that he would not violate that law as the Jewish leaders charged him.

Verses 6, 7. The *promise* has a general reference to the benefits expected to come to the world through the seed of Abraham (Christ), but the special item of those benefits was the resurrection from the dead (verse 8). The Pharisees professed to believe in the resurrection as well as did Paul, but they resented his teaching that it was to be accomplished through Jesus (chapter 4: 2).

Verse 8. *Why should it be thought, etc.* The resurrection from the dead would not be any more impossible with God than any of the other works of His providence, therefore it was unreasonable to call that particular miracle in question.

Verse 9. The apostle then took up the history of his personal case to show that his present conduct and teaching was a complete change from what it had once been. (See the comments on this subject at chapter 22: 4.)

Verse 10. A *saint* is one who is "set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively his," according to Thayer. It is one of the names applied to the followers of Christ who are elsewhere called Christians and disciples. Paul's mention of the authority of the chief priests was to show he acted according to the recognized law of the Jews.

Verse 11. *Compelled them to blaspheme.* The American Standard Version translates this clause, "strove to make them blaspheme," which is evidently the meaning of the apostle. The first word is from the same original as "compellest" in Galatians 2: 14, where we know that Peter did not actually induce the Gentiles to do the things mentioned, for Paul's rebuke put a stop to his perversion. But he was using pressure for the purpose of forcing them to do as he contended. Likewise, Paul tried to terrorize the disciples into blaspheming the name of Christ, but they suffered death or imprisonment before denying their Lord. *Unto strange cities* means those on the outside. His last campaign was to reach to Damascus which was a city "outside" Palestine.

Verses 12, 13. At *midday* the sun would be straight over them, hence a light that would be *above the brightness of the sun* would indeed be a strong one.

Verse 14. All of the group fell to the ground but only Paul (or Saul) heard the voice. (See the comments at chapter 9: 5 for the meaning of *pricks*.)

Verse 15. This is also explained at chapter 9: 5.

Verse 16. Jesus did not appear to Paul to make him a Christian; men were appointed for that work. But an apostle must have seen the Lord after his resurrection, and that is why he *appeared* to Paul. Having been a *witness* of the fact that Jesus was alive, he was also to *minister* or serve Him by telling it to others.

Verse 17. Paul's delivery from his enemies was to be continued until the work for which he had been appointed had been accomplished.

Verse 18. *Open their eyes spiritually* to the truths of the Gospel. *Darkness* is ignorance of those truths, and *light* is the knowledge of them. Satan is the minister of darkness, and God is the source of divine light. *Forgiveness of sins* was to be the personal benefit conferred on those who accepted these truths. *Inheritance* means a share of the spiritual possessions enjoyed by the *sanctified*, which denotes the same as the "saints" in verse 10, and this state was to be obtained by faith in the risen Lord.

Verse 19. *Not disobedient* refers to the assignment to preach as the next verse shows. Chapter 9: 20 says he "straightway" preached Christ in the synagogues.

Verse 20. *First unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem.* According to Galatians 1: 18 it was three years before Paul preached at Jerusalem and other places in Judea.

Verse 21. Paul had done nothing that called for any punishment whatsoever, much less that of being slain. He therefore wished this court to know the truth of the motive for being persecuted by the Jews.

Verse 22. Paul again declared that his preaching was according to the predictions of the very writings that the Jews professed to believe. It is good to hear him give God the glory for his endurance, as he stood in the hearing of this mixed judicial court.

Verse 23. In this verse Paul specifies the most important one of the "things" of which he made mention in the preceding one. That was the fact that Christ was the first that rose from the dead (to die no more, Romans 6: 9). And that this great fact was bringing light to the Gentiles (as well as to the Jews).

Verse 24. *Learning* is from GRAMMA which Thayer defines, "Any writing, a document or record." Paul had made such wide reference to the writings of ancient scribes that Festus thought such knowledge had thrown him into a state of frenzy, to the extent that he had lost control of himself.

Verse 25. Paul made a direct denial of the charge concerning his mental condition, *soberness* being from a Greek word that means "self-control." But his reply to Festus was respectful

and one that recognized his standing. Thayer says the word for *noble* is "used in addressing men of conspicuous rank or office."

Verse 26. *The king* means Agrippa for whose special hearing Paul was making this speech, and who was acquainted with the ancient writings to which the apostle had referred. *Corner* is from GONIA which Thayer defines, "A secret place." *This thing* means the story of Jesus including his public life, crucifixion and evidences of his resurrection, all of which was known to thousands of people.

Verse 27. Agrippa was acquainted with the Old Testament writings, and this question of Paul was a challenge to the king to make a consistent application of them.

Verse 28. Agrippa was logical enough to see the conclusion required from the premises that Paul had cited. He really believed the truth of the prophetic statements, and the facts and truths connected with the story of Christ clearly connected Him with the prophecies. His unwillingness to go all the way that his conclusions would lead, was not from any doubts as to the rightful claims of the Gospel upon his life. But many personal interests of a worldly nature intervened against his better judgment. He was willing only to make the concession to Paul that is expressed by the famous sentence that has become the subject of song and poetry in various literature.

Verse 29. This verse expresses the sincere interest of the apostle in the spiritual welfare of his distinguished listeners. There is no sign of personal triumph in his remarks, for he realizes that nothing short of wholehearted obedience to Christ will avail anything for the unsaved, hence his wish was for the completeness of the conviction that was acknowledged by Agrippa. *Except these bonds.* How gracious was this remark, which shows the complete absence of bitterness, or any feeling that others too should be humiliated who were no better than he.

Verses 30, 31. At the conclusion of Paul's speech the meeting "broke up" and the royal hearers went aside to confer with each other. That was not in order to decide on a verdict, for such action had been taken from them by the appeal of the prisoner. But to see if either of them had discovered "somewhat to write" to Caesar (chapter 25: 26). It was admitted that no

such discovery had been made, but rather that the prisoner was not worthy even of bonds.

Verse 32. Agrippa was the visiting jurist who was invited to give a critical ear to the speech of the prisoner. It was proper, therefore, for him to express the opinion that we have recorded. Had it not been for the appeal that Paul had made, he could have been released from all custody at this time.

## ACTS 27

Verse 1. This chapter and half of the next has to do with the voyage to Rome in Italy, the capital city of the Roman Empire. The voyage was made necessary by Paul's appeal from the lower courts (chapter 25: 11; 26: 32). *Augustus' band*. Josephus writes of a "Troop of Sebaste [the Greek word for Augustus], of Caesarea," and it was an officer of this band of soldiers who was given charge of Paul and the other prisoners.

Verse 2. The first ship sailing in the desired direction was from the city of Adramyttium. This Aristarchus was the same who was with Paul in chapter 19: 29.

Verse 3. The ship landed next day at Sidon, a seaport on the *coasts of Asia*. While the ship was anchored here, Paul was permitted to visit his friends among the disciples.

Verse 4. To *sail under* means "to sail close by," according to Thayer. They sailed near the shore of this island to shield them from the winds that were blowing against them.

Verse 5. Sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia means the waters bordering on those provinces. Passing on they landed at Myra in Lycia, another province of the Roman Empire.

Verse 6. At Myra all on board had to change to another ship.

Verse 7. *Scarce were come* means they just barely made it to reach Cnidus on account of the opposing wind. Going on in a southwestern direction, they sailed between the islands of Salmone and Crete, passing nearer the former.

Verse 8. *Hardly* (with difficulty) they sailed round along the southern shore of Crete and came to a harbor called *fair havens*, near the city of Lasea.

Verse 9. *The fast was now already past*. The *fast* was the period of the

Atonement which came on the 10th day of the 7th month (Leviticus 23: 27). This ceremonial day had nothing to do with the sailing, but it so happened that it came about the beginning of a stormy season on the Mediterranean. The reference to it was merely as a date, indicating the season of the year when it was generally dangerous to sail.

Verse 10. *I perceive* is from *THEOREO*, and the several definitions in the lexicon present the idea of a conclusion based on what one has seen or can see, in connection with his better judgment. From such a basis, Paul advised that it would be a risk to both their lives and to the ship for them to sail.

Verse 11. It was natural to prefer the judgment of these men to that of Paul since they were experienced seamen, and should have been in position to judge.

Verse 12. Just because the place was not *commodious* (convenient) where they were in which to winter, the majority of the crew advised leaving. They thought they could reach the haven of *Phenice* which faced the northwest and southeast. Due to some "weather conditions" with which I am not acquainted, this was thought to offer a safe place in which to remain until spring.

Verse 13. *South wind blew softly*. Such a wind seemed favorable, both as to direction and intensity. It would gently press them north and west along Crete.

Verse 14. The chief characteristic of *Euroclydon* was that of churning up the water into huge waves, which accounts for the difficulties they had with the body of the ship. Thayer defines the word, "A S. E. wind raising mighty waves."

Verse 15. *Let her drive* means they did not try to control the direction of the ship, but let it float in whatever direction the wind and waves drove it.

Verse 16. *Running under* denotes going south of the island and passing near the shore. At this place the conditions had become so severe that they had difficulty to *come by the boat*, which means they could hardly manage the boat.

Verse 17. The *boat* referred to was a lifeboat, which had been towed up to now because the waters were calm when they started. The word for *boat*



is from *SKAPHE* which Robinson defines, "A skiff, boat." They hoisted this boat (with "much work," verse 16) up on deck, then gave their attention to the ship. To strengthen the hull, they passed ropes or chains around it and drew them up tight. *Strake sail* means they lowered the sails for fear the wind in them would force the ship *into the quicksands*. From now on they let the ship drift as it would with the wind and waves.

Verse 18. *Lightened the ship* means they threw overboard some of the goods, thereby easing the weight the ship was compelled to carry in the storm.

Verse 19. *Tackling* means the furniture, apparatuses and all other equipment of the ship. The situation was so grave the disciples assisted in throwing these things out.

Verse 20. The obscurity of *sun* and *stars* indicates the storm continued throughout day and night. Not having any compass in those days, mariners had to depend on the heavenly bodies for their direction. This condition continued for so many days that all on board (except Paul) despaired of ever reaching land.

Verse 21. The *long abstinence* was natural under the terrible strain of the conditions. Paul was very kind and respectful, yet properly chided the group for having rejected the advice he offered them while at Crete.

Verse 22. Paul bade them to be of good cheer since the only loss that was to come to them would be regarding the ship; he then explained why he was thus assured.

Verses 23, 24. *Stood by me . . . angel*. (See Hebrews 1:13, 14.) It was God's will for Paul to appear before Caesar; many results were to come from that great event.

Verses 25, 26. Paul predicted the wreck of the ship, which was to intervene before the personal rescue of the crowd or his appearance before Caesar.

Verse 27. Two weeks after leaving Crete the mariners thought they saw indications of being near land. They were being driven back and forth in *Adria*, the Adriatic Sea, which is that part of the Mediterranean between Greece and Italy.

Verse 28. They *sounded* (measured the depth with a line and weight) and found it *twenty fathoms*, or about 120 feet. After going only a *little further*

they found it *fifteen fathoms*, or about 90 feet.

Verse 29. At that rate they feared the water would soon be too shallow for the ship to float. They cast four anchors out of the rear of the boat to hold it from moving, while waiting for daylight to come when they could see better about conditions.

Verse 30. The sailors lowered the lifeboat *under color* (pretending) that they intended placing some anchors at the forepart of the ship, but in reality for the purpose of abandoning the ship and taking to the lifeboat.

Verse 31. The Lord promised to bring all the persons on board alive through the storm. However, He expected the cooperation of all concerned, especially the ones who were trained in affairs of water travel, hence Paul made this statement to the soldiers.

Verse 32. To prevent the escape of the shipmen, the soldiers cut the ropes and let the lifeboat go. As it was an emergency, the military men acted in this commandeering manner to save the lives of the whole group.

Verses 33, 34. While waiting for daylight, Paul advised them to break their fast *for their health*. Too long abstinence from food would be injurious, and besides, as their ultimate escape was assured, there was no reason for them to punish themselves more.

Verses 35-37. Paul led the way and began to eat, after giving thanks for the bread. The group of 276 persons then took courage and also partook of the food.

Verse 38. After satisfying their hunger, they decided to ease the strain on the boat further by casting the wheat into the sea.

Verse 39. *Knew not the land* denotes that they did not recognize it. All *creeks* of necessity have *shores*, so we learn that a clearer translation would be that they thought they saw a bay with a beach that would be a desirable place for a "forced landing."

Verse 40. *Had taken up* all comes from one Greek word which Thayer defines, "to cast loose." The italicized word *themselves* refers to the anchors which they abandoned in order to relieve the ship of the weight. The rudders were large oars used to steer the ship. While at anchor they would be hoisted out of the water and held by *bands* or ropes; these were now cut

loose. They next raised the mainsail and started toward the "bay" mentioned in the preceding verse.

Verse 41. *Where two seas met* all comes from DITHALASSOS, which Thayer defines, "an isthmus or tongue of land," and he explains it, "the extremity of which is covered by the waves." Both sides of this projection of land were washed by the sea which formed a sort of whirlpool, into which the forepart of the ship was thrust and stranded. The rear part of the boat was then lashed with the violence of this "whirlpool" and crushed.

Verse 42. When the jailer in chapter 16: 27 thought his prisoners had escaped, he intended killing himself rather than be executed (as he thought) by the officers. The soldiers in our verse wanted to kill the prisoners, rather than face their superior officers under the charge of allowing the prisoners to escape. This indicates the harsh rules the Roman government established regarding the responsibility of those having charge of prisoners. It also explains why the Jews felt the necessity of assuring protection for the watchers at the tomb of Jesus. (Matthew 28: 12-14.)

Verse 43. Paul was one of the prisoners and would have shared the fate of the others, had the soldiers been suffered to carry out their purpose. Whether the centurion cared much for the other prisoners we are not told. But his respect for the apostle Paul moved him to dissuade the soldiers from their evil design. Instead, he gave orders for all to get to land in whatever way they could.

Verse 44. Some of the crowd were able to swim to shore. Others made it to safety by the aid of boards and pieces of the ship that helped them to float.

## ACTS 28

Verse 1. Smith's Bible Dictionary says the following: "Melita, the modern Malta. . . . It is 17 miles long by 9 or 10 broad. It is naturally a barren rock, with no high mountains, but has been rendered fertile by industry and toil."

Verse 2. *Barbarous* sometimes means to be rude in speech; rough, harsh. It also means to speak in a foreign tongue. At our place Thayer says it is not used reproachfully, and that the inhabitants were of Phoenician origin, who had some refinement of manners.

These facts explain the kind treatment they gave the shipwrecked group.

Verse 3. A cold rain was falling and Paul was building a fire for warmth. A *viper* is a poisonous snake that came out of the sticks and clung to his hand. It had evidently been sheltering itself among the sticks and was numb from the cold. The heat brought it to its feeling and caused it to attack him as might be expected to be done by such a creature.

Verse 4. The islanders were rather superstitious and thought this incident was the work of some supreme being. They thought Paul was trying to escape just punishment.

Verses 5, 6. They fully expected to see Paul drop dead. Seeing his mastery over it, they reversed their opinion and said he was a god. While that was not the object of the miracle, it did serve to prove Paul and his companions to be good men.

Verse 7. *Same quarters* means that same part of the island. Publius was probably the governor of the island, because he had possessions sufficient to give hospitality to Paul and his group for a period of three days.

Verse 8. Paul had a chance to "return the favor" by healing the father of Publius of a serious disease, which he did by laying his hands miraculously on him.

Verse 9. The good deed done for Publius' father was reported over the island. As a result, others came to Paul and were healed of diseases.

Verse 10. We are not told just how these *honors* were manifested while Paul and his companions remained on the island. But when they were ready to leave, the natives gave them a supply of the necessities of life.

Verse 11. *Castor and Pollux* was the label inscribed on the side of the ship. The words were derived from some legend about heathen gods.

Verses 12, 13. The stop of three days at Syracuse was either because of the conditions of the weather, or to perform the regular business of a vessel. *Fetched a compass* means they took a circuitous route by the place, and coming to Puteoli they landed for a few days.

Verse 14. Smith's Bible Dictionary says Puteoli was "the great landing-place of travelers to Italy," so it is not surprising that some brethren would be there.

Verse 15. The brethren at Rome heard of Paul's voyage toward their city and came to meet him. According to Smith's Bible Dictionary, *Appi forum* was 43 miles from Rome and *Three taverns* was 33. The same information is given in Thayer's lexicon under the word **TABERNAL**. Paul was heartened by seeing this brotherly welcome from those who were willing to brave the uncertainties of the sea to meet this "prisoner of Jesus Christ."

Verse 16. Thayer says the *captain of the guard* was the "captain of the Roman emperor's body-guard." To this officer the centurion delivered his prisoners, thus discharging the duty that was imposed upon him at Caesarea. But Paul was not placed in the soldiers' camp; instead, he was permitted to dwell separately with a single soldier as his guard. This would give him opportunity for seeing persons in whom he was interested.

Verse 17. Paul called these Jews *men and brethren* because of their common blood, not that they were brethren in Christ. He related how he was made a prisoner of the Romans by the Jews, though he was not guilty of wrong-doing against any laws.

Verse 18. *Who* means the Romans into whose hands Paul had been delivered. Finding nothing wrong in him, they were disposed to discharge him from all accusations.

Verse 19. Paul appealed unto Caesar as a defendant, and not as a complainant against his nation. That is, he merely wished to clear his own good name, not that he wanted to cause his Jewish brethren any trouble.

Verse 20. Lest he might be misjudged by his Jewish brethren, however, he thought it well to explain the presence of the chain that was attached to him. *Hope of Israel* refers to the hope of a resurrection through Christ. That was the reason why he called them to him three days after arriving in their city.

Verse 21. These Jews had heard the report about the disciples in general, but had not received any news of accusations against Paul personally.

Verse 22. Because of the unfavorable report these Jews had heard about the disciples, they wished to have Paul's personal story. *Sect* is from **HAIRESIS**, and Thayer defines it at this place, "a sect or party."

Verse 23. These Jews professed to believe the Old Testament, hence Paul

used it as a basis for his speeches. He showed them that their own religious literature had foretold the coming of the kingdom of God, the institution referred to as a "sect."

Verse 24. As usual, the hearers disagreed among themselves over what they heard.

Verse 25. Because of the disagreement between themselves the Jews departed. Before they left Paul spoke *one word*, meaning one quotation from Esaias (Isaiah).

Verse 26. *Go unto this people* denotes that Isaiah was to carry a message to *this* people, the Jews. Hear . . . *not understand . . . see . . . not perceive*. This all means the Jews would refuse to make the proper use of their mental faculties.

Verse 27. *Waxed gross* denotes they had become stupid through their own prejudice. Their motive for such an attitude was to reject the reformation of life that the teaching of the Gospel might work in them.

Verse 28. This announcement to the Jews was on the same basis as set forth in such passages as chapter 13: 46. The Jews were given the first opportunity of hearing the Gospel. When the Gentiles had the divine truth offered to them, they showed a greater readiness to receive it.

Verse 29. *Had great reasoning*. The Jews did not agree among themselves upon the teaching of Paul, hence they got into dispute over it. They were familiar with the law as Paul quoted it, but their prejudice prevented them from accepting his teaching.

Verse 30. *Hired house* means a rented building which Paul used at his own expense. He was still in custody, hence could preach only to those who *came in unto him*.

Verse 31. *No man forbidding him* all comes from **AKOLUTOS** which Thayer defines, "without hindrance." We know that men objected to the preaching of Paul, but God sustained him so that the preaching of the cause of Jesus Christ continued with great zeal.

## ROMANS 1

Verse 1. Paul first mentions his relation as a servant of Christ, which means "one who gives himself up wholly to another's will." He next refers to his position as apostle, and says he was *called* to that office. The word is from **KLETOS** which Thayer

defines at this place, "called to some office," which he explains to mean "divinely selected and appointed." *Separated unto the Gospel* means he was appointed to the work.

Verse 2. *Which* has reference to the Gospel which had been predicted in old time. This fact is referred to in Galatians 3: 8 and 1 Peter 1: 10. When God told Abraham (Genesis 12: 3) that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him, He was meaning the Gospel that was to be given to the world through Christ.

Verse 3. The promise was first given to Abraham, but it was to be fulfilled through the lineage of one of his great descendants, David. *Made* is from *GINOMAI* which means "caused to be." This part of the great promise pertained to the fleshly nature of Christ.

Verse 4. It became generally known that Jesus was a descendant of David as to his fleshly or human relationship, but some special event was necessary to *declare* or prove him to be also the Son of God. That was accomplished by his resurrection from the dead, for God would not have raised him had he been an impostor.

Verse 5. By *we* Paul includes himself with the other apostles, and he regards the appointment as *grace* or divine favor. *For* is from *EIS*, and it means the apostleship was in order to call men of all nations to believe on the name of Jesus.

Verse 6. *Ye* means the brethren to whom the apostle was writing this epistle.

Verse 7. *To all that be in Rome* applies to all the disciples of Christ, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. The church in that city was composed of both, and that must be remembered throughout the study of this epistle, in order to grasp the purpose of much of the apostle's reasoning. The Jewish brethren admitted that the Gentiles were their equals as far as the chances of salvation were concerned, yet they still had a feeling of superiority because of having been God's special people for so long. On the other hand, the Gentile brethren had the attitude of persons who had been underestimated, but whose real merits had finally been recognized by the Lord so that He had admitted them to the benefits of the Gospel because of those merits. Paul will show in various passages that God had never favored either Jews or Gentiles by reason of

their inherent virtues (since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God), but that it was through the abundant mercy of the Lord that any man in the world could be saved at all. This is a fundamental key to many passages of this book, and the reader should note the passage for reference, as the notes will not be repeated in full.

*Saints* is from *HAGIOS*, and means a person "set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively his."—Thayer. This setting apart is accomplished by obedience to the Gospel. In the New Testament the terms Christians, disciples, saints, brethren and children of God, are used interchangeably, and are applied thus to the same people because they possess the qualifications that are denoted by the terms. They are called saints for the reason just stated; disciples means learners or followers; brethren means they have a common relation to the Father; children because they have been begotten of Him, and Christians because they wear the name of Christ.

Verse 8. *World* is from *KOSMOS* and means the people of the earth. Rome was a center of population, being the capital of the Roman Empire. People coming and going to and from this capital would learn of the church and would carry the information back home.

Verse 9. *God is my witness*. Since God knows the hearts of all, He knew that Paul's service was from the heart, and for that reason the prayers of the apostle would be heard.

Verse 10. Having been faithful to the service of Christ elsewhere, Paul prayed trustingly for the opportunity of preaching the Gospel in Rome.

Verse 11. No one but an apostle could impart spiritual gifts (Acts 8: 18), hence Paul's wish to do that for the brethren at Rome denotes that no apostle had ever been in that city. We have no direct information as to how the church was started in Rome, but we know (from the above) that no apostle did it. This refutes the claim of the Romanists that Peter established it and that he was its first bishop.

Verse 12. The motive for this wish of Paul was not far the sake of glory, but he longed for the comfort that comes from association with those of like faith.

Verse 13. *Let* is an old word that

means to hinder. For some reason which he does not state, he had been hindered from coming to Rome. *Other Gentiles* shows that the church in Rome had Gentiles in it as well as Jews.

Verse 14. *Debtor* means one who is under obligation to another, and Paul means he has the obligation to preach the Gospel to these classes mentioned. A barbarian is one who speaks a foreign language, and the word is used in contrast with the Greeks because they were the native people of Greece and also recognized the people of Italy as their equals socially. The *wise* refers to those skilled in the philosophy of the time in contrast with those who were not.

Verse 15. The foregoing considerations made Paul feel obligated to preach the Gospel to the people of Rome to the extent of his ability.

Verse 16. Paul had been persecuted for the sake of the Gospel, yet he was not ashamed of it. The reason for his attitude was the great truth that *it is the power of God unto salvation*. *Power* is from DUNAMIS, which is one of the strongest words in the Greek New Testament for the thought of what may bring about a desired result. But it has such an effect only on those who believe it. *Jew first . . . Greek*. That denotes the Gospel was offered to the Jews before it was to the Greeks (or Gentiles).

Verse 17. *Righteousness of God* means the system of life that will produce a state of righteousness acceptable to God. That system is revealed in the Gospel (not in the law of works in the Mosaic system). The original for *from* is EK which denotes the source of something or the means by which it is accomplished. Hence the thought is that the system of God's righteousness is revealed by means of the faith (in Jesus), and not by the works of the law. *To faith*. The first word is from EIS and is defined "in order to," and as applied here it means that this system of God's righteousness is revealed "in order to" produce faith in the hearer. *The just shall live by (the) faith* in Christ, and not by the works of the law. The Judaizers were trying to force the Christians into observing the works of the law as the proper system of righteousness.

Verse 18. The Gospel not only reveals God's system of righteousness, but it also tells of the divine wrath

against all ungodliness. *Hold* means to hold back or restrain. The unrighteousness of men is a hindrance to the spread and reception of the truth.

Verse 19. From here to the close of the chapter the apostle deals with the corruptions of the heathen or Gentile world. Those people did not have the law of Moses, but they did have the principles of righteousness that nature offered them, and they refused to abide by them. *In them* means the evidences of God's goodness were visible to them.

Verse 20. This verse corresponds in thought with Psalms 19: 1, meaning the evidences in nature of the existence of a Supreme Being. The *invisible things of him* are *His eternal power and Godhead*. Though invisible to man, yet the evidences of them are *clearly seen* in the world that was created and whose objects "declare the glory of God" (Psalms 19: 1). This leaves the heathen *without excuse* for their unbelief.

Verse 21. The heathen did not live up to the information offered them by the things in creation. They did not respect God as he deserved, but estimated Him on the basis of their foolish imaginations, which are described in verse 23.

Verse 22. When a man professes to be wiser than a Being who can create the universe, he becomes the most deplorable of fools.

Verse 23. This verse outlines the idolatry of the heathen, and shows why Paul applied the term "fools" to them. They were bound to know that the brute creatures of the earth could not originate anything, yet they pretended to represent the Creator by making images of these dumb animals and calling them gods.

Verse 24. The original Greek for *gave them up* is defined by Thayer, "To give over into (one's) power or use." Robinson's definition is virtually the same. When men persist in going contrary to the light and information in their reach, He will abandon them and suffer them to go full length into their preferred practices. They dishonored their own bodies by the unnatural immoral practices to be considered at verses 26, 27.

Verse 25. The truth of God cannot actually be changed into a lie, for divine truth is eternal. The definitions of Robinson and Thayer of the word for *changed* are the same in thought, but the former is more direct which

is, "To exchange one thing for another." The heathen gave up the truth of God and accepted the lie of idolatry in exchange. *Served the creature more* [marginal "rather"] *than the Creator*. See verse 23.

Verse 26. *Gave them up* is explained at verse 24. *Vile affections* is defined "depraved passion" by Thayer. *Change* means the same as in verse 25. The iniquity of which these women were guilty is called "homosexuality" in Webster's Dictionary. Liddell and Scott's Greek lexicon defines such a woman as one "who practices lewdness with herself or with other women."

Verse 27. The common name for the iniquity referred to in this verse is sodomy. It is the sin meant in 1 Corinthians 6: 9, last sentence. A case of it is that predicted in Daniel 11: 37, and the man was a Syrian king by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes. The historical fulfillment of that prediction is recorded in Prideaux's *Connexion*, year 175. *Recompence of their error*. This is not described in any work that I have seen, but the circumstances indicate it refers to some physical derangement of the organs involved in the shameless act. We know that the promiscuous intimacies between the sexes has produced the well-known "social disease," and in a similar manner some terrible disorder was the result of the horrible practice of sodomy, which is the unnatural immorality between men and men.

Verse 28. This is the same as verse 24.

Verse 29. The "reprobate mind" in the preceding verse would crave and secure the evils named here, many of which are general in their meaning and do not require extended comments. *Fornication* is unlawful intimacy between the sexes. *Covetousness* is the unlawful desire for the belongings of another. *Maliciousness* is a desire and determination to do injury to another. *Envy* is a feeling that regrets seeing someone enjoying a favor. *Debate* as used here means wrangling or quarreling. *Deceit* is an effort to mislead another to his injury. *Malignity* is virtually the same as maliciousness. *Whisperers* are "secret slanderers" according to Thayer.

Verse 30. *Backbiters* means about the same as "whisperers" in the preceding verse; those who would slander you "behind your back." *Haters of God* is proved by their worship of false gods. *Despiteful* is similar to mali-

cious, and such characters also will show their pride. *Boasters* are those who love to practice those evils and want others to know about it. *Inventors of evil things*. They not only follow in the steps of wicked persons, but also devise evil ways of their own. *Disobedient to parents* means they have repudiated the rightful authority of their father and mother.

Verse 31. *Without understanding* denotes they are too stupid to recognize their folly. *Covenantbreakers* are those who disregard their promises. *Without natural affection* explains why they are "disobedient to parents" in the preceding verse. *Implacable* is defined by Thayer, "That cannot be persuaded to enter into a covenant"; not willing even to talk of "terms" of agreement. It is no wonder that such persons would be *unmerciful* in their dealings with others.

Verse 32. *The judgment of God* is that all who do such things are worthy of death. But that is not all; that same judgment will be meted out to them who have pleasure in those who practice them. It is as bad to rejoice in iniquity as it is to practice it.

## ROMANS 2

Verse 1. Before reading further into this chapter, I shall insist that the reader see the comments on chapter 1: 7, then come back to this place. The closing verses of that chapter pertain to the evil practices of the Gentiles. The Jews were free in their condemnation of the Gentiles, yet they were just as guilty, in principle, as were the Gentiles; therefore this chapter will be directed against them. In condemning the Gentiles for their iniquities, they condemned themselves for things as bad in principle.

Verse 2. *We* means Paul and all others who were acquainted with the ways of God. His judgments are always in harmony with the truth, whether against Jews or Gentiles.

Verse 3. *O man* means the Jew who was condemning the Gentile. He thought that his being a Jew would exempt him from the judgment of God.

Verse 4. *Despiseest* means to belittle or disregard, and the Jew did that with reference to the goodness of God. It was the quality of goodness and longsuffering of God that caused him to put up with the unrighteousness of both Gentile and Jew. The goodness of God would lead the self-righteous Jew



to repentance if he did not "despise" or overlook it.

Verse 5. A hard and impenitent heart is one that stubbornly persists in a course of wrongdoing. *Treasurest up* means that such a life is sure to make a record that will bring the wrath of God upon it in the *day of wrath*; that will be the day of judgment spoken of by Paul in Acts 17: 31.

Verse 6. *According to his deeds* does not teach "degrees of reward or punishment," but only whether they are good or evil. (See 2 Corinthians 5: 10.)

Verse 7. *Eternal life* will be rendered to one class of persons. They are the ones who *seek for glory, honor and immortality*. They are to do this seeking by *patient continuance in well doing*.

Verses 8, 9. These verses designate the other class as those who are *contentious* (resort to trickery), resist the truth and obey unrighteous instructions. To this class God will render *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish*. The apostle gives additional reasons why they will receive such from God; it is because they are souls that do evil. *Jew first and also of the Gentile* again suggests comments at chapter 1: 7.

Verse 10. This verse is for emphasis on verse 7.

Verse 11. *Respect of persons* all comes from one Greek word, and it is defined "partiality" by Thayer. It means God will not favor the Jew any more than the Gentile.

Verse 12. All sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, will be punished for their sins. The word *law* in this verse means the law of Moses; the Jews will be judged for their sins under that law. The Gentiles will be judged for their sins, but it will be *without law*; that is, not by the law of Moses, for they did not live under that. The law by which they will be judged is stated in verses 14, 15.

Verses 13. The principle set forth in this verse applies to whatever law the people lived under, whether they were Jews or Gentiles.

Verse 14. The Gentiles *have not the law* (of Moses), yet they do have the law and evidences of nature (creation, chapter 1: 20). If they make use of such law it will serve as a rule of action for themselves. Many of the requirements stipulated in the law of Moses were in line with natural prin-

ciples (such as love of parents and children, and respect for a neighbor's wife, etc.) The Gentile was expected to respect these natural laws, and he will be condemned if he does not. It must be remembered that all of the aforesaid comments about the two laws apply to the years before the giving of the Gospel of Christ. After that, all persons everywhere were commanded to be subject to that universal law. (See Acts 10:35 and 17: 31.)

Verse 15. Another part of the law in nature for the Gentile was his conscience. That is a part of every human being and he was born with it. For an extended definition of the word see the comments at Acts 24: 16. The conscience may be erroneously informed, hence a man might follow it and still be wrong. But no man can go contrary to his conscience without being guilty of wrong. The Gentile was required never to do anything for which his conscience would condemn him.

Verse 16. This verse states the day on which the judging will be done; it is the one Paul mentions in Acts 17: 31. *My Gospel* does not denote origin or ownership, but the one that Paul was preaching; the Gospel that was the subject of *his* preaching.

Verse 17. This and the following three verses set forth the claims (which were true) of the Jew. He could boast (glory) because God had given the law to his nation.

Verse 18. God's will was made known in the law, hence the Jew could have knowledge of it. *Approvest* means to decide between right and wrong, and the Jew could do that by the instruction the law provided him.

Verse 19. The knowledge furnished by the law, enabled the Jew to feel that he could extend guidance and enlightenment to others less fortunate.

Verse 20. Even persons without ordinary discernment could be instructed by one who had the law for his own support. Teacher of babes is figurative, meaning the Jew could give information to the most unlearned, because he had the background of the inspired law. The Jew was not restricted to the mere principles of right doing, but he had the *form* or ritual in which they were to be carried out.

Verse 21. With all of the forementioned advantages, the Jew had no reason for coming short of the proper conduct in his own life. However, many of them were satisfied to rest on their

knowledge of what was right, without setting an example of the things they told others to do. They would steal to enrich their own purse, yet condemn the Gentiles for the sin of theft.

Verse 22. An adulterer would be condemning himself when he told another not to commit that wrong. Commit sacrilege means to rob a temple. The Jews would profess a horror for idols, yet would not hesitate to enter the idols' temple to steal the metals.

Verse 23. It is wrong to commit any lawlessness; it is worse to break the very law that one has praised as being the law of God.

Verse 24. The Gentiles could see the disorderly conduct of the Jews, and it led them to speak against the God whom they professed to serve. *As it is written*. "My name continually every day is blasphemed" Isaiah 52: 5.

Verse 25. Circumcision was one of the rites required by the law. These Jews were insisting that it be attended to, yet were indifferent about the many practical duties that the same law required. (See Matthew 23: 23.)

Verse 26. *The uncircumcision* is used figuratively, meaning the Gentiles to whom the rite was never given. *Keep the righteousness of the law* means the same as doing them by nature as set forth in verse 14.

Verse 27. *Uncircumcision* and *circumcision* are used to mean the Gentiles and Jews. *By nature* (see verse 14) means the Gentile did by nature what the Jew did not do, though he had the written law that showed him plainly what his duty was. By this better example of the Gentile, he *judged* (condemned) the Jew in his transgression of the law that had been given to him by *letter* (had been written in words).

Verse 28. The word *Jew* is used to designate a real servant of God, not one who merely professes to be one just because he wears the national name. On the same principle, fleshly circumcision has ceased to count favorably for anyone whose general life does not harmonize with the spiritual significance of the rite, namely, the cutting off of the sins of his life.

Verse 29. The real Jew in God's sight is one whose circumcision has been of a spiritual character, cutting off from the heart that which is evil. Such circumcision is not *in the letter* (is not literal), but is spiritual. And such a rite will obtain the *praise* (ap-

proval) of God, although the Jew with his love of rituals will not approve. This circumcision is stated in Colossians 2: 11.

### ROMANS 3

Verse 1. *Advantage* means "pre-eminence or superiority," and not some special favor that would give him any more assurance of salvation. After all that Paul had just written about the equality of the Jews and Gentiles as far as it concerned their spiritual worth, they might feel grieved and think that no other kind of superiority was acknowledged for them, hence the question the apostle asks.

Verse 2. Paul answers the question of the preceding verse, stating that unto the Jews were committed the *oracles* (words) of God. With the exception of one writer (Job), every writer of the Old Testament was a Jew. That shows the great affection of God for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the founders of the Jewish race.

Verse 3. The Jews were not to be blamed if some refused to believe the oracles. They would be shown to be true and a basis of faith in God in spite of the unbelief of many.

Verse 4. *God forbid* is the same as saying "by no means." Even if every man in the world should reject the oracles of God, it would not prove them to be untrue, for man cannot be compared with God, who "cannot lie" (Titus 1: 2). Instead, the rejection by man of the oracles of God will prove man to be a liar. Unless this principle is recognized, we would have to conclude that God could not justly condemn those who reject His word. *As it is written* is a citation to Psalms 51: 4.

Verse 5. Paul does not agree with the complaints of men, but uses some of them to show the greatness of God. For instance, the unrighteousness of man emphasizes the righteousness of God by contrast. *I speak as a man* means he was using the arguments of men to show that they were wrong.

Verse 6. Men argued that since the unrighteousness of mankind *commended* or emphasized the righteousness of God, then He should not punish man for his wrongdoing. The apostle is here showing that on that principle God could not rightfully judge the world, although it was admitted (even by these objectors) that a general judgment was necessary.

Verse 7. Paul makes the same point with *lie* and *truth* that he makes with unrighteousness and righteousness in the preceding verse.

Verse 8. *And not* is a contrast with the closing words of the preceding verse. Taken together it means that instead of 'the liar being judged as a sinner, he should be encouraged to do evil that good might come. Paul had even been accused (slanderously) of teaching such a theory. Then in his own direct language, the apostle says that all such slanderers will be justly condemned.

Verse 9. *We* means the Jews and *they the Gentiles*. After the exposure that Paul just made against unrighteous men, the Jews were disposed to apply it all to the Gentiles. He is denying that and declaring that both Jews and Gentiles are alike under sin.

Verse 10-12. This paragraph describes the character of both Jews and Gentiles as nations and not as individuals. We know that the word *one* does not mean an individual, for that would contradict some facts of sacred history. The scripture plainly teaches that Abel and Job were righteous individuals (Hebrews 11: 4; Job 1: 8), and they were Gentiles. And the righteousness of Daniel and many other individuals of the Jewish nation is too well known to need references. So the paragraph means that there was *not one* nation as a whole that was righteous. That is, neither one of the nations was so righteous that God chose it in preference to the other as the Jews pretended.

Verse 13. Through several verses Paul is describing the evil conduct of many persons in both Jewish and Gentile nations. When a sepulchre is opened, the corruptions in it are manifest. These characters were so bold in their sinful utterances that Paul compares their throats to the sepulchre. Deceitful language is as dangerous as the poison of asps, a very venomous kind of snake.

Verse 14. *Cursing and bitterness* shows their hateful attitude toward others.

Verse 15. *Swift to shed blood* means they are ever ready and anxious to do so.

Verse 16. *In their ways* denotes that the ways of these characters leave such results behind them. They destroy the lives of others, or otherwise make them miserable.

Verse 17. *Not known* in the sense of having a practical knowledge of it. They seek not the peace of others, but prefer to heap trouble upon them.

Verse 18. They have *no fear*, which would mean that they have no respect for God, nor do they act as if they were afraid of His righteous judgments.

Verse 19. The law has jurisdiction over those only who are under it, and that is the Jews. *Every mouth may be stopped*. The mouth of the Jew was stopped in the sense that he had no excuse to make for his sins. All the world (the people of the Jewish nation) was *become guilty* (made subject) to the judgment of God.

Verse 20. *Be justified* is used in the sense of being declared personally meritorious. The very law that requires certain deeds implies the unworthiness of the subject to whom the command is given. Therefore the doing of the deeds of the law only brings the sinner to a state of having done what he was obligated to do, so that he does not deserve any special praise (or justification) for it. The Jew would not have had even any *knowledge of sin* had it not been for the law, therefore the complying with its requirements only gave him credit for having "done that which was his duty to do."

Verse 21. *Righteousness of God without the law* means that system of God's *righteousness* explained at chapter 1: 17. That system was predicted by the Old Testament writers, the very men whose writings the Jews in Rome professed to respect. Yet these Judaizers were speaking as if the righteousness taught in the Gospel was not sufficient, but that both Jew and Gentile should go to the old law for justification.

Verse 22. *Righteousness . . . of Jesus Christ* means the Gospel, the same as set forth in chapter 1: 17. *There is no difference* between Jew and Gentile before the Gospel.

Verse 23. See the comments covering verses 9-12.

Verse 24. *His grace* means the grace of God that was offered the world through Christ. The deeds of man could not save upon their virtue, but the favor made possible by the sacrifice of God's Son brought free justification to all who accepted the terms.

Verse 25. *Propitiation* means something that satisfies a demand made by one person of another, or that was justly due another whether it had been

demanded or not. A man might be in debt to another to the amount of one million dollars, which it would be impossible for him to pay. The creditor, having a son who wished to receive the services of a faithful attendant, would agree to consider the debt "settled" if the debtor would become such an attendant. That is what God proposes to man, if he will become a faithful servant of his Son. *Sins that are past* is represented in the illustration by the million dollars for which the debtor had become indebted but could not pay.

Verse 26. *Might be just, and the justifier*. The word *and* is the key to this profound proposition. The justice of God demanded payment of the million dollars, which man was unable to meet. But God cannot be anything but just, for that is a part of His eternal personality. The blood of Christ was offered in payment of that great debt on condition that the debtor believe on this divine blood Donor. By that arrangement it was possible for God to show mercy to the debtor (the sinner), and at the same time retain the eternal attribute of justice.

Verse 27. The works of the law could not pay that huge debt, neither could the regretful poverty of the debtor satisfy his creditor. But the service to the creditor's son satisfied the creditors just as the blood of Christ atones for those who will do or have done what the great Creditor requires. In view of such a plan, neither the doer of the works of the law nor the servant of Christ has anything of which to boast.

Verse 28. Paul now draws his conclusion from the foregoing premises. A man is justified by *faith* (the Gospel of Christ), and not by virtue of the deeds of the law of Moses.

Verse 29. Another conclusion logically following upon the aforesaid truths, is that God is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. It also explains how He can accept the services of the Gentiles who did not have any benefit of the law.

Verse 30. *Circumcision* and *uncircumcision* means the Jews and the Gentile. The first *faith* does not have the definite article before it, and it denotes the simple act of faith shown by the Jew individually when he performed the rites of the law of Moses. Even those services had to be accompanied with faith or the Jew would

not receive the favor of God in that age. (Read the entire 11th chapter of Hebrews, especially verse 6.) The second *faith* is preceded by *the*, which makes it mean the Gospel which is often termed "the faith." And the benefits thus received by both the Jew under the law, and the Gentile under the Gospel, are bestowed by the *one God*.

Verse 31. In this verse the word *faith* is also preceded by the article "the" in the original. Paul is saying that the law was not made void nor disrespected by the *faith* or the Gospel, but rather it is given a high recommendation for being true (is established), because it had predicted the coming in of the Gospel and the new prophet. (See Deuteronomy 18: 18-20.)

#### ROMANS 4

Verse 1. Paul's question is to introduce his remarks about the works of Abraham and what they meant to him. The Jews not only claimed that God chose them over the Gentiles because of their better qualities, but that they and their law were good enough to be continued in authority for the sake of righteousness before God. That was the reason the Judaizers in Rome (and elsewhere) were so persistent in disturbing the Gentile Christians with their notions. And in defence of their position, they referred to Abraham who was said to be righteous on the ground that he was justified by works (James 2: 21), jumping from the works of the law to those practiced by Abraham centuries before the law.

Verse 2. Abraham did not have to rely on his works to have something of which to glory in God's sight. The Jews were boasting of Abraham's works, for his sake, but there was no need for the patriarch to boast on that ground.

Verse 3. God had already given Abraham the favor of justification for being righteous, on the ground that he believed on Him (Genesis 15: 6). Why, then, should Abraham look to works for justification when God had already counted him righteous without them?

Verse 4. *To him that worketh* means the man who depends on the merits of his works for justification. In that case, if he receives that reward, it will be *reckoned* (considered) on the basis of debt, something actually delivered to him because he had earned it. But that would exclude any credit to the idea of *grace* or favor.

Verse 5. This is just the opposite to the preceding verse.

Verse 6. The principle of receiving favor from the Lord as a gift, and not on the basis of meritorious work, was even taught by David in old time. (Psalms 32: 1, 2.)

Verse 7. If a man's debts are forgiven, that is not the same as actually paying them. (See Matthew 18: 27, 32, 34.) When God forgives a man of his sins, it is not because he has actually paid the debt with meritorious works, for that cannot be done. Instead, it is because the debt has been covered by the blood of Christ (chapter 3: 26, 27).

Verse 8. *Not impute sin* means to forgive them. (See the preceding verse.)

Verse 9. *This blessedness* refers to the grace of God bestowed because of *faith* and not on the virtue of works. Paul asks if it was bestowed on the *circumcision* (Jews) only, or on the *uncircumcision* (Gentiles) also. He then cites the fact that such *blessedness* was given to Abraham. The Jew would reply that he had a point in that very case, for Abraham was the first man to be circumcised. The apostle expected that reply, and he met it in the next verse.

Verse 10. Abraham was reckoned righteous while he was uncircumcised, hence the favor could not have been by virtue of circumcision as the Jews claimed.

Verse 11. Circumcision was given to Abraham as a *sign* or *seal* of the righteousness which he already had displayed. An inspector does not put his stamp of approval on an article of food to make it pure, but to indicate that it was already pure. Circumcision did not make Abraham righteous, but it was given to him because he was that kind of man previously. He had been declared righteous 24 years before the rite of circumcision was given him. (See Genesis 12: 4; 15: 6; 17: 24.) This fact has an important bearing on the world in general. By attributing the quality of righteousness to Abraham because of his faith before he even knew anything about circumcision, it would be made possible for others to become the spiritual descendants of the patriarch, even though they were the ones who did not have circumcision, namely, the Gentiles. This great argument of Paul was especially directed against the Jews in Rome, who made more ado over cir-

cumcision than over the other requirements of the law.

Verse 12. That would make Abraham the spiritual father (ancestor) of *circumcision* (spiritual, chapter 2: 28, 29), to those who are not of the fleshly circumcision. That refers to the Gentiles who, though not circumcised fleshly, yet imitate the faith that Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Verse 13. To be an *heir* of anything means to receive that possession by allotment or gracious gift. Abraham and *his seed* which means his spiritual descendants by faith, became heirs or possessors of the grace of God's favor. That favor was connected with the promise of Christ who was to bless *the world*. But that favor was not bestowed on the merits of law (of works), but *through the righteousness of faith*.

Verse 14. If the promise made to Abraham and his seed was to be fulfilled by the works of the law, then the *faith* (the Gospel) would be made of no avail.

Verse 15. Transgression means going beyond a law, therefore where there is no law there could be no transgression, though there could be other forms of sin.

Verse 16. The words *it is* are not in the original as separate words. The thought of the verse is that the favor of God is the most important subject and the thing that should be the most desired. That is why the divine plan was to bestow such a favor on the basis of grace to the faithful of all nations, not only to the adherents of the law.

Verse 17. Such a grand scheme opened up the way for all to become the spiritual descendants of Abraham, who was set forth as a model of righteousness by faith long before there was any law of Moses. That also made it possible for him to have the promise of being the *father of many nations*, which would include both Gentiles and Jews. *Things which be not as though they were* refers to the apparent impossibility for Abraham to be a father at all when the promise was made.

Verse 18. *Against hope believed in hope* means the same as the last clause in the preceding verse, concerning the improbability of Abraham's parenthood.

Verse 19. This verse comes down to the time when the son of promise was

soon to be born. Such a son had been promised a number of times, but the exact time of it had not been set. When Abraham was 99 years old God set the time for the birth of this son (Genesis 17: 1, 21). *Own body now dead* is figurative as Abraham was of such advanced age. *Deadness of Sarah's womb* is literal as far as reproduction function is concerned. She was barren to begin with (Genesis 11: 30), and she also had passed the child-bearing period (Genesis 18: 11). In spite of all these natural impediments, Abraham believed that God was able to give him and his wife a son who would be the joint offspring of their bodies, by overcoming the defects that nature had placed in the way.

Verse 20. *Staggered not* denotes that he did not waver in the least in his faith concerning the promise of God, but he was firm and absolute in that faith.

Verse 21. Such a faith not only means that God is able to perform what he had promised, but that He would not have promised it had he not known he could do it.

Verse 22. *Imputed to him* denotes that he was considered as a righteous man.

Verse 23. Abraham would have rejoiced at the simple assurance that he was considered righteous, but the fact was written also for the sake of others besides himself.

Verse 24. It was written as an encouragement for *us* (all people of our day, whether Jew or Gentile), to the intent that we believe on God who raised up his Son, the great Seed that was promised to Abraham.

Verse 25. *Was delivered* refers to Jesus being turned over into the hands of his enemies, to be slain because of the offences of the world, that by his sacrifice they might be atoned for. Had Jesus not been raised from the dead, he could not have perfected that system of faith by which man could be justified before God.

## ROMANS 5

Verse 1. The principle of individual faith has been required from the days of Abel on down (Hebrews 11: 4, 6), therefore the word in this verse means "the faith" or the Gospel of Christ. That brings to us justification through Jesus Christ and not the law of Moses. The reader should constantly keep in mind that the predominating thought

of the book of Romans, is the virtue of faith in Christ as against the works of the law, which the Judaizers were urging upon Christians, and which was causing much confusion especially among those of the Gentile nation.

Verse 2. *By whom* means by Christ, and *this grace* means the favor of justification before God. Such justification could not have been obtained by virtue of the works of the law, therefore *we* (Christians) stand and rejoice in the hope of partaking of the glory of God. Of course that glory is to come at the end of the world (Colossians 3: 4).

Verse 3. Since the glory is to be received in the future, we welcome the experience of tribulations. It is not the pleasure of tribulations in which we glory, but it is the good fruit of patience produced thereby.

Verse 4. Patience results in experience, because it can come only by persistent practice, and we would not do that if we were not patient. All of this results in hope, because, having adhered to a course of righteousness in spite of tribulations, we have reason to look for final victory.

Verse 5. The hope we have of a life with Christ when this present period of tribulation is over, keeps us from being ashamed of that which we have endured for His sake (Acts 5: 41). The Holy Ghost (or Spirit) was given to the early Christians in miraculous measure (Acts 2: 38; 8: 14-18). After the complete New Testament was produced, the Spirit dwelled in the church which is the "temple of God" (1 Corinthians 3: 16, 17). However, this indwelling is not in miraculous measure, because that form of it was to cease after the complete rule of faith in Christ was given (Ephesians 4: 8-16).

Verse 6. *Without strength* means we were powerless to save ourselves, or to devise any system by which mankind could be saved. Of necessity, then, we were ungodly as to our spiritual standing, and hence when Christ died his death was *for the ungodly*.

Verse 7. For all practical purposes the words *righteous* and *good* mean the same, and they are generally so used in the New Testament. But when used in distinction from each other, the first means a man who does what is right because the law under which he is living requires it. The second means a man who is naturally of an agreeable disposition so that "every-



body likes him," although he may not be living in obedience to any laws. There are people who would die for such a person if the circumstances called for it.

Verse 8. God and Christ went beyond all these conditions and showed their love for us while we were sinners—neither righteous nor good—by having Christ to die for our sins.

Verse 9. *Justified by his blood* is explained at chapter 3: 25, 26. Through such a complete satisfaction offered by the blood of Christ, the wrath of God against sin will be turned away from us.

Verse 10. Jesus found us in sin and reconciled us to his Father through his blood, which denotes that He put us into the position of praying terms with God. In that relation with God, we could "work out our salvation" by following the example that Jesus set by his own life.

Verse 11. There is a considerable amount of repetition of thought in several verses. Reconciliation is the same as *atonement*, and Paul adds it for the sake of emphasis.

Verse 12. *The one man* by whom sin entered into the world was Adam. He is the only one who is regarded as a personal sinner in this verse. However, it was his sin that caused the separation from the tree of life with its consequent death of the body for all his descendants, we must regard the phrase *all have sinned* as meaning only that all human beings regardless of age or mental or moral qualification, are physical partakers of the results of Adam's sin. We know it cannot mean that infants were thereby forced to become sinners as to their character, for they are represented by Jesus as already possessing the character that adults are required to develop before they can enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18: 3).

Verse 13. *Sin* in this verse is in the ordinary sense, pertaining to the personal conduct of human beings. Adam introduced the knowledge of it, but a person must be old enough to possess knowledge before he can actually perform it responsibly. *Not imputed* means it is not taken into account, and the particular form of sin meant in this verse is that which is the transgression of law. (See the comments on this at chapter 4: 15.) In view of this, before there was any law given, men could not be counted as

sinners by transgression since there was no law to transgress.

Verse 14. It might be (erroneously) concluded from the foregoing, that since men were not adjudged as sinners before the law was given, therefore nobody died before that. Yet the apostle affirms that death did reign through all that period, even over those who had not sinned after the *similitude*—after the manner—of Adam's transgression. This shows that sin in this verse as applied to all mankind is used in the same sense as it is in verse 12. That is, they had to suffer the physical death that resulted from Adam's sin, because it caused them to be born outside the garden of Eden and away from the tree of life. The last clause, *who is the figure of him that was to come*, is introduced to prepare the reader for the comparison a little later on, that deals with the principle of sharing in the *results* of one man's righteousness in the same sense as sharing in the *results* of one man's sin.

Verse 15. An illustration may be used either by comparison or contrast, or by both, and the present one is used in the last sense. The comparison is in the fact that all mankind will have to partake of the physical results of Adam's sin which means death of the body. Likewise, all will partake of the physical resurrection from death as a result of the resurrection of Christ. The contrast is in the fact that the *grace of God*, which means justification from personal sin, is offered to all mankind through Christ, in addition to the resurrection of the body.

Verse 16. This verse means virtually the same as the preceding one, but expressed in slightly different language.

Verse 17. The comparison and contrast are again repeated. The phrase *much more* denotes that the opportunity to receive *abundance of grace* is of more value than the mere resurrection of the body which also will be effected through that of Christ.

Verse 18. This is virtually the same in thought as the preceding verses, but the subject is so vital to the happiness of mankind, that the apostle regarded the repetition of it as necessary. *Offence of one* refers to the sin of Adam, and the *condemnation* means the physical death that resulted upon all mankind. *Even so* again includes both the resurrection of the body, and

also the *justification of life*, which means the offer of forgiveness of personal sins to all who will accept it on the Lord's terms.

Verse 19. *Many were made sinners* is explained at verse 12. *Obedience of one* refers to the great deed of Christ in providing a sacrifice that could cleanse all from sin who would avail themselves of it by their own individual obedience.

Verse 20. The word *law* does not have the definite article before it in the original, so it is used with reference to law in general. That is, man has always had some form of law by which he could live and then be judged. With the Gentile it was the law of conscience and nature (chapter 1: 19, 20; 2: 14, 15), and with the Jew it was the law of Moses. *Offence might abound* denotes that no man was with "excuse" for his sins, since he had a law that taught him to do better. This condition of responsibility made it all the more necessary for the grace or favor of God to be used so that sin could be atoned for.

Verse 21. This verse is the grand conclusion of Paul's argument. The sin of Adam brought physical death upon all mankind, and bringing in a law of conduct brought spiritual death upon all who failed to obey that law. Then the great work of Christ brought physical life to all mankind unconditionally, and spiritual life to all who avail themselves of the "unspeakable gift" of this human-divine sacrifice of the Son of God.

## ROMANS 6

Verse 1. Paul was a master in logic, and he refuted beforehand an erroneous conclusion that some would draw from what he had said. They would argue that if there was more grace where more sin abounded, then it would be well to sin so as to bring that grace.

Verse 2. Even without the statement of the apostle, we can see that such was false reasoning. It would be like arguing that, since doctors have more opportunity for doing the good deed of curing the sick wherever there is more sickness, therefore let us do something to cause more sickness. *God forbid* is Paul's way of saying "by no means," and he then shows the logical objection to the reasoning. Christians claim to have died to sin by repentance, which would preclude the living in or practicing sin.

Verse 3. Death means separation regardless of when or how the word is used. The body and spirit of Christ were separated at his death, and it was done for the sins of man. He died *for* sin, but in order for it to benefit a man, he likewise must die—must die *to* sin, which means that he is to be separated from the practice of sin by repentance. In order for this figurative death of a man to be benefited by the literal death of Christ, it is necessary for him to get into that death. Divine wisdom has decreed that such an experience is to be accomplished by baptism.

Verse 4. This verse incidentally shows how baptism is performed—by a burial and rising—but it was not written for that purpose. In truth, no passage was written to show the form or "mode" of baptism, for the word itself shows that. Whenever a person goes to quibbling about the "mode" of baptism, he is not ready for the ordinance anyway. What he needs but lacks is a sincere belief in Jesus Christ. It is not an arbitrary declaration that baptism is necessary for the new life with Christ. The principle has already been shown in the preceding verse that it is in baptism that we get into the death of Christ. Well, all people should know that Jesus was dead when he shed his blood (John 19: 33, 34), and it is his blood that saves, therefore a man has to be baptized in order to come in contact with the blood. The comparison of death and burial is continued. When Christ came from the grave alive, he was never to die again (verse 9); likewise, when a man has died to sin and has been buried with Christ in baptism, he is thereby made alive spiritually, and when he comes out of that watery grave, he too is expected to live a new life in Christ, and not again become dead in sins.

Verse 5. The word *planted* means to be united with, and likeness denotes only a comparison. Sinners who die to sin and are baptized, will be in spiritual likeness to Him.

Verse 6. *Old man* is a figurative name for our life of sin. To *crucify* figuratively means to have the life of sin put to death as regards general practice.

Verses 7, 8. *He that is dead to sin* by repentance is freed from the bondage of sin, and becomes alive through Christ with whom he has been buried by baptism.

Verses 9, 10. Christ arose never to die again, and likewise it is expected that sinners who die to sin and are buried with Christ, will follow a life of righteousness.

Verse 11. The *death* and *life* of this verse both have a spiritual sense.

Verse 12. All Christians will make mistakes and sin incidentally (1 John 1: 8), but that is not the same as to permit sin to *reign* in the body.

Verse 13. *Yield ye your members* denotes to consent or give one's body over to a life of unrighteousness, and not sinning incidentally according to 1 John 1: 8.

Verse 14. For sin to have dominion over us is equivalent to making a practice of sinning. *Under grace* means that the New Testament system is one made possible by merciful favor of God, so that one's mistakes are atoned for constantly by the blood stream of Christ. (See 1 John 1: 7; 2: 1.)

Verse 15. This is the same in thought as that set forth in verse 1.

Verse 16. Again the key to the passage is *yield yourselves*, which means a deliberate surrender to some ruler, and not the incidental event of sin due to weakness.

Verse 17. *God be thanked* cannot be understood until the entire verse is considered. That will show that the rescue from a sinful service is the fact for which Paul thanked God. *Form* is from *τυπος* and one of Thayer's definitions is, "A pattern in conformity to which a thing must be made." The "pattern" is the example that Jesus set when he died for sin, then was raised from the grave to die no more. The sinner must die to sin, be buried with Christ by baptism, then arise to walk in a new life.

Verse 18. This is the same in thought as verse 11.

Verse 19. *After the manner of men* is all from one Greek word, and means that Paul uses human language because he is speaking to human beings. *Infirmity* is explained by Thayer to mean inability to understand another language due to the frailty of the flesh. Had Paul used the "tongue of angels" man could not have grasped its meaning. Therefore, their natural reasoning would show them that when they formerly yielded themselves servants of uncleanness, the result of it was *iniquity*. So now, by yielding themselves to righteousness, the result will be holiness.

Verse 20. This means that a man cannot be a servant of sin and still be a servant of righteousness; that would be like serving two masters. (See Matthew 6: 24.)

Verse 21. What *fruit* does not imply they had no fruit, but it asks, "what kind of fruit was it," and then Paul answers it by saying, *the end* [fruit] . . . *is death*.

Verse 22. Verses 17, 18 tell when one is made free from sin and hence when he begins to bear holy fruit. The final reward for such sowing and reaping is *everlasting life*.

Verse 23. *Wages* is from *OPSONION* which Thayer defines, "a soldier's pay, allowance." It denotes, therefore, that a life devoted to the service of sin will earn or merit the wages of *death*. Not physical death, for all have to go through that, but the second death, designated in Revelation 21: 8. *Eternal life* is a gift, because it is impossible for any man to earn such a treasure by his own service.

## ROMANS 7

Verse 1. The fact that his brethren understood the working principles of law as it pertained to marriage, prompted Paul to draw comparison between Christ and Moses.

Verse 2. A woman cannot be lawfully bound to more than one man at a time, neither can a person be subject to more than one religious law at the same time.

Verse 3. Jesus taught in Matthew 19: 9 that fornication of a married person is the only lawful ground for the remarriage of the innocent one. Such a sin virtually causes the guilty one to be *dead* to the other. *Adulteress* is used by some to support the notion of "living in adultery," something the Bible does not teach, since the single act of adultery unites the two permanently. (See the comments at Matthew 19: 9.) The word italicized is defined by Thayer as a person with "eyes from which adulterous desire beams forth." It means a frame of mind rather than any physical performance.

Verse 4. As physical death breaks the union of persons in marriage, so when Jewish penitent believers died with Christ, that broke the bond between them and the law of Moses. Being free from the law they could become married to Christ, and the off-

spring of such a union would be *fruit unto God*.

Verses 5, 6. The outstanding difference between the law of Moses and that of Christ, is that the former was ritualistic and its penalty was physical death in extreme cases. The latter is spiritual in its character, and makes provision for the weakness of the human fleshly nature through the grace of God.

Verse 7. The foregoing does not blame the law for the existence of sin; it only revealed it and thus made man responsible. But it could not clear man of guilt by its virtue, hence it was necessary for the law of Christ to come in, to accomplish that which "the law could not do" (chapter 8: 3).

Verse 8. The purpose of this verse is to defend the law against unjust criticism. The revelation of sin by the law seemed to increase it, whereas it was the carnal disposition of man to crave that which he was forbidden to have, that brought about the apparent increase of sin.

Verse 9. *I was alive*. Paul is speaking of humanity in general. While man was ignorant of his sin he was not responsible for it—it was not imputed (chapter 5: 13). As sin was dead at that time, it follows that the conscience was alive—was free from the sting of guilt. The law brought sin to life and then man became "dead in sin."

Verse 10. The commandment that would bring spiritual life to the man if he obeyed it, would result in death "in trespass and sins," until he repented.

Verse 11. This is virtually the same as verse 9.

Verse 12. See the comments on verse 10.

Verse 13. The law (which would mean good to man if he obeyed it), was not responsible for the spiritual death of the human being. No, the law only revealed the existence of sin and decreed a penalty. It was the sin itself, springing into life or action, that brought on the condition of spiritual death. The law served to show how *exceeding sinful* such a life is.

Verse 14. This is explained at verse 10.

Verses 15-21. In the foregoing verses of this chapter, Paul has said much of the carnal or fleshly part of man's personality. He has shown that its

tendencies were responsible for the difficulties with the law of Moses, which was not adapted to the needs of man on its own merits, therefore leaving it necessary to bring in the spiritual law of Christ. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to a description of these two parts of man's being, which I shall refer to by the terms, "inner man" and "outer man." I shall quote the verses of this paragraph, substituting these terms for the pronouns, and making such other changes as the grammatical rules require.

"For that which the outer man does, the inner man allows [endorses] not. For what the inner man would, the outer man does not. What the inner man hates, that does the outer man. If then the outer man does that which the inner man would not, the inner man consents unto the law [against sin] that it is good. Now then it is no more the inner man that does it, but sin that dwells in the outer man. For the inner man knows that in the flesh dwells no good thing. For to will is present with the inner man, but how to perform that which is good the outer man will not do; but the evil which the inner man would not do, the outer man does. Now if the outer man does what the inner man would not, it is no more the inner man that does it, but sin that dwells in the outer man. The inner man finds a law, that, when he would do good, evil is present with the outer man." The reader should understand that both parts of a man are not operating at the same time. The paragraph shows only the tendencies of each, and whichever is in the lead at any given time, will determine whether the person is a servant of Christ or Satan.

Verse 22. This is direct proof of the foregoing description of the "inner man."

Verse 23. This verse should be understood in the light of the paragraph of verses 15-21. *Members* means all the parts that go to make up a human being. The conflict between the fleshly law (rule) of sin and that of the mind or spirit or better part of said being, is the subject of this verse.

Verse 24. Roman convicts were sometimes chained to a dead body as a means of punishment. Paul likens the carnal man whose tendencies lead to spiritual death, to the dead body thus chained to the inner man. Only the proper officer can release a convict from the chain, and Paul asks who

can release one from the control of the fleshly man.

Verse 25. Paul answers his question by saying it is Christ who can give the sinner such release, for which he thanks God. The chapter closes with the proposition running through several verses, namely, the conflict between the mind and the flesh.

### ROMANS 8

Verse 1. *No condemnation* refers to the deliverance from the dead body in chapter 7: 24. However, to continue in the freedom, one must continue to walk according to the inclinations of the "inner man," instructed and guided by the law of the Spirit.

Verse 2. *Law of the Spirit* is the Gospel, and it is called *of life* because it will guide one into a spiritual life in this world, and prepare him for eternal life in the next. *Sin and death* is explained at chapter 7: 5, 6.

Verse 3. The law was not adapted to meet (through its own merits) the needs of fleshly weakness. Jesus came in the flesh, the same kind of body that sinful men have. While in that body He condemned sin by living free from it, then offering that body as a sacrifice for sin.

Verse 4. *Righteousness of the law* means that required by it, but unattained on account of the weakness of the flesh as explained in the preceding verse.

Verse 5. See the paragraph of verses 15-21, of chapter 7.

Verse 6. *Carnally minded* denotes a yearning for fleshly pleasure.

Verses 7, 8. See paragraph of chapter 7: 5, 6.

Verse 9. *Not in the flesh* is explained at verse 1. *Spirit of Christ* is equivalent to "Christ be in you" in the following verse.

Verse 10. *The body* means the "old man" of chapter 6: 6. It died to sin by repentance, and the *spirit* (inner man) came to life through the righteousness of Christ.

Verse 11. The good and bad will all be raised through Christ, but the good only will be raised to life everlasting. (See John 11: 26; 1 Corinthians 15: 49-53.)

Verse 12. *Are debtors*. Are obligated, but not to the flesh to live after it.

Verse 13. This is the same as verse 6.

Verse 14. The Spirit of God operates

through the Gospel (John 14: 16, 17). Being willing to be led by that instruction shows one to have been begotten of God.

Verse 15. This verse makes a comparison of the difference between a servant and an heir. (See Galatians 4: 1-7.) These Jewish Christians had been made free from the law through Christ, which entitled them to recognize God as their Father.

Verse 16. *Beareth witness with* all comes from one Greek word, *SUMMAR-TUREO*, which Thayer defines, "To bear witness with, bear joint witness." Hence the phrase does not indicate any communication between these two witnesses, but that each one gives the same testimony on the subject, namely, that the persons are children of God. That is, the Spirit states through the Gospel what it takes to make one a child of God, and the spirit (mind) of a man knows whether he has done that. If he has, the conclusion is that he is a child of God.

Verse 17. This relationship makes one an heir of God, since only his children can inherit the divine riches. Such a man is a joint-heir with Christ in that He too is the Son of God. *If so be* is virtually the same proviso mentioned in verse 1.

Verse 18. Following Christ includes suffering persecutions with him if need be. Such sufferings are nothing in comparison with the glorious reward to be received.

Verse 19. *The creature* signifies human beings in general. Every man (though some unconsciously) wants something better than he is enjoying in his frail, decaying body. Paul calls the state that is thus yearned for the *manifestation of the sons of God*, and that is the same as the *redemption of our body* in verse 23.

Verse 20. *Vanity* is from *MATAIOTES* which Thayer defines in this place, "Frailty, want of vigor." It means the human creature was made subject to decay of the body, and that took place when he was driven from the tree of life. *Not willingly*. No, he had to be driven out (Genesis 3: 24). *Him* means God, who subjected man to an existence that would end in death of the body, but at the same time gave him hope of a deathless body in another world. (See verse 23.)

Verse 21. The promise in this verse is for those only who are faithful *children of God*. The corruption and

incorruption are explained by 1 Corinthians 15: 52-54.

Verse 22. This is the same as verse 19.

Verse 23. *Not only they* means not only the human family in general. *Firstfruits* of the Spirit means the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that is the possession of all who come into the body of Christ. (See the comments on Acts 5: 32.) To *groan* means to sigh or earnestly to long for the *redemption of the body*, which means the resurrection.

Verses 24, 25. *Saved by hope* denotes that our hope for everlasting life prompts us to persevere in the kind of conduct that is necessary to receive everlasting life.

Verse 26. A safe rule is to let one passage help us understand another, when both are on the same subject, and one seems more difficult than the other. A companion passage for our present one is Ephesians 3: 20, which the reader should see at once. We know that no communication is given to man today on spiritual matters except what can be read in the Bible. Therefore, that which the Spirit does for Christians is a part of the plan of God and Christ for taking care of the Christians' prayers. The Spirit (which can read our minds) forms our prayers as to the wording, so that they are in presentable form to offer before the throne, doing it with *groanings* (sighing) which *cannot be uttered* (by us).

Verse 27. This verse verifies the comments on the preceding one. *He* means the Lord, who not only can read the mind of the saints (Christians), but also knows the mind of the Spirit, since he is the third member of the Godhead, and is subject to the Father and the Son. Therefore, when the Spirit presents the intercessions of the saints to the throne, in groanings that man cannot utter, that form of the prayer virtually becomes the petition of the Christian, addressed to God through Christ who is the official or authoritative Advocate.

Verse 28. This verse does not teach "special providence" as some believe. It means that if a man loves the Lord, he will make "stepping-stones" out of his "stumbling-stones." He will so work on the conditions of life (even his sufferings, verse 18), that they will assure him the *good* reward that God has promised to the faithful. *The called* refers to the men and women who have heard and accepted the call

through the Gospel to serve the Lord. The final reward for such service will be to receive a body that can never die, fashioned after that of Christ (Philippians 3: 21); and as an evidence that God can do such a marvelous work, He decreed to bestow that very favor on some of the saints before the general resurrection, which is the subject of verses 29, 30.

Verses 29, 30. Of course the Lord will not grant the glorious resurrection to any but faithful saints, hence Paul begins his account of this particular group with the event of their entrance into His service. That was when they were *called* by the law in force in their day. Those who accepted the call were justified or made free from their past sins. It was required, also, that these persons be faithful till death, which would constitute them "saints that slept." God never predestinates any certain person as to his character, but He did predetermine what kind of conduct would receive certain favors. The Lord foresaw some who were going to develop such a character, and among them He predestinated a group to come out of their graves to die no more, giving them the same form or bodily image that the Son received, so that he (the Son) could be the *firstborn* (from the grave to die no more) *among* many brethren. To be *among* them would mean to be associated with them in the same event. Hence we read (Matthew 27: 52, 53) about these saints that arose after the resurrection of Jesus. They are the *glorified* ones of verse 30 here, who were given bodies to die no more. As such, they would not remain on earth, hence when Jesus ascended to Heaven he took them with him. This is what Paul means in Ephesians 4: 8 where he says Christ "led captivity captive." (Marginal, "led a multitude of captives.") These had been captives in the unseen state, but were now made free forever and taken along with their Lord in a *glorified* state. When Jesus comes again he will bring them back with him to witness the execution of judgment upon the ungodly (Jude 14, 15).

Verse 31. If God can thus give glorified life to thousands of his saints so long before the general resurrection, He certainly can do the same for all others who will be faithful until death. No wonder the apostle said as to these things that since God is for us, *no one can be against us*.



Verse 32. Paul reasons that God will freely give us all these things, since He did not spare his Son to make the provision on our behalf, who also led the way by being faithful to God, and then going triumphant through the unseen world.

Verse 33. *God's elect* means those who are chosen of God, and such are the ones who obey God's law. It also means those whom God *justifieth* or declares freed from sin. What reason, then, would anyone have to charge anything to such persons?

Verse 34. This question is similar to the one in the preceding verse. Since Christ died for these chosen ones, and took his place by the Father's right hand after his resurrection, He will intercede for them when enemies condemn them.

Verse 35. This question implies a similar answer to the foregoing. When Christ loves us, these hardships cannot separate us from Him.

Verse 36. *Killed all the day long* denotes that the Lord's disciples were threatened with death constantly, as if they were fit only for slaughter.

Verse 37. *More than conquerors* is defined in the lexicon as, "a surpassing victory." A man might win in a physical combat with another athlete, which would be a simple victory only. But if it was a struggle to repossess a treasure that the other contestant had taken from him, the success would be more than a simple victory. Our combat with Satan is to redeem our soul which he had caused to be endangered.

Verses 38, 39. Note that none of these things can rob us of the love of God. But that does not say that we ourselves could not forfeit it by becoming unfaithful to Him.

## ROMANS 9

Verses 1, 2. See the comments at Acts 24:16 for the meaning of *conscience*. *Witness in the Holy Ghost* means his conscience had the testimony of the Holy Ghost (or Spirit), recorded in the scripture. The *great heaviness* refers to his great concern.

Verse 3. Paul had said so much in criticism of his Jewish brethren that some might think it was prompted by a personal grudge against them. To offset such an impression, he refers to evidences of the past that showed his personal love for them. *I could wish* is all from EUCHOMAI. The Englishman's Greek New Testament translates

it, "I was wishing," thus putting it in the past tense as it should be. It is just another expression in Paul's effort to show his Jewish kinsmen how devoted he had been to their interests. (See the comments on the preceding paragraph, also the passage in Acts 26: 9, 10.) *Accursed* means to be separated from Christ—having nothing to do with him except to oppose him as shown in the passage cited in Acts.

Verse 4. This is virtually the same as chapter 3: 1, 2.

Verse 5. *Whose are the fathers* means the Israelites descended from the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Christ came from them as regards his fleshly ancestry.

Verse 6. *Word . . . taken none effect* is explained at chapter 3: 3. *Not all Israel . . . of Israel*. There are two Israels being considered, the fleshly and the spiritual.

Verse 7. Not all of Abraham's descendants were *children* or in the line coming down to Christ; only those who descended from Abraham through Isaac.

Verse 8. *Flesh and promise* refers to Ishmael and Isaac. The regular law of fleshly reproduction was all that was necessary to produce Ishmael (Genesis 16: 1-3). But Sarah was barren and a miracle was needed to produce Isaac, which God *promised* to do for her.

Verse 9. *At this time*. God worked a miracle to enable Sarah to conceive, then let nature go through the usual *time* of expectancy for the forming of the child.

Verse 10. We learned at chapter 3: 9-18 that God did not choose any particular nation because of its personal goodness, for all were corrupt as nations. His choice, then, was solely because He so willed it, as he certainly had the right to do. Paul is making the same argument in several verses, beginning with our present one.

Verse 11. As an illustration of God's practice of making official selections regardless of personal merit, Paul cites the case of the twin brothers where God made the choice before they were born and before they could have done anything, good or evil.

Verse 12. *Elder and younger* are changed to "greater" and "lesser" in the margin. That is proper, for while Esau was elder in the order of their births and thus of *greater* age, yet God

decreed that he and his descendants should give place to Jacob in His plans.

Verse 13. The original word for *hated* is defined by Thayer in this place, "to love less," hence it does not mean a feeling against Esau as if He detested him.

Verse 14. Since no personal injury was done to Esau by this choice, there was no unrighteousness on the part of God in making this official selection.

Verse 15. The *mercy* and *compassion* of this verse does not refer to the personal treatment of the individuals, but to selecting them for national or official purposes.

Verse 16. The selection is not left to the person to do his own choosing, since it was not for personal advantage, but to God whose will is supreme.

Verse 17. In some cases the selection did result in the personal welfare or fate of the one selected, and then God selected one who was already fitted by character for the place. Pharaoh was brought to the throne of Egypt by the Lord at the right time to go through the humiliating experiences related in Exodus, but he was a wicked character to begin with (Exodus 1: 8), so the experience did him no injustice.

Verse 18. Verses 15 and 17 should be considered with this one.

Verses 19, 20. To criticize God for using his divine right of choice would be like a vessel complaining against the one who formed it. It would be similar to the foolish argument about deliberately sinning in chapter 6: 1, 15.

Verse 21. A potter is the one to decide what kind of vessel is to be made out of a lump of clay. The facts that determine it are such as the case of Pharaoh.

Verses 22, 23. A potter might delay his decision about a vessel, when an onlooker would think it very clear as to which vessel deserved to be retained and which discarded. Yet he would not know the mind of the potter, neither would it be his affair.

Verse 24. The apparent unwise action of the potter in the preceding paragraph refers to the Jews and Gentiles. Each of these nations thought the other should have been discarded as an undesirable vessel. (See the comments at chapter 3: 9-12.)

Verses 25, 26. *Osee* means Hosea, and it is a prediction that the Gentiles

were to become God's people, even though the Jews thought them unworthy of it.

Verse 27. *Esaias* is Isaiah, whose prophecy was concerning the Jews also. But this prediction was not so complimentary for this nation, although it was the vessel at first selected by the Potter. Notwithstanding its number was as the sand of the sea, a remnant only was to be salvaged because of unbelief of the majority.

Verse 28. The first application of this verse as well as the preceding one, is that only a remnant of the Jewish nation was to return from the Babylonian captivity. The context of the passage cited in Isaiah 10: 22, 23 shows clearly that such is the meaning. Then later the nation was reduced still more by the wars with the Romans.

Verse 29. *Lord of Sabaoth* means Lord of hosts. *Left us a seed* applies to the *remnant* of verse 27, and to the "elect" for whose sake the days of the siege of Jerusalem were to be shortened according to Matthew 24: 22. The reference to Sodoma and Gomorra is to show how complete the destruction of Israel would have been had it not been for the mercy of God.

Verse 30, 31. *Followed not after righteousness*. The Gentiles were not under the law of Moses and did not profess to follow the life of righteousness. The Gentiles were not under the law of Moses and did not profess to follow the life of righteousness that it prescribed. Yet when the righteousness set forth by *faith* (the Gospel) was offered to them, they were more ready to accept it than was Israel. (Chapter 8: 4 and Acts 13: 42, 46.)

Verse 32. Paul explains that the failure of the Jews came because they did not seek to attain to righteousness by *faith* (the Gospel). Instead, while professing to accept the preaching of the apostles, they insisted on clinging to the merits of the works of the law. The apostle gives an additional explanation of their failure which is in the fact that they *stumbled at that stumbling-stone*.

Verse 33. The stumbling of the people of Israel had been predicted, and Paul cites it which is in Isaiah 8: 14; 28: 16. It is also in Psalms 118: 22 and 1 Peter 2: 6-8. The Jews' prejudice against Christ caused them to reject His system of righteousness.

## ROMANS 10

Verse 1. Paul's personal interest in his Jewish kinsmen is still one of his main concerns. (See the comments at chapter 9: 3.) His wish *that they might be saved* proves they were in an unsaved state at that time.

Verse 2. The apostle freely gave them credit for what was commendable, but also disapproved of all that was wrong about them. A prominent phrase in Thayer's definition of the original word for *zeal* is, "ardor in embracing." Israel was not sluggish in religious activities on behalf of God. *Knowledge* is from *EPIGNOSIS*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "Precise and correct knowledge." The Jews displayed a heated interest in their form of righteousness, without bothering to learn if it was the correct one.

Verse 3. *God's righteousness* is that performed "through the faith of Christ," and *own righteousness* is that "which is of the law" (Philippians 3: 9). Their lack of knowledge mentioned in the preceding verse, is here specified to consist of their being *ignorant of God's righteousness*.

Verse 4. *Righteousness* is from *DI-KAIOSUNE*, and the part of Thayer's definition that is needed here is, "The state acceptable to God which becomes a sinner's possession." This definition shows the word to have a religious sense, meaning the kind of life necessary to salvation. Christ put an end to the law for that purpose, but He did not intend to interfere with the observance of its institutions as national customs. That is why Paul, though a Christian, did the things recorded in Acts 16: 3; 18: 21. See also the comments at Acts 21: 20-26. But none except Jews have the right to any of these things, even as customs (Galatians 2: 21; 5: 1-4).

Verse 5. All who served God acceptably, from Abel onward, were required to do their performances with faith. But the New Testament system is the only one that is designated as one of faith. In contrast with this, the Mosaic system was one of works, the predominating idea being that the "doing" of the works was what was acceptable to God.

Verse 6. *Righteousness which is of faith* still means the Gospel system. Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 30: 11-13, but adds some words to make it apply to the law of Christ, whose active principle is faith; "take God at

his word," without demanding why or how the divine truths and facts were accomplished. On this basis, one should not be concerned about "who" or "how" it was that Christ came down from above.

Verse 7. And by the same rule as the preceding verse, we need not be concerned about the "hows" of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. *Deep* is from *ABUSSOS*, and Thayer's definition of it is, "Bottomless, unbounded, the abyss." He then explains it to mean, "the common receptacle of the dead."

Verse 8. Our concern is not so far away as the foregoing inquiries would indicate, for all necessary information is nigh at hand in the divine Word.

Verse 9. The simple belief that the resurrection took place, and the confession on our part of such a belief, is sufficient to bring salvation within reach as far as what we must believe is concerned.

Verse 10. The *heart* is the mind and it must accept the divine testimony that Christ arose from the dead, then the believer must make a confession of this belief. Paul does not say that this belief and confession *alone* will bring one into a saved state. But they are a part of the terms that pertain to the "righteousness" discussed above, which leads one *unto* or in the direction of salvation. Other items will logically follow if this belief is "from the heart" (chapter 6: 17).

Verse 11. *Not be ashamed* means "not be disappointed." The emphasis should be on the word *whosoever*, in view of the self-importance felt by the Jews.

Verse 12. This verse shows why "whosoever" in the preceding one is emphasized. The Jews thought they occupied a place of superiority in the Lord's sight.

Verse 13. See Acts 22: 16 for the practical meaning of "calling on the name of the Lord." It denotes more than merely pronouncing the holy name.

Verse 14. If believing in the Lord is necessary to calling on him, it explains the comments in the preceding verse. Even unbelievers can say "Lord, Lord," but to no avail. Faith is not an emotion miraculously produced, but is the effect of something heard. Also, before the New Testament was written, someone had to preach the word so

that the sinner could hear it. (See 1 Corinthians 1: 21 and Titus 1: 3.)

Verse 15. *Except they be sent* also pertains especially to the time before the New Testament was written. The original for the last italicized word is *APOSTELLO*, and Thayer's first definition is, "To order one to go to a place appointed." That is why Christ "ordered" his apostles to "go" as recorded in Matthew 28: 19, 20, but told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they were "endued with power from on high" (Luke 24: 49). That was because they would not know what to preach without this "power," since the New Testament had not been written. This great work of the apostles was predicted in Isaiah 52: 7. *Beautiful are the feet* means their footsteps are beautiful because they bring the promise of peace and other good things.

Verse 16. This is similar in thought to chapter 3: 3.

Verse 17. This verse clearly shows that faith does not come to a sinner as a direct gift from God. It can be produced only by hearing the word of God. That accounts for the items set forth in verse 14, 15.

Verse 18. The pronoun *their* refers to the *preachers* of verses 14, 15, who were the inspired apostles. Paul affirms that their word had at that time gone *unto the ends of the world*. This same fact is declared in Colossians 1: 23. Therefore, when a man applies the "Great Commission" to preachers of today he is perverting the scripture.

Verse 19. *Did not Israel know* that the Gospel was to be preached throughout the world, to both Gentile and Jew? They did not, but they should have known had they "considered" (Isaiah 1: 3), for their own lawgiver Moses prophesied it in Deuteronomy 32: 21. Had the Jews "considered" it, they would have realized that *no people and foolish nation* meant the Gentiles.

Verse 20. *Very bold* means his language is very strong, sounding almost like a disagreement, such as a man finding something that he was not looking for. This, of course, has the same meaning as chapter 9: 30.

Verse 21. Here is a contrast to the foregoing. The Gentiles were not seeking God through any system of religion, yet they were offered one which they gladly accepted. Israel was constantly exhorted to hear and obey, yet they stubbornly disobeyed and were a *gainsaying* (calling in question) people.

## ROMANS 11

Verse 1. The last verses in the preceding chapter indicates a dismal prospect for God's ancient people. Realizing such a possible conclusion being formed by his readers, Paul clarifies the subject in this chapter. The Jews were stubborn, and as a nation had alienated themselves from God; there were some exceptions such as the apostle Paul.

Verses 2, 3. While the nation had departed from God, he had not cast it off nor regarded its departure as final. *Which he foreknew* refers to the promise to Abraham to make of him "a great nation" (Genesis 12: 2). The apostle then cites a former time when *Elias* (Elijah) thought the whole nation was gone (1 Kings 19: 10).

Verse 4. God told the prophet that seven thousand men were still faithful to Him, although the majority had gone into idolatry.

Verse 5. The Jewish nation was chosen as the people to bring the Saviour into the world, and that is what Paul means by *the election of grace*. There has always been a sufficient portion of the nation (though small in number), to carry out the divine plan for the salvation of the world. The individuals of this "remnant" were good enough that God preserved them for the predestined purposes.

Verse 6. The leading thought in this verse is that *grace* and *works* cannot both be given the credit for the salvation of this "election" or "remnant." If the merits of the works of the law are to be given the credit, then grace (the Gospel) is excluded from consideration, and vice versa.

Verse 7. Paul concludes that *Israel* (as a whole) had not obtained what he sought for, namely, justification (because he thought to obtain it through the works of the law). But the *election* (verse 5) had obtained it through the faith of the Gospel. *Rest were blinded*. Israel as a whole was hardened by the national prejudice against Christ.

Verse 8. *God hath given them*. He abandoned them to their unbelief for the time, but expects them finally to change and recognize Christ (verse 26).

Verses 9, 10. The original for *table* is defined by Thayer at this place, "a banquet, feast." The passage is a prediction that even the feasts of the Jews would be used by their foes to *snare* or entrap them to their detri-

ment. The rest of the paragraph is a further prediction of the fate to come to the Jews for their stubborn unbelief. *Bow down their back* predicts the subject condition of Israel at the heathen's hands.

Verse 11. There is a vast difference between causing an event to happen for a certain purpose, and using the event for that purpose if it does happen. A man might not place his foot in the path of another in order to cause him to stumble and fall, yet he might have his foot where he had a perfect right to have it, and then another man, not "looking where he was going," might stumble and fall. God did not place his Son in the path of the Jews for the purpose of making them stumble and fall, yet He did put his Son in the world where He had every right to have him, then the Jews stumbled over him and fell through their blind unbelief. God then used the situation as an advantage for the Gentiles. *Provoke them to jealousy* means that the favored state of the Gentiles would cause the Jews to realize what they had lost, and finally come back to their former favor with God by recognizing his Son. (See verse 26.)

Verse 12. If such benefit came to mankind through the fall of the Jews, certainly more will come when they as a nation (the meaning of *their fulness*) come back.

Verse 13. *Magnify* means "to honor" according to Thayer. Since Paul was especially the apostle of the Gentiles (chapter 15: 16; Galatians 2: 9), he honored that office (work) by showing to them their favored standing with God.

Verse 14. *Emulation* means a stimulation into action by the good example of another. It is virtually the same in thought as that expressed at verse 11.

Verse 15. This is the same in thought as verse 12.

Verse 16. A great part of this chapter is for the information of the Gentile Christians who were disposed to make too much of their acceptance with God, over the Jews who had been the "chosen people" for so long. Paul wants them to know that the present alienated state of the nation of Israel was not to be permanent, but that when it gave up its stubborn unbelief and acknowledged Christ to be the promised Messiah, the nation would be as *holy* (acceptable) to God as it

always was. The subject is illustrated by a reference to the practice under the Mosaic system. (See Leviticus 23: 10; Numbers 15: 19, 20.) In the application it means that if the Jewish Christians who were first converted to Christ (Acts 13: 46) were *holy* (acceptable), then the whole nation would be when it also turned away from its unbelief (verse 26).

Verses 17, 18. The olive tree is used as an illustration of the subject. The branches being *broken off* is the same as the "stumbling and fall" of verses 11, 12. (See comments on those verses.) The Gentiles are compared to a wild olive tree.

Verses 19, 20. This is the same argument as in most of the preceding verses. The Gentiles were warned not to feel boastful of their favorable standing with God.

Verse 21. If God cast off the Jews because of their unbelief, He surely will not continue his favor to the Gentiles if they become unfaithful.

Verses 22, 23. The *goodness* and *severity* of God are applied to those only who deserve it, depending on whether men are believers or unbelievers. And this is true regardless of whether they are Jews or Gentiles. (See Acts 10: 34, 35.)

Verse 24. *Grafted contrary to nature*. In the grafting process when a graft from one tree is put into the limb of another, the fruit will be like the graft and not that of the tree into which it is inserted. Paul uses the illustration contrary to nature and represents the Gentiles (the wild olive) as being grafted into the tame olive (the Jewish stock). Yet, instead of being required to bear its own natural fruit (wild olive), God counteracts the rule of nature to enable this wild graft to bear tame fruit. That being the case, these Gentile Christians should realize that God would graft the natural branches (the Jews) back into their own stock. The point is the same as was made before, namely, the Gentiles should not be too boastful of their standing.

Verse 25. *Blindness* (or unbelief) *in part* proves that the condition of unbelief with Israel was not total, and the latter part of the verse shows that even that state of partial unbelief was not to be permanent. *Fulness of the Gentiles* means until they have had a *full* time with the Gospel all to themselves while the Jews are out. Just

when that fact will be accomplished the apostle does not say.

Verse 26. *All Israel shall be saved.* This cannot mean that every individual Jew will be saved, for that is not true of the Gentiles, and it was never true of any nation as such. It means that the Jews as a nation will give up its stand against Christ and acknowledge him to be the Messiah of the Scriptures. That will open the way for individual Jews to have *ungodliness turned away* from them, by themselves "turning from transgression" (Isaiah 59: 20). This is the only unfulfilled prophecy between now and the second coming of Christ.

Verse 27. When the Jews turn unto Christ and from their transgressions, God will fulfill his covenant unto them, namely, to *take away their sins.*

Verse 28. The nation as a whole had rejected the Gospel, and God regarded it as a group of enemies, then turned the situation in favor of the Gentiles (*for your sakes*); this is according to verse 11. *Touching the election* (verse 5). For the sake of the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God still loves the nation in spite of its temporary state of unbelief, and is ready to receive it again when it gives up its unbelief.

Verse 29. *Gifts* means the favors of God, and the *calling* is the invitation of the Lord for all men, Jew and Gentile alike, to accept those favors on His terms. *Without repentance* denotes that God does not regret making those offers, and He will fulfill them whenever men comply with the terms.

Verses 30, 31. This is virtually the same as verses 11, 12. *Not believed that.* Note especially the comments on "stumbled that" in the verses cited.

Verse 32. *Concluded them all in unbelief* does not say God caused them to become unbelievers. The truths and facts disclosed to God that all nations were unbelievers, and for that reason He put them all in that class, which would make them all the subjects of divine mercy.

Verse 33. No wonder the apostle exclaims on the *depth of the riches of God*, in providing a way for the exercise of His mercy. *Unsearchable* means the judgments of God are beyond the full comprehension of man.

Verses 34, 35. Not knowing the infinite mind of the Lord, it would be foolish for man to think of advising

Him. Nor can man give any favors to God that would obligate Him to recompense them back to man.

Verse 36. The thought of this verse is that the Lord is infinite in wisdom and every other greatness, and man is entirely dependent upon Him.

## ROMANS 12

Verse 1. *Beseech* or earnestly exhort, *by the mercies of God*, in view of the mercy shown in chapter 11: 32. *Present* means to offer willingly something to another, not to have it taken from us by force. *Living sacrifice* in contrast with the dead creatures that were offered on the brazen altar. *Holy, acceptable to God.* The Jews could offer only such animals as were not defective. Christians must have their bodies "washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10: 22), and also have the carnal thoughts and practices "mortified" (put to death, Colossians 3: 5). *Reasonable* is explained by Thayer to mean, "the worship which is rendered by the reason or soul." It is a contrast to the literal or fleshly sacrifices offered under the Mosaic system.

Verse 2. *Be not conformed* or be not like the things of this world. *Be transformed* means to be changed to a different form of living. *Renewing of your mind* denotes a "complete change for the better" in the desires and motives of the mind. *Prove* or demonstrate by living it out that the *will of God* is a good and acceptable way of living.

Verse 3. The *grace given unto Paul* was the favor of inspiration. That authorized him to make the following statements. To *think more highly* means esteeming oneself overmuch; being "vain and arrogant." *Think soberly* or moderately concerning one's talents or natural gifts. We know the apostle means such gifts for chapter 1: 11 shows this church did not then possess any miraculous or spiritual gifts. *Measure of faith* means that God-given natural capacity to absorb the instruction in the word of God (the source of faith, chapter 10: 17), thus becoming able to try out in practice the particular talent or talents that one has.

Verses 4, 5. The human body is used as an illustration of the body of Christ, because the members of the fleshly body each have a separate *office* or use. The various members of the body of



Christ have individual parts to perform in the spiritual life.

Verse 6. *Gifts* is from the same Greek word as "gift" in 1 Corinthians 7: 7, where the context shows it means a gift of nature and not a miraculous one. *According to the grace* is explained at verse 3. According to Thayer's lexicon, *to prophesy* means, "To break forth under sudden impulse in lofty discourse or in praise of the divine counsels." In 1 Corinthians 14: 3, 4, Paul shows that one form of prophesying is to speak "to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." Prophesying, then, does not necessarily mean to speak with a spiritual gift.

Verse 7. *Ministry* means that service to others that their condition requires. If a man has the ability to teach, let him attend to that as his personal work.

Verse 8. *To insist* means to insist on the performance of known duties. *Giveth* is from METADIDOMI, and Thayer's first definition is, "To share a thing with any one." *Simplicity* is from HAPLOTES, and it has been rendered in the King James Version by, bountifulness, liberality, singleness. *He that ruleth* applies to the elders since they are the only rulers in the church. They are to be diligent and "watch" the conduct of the members to see that it is not such as to endanger their souls. (See Hebrews 13: 17.) When administering to the distress of another let it be done cheerfully, and not in the spirit of one who does it merely because it is a duty he has to perform.

Verse 9. *Dissimulation* means hypocrisy; do not merely pretend to love another. *Abhor* is from APOSTUGEO which Strong defines, "to detest utterly," and *cleave* is from KALLAO, which the same author defines, "to glue, i.e., to stick." The thought is that Christians should not be half-hearted in their opposition to evil or support of the good.

Verse 10. *Kindly affectioned* is defined in the lexicon, "loving affection, prone to love, loving tenderly." *Brotherly love* is from PHILADELPHIA, and Thayer's definition is, "in the New Testament the love which Christians cherish for each other as 'brethren.'" *Honor* means respect or esteem, and *preferring* is defined, "To go before and show the way." The thought is to be a leader and set an example in showing respect for others.

Verse 11. *Business* is from SPOUDE, which Thayer defines, "Haste, with haste; earnestness, diligence," and the original for *slothful* is defined, "sluggish, slothful, backward." The thought is that Christians should not be indifferent about the activities of the service for Christ. The remainder of the verse means virtually the same thing.

Verse 12. *Rejoicing in hope*. A Christian does not have to be in possession of the crown of life to rejoice, but he can rejoice over the hope of receiving it; that will cause him to be patient in tribulation, and continue to be a prayerful disciple.

Verse 13. *Necessity* is from a word that means a state of destitution that the Christian is here told to relieve. Thayer defines the original for *given*, "to seek after eagerly," and that for *hospitality*, "love to strangers" (Hebrews 13: 2).

Verse 14. *Bless* is from EULOGEO and means "to invoke [wish for] blessings," while *curse* means to wish that some ill fortune will come upon our persecutors.

Verse 15. This verse means to share in the feelings of others over their condition, whether it be favorable or otherwise. This is taught also in 1 Corinthians 12: 26.

Verse 16. *Be of the same mind*. Be interested in the same things that concern our brother. (See preceding verse.) *Men* is not in the original; the sentence denotes an interest in common or lowly things rather than craving that which is lofty. *Own conceits* is from the original terms that mean "yourselves." The sentence means not to be conceited over one's individual wisdom, being like Job's friends to whom he said in irony, "Wisdom shall die with you" (Job 12: 2).

Verse 17. The first sentence means not to retaliate or do an enemy a wrong because he has done to us that way. *Provide things honest*. Live so that no one can reproach you.

Verse 18. James 3: 17 teaches that divine wisdom requires peace that is in harmony with the truth "from above." Our present verse requires peace on the same terms.

Verse 19. An evildoer deserves to be treated with revenge, but Christians are not the ones to inflict it. The Lord says *vengeance is mine*, therefore the passage means to give place unto [divine] wrath.

Verse 20. The first part of this verse is the same in thought as that in verse 14. *Coals of fire* is figurative, meaning that an act of kindness will bring a tortured conscience upon an enemy that will be like fire on top of his head.

Verse 21. In the conflict between *evil* and *good*, let the disciple of Christ so conduct himself that he will be the conqueror and win the battle for the good. This is virtually the same thought as that in the preceding verse.

### ROMANS 13

Verses 1, 2. *Higher* is from HUPERECHO, which Thayer defines at this place, "to be above, be superior in rank, authority, power." *Power* is from EXOUSIA which the same author defines at this place, "one who possesses authority; a ruler, human magistrate." *Be subject* is from HUPOTASSO, and both Thayer and Strong define it in this passage, "to obey." The sentence, then, means that every person must obey the rulers of human governments. The same command is given in direct terms in Titus 3:1 and 1 Peter 2:13, 14. *Ordained* is from TASSO, which Thayer defines here, "to place in a certain order, to arrange, to assign a place, to appoint," and Paul says this is done of God. The Mosaic system was both religious and civil, or secular as a government. But when the New Testament age came in, the Lord dropped the civil use and ordered man to form his own government, with the understanding, of course, that he was not to pass any laws that would violate the religious principles of His law. That is why it is the same as resisting the ordinance of God for a man to disobey the laws of the land.

Verse 3. In most of the verses Paul is considering the penal parts of the law. *To be afraid* of these rulers means to respect their laws against wrongdoing. *Have praise of the same*. If a man does right he will be regarded as a good citizen.

Verse 4. *Minister of God* is explained in the first paragraph. *Beareth not the sword in vain*. There is only one use for a sword and that is to take life; in the hands of an officer it would mean capital punishment. Here we have the teaching that when an officer executes capital punishment, he is acting as a "minister of God."

Verse 5. A Christian will obey the laws with a twofold motive. He wishes

to avoid punishment, and he also desires to have a good conscience.

Verse 6. This *tribute* means tax on property. The rulers protect our property, which makes it necessary to support them while they are *attending upon this very thing*.

Verse 7. *Custom* is defined by Thayer, "toll, custom," and explains it to mean, "an indirect tax on goods." The two words, *tribute* and *custom* means "all taxes, personal and real." We should *fear* the penal officer (verse 3) and respect or honor the rulers.

Verse 8. A part of Thayer's explanation of *owe* is, "that which is due." It does not forbid honorable debts such as accounts, for Paul and Philemon conducted such transactions (Philemon 18), but a man should regard his debts and deal honestly. The debt of *love* can never be paid, hence one may always *owe* without criticism.

Verse 9. The Jews regretted giving up the law that contained what they thought were such important principles. Paul is showing that those principles are not lost by receiving the Gospel. It requires Christians to love their neighbors as themselves, and if they do, they will necessarily do all the things that are named in this verse.

Verse 10. Love (one of the requirements of the Gospel) fulfills the law by prompting one to do these neighborly acts specified by the law.

Verse 11. *Wake out of sleep* denotes arousing from indifference and becoming more active in the service of the Lord. *Salvation nearer*. If we are faithful until death or until Jesus comes — whichever occurs first — our salvation will be assured. Of necessity, then, the passing of the days brings us nearer to that reward.

Verse 12. *The night* is a figurative term for the period of waiting, and the *day* (of our salvation, verse 11) is *at hand* or *nearer* as stated in the preceding verse. Moralizing on these truths, the apostle exhorts us to cast off the works of darkness and put on the *armor* ("implements") of light, which means divine truth.

Verse 13. *Honestly* means "decently," and the *day* here means the condition of spiritual light. *Chambering* is from KOITE which Thayer defines "cohabitation," then explains it to mean, "whether lawful or unlawful." *Wantonness* is from ASELGIA and Thayer's

definition is more specific than on the preceding word: "Unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness," etc. He then explains it at our passage to mean, "filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females." Such a life as the foregoing describes will not prepare one for salvation when the "day arrives."

Verse 14. Galatians 3: 27 tells us how we can "put on Christ." *Make no provision* means not to look forward to the lusts of the flesh, in order to have the opportunity for gratification.

### ROMANS 14

Verse 1. This chapter deals with two subjects on which the Lord has made no legislation as to their being right or wrong. *Him that is weak in the faith* does not pertain to matters that are necessary to salvation, for on that subject all Christians are commanded to be "strong in the Lord" (Ephesians 6: 10). But it means one who is weak as to whether he should participate in the things others were doing. *Receive ye* denotes that we should accept him as a brother in Christ, but not with the idea of judging or condemning him on these unlegislated things on which he has some doubts.

Verse 2. *Who is weak* explains the *weak* person in verse 1. He is weak in that he thinks he should not eat any kind of food but herbs.

Verse 3. *Him that eateth* is the one who will *eat all things* in the preceding verse. To *despise* means to belittle or look down upon one, and Paul forbids the one man thus to treat a brother who restricts himself to vegetables. Likewise, this latter man has no right to condemn the one who *eats all things*, for *God hath received him* or recognized him as an acceptable servant.

Verse 4. The relation of master and slave, a common one in the Roman Empire, is used for the purpose of illustration. If a slave deserves correction, his own master is the one to administer it. Likewise the servant of God has to answer to Him only in regard to these unlegislated matters. In the present case He will hold up for his servant because he has not disobeyed any divine law.

Verse 5. Having dealt with one subject pertaining to the individual conscience, on which the Lord has not legislated, Paul introduces another which is the observance of days.

Thayer defines the original word for *esteemeth*, "to prefer." One man has some preference for a certain day while another has not. The Lord does not care which view a man takes, just so he is fully persuaded in his own mind, and does not try to force his views on another.

Verse 6. *Regardeth* is from *PHRONEO* which Thayer defines, "to direct one's mind to a thing," and he explains it at this place to mean, "to regard a day, observe it as sacred." Robinson's definition of the word is, "to regard, to keep." Both the lexicon definitions and the language of Paul show he is writing of men who prefer to "keep" some certain day in a religious way since he regards such a day as sacred. But that is his individual privilege, even as it is the privilege of another not to keep any day as sacred. The same privilege applies to eating or not eating certain foods.

Verses 7, 8. I have combined these verses to prevent a wrong conclusion. We are not under obligation to any *man* with regard to this liberty described in verse 6, but we are subject to the Lord, who forbids us to press our views on another in this matter.

Verses 9, 10. Even if there should be anything objectionable to Christ in the exercise of this liberty, it is between the individual and Him, and he will answer at the judgment.

Verse 11. Every tongue will confess, but those who wait till the judgment to do so will bestow glory on the Father only but will receive no reward (Philippians 2: 10, 11).

Verse 12. The word *himself* is the one to be emphasized in this verse.

Verse 13. The word *judge* is from *KRINO* which has several meanings, and two of them are "condemn" and "conclude." The verse means for one brother not to *condemn* another regarding these unlegislated matters. Rather he should *conclude* not to put a stumbling-block in his way by trying to force him to eat what he believes it is wrong to eat.

Verse 14. *I know* denotes that Paul is speaking by inspiration. No kind of food is unclean in fact (1 Timothy 4: 4), but it is unclean to the man who believes it is.

Verse 15. This is the first time in this chapter that the word *meat* is used. Had the word "herbs" not been used in contrast to it in verse 2, we would have no reason for saying it

means the flesh of animals, for the lexicon only defines it, "that which is eaten, food." Hence the principle Paul is discussing is that God does not care what kind of food one eats, as long as he has no conscientious objections to it. If a brother has such objections, another should not induce him to eat it, defiling his conscience.

Verse 16. *Your good* means the right for the "strong" to eat meat. If he tries to force that privilege on the weak brother, he will speak evil of this strong brother.

Verse 17. If salvation depended on eating or not eating certain foods, then it would be necessary to insist on one or the other. Since it does not, we should not disturb anyone on it, but give our attention to righteousness and peace.

Verses 18, 19. By observing this rule of respect for a weak brother's conscience, we not only serve God acceptably, but all good men will approve of it.

Verse 20. For the sake of meat, do not destroy the work of the Lord. *All things are pure*, etc., is explained by the comments on verse 14.

Verse 21. This verse is a generalization of the arguments of the chapter. We should not press our "rights" on a brother who is weak concerning these practices.

Verse 22. *Faith* here is upon the testimony of the conscience that it is right to *eat all things*; he should exercise that to himself. It is wrong to press it upon a weak brother, and if he does so the Lord will condemn him, for imposing upon another that thing that is *allowed* for a strong brother.

Verse 23. *Whatsoever is not of faith is sin*. This is the same *faith* that is described in verse 22, namely, that which is produced by the testimony of one's conscience. Since the Lord has not legislated for or against the observance of days or the eating of foods, a man's conscience must be his sole guide and basis of his faith.

## ROMANS 15

Verse 1. This is virtually the same as chapter 14: 21.

Verse 2. *Please his neighbor* is to be accomplished by respecting his views on the matters discussed in the preceding chapter. This will have the effect of edifying him, or building him up in his service to the Lord. Such a

result would be the opposite to that set forth by the comments at verse 16 of that chapter.

Verse 3. None of the things Christ did for man brought Him any selfish pleasure. The quotation is from Psalms 69: 9. Many of the passages of David are worded as if they pertained to his own experiences. To some extent they do so apply, but the main thought is that they are prophecies to be fulfilled in his illustrious descendant, Jesus the Christ. *Thee* and *me* in our verse means God and Christ. The reproaches that were aimed at the Father were like arrows that missed their mark and struck the Son.

Verse 4. Paul had just quoted from the Psalms, therefore we know his word *aforetime* means the things written in the Old Testament. *Learning* is from DIDASKALIA, and Thayer defines it, "teaching, instruction." They were not written, then, as our law, for this whole book is in opposition to that. But by learning of God's dealing with his servants in old time, and observing how they came through their trials by the help of God, the disciples of Christ may be encouraged to press on in their own duties, even though unpleasant sometimes, in the hope of a life of joy and freedom from trial in the world to come. If God caused these Old Testament things to be recorded *for our learning*, it is our duty to study and learn them.

Verse 5. *Likeminded* is similar to the thought in chapter 12: 16. The brethren should be united in their care for each other, and to have that unity *according to Christ Jesus*. Such a mutual consideration for each other will cause them to suppress their personal preference and give their attention to the instructions of the Lord.

Verse 6. Being united in *mind* concerning the things of God and Christ, they will also be united in speech (*one mouth*) in their praise of the Lord.

Verse 7. This is the same as verse 5.

Verse 8. *The circumcision* is a term meaning the Mosaic system, Jesus was a Jew and his entire life on earth was under that dispensation. *To confirm the promises*. God promised Abraham that the person who was to bless all the families of the earth should be of his seed (Genesis 22: 18). Had Jesus come through the Gentile nation, it would not have fulfilled the promise to Abraham.

Verses 9-11. The Jewish birth of Jesus fulfilled the promise as to His being of Abraham's seed, and also the offering of the Gospel to the Gentiles fulfilled that part of the promise that "all nations" would be blessed through this seed.

Verse 12. This verse pertains to the same promise made to Abraham, but extends it on down to one of his great descendants; for David (the son of Jesse) was a lineal descendant of Abraham to whom the promise was first made. The quotation showing this promise is in *Esaias* (Isaiah) 11: 10.

Verse 13. No apostle had been in Rome when this epistle was written, and hence no spiritual gifts were possessed by that church. The power of the Holy Ghost (or Spirit) was exerted through the word of God which is the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6: 17). By *believing* this word, the brethren could be filled with *joy* and *peace*, all of which would give them their *hope*.

Verse 14. Paul had much confidence in the brethren at Rome, and wrote this complimentary passage for their encouragement.

Verse 15. Notwithstanding his confidence in them, Paul thought it well to stir up their minds on the important matter. Being favored with the apostolic work under God, Paul was acting properly in thus writing to the brethren.

Verse 16. Paul's special mission was to the Gentiles (chapter 11: 13; Acts 9: 15), and most of the brethren in Rome were of that nation. *Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost*. Acts 11: 15-18 records the giving of the Holy Ghost to the Gentiles, which was a public announcement from God that the Gentiles would be acceptable Gospel subjects.

Verse 17. Paul gloried (took great pleasure) in the work among the Gentiles, especially since that constituted the things pertaining to God.

Verse 18. *Not dare to speak . . . not wrought by me*. He would not take credit for work that had been done by others.

Verse 19. His own field of labor had furnished him much cause for rejoicing. That work had been performed under God through the aid of the Spirit of God, inspiring him. The territory Paul mentions had not been "covered" by other preachers, hence it

was virtually new territory where the apostle felt free to labor.

Verse 20. By working in new fields he would not be building on another man's foundation. This idea is also set forth in 2 Corinthians 10: 15, 16.

Verse 21. These new fields were predicted in Isaiah 52: 15.

Verse 22. *For which cause* refers to his plan to confine his labors to new fields, so that he did not have time to make the journey to Rome until the present.

Verse 23. *Having no more place in these parts* denotes the field had been "worked out," so he was free to go elsewhere in his labors.

Verse 24. This purpose of Paul was never accomplished that we have any substantial account of, nor any record of labors performed in that territory.

Verse 25. This ministering was to consist in taking some contributions from various brethren, and delivering them to the *saints* (disciples) at Jerusalem.

Verse 26. This verse tells who were making the contributions, namely, the disciples in Macedonia, and those in another Greek country called Achaia.

Verse 27. *Their debtors they are* means the brethren in the countries named are indebted (under obligation) to the *poor saints* at Jerusalem. The latter had supplied the former with spiritual things (the Gospel), now in turn they should help them with *carnal* (temporal) necessities of life. This is exactly the same as Galatians 6: 6.

Verse 28. See the comments at verse 24.

Verse 29. No fuller blessing could be brought to a community, than that provided by the Gospel of Christ that Paul was preaching.

Verse 30. Paul here teaches that the prayers of disciples in behalf of each other are one means of having a part in their labors for the Lord.

Verse 31. Paul expected to encounter some foes in Judea. He accounts for this opposition by the fact that they were unbelievers. He also desired to be understood and received by the saints in that region.

Verse 32. *By the will of God* denotes that he would be able to carry out the desire as to visiting the brethren in Rome "if the Lord will."

Verse 33. This is an expression of good will. There is only one God, so

the expression *God of peace* means that he is such a God.

## ROMANS 16

Verse 1. *Servant* is from DIAKONOS which is usually translated "deacon." Having the feminine inflection in the composition at this place, it could be rendered "deaconess," and it is so defined by Thayer. He then explains it to mean "a woman to whom the care of either poor or sick women was entrusted." Robinson gives the same information; but neither the New Testament nor any secular authors that I have seen, say anything about official deaconesses. Phebe was a member of the church at Cenchrea, a harbor of Corinth, and she served there in the capacity described above.

Verse 2. *Business* is from PRAGMA, which Thayer defines at this place, "a matter of law, case, suit." Phebe needed to go to Rome on some legal affair, and in that big city she would naturally need some assistance. Paul tells the brethren to receive her as a saint (disciple of Christ), and to help her for her good example of assisting others, including himself.

Verses 3, 4. These worthy disciples had once been banished from Rome (Acts 18: 2), but had returned home after some time. While at Ephesus they did some important work just preceding that of the apostle (Acts 18: 24-26), and they otherwise rendered faithful service to him. *Laid down their own necks* is figurative, referring to the risks to their own lives they had run for him.

Verse 5. *The church that is in their house*. In the early years of the church, the disciples did not have church buildings in every place, hence they conducted their services in the homes of the brethren; the home of Priscilla and Aquila was one of such places. *Achaia* is another name for "Asia" at this place according to both Moffatt and the American Standard Version. 1 Corinthians 16: 15 says that the house of Stephanas was the first fruits of Achaia.

Verse 6. All we can know of this woman is what is said here. She had rendered some kind of service for Paul for which he wished her to be remembered.

Verse 7. In the King James Version, the terms "greet" and "salute" are used interchangeably as they well may be, since they both come from the

word ASPAZOMAI, which means a gesture of good will in whatever form it may be performed. *Who also were in Christ before me*. This statement is against the theory of unconditional predestination, which claims that God determined "from all eternity" just who was to be saved. If that were true, it would be impossible for any person to be in Christ before another, since all would have been placed in Him by divine decree at the same time.

Verses 8, 9. The persons named had helped the apostle in some way. I have no information as to the nature of their services.

Verse 10. There is no separate word in the Greek for *household*. The marginal reading is "friends," which is correct as the name Aristobulus is in the possessive form. Smith's Bible Dictionary says he is reputed by legend to have been a preacher.

Verses 11, 12. *Kinsman* is used in the sense of a fellow-countryman. All of the persons here are given "honorable mention" because they had *labored much in the Lord*.

Verse 13. *His mother and mine* is a term of tender appreciation for the favors Rufus' mother had shown to Paul; she had been like a mother to him.

Verses 14, 15. The works of reference that I have seen do not know much about these persons, other than to ascribe to them an active interest in the Lord's work.

Verse 16. *Holy kiss*. I have examined a number of dictionaries and histories, as well as four lexicons, and they all represent the kiss to have been a form of salute between persons of both sexes, the custom dating back to ancient times. The instruction of the apostle, then, was not to start any new form of salutation for the kiss was in use centuries before he was born. The point is in the word *holy*, and it means for the salutation to be sincere and not one of hypocrisy as was that of Judas. The word "church" in the King James Version of the New Testament is always from EKKLESIA, and its primary meaning according to Thayer is "A gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly." Robinson gives the simple definition, "A convocation, assembly, congregation." The word has no religious significance unless it is associated with some other word. Hence our phrase means those who have been "called out" by Christ to



“assemble in His name.” Any group of men and women thus called out would be one of the assemblies or congregations or churches of Christ.

Verse 17. To *mark* means to observe very carefully in order to discover the nature of the person's conduct. There is not much difference between *divisions* and *offences*, considering their results. The first means that which causes disunion in a body of people, and the second means that which causes someone to stumble along the pathway of life. These things are always wrong, hence the proviso *contrary to the doctrine which you have learned* is stated to signify that such theories have not been taught by any true teacher of the Gospel. To *avoid* is more than merely a refusal to accept, but Thayer defines it to “keep aloof from, one's society; to shun one.” Christians should keep no company with such characters, but should shun them as they would Satan.

Verse 18. *Belly* is from KOILIA, and Thayer defines it at this place, “the gullet [throat, or what goes down it], and he explains it to mean, “to be given up to the pleasures of the palate, to gluttony.” The motive of these divisive characters is to gain the confidence of their victims, in the hope of obtaining something from them to consume upon their appetite. *The simple* refers to those who do not suspect anything wrong in the workings of these teachers, and hence are easily deceived thereby.

Verse 19. *Obedience is come* denotes that the report of their obedience had become generally known, and for this the apostle was rejoicing. *Wise* and *simple* are used as contrasts, with the idea that no one can know too much about that which is good, but the less we have to do with things that are evil, the better will be our condition.

Verse 20. *Shortly* is a comparative term, for the final victory over Satan is not to be until the end. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2: 10). The endless life of happiness awaiting the faithful after death is so great that the span of life is “but for a moment” (2 Corinthians 4: 17).

Verse 21. *Timotheus* is the same as Timothy, and he is called the work-fellow of Paul because he was associated with him in his travels (Acts 16: 1-3), and also was a close friend in Christ in many of the trials of the apostle. He had good reason to join

in the salutations to the brethren at Rome, because he had been in contact with many of them in other places. Paul refers to *Lucius* among his *kinsmen*, and the Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary places him with the one mentioned in Acts 13: 1. Smith's Bible Dictionary says he was a fellow tribesman of Paul, and that tradition recognized him as a bishop of the church of Chenchrea. Jason was the man who entertained Paul and Silas in Acts 17: 5-9, for which he was persecuted by the mob. It is significant that he would join his salutation with others being sent by Paul. There is not much said about Sosipater, but he was of sufficient importance to have Paul include him with the group that was sending salutations to the brethren at Rome.

Verse 22. The Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary says the following of Tertius: “The amanuensis [secretary] who penned Paul's Epistle to the Romans and who sent his salutation, along with others' to the church at Rome.” Paul usually had someone else to do the writing of the epistles as he dictated them, then he signed them which made them his epistles officially.

Verse 23. *Gaius mine host* means he was the one who provided headquarters for Paul when he was in Corinth. He was also the one whom the apostle baptized in that city (1 Corinthians 1: 14). He was said to be very hospitable, and that accounts for the fact that he entertained a whole congregation. *Erastus the chamberlain*. The third word is from OIKONOMOS which Thayer defines as follows: “The superintendent of the city's finances, the treasurer of the city.” It is important to know that a disciple of Christ would be entrusted with such an important position. This circumstance is also against the theory of some professed disciples today, who say that it is wrong for Christians to have anything to do with civil government, and who even go so far as to object to casting a vote. Yet we here have an instance of one of the brethren of Paul who did “take part in politics” to the extent that he held an important position as a servant of the government. What is commonly called “politics” is usually very corrupt, but that is because a good thing is being abused. Since civil governments exist by divine ordinance (chapter 13: 1-6), it is a serious error

to assert that Christians do wrong to have any part in their administration.

Verse 24. *Grace* is from CHARIS and it has been so rendered 129 times in the King James Version. It is rendered also by benefit 1 time, favor 6, liberality 1, thank 3, thanks 4. Thayer gives as its primary definition, "sweetness, charm, loveliness," and explains it to signify "that which affords joy, pleasure, delight." Other definitions are, "good-will, loving kindness, favor; kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved." *Amen* is from the Greek word AMEN; it occurs in the Greek New Testament 150 times, and has been rendered "amen" 50 times, and "verily" 100 times in the King James Version. Thayer says that at the beginning of a discourse it means "surely, of a truth, truly." He says a repetition of the word as John alone uses it, has the force of a superlative, "most assuredly," and at the close of a sentence it means, "so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled." Thayer further says historically, "it was a custom, which passed over from the synagogues into the Christian assemblies, that when he who had read or discoursed had offered up a solemn pray to God, the others in attendance responded

*Amen*, and thus made the substance of what was uttered their own." With this short but impressive sentence, Paul begins the closing words of apostolic and brotherly interest in his brethren at Rome.

Verse 25. *My Gospel* means the Gospel that Paul was preaching, and that it was the power by which they were to be *stablished* (made firm), communicated to them by preaching. A *mystery* is anything not known, and such was the case regarding the great system of salvation through Christ.

Verse 26. It was then (in Paul's day) made manifest *by the scriptures of the prophets*, referring to the predictions in the Old Testament. *It was made known to all nations*. (See chapter 10: 18; Colossians 1: 23.) *For the obelience of faith* means it was revealed to all nations to the end that all might obey it from the motive of faith.

Verse 27. This is similar in sentiment to verse 24. *God only wise* means to give Him credit for the origin of all true wisdom. Such a Being is worthy of all glory, and it should be offered through the name of His only begotten Son, Jesus the Christ, and it should be attributed to him for all the coming ages. AMEN.



# Bible Commentary

## 1 CORINTHIANS 1

*General remarks.* It will throw much light on many passages of this epistle to learn something of the city of Corinth. I shall first quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary: "The situation of Corinth and the possession of its eastern and western harbors, Cenchrea and Lecheun, are the secrets of its history. Corinth was a place of commercial and manufacturing enterprise. Its wealth was so celebrated as to be proverbial; so were the vice and profligacy [extravagant living] of its inhabitants. The worship of Venus [heathen goddess of bloom and beauty] here was attended with shameful licentiousness [immoral thoughts and practices]. "I shall next quote from the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia on the city of Corinth: "It soon became one of the most important commercial places on the Mediterranean; but its character was somewhat peculiar. Its population was extremely heterogenous [a mixture]. A numerous colony of Jews settled there when driven away from Rome by Claudius, and among them were Aquila and Priscilla. Everybody went to Corinth to make money or to spend it. All nations were represented there; but nearly the only bonds which held the inhabitants together were their common enterprises and their common debaucheries."

A number of serious defects had come into the church at Corinth when Paul wrote his first epistle to it, which will be commented upon as we come to them in the course of this study. Notwithstanding these evils, the apostle recognized it as a *church of God*. It will help to understand this apparent inconsistency by considering the case of the church at Ephesus as recorded in Revelation 2: 1-5. The Lord had a serious complaint against this church, yet he recognized it as one of His at the time of sending a letter to it. But the candlestick that represented its standing was to be removed if it did not repent. This means that a church (and likewise an individual) does not necessarily lose its standing with the Lord at the mere instance of doing wrong; it loses it when it refuses to correct itself after being admonished. The church at Corinth acted favorably upon the admonition of Paul (2 Co-

rinthians 7: 8-11), hence it continued to be recognized as a church of God.

Verse 1. *Called* is from KLETOS, which Thayer defines at this place, "called to some office," and he explains it to mean, "divinely selected and appointed." *Of Jesus Christ* denotes by whom Paul was thus called unto the apostleship, which also was according to the will of God. *Of Sosthenes*, Thayer says historically, "a Christian, an associate of the apostle Paul, 1 Corinthians 1: 1." Paul chose this brother to join with him in the salutation.

Verse 2. The terms *church of God* and *church of Christ* are both used for the same institution because of their common relation to the Deity. For the meaning of *church* see the notes on Romans 16: 16, in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary. The various qualifying terms following the phrase of the church do not indicate separate groups, but are qualities belonging to the one institution. *Sanctified* is from HAGIAZO, which Thayer defines, "1. to render or acknowledge to be venerable, to hallow. 2. to separate from things profane and dedicate to God, to consecrate." *Saints* is from HAGIOS, which Thayer defines, "set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively his." *With all*, etc., means to apply the epistle to Christians everywhere. For the meaning of *calling on the name of the Lord*, see the notes at Acts 22: 16 in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary. Lord . . . theirs . . . ours, signifies there is only one God.

Verse 3. *Grace* is from CHARIS, and one part of Thayer's definition is, "kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved." This phase of the word explains why the apostle specifies that it is the grace from God he is wishing for his brethren, since all of God's favors upon man are undeserved. Such favors are bestowed upon man only through the Lord Jesus Christ. That is because the sacrifice of Christ provided the way for God to maintain his justice and at the same time extend this unmerited favor to humanity. (See the notes at Romans 3: 26, volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.)

Verse 4. In his unselfishness Paul was thankful for the favors bestowed upon the brethren at Corinth. In this

he was carrying out his own words in Romans 12: 15.

Verse 5. Riches do not always consist of material wealth; the Corinthians had been given the wealth of spiritual blessings in the form of *utterance* and *knowledge*. The first is from *LOGOS* which is the Greek term for "word," and is applied in a variety of senses. It denotes any expression of thought, whether in single words or in sentences, or even in entire discourses. It is also applicable either to inspired or uninspired speech, so that it would include the gift of tongues. The second word is from *GNOSIS* and the outstanding definition in Thayer's lexicon is, "intelligence."

Verse 6. This verse shows the preceding one has special reference to the spiritual gifts that were bestowed on the church at Corinth, since that was the primary purpose of those gifts (Mark 16: 20; Ephesians 4: 8-15).

Verse 7. *Come behind in no gift*. Not every member of a congregation was given a spiritual gift, but a sufficient per cent of the membership would be thus endowed to accomplish the Lord's work. The Corinthian church was large in numbers (Acts 18: 8), which would call for a proportionate number of gifted men. *Waiting for the coming*. All persons must of necessity wait literally for the coming of Christ. Strong defines the original word, "to expect fully."

Verse 8. The promise to confirm them *unto the end* does not mean that spiritual gifts will continue that long. The idea is that the Lord will do whatever is necessary for the purpose. After the New Testament will have been completed, spiritual gifts will not be needed and they will cease (chapter 13: 8-10). The grand purpose of all divine means for the confirming of God's people, is that they may be prepared to stand approved by Christ when he comes again.

Verse 9. A part of Thayer's definition of *faithful* is, "worthy of trust; that can be relied on," and this definition is especially applicable to the Lord. It carries the idea that He may be expected fully to fulfill all his promises. God had promised to bless all mankind through Christ, who is the seed promised to Abraham (Genesis 22: 18). In being *faithful* to redeem that promise, God called the Corinthians into the fellowship of his Son.

Verse 10. The apostle now approaches

one of the serious defects referred to in the "general remarks," that of *divisions*. This is not a formal or bodily division, but one of sentiment that causes contention and strife. That is why he specifies the *mind* and judgment in his exhortation, to the end that all would *speak the same thing*. The *mind* means the faculty of reason, and *judgment* denotes the conclusions arrived at with the mind. The apostle beseeches them all to be united in sentiments.

Verse 11. The name *Chloe* does not appear in any other place, and all we can learn of her is that she was a disciple who was concerned about the conditions existing in the church at Corinth. She passed the information on to the apostle which he repeated in his epistle to the church in that city.

Verse 12. The reader should not be confused over the apparent similarity between *contentions* and "contend," both of which are used in the New Testament. The first means quarrels and wranglings over petty matters of personal opinion. The second is from the vocabulary of contests in the physical exercises, in which a man engages with a contestant under recognized rules of combat. *Every one of you*. That is, each man among them had his preference and was wrangling with the others about it. The four persons named were not literally the subject of their quarrels; chapter 4: 6, 7 shows this, which will be commented upon in detail when we reach that place in this study. But until that time, the apostle reasons as if their contentions were actually over these men (even including Christ), and I also shall make my comments from that standpoint. The idea of Paul seems to have been that, having received the force of the argument before their actual prejudices were aroused, they should be prepared to see the folly of their variances.

Verse 13. The three questions in this verse require negative answers. *In* is from *EIS* which means "into" the name of another, that was supposed to have been accomplished by the ordinance of baptism.

Verse 14. There was more than one man named Gaius, one of whom belonged to the congregation in Corinth, and was among the few persons whom Paul baptized.

Verse 15. The apostle gives his reason for the feeling expressed in the preceding verse. *In* is from the same word as in verse 15.

Verse 16. Paul did not place much stress on the question of who personally does the baptizing, consequently he seems to have overlooked this case in verse 14. *Household* is from *oikos*, and in the King James Version it has been rendered by house 102 times, home 4, household 3, temple 1. The first definition in Thayer's lexicon is, "an inhabited house." We know the inhabitants of Stephanas' house were old enough to believe on the Lord, for Acts 18: 8 shows that such were the ones baptized.

Verse 17. *Christ sent me not to baptize*. This statement has been perverted by some who seek to belittle the importance of baptism, and to represent Paul as thinking little of the ordinance. What he teaches in Acts 19: 1-5; Romans 6: 3, 4; Galatians 3: 27 and Colossians 2: 12 indicates the weight that he attaches to the ordinance. But as to what person does the physical act of baptizing a believer, because of the wrong use that might be made of the subject, Paul was thankful he had let others do most of it at Corinth. What Paul could do that others could not was to preach the Gospel, which required more than physical strength. And even that great work was not to be accomplished by the use of *words* or speech that consisted of worldly wisdom, for that would detract from the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ.

Verse 18. The Greek nation was devoted to the importance (as it was considered) of philosophy, or what we would term worldly wisdom. Its people estimated any theory proposed to them in proportion to whether it agreed or disagreed with this philosophy, and it was in view of this truth that Paul wrote as he did in this and several verses following. However, the relation between divine truth and philosophy is somewhat similar to that between it and "science." When this last term is understood, it is found to be in harmony with divine truth. Likewise, when true philosophy is understood, it will be seen that it, too, is in harmony with divine truth. In support of this from the standpoint of history, I shall quote from the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia:

"PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION. Both philosophy and religion must first have had some historical development before their relations could appear for investigation. In fact, they may be said to have proceeded apart until the

Christian era, when they openly met as strangers whose mutual interests were yet to be perceived and adjusted. It was not until Christianity had emerged from the symbols of Judaism, that religion stood forth in a mature form, free from philosophic speculation; and it was not until Grecian wisdom had outgrown the myths of Heathenism, that philosophy appeared in a pure state, disengaged from religious superstition. Nor was it strange that the first meeting of the two great powers should have resulted in misunderstanding and conflict. The early Christians, claiming a revealed knowledge from Heaven, could only denounce philosophy as the foolishness of the world; and the philosophers, in their skeptical pride of intellect, were fain to despise Christianity as a mere vulgar superstition. The struggle had its practical issue in the bitter persecutions which prevailed until the triumph of Christianity under Constantine." Corinth was in Greece and the church there was made up in most part of Greeks, hence the occasion of Paul's teaching on the subject of worldly wisdom. The reader should note this paragraph and refer to it frequently as he reads the comments on the following verses. *Perish* and *saved* in this verse refer respectively to the philosophers and Christians described in the quotation from Herzog. Before this development, the philosophers were inclined to judge religion by the standard of their theories, and Paul was opposing that position.

Verse 19. This quotation is in Isaiah 29: 14. What was once called the wisdom of the sages was proved to be not only unwise, but utterly contrary to natural evidences.

Verse 20. *Where is the wise?* etc., means what has become of the theories of these so-called wise and great ones? *Made foolish* means the foolishness has been made apparent by the light of truth. Only one out of the many examples will be cited here. For years the "wise" men of the world taught that the earth is flat, but today the engineers have been compelled to make certain changes in the operation of television in order to compensate for the curvature of the globe.

Verse 21. The world with all its theories that it called wisdom, failed to attain unto that wisdom that would make known to it the true God. *Foolishness of preaching*. Paul is not admitting that the Gospel is foolish, but



is using the term expressed by the professed wise men. What they consider as foolishness is the very means God uses to save the believers. But it must be made known in order to save anyone. The third word in italics is from KERUGMA and is defined by Thayer, "that which is promulgated [publicly proclaimed] by a herald or public crier, a proclamation by a herald; in the N. T. the message or proclamation by the heralds of God or Christ." (See Romans 10: 13-18 on the necessity of preaching.)

Verse 22. The Jews professed to believe in a higher form of knowledge than was possessed by mere human beings, but they were critical of any teaching that claimed such a quality unless accompanied with some direct demonstration from heaven. The Greeks were not interested in anything that did not come up to the standard of their own philosophy. (See the long note and historical quotation at verse 18.)

Verse 23. The first clause is virtually the same as the last part of verse 21. The preaching of Christ was always a stumblingblock to the Jews (Romans 9: 32). The story of Jesus did not agree with the philosophy of the Greeks, hence they regarded it as foolishness. This was manifested when Paul was in Athens (Acts 17: 32).

Verse 24. *Them which are called* denotes the ones who respond favorably to the Gospel call. There were persons among both Jews and Greeks (Gentiles) who were sufficiently free from prejudice to recognize the merits of the story of Christ, and to them He represented both the power and wisdom of God.

Verse 25. That which seemed like foolishness in the estimation of the ones clamoring for worldly wisdom, was far beyond the best that the philosophers of the nations could display. The *weakness of God* is used in the same comparative sense as the *foolishness of God*, using the language of the philosophers for the sake of argument.

Verse 26. *Are called* has the same bearing as the words in verse 24, namely, those who accept the call of the Gospel. The classes named are among the philosophers and wise men of the nations. The invitation and promises held out by the story of a slain and risen Lord, do not appeal to *many* of those classes, hence a comparatively small number are willing to accept the favor.

Verse 27. In all of these verses Paul uses such terms as *foolish* and *wise* in the sense attached to them by the so-called leaders of thought among the people of Greece especially, and of the world in general. *To confound* means to confuse and baffle. The unpretentious proclaimers of the Gospel were able to put their adversaries to shame. The case of Stephen in Acts 6: 10 is an outstanding one which states: "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake."

Verse 28. This has virtually the same thought as the preceding verse, with a different set of terms. *Base* and *despised* means the subjects that the philosophers looked down upon. *Things which are not* of any consequence in the eyes of these wise men of the world, were to have such an influence with the sincere believers who hear the sacred story that the *things that are* so important in the estimation of the proud sages would be exposed and shown to be vain.

Verse 29. *No flesh should glory*. The self-exalted accomplishments of fleshly man were to be stripped of their show of wisdom, and leave them without anything of which to boast.

Verse 30. *Ye in Christ* refers to the brethren at Corinth, and Him stands for *God* in verse 28, who had received these brethren in Christ. *Is made unto us* denotes that Paul ascribed to them the qualities named in the verse, even though the philosophers might belittle them.

Verse 31. *As it is written* has such a wide scope of references that it is unnecessary to cite them. The whole teaching of the Bible is that man owes all to God.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 2

Verse 1. The vanity of worldly wisdom is still the main subject of this part of Paul's epistle. He verifies his attitude on the matter by referring to the work which he did when he brought the Gospel to them, recorded in Acts 18: 1-11. *Speech* and *wisdom* mean the same as "utterance" and "knowledge" in chapter 1: 5.

Verse 2. *Know* is from EIDO, and the definitions and explanations of Thayer occupy nearly two pages in his lexicon, which indicates the wide range of its meaning. In the present verse it has the sense of "to pay attention, observe; have regard for, cherish." It means that Paul determined not to be

concerned about anything but the story of the cross, with its offered mercies to the children of men.

Verse 3. Even an inspired man may feel anxious and insufficient for certain tasks. In Acts 18: 9 Paul seemed to have some of these signs of personal weakness, for the Lord saw fit to encourage him and tell him to "be not afraid, but speak." In this great center of worldly learning, he trembled lest he might not do the work justice. However, he determined to depend solely on the Lord's help and wisdom.

Verse 4. *Speech* means the language to be used, and *preaching* denotes the public proclamation of that language. Paul asserts that neither of these items of communication was counted on to persuade the hearer because of its wisdom from man. Instead, he depended on the power imparted to him by the Holy Spirit to be so efficient that its true worth would be *demonstrated* or made to become manifest.

Verse 5. Whatever means that would be used to enlist men in the service of the Lord, would need to be relied on as a motive for remaining faithful. The wisdom of man is changeable, and if this faith was based on such a foundation, it would fall as soon as the wisdom of man was exposed.

Verse 6. The notes at chapter 1: 18 should be consulted again. *Perfect* is used in the same sense as *called* in chapter 1: 24. Those who accept the Gospel from the heart will see in it a genuine wisdom that is beyond all comparison with that of the world. *Princes of this world* means the leaders among the philosophers of Greece.

Verse 7. *Mystery* is from *MUSTERION*, which Thayer defines at this place, "a hidden purpose or counsel," then explains it to mean, "In the N. T., God's plan of providing salvation for men through Christ, which was once hidden but now is revealed." The word does not necessarily mean something that is complicated and beyond the understanding of ordinary men. As long as anything is not known it is a mystery, regardless of its character. Hence a popular theory that the Gospel is today a mystery and cannot be understood by uninspired persons, is erroneous and calculated to hinder people from studying God's word. *Before the world* denotes that God planned the salvation of man even before the age of human existence. Not that any certain man was *ordained* to be saved, but the

scheme by which all men might be saved if they would.

Verse 8. *None of the princes of this world knew* because it had not been revealed. Those who crucified Christ did not realize he was *the Lord of glory* (Luke 23: 34).

Verse 9. This verse has been perverted in song and speech for years, and made to mean that the story of divine love for man, including the reward that is to be given to God's servants, is still a mystery that is to be revealed at some future time. That idea is not even any part of the meaning of the passage. The *eye, ear and heart* of man means the natural senses of the human being. No man living, even among the wise sages of the so-called learned world, could discover through his human faculties what the Lord had in store for the faithful.

Verse 10. This verse must be considered in connection with the preceding one. Since the natural mental faculties could not discover these great spiritual truths, it was necessary to give a revelation of them, and that was done by the Spirit bestowed in great measure upon the apostles and other New Testament writers.

Verse 11. The spirit of a man knows what his thoughts are, and likewise the Spirit of God knows the thoughts of Him. Being an intelligent and supernatural being, this Spirit could communicate between God and man and carry the thoughts of the former to the mind of the latter, thus making him acquainted with the truths that his human philosophy and wisdom could not discover.

Verse 12. *Spirit of the world* refers to the matter of human philosophy that has been under consideration through many verses. The spirit which is of God is the source of divine inspiration, and by receiving such a spirit it would reveal the things that are gifts from God. This is the same thought as shown in verses 9, 10.

Verse 13. While the apostle used the language of humanity (Romans 6: 19), he did not form it on the basis of man's wisdom as the philosophers taught it. Instead, he was guided in the selection of terms by the Holy Ghost, so that he would use such of the words of man's language as had a spiritual bearing, in order that they would convey the ideas that were in keeping with the thoughts of the Spirit. *Comparing* might well be rendered "expressing," meaning that Paul expressed spiritual

thoughts with such words as would impart the desired ideas.

Verse 14. *Natural* is from *PSUCHIKOS*, and literally means the animal part of man. In a sentence like our verse, Thayer says it means, "governed by the sensuous nature with its subjection to the appetite and passion." A man thus interested in the things only that will gratify his fleshly desires, will not receive and appreciate the things offered by the Spirit of God, for they are not composed of matters that would give carnal pleasure. Hence they will seem foolish in his estimation so that he will not *know* or realize their real worth. *They are spiritually discerned.* They can be discerned or their true value be recognized only by those who take a spiritual interest in them, seeking only that which will impart spiritual benefits.

Verse 15. He that is spiritual—he who does take such a spiritual view of these subjects coming through the Spirit of God, as set forth in the preceding verse, will be able to realize what they mean, which is denoted by the phrase *judgeth* ["discerneth"] *all things. He himself is judged* ["discerned"] *of no man.* The last word means the natural man described in verse 14. Such a man will not recognize the spiritual truths possessed by the man described in the first phrase of this verse.

Verse 16. No man can know how to instruct the Lord (verse 11), therefore all spiritual information must travel the other way—from the Lord to man. Paul claims that such a flow of instruction had taken place in that *he had the mind of Christ.*

### 1 CORINTHIANS 3

Verses 1, 2. *Carnal* is from *SARKIKOS*, and its literal and primary definition is, "fleshly, carnal." Without any qualifying context, therefore, it refers to the material part of man and not his mental or spiritual part. But when it is used in a bad sense, Thayer says it means to be "under the control of the animal appetites; governed by mere human nature, not by the Spirit of God." Paul accuses the Corinthians of being carnal because they were showing a desire for that which was prompted by mere human nature. He also compares them to babes, which is logical because an infant knows only such pleasures as its fleshly body demands and can appreciate.

Verse 3. *Envy, strife, and divi-*

*sions* are prompted by their personal desires, hence the apostle charges them with being carnal. *Walk as men* denotes a conduct that is prompted by the human or fleshly appetites.

Verses 4, 5. See the comments at chapter 1: 12.

Verses 6, 7. The argument in this verse is that the Lord's servants do not all have the same talents or work, even as the production of a crop involves the services of more than one man. Yet all the work of men would avail nothing if God did not give to nature the power of growth.

Verse 8. These men *are one* in the eyes of the Lord. If each will do what he can, he will receive his due reward from God and not from any man.

Verse 9. *We* means Paul and Apollos as laborers in God's vineyard, according to the figure in verse 6-8. God's building is another figure, that of a structure in which various men labor to erect it.

Verse 10. Cooperation or joint labor under God is still the subject of Paul, and he is continuing the figure of a building for his illustration. He gives the grace of God the credit for being able to work as a *wise masterbuilder.* The first thing such an architect will do is to lay the foundation. Paul did this when he introduced the Gospel of Christ to the people of Corinth (Acts 18: 1-11). After he had done this, others came into the community and gave further teaching to the brethren, and that constituted building upon the foundation of truth that he had laid. *Take heed* means that any man offering further teaching should be careful that what he teaches will be in harmony with the original foundation of truth the apostle had laid.

Verse 11. There is but one foundation and that is Christ, which God laid in Zion which is the church, and it was done once for all when He died in Jerusalem and rose from the grave. When Christ was preached to the Corinthians or to any others, that is what is meant by laying the foundation there.

Verse 12. Building upon this foundation means to induce men to accept the Christ as the foundation of their hope. The three degrees of comparison, whether favorable or unfavorable, refers to the different kinds of persons who profess to accept Christ.

Verse 13. No preacher is a mind reader, consequently he may be misled

by some who are not acting with sincerity. However, he should heed the admonition given at the end of verse 10, and not use any unscriptural teaching to persuade his hearers to act. The final test of a man's work will come when Jesus is revealed at the last day. But it may be that some of his "converts" will prove unfaithful even while in the life of the preacher, so that he will behold them falling under the fiery trials that are to come before the professed servants of Christ (1 Peter 4: 12).

Verse 14. If a man does his part by teaching the people what is right, and the converts remain faithful, he will have the *reward* that consists of a joyous observation of such steadfastness. This reward is described in 2 John 8 and 3 John 4.

Verse 15. If a man's "converts" fail to stand the test of persecutions or the self-denials required, he will lose this reward described in the preceding verse. But if he has not shunned to declare all the counsel of God, he will be saved from the fire of God's wrath that is to come upon the unfaithful. In other words, a preacher's salvation does not depend upon the steadfastness of those whom he brings to Christ, but on his own faithfulness in preaching and living the truth.

Verse 16. *Ye are the temple of God* means them as a congregation, which was built upon the foundation laid for them by Paul when he preached Christ to them. The church is the spiritual building in which the Holy Spirit dwells (Ephesians 2: 22).

Verse 17. The temple is the church, and such divisions and contentions as were being conducted in Corinth were defiling the temple. Paul is warning the brethren of the wrath of God which they were liable to receive if they continued their variances.

Verse 18. This verse refers to those who were placing undue emphasis on the personal wisdom and special qualifications of certain men in the congregation. Such men were vain and self-deceived, and as long as they maintained such an attitude they would shut themselves off from real wisdom. *Let him become a fool* is an accommodative expression, meaning that if he will admit to himself that he is not a wise man, he will then be in the proper frame of mind really to learn.

Verse 19. The quotation is in Job 5: 13, and is the statement of one of Job's friends. It is an uninspired re-

mark but is the truth, hence Paul gives it approval.

Verse 20. *The wise* means those who boast of their worldly wisdom; all such are vain in the estimation of the Lord.

Verse 21. *No man glory in men*. One man is no more important in God's sight than another, regardless of his apparently great qualifications. *All things are yours* denotes that all of these seemingly great things have been provided for the benefit of the brethren and not for their worldly glorying.

Verses 22, 23. Again referring to the men as he did in chapter 1: 12, Paul takes in more scope in his general summing up of the lesson at hand, including other persons and also other things, both present and future. This all shows that the specific point in view is yet to be brought out, which we will see in the next chapter.

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 4

Verse 1. A *minister* is a servant and a *steward* is an agent. Paul wished that he and his companions should be *accounted* only in that light.

Verse 2. A *steward* or agent is supposed to be honest in handling the affairs of his master, for which he would not deserve any special thanks.

Verse 3. Paul was the agent of the Lord, and it was to Him that he would have to answer. Man might approve of his conduct, but that would be a *very small thing*, for human judges might pass favorably on his case while the Lord would not.

Verse 4. Even though Paul could think of nothing in himself that was wrong if measured by the wisdom of man, yet that alone would not satisfy him, for the Lord was the one who was to have the final word as to his standing.

Verse 5. *Judge nothing* as to the merits of human accomplishments by human standards of wisdom or philosophy. The Lord will come in judgment someday, and then all will be given due reward for any virtue they possessed, whether their brethren appreciated it or not.

Verse 6. The words *figure transferred* are from METASHEMATIZO, and Thayer's definition is, "to change the figure of, to transform." He then explains the definition at this passage to mean, "to shape one's discourse so as to transfer to one's self what holds true of the whole class to which one belongs, i.e. so as to illustrate by what

one says of himself what holds true of all." The reader may refer to what is said about this verse at chapter 1: 12. The four persons named were not really the ones over whom the Corinthians were contending. Paul now explains that he was using the names by way of illustration, in order that they would "see the point" without having their resentment aroused against being personally criticized. The men over whom all these contentions were being waged were right there in the congregation. That is why Paul uses the language that *no one of you be puffed up for one against another*. This proves beyond a doubt that the trouble was over men who belonged to the congregation in Corinth. None of the men named in chapter 1: 12 even lived in that city, hence the contention was not over them.

Furthermore, the name of Christ is included with the ones over whom they were contending. It is inconceivable that in their partisan strife, *one of them* would say he was for any teacher as against Christ. No, the men who were the objects of the trouble were those in the congregation with spiritual gifts. The possession of those powers was considered of such importance that it had split the congregation up into groups, not formally but in sentiment, the various sets adhering to the particular gifted man whose gift happened to strike them as the most important. It must be observed that not every member of a congregation would be possessed with a gift, but only a sufficient proportion to accomplish the Lord's plans. This contention over the spiritual gifts was so serious that Paul devoted three chapters—12, 13 and 14—to the subject, which will be commented upon when we come to them in this work. This long note will not be repeated in full, hence the reader should mark it for convenient reference when occasion arises.

Verse 7. The meaning of this verse will be clear when considered in light of the preceding one. The word *another* has been supplied by the translators, so that neither the first nor third personal pronoun is used by the apostle. The entire argument applies to the men of the Corinthian congregation. *What hast thou that thou didst not receive?* This refers to the various gifts that were possessed by members, who were puffed up with pride over such attainments; and it was made worse by the contentions of the groups

in the congregation that were arraying themselves as partisans in behalf of their respective "heroes." Paul is rebuking them for this pride by the question just stated. Those gifts were not anything that had been accomplished by them, for they had received them as direct bestowments through the Spirit and hence they had nothing of which to boast, much less to suffer the congregation to be divided up into contentious groups over it.

Verse 8. *Full* is from KORENNUMI which Thayer defines, "to satiate, sate, satisfy." *Rich* is from PLOUTEO and Thayer's definition is, "to be richly supplied." These are such excellent conditions that Paul would surely not seriously attribute them to these brethren after having just given them such a severe rebuke for their pride over gifts that had been bestowed upon them through no personal merit. The only conclusion, then, that we can reach, is that he used it in irony as a further reproof of them for their pride over the gifts. *Reigned as kings without us* (the apostles). Some more irony, referring to their feeling of self-sufficiency, to the extent that they did not feel the need of apostolic help. *Would to God ye did reign* is a serious phrase, expressing the unselfishness of the apostle. He would have rejoiced had the Corinthians been as strong as they felt, for in that case he also could share in the accomplishment, seeing he was the one who put them into the work to begin with.

Verse 9. The apostles really possessed qualifications far beyond all that the Corinthians could rightfully claim, yet Paul was not being puffed up over it. Instead, he wanted them to know that those very peculiar attainments caused the apostles to be placed in an unpleasant position before both angels and men. *Last* means as to personal advantage, the thing of which the Corinthians were boasting. In spite of all their worth-while gifts, the apostles were exposed to the ridicule and persecutions of the world. *Spectacle* is from THEATRON, which Thayer defines, "a public show; a man who is exhibited to be gazed at and made sport of." The illustration is drawn from the Roman practice of the public theatre. When the main show was over, certain men who had been doomed to die, were brought forth into the arena for the "final act"; their clothing was removed and their bodies were exposed to the beasts to devour, for the entertainment of the

audience. Thus Paul says the apostles were exposed *as it were appointed to death*.

Verse 10. See the notes on verse 8 where the language is used with a similar meaning to that here. In their own estimation the Corinthians were *wise, strong, and honorable*. The apostles were making no pretensions to greatness, but were submissive to the humiliation resulting from the unpopular work of preaching the Gospel.

Verse 11. Being out on the "firing line" and exposed to the hardships of an active soldier of the cross, Paul was made to suffer many things, notwithstanding his many excellencies to which the brethren in Corinth could lay no claim.

Verse 12. Paul often depended on his occupation of tent making to obtain the necessities of life (Acts 18: 3). When he was mistreated he took it in the best of spirit, even enduring all sorts of persecution as long as his character was not challenged. (See 1 Peter 4: 15; Acts 25: 11.)

Verse 13. *Being defamed, we entreat*. This does not contradict the preceding verse. Paul never made any unofficial or personal retort against those who tried to injure his good name, but that did not prevent him from taking the necessary legal steps for his protection. That is what he did when he "appealed unto Caesar" (Acts 25: 11).

Verse 14. The Corinthian brethren were entitled to being shamed, but that was not Paul's motive in writing as he did. His purpose was to induce them to correct their selfish ways, and hoped to do so by calling their attention to his own experiences. Sometimes the example of a loving father will make more of an impression on his sons than will his direct instructions.

Verse 15. There might be no limit to the number of persons who could instruct others, but since a man can be begotten once only, there can be only one person to lead him into primary obedience by making him know what he must believe in order to become a child of God. Paul had done this for the Corinthian brethren, and it is in that sense that he says *I have begotten you through the Gospel*.

Verse 16. Thayer defines the original for *follower* as "an imitator." A son would do well to imitate the example set by a righteous father. If the Corinthians would do that in regard to the life of Paul, they would cease to

be puffed up over the comparatively small matter of spiritual gifts.

Verse 17. *Son* is used figuratively, and Thayer explains the original in this and many other passages to mean, "just as in Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Persia, so in the N. T., pupils or disciples are called children of their teacher, because the latter by their instruction nourish the minds of their pupils and mould their characters." In chapter 16: 10, 11 is a statement of Timotheus' journey to Corinth, but he had not reached the city when Paul wrote this statement; the apostle wished to have a welcome in readiness for him when he arrived. Paul was not seeking any personal praise for his work, but wished the Corinthians to have the testimony of Timotheus (Timothy) that he was doing all his teaching as Christ would have it done.

Verse 18. *Puffed up* means to "be proud" or act in a boastful manner. The ones who were having that feeling were not especially eager for Paul to come, lest he chastise them orally and severely for their contentious behavior. When they learned that Timothy was coming instead of Paul at that time, they triumphantly asserted that the apostle was not coming.

Verse 19. *Not the speech . . . but the power*. Paul did not propose to be worried by the arrogant assertions of those leaders, but intended to test their real abilities.

Verse 20. Not in word (only), for many loud and boistrous talkers have come into the world, but their real power or efficiency has been exposed as a sham.

Verse 21. This verse is a challenge for them to make the necessary changes in their conduct that would put them in a condition to receive the apostle's approval, and thus receive his spirit of meekness instead of the rod of chastisement.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 5

Verse 1. *Commonly* is from HOLOS, and Robinson defines it in this passage, "everywhere, commonly," and Thayer's definition is virtually the same. The meaning is that the condition was so well known that the fact was not questioned by anyone. *Fornication* is from PORNEIA, and Thayer gives the one word in our verse as his definition. But he adds the following information historically: "Properly of unlawful intimacy in general. That this meaning must be adopted will surprise no one



who has learned from 1 Corinthians 6 how leniently converts from among the heathen regarded this vice and how lightly they indulged in it; accordingly, all other interpretations of the term, such as of marriages within the prohibited degrees and the like, are to be rejected." While on this phase of the subject, it will be well to read the "general remarks" at the beginning of chapter one. Since the ordinary evil of fornication was so prevalent and tolerated so liberally, it makes the attitude which Paul describes all the more significant.

A popular phrase, "living in adultery," is of human coinage, and has no scripture foundation; therefore, we shall examine the word *have* in this verse. It is from the Greek word *εχο*, and two full pages are used in the lexicon of Thayer in his definitions and explanations. The definitions (the parts in italics) include, "to have; to hold in the hand; to have possession of; to hold fast, keep; to regard, consider, hold as; to own, possess." Thus the word can be seen to refer to the attitude of a man toward something, without necessarily considering what legal or moral principles are involved. In the present passage, Thayer explains the word to mean, "to have (use) a woman (unlawfully) as a wife." The Lord requires his people to recognize the laws of the land, and they do not regard the fleshly union as constituting the marriage relation as does God (Genesis 2: 24; Matthew 19: 5, 6; 1 Corinthians 6: 16), and that is why Thayer inserts the word "unlawfully" into his explanation. The Gentiles (or heathen), with all their leniency toward immoral conduct, did not endorse such a practice as was being done by this man, and that is the sense in which they would *not so much as name it among themselves*. *Father's wife* means the man's stepmother. The necessary inference is that his father had remarried, to a younger woman than his son's mother, and the difference in age had induced this woman to become intimate with her husband's son.

Verse 2. *Puffed up* means their pride over the superiority they imagined they had as we saw in the preceding chapter. Even this shameful case of fornication had not moderated their self-esteem. They should have *mourned* or lamented over the wicked character, and resolved that he would be put from among them.

Verse 3. Paul was an inspired man

and could speak with authority. This enabled him to form the correct judgment on the present case even though absent and before any hearing had been conducted.

Verse 4. The sentence which Paul is going to pronounce will be in the name of Christ, which means by his authority. The first specification is that the action is to be done *when ye are gathered together*. This teaches that no final act of discipline can be scripturally done except at a meeting of the church. It does not even authorize that a "special meeting" be called for the purpose. The rulers of a congregation may designate the particular meeting at which it will be done, according to their judgment in the case. But when the appointment is made, it must be set at one of the times "when ye are gathered together." Paul informs them that his spirit will be with them in this great and solemn action, which will be true of all congregational actions that are according to apostolic teaching. Moreover, this action would be backed up by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that it cannot be considered as an act of personal revenge on the part of the brethren.

Verse 5. Now comes the verdict of the apostle which must be made that of the congregation also, in order that it may be the action of "the many" (2 Corinthians 2: 6). *To deliver* is defined by Thayer, "to give over into one's power or use." He explains it at this place as follows: "The phrase seems to have originated from the Jewish formulas of excommunication, because a person banished from the theocratic [church and state] assembly was regarded as deprived of the protection of God and delivered up to the power of the devil." *Destruction of the flesh* is explained by Thayer as follows: "Said of the external ills and troubles by which the lusts of the flesh are subdued and destroyed." The idea is that by expelling him from the congregation, it may cause him to realize the terrible condition he is in on account of having lived for the gratification of his fleshly desires, and the result will be his "crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5: 24). That will put him in condition to be restored to the fellowship of the saints, where he can so live that his spirit (his immortal being) may be saved when the Lord comes again. Another serious truth taught in this passage, is that when a person is excluded from the fellowship of the church, he is then

in Satan's territory whose inhabitants have no promise of salvation in the world to come.

Verse 6. The Corinthians were so full of pride over their supposed strength, that they seemed to think a single case of wickedness would not hurt them. The illustration of leaven is according to what everyone knows about that product. A woman would not use as much leaven by bulk as the amount of bread she wished to produce, for the small lump deposited in the mass would work until "the whole was leavened" (Matthew 13: 33). Likewise, one bad character who is permitted to remain in a congregation will finally defile the whole body. (See chapter 15: 33.)

Verse 7. Paul has introduced the subject of leaven for the purpose of illustration. There were enough Jews in the congregation to know about the regulations under the law of Moses regarding leaven, and even the Gentiles had seen enough of the Jewish practices to understand something on the subject. At the time of the feast of the Passover and the seven days following, the Jews were required to "put away leaven out of your houses" (Exodus 12: 15), in order that they might keep their feast acceptably. Paul uses the language of that occasion for his instructions to the Corinthians. Purge out therefore the old leaven corresponds to "put away leaven out of your houses" with the Jews. The leaven to be purged out of the Corinthian church was the wicked fornicator. *That ye may be a new lump* means the church will be free from the leaven of this wicked man, and in so doing they would become a body fit for the service of Christ, having become *unleavened*. The Jews were to bring about this condition that was free from leaven, because a creature had been slain and prepared to be used in the Passover feast, and it could be eaten only "with unleavened bread" (Exodus 12: 8). Likewise, Christ has been slain and made a passover for us, and we should be prepared to partake thereof with a condition that has been purged from the leaven of sin.

Verse 8. The *old leaven* refers to the case of fornication that had been working in the *lump* or congregation. All other leaven likewise was to be kept out of the body. In naming the various kinds of leaven, Paul includes *malice* which was not present in the case of the fornicator as far as there is any indication. This denotes that the apostle

is extending the illustration so as to apply to the entire service of Christ. The *feast* may be said to include all of the activities of the life that Christians are to live under Christ; it is all a rich feast. The passover of Christ's body and blood was consummated but once, it is true, as far as the physical ceremony was concerned, but the spiritual partaking thereof is to be continuous. It will be well at this place to corroborate the idea just set forth by quoting from 1 John 1: 7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This walking in the light is equivalent to maintaining a condition described in our present verse as *unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*.

Verse 9. *I wrote* refers to an epistle Paul wrote previously, for up to this verse there has been nothing said on the subject at hand. Colossians 4: 16 speaks of an epistle sent to the Laodiceans, so we know that he wrote some letters that were not intended to become a part of the New Testament compilation. In the epistle referred to here, Paul gave instructions not to *company with* fornicators. We do not know what occasioned that letter nor why that particular instruction was given. The three words come from the Greek word *SUNANAMIGNUMI*, and Thayer defines it, "to mix up together; to keep company with, be intimate with, one." Further comments will be made when we come to verse 11.

Verse 10. This verse is given to clarify a statement in the former epistle as to whom they were to avoid in their associations. The world is so full of such characters as are named, that if Christians were required to avoid all of them, they would have to go out of the world; that is, cease to live in any populated country.

Verse 11. The preceding verse designated who were *not* meant by the restrictions, this one will specify who *is* to be so treated. *Now I have written* denotes that the apostle is giving his latest instruction on the subject. *Man that is called a brother* means one who had been a member of the congregation, but on account of the evils named had become unworthy of the term "brother," and hence one with whom they should *not keep company*. (See the notes on this phrase at verse 9.) The refusal to associate with this man is to be carried to the extent that they

were not even to eat with him. Some teach this means eating the Lord's Supper, but the apostle has just explained that his instructions do not apply to men of the world; they apply only to those who had been members of the church. This theory mentioned would mean that people of the world were permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper, but the apostle has just explained that his instructions do not apply to men of the world; they apply only to those who had been members of the church. This theory mentioned would mean that people of the world were permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper, which we know is not true.

To eat is from SUNESTHIO which Thayer defines, "to eat with, take food together with," so the word refers to the physical act of partaking of material food. But such an act itself meant more in old times than it does today; read the following passages. Genesis 26: 30; 31: 46; 1 Kings 13: 15; Proverbs 23: 6; Matthew 24: 49; Mark 2: 16; Acts 11: 3; Galatians 2: 12. From these we may see that the act of eating with others had a social significance formerly that it does not have today. However, the same principle holds good now, and the restriction not to company with means any act or association that would indicate a social recognition. If a man has been excluded on such charges as are named in the present passage, others are forbidden to be intimate with him, for such an association would encourage him to continue in his sinful life, thinking himself to be as good as those who associate with him.

Verses 12, 13. *What have I to do* means "I have nothing to do with judging them outside the church." Hence the church was not expected to be further responsible officially for those who were already of the world, or who would become inhabitants of it by being excluded from the church. The Lord would then be the sole judge of them. But those in the fellowship of the church are subject to the discipline of the congregation. The whole discussion of the case is closed with the direct command to put the wicked person from among them. Nothing is said about the woman, hence we must infer she was not a member of the church and so it would not be responsible.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 6

Verse 1. *Matter* is from PRAGMA and Thayer defines it at this place, "a matter at law, case, suit." The word

does not pertain to questions of morals or religion, but to temporal interests between man and man. That is why it is called *things pertaining to this life* in verse 4. Paul tells the brethren they do not have the right to take such disputes to the secular courts.

Verse 2. *Judge* is from KRINO. The outstanding definitions of Thayer are, "To approve, esteem; to be of opinion, deem, think; to determine, resolve, decree; to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong." These definitions set forth the idea that the saints (Christians) are to declare the laws by which the world at present is to be ruled religiously, and is to be judged at last. But they could not do this correctly without an inspired law for their guidance which was given by the apostles. That is why Jesus told them (Matthew 19: 28) that they were to "sit upon twelve thrones, judging [KRINO] the twelve tribes of [spiritual] Israel." And after the apostles produced this law by inspiration, the church was to perpetuate the rule under the apostolic teaching. That is why Paul taught in Ephesians 3: 10 that it was "by the church the manifold wisdom of God" was to be made known. The reasoning of Paul is that if the Lord thought his disciples were wise enough to apply His law on the great matters pertaining to the righteous life now and the judgment to come, they should be able to decide such small matters as disputes over temporal transactions.

Verse 3. On the same basis as the preceding paragraph, Christians are teaching and applying the divine law that sets forth the judgment of angels. A part of that law is shown in 2 Peter 2: 4 and Jude 6, that tells of the judgment to be pronounced against those angels that sinned. It is in this sense that *we shall judge angels*, not that any man will literally participate in the procedure at the last day. But the same point is made as that made in the preceding verse, namely, if Christians are entrusted with teaching and applying the law that is to be imposed upon the former inhabitants of Heaven, they certainly should be able to decide matters pertaining to the inhabitants of *this life* or which concern only temporal life.

Verse 4. The original Greek manuscript did not have punctuations, hence the question mark does not show here, but the inflection of the words in the composition does indicate the form of the sentence. It will help in seeing

the idea of this verse to quote the version in Living Oracles which is as follows: "If, then, you have the cognizance [decision] of such matters, why do you set those to judge who are of no account in the congregation?" The congregation had very little esteem for the judges in those secular courts, yet these brethren who had some personal dispute over a temporal matter, were going to these courts for settlement instead of letting the church decide it (according to Matthew 18: 17).

Verses 5, 6. This paragraph, following immediately upon the statement of the preceding one, shows that it was not an instruction as to what they should do, but was a criticism in question form of what they were doing, which Paul says was shameful.

Verse 7. Instead of disgracing the church before the secular courts, a brother would better take the loss he thinks the other is trying to impose on him.

Verse 8. It would be wrong to go to law even when a brother was being defrauded, but it is worse when he takes the case to court in order to despoil another of his rights, as some of these Corinthians were doing.

Verse 9. Having dealt with the specific evil concerning going to law, the apostle broadens his teaching to consider various forms of evil. Chief among the corruptions that existed among the people of Corinth was the different forms of immorality that were practiced by many with very little concern as to right or wrong. In fact, much of that was a part of the heathen religious ceremonies of that country, which accounts for the indifferent attitude that even the professed disciples of Christ showed on the subject. The present verse, also some others in the chapter, will show us how much concern the apostle felt over it. The word *effeminate* and the phrase *abusers of themselves with mankind* both refer to sodomites. The second means a male who uses another male in the place of a female, and the first means a male who permits his body to be so used. (See the notes at Romans 1: 27, volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary, on the subject in the italicized phrase.)

Verse 10. Most of the characters named are so well known as not to need detailed comment. *Revilers* are those who use false degrading speech against others, and *extortioners* are

men who acquire unjust gain from others on one pretense or another.

Verse 11. Some of the Corinthians had been guilty of these evils, but the Gospel had shown them the way to be redeemed from such practices. Yet they were in constant danger of going back to them if they were not vigilant, hence the apostle is sending them this teaching contained in several of the verses. *Washed, sanctified and justified* all refer to the work of becoming a Christian, which was completed by having their bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10: 22).

Verse 12. The original word for *expedient* is defined "profitable" in Thayer's lexicon. A thing could not be profitable that was not lawful, but it might be lawful and not profitable. This verse has special reference to foods of all kinds. (See next verse.) There is no direct legislation against any kind of food (Romans 14: 1-3; 1 Timothy 4: 4), but it would not be profitable for a Christian to become a slave to his appetite, and Paul says he will not be brought under it.

Verse 13. A more convenient wording of the first clause would be, "foods for the body, and the body for foods." These two are perfectly adapted to each other, but they are both to be done away with, which is the meaning of *destroy*, and that is why Paul declared in the preceding verse that he would not allow himself to become enslaved by his appetite. This teaching is true independent of any other subject, but Paul is using it to introduce another point about the right use of the body. The same physical use is made of the body in the act of fornication as in lawful intimacy, but the Lord did not intend for man to abuse his body in that way, any more than He intended for him to abuse the use of food for the body. It is easy to see why the apostle is again dealing with the subject of immorality, in view of the prevalence of that evil in Corinth.

Verse 14. The *destruction* of the body mentioned in the preceding verse, did not mean its annihilation, but that its temporal form requiring food would be discontinued. The human body is made in the image of God, and its importance in His estimation is great, so much so that it will be raised from the dead at the last day.

Verse 15. The value of a man's body is still in the apostle's mind, and he declares it is a *member of Christ*; not

literally, of course, but a part of that great body of which Christ is a member. In view of such a sacred relation, Paul deplores the sin of using the body to unite with an immoral woman, again referring to the loose morals being practiced by so many in Corinth.

Verse 16. We know the apostle was not using that statement in some special or strained sense, for he supports it by quoting the words of God and Christ where we know the language applies to the intimate relation of the sexes, the only "ceremony" the Lord ever gave as a basis of marriage. (See Genesis 2: 24; Matthew 19: 5, 6.)

Verse 17. The intimate relations of a male and female make them one body, and the faithful joining of a disciple to the person of Christ makes them one spirit.

Verse 18. *Flee fornication.* The prevalence of immorality in Corinth, and its effects on the disciples of Christ, continues to be one of the apostle's chief concerns. To *flee* from a thing means more than merely not partaking; it means to run away as from a poisonous adder. *Every sin* refers to sins of a material or physical nature, not that immorality is the only sin that a man can commit within his own personality, for when he harbors filthy thoughts, that is a sin within his own person. However, they are not bodily sins, while fornication is: it constitutes a sin against his body that was made in the image of God.

Verse 19. In chapter 3: 16 Paul tells the Corinthians that "ye are the temple of God," and it means they as a congregation. In our present verse he tells the same brethren that *your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost*. There is no discrepancy, for the church is made up of individuals, whose bodies must be kept pure in order that the church as a whole may be pure. This is why God claims possession of the bodies of the saints; it is in order that His spiritual body may be right.

Verse 20. If a person wishes to own something he will pay a price for it, and the value of the price will depend on the estimation he has of the thing to be bought. God rated the persons (both fleshly and spiritual) of the disciples so highly, that He paid the price of the blood of Christ for them (Acts 20: 28; 1 Peter 1: 18, 19). It is hence the duty of Christians to use their bodies and spirits (minds) in such a way as to glorify God.

## I CORINTHIANS 7

*General remarks.* This chapter was occasioned by a condition existing at that time, due no doubt to the activities of the Roman Empire in its military oppression of various religions, which finally affected the church. The general existence of immorality also entered into the teaching of Paul in answer to the letter that was sent to him. The key to many of the expressions of the chapter is in the 26th verse which mentions the "present distress," brought about by the oppression just mentioned. That made it inadvisable to take on further obligations, especially those brought upon a man who begins to organize a family. Under these conditions someone wrote to Paul for advice as to what they should do, and it was that it would be better to remain just as they were, and not take upon themselves the obligations of married life. However, the marriage relation is the Lord's means of meeting the desires of the flesh on this subject, and unless a man is sure that he can resist all temptation to immorality, then he is to discard Paul's advice and enter the state of marriage for the lawful gratification of his desires. While discussing the specific subject brought up by the letter, the apostle will include some teaching on other matters, that are to be observed by disciples today. I urge the reader to become familiar with this paragraph, as it will be helpful for reference at various places, for it will not be repeated in every verse as the comments on the chapter continue.

Verse 1. *Touch* is defined in Thayer's lexicon, "to fasten to, make adhere to," and in this verse it means to have intimate relations with a woman in marriage.

Verse 2. *Nevertheless.* See the paragraph at the beginning of the chapter, about when the advice against marriage was to be discarded.

Verse 3. Since the primary object of marriage (aside from reproduction) is to give lawful gratification of sexual desires, the husband and wife should cooperate with each other to that end.

Verse 4. *Power* is from *EXOUSIA*, which means authority or control. This verse teaches that neither husband nor wife has exclusive right about the use of his body, regarding whether it should be used for the gratification of the other. This idea, especially as it pertains to the woman, is taught in Genesis 3: 16.

Verse 5. The context shows that *defraud* means to withhold from each other the intimate relation. They are permitted to do so only on condition that both consent, so as to be free for exclusive religious devotions. Even then, they should not stay apart too long, lest they be tempted to seek gratification unlawfully; *incontinency* means lack of control of the fleshly desires.

Verse 6. *I speak this by permission.* Whether the pronoun *this* refers to what Paul has just said, or to what he is about to say, is relatively unimportant. The point to learn is the meaning of *permission*. It is taught by some that Paul was only permitted to write on some things and not commanded to do so, and therefore what he said by permission would have no binding force. I believe the distinction is unimportant, for the Lord would certainly not *permit* Paul to write any instruction that was not right for the benefit of all concerned.

Verse 7. Paul's general teaching on the marriage institution, as well as what he says in this chapter, would show us he does not mean to wish that every man would abstain from marriage as a permanent way of life. But if all men had the self-control over their nature that the apostle had, they would have no difficulty in following the advice during the "present distress." The *gift* means the natural ability to maintain control over the passions.

Verse 8. See the advice explained in the first paragraph.

Verse 9. *Cannot contain* denotes they cannot have complete control over the desires. *Burn* is from PUBOO which Thayer explains at this place to mean, "to be inflamed with sexual desire."

Verse 10. *Yet not I, but the Lord.* This teaching was not given to them merely by the *permission* of the Lord (verse 6), but He commanded him to give it. *Let not the wife depart.* Some might think that if it was better not to marry, it would likewise be proper for a wife to relieve her husband of these "added obligations," and Paul is teaching against such an action.

Verse 11. Regardless of what might cause a wife to depart, she would have no right to remarry some other man. The husband had no right to put away his wife on the ground of Paul's advice about the "present distress."

Verse 12. *I, not the Lord* means by Paul's permission and not by command

of the Lord. (See the notes on verse 6.) A man might have been tired of married life and thought he could be relieved of the burden by putting his wife away, using as a special excuse that she was an unbeliever. Paul means that he should not do so if the wife is willing to remain with him.

Verse 13. This takes the same comments as the preceding verse.

Verse 14. The unbelieving partner is not sanctified by the other in the sense of religious holiness before God, for in that sense no person can sanctify another. It means that the marriage of one person to another makes their cohabitation moral, since the marriage relation is a fleshly one, primarily for fleshly purposes (see the comments at verse 3). Were this not true, then children born of parents one of whom is an unbeliever would be *unclean*, which means ceremonially improper, whereas, all children of parents who are married to each other are holy as far as their origin is concerned.

Verse 15. It should be noted in this verse that it is the unbeliever that is determined to desert the marriage, in spite of the willingness of the other to continue even under the "present distress." The believer is told to *let him depart*, which denotes that he is not obligated (*is not under bondage*) to hold the unbeliever with him if it would have to be done under continual strife or "family quarrels," for God is wanting his creatures to live in peace if possible, in which they were called. But that has nothing to do with the question of remarriage for either of them. In truth, verse 11 orders that if the departing wife should change her mind and desire the marriage relation again, she must go back to her husband. And that would mean also that the husband would be required to remain single, else the wife could not obey verse 11 even if she wanted to. All of this is in keeping with Matthew 19: 9 which clearly teaches that no married person may be remarried to another, except upon the immorality of the present marriage companion.

Verse 16. The preceding verse was rather a break into the line of thought being set forth in verse 14. In that Paul was showing that a believing husband or wife need not break up their marriage on account of the unbelief of the other; that the morality of the marriage was not affected by the unbelief of one of them. The present verse continues the thought, and gives another reason why he should remain



in the marriage, namely, he might be able to convert his partner. This idea is taught in 1 Peter 3: 1, 2.

Verse 17. Whatever condition may be the lot of a man who has accepted the call of the Lord, let him be faithful to his profession. This command is announced as being applicable to all the churches. (See notes at John 15: 16 on *ordain*.)

Verse 18. *Become uncircumcised*. This refers to a surgical trick whereby it could not be known from appearances whether a man was circumcised or not. The verse means for a Jew not to resort to that if he decides to become a Christian. This surgery is mentioned in Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book 12, Chapter 5, Section 1.

Verse 19. The teaching of the preceding verse is based on the truth of this. Under Christ it makes no difference whether a man is circumcised or not, just so he keeps the commandments of God. (See Galatians 5: 6; 6: 15.)

Verse 20. This verse is a general application of the preceding several verses.

Verse 21. A great part of the people were slaves in the Roman Empire. The fact that a man was in that "calling" or station in life, need not hold him back from accepting the Gospel call, for salvation is for all classes. However, if his master sees fit to release him, he should accept it for the advantages it would give.

Verse 22. Two kinds of service and freedom are meant here, the temporal under a human master, and the spiritual under Christ. Hence a man can be a servant under the former and yet be free from sin while being a servant of Christ.

Verse 23. This does not contradict verse 21. It means not to serve men as to any religious directions. The temporal masters often bought their slaves, and likewise Christ has purchased his with his own blood. (See chapter 6: 19, 20.)

Verse 24. This is the same as verse 20.

Verse 25. *No commandment* in the same sense as verse 6. *Give my judgment* under the permission of the verse just cited. Paul had shown himself faithful to the Lord, and hence he was given the *permission* to use his judgment in the case.

Verse 26. *So to be* means for him to remain just as he is, on account of the

*present distress*. (See the paragraph at the beginning of the chapter.)

Verse 27. This repeats the teaching running through much of the chapter.

Verse 28. *If thou marry, thou hast not sinned*. Paul had never forbidden marriage as being wrong, but only advised against it on account of the *present distress*. While not a sin, yet the marriage will bring them *trouble in the flesh* which means the hardships caused by the condition of the country. *I spare you* is a brief way of saying "I wish to spare you these troubles by advising you not to marry while the present conditions prevail."

Verses 29, 30. The original Greek word for *short* is defined by Thayer at this place, "is shortened," and Robinson defines it, "the time is contracted, shortened." The *time* referred to in this passage is the period of the *distress* caused by the oppression under Rome. Naturally the passing days made that period shorter, and the teaching of this verse is that disciples should not be so concerned about these various conditions in their earthly life. Give chief attention to their obligations as Christians until the conflict was over, which was not to be very long in comparison.

Verse 31. The good things of this world are necessary to man's existence as a temporal being, therefore he must make some use of them. *Abusing* is from a word similar to the one for *use*, with a prefix in the Greek composition that makes it mean "to overdo" the use of them. The logical reason the apostle gives for the exhortation is that all these things are temporary; they will pass away.

Verses 32, 33. *Carefulness* means anxiety over the handicaps of the *present distress*. A married man would have to give his attention to the things of the world, such as those necessary to care for his wife. That would really be his duty if he had a wife, but he could avoid such anxiety for the time being if he took Paul's advice and remained single.

Verse 34. The same things apply to women in that a married woman would be obligated to give some attention to the rightful requirements of her husband. If she remained single she would be free to give her sole attention to religious devotions. *Be holy both in body and in spirit* does not mean that her relations with her husband would be wrong, but they would be temporal and would thus require

some of the time she otherwise could devote to these spiritual matters.

Verse 35. This verse is a general summing up of several preceding ones. It shows that Paul's teaching regarding the advisability of entering marriage during the *present distress* was not on the basis of right and wrong. It was for their *profit* (advantage) in the services to Christ. Being free from the unavoidable burdens the present conditions would impose on married people, they could devote their time to the Lord's service *without distraction*.

Verse 36. This verse (as here translated) is entirely out of line with the general teaching of the chapter. Note the pronoun *her* is in italics which is because the King James translators did not understand the verse. Some later commentators even insert the word "daughter" after *virgin*, for which there is not the slightest ground in the original. They make this verse refer to a father's willingness for his daughter to marry. What would a man's control over his own passions have to do with his consent to his daughter's marriage? The confusion is caused by a common but erroneous notion that *virgin* always means a woman. A look at Revelation 14: 4 would show that to be wrong, even if one could not consult the original. That passage says the persons were "not defiled by women; for they are virgins."

When the word in question is used as a state or condition in life, it means virginity. The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders this verse as follows: "But if anyone thinks he behaves unseemly [improperly] to his virginity, if he be beyond his prime, and so it ought to be, let him do what he wills, he does not sin; let them marry." It is easy to see this verse means the same as Paul's teaching in the rest of the chapter, namely, that it is best to remain single if one has control of his desires. But if he begins to doubt his ability to remain chaste in an unmarried state, then he should marry, and in so doing he would not commit any sin. It is true it says let *them* marry, which is because any marriage requires two persons.

The word *virgin* is from PARTHENOS, and Thayer gives the following definition as it applies to men: "One who has never had commerce [intimacy] with women." *Pass the flower of her [his] age* means a male who has reached the age when his sexual na-

ture has become fully developed and more insistent on gratification. By changing the pronouns from the feminine to the masculine, as the inflection of composition in the Greek text requires, the verse will be easily understood. It will then give the same advice that the apostle has given throughout the chapter, namely, that moral chastity is more important than freedom from the burdens of family life. If a man cannot have sure control over his desires, he should avail himself of marriage which is the Lord's plan for lawful gratification of them. This is directly taught in verse 28, where Paul explains that his purpose in giving the advice was to have them avoid the *trouble in the flesh* that would come to married people in the *present distress*.

Verse 37. This is the same in meaning as the preceding verse.

Verse 38. The pronoun *her* is in italics in both sentences and is not justified by the original. The phrase *giveth in marriage* means to give himself in marriage to another. He that becomes married *doeth well* because he avoids the guilt of immorality, but he that is able to remain unmarried *doeth better* because he not only maintains his moral chastity, but avoids the burdens of married life.

Verse 39. It is sometimes asked if the requirements of this verse would not be on the same proviso of *present distress*, as the advice of Paul about the marriage of those single at the time he was writing. The cases are not the same, for it is expressly stated that if a man married in the first place he would not do any sin (verse 28), since that instruction was given as advice only to avoid the burdens of married life. The present verse plainly says the wife is bound *by the law* (not a temporary condition caused by the *present distress*) as long as her husband lived; not as long as the "distress" continued. Hence the verse involves a matter of right and wrong (not one of expediency as is the other). *At liberty to be married* means she has the right to be married, with the stipulation that it must be *in the Lord*. All marriages are in the Lord in the sense that the Lord is the author of the basis of the physical relation (Genesis 2: 24; Matthew 19: 5), hence the phrase here has a special sense since it is applied only to second marriages. To be *in the Lord*, therefore, can mean nothing else than being in His body which is the church. A Christian widow has no

right to marry a man outside of the church. The same principle would logically apply to a Christian man. The woman is mentioned only because the greater part of the other verses have been dealing with the wives.

Verse 40. *Happier* if she so abide, but not more righteous, which again brings in the advisability of any single person entering marriage at that time. *I think* does not mean that Paul was uncertain, for it is from the same Greek word as Jesus used in Matthew 22: 42, where he asked the Pharisees, "What think ye of Christ?" We know Jesus did not wish them to give him any answer on which they were doubtful. It simply means to state some idea or conclusion that a person has. Paul had no doubt as to the source of his idea at this place, for it came from the same One who had given him the "permission" to speak in verse 6. Acting under that privilege, he gave it as his judgment that the woman would be happier were she to remain unmarried.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 8

Verse 1. Corinth was a Greek city and the sacrificing to idols was common. The flesh of the beasts was not burned, but only put through some routine, then sold in the market for meat. The question arose as to whether it was right for Christians to eat that meat. Some of the brethren understood that it did not make any difference, since the idols were dead objects and meant nothing. Those having this knowledge were being puffed up over their supposed superiority and were discouraging the weaker ones. Paul wanted them who were the better informed to show *charity* (love on behalf of the brethren) and thus *edify* or build up the less informed disciples.

Verse 2. These better informed brethren were correct theoretically, yet their boasted knowledge had caused them to be ignorant of what was more important, namely, the proper attitude toward the others.

Verse 3. The greatest knowledge a man can have is shown by his love for God (and his weaker children). Such an attitude shows that the man knows God, which proves that he has the kind of knowledge that is really great. It may well be worded, "If any man loves God, such a man knows the same God."

Verses 4, 5. Various objects in nature were worshiped as gods, which is why Paul uses the phrase *gods many*

*and lords many*. But the apostle agrees with the "knowing ones" that these gods were nothing.

Verse 6. Repeating the idea just set forth, the apostle adds some truths about the God who created all these things which the heathen were ignorantly worshipping.

Verse 7. Not every man (even among the disciples) had been clearly informed on the subject of meats that had been used in the idolatrous service. For the meaning of *conscience*, see the notes at Acts 24: 16 in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary. When these uninformed brethren were induced to eat this meat, they had a "guilty feeling" because they could not see anything in the act except a form of idolatrous worship. Such an attitude would make them really guilty, because one must have a clear conscience in order to please God.

Verse 8. This is the same as verses 1, 4, 5.

Verse 9. The better informed brethren should not use their privilege in such a manner as to cause the weaker ones to go against their conscience.

Verse 10. *See thee* is a key to the subject, which will be referred to at verse 13. *Idol's temple*. After the religious exercises were over, a temporal meal was served and a visitor could sit down and eat in much the same fashion he would today in a restaurant. There was nothing wrong about it in itself; but if one of these weaker brethren should see it, he would be *emboldened* (encouraged) to eat also. He would reason, "If that brother may eat of that meat, I will also."

Verse 11. But as soon as he had done that, he would have that "guilty feeling" which defiled his conscience. He would *perish*; be in danger of condemnation for defiling his conscience, and it would be through the example of the stronger brother who had no conscientious objections to the meat.

Verse 12. Anything that is done toward the disciples of Christ, whether good or bad, is counted as being done unto Him. (See Matthew 25: 40, 45.)

Verse 13. *Make my brother to offend* means to cause him to stumble or do wrong. *I will eat no flesh*; that is, in his presence (verse 10). If a Christian believes it is right to eat this meat he may do so, but he must exercise that faith or privilege "to himself" (Romans 14: 22).

## 1 CORINTHIANS 9

Verse 1. *Am I not an apostle?* Verse 2 indicates that some had questioned the apostleship of Paul. He will name some of the reasons for claiming to be an apostle, in both the present and the next verse. *Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?* It was one of the qualifications required of an apostle that he had seen Christ alive after the crucifixion. *Ye my work in the Lord:* Paul started this church (Acts 18: 1-11).

Verse 2. Aside from any work Paul might have done elsewhere, the Corinthians had the evidence in their own experience that Paul was an apostle. *Seal* is from SPHRAGIS, which Thayer defines at this place, "that by which anything is confirmed, proved, authenticated, as by a seal." When a legal paper has an official seal stamped on it, that proves the existence of the seal, just as the letters the reader is now looking at prove the existence of the type somewhere. The bestowal of spiritual gifts could be done only by an apostle (Acts 8: 18). The church at Corinth possessed those gifts after Paul had worked with them, which proved that he was an apostle.

Verse 3. Paul gives an *answer* to the ones who wanted to *examine* him, which denotes the examination consisted of questions as to why he did or did not do some things.

Verse 4. *Power* is from EXOUSIA, which means right or authority. *To eat and drink* means to do so at the expense of those to whom he preaches. (See verse 14.)

Verse 5. Paul means he has the right to do so at the expense of the church, as well as to obtain his own food from it. He abstained from marriage voluntarily, but insists that had he chosen to do so, he would have the right to marry and have his wife travel with him at the expense of the church. His stipulation that his wife would be a *sister* (in Christ) is a strong recommendation that even the first marriage of Christians should be with one in the faith. As an approved example of his right in this matter, he cites that of other apostles including *Cephas* (Peter).

Verse 6. Paul narrows his discussion to himself and Barnabas. *Forbear working* means not to labor with their hands to obtain the necessities of life.

Verse 7. Nobody expects a soldier to support himself while fighting for

his country. On the same principle, a man who produces fruit or stock is granted the right to partake thereof.

Verse 8, 9. To show that he was not making these arguments on his personal authority only, Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 25: 4 in regard to oxen. Before the days of machinery, small grain was piled down on a floor and the beast was driven round over it to break the husk from the grain. It was natural for the ox to help himself to the feed, and the command was not to muzzle him to keep him from eating the grain. *Doth God take care for oxen?* The law against muzzling the ox was in force literally, but the circumstance was used as an example for something more important than the comfort of brute beasts.

Verse 10. *For our sakes . . . this is written.* The law indeed was intended as a merciful provision for the dumb creature, but it was *written* as a lesson for men who were to partake of the fruit of their own labors.

Verse 11. Paul is still discussing his right to financial support, not that he is asking for it. *Carnal things* is another term for the temporal necessities of life. The Corinthians had received spiritual things (the Gospel) from Paul, and it was right if they were asked to contribute to his necessities were he to ask for it.

Verse 12. Having shown his full right to the temporal support of the Corinthians, Paul informs them it is not his intention to require it.

Verse 13. The apostle adds another proof for his position by referring to an arrangement under the Mosaic system, in which the one officiating in the altar service got part of his living from that service. (See Leviticus 6: 16, 26; 7: 6, 31, 32.)

Verse 14. *To live of the Gospel* means to obtain a living from those to whom the Gospel is preached. This is taught also in Galatians 6: 6.

Verse 15. Again Paul explains that he is not hinting for favors. In truth, he would even refuse to receive them on account of a special circumstance to be commented on soon. But he wishes to correct a wrong attitude some had on the subject

Verse 16. Regardless of all other considerations, it was the duty of Paul to preach the Gospel, else the *woe* or condemnation of the Lord would be on him.

Verse 17. However, if he preaches independent of his fixed duty, there

was a special favor offered to him. If he does not do it under a free motive, then the *woe* mentioned in the preceding verse, here called *dispensation*, would be upon him.

Verse 18. Paul asks and answers the question as to the *reward* mentioned in the preceding verse. That consisted in the privilege of preaching to the Corinthians and not taking any financial support from them. Verse 14 says the Lord ordained that preachers were to be supported by the ones who heard the preaching. Paul was given a special exemption from that law in order to have some satisfaction from the privilege of which he might glory (verse 15). It did not bring all of the enjoyment he expected, for afterward he apologized for it (2 Corinthians 12: 13).

Verse 19. Paul was not legally bound to any man, yet he voluntarily put himself in a position of service to everybody for the good he could do.

Verse 20. The passages from this verse through 22 have been perverted, and made to represent Paul as a time-server for the sake of peace and friendship, even to the extent of compromising the truth. Nothing could be more unjust toward a man whose integrity was shown in such expressions as, "let God be true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3: 4). There are numberless incidentals in the conditions and lives of people that do not involve any principle of right and wrong. Paul means that in all such circumstances, he conformed to the conditions as he found them, in order to show a friendly interest in the happiness of the people. The customs of the Jews under the law included many items that were not especially of a religious obligation. Jews who were Christians had the right to practice them which Paul did while with them.

Verse 21. When Paul was mingling with those who were not Jews, he did not try to press the Jewish customs upon them, but he did advocate the law of Christ which was and is binding upon all mankind.

Verse 22. *To the weak*. Paul always respected the talents of those with whom he came in contact, and adapted his teaching and practices to their understanding.

Verse 23. By conforming himself to these various conditions, many of which existed in Corinth, the apostle showed a sincere interest in the Gospel. He also placed the whole relation

between himself and the Corinthian brethren on a plane that enabled them all to be fellow partakers of the Gospel.

Verse 24. In the foot races that were common in those days, there could be but one successful contestant for the prize. There need be no limitation as to the number of winners in the Christian race. The point is that each man should run as if only one could win, and he was determined to be that one.

Verse 25. Paul is using the various athletic games of the country for his illustrations. The contestants were *temperate*, which denotes that they prepared themselves by a strict schedule of diet and exercise. *Corruptible crown* means the prize to be won in those games was material and subject to decay, while that for which the Christians were contending was "a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5: 4). For that reason all Christians should make the greater effort to qualify and perform to the utmost of their ability.

Verse 26. *Not as uncertainly*. If only one person could win in the race, then the success of another would mean defeat, and the whole contest would be hanging on uncertainty. But since it is an individual affair and based on faithfulness only, each runner may assure himself of victory. *Beateth the air* is an allusion to a practice of going through the motions of a boxer preparatory to the real fight, in which the performer threw his arms around in the air, similar to the modern practice with dumbbells for the purpose of physical training.

Verse 27. Instead of the actions described in the preceding verse, Paul says he fights with a real person and that is himself. *I keep under* is from *HUPOPIAZO*, which Thayer defines, "to beat black and blue, to smite so as to cause bruises and livid [black and blue] spots," and he explains it at this passage to mean, "like a boxer I buffet my body, handle it roughly, discipline it with hardships." The great apostle Paul never considered himself to be out of reach of temptation as long as he lived, but believed it necessary to be always on his guard against the wiles of Satan. *Castaway* means one who becomes unfaithful before the end of life's contest.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 10

Verse 1. The main lesson in several verses of this chapter, is that it is not enough just to get a good start in the

service to Christ, but it must be followed by a faithful life to the end. Emphasis should be placed on the little word *all* in these verses. Since *all* of the fathers had the same start, whereas they did not *all* reach Canaan, the lesson mentioned is set forth. The *fathers* means the early ancestors of the Jewish nation who started from Egypt, to go toward the country that had been promised to Abraham and his descendants. The cloud was what guided them, and the sea was the Red Sea, through which *all* passed "without the loss of one."

Verse 2. Notice that both the cloud and the sea were required to accomplish the baptism. That is because the word means a complete burial or envelopment. The sea at their sides and the cloud over the top made a literal surrounding. They are said to have been baptized *unto Moses* because he was their leader, even as Jesus is the leader of Christians unto whom they are baptized.

Verses 3, 4. The meat they ate was literal but had a typical or spiritual significance, because it had to be provided by miracle; it refers to the manna and quails recorded in Exodus 16. The drink also was literal water but had to be produced by miracle (Exodus 17: 6). The rock at Horeb from which the drinking water was drawn was a type of Christ who is the Rock of Ages.

Verse 5. *For they were overthrown in the wilderness* is stated as the proof that God was displeased with them.

Verse 6. *These things* refers to the judgments sent upon the Israelites, and they were to serve as punishments for them, and a warning for Christians not to lust after evil things as they lusted.

Verse 7. The idolatry referred to is recorded in Exodus 32. Verse 6 of that chapter says the people "rose up to play," which is the passage Paul quotes in our present verse. And verse 19 of the chapter in Exodus says when Moses came in sight, the people were dancing. The word *play* in our verse is from *PAIZO* which Thayer defines, "to play, sport, jest; to give way to hilarity," and he explains it to mean, "by joking, singing, dancing." It is significant that Paul connects *idolatry* with the *playing*, which we now have learned included dancing. That is a serious conclusion, and we are sure the idea is from the truth that in promiscuous

dancing, the participants are devoted to the goddess of lust.

Verse 8. The case of fornication referred to is recorded in Numbers 25. The occasion of it was the failure of Balaam to curse Israel in his speeches. Afterward, however, he gave Balak some advice by which the men of Israel were induced to commit fornication with the girls of Moab; this is mentioned in Revelation 2: 14. The secular history of the event is recorded in Josephus, Antiquities, Book 4, Chapter 6, Sections 6-9. It was especially appropriate to warn the Corinthians against fornication, in view of the immorality that was so common in that city.

Verse 9. We know when this temptation took place by the fiery serpents that Paul mentions in connection with it. The case is in Numbers 21: 5, 6, and consisted in the complaints of the people "against God, and against Moses." Christ was not specifically known to the Israelites, but He was with God in all of the dealings with man. If Christians utter words of opposition against Christ, as those Israelites did against Moses and God, it is regarded as a temptation which Paul is warning against.

Verse 10. *Murmur* is from *COGGUZO*, which Thayer defines, "to murmur, mutter, grumble, say anything in a low tone," and he explains it at this place to mean, "those who discontentedly complain." The instance Paul refers to is in Numbers 14: 1-4. The word is used of members of the church who manifest an unfavorable attitude toward things in general, yet will not specify anything they can show to be unscriptural.

Verse 11. *These things* means the same as the phrase in verse 6, namely, the judgments sent on the Israelites for their sins. They were thus punished on account of their own deserts, and the account of them is *written* for the benefit of us who are living in the Christian Dispensation; we should profit by their mistakes and the punishment inflicted on them. *Ends of the world*. The last word is from *AION* and means "age." The word is plural, so the phrase means "the ends of the ages." God has given the world three ages or dispensations, and the Christian Dispensation is here declared to be the last one. The theory that Christ will come and set up another age (the Millennial age) is therefore false, and implies that Paul did not tell the truth here.



Verse 12. This verse is good general advice, appropriate for all people in all ages. No one is in as much danger of falling as the man who is too sure of himself. (Paul showed the opposite attitude in chapter 9: 27.) The Corinthians were so puffed up over their spiritual gifts and other advantages; they had that overconfident feeling, so the admonition was peculiarly needed for them.

Verse 13. The Bible does not teach that God will do something for the salvation of one man that He will not do for another under the same circumstances, therefore this verse does not justify the theory known as "Special Providence." The plan of salvation is completely offered in the New Testament (Colossians 2: 10), and all of the human race have equal access to it. The other passages showing this truth are too numerous to be cited here. No miracle is promised as an escape from temptation that has not been provided for in the Gospel. If such a favor were intended by this passage, Paul certainly would not have written chapter 9: 27, for he would have expected the Lord to provide such an escape for him that he should not become a "castaway." *Will with the temptation*, etc. In the management of the universe, if it is God's will to bring about some conditions that might be too trying for a Christian, then He will so regulate those conditions that nothing will be beyond the protection offered the Christian in the written Word.

Verse 14. Idolatry was frequently mingled with immorality, both of which were common in Corinth. In chapter 6: 18 Paul exhorts the brethren to "flee" from the latter, and in this verse he urges the same action toward the former. To *flee* from a thing means more than merely not partaking; it means to run as from a poisonous adder.

Verse 15. The original for *wise* means one who is intelligent, a man who is capable of forming logical conclusions. Paul believed the Corinthian brethren were able to "see the point" in all of the present reasoning.

Verse 16. In chapter 8 Paul deals with the subject of meat that had been offered in sacrifice to idols. He shows that the mere eating of such meat was not wrong in itself, but that when it was used as a religious performance it constituted a form of idolatry; fellowship (or communion) with idols. On the same principle, to partake of the cup and bread in the Lord's Supper

means to have fellowship with the blood and body of Christ. Note that Paul does not call the cup and bread "The Communion," as a familiar but careless saying puts it. In truth, the term is not to be found in a single passage in the New Testament, much less is it applied to the Lord's Supper which is only a part of the communion or general service to Christ under the Gospel system of salvation. *Bless* is from EULOGEO, and Thayer's first definition is, "to consecrate a thing with solemn prayers; to ask God's blessing on a thing," hence it does not mean to confer some miraculous quality on the cup and bread.

Verse 17. *One bread* means that Christians have only one use for bread as a religious act, and that is to represent the body of Christ that was given for the salvation of man. When it is partaken of for that purpose, all who do so are acting as sharers of the same blessing of salvation through Christ.

Verse 18. Ancient Israel not only offered certain articles in sacrifice upon the altar, but the proper ones ate of a part of those animals. In doing so they became participants of the altar service. On the same principle, when disciples eat of the bread in view of the body of Christ, they receive benefits of His body.

Verse 19. In chapter 8: 4 Paul had said that an idol was "nothing," and yet he showed that if a man participated in the sacrifices offered to the idol, it made him guilty of a real sin, that of idolatry. In the present passage he sees that a wrong impression as to the importance of the idols, might have been made of his comparison to the body and blood of Christ. He wishes to prevent such an erroneous conclusion, which he does with this introductory question. It is as if he would say, "Do you think I have changed my mind, and am granting to the idols some important existence?"

Verse 20. In answer to the foregoing question, the apostle affirms that the beings to whom the Gentiles offer their sacrifices are only *devils*, a word coming from DAIMONION. Thayer defines the word, "a spirit, a being inferior to God, superior to men . . . evil spirits or the messengers and ministers of the devil." He then adds historically, "According to a Jewish opinion which passed over to the Christians, the demons are the gods of the Gentiles and the authors of idolatry." With this view of the subject in mind, the idola-

trous worship is considered as fellowship with devils.

Verse 21. The thought of this verse is that people cannot be in fellowship with the Lord and with devils at the same time, which Christ taught in Matthew 6: 24.

Verse 22. To be jealous means to be fearful of losing something that may be obtained by another. Paul implies that men might give their devotion to idols and thereby cause God to be jealous, which would actually take place according to Exodus 20: 5. The Corinthians may not have been doing it for that purpose, but Paul shows them that their conduct implies it.

Verse 23. *All things* is said with regard to questions on which there is no specific legislation from the Lord, some of which will be considered soon. To be *expedient* means to be profitable; a thing might not be wrong, but if it would not benefit anyone it would not be expedient.

Verse 24. There is no original word for *wealth*. The verse means that no man should be selfish, but should seek to bring happiness to others.

Verse 25. The *shambles* was a market where they sold meat and other provisions of food. Meat that had been offered in service to idols was taken to these markets for sale. Paul means they need not have any conscientious scruples about partaking of food that might have been purchased at these markets.

Verse 26. All articles that are suitable for food have been created by the Lord and no restrictions need be made as to their use. The law of Moses did make some regulations against certain creatures, but that was for the purpose of ceremonial training and not because of any literal unfitness in them. That law passed away and now "every creature of God is good" (1 Timothy 4: 4).

Verse 27. *Them that believe not* mean one's personal friends who are not members of the church. *To a feast* is not in the original but is implied by the rest of the verse. *Asking no question* means the same as the phrase in verse 25.

Verse 28. *Eat not . . . for the earth is the Lord's*, etc. See the comments on verse 26 for the last phrase. That phrase shows that it would be right in itself to eat of any food, yet he should *not eat* for the sake of one who thinks it is wrong.

Verse 29. Paul explains that it is the other man's conscience he means, not the one who would otherwise eat. *For why*, etc., means as if Paul said, "Why do I give you this instruction? Answer, because my liberty is to be controlled by the other man's conscience with reference to these unlegislated questions."

Verse 30. This verse means the same as the preceding one.

Verse 31. In regulating one's liberty on these matters of eating and drinking so as not to offend a weak brother, it will redound to the glory of God.

Verse 32. *Give none offence* means not to do anything that might cause another to stumble or sin. Some things would be regarded wrong in the eyes of the Jews that would not offend the Gentiles, and vice versa. Also, there might be matters on which neither would have any scruples as far as their nationality is concerned, yet would be objectionable to the brethren. Paul means for the disciples to have regard for the conscience of all these classes.

Verse 33. This is the same as chapter 9: 19-23.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 11

Verse 1. *Followers* is from MIMETES, which Thayer defines, "an imitator." The word does not require the presence of authority, although an apostle would have that: it may be said of any Christian when the proviso that Paul names is observed, namely, that the person who is imitated is himself an imitator of Christ.

Verse 2. *In all things* is said in the sense of a general statement. The Corinthian brethren were generally favorable to the apostle's teaching, and for that he praises them. But there were some particulars in which they were at fault, and Paul is dealing with them in this chapter.

Verse 3. This verse presents four persons: God, Christ, man and woman, named in the order of their rank. The last two are on earth and are visible to others, which accounts for some regulations of customs that are discussed in this chapter.

Verse 4. *Praying* does not require spiritual gifts, hence the *prophesying* need be no more specific than the description given in chapter 14: 3. The original Greek word for *covered* means to be veiled so as to hide the face. If a man covers his head he dishonors it, because it should be exposed to view

due to his position of authority in the social world.

Verse 5. *Praying and prophesying* have the same meaning as explained in the preceding verse. The word *shaven* shows Paul is considering the hair as the veil or covering. It was customary for women to veil or cover their face with their hair when praying in the presence of men. To neglect this was a dishonor to her head, because it exposed it and put her in the class of men who are the rulers in the social rank. If she thus keeps her hair away from her face, she is as much exposed to shame as if her hair had been cut.

Verse 6. *If the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn.* This does not endorse a woman's shearing her hair but rather condemns it, for Paul compares it to something else that we know he condemns because it is a dishonor to her. *If it be a shame* is a phrase that takes it for granted that the thing named is commonly thought to be a shame, namely, for a woman to have her hair cut.

Verse 7. God, Christ and man are all rulers in their respective ranks, hence a man should not cover his head and thus put himself in the same subject class as the woman. A woman can be a glory to man only by maintaining an attitude of submission to him.

Verse 8. This verse refers to the fact recorded in Genesis 2: 21-23, which shows the woman was made from a part of the man.

Verse 9. The woman was created for the man because God said it was not good for the man to be alone (Genesis 2: 18).

Verse 10. Submission to authority is the outstanding thought which Paul has been discussing. We have seen that an unveiled head indicates authority, for which reason a woman should be veiled as a sign that she is under authority. Angels are ministering spirits under the authority of God, and are invisible persons in the assemblies of Christians. Some of their class have been rebellious in times past (2 Peter 2: 4; Jude 6), and Paul wishes the woman to show to the faithful angels who are present in the assembly, that they are submitting to the authority that is over them.

Verses 11, 12. Lest the foregoing teaching might make a wrong impression as to the importance of the woman, Paul adds these verses to show

that both man and woman are necessary in the general plans of God; the same is taught in verses 8, 9.

Verses 13. *Judge in yourselves* has about the same force as "nature" in the next verse. *Comely* is from PREPO, which Thayer defines, "to be becoming, seemly, fit."

Verse 14. *Nature* is from PHUSIS, which Thayer defines at this place, "nature, i.e., natural sense, native conviction or knowledge," and he adds the explanation, "as opposed to that which is learned by instruction and accomplished by training or prescribed by law." Robinson gives virtually the same definition. The explanation given of the definition is an exact description of the customs discussed in the preceding verses as to what use a woman should make of her hair, and he says it is opposed to (different from) that which nature teaches. Customs change because they are the product of man, while nature never changes because it is the creation of God. As long as nature exists it will be a shame for a man to have long hair, and, as a necessary conclusion, it will be a shame for a woman to cut her hair.

Sometimes a quibble is made by asking just what it takes to constitute *long hair*. In the first place, the statement of Paul remains in the text, and it is as much the obligation of the quibbler to answer the question and prove his answer, as it is that of the one who insists on observing the teaching of the apostle. However, for the benefit of the sincere inquirer, I will state that the Lord has given us a clear-cut definition of what constitutes *long hair*, in the stipulations for a Nazarite which included long hair. The passages that state the law on it are Numbers 6: 5; Judges 13: 5; 1 Samuel 1: 11. These all require that no razor is to be used on the head, hence by *long hair* the Lord means hair that is as long as nature makes it. If a man cuts any of it off he ceases to have long hair, and exposes his head to shame. By the same token, if a woman cuts any of her hair she also ceases to have long hair in the sense the apostle is using the term, and thus she does that which is a shame.

Verse 15. This verse is virtually explained in the preceding paragraph. It has the added thought that by having long hair, which nature teaches her that she should have, she is in a condition to observe also what custom has established in the time of the

epistle, namely, using that long hair as a veil when praying in man's presence.

Verse 16. This verse is often pounced upon by the quibblers, like a "drowning man grasping at a straw," in their desperate attempt to find some justification of women in their unnatural and unfeminine act of cutting their hair. I have never yet heard anyone who made a serious effort to show this passage to be related in the remotest degree to the issue at hand. *Any man* is from the one Greek word *ΤΙΣ*, which means any person or thing, indefinitely, and would apply to a woman as well as a man. *Contentious* is from *ΦΙΛΟΝΕΙΚΟΣ*, which Thayer defines at this place, "fond of strife, contentious." No one would be contentious over anything that was not objectionable to another. It would have to be over something he wished to do that some other one did not want him to do. In the present case it could not be over short hair for women, for nobody was wanting that. Instead, verse 6 shows that there was common objection to that, which was a basis for one of Paul's arguments. The only thing in dispute was whether a woman should cover her face with her hair, or keep it away in a manner that would look as if it were *shorn*, a condition which Paul states would be a shame. Since no person was contending for short hair with women, the contention could not be over that. The point the apostle is making in this verse, is that the custom of all the other churches was for the women to veil their faces with their hair when praying in the presence of men.

Verse 17. In verse 2 the apostle told the brethren there were some things for which he would praise (commend) them. In the present verse there were some things for which he would not praise them, one of which was that their coming together was not for the better but for the worse.

Verse 18. The *divisions* in the church were over several subjects, but Paul is writing of a particular one in the rest of this chapter; and one that is very important because it pertains to the Lord's Supper. A report of the divisions in the church had come to Paul in some manner not stated. *Partly believe it* cannot apply to the degree of his belief, for a man either believes a report or he does not. The idea is that Paul believed the report to be true in regard to a part of the congregation, but that some of them dis-

approved of the divisions. The argument in the next verse justifies this conclusion.

Verse 19. *Must* is from *ΔΕΙ*, which Thayer defines, "it is necessary," and explains it to mean at this place, "necessity in reference to what is required to attain some end." Robinson's definition and explanation give virtually the same thought as Thayer's. It is clear the word means that heresies are necessary for a certain purpose, and that is stated to be, *that they which are approved may be made manifest among you*. This agrees with the conclusion expressed in the preceding paragraph, namely, that a part only of the congregation was guilty of the divisions among them, the faithful ones being "approved" by their opposition to the heresies. But this necessity for heresies should not encourage anyone to promote evil doctrines, for Jesus pronounces a woe on those who cause offences, even though He had just declared that it was impossible for them not to come (Luke 17: 1).

Verse 20. Having set forth some general principles concerning heresies in the foregoing verses, Paul comes to the special subject at hand, namely, the Lord's Supper in the course of their coming together. The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders the last clause, "it is not to eat the Lord's Supper." Of course Paul does not deny the Corinthians professed to come together for that purpose, but he means that under the circumstances what they did could not be rightly called so for reasons soon to be stated.

Verse 21. *Taketh before* means that such persons were so eager to eat that they did so before the others were ready. In the first years of the church it was a custom for the disciples to partake of a common meal before attending to the Lord's Supper. This was somewhat after the order of events occurring at the time Jesus established the Lord's Supper, namely, they had the passover first, then Jesus set forth his memorial supper next. These common meals are referred to in the New Testament as "feasts of charity" (Jude 12; 2 Peter 2: 13). In some way the Corinthians tried to blend the common meal with the Lord's Supper. That corrupted it and caused Paul to say they were not eating the Lord's Supper when they came together. *Drunken* is from *ΜΕΘΥΟ*, and primarily means to be intoxicated with drink. But it is used here as the opposite of *hungry*,

hence it is in the sense of being filled. Groves defines the word, "to be filled, plentifully fed," and it has that meaning in our verse. Those who *look before* their own supper would be filled, while the ones who waited—the "approved" ones whom Paul's word "partly" in verse 18 included—would still be hungry.

Verse 22. Some might claim they would become too hungry to wait until the rest were ready to eat. Paul tells all such that they should eat at home before coming to the assembly if their appetites were thus demanding gratification. But instead of doing that, they were abusing the purpose of the feasts of charity by their disorderly conduct. By such practices they *despised* (belittled or put to shame) the the public assembling place, and also embarrassed the poor, who are meant by the phrase *them that have not*. I shall quote Thayer's remarks about the feasts as they were related to the poor of the congregation: "AGAPAI, agapae, love-feasts, feasts expressing and fostering mutual love which used to be held by Christians before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and at which the poorer Christians mingled with the wealthier and partook in common with the rest of the food provided at the expense of the wealthy." Such disorderly conduct of the more prosperous brethren as Paul describes, would confuse the poorer ones and make them feel that they were not welcome to the public feasts of the congregation. This is one of the things for which the apostle said he would not praise them. The poorer sort of the brethren would not appreciate these free meals (feasts of charity) when they saw the corruption practiced by the wealthier classes, and the whole procedure thus made a mockery of the institution of the Lord's Supper, which is why Paul said when they came together they would not eat the supper.

Verse 23. The Corinthians had so corrupted the divine institution that the apostle thought it necessary to describe it to them again, just as he had delivered it to them when he was with them for so long (Acts 18: 1-11). The simple phrase *took bread* states all we need to know as to the article to be eaten in the Lord's Supper. In every place where it is referred to after the church was set up, it is mentioned by the simple word "bread" (Acts 2: 42; 20: 7; 1 Corinthians 10: 16; 11: 23; 27, 28). In all of these

places except our present chapter, the word is used independently of any consideration for the Jewish passover. Therefore, to insist on any particular *kind* of bread for the Lord's Supper is to be more specific than the Lord is.

Verse 24. *Break it*. The term is from the same original Greek word as "break" in Matthew 14: 19 and it has no more spiritual significance in one place than in the other. The only reason for breaking the bread is that more than one person may partake of it in decency. I have known instances where a group of disciples was so few in number that only one attendant (commonly but erroneously called "deacon") was used. Then if the one presiding at the table happened to forget about "breaking" the loaf in two pieces, it was thought a terrible mistake was made. Such a tradition shows that the real significance of the institution is overlooked almost as much as the Corinthians did it. Whether the one presiding breaks the bread (so as to place it on a number of plates), or the attendants break off a piece to serve to each participant, or he breaks it off himself, the bread is sure to be "broken," and that is all that is required. *My body, which is broken for you* is another expression that is misapplied. It is a common thing to hear the one "presiding" to quote this, then refer to the Roman spear that "broke" the body of Jesus after his death. The mechanical act of piercing His side, or even that of driving the nails through his hands and feet, was only a means to an end, namely, "to be shattered, as it were, by a violent death"—Thayer. Robinson says virtually the same thing. Had it been the Lord's will that Jesus be killed by a violent blow on the head but leaving the surface of the body intact, it would still have been true that his body was broken for us, in the sense the apostle uses the term. When Christians eat of this bread, they are to do so in remembrance of the "violent" death of Christ. It is significant that in Luke 22: 19 where the supper is being instituted, it is stated that the body of Jesus was "given" for his people, which agrees with the idea that the mechanical fact of the spear and nails was not necessary to the word "broken."

Verse 25. *After the same manner* is not a comparison to the form or performance in the procedure, for the phrase is from the same word as "likewise" in Luke 13: 3, and we know Jesus did not mean that all impentitent

sinner would perish just as the Galileans did. It means as if it said, "for the same purpose," etc. *Supped* is from the same Greek word as "supper" in Luke 22: 20; it means He took the cup after the passover supper was ended. *New testament in my blood*. In Hebrews 9: 16 Paul says that a testament requires the death of the testator. The beasts that were slain under the Mosaic system constituted the testator for that covenant, which is the reason they were slain. The New Testament (or covenant) also required the shedding of the blood of the Testator (who was Christ), hence we have the phrase italicized here. The expression *is my body* in the preceding verse, and in my blood in the present verse, are used with the meaning that they represent the body and blood of Christ. Partaking of the cup, like that of the bread, is for the same purpose, namely, to be *in remembrance* (a memorial) of Christ.

Verse 26. *Often* is not used in view of the frequency of the observance of the Lord's Supper, for Acts 20: 7 and 1 Corinthians 16: 1, 2 settles that question, and shows it is to be done once each week. The term means that each time the institution is observed it is for the one purpose, namely, to *show* ("proclaim publicly" — Thayer) *the Lord's death*. A common speech that may be heard at the table is as follows: "We now come to the Lord's Supper in which we will commemorate the death, burial and resurrection of Christ." Such a statement is not only unscriptural but is foolish. It is evident that anything that represents the death of Christ could not also represent his life. The life of all creatures is in the blood, and when the body and blood are separated, that body is bound to be dead. Likewise, when the guests see the fruit of the vine in one vessel, and the bread in another place on the table, it represents the separation of the body and blood, and in such a condition it "shows" or represents the *death* of Christ. *Till he come* signifies that the Lord's Supper is to be perpetuated until the end of the world.

Verse 27. The general character of the persons eating and drinking is not under consideration, but the manner or purpose of the act is the subject. (This will be enlarged upon in verse 29.) *Guilty of the body and blood* means to be guilty of sin against the body and blood of Christ.

Verse 28. *Examine himself*; this phrase is perverted many times. The

speaker will say, "I cannot examine you nor you me, for I do not know how you have been living." The way a brother "has been living" is not in this text, and such a remark shows that the one making it is in danger of condemnation himself. The manner or purpose of eating and drinking is the point. If a man asks himself why or for what purpose he is about to partake, he will be examining himself in the sense the apostle means. When he does this, and concludes it is for the purpose of showing the death of Christ, he is then ready to eat and drink worthily (an adverb and not an adjective).

Verse 29. *Discerning* is from *DIABRINO*, which Thayer defines at this place, "to separate, make a distinction, discriminate." The thought is that the participant should eat and drink with his mind on the body and blood of Christ, *remembering* that the two parts were separated and that He died for us. Unless this is done, the person partaking will bring condemnation upon himself. The Corinthians did not *distinguish* between the body of Christ and food for natural hunger. The same guilt may be brought upon us today without eating to satisfy our hunger. If we partake of the "emblems" while our mind is on some other subject instead of the death of Christ, such as our plans for the day, etc., we will be just as guilty as were the ones at Corinth. Sometimes disciples will be engaged in conversation at the time, and will partake of the bread and/or cup mechanically or as a habit only. When they do so they eat and drink damnation to themselves.

Verse 30. The question is asked at this verse whether it means physical or spiritual sickness, and my answer is that it includes both. In the first years of the church God sometimes inflicted physical punishment upon disciples, even to the extent of putting them to *sleep* (in death). (See the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5.) But the days of such demonstrations are over, while the guilt of corrupting the Lord's Supper is just as possible, and also just as deserving of being *judged* (condemned) as ever. Therefore, when disciples corrupt the holy ordinance, or commit any other violation of the Lord's spiritual law, it brings upon them the serious condition mentioned here unless they repent.

Verse 31. This verse states a principle that may have an application to



other subjects besides the one at hand with the Corinthians. Had they *examined* themselves as directed in verse 28, and then brought themselves under the necessary correction (judgment), it would not have been necessary for the Lord to judge them. Likewise, the New Testament today gives very positive instructions about the conduct of disciples, and they should be able even in themselves to decide between right and wrong. However, if they will not do so, it then becomes the duty of the rulers of the church to make the application for them, and administer such corrective discipline as needed.

Verse 32. In the days of miracles the judgment or punishment was administered directly by the Lord (verse 30). Today the correction has to be delivered by the church, and when it is done it is counted as coming from the Lord (chapter 5: 3, 4; 2 Corinthians 2: 10; 7: 11, 12).

Verse 33. *Tarry one for another.* This is another statement that is often perverted and made to mean that public services should not start until others arrive. Not only does such an application miss the thought intended by the apostle to be conveyed, but it violates other scripture. Romans 12: 11 forbids Christians being slothful or lazy in coming to the services. A soldier who fails to appear at the time he is told to receive the stain of AWOL, and the disciple who is late in arriving at the place of services deserves the same blot. The tarrying of our verse was to be done *after* the congregation was assembled, and it means not to *take before other* (verse 21) his supper, but to wait (tarry) until the others were ready to eat.

Verse 34. *If any man hunger* is explained by the comments on verse 22. It does not mean to rule out the observance of the feasts of charity, but only to correct the abuses of it by those who claimed to be too hungry to wait. *Come together to condemnation* is the same subject that is considered in verse 17. There were other items that needed to be set forth for their instruction, but the apostle thought it well to do that when he made his next journey to them (chapter 4: 18, 19).

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12

Verse 1. *Spiritual gifts.* The second word has been supplied because it has no separate one in the Greek. The first one is from PNEUMATIKOS, and Thayer explains that it is used both "in reference to things," and "in refer-

ence to persons." Paul says he wants the brethren to be informed on the subject, hence this and the next two chapters are written to show the truth concerning such matters; both as to spiritually-gifted men and their gifts. We learned at chapter 4: 6 that the church at Corinth was divided (in sentiment) over the men among them who possessed spiritual gifts. That contention was so serious that the apostle wrote chapters 12, 13 and 14 to discuss the subject. If this is overlooked, any attempt to explain the various parts of the three chapters will likely be a failure.

Verse 2. The Corinthians were Gentiles and worshipers of idols before they received the Gospel. Since the idols were dumb things, to be carried away with them or be devoted to such services was a proof of their spiritual blindness, and no such worshipers could exhibit any fruits of the Spirit.

Verse 3. There were many false teachers coming round in those days, claiming to possess supernatural knowledge. A test of their genuineness was their manner of referring to Jesus. If they pronounced any evil wish or prediction concerning Him, the Corinthians were to know that no such persons were speaking by the Spirit. *No man . . . but by the Holy Ghost.* The idolatrous teachers would never be induced by the dumb idols to confess Jesus; the Holy Ghost only would so inspire them.

Verse 4. Up to this place the remarks of the apostle are general, and are offered as a preparation for instruction on the true spiritual gifts and the disciples possessing them. The dissensions over the gifts previously mentioned are now the direct subject that Paul is considering. *Diversities of gifts . . . same Spirit.* The Corinthians were contending with each other over the comparative importance of their different gifts. The point Paul is making is that since there is but one Spirit, there could be no actual difference as to the value of the various gifts.

Verses 5, 6. *Administrations and operations* means the outworkings of the Spirit through the gifts; that all come from the same divine source.

Verse 7. A foreman over a crew of workers knows his men and which tool each can use to the best advantage for the whole project. Likewise, the Lord knows which spiritual gift each disciple can best use to the *profit* of the

**Gospel work.** Hence not all members of the church received the same gifts, and yet the diversities of the various assignments indicated no partiality as to the different brethren.

Verse 8. *Wisdom* and *knowledge* have much the same meaning in general use, but as spiritual gifts there is a difference. The second one means supernatural understanding, and the first means the special ability to teach it to others.

Verse 9. This *faith* is the miraculous kind such as Matthew 17: 20; 1 Corinthians 13: 2. Miraculous *healing* requires this gift of faith, but the phrase is used as a specification of it, in relieving persons of their physical ailments.

Verse 10. *Working of miracles* is more general, referring to any situation coming before the possessor of the gift that gives an opportunity for demonstration of spiritual power. This *prophecy* is the kind that enables the possessor to make predictions, not that described in chapter 14: 3. Without the complete Word it was not always possible to detect an evil spirit claiming to be of God, hence this *discerning of spirits* was possible through the gift. One man could speak in a foreign tongue, perhaps, but would not know its interpretation. Another man had the gift of interpreting such tongues. (See chapter 14: 27, 28.)

Verse 11. This is virtually the same as verse 7. *As he will* denotes as the Lord willed in directing the Spirit as it delivered the various gifts.

Verse 12. The human body is used to illustrate the church which is the body of Christ, with the unified work of spiritual gifts in that body.

Verse 13. The main thought running through these several verses is that there is only *one Spirit*, hence no difference should be made in the importance of the different gifts of the Spirit. Men would never have been taught the necessity of baptism had not the Spirit given the apostles and other inspired teachers the instruction to pass on to others. The point is that all people who have been baptized have received the instruction as a result of teaching from *one Spirit*.

Verse 14. It takes more than one member to constitute a human body.

Verses 15-17. This imaginary conversation between the different parts of the fleshly body, is written to show the point stated in verse 14. No one of the members of the body can take

the place of the other. This reasoning drawn from the fleshly body is continued through verse 26.

Verses 18-21. This paragraph is similar to the preceding one.

Verse 22. Every part of the human body is necessary and should not be removed by surgery, unless it becomes so diseased that medication will not cure it.

Verse 23. *Less honorable* is from *ATIMOS*, which Thayer defines "less esteem." The comparison is made to the feet and certain hidden parts of the body. According to Thayer, *more abundant honor* means more "preciousness or value." That is true, for the feet and other parts referred to are prized very highly, even though we seek to cover them as not being comely or attractive.

Verse 24. The *comely* or more attractive parts of the body, such as the face and hands, need no special attention, but are able to "take care of themselves."

Verse 25. God has so arranged the human body that there need be no *schisms* (lack of harmony) in the body. For instance, if the feet and hands opposed each other, a man would be constantly hindered in what he wished to do or where to go.

Verse 26. The unity of the members of the fleshly body is demonstrated by this very sympathy of one for the other. If a man injures his little finger, his entire being is concerned and caused to suffer, and the whole person will try to help the wounded member to get well. Of course the point is that the different members of the body of Christ should have a like sympathy for and interest in each other. The spiritual application of the comparison is made in Romans 12: 15.

Verse 27. The apostle now comes directly to the application of his illustration. The church is the body of Christ, and it is composed of disciples who are the members of the body. As the parts of the fleshly body act in harmony with each other, shown in the preceding verses, so the members of the body of Christ should be interested in each other and seek to assist them in the mutual service to Christ. If that is done, the dissensions over the different spiritually-gifted men and their gifts will be stopped.

Verse 28. Every function or office named in this verse still exists in the church except the spiritual gifts. In the early days of the Gospel age the

gifts were possessed by each of these officers or workers, in order that they might perform them the better. After the New Testament was completed the spiritual gifts ceased, and these officers and workers continue down to our time, but are working only with the guidance of the Gospel. The apostles are still in authority (Matthew 19: 28), doing their ruling or "judging" through the Gospel which they wrote and left with us. I shall next notice the various officers and functions mentioned in the verse.

*First, secondarily, etc.*, denotes the numerical order in which they were set in the church, the comparative importance of them being denoted as we discuss them. The apostles were first in order because Jesus selected them before the church was set up, and they had charge of the work under the Lord when the divine institution began (Acts 2). They are also first in importance because their inspired word is the permanent law of Christ, and will be until the end of the world. These *prophets* were men who could make predictions by the aid of their spiritual gifts. *Miracles* and *healings* are explained at verses 9, 10. *Help* is from ANTILEPSIS, and Thayer explains it at this place to mean, "the ministrations of the deacons, who have care of the poor and sick." *Governments* is from KUBERNESIS, and Thayer's definition is, "a governing, government." We know from 1 Timothy 5: 17; Hebrews 13: 7, 17 and 1 Peter 5: 1, 2, that the elders are the rulers in the church, hence they are the ones meant by these *governments*. *Diversities of tongues* refers to the men who could speak with various foreign tongues by the help of spiritual gifts.

Verses 29, 30. *Are all apostles?*, etc. All of the questions in this paragraph should receive the negative answer; they are a summing up of the argument that Paul has been making regarding the relation of the different members of the church in the exercise of their spiritual gifts.

Verse 31. *Covet earnestly* is from ZELOO, which Thayer defines, "to desire earnestly, pursue." *Best* is from KREITTON, and Thayer defines it, "more useful, more serviceable." Paul has consistently taught that all of the gifts are important, and he has rebuked the brethren for their contending with each other over their respective gifts. We should conclude, therefore, that he here means their main interest should be in that which will do the church

the most good, and not which of them can exhibit the greatest power. *More excellent* way signifies that after all that can truly be said of the spiritual gifts, there is something that is more excellent; that will be shown in the next chapter.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 13

Verse 1. This chapter continues the same general subject that Paul has been considering, namely, the proper estimate to be placed on spiritual gifts. The Corinthians were so devoted to them that they had fallen to wrangling against each other. This spirit of dissension had caused them to slight the "more excellent way," which is prompted by *charity* or love. The apostle will devote this chapter to showing the emptiness of all their boasted gifts without having this greatest of all virtues, love for each other. *Sounding brass* and *tinkling cymbals* were used in both religious and military exercises. Smith's Bible Dictionary says they were used "as an accompaniment to other instruments." They would therefore not express any distinct note or other useful term in themselves. Paul compares that fact with the use of spiritual gifts when not connected with love.

Verse 2. Some of the most outstanding spiritual gifts are named in this verse for specimens, and even they are *nothing* in the absence of love for the brethren.

Verse 3. Bestowing goods upon the poor is possible even in the absence of what the King James translation calls *charity*, which shows the word does not mean what is commonly called "liberality." The word is from AGAPE, and the common version renders it "love" in 86 places. For further information, see the comments at Matthew 5: 43, volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 4. This and a number of verses following will show some things that charity (or love) will do, and also what it will not do. *Suffereth long* means it will cause a man to be patient and kind. *Envieth not* denotes that one man will not be grieved because some other one has a gift that he does not have. This teaching especially was needed by many of the Corinthians, because they were contending over the respective gifts of each other. To *vaunt* means to make a vain display, and it would be caused by being *puffed up*.

Verse 5. *Unseemly* means unbecomingly, and the Corinthians had certainly been guilty of such behaviour. *Seeketh not her own* signifies that one is not selfish. *Not easily provoked* denotes one who does not become angered at every little provocation. *Thinketh no evil*. If a man loves his brother, he will not hold him guilty of any evil if he has only his personal opinion as an evidence.

Verse 6. *Iniquity* is placed as an opposite of *truth*, which shows that one does not have to commit some outward act of wrongdoing to be guilty of iniquity; his rejoicing in it makes him guilty. Paul taught the same principle in Romans 1: 32.

Verse 7. *Beareth* means to cover or hide the faults of others as far as possible without encouraging sin. *Believeth* and *hopeth* must be understood in the light of other passages. Hebrews 11: 1 tells us that hope is based on faith, and Romans 10: 17 says that faith comes by hearing the word of God. The present phrase means that a man who has the love of God and the brethren in his heart, will believe all that God declares. *Endureth* denotes a willingness to remain faithful throughout all trials.

Verse 8. *Charity* (or love) *never faileth*. A part of Thayer's definition of the original for *faileth* is, "to perish," which means that it will cease to be. That is not true of love, for it will never cease to be, even after the spiritual gifts mentioned in this verse cease to be.

Verse 9. *In part* is said in view of the temporary use and purpose of the spiritual gifts. While the church had such helps only, the knowledge of spiritual things was but partial.

Verse 10. *That which is perfect* (complete) means the completed New Testament, called "the perfect law of liberty" in James 1: 25. When that was given to the church, the temporary and partial information derived through the spiritual gifts was to be no longer necessary.

Verse 11. The illustrations in this and the next verse are to show the difference between the time when the church had to depend on spiritual gifts, and when it would have the complete New Testament. The contrast is likened to the immature activities of a child as against those of a man.

Verse 12. The *glass* means a mirror which was made of polished metal in

old times. Seeing a thing as it is reflected against one of these plates is compared to the knowledge attained through spiritual gifts. Seeing the things directly or *face to face*, is compared to the full and direct knowledge to be attained through the New Testament. *Know as I am known*. This is the text usually cited by advocates of "future recognition," meaning that we shall "know each other in Heaven." Of course that has to mean knowing others as we know them now; and that requires that we will be "as" we are now, or the "recognition" will be impossible. The theory is Sadducean, infidel, and a debasing of Heaven. It is Sadducean in that it implies a continuance of marriage as the Sadducees contended. It is infidel in that it contradicts 1 Corinthians 15: 50, which says flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, yet which must occur if we are going to be "as we are now." It debases Heaven in that it puts the joys of that eternal place on the basis of fleshly relationship. We know such is the motive for the theory, for its advocates will say, "I would not be happy in Heaven if I did not know my loved ones." Such remarks mean that human beings know better what will be necessary for happiness in that world than does the Lord.

This passage has nothing to do with conditions after this world is ended. It is an item in the same argument Paul has been making since the beginning of chapter 12, namely, the use and comparative importance of spiritual gifts. Before the New Testament was completed, the church had to rely on the spiritually-gifted men and their gifts for information to a great extent. These men could not always be speaking, nor could they be in evidence in every place, due to the many handicaps of human life. As a consequence, some disciples would have knowledge of spiritual matters that others would not. "But when that which was perfect was come" (the complete New Testament), all would have equal chance for such knowledge. The words *know* and *known* are from *EPIGINOSKO*, which Thayer defines, "to become thoroughly acquainted with, to know thoroughly; to know accurately, know well." Of course this knowledge pertains to our spiritual relationship in the church. On that subject we may "know as we are known," since all members of the body have equal access to the full information offered in the New Testament. Personal recognition is not being considered.

Verse 13. *Now abideth* signifies that after the complete New Testament has been produced—after the spiritual gifts have ceased, there will still be *faith, hope and charity* (or love). That is because the Christian life will always need such graces. *Faith* (which is produced by hearing the word of God) will be necessary to guide the disciple of the Lord aright, and *hope* will be needed to urge him that through perseverance he may gain the reward at last. *Charity* is the greatest of these three, because faith will be changed to sight, and hope will give place to actual possession, after this life is ended. But love is eternal and will exist on into the life with God in Heaven.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 14

Verse 1. The reader should keep in mind that the subject of the preceding two chapters and the present one, is the spiritual gifts that were possessed by disciples in the first years of the church. Paul is showing the proper purpose and use of the gifts, and is trying to correct the many abuses that had crept into the church in Corinth in the exercise of them. This chapter, therefore, was not written for information concerning "the duties and privileges of women in the church," as it is so frequently claimed. Such a use of the chapter is a perversion of it, for it has no connection with that subject. Instead, it has to do with the conduct of the church when assembled, showing the proper procedure in the exercise of spiritual gifts. *Follow after charity* is in line with the preceding chapter which shows that charity is the greatest of all graces. If it had been in effect through all of their proceedings, the abuses would not have occurred which the apostle is trying to correct. *Rather . . . prophesy*, because it is "more serviceable" as was stated in chapter 12: 31.

Verse 2. Speaking with tongues manifests miraculous power, but it does not contribute as much benefit to the brethren as does the gift of prophesying, when the latter is done after the manner described in the next verse.

Verse 3. This verse gives the practical form of prophesying, that which edifies, exhorts and comforts men.

Verse 4. Being the possessor of the gift of tongues, this man will be benefited by its use, but the church as a whole would not be benefited as it is by prophesying.

Verse 5. Paul did not begrudge any man his possession of the gift of tongues, and he was not conducting the present discussion from that motive. He had a practical reason, however, for preferring the gift of prophesying, namely, it edifies the church (verse 4). *Except he interpret*. I believe this is correctly translated, and hence that at least some men were given two gifts, that of speaking in a foreign tongue, and also of interpreting it; otherwise he could not "edify himself" (verse 4). Verses 13, 14 also indicates that the same man may possess both gifts.

Verse 6. *If I come*. The apostle uses himself only as an example as if he said, "suppose I come," etc. To speak with tongues would not profit the church unless they were so used as to bestow upon it some of the following results. *Revelation* means a communication of some new truth; *knowledge* denotes the supernatural kind that had not been previously recorded; *prophesying* refers to the kind described in verse 3; *doctrine* means teaching in general.

Verse 7. *Without life, giving sound*, means things that do not have life yet that give off sounds, such as the *pipe or harp*. *Give a distinction*. These instruments should be so used as to conform to some accepted code, else they would mean nothing to a hearer. The blasts of a locomotive would mean nothing to railroad men, if they were not made according to the code in use by the company.

Verse 8. The same illustration is used in Numbers 10: 1-9, where a non-living trumpet is used as a signal device. Certain blasts were to indicate a corresponding action. If the "code" was ignored, the soldier would not know whether to line up for action or remain in his tent.

Verse 9. Paul makes the application of his illustration in this verse. He means for them to make such a use of their gift of tongues as will contribute beneficial information to the hearers.

Verse 10. *Voices* is from the Greek word *PHONE*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "speech, i. e., a language tongue." It is true that several different forms of language are in use in the world, and each has its own significance according to the vocabulary of the people speaking with it.

Verse 11. But unless the hearer knows the meaning of the word when

it is spoken to him, he will receive no exchange of thought from the speaker. Barbarian is from BARBAROS, and Thayer's definition in this passage is as follows: "One who speaks a foreign or strange language which is not understood by another." Hence the word does not necessarily mean a term of reproach in the New Testament. But when used with regard to language between different people, it does always mean they are barbarians to each other, if there is not a mutual understanding of the speech that it uttered.

Verse 12. The desire to *excel* merely from the motive of rivalry over others is wrong. The word in this verse is in the intransitive form, and is defined by Thayer "to abound in." The thought is that each member of the congregation should wish to abound in that gift that would best edify the church.

Verse 13. *Wherefore* means a conclusion in line with the exhortation in the preceding verse. *Pray that he may interpret* is commented upon at verse 5, regarding the possession of two gifts by the same man.

Verse 14. *My spirit* refers to the spiritual gift possessed by the one who is praying, while *my understanding* pertains to the one hearing the prayer. If a man prays with an unknown tongue, the hearer who does not understand that tongue will not get any benefit from the prayer.

Verse 15. The first half of this verse is explained in the preceding one. The second half is generally misapplied today. A song leader will arise before the congregation and try to get it in condition for some good singing. He will probably tell the people to wake up and sing as if they meant it, then remind them that Paul said to "sing with the spirit and with the understanding," as if he was conducting a "pep meeting." He may continue his erroneous use of the passage by telling them to study the words of the song so as to understand what they are singing, else they could not "sing with the understanding as Paul commands."

The passage as it reads and is quoted did not apply to congregational singing in Paul's day even, much less does it so apply today. It was a part of the exercise of miraculous gifts, and the spirit that is named is the Holy Spirit, given to Christians in such measure that they could speak and sing with words that had not yet been revealed to others. In selecting his words, the

singer was instructed to use those that the *audience* (not himself only) could understand. The term "my understanding" has reference to the ability of the hearer to understand what he hears.

Verse 16. To *bless* means to praise the Lord for his blessings. One man may be expressing thanks in the audience of disciples, which is supposed to represent the sentiments of the hearers. *Occupesth the room* is a figurative expression that means one who is *unlearned*, or not educated in the various languages. It is also defined in the lexicons as a private person in contrast with one who is in public life. *Say amen*. The manner of Paul's question implies that it was taken for granted the audience would use this word after the public prayer of one speaker, thus making his sentiments their own. Doubtless the Lord expects the disciples to do the same thing after a public prayer today. No one can pray with a spiritual gift now, but all should express their prayers in such a manner that the congregation may hear and understand them. If a man mumbles a prayer in an undertone, or drops his chin upon his chest, it will make it impossible for others to know what he says, and hence an "amen" after such a prayer would be as unscriptural as the prayer. I never say amen to a prayer unless I have heard every word of it, and also believe it was a scriptural prayer.

Verse 17. A prayer uttered in a foreign tongue could be well formed, but it would not edify the unlearned man.

Verse 18. Being an apostle, Paul could speak in a multitude of tongues, which was a necessary qualification for one who was to preach the Gospel in various parts of the world. He was grateful for the gift, but also was considerate of the church in the exercise of it in any established congregation.

Verse 19. *My understanding* means the hearers could understand his words (verse 14). Paul's motive for preferring a few of these words to ten thousand of the others was an unselfish one; it was because it would give more teaching to others.

Verse 20. The brethren at Corinth had behaved so foolishly over their spiritual gifts, the apostle likened them to children. He was willing for them to be as free from malice as children, but in *understanding* (activities of the mind) he wished them to be as men. They certainly had shown malice toward each other, when they had be-



come contentious among themselves over their spiritual gifts. It was like children quarrelling with each other over whose mechanical toy would do the best performances. No wonder Paul thought it necessary to give this subject three whole chapters, and parts of some others.

Verse 21. The quotation is from Isaiah 28: 11, 12, which shows that the term *the law* includes the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. The connection shows that Isaiah was writing about conditions just previous to the captivity of Israel by the heathen. Israel had refused to listen to the law of the Lord even when it was spoken to them in their own tongue. Hence He said he would cast them into the midst of a nation speaking a tongue foreign to the people of Israel. Therefore, the use of tongues was not primarily for the purpose of instruction to believers, but as an evidence to unbelievers, to convince them of the existence of supernatural power. In view of this truth, Paul makes the point that the brethren made a mistake in trying to impose their gift of tongues onto the whole church to the extent they were doing.

Verse 22. On the basis of the preceding verse, the brethren should give the use of tongues a comparatively small consideration in the assembly, and make greater use of prophesying since it would edify the church.

Verse 23. We are sure the Bible does not contradict itself; but when the language seems that it does so, there is always a reasonable explanation possible. Verse 22 says tongues are a sign for the benefit of unbelievers, while the present verse says that tongues will cause them to regard the church as a group of madmen. The word *unlearned* is from *IDIOTES*, and Thayer's definition in this verse is one who is "not a prophet; destitute of the gift of tongues." The key to the question is in the word *all*, for an unbeliever would not require that a whole group in an assembly be able to speak in a foreign tongue to be convinced of the presence of supernatural power; one or two would be sufficient. Therefore, if the whole group did so, it would naturally seem to this "outsider" that the crowd was beside itself.

Verse 24. *All* is the key word again, for it is applied to *prophesying* which was the gift that imparted the most edification or instruction. *Convinced* and *judged* are used in virtually the same sense, meaning that the informa-

tion imparted by this general display of the gift of prophecy, would have a beneficial influence upon this man who was previously an unbeliever.

Verse 25. *Secrets of his heart* are the thoughts produced by the edifying prophesying just heard. See the note at Matthew 2: 2 for the meaning of *worship*.

Verse 26. *How is it then* is an introductory expression, as if the apostle had said, "How about it, brethren?" *Every one of you* means "each one of you has something to contribute to the services." The general program was approved, with the stipulation that it be so conducted as to edify the church. The items named were to be in the line of spiritual gifts. *Psalm* as used here is defined by Thayer, "a pious song." *Doctrine* is defined, "teaching, instruction." *Tongue* is from the Greek word *GLOSSA*, which occurs 50 times in the New Testament, and is always translated by this one word. It means the language of any people that is expressed by the natural tongue. *Revelation* is from a word that means a making known some truth that was hitherto not known. *Interpretation* denotes an explaining of a foreign word or sentence that has been spoken by some other person.

Verse 27. *Man* in this verse and the pronoun in the next being singular, indicates the terms *two* and *three* refer to the number of words or sentences that were to be spoken in any given assembling. *By course* means he should utter them in turn with the interpreter. That is, he should speak one of the words or sentences and then let the other man interpret it. Next speak another word and let the other interpret, and after the third word or sentence, he should cease his speaking.

Verse 28. The speaker in tongues was subject to a further restriction, namely, that there be an interpreter present. If none were in the assembly then he was to keep *silence*, and the word is from the very same Greek original as the one in verse 34. So here is an instance where even a *man* was to keep silence, a truth that is ignored by the extremists on the "woman question."

Verse 29. The prophets were a preference as to the gifted men (verses 1, 2), hence the apostle is not as specific in his restrictions on them as he is about the speaker with tongues, where he adds the words *at the most* (verse

27). Two or three would be sufficient for any one gathering, and others were to *judge* or discern the meaning of their words.

Verse 30. Verse 26 shows that certain ones might come into an assembly with a communication to be offered to the church. After coming together, however, the Lord might see fit to make a special revelation to another. In that case the first one was to give way to the one receiving the later revelation.

Verse 31. All of the men who had the gift of prophecy were to be given opportunity to speak in their turn, since prophesying was so highly esteemed (verses 1, 2), so that all might be comforted.

Verse 32. *Spirits of the prophets* means the spiritual gifts that they possessed. These men were not compelled to speak unless they so willed, hence there would be no excuse for their being disorderly in the exercise of the gift.

Verse 33. *God is not the author of confusion.* This is a reason for the foregoing instructions about the proper conduct of the prophets, as well as of other men with spiritual gifts. *As in all churches of the saints.* I see no importance in the question whether this phrase belongs with the present verse, or should be attached to verse 34. The point in both verses (as it has been throughout the chapter), is to have the exercises of the assembly so conducted as to edify the church in an orderly way. The Lord desired such a result in all of the congregations but the one in Corinth seemed to be in special need of the instruction.

Verse 34. If the reader has carefully followed the teaching that has been offered from chapter 12: 1 down to this verse, he will see that it has nothing to do with the subject of "woman's duties and privileges in the church," as that is considered today. The extremists on that question will ignore all of the context, and settle upon this one passage, because they think it justifies their unholy restrictions against a part of the body of Christ. Such a use of the verse is as gross a perversion as any sectarian ever committed against Acts 2: 38.

This verse is just another item in the attempt of Paul to restore order in the public assembly when exercising the spiritual gifts. Notice it says *your women*, which shows it was not said to women in general, but to the wives

of the gifted men. The perversionists try to dodge this by saying the pronoun refers to the church as a whole. That will not do: the next verse shows these women had husbands, so the attempt at perversion fails again. To say this verse is of general application and in force today, makes it contradict Ephesians 5: 19, where the word "speak" is from the same Greek term as the one in our verse. Yet no one denies that the women have the right to sing, and when they do they are "speaking" according to the apostle's command. *Obedience* is from a word that denotes "subjection," and it does not always require that any specific command has been given. The wives of the gifted men were to be in subjection in that they remain quiet while their husbands were performing their spiritual gifts.

Verse 35. Since it is the wives of gifted men who were commanded to keep silence, it follows that the things they might wish to learn about are those pertaining to the gifts of their husbands; wish to know more details about them. Otherwise they could not hope to obtain such information even at home. Furthermore, we know it does not pertain to information in general, for that was supposed to be obtained in the assembly (verses 3, 5, 12, 19).

Verse 36. The Corinthians were so puffed up over their spiritual gifts, that it made them vain enough to regard themselves as a source of divine knowledge. The key to this verse is in the words *from* and *unto*. The word of God had not come out from them—had not originated with them. Instead, all the knowledge they possessed had been bestowed by the Lord, hence they had no ground for boasting.

Verse 37. No spiritual gift is more important nor based on any more authority than the writings of an apostle. If the claimants for spiritual gifts were genuine, they would acknowledge the writings of Paul to be divine commandments. Furthermore, if they go that far, they will be required by the rule of consistency to bring their conduct under the teaching of the same.

Verse 38. No one is ever asked to acknowledge anything that he does not profess to know. The evidences in support of Paul's claim for his writings were so weighty, that everyone should have been in position to recognize them. Therefore, if some man claimed that he knew nothing about what Paul was saying—had nothing to

*acknowledge*, it would be prompted by stubborn indifference. In that case the apostle said *let him be ignorant*, which means that he was not worthy of further attention.

Verse 39. *Covet* is from ZELOO, and Thayer defines it, "to desire earnestly." Among the different spiritual gifts, that of prophesying was the one which Paul preferred because it was the more serviceable (verses 3, 19), hence he advised the brethren to desire it. At the same time he instructed them not to slight the other gifts.

Verse 40. This verse is the grand conclusion of the reasoning that Paul has been offering throughout the chapter. *Decently* is from a word that Thayer defines, "in a seemly [becoming] manner." *In order* means for the various items of their services to be done at the proper time, or in a systematic manner so as not to create confusion. (See verse 33.)

### 1 Corinthians 15

General remarks. This chapter offers a complete change of subject matter from that of the preceding three chapters, and takes up a question involving some of the philosophy of the Greeks. Corinth was one of the chief cities of Greece, and the church in that city was somewhat tinged with the philosophy of that nation; that accounts for much of the teaching in chapter 2. The Greeks would not have very much interest in any proposition that did not measure up to their ideas of reasonable philosophy. This fact was displayed in Acts 17: 31, 32, where Paul introduced the doctrine of the resurrection, which seemed to the people of Athens as a foolish notion. That same attitude toward the resurrection had crept into the church at Corinth, which called forth the matter contained in this chapter. The false teachers who were agitating that, professed to be believers in Christ, yet denied the resurrection of the body. Paul shows in this chapter that it is inconsistent to profess faith in Christ as the risen Lord, yet deny the truth of the rising of His disciples from the dead. He shows that if one has been raised, we must believe that the other will be also.

Verse 1. *Moreover* is from the little Greek word DE, and in the King James Version it has been rendered by and, but, even, for, further, howbeit, nevertheless, now, then, therefore and others. A part of Robinson's explana-

tion of the word is that "it marks a transition [change] to something else." Thayer's description of the word is virtually the same. Paul uses it because he is passing from the subject of spiritual gifts to that of the resurrection. *I declare* is from GNORIZO, which Thayer defines, "to make known," and at our verse he explains it to mean, "to recall to one's mind, as though what is made known had escaped him." Robinson's explanation is, "by way of putting again in mind." These definitions are appropriate, because the apostle had previously preached the Gospel to the Corinthians (Acts 18: 1-11). It was hence not a new subject, for they had *received* it and professed to *stand* upon it as the foundation of their faith. But some of them seemed to have forgotten it through the effect of the philosophy described in the "general remarks" above.

Verse 2. The mere believing of the Gospel will not save a person, but he must also *keep in memory* the truths concerning it. The phrase is from KATECHO, which Thayer defines, "to hold fast, keep secure, keep firm possession of." But all of these considerations would be *in vain*, according to the teaching of some persons at Corinth. (See verses 13, 14.) It is the purpose of the apostle to show them the logical conclusion that must follow if such a proposition is established, namely, *that there is no resurrection of the dead* (verse 12). By this they meant there would be no future resurrection of the body. They tried to teach some vague kind of theory that would make the word "resurrection" mean only a spiritual event, and that all of the facts concerning a raising of the body had already occurred—that it was "past already" (2 Timothy 2: 18). In that passage Paul declares that such a doctrine was overthrowing the faith of some, which is equivalent to the phrase in our present verse, namely, *believed in vain*. Having advanced the serious conclusion necessarily following their false teaching, Paul repeats the facts of the Gospel to which he referred in verse 1.

Verse 3. Paul did not originate the story of the Gospel; in Galatians 1: 12 he says he was taught it by the revelation of Jesus Christ. The mere death of Christ was not sufficient, for other men had died and even been resurrected. But Jesus is the only man who ever died *for our sins*. *According to the scriptures* means the Old

Testament. One outstanding portion is Isaiah 53, particularly verses 4, 5, 8 and 10.

Verse 4. The burial of Christ was not directly connected with our salvation, for had He not revived, whether in a grave or outside, no one would have been saved. But Jesus had predicted that he would spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and his burial made that prediction true. *Third day according to the scriptures.* Psalms 16: 10 is quoted by Peter in Acts 2: 27, 31, and Paul quotes it in Acts 13: 35. This is the only passage in the Old Testament that directly predicts the resurrection of Christ, and yet it says nothing of the "third day," although Paul so applies it. The conclusion is to be seen by considering John 11: 39 which shows that by the fourth day a body would begin to "see corruption." Jesus must not remain dead that long for his body was not to undergo that change. And yet it must remain the three days in order to fulfill the prediction in comparison with the three days and three nights that Jonah was in the body of a whale.

Verse 5. A few verses are given to cite the evidences of the bodily resurrection of Christ. Cephas was another name for Peter (John 1: 40-42). He was one of *the twelve*, but is mentioned separately because he saw Jesus at a time when he was not with the rest of the apostles.

Verse 6. There is no other direct mention of these *five hundred brethren*, but Matthew 26: 32 and 28: 7, 10, 16 indicates that Jesus saw many of his disciples in Galilee after his resurrection. For additional comments on this subject, see those at Acts 1: 15 in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 7. This *James* was not one of the twelve apostles, but was the one named in Acts 15: 13 and Galatians 2: 9, and is the author of the epistle of James. *All the apostles* means the eleven (Judas having killed himself), and Luke 24: 33-36 gives the account of their seeing Him.

Verse 8. *Last of all.* From the time of Paul's journey to Damascus (Acts 9: 3-5 and 26: 16), no human being has seen Jesus that we know of. *One born out of due time* is from the Greek word ΕΚΤΡΟΜΑ, and Thayer defines it, "an abortion, abortive birth; an untimely birth." Paul uses the term to illustrate his feeling of unworthi-

ness to be called an apostle. Thayer's explanation of the word as the apostle uses it at this place is as follows: "Paul likens himself to an ΕΚΤΡΟΜΑ, and in verse 9 explains in what sense: that he is as inferior to the rest of the apostles as an immature birth comes short of a mature one, and is no more worthy of the name of an apostle than an abortion is of the name of a child."

Verse 9. This verse explains the feeling of inferiority that Paul expresses in the preceding verse. He specifies it to mean his record as a persecutor of the church of God. The extent of his persecution is indicated by the relief that his conversion brought to the churches throughout Palestine (Acts 9: 31).

Verse 10. The grace of God is his unmerited favor, and Paul attributed all of his good lot to that source. To show his appreciation for the favor, he labored more than any of the other apostles. But even then he considered the labor as the work of God, using the apostle as an instrument for the work.

Verses 11, 12. Having given proper credit for the work done under God, the apostle settles down upon the argument that is indicated in the beginning of the chapter. He will proceed to show the inconsistency between the professed faith of the Corinthians in the bodily resurrection of Christ, and their denial of a like event for those who die in Him.

Verse 13. This short verse states the major premise for the great argument that Paul intends to present. But the mere assertion of a basis for argument is not sufficient for the support of it, because that would be assuming the very point under discussion. The statement must be either self-evident, or be supported by vital facts or truths. In 1 Thessalonians 4: 14 Paul makes virtually the same statement as the one in this verse. The death and rising again of Jesus is there coupled with the assurance of the bringing of the dead in Christ "with him" from their state of death. Since the body of Jesus (as to its material) was like that of all other men, it follows that it would be as impossible or unreasonable to believe in the resurrection of His body as to expect the same thing of the bodies of other men. Such a proposition is self-evident and needs no further evidence. Reasoning the other direc-

tion, therefore, if philosophy denies the bodily resurrection of men in general, then it must deny that of Christ, and hence the professed basis of the faith of the Corinthians, namely, the bodily resurrection of Christ, is disproved, and the major premise of Paul's great argument is established.

Verse 14. Having presented an unquestionable basis regarding the question in dispute, Paul will devote a number of verses showing some of the logical conclusions that must follow, thereby proving to the brethren that their whole program of religious activities and hope is fundamentally wrong. One conclusion is that the preaching of the apostles was in vain or of no avail. That necessarily would mean that their faith was vain, since it was based on the facts that had been preached to them. Reference is made to this "vain" belief in verse 2.

Verse 15. The Corinthian brethren would not intend to accuse the apostles of fraud, yet their theory about the resurrection implied that the preachers were guilty of it. They had preached that Christ was raised from the dead, but Paul has shown that it was false according to the teaching held at Corinth.

Verses 16, 17. This paragraph is covered by comments over verses 2, 3, 13, 14.

Verse 18. The Corinthians had never been taught that eternal salvation was to be actually possessed before the end of the world. But if the dead were never to be raised, then their bodies would be destroyed along with that of the earth. That is why Paul says that those who had died in the Lord were *perished*, which means they had come to their end.

Verse 19. Another conclusion following this false theory advocated by some people at Corinth, is that all benefits to be had from being in Christ must be had in this life—nothing to be received after death. In that case Christians are the most miserable of all men, because they must be denied the pleasures of the world and also undergo many persecutions in behalf of their faith, with no prospect of any joys beyond the grave. While this was true especially of the apostles because of their direct contact with the enemy, it was and is still true of all faithful disciples of Christ. It is true that Christians should be the happiest people on earth, but that is because of

their hope of endless bliss in the life to come.

Verse 20. Taking for granted he has proved his point, Paul reaffirms the third fact of the Gospel, namely, that Christ arose *from the dead*. The italicized words are significant in that they specify from what Jesus arose. He previously arose to the cross (John 12: 32, 33), and arose from earth to Heaven, but those facts were not in dispute; that from the dead was. The body is the only part of Christ or any other man that dies, hence if the body is not to be raised from the grave, then there will be no resurrection at all. Paul has shown the awful conclusions made necessary by the theory that there is to be no resurrection of the dead. He will next show the glorious conclusions made possible by the truth of the resurrection. The first one is that Christ has become the *firstfruits of them that slept*; that is, he was the first person to rise from the dead to die no more. For detailed comments on this subject, see those on Romans 8: 29, in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 21. Adam was the first man, and after joining with his wife in eating of the forbidden fruit, they were both driven out of the garden and permanently prevented from re-entering it. That cut them and all of their descendants off from the tree of life, so that all had to die whenever their bodies failed through disease or other causes. But none of Adam's descendants were to blame for that condition, hence God arranged it so that through another man's resurrection they could all be raised from the dead without any conditions on their part.

Verse 22. This verse specifies the two men of the preceding verse to be Adam and Christ. The latter is called a man because he was given a body (Hebrews 10: 5) that was like that of other men, in that it was fleshly and was subject to death. That made it possible for Him to die and be raised again, thereby opening the gates of death to all men to come therefrom.

Verse 23. The literal resurrection from the grave will come to all men whether they are good or bad, since they are not responsible for their bodily death. However, that experience is all that mankind in general will receive unconditionally from the resurrection of Christ. What will come to them after the resurrection depends

on how they lived on earth (Daniel 12: 2; John 5: 28, 29). This is why Paul makes the assertion of the words *every man in his own order*; that is, *every man* means of those who are the Lord's own. Some of them were raised immediately after the resurrection of Christ among whom he was the *firstfruits*, then at His coming the others who are dead in Him will also be raised. While all mankind will be raised whether good or bad (verses 21, 22), yet from now on through the chapter the apostle will be writing only of those who are His and who have been "asleep in Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 4: 14).

Verse 24. *Then* is an adverb of time, and refers to the words "at his coming" in the preceding verse. This verse gives the information as to what is to come to end at the coming of Christ, namely, the kingdom or rule of Christ. Paul directly says that the kingdom with Christ as its head will end when He comes, and he will deliver it up to his Father. From this inspired prediction come two other important truths, namely, that the kingdom of Christ will have been in existence before His second coming, and also that he will not be a king after that coming. Therefore, the doctrine that the kingdom is still a thing of the future, and that He will set up a thousand year reign when he comes is false.

Verses 25, 26. When Jesus came from the dead to die no more, he annulled death or gave it the "death stroke" (2 Timothy 1: 10). However, not until every human being has been brought back to life, will it be a fact that death is destroyed; Jesus must be king until the great event is accomplished. This does not contradict the statement that He will give up his kingdom "at his coming," for all of the mentioned events, the coming of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead and the transfer of the kingdom to his Father, will take place "in a moment" (verse 52). After the dead have all been raised to die no more (as to bodily death), the triumph will be complete, and Jesus will then be qualified to relinquish the kingdom to God who shall continue to reign endlessly, thus putting the final fulfillment to the prediction that the kingdom of "the God of Heaven" shall "stand for ever" (Daniel 2: 44).

Verse 27. The pronouns stand for God and his Son. God has put all things under the feet of Christ except

himself. Jesus declared this fact in Matthew 28: 18, and it was on that basis that He gave to his apostles the Great Commission.

Verse 28. Eliminating the pronouns, this verse means that after the Son has brought all things under subjection, then that Son will become subject unto God the Father. The grand motive for this consumation is *that God may be all in all*.

Verse 29. *What shall they do*. The pronoun is in the third person, while Paul is writing to the church in general as in the second person. This shows that not all persons in the Corinthian church were practicing this baptism, even as not all were denying the resurrection, as is indicated by the words "how say some among you" (verse 12). This item must not be overlooked in considering this verse, for any professed explanation of it that would apply to all Christians in general would necessarily be wrong. The word *for* is from HUPER and Thayer defines it at this place, "in the place of, instead of." I shall quote Moffatt's translation of this verse: "Otherwise, if there is no such thing as a resurrection, what is the meaning of people getting baptized on behalf of their dead? If dead men do not rise at all, why do people get baptized on their behalf?" Not all of the brethren in Corinth were practicing this inconsistency of being baptized on behalf of their dead, neither were all of them denying the resurrection (verse 12). But Paul considered it necessary to notice them in his epistle to the whole church, even as he deemed it worth while to notice the group that was practicing this "proxy" baptism. The apostle does not endorse the foolish practice, but brings it up to expose their inconsistency.

Verse 30. *Stand in jeopardy* means to be in danger of death from the enemies of Christ. All Christians and especially the apostles were constantly being persecuted (verse 19), some of them even unto death. How foolish, then, to cling to a profession that threatens one with death if there is to be no resurrection.

Verse 31. *I die daily* is figurative, meaning that Paul was daily exposed to the danger of death because of his service to Christ.

Verse 32. *I have fought with beasts*. These words are all from the one Greek word *THERIOMACHEO*, and Thayer defines it, "to fight with wild beasts."



I believe this was a literal experience of Paul and shall state my reasons. We know it was an action that endangered the physical life of the participant, else Paul would not have connected it with the resurrection in his reasoning. It is certain that he has the same event in mind in 2 Corinthians 1: 8-10, where he relates that he had "despaired even of life." He did not know whether the Lord was ready to release his faithful apostle from his labors through this event, hence he was willing to do his part in the combat with the beasts, trusting in God to help him overcome the beasts if He so willed. Or, if that was not the case, he would meet his fate with his trust in God "which raiseth the dead." Furthermore, had it been vicious men who attacked him, he would not have "resisted the evil" (Matthew 5: 39), but would have submitted to his fate as he did when he was subjected to other threatening brutalities. *Let us eat and drink* is said as representing all the fleshly pleasures of this life. If there is no life beyond the grave, there would be no reason for denying ourselves any of the fleshly pleasures of this world.

Verse 33. The original for *evil communications* is translated "bad company" by James Macknight, and Thayer's lexicon agrees with it. Thayer defines the original of *manners*, "custom, usage, morals, character." We have seen that not all of the brethren at Corinth were advocating this evil doctrine concerning the resurrection. This verse is a warning against others having company with such bad teachers, lest they also be drawn into the heresy. If a man does not believe that he will live again, it is logical that he would be tempted to engage in that which would give him fleshly pleasure, and hence his otherwise good practices would become corrupted.

Verse 34. This is a further warning against being led into the sin of these false teachers. Paul attributes their evil doctrine to ignorance of God, just as Christ charged the Sadducees on the same subject, that of the resurrection (Matthew 22: 23-29). The apostle considers it a shame that some of the Corinthians were so ignorant of the wisdom and power of God.

Verse 35. When advocates of error cannot offer a just defense of their own position, nor show an honest objection to that of their opponent, it is often a trick of theirs to pose a

quibbling question which they think will puzzle him. As if a man is required logically to account for all the apparent difficulties that his position may suggest. Nothing could be farther from the truth, nor from the universal practice of reasonable men in accepting a conclusion that has been shown to be fundamentally sound, notwithstanding any incidental items that cannot be explained. Such a subterfuge as herein described was resorted to by the promoters of the heresy that Paul was exposing, when they asked *with what body do they [the dead] come?* Even if Paul could not have answered such a question, that would not have proved that the dead could not come to life again.

Verse 36. *Fool* is from APHEON, and Thayer defines it, "senseless, foolish, stupid; without reflection or intelligence, acting rashly." It does not mean that the person does not have natural mental ability, for then he could not justly be censured. But he is one so devoted to his notion that he will not use his mind to consider other matters with which he is familiar, and which would meet his own quibble in the question at hand. Such a matter is the well known truth that a vegetable grain will never reproduce its kind unless it dies and mingles with the earth in which it was placed.

Verse 37. *Bare* is from GUMNOS, which literally means "naked." The Englishman's Greek New Testament uses the indefinite article "a" in connection with it, making the phrase read, "a bare grain." The verse means that a man puts a mere grain of any kind in the ground from which he expects a crop; not the grain just as he placed it in the soil. And when it dies and decomposes, it partakes of the materials around it and from them a new body is formed with added parts. And while it is another body in one sense, in another it is the same, for the new growth is produced out of the old seed or body. Paul uses this circumstance to illustrate the death and resurrection of the body of a faithful servant of Christ.

According to the theory of the ones in Corinth whose heresy Paul was exposing, and of all others today who say that our bodies will never come from the grave at the last day—according to them, the grain should just all remain in the ground, and in another spot of the earth the farmer would dig up some other grain and consider it as his new crop. No, the

bodies of the saints will all come forth, but they will be in another form which will be like that of Christ at his coming (Philippians 3: 21). *It may chance of wheat*, etc. Paul uses the wheat for his illustration, but the same reasoning would be true of any other grain.

Verse 38. The stock with its roots, leaves and fruit, is the new body that God is pleased to give to the original grain. Likewise, He will give to the body of the dead in Christ another form, that will be like the immortal body of his Son, possessed with the new harvest of eternal glory.

Verse 39. To show that it is in keeping with the works of God to have the body of a saint take on another form (although it is the same body), Paul refers his readers to other conditions in the creation, such as the different kinds of flesh.

Verse 40. He uses this as still another illustration of God's wisdom and power. *Celestial* means of the air or sky, *terrestrial* means pertaining to the earth.

Verse 41. The sun and other bodies in the universe all have their own peculiar form and glory, showing that the Creator is not limited in the number and kinds of bodies that He may create.

Verse 42. God's ability to create and change and otherwise manage all of His works has been shown by the preceding verses. The apostle now comes directly to the subject under discussion, the possibility and character of the resurrection. *The dead* is the antecedent of the pronoun *it*, which certainly proves beyond all question that it is the body that is to be resurrected, since it is the only part of man that ever dies literally. *Corruption* means to be subject to decay, and *incorruption* means the opposite.

Verse 43. *Dishonor* is not used in any moral sense, for the same kind of body was possessed by Jesus that Paul is writing about here. It means the state that would be subject to decomposition, which the body of Jesus had which was the reason he must not have remained dead more than three days and nights. *Raised in glory* means more than an existence that is never to end (the wicked will have that; Mark 9: 44, 46, 48), but a state in which the body will be given the same glorious form as that of Jesus in his present condition (Philippians

3: 21; 1 John 3: 2). *Weakness* and *power* are used for the same purpose as the preceding terms because they are opposites.

Verse 44. *Natural* and *spiritual* bodies are applied to the same thing, namely, the human body. But the first applies to it when it is *sown* (is placed in the grave), the second applies to it when it will be resurrected. The false teachers in Corinth, and all others today who deny the resurrection of the body, are disposed to ignore this verse. They say it is impossible for a material thing to be changed into an immaterial one, thus limiting the power of the Creator. Yet in the realm of nature as they must recognize it, there is an indisputable proof of changes virtually as great. For instance; the universe is divided into three distinct classes, namely, the mineral, the vegetable and the animal. The first is inorganic and the others are organic. Notwithstanding these independent and different existences, the inorganic mineral is absorbed into the vegetable, the vegetable is next absorbed and converted into the animal. If there is a Creator who can establish such laws of change within our own knowledge, why doubt His power to lift the animal to one more stage and convert it into a spiritual state? With God all things are possible that are right (Genesis 18: 14).

Verse 45. This statement is written in Genesis 2:7, and Paul calls Adam the first man. This refutes a theory of some visionary followers of a visionary false teacher, that a prior creation of man occurred to that recorded in Genesis. The *last Adam* is Christ according to Romans 5: 14, considered in connection with verse 22 here.

Verse 46. The first Adam did not give us a spiritual body, but instead it is one that was made subject to death and decay by being separated from the tree of life. After that came Christ who has the power to give a spiritual body to all His faithful followers.

Verse 47. This is virtually the same as the preceding verse.

Verse 48. This offers the same thought as that in verse 45.

Verse 49. All men whether good or bad receive their fleshly bodies from Adam. Likewise, all will be brought from the dead through the second Adam, whether good or bad as taught in verse 23. But in addition to this,

those who die in Christ will come from the dead with a *heavenly* body. To avoid a misunderstanding, let it be said that every human being regardless of conduct will be raised from the dead, and will continue to exist consciously without end. But only the righteous have been promised a body like that of Jesus. This should not confuse any person, for God is able to preserve the bodies of men continuously in whatever form He sees fit. Hence we read that the bodies of the unsaved will be cast into the lake of unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not (Mark 9: 44, 46, 48). Those who say that the wicked will have immortal bodies are making an assertion without showing any proof.

Verse 50. *Inherit* is from KLERONOMEO, and Thayer defines it at this passage, "to partake of eternal salvation in the Messiah's kingdom." That is why those to be admitted into the eternal home in the next life must be changed from a body of flesh and blood, to one that is spiritual and like that of the Saviour. But such a change of body is not necessary with the unsaved, for there is no restriction as to what kind of beings can enter into the lake of fire and brimstone, since God is able to preserve all creatures cast therein in whatever state He sees fit.

Verse 51. *Mystery* is from MUSTERION, and Thayer's second definition is, "a hidden purpose or counsel; secret will." It does not necessarily mean something that is complicated or technical in its nature, but only that it has not been hitherto made known. *Sleep* is a figurative term that is defined in the lexicon, "to die." The same truth is stated in 1 Thessalonians 4: 14, 15. In each of these passages the connection shows Paul is speaking only of faithful disciples of Christ. We thus have the precious information that as long as the earth exists there will be those who are true to the Lord, and hence that saving faith "shall not perish from the earth." But though Christians living at the coming of Christ will not die, they will have to be *changed*, as the preceding verse states that a fleshly body cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Here is another point against the heresy that our bodies will not rise nor go to Heaven. These Christians will not die, hence their soul and body will never separate. Yet they are to be taken to be ever with the Lord as Paul asserts in the pas-

sage cited in 1 Thessalonians. And if God can and will convert the flesh and blood bodies of these living Christians into a spiritual form that will be fit to "ever be with the Lord," it is foolish to deny His power to effect the same change in the bodies of those who are "dead in Christ."

Verse 52. This verse is virtually the same as the preceding one, except that it adds the information that the resurrection of these saints and the changing of the living ones, will all take place at one instant.

Verse 53. The body is the only part of man that is *corruptible* and *mortal*, hence it is the body that is to be changed into an incorruptible and immortal form. This applies necessarily to both dead and living in Christ when he comes.

Verse 54. When the change just mentioned has occurred, a prediction in Isaiah 25: 8 will be fulfilled, namely, death is swallowed up in victory.

Verse 55. *Where is thy sting?*, etc., is a shout of triumph by the saints, as they rejoice in their victory over death.

Verse 56. *Sting of death* means that because of sin death threatened the human race with the *sting* of God's eternal wrath. The *strength* or effect of sin in bringing about this sting, is through the law against sin, which makes mankind responsible for their conduct.

Verse 57. *The victory* does not mean only the rising from the dead, for all mankind will have that regardless of conduct. But Paul has been writing about the faithful in Christ only from verse 23. Hence this victory means that one over the eternal results of individual sin, which is to be accomplished by faithful service to *our Lord* Jesus Christ.

Verse 58. The grand conclusion to the argument of the chapter is stated in this verse. Since death does not "end it all," but the faithful shall enjoy endless bliss in the world to come, even though death from whatever cause may intervene, they have great reason to press on in their service to Him. There is not much difference between *steadfast* and *unmoveable*. The first means to have a fixed purpose in life, the second means to be determined not to be moved from that purpose. *Abounding* is from PERISSEUO, which Thayer defines, "to be pre-eminent, to excel." Of course it means

for each Christian to excel himself—never to be satisfied with present attainments in the Lord's work, but ever striving to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3: 18).

### 1 Corinthians 16

Verse 1. A great dearth was predicted in Acts 11: 27-30, which came with such force that the disciples in Judea were thrown into a state of want. The condition lasted for some years and it is referred to in Romans 15: 26; 2 Corinthians 8: 1, 2; 9: 1, 2. Collections were made at various times and from different communities for the relief of the saints. It is concerning this matter that Paul is writing in this chapter. We have no record elsewhere of this order given to the churches in Galatia. *As I have given order* indicates that Paul gave those churches the same instructions on the subject that he wrote to the church in Corinth. Such a plan, therefore, should be regarded as the Lord's way for churches to raise money for carrying on His work.

Verse 2. The Englishman's Greek New Testament translates the first clause as follows: "Every first day of the week," and Thayer's explanation of the passage agrees with such a rendering. It was on this day the money was to be contributed for relief of the dearth-stricken saints, and since the disciples came together on that day for the Lord's supper (Acts 20: 7), it was a consideration of convenience on that part of Him to ordain this public collection to come at the same gathering. *Lay by him* has been an occasion for controversy as to where the members were to put their contribution. The pronoun *him* is not necessarily in the masculine gender in the original, but may properly be rendered "itself." *In store* is from THESAURIZO, and James Mac-knight defines it, "putting it in the treasury." This critical information agrees with the reasoning Paul makes, namely, *that there be no gatherings when I come. Gatherings* is from the same Greek word as "collection" in the first verse. If the brethren were to put this contribution some place in their homes, then it would have to be collected when Paul came, and that is what he wished to avoid. Besides, the fact that they were told to do this on the same day the disciples came together, indicates it was to be a public collection. *As God hath prospered him*

means each one was to give according to his financial ability.

Verse 3. This advice is on the principle of Romans 12: 17 and 2 Corinthians 8: 18-21. A man who is entrusted with the property of another should wish to protect himself from any suspicions of dishonesty. I have known of cases where brethren who handled the money of a congregation, would resent all inquiries about the amount of funds in their hands. They would probably make some peevish remark such as, "If you think I am not honest, I will just turn the job over to someone else." There is something wrong with a brother who takes such an attitude, to say the least, and he lays himself open to just suspicion.

Verse 4. When Paul wrote this verse he did not know whether he would go to Jerusalem on this mission; Romans 15: 25-27 shows that he did.

Verse 5. Acts 20: 1-3 records this work of Paul in those Greek countries, in which he was threatened with bodily harm from the Jews.

Verse 6. *Bring me on my journey.* The first word is from PROPEMPO, which Thayer defines, "To send before. To bring on the way, accompany or escort." He then explains the word to mean, "To set one forward, fit him out with the requisites [things required] for his journey." Hence when a church furnishes a preacher the things he needs to take him to his "field of labor," it is bringing that preacher on his journey to the Lord's work.

Verse 7. The apostle did not count on seeing the Corinthian brethren in the immediate future, but he was expecting to see them later, subject to the will of the Lord.

Verse 8. The Mosaic system was both religious and secular as a government. When Christ gave his institution to the world it was intended to supplant the old one for religious purposes (Romans 10: 4), but the Jews were still left the privilege of observing their national institutions, as long as they did not try to obtain spiritual benefits from them. That is why Paul planned to continue his work at Ephesus until Pentecost. That being one of the Jewish national feasts, the apostle wished to go to Jerusalem to attend it.

Verse 9. The first part of this verse is somewhat awkwardly constructed by the translators. The words *great*

and *effectual* are adjectives, modifying *door*, which means as if it said "a great and effectual [efficient] door." The fact of there being *many adversaries* was the reason Paul wished to remain at Ephesus as long as he could.

Verse 10. Chapter 4: 17 mentions the fact that Timotheus (Timothy) was told to go to Corinth. Paul asks the brethren to give him a friendly reception; as a recommendation in support of the request, the apostle tells them of the work of the Lord in which Timothy was engaged.

Verse 11. To *despise* means to belittle or treat with improper regard. Timothy was supposed to spend some time at Corinth and then return to Paul. He did this, for 2 Corinthians 1: 1 shows him joining in the salutation of that epistle.

Verse 12. Paul was an apostle while Apollos was only an unofficial preacher, yet he was not bound to make the journey to Corinth, for the apostle only *greatly desired* him to go. This indicates that Paul was not inclined to abuse his position by commanding another brother in matters where the legislation of God was not involved.

Verse 13. *Watch ye, stand fast* contains a twofold exhortation. To watch means to be alert for any challenge to their faith, and if it appears it should not be suffered to shake them from their faithfulness. *Quit you like men* is all from one Greek word which Thayer defines, "to show one's self a man, be brave." Such an attitude was necessary to meet the attacks of enemies.

Verse 14. *Charity* is from one of the Greek words that are usually translated "love." For a complete explanation of the word, see the notes on Matthew 5: 43 in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 15. *Achaia* is another name for Greece, the country in which Corinth was located. The baptism of Stephanas and his household is recorded in Chapter 1: 16. (See the notes on Romans 16: 5.) *Addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints* denotes they were devoted to the service in behalf of the saints or disciples.

Verse 16. Thayer explains the original for *submit* to mean, "to yield to one's admonition or advice." Hence it is not used in the sense of an authoritative command, for even a righteous household like that of Stephanas

would have no such authority. The statement of Paul is more in the nature of an advisory exhortation. It is always well to listen to the instructions or exhortations of faithful disciples of Christ. If they are scriptural they should be accepted on the principle of chapter 11: 1.

Verse 17. The lack on the part of the Corinthians, which was supplied by the coming of these brethren, was not in regard to material things as the next verse shows.

Verse 18. These brethren refreshed Paul by their coming to him, and by the message which they evidently brought from the Corinthian church (chapter 7: 1). Paul reasons that such brethren were a blessing wherever they dwelt, and therefore must have been so among the brethren at Corinth; he commends them to the favor of the church.

Verse 19. Revelation 1: 11 names seven churches in Asia, and Ephesus was one of them, where Paul was when he wrote this epistle (verse 8). *Salute* is from ASPAZOMAI, and in the King James Version it is translated by embrace 2 times, greet 15, salute 42, take leave of 1. Thayer defines it, "to salute one, greet, bid welcome, wish well to; pay one's respects to." He explains that it can be done either in person or by letter, and of course it was done by the latter method in the present case. Special mention is made of Aquila and Priscilla because they were outstanding disciples and had been closely associated with the apostle in the Lord's work (Acts 18: 1-3). They were at Corinth at the same time that Paul labored there, but later went to Ephesus and hence gave their salutation to the Corinthian church through the epistle that Paul was writing. *Church that is in their house*. In the first years of the church the brethren did not have regular church buildings in many places. That was due either to their financial limitations, or to the fact that the group in the community was too few in numbers to require it. In such cases the church had its meetings in private homes, and Aquila and Priscilla used their home for that purpose.

Verse 20. *All the brethren* would necessarily mean those in contact with Paul as he was writing the epistle, especially those engaged in public work for the church. *Holy kiss*. I have examined a number of dic-

tionaries and histories, as well as four lexicons, and they all represent the kiss to have been a form of salute between persons of both sexes, the custom dating back to ancient times. The instruction of the apostle, then, was not to start any new form of salutation, for that of the kiss was in existence centuries before he was born. The point is in the word *holy*, and it means for the salutation to be sincere and not hypocritical as was that of Judas.

Verse 21. Paul wrote some of his epistles with his own hand (Galatians 6: 11), others he dictated and then signed them to show that they were genuine.

Verse 22. *Anathema* means a curse, and it is pronounced upon a man who does not love Jesus. *Maranatha* is transferred into the King James Version without being translated. Thayer defines it, "our Lord cometh or will come." It denotes, therefore, that such a person will be accursed when the Lord comes. (See 2 Thessalonians 1: 7-9).

Verses 23, 24. Paul wishes that the grace (favor) of Jesus may be with the brethren at Corinth. As a secondary favor upon the church, the apostle assures it of his love for all in Christ Jesus. *Amen* is explained in the notes on Romans 16:24, volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.

## 2 Corinthians 1

Verse 1. Much of this epistle will reflect the results of Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth. Because of the conditions in that church due to the habits of the Gentile citizens of the country, it will be well for the reader to reread the "general remarks" offered at the beginning of the first epistle. The apostleship of Paul was supported both by Jesus and his Father. With such a weighty endorsement, the epistle to the church should have the most respectful consideration from those to whom it is addressed. It was sent directly to the church in Corinth, which was the Roman capital of Greece, and the salutation included all the saints (disciples) in *Achaia*, the name the Romans gave to Greece. For comments on *Church of God*, see those on Romans 16: 16, in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary, and those on 1 Corinthians 1: 2.

Verse 2. For comments on this verse, see 1 Corinthians 1: 3.

Verse 3. A father and son could not be the same individual, and God is declared to be the Father of Christ. This refutes a false teaching in the world that Jesus is "the very and eternal God." It also exposes another heresy known in religious circles by the name of "Jesus Only." God and Christ are one in purpose and goodness, but are two separate persons. Father and God of mercies and comfort simply means that all such blessings come from Him.

Verse 4. Paul regarded himself and all other Christians who were having persecutions for the sake of righteousness as "companions in tribulation" (Revelation 1: 9). The preceding verse says that all comfort comes from God, hence he is the One who enabled the apostle to pass his comfort on to others.

Verse 5. Jesus was in Heaven clothed with a spiritual body when Paul was writing this epistle, hence He could not literally undergo personal sufferings. But the church is His body in another spiritual sense and is subject to sufferings, and in that manner He may well be said to suffer with the faithful disciples. Besides this, Hebrews 4: 15 says that Christ can "be touched with the feelings of our infirmities," and in this sense He is also able to suffer with the saints. By the same token, the faithful disciples will share in the triumph of their Master over all trials and hardships experienced for the sake of righteousness.

Verse 6. The afflictions heaped upon Paul in his defence of the Gospel, should be a source of consolation to the Corinthians, in that they would have an encouraging example of saving faith that is put to the test. That is, it will be thus *effectual* (will have that effect) provided they are willing to withstand that same kind of sufferings if called upon to do so. The assurance that Paul could find consolation in spite of his sufferings, would result in consolation for the Corinthians. This is the same thought that is set forth in verse 4.

Verse 7. Paul's hopefulness in regard to the Corinthian brethren was based on their general attitude toward the Gospel. We shall later learn that they reacted favorably to the first epistle, hence it was reasonable to hope for their continued devotion to the Lord, even though great tribulations might come upon them.

Verse 8. The apostle has been making general references only to his difficul-



ties, but now he makes a more direct mention of them. He names Asia, but the specific place in that district where they occurred was Ephesus, where he "fought with beasts" (1 Corinthians 15: 32).

Verse 9. *Sentence of death.* Paul was so certain that he would die that he resigned himself to his fate. He was enabled to take such an attitude because of this trust in God *which raiseth the dead.*

Verse 10. The event did not turn out as Paul feared, for God took a hand in it and gave him the victory over the beasts. This gave him renewed faith in the power and goodness of God in delivering him from other conditions that threatened him.

Verse 11. Paul believed in the benefits of prayer and asked the brethren to pray for him, that he might continue to overcome his trials. In that case he would stimulate others to thank God for divine favors bestowed on the apostolic labors.

Verse 12. Among the reasons that would cause Paul to rejoice would be that of a good conscience. *Simplicity* and *sincerity* mean virtually the same thing, except Paul modifies the latter with the word *godly*. A man might be conscientious or honest, and yet not be satisfactory to God. (See Acts 23: 1; 26: 9; Romans 10: 1, 2.) Hence the apostle wished that his motives would all be directed by the will of the Lord. The word *conversation* in the King James Version comes from a number of Greek words, but with the exception of Philippians 3: 20, every instance means "manner of life," and not merely one's speech. Paul desired to live properly toward all men in the world, and such a life had been manifested *more abundantly* toward the Corinthian brethren because of his extended labors among them. (See Acts 18: 1-11.)

Verse 13. In Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians (chapter 2: 1-4), he declared that his oral speech was within the realm of simple language. He here continues that manner in his writing, so the brethren may read with understanding and hence be able to acknowledge the truth conveyed to them.

Verse 14. The reaction of the church to the first epistle shows the brethren had acknowledged its truth *in part* (that is, as far as the epistle had gone in considering the subjects at hand). The result of this respectful attitude was to be a mutual rejoicing over spiritual advancement. *In the day of the*

*Lord Jesus.* Most of the harvest to be received from the "sowing to the Spirit" will not be reaped until the *day* when Jesus comes again.

Verse 15. *This confidence* refers to the state of cooperation mentioned in the preceding two verses. *Second benefit* is said with regard for the spiritual gifts that an apostle can bestow on Christians.

Verse 16. Paul's plans included a visit into Macedonia, another Greek country lying north of that in which Corinth was located. He intended going to Corinth first, then making his journey into Macedonia as a sort of "side trip," after which he would come back to Corinth, from which place he would expect to be assisted onward toward Judea by the church; but 1 Corinthians 16: 5-7 shows he changed his plans.

Verse 17. *Did I use lightness?* The last word means "fickleness," and Paul wonders if the Corinthians would accuse him of that when he changed his plans; the form of his question implies a negative answer. Neither does he admit that he was moved by any fleshly interest in what he was doing. *Yea yea, nay nay* describes a person who is not certain what he wants to do, and the apostle denies being such a person.

Verse 18. *As God is true* is a phrase used for comparison, meaning that what Paul is about to affirm is just as true as the thought in the italicized phrase. *Word . . . not yea and nay.* Paul's preaching was not the wishy-washy kind; when he said "yea" or "nay," he meant it.

Verse 19. Paul was serving and preaching for the Son of God, and hence he could not consistently manifest a fickle spirit in his preaching. *In him was yea.* The promises and other statements coming from Jesus were always positive, leaving no room for doubt that He always meant what He said and would make His word good. *Silvanus* and *Timotheus* are other forms for Silas and Timothy.

Verse 20. This verse is virtually a repetition of the preceding one, with the added information that Jesus is to be regarded as reliable, because He is working in harmony with the Father. The promises are *amen*, which means they are backed up by the authority of Heaven, and are all to the glory of God.

Verse 21. *Stablisheth* denotes to confirm or strengthen a person in his work. Paul gives God the credit for

such support which he and the brethren in Corinth were enjoying in Christ.

Verse 22. *Earnest* means a pledge or foretaste of a more complete favor yet to come. Such an assurance was bestowed in miraculous measure upon the apostle.

Verse 23. *Call God for a record*. Paul knew that God was a witness of everything that he or any other man did or thought. He then would certainly not make a statement that was not true. *Came not as yet* refers to Paul's change of plans, commented upon at verses 16, 17. By this change, his visit to Corinth was delayed until they had more time to reflect on the epistle that he had sent to them, which was followed by their correction of many of the evils that were in their practices. By such a reformation, the congregation was "spared" the severe chastisement that he would have thought necessary, had he arrived before they made the corrections.

Verse 24. The severity that is implied in the preceding verse does not mean that the apostle was a tyrant over their faith, but yet he was bound to insist on their adapting their conduct to the will of the Lord however firm it might be.

## 2 Corinthians 2

Verse 1. This chapter continues the thought introduced in verse 23 of the preceding one. *Heaviness* is from LUPE, which Thayer defines, "sorrow, pain, grief," and he explains it at this passage to mean, "of one who on coming both saddens and is made sad." Paul was always conscientious and would not keep back any unpleasant chastisement that was due his brethren. (See chapter 7: 8.) However, by waiting a while longer before appearing in person, the brethren were given space to profit by the letter which he had sent to them, which caused some grief as we shall see later.

Verse 2. Since the sorrow over wrongdoing would be mutual between the guilty person and the one who chastised him for it, the only way the rebuker could be made glad would be by the repentance of the guilty one. Hence we can understand why Paul delayed his coming to Corinth until they had time to reflect and make adjustments.

Verse 3. This verse has virtually the same thought as the preceding one in its first part. *Having confidence*. Paul believed the Corinthian brethren would

rejoice in whatever they saw would bring joy to the apostle.

Verse 4. Like a firm but kindhearted parent, Paul wrote his rebuke of the brethren in Corinth, although it pained him in his heart to do so; he knew they might be grieved also. But the purpose of the epistle was not merely for their grief, but to show them his great concern and love with reference to their spiritual welfare.

Verse 5. Paul is referring to the fornicator reported in chapter 5 of the preceding epistle, although no specific mention is made of him nor his sin. *Not grieved me but in part*. Paul does not claim to be the only one who is grieved over the affair; he is bearing only a part of the burden. *Not overcharge you all*. A part of the congregation at first had endorsed the fornicator, and thus were responsible for the grief that had been brought upon Paul by the circumstance. However, the apostle did not want to make too strong a complaint about it, since the guilty one had evidently repented of his wrong in committing the deed, and the church had taken the right attitude toward the epistle written that included the subject.

Verse 6. The church has no authority to administer physical *punishment*, but the word refers to the rebuke and disciplinary action that was taken against the fornicator. *Inflicted of many*. The last word is from an original that literally means a majority. The New Testament church does not decide religious matters by what is generally known as a "majority vote." In the present case it will be noted that Paul uses the term as a contrast with *a man*. There was just one man who had committed the act, but the chastisement was administered by many more than one, namely, by the church when it was "gathered together" (1 Corinthians 5: 4). No final act of discipline can be scripturally performed except in a general assembly of the disciples. In such a meeting each member of the congregation has the right to offer scriptural objections to what is being proposed. If no such objection is stated, then the action must be regarded as that of the entire assembly; the act of *many*.

Verse 7. This verse considered alone might leave the impression that the church was still holding the charge against the fornicator, but we shall soon see that such was not the case.

Verse 8. Paul would not tell them

to *confirm* their *love* toward the man, if they had not granted him any love at all. But sometimes brethren are too indifferent about certain matters, and expect others to take too much for granted. In as serious a case as the present one, they should not act in that way, but should so conduct themselves that the brother would have no doubt of the love of the church.

Verse 9. *Did I write* has reference to the first epistle to the Corinthians. The Philippians were especially ready to do their duty even when the apostle was not present (Philippians 2: 12), and he concluded to make a test of the faithfulness of the brethren in Corinth, by remaining away long enough to see their reaction to the written instructions of the first epistle.

Verse 10. In 1 Corinthians 5: 3, 4 Paul shows that the act of discipline that he commanded to be done would be by his endorsement and participation, even though he really were not present. By the same token, the action of the church in forgiving the penitent man would be endorsed by him, though absent. *In the person of Christ* means to be acting by His authority. Being an inspired apostle of Christ, Paul could act as His representative in the matter. Not only did he have the authority to share in the act of forgiveness toward the penitent man, but he was personally so inclined.

Verse 11. Verse 7 indicates that if the brethren did not give the penitent one sufficient proof of their love, he would be overcome with sorrow or despair, and might be driven farther out into the world again. Of course that would be an advantage to Satan to have a soul lost to the church and gained for his realm. *Devices* means purposes and plans, and Satan always plans on using every occasion to injure the truth.

Verses 12, 13. Even an apostle feels the need of encouragement from his brethren. When Paul arrived in Troas on this mentioned occasion, he observed an open *door* or opportunity for preaching the Gospel. But he had expected to meet Titus there to report how the church had reacted to his first epistle. Not seeing him at this time, his disappointment cut short the work and the apostle went on to Macedonia, another province made up of Greek people, lying just north of Greece proper.

Verse 14. Paul was induced to change his plans on account of the disappoint-

ment. However, a devoted servant of Christ will not permit such an experience to lead him astray, for his trust in the Lord will enable him to triumph. *Savour* means odor or fragrance, and Paul likens the knowledge of Christ to something pleasingly fragrant.

Verse 15. The pronoun *we* refers to any men who preach the Gospel. Such work is a sweet *savour* (taste or odor) in the estimation of Christ, and such is true whether the ones to whom it is preached accept it and are *saved*, or reject it and *perish*.

Verse 16. God does not wish that any soul will be lost, yet if the Gospel is rejected, it will become a *savour* (odor) of something that is deadly. The same Gospel will act as a life-giving odor for those who inhale it with sincerity. Hence the true preacher of God's word has the assurance that whether his hearer accepts or rejects it, the result will be as God expected it, and thereby it will "not return unto Him void" (Isaiah 55: 11). The results of preaching the truth of God will be the same regardless of who does the preaching. However, it was especially true of the apostles since they were the ones who first preached it and did it by direct inspiration. That is why Paul asserts that he *is sufficient* (qualified) *for these things*.

Verse 17. Paul emphasizes his fitness for the aforesaid work, and specifies one qualification, namely, that he is not one who corrupts the word of God. *Sincerity* means a state of being pure or unmixed, and such was the kind of preaching Paul was doing; he gave it to the people unmixed with human traditions.

## 2 Corinthians 3

Verse 1. In reference to the declarations in the closing verses of the preceding chapter, Paul implies a denial that they were given in the spirit of boastfulness, of which he evidently had been accused by some persons in Corinth. His work was so well known in that city that he did not even need any commendation from outside sources. *As some others* refers to men coming to or going from the vicinity of Corinth who were not so well known, and who had to be provided with letters of commendation as credentials.

Verse 2. *Ye are our epistle*; Paul founded the church in Corinth (Acts 18: 1-11). *Known and read of all men*. That congregation was very strong and became known generally as the work

of Paul. Such information was spread not only through the regular channels of news, but the work of the apostle in Corinth was so precious to his heart, that he imparted the information to others. (See chapter 9: 2.)

Verse 3. The gist of Paul's figurative verses is that the lives of the Corinthians constituted an epistle, because they were displaying the principles that Christ taught. The agency through whom the teaching was written to them was the apostle, who was enabled to do such work by the Spirit of God. In contrast with the law of Moses that was written on tables of stone, this epistle was written on the human heart or mind of the Corinthians.

Verse 4. Having described the situation in the preceding verse, Paul affirms his confidence in the correctness of that description in the present verse.

Verse 5. Paul explains the entire qualification for his part in the preceding program, by giving God the honor for the source of such sufficiency.

Verse 6. *Ministers* is from the same Greek word as "deacon." Thayer's general definition is, "one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a servant, attendant, minister." Paul was *made able* to administer the commands of Christ by the Spirit of God as stated in verse 3. *New* is from *KAINOS*, which Thayer defines at this place, "new, which as recently made is superior to what it succeeds." *Testament* is from *DIATHEKE*, which Thayer defines, "a compact, covenant." In connection with our present passage he says, "we find in the New Testament two distinct covenants spoken of, namely, the Mosaic and the Christian, with the former of which the latter is contrasted." The latter covenant is the one of which Paul was made an able minister. *Letter . . . spirit*. Any document intended for the guidance of human beings would have to be expressed in some language and hence would need to use letters. However, some special sense is here attached to the term which will be seen in the following verses. *Letter killeth*. In Romans 8: 2 Paul calls the first covenant the "law of sin and death," because it inflicted physical death upon those who committed serious violation of it (Hebrews 10: 28). Under the law of the Spirit men are suffered to live physically in spite of their sins, and also may live eternally if they will make the necessary reformation of life.

Verse 7. The Mosaic covenant is called the *ministration of death* for the

reason shown in Hebrews 10: 28, together with the comments on the preceding verse. The superiority of the new covenant over the old would not mean much, unless it is known that the old one also was important. Hence Paul reminds the reader that in administering that first one, the face of Moses became so bright with its glory that the children of Israel could not endure looking directly into his face. (See Exodus 34: 29-35.) *Which was to be done away*. This statement refers to the covenant that was written on the tables of stone, namely, the ten commandments.

Verse 8. The original word for *rather* is defined by Thayer, "to a greater degree." Paul justifies his contrast by the fact that the first covenant (though glorious) was written on stone and also it "was to be done away," while the second was a ministration of the Spirit.

Verse 9. This verse refers to the same contrast that is considered in the preceding ones but with slightly different terms. *Ministration of condemnation* alludes to the same thought as that in the words "sin and death" in Romans 8: 2. *Ministration of righteousness* is used of the Gospel or new covenant, because in it is revealed "the righteousness of God" by faith. (See Romans 1: 17.) *Exceed* is used in the same sense as *rather* in verse 8.

Verse 10. *Had no glory* is said in a comparative sense only, for Paul has already shown the first covenant to be very glorious. However, it was nothing when compared with the second; it was glorified by being given through the Spirit.

Verse 11. This verse is an unanswerable refutation of a prominent but perverse doctrine in the world today. Certain followers of a visionary old woman maintain that the sabbath law is still binding on Christians. As an effort to evade the inconsistencies of their heresy, they assume a distinction between what they call the "ceremonial law" written by Moses, and the ten-commandment law written by the Lord. They admit that the law of Moses was to be done away, but maintain that the law of God (the ten commandments) was never to be abolished. But we know Paul is writing about the ten commandments in this chapter, for he says they were written on tables of stone, while Moses wrote his "ceremonial law" in a book. Also, our present verse plainly says the covenant that was written on the stones *IS done away*, while something else (the law

of the Spirit) *remaineth*. It would be impossible for language to state a more complete and direct refutation of any theory, than the present chapter does of the Christ-dishonoring heresy of the Sabbatarians.

Verse 12. *Plainness* is correctly rendered "boldness" in the margin of some Bibles. This boldness was caused by Paul's abiding confidence in the perpetuity of the law of Christ. The law of Moses as a religious standard was ended by that of Christ (Romans 10: 4), and His law of the Spirit took its place.

Verse 13. Paul has been showing some contrasts between the old and new laws, and another one is shown here. He does it by making a figurative use of the veil that Moses put over his face. That veil was a literal one and was used as a literal shield for the eyes of the children of Israel. But as the glare on the face of Moses was a symbol of the glory of the old covenant, the hiding of that glare constituted (in Paul's figurative use of it) a concealment of the glory of that covenant. That covenant, though glorious, was destined to be done away, which truth was not realized by the children of Israel. Hence their failure to see the glory of that covenant that was destined to come to an end, is used by the apostle to symbolize their failure to realize the truth, namely, that it was to be abolished. *And not as Moses*, etc., means that Paul would not try to hide part of the glory of the new covenant, but instead he would "use great plainness [boldness] of speech" (verse 12).

Verse 14. Paul continues his figurative use of the veil, and likens it to the unbelief of the Jews concerning the temporary use of the old covenant, and the permanent use of the new under Christ. As a result, even down to the days of the apostle, when the children of Israel read the Old Testament, that veil of unbelief prevented them from realizing that the glory of that covenant was to be ended under Christ.

Verse 15. This verse is virtually a repetition of the preceding one, with the *heart* being used in the sense of the *mind* as in verse 14.

Verse 16. The pronoun *it* stands for the *heart* in the preceding verse. Of course the heart and mind of a man are the same, meaning the mental faculty by which he either believes or disbelieves a truth proposed to him. Paul here plainly predicts that the heart of the Jewish nation will some

day turn to the Lord. That is the same truth that is taught in Romans 11: 26. (See the comments on that passage in Volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.) The removal of this veil of unbelief is predicted in Isaiah 25: 7, where the connection clearly shows the prophet is making a prediction of the Gospel Dispensation. It all means that the Jews as a nation will finally give up their rejection of Christ, and will recognize Him as the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.

Verse 17. *That Spirit* means the one referred to in verse 3 and others in the chapter. The Lord is that Spirit in the sense that He gave the new covenant to the world through the inspired apostles, and whoever receives that covenant enters into a state of liberty—freedom from the old law.

Verse 18. This highly figurative verse is based upon the incident when the face of Moses was veiled, hiding the glory that was caused by the old covenant. As a contrast, Christians are to look with uncovered faces into the new covenant that was given by the Spirit of the Lord. When they look into it they see the Lord, and his glory is reflected as by a mirror. If I look into a mirror I will see what my appearance actually is. But Paul extends the figure by showing that the Spirit of the Lord is such that when I look into the inspired mirror, it affects my own spiritual appearance so that as I behold the image reflected in that mirror, I will see it change from time to time. Dropping the figurative form of speech, the verse means that the more we "look into the perfect law of liberty" (James 1: 25), admiring the Lord's image that we see therein, the more our own character will become like His. Reasoning from these truths, it may be appropriately said that professed Christians who show the least amount of the characteristics of Christ, are the ones who seldom gaze into the divine mirror, the New Testament.

## 2 Corinthians 4

Verse 1. Paul calls the new covenant system a *ministry*, which means a service under Christ. He regards it as being so rich and glorious in contrast with that under Moses, that he is determined to *faint not*. It means he will not falter in his service for Christ, since there is so much to be gained by serving Him.

Verse 2. To renounce means to give up and completely turn from a thing.

All *dishonesty* (shame) is wrong, but so much has been said about hiding or covering the face, the apostle specifies that form of wrongdoing in this passage. The servant of Christ should not resort to any *craftiness* (trickery) in his teaching of the truth of Christ. To handle the word of God deceitfully means to pervert it and mix it with human traditions in such a way as to deceive the hearer. He would be misled by the appearance of truth that he would see in the mixture. The Judaizers who had been troubling the Christians were doing that very thing, by mixing a part of the law of Moses with the teachings of the Gospel. *Manifestation of the truth* means to give the plain unmixed and "unveiled" truth to the people. Such teaching would be commended by *every man* who conscientiously desired that which is pleasing to God.

Verse 3. In this verse we have a comparison that results both in a likeness and a contrast, based on the statements of the preceding chapter. The likeness is in the fact that something is *hid* or covered ("veiled"), and the contrast is that the hiding pertains to a different class from those indicated at Sinai.

Verse 4. The Gospel is hid to the people who are *lost*, and yet they are the ones who most need it. However, it is not the fault of the Lord that these people are lost, but it is caused by their own blind unbelief. This condition is caused by a being whom Paul calls *the god of this world*. Luke 4: 6; John 12: 31; 14: 30; 16: 11; Ephesians 2: 2 shows us that Satan is the one referred to by Paul. Certainly he does not want anyone to be influenced by the Gospel, for therein is reflected the spiritual image of Christ, and when men see that and admire it, they will become like Him and hence will reject Satan.

Verse 5. Paul's own personality or importance was not the subject of his preaching, for he claimed only to be the servant of the church for the sake of Jesus to whom the church belongs. The subject of all his preaching was Christ as the Saviour and Lord of all who will believe and obey.

Verse 6. *Light to shine out of darkness* refers to the condition prior to the six days of creation described in Genesis 1. Verse 2 of that chapter says that "darkness was upon the face of the deep" [the sea], and verse 3 states that God said, "let there be light." This material event is used to illus-

trate the condition of spiritual darkness that all men have before they receive the light of divine truth. This light is displayed upon the divine face of Jesus Christ and is communicated to those who will open their hearts to receive the truth. When that is done the spiritual darkness that enshrouded the heart of the sinner is penetrated, and in the place of that darkness, or "out of that darkness," will shine the glorious light of the Gospel.

Verse 7. The *treasure* means the light of the Gospel, and the *earthen vessel* is a human being. When the effects of the great truth concerning Christ are observed by the world, and knowing that man in his natural ability is unable to accomplish such results, it will be concluded that the power has come from God.

Verses 8, 9. In this paragraph Paul mentions four sets of unfavorable terms, in each pair of which he shows a contrast. The distinction is made between what he is actually experiencing, and what he did not suffer his adversities to do unto him. In other words, what he was forced to endure was bad enough, but the other would have been worse which he would not allow to take place with him; he resolved to surmount all his trials. He did not permit his *troubles* to *distress* him, which means to cramp or hinder him in his work. He was sometimes puzzled and wondered "what was coming next," yet he never gave way to *despair*. In spite of his *persecutions*, the Lord sustained him and he also had the encouragement of some faithful brethren. To be *cast down* means to be prostrated, while to be *destroyed* means to be entirely put out of the contest, and Paul would not let his trials come to that end. He was sometimes "down," but never let himself be counted "out."

Verses 10, 11. A man does not literally die but once, yet Paul was constantly in danger of death. (See 1 Corinthians 15: 30, 31.) The apostle was willing to face all this threat of death, that he might display the kind of life Jesus led on the earth.

Verse 12. On account of his work as an apostle and being on the "firing line," Paul had to face this danger of death constantly. The Corinthian brethren were not thus exposed to death as Paul was, yet they were receiving the spiritual benefit of the sufferings imposed upon the apostle, and it meant spiritual life for them.

Verse 13. *The same spirit of faith is*



a quotation from Psalms 116: 10. David's faith was so strong that he was willing to express it in words, regardless of what his enemies might do unto him. Paul affirms that he has that same spirit of faith, hence he is determined to speak the truth of Christ however much it might endanger his life among his enemies. This is a summing up of the attitude described in the verses beginning with verse 8.

Verse 14. Paul's confidence in the resurrection sustained him amid all of his persecutions. *Present us with you.* All men will be raised from the dead regardless of their manner of life, but the righteous will stand together in the group which Jesus will present as his own to the Father.

Verse 15. Paul endured many trials and inconveniences for the sake of his brethren in Corinth. He expected them to react with many expressions of gratitude in their prayers, thus giving God the glory for the *grace* or favor bestowed upon them.

Verse 16. *Faint* is the same as that in verse 1, and means to falter or be heartless, and Paul affirms that he would not suffer such to happen to him. That was because of his abiding faith in the promises of God, and the assurance that some day all "earthly things would cease to be, and life eternal fruit should bear." The *outward man* means the fleshly body that is the subject of persecutions and also is subject to the frailty of age and infirmity. While such changes are going on, the *inward man* (the soul or spirit) is living on and on and growing stronger each day and gaining much of that strength from the very trials that the enemy thought would cast him down in despair.

Verse 17. *Light affliction* and *moment* are used in a comparative sense. The first can affect the outward man only (Luke 12: 4, 5), and the second applies to this life only. On the other hand, the glory that shall be given to the faithful will be eternal in its *weight* (or worth) and endless in its duration.

Verse 18. *Look not* means not to be unduly concerned about it. *Things which are seen* means the present physical trials. *Not seen* means the spiritual reward in the next world, and that will be eternal in character and endless in duration.

## 2 Corinthians 5

Verse 1. *Know* is from EIDO which has a wide range of meanings. In the present passage Thayer defines it, "it

is well known, acknowledged." Hence it does not mean knowledge as different from faith, but rather that something is so well established that no doubt can be felt about it. *Earthly house* means the fleshly body that is the victim of persecutions as set forth in the preceding chapter. *Tabernacle* is applied to it because it is the home of the spirit of man while in this world. *Dissolve* denotes that something is thrown down, as a building might be taken down and its use discontinued. *Building of God* means the spiritual body into which the present one of the saints will be changed when Jesus comes *from heaven* (Philippians 3: 21).

Verse 2. *In this we groan* refers to the natural desire that every man has for something better than he now has in his fleshly body with all of its tendencies toward disease and decay. (See Romans 8: 22, 23.) *House which is from heaven*; the design of this house, and the power of carrying it out, exists in heaven the place of God.

Verse 3. Our spiritual being is not satisfied without a form or immaterial body to be associated with it.

Verse 4. The first clause of this verse is the same as that in the beginning of verse 2. *Being burdened* with the weight of fleshly infirmities creates a desire for relief. The desire is not merely to be relieved of the fleshly weight, but also that we may receive another kind of body for our soul. *Mortality* is from THNETOS, which Thayer defines, "liable to death, mortal," and hence life means the opposite. The saved will have their bodies changed into a form that will not be subject to death, for it will be like that of Jesus (Philippians 3: 21; 1 John 3: 2).

Verse 5. *Wrought us for the self-same thing* means that God has worked matters to accomplish this very result. *Earnest* means a pledge or foretaste of a more complete favor yet to come. Such an assurance was given in miraculous measure to the apostle, and is bestowed in a lesser measure upon all Christians. This is done in the church which is the body of Christ, and by the spiritual blessings that come to all faithful disciples of Christ.

Verse 6. Paul was never made uneasy by the threat of persecutions, for if "worst came to worst" and his enemies even slew him, he would then go into the presence of the Lord. On the other hand, as long as his soul was in its *home in the body*, he would be absent from the Lord. Hence the enemy

could do nothing to make his condition less desirable. This accounts for his resolute firmness when in the midst of the severest persecutions, or even when it seemed that death was near. (See 1 Corinthians 15: 30-32.)

Verse 7. *Sight* means the appearances of things in the present life, many of which are threatening and otherwise undesirable. *Faith* opens up before the apostle (as well as all other disciples) a vision of the Lord's presence. With such an incentive, the servant of Christ will *walk* or pursue his course while on the earth.

Verse 8. Paul's personal preference is expressed in this verse, which is the same thing that he does in Philippians 1: 23. Were it not for the good he could do while remaining in the world, he would rather die and go to be with the Lord.

Verse 9. Not knowing how nor by what means he would be taken out of the land of the living, the apostle was determined so to live that he would be prepared to stand approved whenever the time came to go into judgment with Him.

Verse 10. *We must all appear* is especially significant because Paul had referred to his responsibility regardless of when or how he would end his life. The thought is in keeping with his discourse delivered in Athens (Acts 17: 31), and with Peter's statement in Acts 10: 42 that Jesus was ordained to be the judge of the quick (living) and the dead. *Receive the things*. The last word has no separate word in the original; the phrase means to receive something from the Judge in view of the *things* that were done while living in the fleshly body. *According*. This word has been perverted by those who wish to defend the heresy commonly called "degrees of reward and punishment." Such a use of it wholly disregards Paul's own application which is in the same verse, namely, whether the things done are *good* or *bad*. There are only two kinds of deeds that can possibly be done, and they come under one or the other of these two words. By the same token, there can be only two kinds of reward bestowed upon man, namely, a crown of life for the *good* or a sentence of death for the *bad*, and it will be administered *according* to whichever a man has done.

Verse 11. *Terror* is from PHOBOS, and Thayer defines it virtually the same as Robinson, but the latter gives a somewhat fuller definition which is,

"fear, reverence, respect, honor," and he explains it at our passage to mean, "a deep and reverential feeling of accountability to God or Christ." Paul knew that such a feeling should be had toward the Lord, and it caused him to persuade men to prepare for the judgment day. *Made manifest unto God*. Everything a man does is known to God, which is one of the reasons Paul was constrained to do his duty by warning his fellow creatures against the day of final accounts. He believed that his work was so well known to the Corinthians that they could conscientiously commend him.

Verse 12. *Commend not ourselves*. Paul believes it would be better to let others do the praising of his work, hence he leaves that privilege to the Corinthians. Since self-praise is sometimes criticized, if Paul had indulged in that too much, his friends in Corinth would have been approached by the enemy with criticism of their leader (the apostle). But if the commendations were of their own formation, it would silence those pretenders who were not speaking from the heart.

Verse 13. Festus accused Paul of being beside himself (Acts 26: 24), and it is implied that he was so accused by some at Corinth. He affirms that if it is true, the matter is between himself and his God and so no one else needs be concerned about it, since no information for man would be at stake. On the other hand, his *sober* or serious conduct and speech would be maintained for the benefit of his brethren. Paul does not specifically deny either of the charges, but lets the conclusion be drawn that all of his manner of action and speech is such as to show respect for God and consideration for the needs of man.

Verse 14. The motive for the zeal of Paul was the love of Christ, which was so great that He died for all mankind. The death of Christ was needed by all as was proved by the truth that He died for them, since the death would not have taken place had such an event not been necessary.

Verse 15. The death of Christ was done that all humanity might be brought from the dead (1 Corinthians 15: 22). But it was for the additional and far more important purpose of inducing men to live such lives while in this world, that when they are brought alive from the grave they may live in joy in the eternal world.

Verse 16. *No man after the flesh*. It makes no difference whether a man is

a Jew or a Gentile in the apostle's estimation, for such a distinction counts for nothing in Christ Jesus. (See Galatians 6: 15.) It was necessary at one time to consider the fleshly nature of Christ, for that was a part of His qualification as the sacrifice for the sins of the world. But all that is past and He is at his Father's right hand in glory. Hence the time is no more present when such questions should be asked as to whether a man is a Jew or a Gentile, when the matter of his acceptance with God is considered. This fundamental truth was one thing that the brethren in Rome also had overlooked.

Verse 17. *New creature*. Adam was the first man in the first or material creation, and Christ is the first one in the second or spiritual creation (1 Corinthians 15: 45). When a man obeys the Gospel and comes into Christ, he is renewed spiritually and becomes a part of the new creation. *Old things are passed away* denotes that such a man is to follow a new kind of life, not one of sin (Romans 6: 4).

Verse 18. God is the creator of *all things*, whether the material world is being considered or the spiritual one. *Reconciled us* is true of all Christians, but Paul is here considering especially the relation of himself and the other apostles to the great work of the new creation. In order for man in general to be *reconciled* or brought to God in the spiritual creation, it was necessary for some agency to be empowered for the work. Such a service or *ministry* was given to the apostles.

Verse 19. *To wit* is an explanatory term, connecting the preceding verse with the present one. The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders this place, "How that God was in Christ," etc. God accomplishes his work for the salvation of the world through the Son. (See John 14: 6.) *Reconciling* is from KATALASSO, which Thayer defines, "to receive one into his favor." It should be noted in which direction the reconciling is to be done, namely, from man to God. Man is the guilty party while God is the offended one. He has done nothing that needs to be made right, but man has separated himself from Him by his life of sin. However, God loves the creatures of His great wisdom and power, and desires to have them brought back into a life of righteousness. For this purpose the invitation is given for man to come into Christ by obedience to the Gospel. If he will do this, all his sins will be forgiven or not be *imputed*,

which means they will not be longer held against him. The word by which the work is accomplished has been committed unto the apostles.

Verse 20. *Ambassadors* is from PRESBEUO, which is used twice in the New Testament (here and in Ephesians 6: 20). Both Thayer and Robinson give us the simple word that is used in our verse as their definition, which shows they understand the Greek term to mean the same as the English, namely, "the official representative of his own government." Hence there are no ambassadors for Christ living on earth today, for the apostles are still in authority (Matthew 28: 20). *Be ye reconciled*. The Corinthians had already been reconciled to God by their obedience to the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15: 1, 2), but it was necessary to remain faithful in order to continue in the faith or *be reconciled*.

Verse 21. *Be sin for us* means that Christ the sinless one, was made an offering for sin on behalf of mankind. This makes it possible for man to lead a life of righteousness by being in Him.

## 2 Corinthians 6

Verse 1. *We* has reference to Paul and the teachers associated with him. The important truth is stated that the workers were acting *together*; cooperation is an essential thing in the work of the Lord. *Receive not . . . in vain*. This is an exhortation for his readers to make good use of their opportunities in the cause of the Lord. It is a great favor (*grace*) to be given such an opportunity, but if they are neglectful in their duty, the whole proposition will be fruitless as far as their salvation is concerned.

Verse 2. The present verse is enclosed in parentheses; however, it is directly related to verse 1. In that place the apostle exhorts the Corinthians not to let the offer of salvation to them be in vain. The present one is a quotation from Isaiah 49: 8, and the connection of that passage shows the prophet was predicting the offer of salvation to the Gentiles. The Corinthians were Gentiles and hence were among the ones to whom the prediction applied. That prediction was in effect at the time Paul was writing, hence he informs them *now is the accepted time*. That is why he insists that they make good use of the opportunity.

Verse 3. This verse goes back to the first one and connects the actions with

the "workers together" who were Paul and the other preachers of the Gospel. *Offence* is from ΠΡΟΣΚΟΠΕ, which Thayer defines, "an occasion of stumbling," and explains it to mean, "to do something which causes others to stumble." One meaning of the original word for *ministry* is "service," and Paul means the service of preaching the Gospel. If the preachers were to set a bad example and cause others to do wrong, then the very truth they were preaching would be blamed for it, though unjustly. But Christians should "practice what they preach," and thus not give others any excuse for doing wrong.

Verse 4. Instead of *giving offence* (see preceding verse), Paul and his co-workers were striving to live in such a way that others would approve them, and regard them as true ministers of God. Such approved conduct was patiently maintained even when conditions were unfavorable. *Afflictions* were sometimes imposed upon them by their enemies. The original for *necessities* is defined by Thayer, "calamity, distress, straits." *Distresses* is similar to the preceding word but not quite as physical. It has special reference to situations where the mind is in a state of perplexity, being anxious about what is coming next.

Verse 5. *Stripes* means blows or wounds inflicted with a heavy rope or leather thong (Acts 16: 23, 33). *Imprisonments* refers to those unjustly imposed on him, such as that in the passage in Acts just cited. *Tumults* means "disturbances, disorders," such as are recorded in Acts 14: 19; 19: 29; 21: 30, which were caused by the presence and teaching of Paul. *Labors* is from an original that means any intense activities, whether in body or mind, that are caused by the service to Christ. *Watchings* and *fastings* pertain to the many seasons of anxiety that Paul was forced to undergo, occasioned by the uncertainties in the activities of the foe.

Verse 6. This and the next verse should be connected with "approving ourselves" in verse 4. The verses are to specify the items in their conduct by which they were to be "approved." *Pureness* literally means "without mixture." Paul endeavored to lead a life "unspotted from the world" (James 1: 27). *Knowledge* denotes the information that had been received from the Lord by inspiration. *Longsuffering* means patience in dealing with the rebellious, and *kindness* indicates a gentle

attitude toward those who would mistreat the apostle. *By the Holy Ghost* (or Spirit) means he regulated his work for the Lord by being thus divinely guided. *Love unfeigned* signifies a genuine interest in the welfare of others and not merely a pretended one.

Verse 7. *Word of truth* was that offered in the Gospel, as opposed to the false theories of the Greek philosophers. *Power of God* was given credit for his success and not placing it on his individual ability. *Armor of righteousness*. The strongest protection one can have against any successful attack upon his character that the enemy may make, is a life of constant righteousness. That is why it is called a "breastplate" in Ephesians 6: 14.

Verse 8. Paul reverts to the line of thought presented in verses 4 and 5, with the exception that he states both favorable and unfavorable conditions in contrast with each other. He was shown *honor* by some and *dishonor* by others. *Evil report* means he was slandered by his enemies, but was commended—given *good report* by others. Was accused of being a *deceiver* although he never was guilty of falsehood.

Verse 9. He was *unknown* from the standpoint of worldly fame, yet was *well known* to God and many faithful disciples. *Dying* in that he was threatened with death daily, yet was able to *live* through the grace of God. *Chastened* with many trials and persecutions, but not suffered to be physically put to death.

Verse 10. *As sorrowful*. The conduct of wicked people and the prospect of their terrible future, caused Paul to be affected with sorrow for them; yet he *rejoiced* over the reward that he believed was awaiting himself and all other faithful disciples of Christ. He was *poor* in this world's goods, yet in giving the Gospel to mankind he bestowed upon them the spiritual riches that cannot be valued in gold (1 Peter 1: 7). The last clause is virtually the same in meaning as the preceding one, except Paul applies the possession of the spiritual riches to himself and his co-workers.

Verse 11. The plural pronoun has been used through many of the passages in this book, because Timothy and other workers were associated with Paul in most of the experiences mentioned. However, they have a special application to the apostle, and some things would have been true of

him only. The reader should bear these remarks in mind, regardless of which form of pronoun is used in the comments. *Mouth is open* signifies that Paul spoke freely to the Corinthians. *Enlarged* is from PLATUNO, which Thayer defines, "to make broad, to enlarge," and he explains it at this place to mean "our heart expands itself to receive you into it, i. e., to welcome and embrace you in love."

Verse 12. *Straitened* means to be cramped or restricted, and *bowels* is used figuratively in reference to the affections. Paul is complaining of the lack of affection manifested by the Corinthians. (See chapter 12: 15.) He means to tell them their lack of affectionate expression for him is not his fault, for his heart was large enough for all their love (preceding verse); the fault is their own restriction.

Verse 13. This verse requests the Corinthians to "loosen up" or enlarge their heart to make room for the apostle's affections, and thus *recompence* (or reward) him for the love he has been showing for them.

Verse 14. Notwithstanding all that can justly be said against Christians marrying those who are not, it is a perversion to apply this passage to that subject. The same subject is under consideration in verse 17, where the apostle commands them to *come out from among them*. If Paul was writing in view of the marriage relation, then the command would require Christian husbands or wives to separate from their companions who were not Christians. But that would contradict 1 Corinthians 7: 12-16 and 1 Peter 3: 1, 2, and we are sure the Bible does not contradict itself. The passage at hand refers to religious organizations, or any such that profess to offer religious benefits to the world. That would include the ones that make direct professions of a religious character, such as the sectarian organizations, also those whose claims for spiritual rewards are only a part of their avowed purpose, such as the various fraternal organizations. The New Testament church is the only organization that has any scriptural right to offer spiritual instructions and other benefits to the world. (See Ephesians 3: 10, 11, 21, and 1 Timothy 3: 15.)

*Unequally yoked* is from HETERZUGER, and this is the only place the word is used in the Greek New Testament. Thayer defines it, "to come under an unequal or different yoke; to have

fellowship with one who is not an equal." He then explains it to mean, "the apostle is forbidding Christians to have intercourse [familiar association] with idolaters." Robinson's explanation of the word is virtually the same as that of Thayer. The remainder of the verse (and several verses following) shows specific reasons for the command. Idolatrous teaching and practices certainly constitute *unrighteousness*, and Christians can have nothing in common with such a system. *Light* and *darkness* are used figuratively, referring to truth and error as pertaining to spiritual matters. *Communion* means fellowship, indicating a common sharing in the same thing. Christians believe in the truth of the Lord and hence cannot be a partner with those who teach error.

Verse 15. There are several words that have similar meanings, but Paul uses the various ones for the sake of completeness in thought, and also for the sake of being more pleasant to the ear of the reader. *Concord* is virtually the same as "agreement," which is used later in the chapter. Thayer says *Belial* is "a name of Satan," and he is placed as opposed to Christ because there is no unity between them. *Infidel* is the same as *believer* in the Greek with a negative prefix.

Verse 16. *Temple of God* is contrasted with *idols* because those heathen objects of worship were usually housed in buildings in which the idolaters gathered for their religious exercises. *Ye are the temple* refers to the disciples as a congregation in which God dwells as the "guest of honor." It is true that 1 Corinthians 6: 19 says the bodies of Christians are temples of the Holy Ghost, but there is no difficulty, for the church is made up of individual disciples. *Their God . . . my people*. In the national life of the various groups of people existing in olden times, each group claimed some particular deity as its head or ruling spirit. By the same token, if Christians will be separate from all heathen and other unlawful religious associations, God will claim them as his people, and will allow them to own Him as their God.

Verse 17. *Come out from among them* denotes a complete separation from the thing spoken of, having nothing to do with any of its activities, nor having any interests in common with it. The Gentiles were largely given to the practices of idolatry, and the Corinthians had been mixed up with such

relations. *Unclean* means to be foul in a ceremonial as well as literal sense, and the practices of idolatrous nations were defiled in both senses. Their complete separation from all such was a condition on which the Lord would be willing to receive them.

Verse 18. The relation of parent and child is one of the most intimate ones possible to mankind. *Sons* and *daughters* are terms that apply to individuals, but it is true that the church which is the temple of God is composed of individuals, hence the terms are entirely appropriate here. This relation is assured the Corinthians on condition that they maintain a complete separation from all alliances that would corrupt them ceremonially or physically.

## 2 Corinthians 7

Verse 1. *These promises* are the ones mentioned in the last two verses of the preceding chapter. The prospect of such favors from God should be a sufficient motive for all Christians to do their utmost to obtain them. Since our bodies are made in the image of God (Genesis 1: 26; 5: 1, 2), then a spirit for man was formed within him (Zechariah 12: 1), he should wish to keep that body and spirit clean both physically and spiritually. *Filthiness* is from *MOLUSMOS*, which is not used in any other place in the Greek New Testament. Thayer defines it by the single word "defilement," then explains it to mean "an action by which anything is defiled." Since this is the only passage where the word is found, we know that by "anything" the author of the lexicon includes both the flesh and spirit of man. In its application to Christians today, therefore, it would include all false religious teaching, which defiles the spirit, and also that which defiles the body, such as narcotics, opiates and alcohol, when used as a habit.

*Holiness* is commanded here and elsewhere (Hebrews 12: 14), therefore we know it is something that can be accomplished today. The word has been perverted by false teachers, and made to mean something of a supernatural or special attainment, that requires a direct operation of the Lord upon the heart of the disciple after he has come into the church. The term is from five different Greek words in the New Testament, but all of them have virtually the same meaning, which is that relation and practice of a Christian that makes him separate from the worldly

life of sin. It has the same meaning as the words "righteousness" and "godliness," and all other terms in the New Testament that are applied to Christians.

Verse 2. *Receive us* is said in the same sense as chapter 6: 12, 13. The three denials of the verse refer to the severe rebukes that the apostle had given them previously; that in so doing he had not done them any injustice.

Verse 3. *Speak not to condemn*. Paul knew that some of the Judaizers had accused him of such treatment toward the Corinthian church, but he was not making the application to all of them. *Said before* refers to the passage cited in the preceding paragraph.

Verse 4. Paul felt *bold* in the sense of being greatly encouraged because of the attitude of the Corinthian church toward his former epistle. It gave him joy and comfort notwithstanding the many tribulations he was suffering for the Gospel.

Verse 5. *Flesh had no rest* denotes that his discomfort was from the standpoint of his temporal feelings, not that his spiritual state of mind was disturbed. (See the comments at chapter 2: 12, 13.) The *fightings* were the conflicts with visible enemies, and the *fears* were from his anxiety over the situation at Corinth.

Verse 6. God uses various means to comfort His faithful children. In this case it was done by sending Titus to Paul with the good news of the attitude of the Corinthian brethren toward the first epistle.

Verse 7. Paul was not selfish in his enjoyment of good news. He found joy in seeing that Titus also was comforted over the good state of the church at Corinth. *Earnest desire* indicates they wish to do their duty. *Mourning* refers to their sincere sorrow over their wrong in the matter of the fornicator. *Fervent mind toward me* denotes a kindly feeling toward Paul, even though he had rebuked them sharply.

Verse 8. A loving parent would regret the necessity of punishing his child, but would not regret having done so. That would be especially true if the punishment produced the desired results. That is the meaning of this verse, for the first epistle caused the Corinthians to be genuinely sorry for their wrongs.

Verse 9. The mere fact that they were made sorry did not cause Paul's



rejoicing, but their sorrow was the kind that caused them to repent. *After a godly manner* means their sorrow was the kind that pleased God; hence the letter from Paul had not damaged them in any way, but rather had benefited them.

Verse 10. Mere sorrow for sin will not cause one to repent, for he may only be sorry he was detected and punished. But if he is sorry for his sin because it is offensive to God, it will cause him to do what he can to make himself right. Such a sorrow is *not to be repented of*, which means it is not to be regretted. To be sorry only because of being taken in sin is a *sorrow of the world*, and such a state of mind *worketh death*, as it did in the case of Judas whose worldly sorrow brought him both physical and spiritual death. (See Matthew 27: 3-5; John 17: 12; Acts 1: 25.)

Verse 11. In the preceding verse the apostle makes only a general reference to the good effect that will be produced by godly sorrow, but in this he specifies a number of fruits of such sorrow. *Carefulness* means concern and diligence in attending to their duty. *Clearing of yourselves* all comes from APOLOGIA, and Thayer's definition is, "verbal defence, speech in defence." Such a speech would be called for only where one is accused of wrongdoing, whether guilty or not. The Corinthians were guilty of wrong in the case of the fornicator, and only by doing their duty could they be able to make their defence. *Indignation* was felt by them when they were made to realize the guilt of the man they had been tolerating in their fellowship. *Fear* means respect for the Lord, and concern over what might result were they not to deal with the guilty man as they should. *Zeal* is virtually the same in effect as *carefulness* used above. *Revenge* means punishment of the guilty man by the proper act of discipline. Romans 12: 19 says that vengeance belongs to the Lord, and when a church inflicts scriptural discipline on a guilty member, it is the Lord's way of administering vengeance upon him. To be *clear* means to be "pure from every fault" according to Thayer. If a congregation fails to exercise corrective discipline upon a guilty member, his guilt becomes that of the congregation also.

Verse 12. The fornicator at Corinth, and the man whose wife he was wrongfully using, were not the only ones concerned in the sad affair. In 1 Co-

rinthians 5: 6 it is declared that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," which refers to this case, and shows that the whole church was affected by the case. Paul wished the brethren to know he had much care on their behalf and hence urged them to do their duty.

Verse 13. Paul found joy in seeing Titus comforted (verse 7), now he has joy over that of the Corinthians, also rejoices that Titus is *refreshed* or encouraged.

Verse 14. Paul had *boasted* (spoken words of commendation) of the merits of the church at Corinth, even before the developments were completed. Now he is *not ashamed* (has no regrets) since his praise of them has been proven true.

Verse 15. Actual obedience is more important than mere professions of agreement. The Corinthians not only showed a friendly attitude toward the epistle of Paul (sent to them by Titus), but confirmed it by doing their duty, and this was also accompanied with friendliness to Titus for having brought the message to them.

Verses 16. Confidence in our brethren is helpful in the struggle against the common enemy, for it strengthens our faith to see that the Gospel has its influence for good upon others.

## 2 Corinthians 8

Verse 1. *We do you to wit* is an obsolete translation that means, "we will make known to you," etc.

Verse 2. The subject of this and the next chapter is the contribution for the needy disciples in Judea. Paul has referred to it in 1 Corinthians 16: 1, and it is mentioned in Acts 11: 28-30. The preceding verse refers to the contribution of the Macedonians as the grace of God being bestowed upon them. That means that God enabled them to make a liberal gift in spite of their comparative poverty and their own trials as Christians among enemies. What adds to the merits of their giving is their *joy* at being given the privilege of performing such a worthy deed.

Verse 3. No person can actually do more than his *power* to do, but he can have a willingness that goes beyond it, and these churches had that frame of mind.

Verse 4. The sincere interest those churches had in the matter was indicated by their insisting upon Paul to receive their contribution, that he

might pass it on to the needy ones. *Fellowship* is from the same Greek word that is used in Acts 2: 42, and means partnership, or a sharing of something with another.

Verse 5. *Not as we hoped.* The liberality of the Macedonian churches went beyond Paul's expectations. He accounts for it by the fact that they *first gave their own selves to the Lord*. When disciples realize that they are actually not their own (1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20), they may be willing to consider "all that they have and are" as belonging to the Lord.

Verse 6. *As he had begun.* Titus began the work of directing the Corinthian brethren in this matter of fellowship (chapter 12: 18), and the favorable reaction of the church caused Paul to urge Titus on to its completion.

Verse 7. The virtues of *faith, utterance, knowledge, diligence and love*, pertained principally to spiritual matters. The Corinthian brethren *abounded* in them, which encouraged Paul to exhort them to abound also in the *grace* (favor) of bestowing temporal benefits upon the poor saints.

Verse 8. *Not by commandment.* We know the apostle did not mean the giving was not commanded, for that would contradict 1 Corinthians 16: 1, where he says he had "given order" to other churches on this subject, and passed the same instruction on to this church. The idea is that he wished the brethren to be stimulated unto the work by the good example of others. This shows it is right to refer to the liberality of others when exhorting a congregation to bestir itself in the matter of giving.

Verse 9. Much misplaced sentiment has been expressed at this passage by teachers who wish to show how poor the Saviour was while on the earth. They will even quote Matthew 8: 20 and apply it here, when that passage has nothing to do with the subject of poverty as we commonly use that term. (See the comments on that verse in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.) The poverty of Jesus was the opposite of his former riches, which was his possession and enjoyment of the glory of Heaven. He gave it all up that he might come among men to show them how they might come into possession of such eternal riches. He could not have set such an example had He retained his possession of those eternal joys and spiritual wealth continuously, instead of coming to the

earth where he would be dispossessed of them.

Verse 10. The *forwardness* or willingness of the Corinthian brethren as to helping the needy ones in Judea, had caused them to begin the collections a year before.

Verse 11. Paul urges the brethren to "speed up" the program so earnestly begun before, carrying their *readiness* of mind into action or actual *performance*, by contributing out of their possessions.

Verse 12. To begin with, in order for the gift to be acceptable to God, it must be prompted by a *willing mind*. The size of the gift that is required in order for it to be *accepted* is based wholly on what they *have*, or, as 1 Corinthians 16: 2 states it, according "as God hath prospered" them.

Verse 13. The actual amount the Lord requires from each disciple is not the same in all cases when stated in "dollars and cents." That would cause the more prosperous to be *eased*, while the less fortunate in worldly goods would be *burdened*.

Verse 14. The *equality* denotes that all members of the body of Christ should be equally interested in the welfare of others. If such were the case, then those in need would be assisted by the ones in better circumstances. (See 1 Corinthians 12: 26.)

Verse 15. This refers to the gathering of manna in the wilderness recorded in Exodus 16: 18, and Paul is making a spiritual application of it. (See the comments on that passage in volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary.)

Verses 16, 17. Titus was always subject to the instructions of Paul, but his own interest in the Corinthian brethren also prompted him to act.

Verse 18. The original for *praise* is defined by Thayer, "approbation, commendation, praise." This brother had a good reputation among the churches for being true to the Gospel. He was sent with Titus as a moral protection against any suspicion of misuse of the funds he was carrying.

Verse 19. This *brother* was not merely the selection of Paul, but he had been chosen by these same churches among which he had the *praise*, to be with Paul in his traveling to and fro while collecting the *grace* (gift) to be turned over to the needy ones.

Verse 20. These precautionary measures were taken to prevent any questioning as to how the money was being handled. A man who is entrusted with the property of another should wish to protect himself from any suspicion of dishonesty. I have known of cases where brethren who handled the money of the congregation would resent all inquiries about the amount in their hands. They would probably make some peevish remark such as, "if you think I am not honest, I will just turn the job over to someone else." There is something wrong with a brother who takes such an attitude, to say the least, and he lays himself open to just suspicion.

Verse 21. The Lord knows the heart of every man, but human beings do not. It is necessary, therefore, that a man who handles the money contributed by others, should so conduct himself that his *honest things* will be evident to all.

Verse 22. To put the matter beyond all danger of questioning, Paul sent still another brother along with Titus, besides the one mentioned in verse 18. We are not told his name, but he was no stranger to Paul, for he had shown himself diligent in many things. His diligence was strengthened by his confidence in the Corinthian brethren. (*I have in you* should be translated "he has in you.")

Verse 23. This verse constitutes an apostolic recommendation for Titus and the brethren who were going with him. It is somewhat on the same basis as the foregoing statements, namely, an assurance that the men entrusted with the important work at hand were worthy.

Verse 24. Paul had boasted (spoken in complimentary terms) to these brethren, of the good spirit of the Corinthians. They are requested to verify it by their treatment of the messengers upon arrival among them.

## 2 Corinthians 9

Verse 1. It was *superfluous* or unnecessary to write as far as their general state of mind was concerned, as to giving to the poor ones in Judea.

Verse 2. Their being ready for a year proved the Corinthians had the right attitude on the subject. Paul had *boasted* (spoken in complimentary terms) to the churches in Macedonia of the *forwardness* of the churches in Achaia (another name for Greece in which Corinth was located. *Your zeal*

*hath provoked very many.* (Chapter 8: 8.)

Verse 3. It is easy to forget about a duty, especially if the occasion for doing it is delayed some time. Hence Paul sent the brethren on ahead to remind the brethren at Corinth about it to be ready, lest his boasting should be in vain.

Verse 4. The brethren from Macedonia would be with Paul when he came to take up the money at Corinth. If they had forgotten to get ready it would make the apostle feel as if they had "let him down." *That we say not ye.* Even if such a condition should be found upon arrival, Paul would take the humiliation upon himself only, and he wished to avoid it by this reminder.

Verse 5. Much of this verse is the same as verse 3. *Bounty*, not *covetousness*. The first word means something bestowed as a blessing and therefore as a free gift. If the donation is prompted by the desire to bless another, then the gift will not be so stinted as to show the donor to be covetous, nor that he was making the contribution under the impression that he "had to do it."

Verse 6. This verse is said on the general principle in nature that a man's harvest is regulated in part by the kind of seed that he sows. The harvest in this case consists in the good being accomplished by the fellowship, and the approval of God for their generous contribution toward the needy and worthy disciples of Christ.

Verse 7. *Purposeth* is from PROAIREO, and it is the only place it is used in the Greek New Testament. Thayer defines it, "to bring forward, bring forth from one's stores; to bring forth for one's self, to choose for one's self before another, i. e., to prefer; to purpose." The word gives us two thoughts, namely, that a man should ponder over the amount he is going to give, and also that no one else can do this pondering for him. As to the amount he decides to give, and the spirit in which he does it, that must be determined by the following part of this verse together with verse 6. *Grudgingly* is from LUPE which Thayer defines, "sorrow, pain, grief." After a man decides what he is able to give, it should not be painful to him when he does it. The familiar suggestion that "we should give until it hurts" is therefore unscriptural. *Of necessity* means not to give with the feeling that one "has to."

*Cheerful* is from **HILAROS** (similar to our English word "hilarious"), and is the opposite of giving *grudgingly*. As to the amount one should be glad to give, that is to be determined by 1 Corinthians 16: 2 and 2 Corinthians 8: 12, spurred by the exhortation in verse 6 of our present chapter.

Verse 8. In the "days of miracles" it sometimes happened that special literal favors were bestowed upon faithful disciples. But this matter is of too much importance to allow of such an application of the promise. Yet we can believe that the proper grace will be given to those who devote their time and possessions to the Lord.

Verses 9, 10. This paragraph takes the same comments as the preceding one. Matthew 6: 33 also should be considered in connection with the subject.

Verse 11. *Bountifulness* means liberality, and the faithful disciple who is disposed to be generous in his support of the cause of Christ, may expect to be able to perform the worthy service. *Through us*. The apostle was going to take the gifts of the Corinthians to the needy ones in Judea, which would cause them to give God thanks.

Verse 12. This expression of thanksgiving that would be caused by the help bestowed upon the poor saints, was as much valued by Paul as the actual relief of their needs by administration of the financial service.

Verse 13. *Professed subjects*. The Corinthian brethren carried out their profession for the Gospel by doing something practical on behalf of fellow disciples. This caused the recipients of the *distribution* (financial fellowship) to give God the glory, as being the main cause of the whole *experiment*.

Verse 14. The disciples in Judea also prayed for their benefactors. *Long after you* denotes an increasing feeling of interest in these brethren because of the grace or favor of God which they believed to be evident in them.

Verse 15. *Unspeakable* is from a Greek word that means "indescribable." In verse 13 the Gospel of Christ is given a prominent place in the situation, and verse 14 includes the *grace of God*. This wonderful relationship of the Jewish disciples in Judea with the Gentile brethren in Greece and Macedonia, was made possible by the Gospel of His Son. No wonder Paul calls it an *unspeakable* gift, for human language is incapable fully to describe it.

## 2 Corinthians 10

Verse 1. Up to the present passage Paul has used the pronoun of the first person in both the plural and singular forms. That was because most of his statements could apply to himself and the brethren associated with him, even though some of them may have applied to him in a special sense. (See the comments at chapter 6: 11.) But the words *I Paul* in this verse show he is speaking about himself only, and will be through the rest of the book. That is because certain Judaizing persons in the Corinthian church were opposing the apostle, making various accusations and complaints against him. He meets those charges in some very strong language. Paul refers to the meekness of Christ, and desires to be influenced by it in his approach to the brethren. *Presence am meek . . . absent am bold*; this was one of the complaints.

Verse 2. Paul admits that he is *base* or mild in *presence* or "outward appearance," in his attitude toward most of the brethren. However, he expects to be more *bold* or severe in his dealing with the Judaizing critics. But he *beseeches* (*you* is not in the original) or desires to avoid showing such an attitude toward the other members of the congregation. One of the accusations the critics were making was that Paul's conduct and teaching were prompted by his fleshly interests.

Verse 3. Paul will show that he is bound to walk *in the flesh* in that he is living in the fleshly body while on the earth, but that his activities are not *after* or according to the flesh.

Verse 4. *Weapons . . . not carnal*. This statement has been perverted to mean that Christians should not engage in warfare in defence of their country. It has nothing to do with that subject, but means that carnal or temporal weapons are not to be used in support of the Gospel. However, the apostle uses some of the terms of such warfare to illustrate that of the spiritual conflict against the enemy of righteousness. In carnal warfare it is necessary to pull down *strongholds* or barricades of the foe, and it means that Christians must attack sin in its strongest forms.

Verse 5. *Imaginations* is defined by Thayer, "a reasoning," and he explains it to mean, "such as is hostile to the Christian faith." There is no element that can do more injury to the cause of Christ than the false reasoning of

the self-wise teacher. *Bringing into captivity* is a phrase based on carnal warfare. One objective of a military leader is to capture the soldiers in the opposite army. In some instances such captives have been made to do service for their captors, in which cases it would be better to capture them alive than to slay them in battle. Likewise in spiritual warfare, it is well to subdue the false reasoning of men, and if possible to turn their mental activities into service for Christ.

Verse 6. This *revenge* is the same as that in chapter 7: 11, being the Lord's way of taking vengeance on the workers of unrighteousness. However, it cannot be accomplished without the cooperation of the Christian soldiers in the spiritual warfare. That is why Paul states the condition; *when your obedience is fulfilled*.

Verse 7. Paul is still considering his critics who were boasting of their own importance, which had only some *outward* appearance for their support. But even if such an evidence were to be relied on for the claim of being a servant of the Lord, Paul could lay as much claim to it as his critics.

Verse 8. Paul could actually boast of his authority as an apostle, and he was not ashamed of such qualification were he called upon to resort to it in severe terms. Yet he would prefer to use it for their *edification* (upbuilding) rather than for their *destruction* or severe chastisement.

Verse 9. Regardless of what unpleasant effect the critic might pretend to receive from the letters of Paul, his motive in writing them was not merely to *terrify* them.

Verse 10. The gist of this verse is an attempt of the critic to belittle the work of Paul, by slighting remarks about his personal appearance and his manner of speech. This objector did not like the bold language in the first epistle because it sharply rebuked those at fault. Still feeling the sting of that letter, he pretends to have no fear of the personal appearance of the apostle, since a man so insignificant and *contemptible* (as he thought) as the apostle Paul, could not say or do anything that would humiliate him.

Verse 11. Paul assures this man that whether present or absent, his teaching against error would be the same, regardless of any supposed physical defects. This would be true because the apostle always wrote and spoke as

the Holy Spirit guided him, so that his work was not originated with himself.

Verse 12. Paul's critics were inclined to praise themselves, and he was determined not to be like them. The rest of this verse means that the self-appointed judges of Paul formed their own standard of conduct among themselves. *Measuring themselves by themselves*. Each man was satisfied with his own standing if he was as good as his fellows to whom he compared himself.

Verse 13. The reader is again instructed not to be confused by the plural form of the pronoun. The definite phrase "I, Paul" in verse 1, and the subject matter of the closing verses of the chapter, make it certain the apostle is writing about himself only. Webster says the following of the word in question: "We is used for the singular *I* . . . by editors and other writers to keep an impersonal character or to avoid the egotistical sound of a repeated *I*. *Without our measure*. Paul had been accused of overstepping his bounds when he came to Corinth. He asserts that the *rule* or commission given to him included that city; that it *reached even unto you*. That was true, for Paul had been especially appointed to preach to the Gentiles.

Verse 14. *As though we reached not*. Had the commission given to Paul not included the city of Corinth, his going that far would have made him chargeable with stretching himself beyond his proper measure. *We are come* is equivalent to saying that his "assigned territory" reached as far as Corinth.

Verse 15. Paul believed in the phrase "honor to whom honor is due," and hence would not boast or take credit for work that was accomplished by another. But Corinth was within his allotted territory, therefore his *hope* was based on developments there. He believed that if the Corinthians made the proper showing of their professed faith, it would enlarge his "field of labor" so that he could do some more work beyond that locality around the city of Corinth.

Verse 16. *Line* is used in the sense of *rule* and *measure* in the previous verses. Paul would not go into another man's field of labor where the foundation work had been done already, then take advantage of it to have something for which to take credit.

Verse 17. *To glory in the Lord* would mean to give Him credit for all good work that might be accomplished. But even such apparently humble glorying

would not be justified unless the work had been done in harmony with the Lord's will.

Verse 18. This verse explains why the preceding one is so worded. Self-approval will not count for anything in the great work professed to be done for Christ. (See verse 12.) The Lord will not commend any man on the basis of his comparison with some other man, but only on whether the work is in harmony with His will.

## 2 Corinthians 11

Verse 1. The original for *folly* is defined in the lexicon as "foolishness," but Paul is not using it in any radical sense. It is somewhat like a case of a doting parent over his child, where it is often remarked, "He is quite foolish about his boy or girl." *Bear with me* is rendered in the margin, "you do bear with me," which is endorsed by other commentators. The Corinthians generally had borne with Paul in his extreme earnestness and anxiety for them, but he wishes them to go along with him still further, because his concern for them is become more and more intense.

Verse 2. In old times the father or other near relative often arranged espousals (engagements) for another. When such an arrangement was made, the one who acted for the parties would be anxious that they be true to each other until the actual marriage time, and if any unfaithfulness should be indicated it would cause him to be jealous. Paul had led the Corinthians in obedience to Christ, which was the time they became engaged to Him, the marriage to be celebrated when the bridegroom comes for that purpose. (See Revelation 19: 7.)

Verse 3. Paul is continuing his comparison with the marriage relation and kindred subjects. A man who wishes to interfere with the engagement of a woman to some other man, will resort to deceptive means in order to seduce her. Likewise, the apostle fears that evil men may seduce the Corinthians by using the deceptive theories of the philosophers of Greece that the false teachers had adopted.

Verse 4. The last word of this verse has been supplied by the King James translators. The marginal reading gives it "with me," which is justified by both the original Greek and the connection in the passage. *If he that cometh*, etc., does not express any question as to whether these false teachers

came with their evil doctrines, but rather that they actually were doing so. (See verses 19, 20.) Paul is reasoning that since they have been tolerating these unworthy teachers, they certainly ought to listen to him. Moffatt translates the last phrase, "Why not put up with me," which makes good sense and is also in agreement with the context.

Verse 5. In this verse, Paul begins to show some reasons why they ought to "put up" with him. He not only was an apostle, but ranked with the *very chiefest apostles*.

Verse 6. *Rude* means unlearned or ignorant in his use of language. Paul is not admitting that he is thus lacking, but his enemies were making the charge and urging it as a reason for belittling his teaching. The apostle is reasoning that even if such a criticism were acknowledged, it would not affect his knowledge which was furnished him by the Spirit on account of his apostolic appointment. This knowledge had been *made manifest* by the supernatural deeds which he had performed at Corinth.

Verse 7. *Abasing myself* does not denote he had done anything improper or undignified, but supporting himself in part by his own labor, his enemies charged that it showed he was not really an apostle.

Verse 8. To *rob* does not necessarily mean to take something wrongfully. A man will say he robbed his bees, and yet he would not have done any unlawful act. Paul means he called upon other churches to support him in his work for the people of Corinth. The church at Philippi was one that supported Paul in his labors in other places (Philippians 4: 15). *Wages* means financial support for work in the Gospel field.

Verse 9. The preceding verse makes a general mention of receiving financial help from the church at Philippi, while this verse cites a more specific case of it. Philippi was in Macedonia, and the brethren from that country came to Corinth with a supply at a time when the apostle was in need; this made it unnecessary to call upon the Corinthians for help. He affirms further that he will continue to relieve them from such service, which was according to a special permit which he had been granted by the Lord (1 Corinthians 9: 17, 18).

Verse 10. By looking to such sources for temporal support, he could still



boast of giving the Gospel freely in *Achaia*, another name for Greece, of which Corinth was an important city.

Verse 11. *Wherefore* means, why am I doing this? He then affirms that *God knoweth* it is not through any lack of love for them. (It was rather for an opposite reason.)

Verse 12. This verse tells why Paul pursued the course described above; it was to prevent the enemies from having any occasion for evil claims. *May be found even as we*. The false teachers would like to call upon the church for financial assistance on the ground they were preaching the Gospel. The example of Paul in preaching without charge would shame them out of making such an attempt upon the church.

Verse 13. These false teachers were able to mislead a great many brethren by trickery and other deceptive means, making themselves appear as apostles of Christ.

Verse 14. Satan is a supernatural being, and at times in the history of the world has manifested his power in various forms. He appeared to Eve in the form of a serpent (Genesis 3: 1). Sometimes he assumes the form of a roaring lion (1 Peter 5: 8). In our verse he is said to appear as an angel of light. It will not do to say this merely means evil men who are the agents of Satan, for the next verse mentions those characters as a separate group. We are not specifically told when Satan ceased making his appearance in these disguised forms to men on the earth. Evidently it was at the same time that other miraculous characters (both good and bad) passed out of the land (Zechariah 13: 2). He now does his work through evil human beings, to be mentioned in the next verse.

Verse 15. *Ministers* is from the same Greek word that its rendered "deacon" in other passages. Thayer's primary definition is, "one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a servant, attendant, minister." Hence Paul accuses these false teachers with executing the orders of Satan, but doing it under the guise of righteous workers. *Whose end . . . their works; will reap as they sowed* (Galatians 6: 8).

Verse 16. Paul does not admit being a fool to the extent charged; yet, be that as it may, he requests to be tolerated in his feeling. (See comments at verse 1.)

Verse 17. Paul does not put this privilege which he is claiming on the basis of a direct instruction from the Lord. He claims it only as a personal liberty, and on that ground reserves to himself the right to indulge himself in that enjoyment.

Verse 18. *After the flesh* is not said in the bad sense commonly attached to fleshly things. Paul is applying it to his personal experiences, which though they were unpleasant, yet since they were endured for the sake of the Gospel, he found a joy in them and of such an experience he boasts.

Verses 19, 20. These verses are referred to in the comments on verse 4. The argument Paul is making is that he is entitled to the friendly consideration of the brethren for his whim (as they seemed to think his ideas were), when they were giving these other persons such tolerance. Especially since the apostle had nothing questionable in his case, while these other men did have. This paragraph describes what they were doing and the Corinthians were "putting up" with it. The brethren considered themselves wise, yet they endured those they considered as fools; they even tolerated many injustices from these fools. An instance is that of being brought *into bondage* to the ordinances of the old law. Not that they literally were led to adopt those institutions, but suffered themselves to become confused over them. (See chapter 3.)

Verse 21. Paul had been *reproached* because of his bodily *weakness* (chapter 10: 1, 10) but he was not allowing that to humiliate him. Instead, the very weaknesses concerning which his enemies said he was acting *foolishly*, were a valid source for his boasting, for he will now show that he endured untold trials in spite of those supposed handicaps. Through several verses the apostle will state the truly worthy qualifications he possessed, even while undergoing the fleshly inconveniences of which he boasts.

Verse 22. In the Bible there are three terms applied to the same people, namely, Hebrews, Israelites and Jews. However, they were not all derived from the same source. The first came from Heber, a distinguished man in the blood line (Genesis 10: 21). The second is from the extra name given to Jacob by the angel (Genesis 32: 28). Since Jacob was preferred before the elder brother Esau, to be in the blood line for the Messiah, it was an honor

to be called an Israelite. The third is derived from Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, through whom the blood line was to flow. A man called by any of these names could boast of being of the *seed of Abraham*, as Paul does in this verse. Since some distinctions could be made between all of these names due to immediate circumstances, some persons might claim an importance out of one or the other according as his personal interests would suggest. Paul shows that none of his critics could boast of any advantage over him, for he could lay claim to all of the names.

Verse 23. See the comments on verse 1 for the sense in which he *speaks as a fool*, also those on verse 21 for the relation between the weaknesses of which he boasted, and the services he was rendering to Christ in spite of those supposed defects. Paul was more of a *minister* (servant) than his critics, and he specifies a number of facts as proof. His *labors* were more in that he carried the Gospel to a multitude of countries, whereas his objectors were located around Corinth. The *stripes* will be noticed at verses 24 and 25. Acts 16 gives an account of one imprisonment, but secular history relates a great many times at which Paul was placed in prison because of his work for Christ. *In deaths oft* is figurative, meaning he was frequently in danger of death. (See 1 Corinthians 15: 30-32.)

Verse 24. *Forty stripes, save one*. The law of Moses limited the number of lashes that could be inflicted upon a victim to forty (Deuteronomy 25: 1-3). The whip by which it was done was originally single, and the punishment required forty operations of the administrator. For some reason the act was changed, and I shall quote from Prideaux's *Connexion*, Year 108, for explanation: "This punishment among the Jews was not to exceed forty stripes, and therefore the whip with which it was inflicted [after the change mentioned above] being made of three thongs, each blow giving three stripes, they never inflicted upon any criminal more than thirteen blows, because thirteen of those blows made thirty-nine stripes; and to add another blow, would be to transgress the law, by adding two stripes over and above forty, contrarary to its prohibition. And in this manner was it that Paul, when whipped by the Jews, received forty stripes save one, that is, thirteen blows with this threefold whip." The verse

means that Paul suffered this treatment on five different occasions.

Verse 25. Not all of the details of Paul's adversities are recorded, but his tabulation of them in this chapter is authentic, for he is writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. One case of his being beaten with rods is related in Acts 16: 22, 23. The one instance of stoning is stated in Acts 14: 19. The case of shipwreck that Paul suffered (Acts 27) was after this epistle was written, hence the three occasions referred to here are not recorded elsewhere. *Been in the deep* means he was forced out by shipwreck to float in lifeboats or on boards, such as Acts 27: 44.

Verse 26. We should bear in mind that Paul is giving a list of his experiences that happened as a result of being a "minister" or servant of Christ (verse 23). *Journeyings* were done on behalf of the Gospel, and that exposed him to the dangers from *robbers* who infested many of the lines of travel. His *own countrymen* were the Jews who often persecuted him (verse 24). *Perils by the heathen* means the mistreatment from the Gentiles, such as were inflicted upon him at Philippi (Acts 16). The perils in the *city*, the *wilderness* and the *sea* include the trials already referred to in the verse and elsewhere in the chapter. An instance of his trouble from *false brethren* is recorded in Galatians 2: 4.

Verse 27. *Weariness and painfulness*. The Englishmen's Greek New Testament renders this, "labor and toil." It refers to the difficult tasks the apostle performed frequently in his work for the Master. Thayer defines the original for *watchings* by "sleeplessness." Paul lay awake for hours, thinking and pondering over the situation, wondering what was coming next. *Hunger and thirst* refers to the times when Paul's friends were prevented from administering to his needs, and he was left to suffer for the things necessary for his bodily comfort. *Fastings* is similar to the thought just explained, with the added idea of a more extended abstinence from food. *Cold* was a result of the *nakedness*, or the shortage of necessary clothing, brought about by the conditions similar to those causing the *hunger and thirst*.

Verse 28. *Things that are without*. Most of the trials just recorded affected Paul's body externally, and were the direct result of his work for Christ, and of the activities of his enemies.

On top of all those tribulations, he was daily burdened with the *care* of all the churches. The word means anxiety or worry for the spiritual condition of all the congregations, not only those with whom he was permitted to labor personally. (See Colossians 2: 1.)

Verse 29. This verse is Paul's comment on the preceding verse. *Weak* refers to the disabilities and misfortunes of his brethren; *offended* denotes the mistreatment that is imposed upon his fellow disciples wherever they were located. Paul sympathized with all of them, and that is why he felt such *care* (anxiety) for the churches.

Verse 30. Paul regarded his sympathy for the troubled and tried as a worth-while sentiment. His own *infirmities* and misfortunes would enable him the more to have such a feeling for others; hence he would glory or boast of his own infirmities.

Verse 31. The greatest motive one can have for always telling the truth, is the realization that God knows all about his heart.

Verses 32, 33. Before closing this phase of his epistle, the apostle cites a specific instance of his afflictions that were imposed by his enemies. The significant thing about this case is that it was at the very start of his service for Christ. The account of it is in Acts 9: 23-25, where the Jews were so eager to seize the apostle that they watched the gates day and night.

## 2 Corinthians 12

Verse 1. In the preceding chapter Paul's boasting refers to the weaknesses and handicaps that were imposed upon him by his enemies, or as a result of his difficult labors for Christ. In this chapter he speaks of infirmities that were placed upon him directly by the Lord. Several verses are used to explain how those infirmities were brought about. *Visions* is from OPTASIA, and Thayer defines it at this place, "the act of exhibiting one's self to view." *Revelations* is from APOKALUPSIS, and Thayer's definition is, "properly [primarily] a laying bare, making naked." He then explains it to mean, "tropically [figuratively], in New Testament and ecclesiastical language, a disclosure of truth, instruction, concerning divine things before unknown." The verse means, therefore, that the Lord appeared to Paul, and while in his presence He revealed some truths to the apostle that had not been known by him before.

Verse 2. The aforesaid truths (or facts) were concerning a *man in Christ* whom Paul says he knew, and these facts occurred more than fourteen years before the present writing. *Caught up* is from HABPAZO, which Thayer defines, "to snatch or catch away," and he explains it to denote, "divine power transferring a person marvelously and swiftly from one place to another." It is the word used in Acts 8: 39 where the Lord "caught away" Philip. The original words for *third* and *heaven* have no specific meaning here as far as the lexicon definition is concerned, hence the connection in which they are used must determine their sense in any given case. Since the first heaven is the region where the birds fly (Genesis 1: 20), and the second is that where the stars are held (Genesis 22: 17), it leaves the third heaven to mean where God's throne is. That will account for some things that are said about the experience of this "man in Christ." *In the body* and *out of the body* is equivalent to "alive" and "dead," and Paul did not know which was the man's condition when he had this experience.

Verse 3. This is the same as verse 2.

Verse 4. *Paradise* is the same as the *third heaven*, because the word is defined in the lexicon as "pleasure gardens," regardless of what specific location may be in the mind of a writer. *Unspeakable* and *not lawful* are accommodative in their meaning. The things heard were in the third heaven, hence the words were not to be repeated by a *man*, although he was permitted to hear them.

Verse 5. *Such an one* and *myself* are different persons, since Paul says he will glory of one and will not of the other. Neither Paul nor any other inspired man has told us the name of the one who was caught up, and I am not disposed to guess at it. Had Paul considered it important for his readers to know it he certainly would have told them; he could have done so since he knew him. There is an important truth made evident by this incident that is often overlooked. Paul says this man heard words while being caught up, yet he did not know whether he was in the body or out, which shows that a human being will be conscious after the death of the body, which refutes the fundamental theory of materialists.

Verse 6. *Fool* does not mean a person without intelligence, but one

who does not use it aright, or who goes to extremes in expressing his sentiments. Paul had so much ground for his glorying that he could not be justly accused of going to such extremes as the word *fool* signifies. However, to avoid any misunderstanding, he determined to forbear going as far as the truth would have justified him to go.

Verse 7. To be *exalted above measure* means to be filled with pride or a feeling of self-importance. The Lord wished to prevent Paul from being tempted into such a frame of mind. Note it was the *revelations* that might cause the evil effect. Nothing is said of the *visions* in connection with the temptation. It is not shown anywhere who had the visions and hence they do not figure in the consideration of this danger. The *revelations* were what the Lord told Paul, and that alone is stated as being the possible cause of his being too much exalted. Although the English word *thorn* occurs several times in the New Testament, this is the only place where it comes from SKOLOPS, which Thayer defines, "a sharp stake." Robinson defines it, "anything pointed," and he explains it to mean in the New Testament, "something which excites severe and constant pain, probably some bodily infirmity." The only other place where this subject is evidently referred to is Galatians 4: 13, 14. Paul tells the brethren there that they "despised [belittled] not" his temptation which was in the flesh. From what is said in the inspired writings, we know that this *thorn* was some kind of bodily infirmity that was painful and humiliating, but to be more specific would be speculation. *Messenger* (or agent) of *Satan*. Since all human afflictions have come upon man because of Satan's evil work, and since this *thorn* was a bodily ailment of Paul, he calls it the messenger of Satan.

Verse 8. Paul had gloried in his infirmities, hence it was not the humiliating feature of this *thorn* that he wished to have removed. It was therefore the actual physical suffering about which he prayed three times to the Lord.

Verse 9. The Lord did not see fit to remove the thorn, but assured the apostle that he would not be overcome by it. *Strength made perfect in weakness*. There is an old saying that "man's extremity is the Lord's opportunity," and that is agreeable with the passage here. Hence, with the assur-

ance of God's help, Paul was glad to be resigned to the inconvenience of this *thorn in the flesh*.

Verse 10. Paul took pleasure in his infirmities because of the good results they had on his morale. The greater his trials might be the more he would realize the value of the Lord's help. That is why he said when he was weak, then he was strong.

Verse 11. We often hear it said that "overindulgence will result in a spoiled child." That is what Paul is admitting has occurred from his treatment of the Corinthian brethren. They seemed to have taken his kindness for granted, and as a result had failed to recognize the greatness of the apostle; at least they had not expressed their appreciation. That induced him to make up for it with his own glorying, which has been explained in several preceding verses. Their selfish attitude had even implied that he was an inferior apostle, and some of his personal enemies even called in question whether he could rightfully claim to be an apostle. (See 1 Corinthians 9: 1, 2.) Against such an attitude he asserts that he was not only an apostle, but was not inferior to the chiefest of them. *Though I be nothing*. Paul gives all credit to the Lord for what he was accomplishing, otherwise he could not have performed the evidences of his apostleship that they had seen.

Verse 12. These *signs of an apostle* are mentioned also in the passage referred to in 1 Corinthians 9: 1, 2 cited in the preceding verse. *In all patience*. In performing these signs, the apostle was brought into contact with conditions that required much patience on his part.

Verse 13. *Inferior to other churches*. It was the Lord's plan that preachers should be supported by the people to whom they gave the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9: 14), and to accept such support from a group was one important item in recognizing it as a church of the Lord. By preaching to the Corinthians free of charge, they had been deprived of that advantage and so might have complained of a spiritual "inferiority complex." Because of such an unintentional wrong having been done them the apostle asks their forgiveness. However, since he asked permission to make an exception to the rule for support of the preachers of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9: 18), he proposed to maintain that course toward them of Corinth.

Verse 14. A *third time* would imply two previous ones, but Paul's first visit to Corinth as recorded in Acts 18th chapter is the only one that is shown in that book. We need only conclude that the apostle conducted himself on the second visit according to the requirements of the occasion. *Not be burdensome* denotes that he will continue to relieve them of financial obligation to him, just as he has done up to this time. He uses the common rule of provisions being made by parents for their children, to illustrate his feeling for the Corinthian brethren. Of course he is regarding the relationship from a spiritual standpoint. (See 1 Corinthians 4: 14, 15.)

Verse 15. *Though . . . the less I be loved.* Paul would not let the indifference of the Corinthians keep him from continuing his fatherly concern for them. *Spend and be spent* is somewhat figurative. He would go on devoting his time and talents upon them, and also permit them to make use of him for their own benefit.

Verse 16. *Be it so.* It was admitted that Paul did not personally burden them with the duty of supporting him, but some of them were accusing him of getting something from them in a round-about way. The rest of this verse should be understood as a quotation by Paul of what some of his accusers were saying. Moffatt renders this passage thus: "I was not a burden to you, no, but I was clever enough to dupe you with my tricks? Was I?"

Verse 17. In answer to their implied accusation, Paul asks in general terms if he had taken anything from them through the men he had sent among them.

Verse 18. In chapter 8: 16-22 is an account of the visit of Titus and the "brother" to the church at Corinth. Paul asks if Titus got anything from them wrongfully at that time. Had he done so they would have used it as evidence, which would have been easily proved since Titus was not alone. This other brother who was with him was "praised" or recommended "throughout all the churches." *Walked we not*, etc. Paul's question is really a challenge for them to show any inconsistency in his conduct, in view of what they knew concerning this visit of Titus.

Verse 19. Paul did not make the preceding argument as an excuse (he needed no such defence), but was speaking the truth in the fear of God in Christ. He was speaking for

the sake of these brethren whom he loved, and for their edification.

Verse 20. In the preceding verse Paul expresses his purpose to be the edifying of the brethren. That would mean their improvement in spiritual things, so that there would be less to chastise in connection with their conduct. Were such improvement not made, Paul would not be satisfied with them when he arrived and would hence be required to discipline them which would be unpleasant to all. For that reason the meeting would be a disappointment also to the Corinthians. The apostle then gives a list of evil conditions he fears might exist when he came which would need to be corrected. *Debates* are not all alike; some are right and others are wrong. The word here means wrangling and quarreling and that is always wrong. *Envy* means to be indignant because of the good fortune of another. *Wrath* is defined by Thayer, "indignation which has arisen gradually and become more settled." Thayer defines the original for *strifes* as, "a desire to put one's self forward." *Backbiting* means the attempt to defame another's good name. *Whisperings* means secret slanderings for the purpose of injuring the reputation of another. *Swelling* is from a word that denotes one who is puffed up with pride. *Tumults* denotes a state of disturbance that threatens to result in a riot.

Verse 21. *God will humble me.* Not that God would blame Paul for the conditions, for he had done his duty in rebuking them for all their wrongs. But the apostle would be humiliated were he to find the Corinthians guilty of these evils, and it would be chiefly because such practices are displeasing to God. To find them active in these evils when he arrived would be disheartening, but it would likewise be saddening to find those previously rebuked still unrepentant of their corruptions. If Paul should find such a state of affairs when he reached Corinth, he could but bewail the condition and feel the need of administering severe chastisement.

## 2 Corinthians 13

Verse 1. See the comments at chapter 12: 14 on the meaning of *third time*. In the preceding chapter Paul expresses a fear that he would find conditions undesirable when he got to Corinth the next time. He also expresses a warning intimation that if he found such conditions, he would re-

buke them for their sins. Now he emphasizes the warning, but assures them that his treatment of them would be fair and according to a principle already established in the Scriptures (Deuteronomy 19: 15), that a charge must be sustained by two or three witnesses.

Verse 2. *Told you . . . as . . . second.* This is the more definite information we have of what Paul did the second time he visited Corinth. (See comments at chapter 12: 14.) *Which heretofore have sinned* are the ones designated by *sinned already* in chapter 12: 21, and *all other* means the ones engaged in evildoing right at the time of his third visit which was yet to come.

Verse 3. Paul claimed to be a true spokesman for Christ, but he could not truly make such a claim were he to come short of his duty in rebuking sin. (See Acts 20: 26, 27.) The Corinthians understood that Christ was no weakling when it came to condemning wrongdoing, and therefore they would know that a true teacher for Him would also not *spare* when he was dealing with professed disciples who had become corrupt in their conduct.

Verse 4. *Crucified through weakness.* This has reference to the fleshly body that Jesus took upon himself (Philippians 2: 7) in order that He might become a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. That body was as weak as that of any other man when it was attacked mortally, hence it was the victim of death through the crucifixion. But the power of God was sufficient to unite that body with its soul again and enable Him to live. *We also are weak with him* denotes that Christians will risk their temporal lives if need be, in their devotion to Him who is able to sustain them spiritually. This was especially significant in the case of the apostle who was devoting his services *toward you* (the Corinthians).

Verse 5. *Examine* is from PEIRAZO, which Thayer defines, "to try, make trial of, test," and he explains it in this passage to mean, "for the purpose of ascertaining his quality, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself." Paul's purpose for the examination is to see if the Corinthians are in the faith; whether they could still be regarded as faithful disciples. DOKIMAZO is the word for *prove*, and it has virtually the same meaning as the word just explained, and it doubtless is used for the sake of emphasis. *Reprobates* is from ADOKIMOS, and the first of

Thayer's definition is, "Not standing the test, not approved." The most significant thought is that having Christ in one, and being a reprobate are two opposite conditions, and a man cannot possess both at the same time. The exhortation of the verse is for each man to make this self examination to ascertain what his true condition is.

Verse 6. Paul does not intimate any doubt as to his not being a reprobate. He is concerned, however, over the attitude of the Corinthians on the subject. This concern is justified by the fact of personal enemies among the brethren, which has been referred to in a number of places in this book.

Verse 7. *Not that we should appear approved.* In verse 3 it is shown that Paul's severe chastisement of wrongdoers would prove him to be an acceptable spokesman for Christ. If they *do no evil* it will make it unnecessary for him to exhibit that evidence. Nevertheless, he was more desirous of their not doing evil, even if it did deprive him of such proof, and even though it would seemingly give the enemies of the apostle a pretext for saying he is a reprobate.

Verse 8. This verse is in line with the preceding one. Were the brethren to conduct themselves as they should, Paul could not have exercised his power of discipline against them without doing something *against the truth*, which is a thing he felt that he could not do.

Verse 9. The terms *weak* and *strong* are used somewhat figuratively, referring to the unpleasant experiences of the apostle as against the more fortunate ones of the brethren. If the afflictions must come, he would rather suffer them and let his brethren escape, just so they followed the conduct pertaining to Christian *perfection*.

Verse 10. See the comments at 1 Corinthians 4: 21; 2 Corinthians 2: 3 and 10: 8. Paul was always conscientious and never evaded any duty however unpleasant. Yet he was considerate of the feelings of others, and never used the severest corrections against his brethren if a milder form could lawfully be used. If he could induce them to make the necessary adjustment through the means of his epistle, he would be spared the unpleasant ordeal of invoking his *power* (authority) in person, since his presence seemed to be objectionable to some.

Verse 11. This is a kindly, fatherly admonition with which the apostle ap-



proaches the close of his epistle. *Be perfect* means to complete what is necessary by removing the wrongs in their lives, after which they would have the right to feel comfortable in their consciences. In order to *be at peace* it is necessary to *be of one mind*, and that is possible only by each one bending his own mind to that of the instruction delivered to them by the inspired apostle. A man can be at peace with God only by living in peace with his brethren according to the instructions of inspiration.

Verse 12. This is explained at 1 Corinthians 16: 20.

Verse 13. *All the saints* refers to those associated with Paul at this time. They joined the apostle in friendly salutation to the brethren at Corinth.

Verse 14. The three members of the Godhead, namely, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (Spirit), are named in this verse. *Grace* means the favor of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the *love* of God denotes the affection that He extends toward his faithful children. *Communion* is from the same word as *fellowship* in many passages. It means the partnership that all faithful disciples may enjoy with each other through the truth made known by the work of the Spirit. It also includes the blessing of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church (1 Corinthians 6: 19). For the meaning of *amen*, see the comments at Romans 16: 24, in the first volume of New Testament Commentary.

### Galatians 1

*General remarks.* The preceding three epistles of Paul were written to single congregations, and they were located in Europe. The present one was sent to a group of churches in a certain district called Galatia. It was a part of Asia Minor, which in turn was a part of the continent of Asia. Paul had labored among these churches and at one time a warm personal attachment had been formed between them. There were some Jews in these churches, but for the most part they were Gentiles. The principal reason for the epistle was to counteract the evil teaching of some Judaizers who were troubling the churches. These were Jews who tried to induce Gentile Christians to take up the ordinances of the law of Moses, particularly the rite of circumcision. This disturbance was in evidence in many parts of the Roman Empire where Christianity had been planted

(Acts 15: 1, 2; Colossians 2: 16-23, and others), but the present epistle is directed to the territory in Galatia, doubtless because Paul was so disappointed over the reversal of conditions there.

Verse 1. *Apostle* is from *apostolos*, and Thayer defines it as follows: "A delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders." If the word is to have any special application it will need to be determined by the connection in which it is used. For instance, if a man is sent out merely on the authority of men, then such an apostle would have human authority only. Hence Paul considers that point when he says here that his apostleship is *not of men neither by men*. His divine call to the office had been questioned by some of his critics operating in Galatia. The same situation appears to have existed elsewhere. (See 1 Corinthians 9: 1, 2.) *Who raised him from the dead*. This fact gives force to the authority of Paul, for God would not have raised Jesus from the dead had he not been his Son. The apostolic call, therefore, which Jesus gave to Paul, came ultimately from God.

Verse 2. *Brethren which are with me*. These brethren had no authority in connection with this letter; they did not even take part in the writing of it (chapter 6: 11). The phrase means they joined the apostle in friendly salutation to the churches.

Verse 3. This expression of well-wishing occurs at the beginning of every one of Paul's epistles with the exception of Hebrews. It is not a mere sentimental statement but contains some fundamental truths. *Grace* is from *charis*, and one part of Thayer's definition is, "kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved." This phase of the word explains why the apostle specifies that it is the grace from God he is wishing for his brethren, since all of God's favors are bestowed upon man only through the Lord Jesus Christ. That is because the sacrifice of Christ provided the way for God to maintain his justice and at the same time extend this unmerited favor to humanity. (See the notes at Romans 3: 26, volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.) *Peace* is from *eirene*, and the outstanding definition in Thayer's lexicon is, "peace between individuals, i. e., harmony, concord, security, safety, prosperity." It is significant that Paul ascribes this favor to God and Christ, for they are the

only Beings who can assure it to man in the face of unnumbered difficulties besetting an existence on the earth. And such a favor will be granted only to those who model their lives according to the will of the Lord. Such a life will assure one of being at peace with God, though it may not always have such a result with mankind. (See Romans 12: 18.)

Verse 4. The churches of Macedonia were praised for their liberal support of the brethren in Christ (2 Corinthians 8: 5), and their devotion is accounted for partly by the fact that they "first gave their own selves to the Lord." The same motive is ascribed to Christ in his sacrifice for mankind, namely, he *gave himself for our sins*. Many people are willing to bestow some favor upon others if it does not require any personal inconvenience upon themselves. And it is usually even then in a case where the person to be benefited is "a worthy individual." But Jesus made his supreme sacrifice for the sins of the world. Furthermore, this favor from Christ was not with the motive that the ones benefited might be placed in a condition where they could "return the favor" upon their benefactor; it was to deliver them from *this present evil world*; that is, rescue them from the evil influences and results of the present world or age.

Verse 5. *Whom* refers to the Father in the preceding verse. *For ever and ever* is an emphatic way of saying that God deserves to receive glory without end. *Amen* is explained at Romans 16: 24, in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 6. Up to this place the verses constitute Paul's introduction for his epistle. He now begins on the main subject of the letter, namely, the corruptions that had entered among the churches of Galatia through the activities of Judaizers. The reader should again consult the comments on these false teachers in "general remarks" at the beginning of this epistle. *Him that called you* refers to God (1 Corinthians 1: 9), who had called them by the preaching of Paul, to receive the *grace* or favor of Christ. *So soon removed* indicates the fickleness of these brethren, for it had not been such a long time since they had been taught the truth. *Gospel* is always from EUAGGELION, and its primary meaning according to Thayer is, "good tidings," and it can have special applications

only by the connection in which it is used. Hence if some pretended good news should be offered to persons, it would be a form of gospel regardless of whether it were true or false. That explains why Paul uses the phrase *another gospel*. The first word is from HETEBOS, which means another kind of gospel or supposed good news. The false doctrine was the claim that Christians could obtain salvation by observing the ordinances of the law of Moses, especially that of circumcision; this is clearly shown in Acts 15: 1. But since such "good news" was false, Paul calls it another kind of gospel.

Verse 7. This verse might seem to contradict the preceding one, but the explanation is in the difference between the original words for *another*. (See verse 6 for the meaning of the word in that instance.) In this verse the word is from ALLOS, which means another something of the same kind. As there is but one true Gospel, there cannot be another like it or of the same kind. That is why Paul says this doctrine that the Judaizers were giving was not another Gospel like the one he was preaching; and for a good reason, for there is no other like it. To *pervert* the Gospel means to corrupt it by mixing it with something else. The Judaizers were trying to combine the law of Moses with that of Christ, and in so doing Paul charges them with perverting the Gospel, and it was causing *trouble* for those who otherwise had been faithful.

Verse 8. We have seen that some people questioned the apostleship of Paul (verse 1); on the other hand, some Judaizers charged that he was advocating the practice of circumcision as a religious necessity (chapter 5: 11). A pretext for such a false claim may have been drawn from the fact that Paul had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16: 3), disregarding the fact that Timothy had Jewish blood in his veins, and thus had a right to it from a national standpoint. (See the comments at that place in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.) However, even if Paul did preach such a false doctrine, that would not make it right but instead he would be under the curse of God. *Angels from heaven* were never permitted to preach the terms of salvation to any human individual, much less would they dare preach a gospel that contradicted the inspired one given by Paul.

Verse 9. To emphasize his warning

against the false teacher, Paul refers to what he had taught them at a previous time. *Said before* is from *PROEIPON*, which Thayer defines at this place, "to say before, i. e., heretofore, formerly." Robinson defines it, "to have said before, to have already declared." Hence it could not be intimated that Paul's present warning was some new idea of his. We know Paul had been among them before and had delivered his teaching on the matters of proper living. (See chapter 5: 21.) *Accursed* is from *ANATHEMA*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "a man accursed, devoted to the direst woes." Robinson says it means to be "separated from God's favor and delivered to destruction." It is easy to see that preaching a false doctrine is one of the worst sins of which a man can be guilty.

Verse 10. *Persuade* in this passage means "to make friends of, win one's favor, gain one's good-will; to seek to win one, strive to please one," according to Thayer. Paul makes his statement in question form, but he really is denying that he is trying to please men with his preaching. The basic reason is that he could not be a servant of Christ while preaching in a way to win the favor of men. He was resolved to be true to God even though he would lose the friendship of the whole world. This was in agreement with his statement in Romans 3: 4.

Verse 11. To *certify* means to make known, and *after man* means to be according to man. Since the Gospel was not composed to suit the wishes of man, Paul could not be true to his call were he to try bending it to suit man in order to win his friendship and good will.

Verse 12. Paul received the Gospel by the *revelation* authorized of Christ. (See the definition of the word in the comments at 2 Corinthians 12: 1.)

Verse 13. *Conversation* means conduct or manner of life, and Paul is referring to what he practiced while he was a worker in the *Jews' religion*, which means that under the law of Moses. His reference to the persecution of the church of God in the past, was to show that his present defense of it was not motivated by a life-long prejudice in its favor. *Beyond measure* is from *HUPERBOLE* which is defined in Thayer's lexicon as "preeminently; exceedingly." *Wasted* is from the same Greek word as "destroyed" in Acts 9: 21, where the persecution by Paul is the subject. In that place it is stated that he "destroyed them which called

on the name" of the Son of God. This explains in what sense the church of God may be destroyed; it is by overthrowing certain members of it. Such individual destruction of the church has always been and always will be possible, but the church as a whole is destined to live for ever. (See Daniel 2: 44.) It was impossible for the powers of darkness to prevent the building of the church (Matthew 16: 18), and the world is given assurance that Christianity will exist on earth until the second coming of Christ (1 Corinthians 15: 51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4: 15-17).

Verse 14. *Profited* does not have the sense of personal gain as the word usually does. The original is defined in the lexicon, "to go forward, advance, proceed, make progress." *Equals* is from *SUNELIKIOTES*, which Thayer defines, "one of the same age, an equal in age." It is much like a case in the public schools where it may be said of a boy that "he stood at the head of his class." The point Paul is making is that in leaving Judaism and coming to the Gospel, he was not seeking some balm for disappointment over failure, for he was highly successful before.

*Traditions* is from *PARADOSIS*, which Thayer defines, "a giving over, giving up; i. e., the act of giving up, the surrender. A giving over which is done by word of mouth or in writing." The reader should make himself familiar with this word, which is used frequently in the New Testament, but not always in a bad sense. Any doctrine or rule of conduct becomes a tradition when it has once been given over from one person to another. Whether it is good or bad, and whether it is of any authority or not depends upon the persons handing over the doctrine. Hence the traditions Paul was condemning were those that had been given over by the Jewish fathers, and they were not of authority.

Verse 15. *Separated* is from a word that means to "appoint, set apart, one for some purpose." *From my mother's womb* means from the time of his birth. At the time of Paul's birth, God determined to use him as a special messenger of Christ. However, that was not made known to him for many years, and even then He did not put that appointment in effect until He had called him by his grace or the Gospel. That call is recorded in Acts 9.

Verse 16. This verse states the purpose for which God selected Paul, which was to preach His Son among the *heathen*, or nations of the world.

*Immediately* denotes that Paul did not delay entering into the work for which he had been called. *Conferred not with flesh and blood* indicates he did not seek counsel or information about his duty; not even of his relatives or close personal friends.

Verse 17. Paul did not first try to consult the other apostles, for his call was from God directly and the previous apostles would not have been able to confer any special qualifications on him. Since no other reference is made to this journey into Arabia, we have no way of determining the purpose of it nor how he spent the time while there. But we have the information that after his stay there was ended, he returned to the city of his conversion before going elsewhere.

Verse 18. *After three years* is dated from his conversion, and includes the time spent in Arabia and Damascus. The time spent in the last place was divided between the days immediately after his conversion, and his return from Arabia. (See verse 17 and Acts 9: 19-22.) The special purpose for Paul's journey to Jerusalem was to see Peter. As this was his first visit to that city since his conversion, it is not strange that he had not met Peter before. The words *to see* are from HISTOREO, and this is the only place in the Greek New Testament where the word is used. Thayer defines it, "1, to inquire into, examine, investigate. 2, to find out, learn by inquiry. 3, to gain knowledge of by visiting; to become personally acquainted with, know face to face." All of this was after the three years, in the course of which Paul had been preaching the Gospel elsewhere, hence it does not contradict verse 17. Neither does it leave any room for saying that he went up there to receive the Gospel from Peter (which would have contradicted verse 12). But the importance of the apostle Peter created a desire in Paul to "become personally acquainted with him," and to "know him face to face." He spent fifteen days in the city while visiting Peter.

Verse 19. *Apostles . . . James the Lord's brother*. He was not one of the twelve, but was a very prominent man in the church at Jerusalem, and the term is applied to him in a sort of honorary manner. Regarding such a use of the word, Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary says the following: "The term came to be used more widely than at first, restricted to its reference to the twelve and Paul. This is confirmed by Paul's reference

to James, the Lord's brother, as an apostle (Galatians 1: 19)." Thayer agrees with this thought, for after giving the definition of the Greek word for *apostle*, he adds by way of explanation, "In a broader sense the name is transferred to other eminent Christian teachers."

Verse 20. Paul's apostleship had been questioned by some Judaizers, and his account contained in the preceding several verses is given as factual evidence of his authority. The statement *before God I lie not* is added to show that he is conscientious and serious, for he knows that God understands his heart.

Verse 21. *Syria and Cilicia* were provinces north of Palestine, and the latter contained Tarsus, the city of Paul's birth. The immediate occasion for his going there at this time is shown in Acts 9: 26-30. (See the comments at that place in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.)

Verse 22. *Unknown by face* means they had not seen Paul personally. This is not strange, for he had spent the years following his conversion in Damascus and Arabia, and was in Jerusalem only *fifteen days* (verse 18) before being driven out by persecution.

Verse 23. *They had heard only*. Even though these churches had never met Paul in person, yet the report of his persecution of the saints had reached their ears and filled them with a state of unrest. Now the opposite report was coming to their ears and it brought great relief to them. Hence the writer of Acts says the churches had "rest" upon the ceasing of oppression from this man. (See the comments at Acts 9: 31 in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.)

Verse 24. *Glorified God in me* means they gave God the glory for all of the good results of Paul's conversion. This glorification toward God was not in words only, as may be seen in the passage cited at the close of the preceding paragraph.

## Galatians 2

Verse 1. *Fourteen years after* is dated from the same event as "after three years" in chapter 1: 18, namely, his conversion. In Acts 15: 2 where this same trip to Jerusalem is recorded, it says that "certain other of them" went with Paul and Barnabas. In our present verse we are told that the "other" person was Titus.

Verse 2. The English word *revelation* always comes from the same Greek

word, and any special part of the lexicon definition that is to be applied must be determined by the connection in any given case. However, its general definition is proper in the present verse, namely, the one word "instruction." So the verse means that Paul was instructed to go up to Jerusalem, hence his move was not merely from a personal desire. *That Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles.* This does not imply that Paul preached one Gospel to the Gentiles and a different one to the Jews. No, it is a declaration that he always preached the same one wherever he went, which is what he teaches in chapter 1: 6-9. The part of this same Gospel that was confused in the minds of the Jewish brethren was that which admits the Gentiles to all the benefits of salvation without requiring them to accept circumcision. (See Acts 15: 1.) Paul knew that the "rank and file" of the Jewish Christians were so perplexed over this subject that he would have difficulty in convincing them if he approached them as a group, hence his plan was first to present the matter to a few of the more able thinkers. The original *for reputation* is defined by Thayer, "to seem, be accounted, reputed," and he explains it to denote, "those who are reputed to be somewhat of importance, and therefore have influence." *Lest . . . in vain.* If the Jewish Christians were to continue in this perverted teaching concerning the Gospel, it would upset the work of Paul among them. To avoid such a result, he used the tactful plan just explained.

Verse 3. Paul's plan accomplished the desired effect as indicated by this verse. Titus being a Greek, belonged to the Gentile nation, but according to the contention of the Judaizers he should have been circumcised to be saved. The statement is made that he was not *compelled* to submit to it. Of course no one thought of using physical force to administer the rite on anyone. The word means to constrain, either by force or persuasion, and the latter means was attempted by the false brethren.

Verse 4. Why was Paul's plan put to the specific test in the case of Titus? This verse answers the question by saying that false brethren had been brought in unawares. The purpose of this movement was to *spy out* ("plot against"—Thayer) the liberty that all Christians have in Christ. Even Jewish Christians are not required to be circumcised in order to be saved, but

these Judaizers intended to bring them into the bondage of the law of circumcision.

Verse 5. *Not for an hour* denotes that Paul did not yield to the pressure for a single time. The backing that he had created in verse 2 enabled him successfully to withstand the Judaizers.

Verse 6. Having disposed of the *false brethren brought in*, Paul gave his attention to the men of the city of Jerusalem; doubtless they were the ones referred to in Acts 15: 1. This group might even have included some of the apostles living in Jerusalem who were somewhat confused on the subject at hand. These men *seemed* (were reputed) to be *somewhat* (something) on account of their previous standing with God. But that would not have anything to do with whether they were right or wrong in the present controversy. However, out of respect for their reputation, Paul listened to them but was not told anything that he did not know already. That is the meaning of *in conference added nothing to me.*

Verse 7. The brethren living in Jerusalem, though previously mixed up on the subject of circumcision, seemed to be more fairminded than the *false brethren* who had been imported in verse 4. When they saw the truth of the situation, they sided in with Paul and Peter. *Gospel of the uncircumcision.* This is a brief way of saying that the Gospel does not require circumcision of the Gentiles, and that Paul was to be especially commissioned to preach to them. *Gospel of the circumcision* means that the Jews could still observe the rite of circumcision as a national mark, while depending solely on the Gospel of Christ for salvation.

Verse 8. The pronoun *he* refers to the Lord. This explanatory verse is intended merely to state that the Lord showed no partiality in His qualifying Peter and Paul for the apostleship.

Verse 9. *Pillars* is from *STULOS*, and Thayer defines it by the same word that is used in the text. He then explains it to mean, "persons to whose eminence and strength the stability and authority of any institution or organization are due." Robinson defines it, "a column, pillar," and explains it to mean, "any firm support; for example, persons of authority and influence in the church." Paul ascribes this character to James (the Lord's brother), Cephas (Peter) and John (brother of James). There is nothing to indicate that any of the group were

unfavorable toward the work of Paul and Barnabas, but the three men are named because of their high standing, and because they were the ones who acted in this outward expression of endorsement. *Right hands*. The two words are from the Greek word DEXIOS. Robinson defines it, "right, on the right side or hand, opposite the left," hence it does not mean right as the opposite to wrong. Greenfield explains it at this place, "to give the right hand to any one, as a pledge of sincerity in one's promises." The reason the right hand is used is because most men are right-handed by nature, and hence any gesture that calls for the joining of hands would naturally use the right hand. Thayer explains this feature of the subject as follow: "Property of that hand which is wont [accustomed] to take hold of as well as to point out." The fact that special attention is called to certain persons who were left-handed (Judges 3: 15; 20: 16), shows it is the natural rule to use the right hand.

*Fellowship* is from KOINONIA and means partnership or joint interest in something. This act of the three "pillars" was to indicate to Paul and Barnabas that they were interested in the work about to be done, and would give it their full moral support. *Heathen* is from ETHNOS, and in the King James Version it is rendered by heathen 5 times, Gentiles 93, nation 64, people 2. As it is used in this verse, it means the Gentiles, and the term *circumcision* means the Jews. We know this does not mean that each one was restricted to the class designated, for Paul preached to all classes. But their assignment as a whole was to be as indicated.

Verse 10. *The poor* were the Christians in Judea, most of whom were Jews. The verse means that while Paul and Barnabas were especially assigned the preaching among the Gentiles in other provinces, they should not forget the poor saints in Judea though they were Jews. Paul was already thus disposed toward them, so that complete harmony existed between them.

Verse 11. *When Peter was come to Antioch*. It is questioned by some whether this was before or after the events of Acts 15. The information as to dates is not clear enough to decide the point definitely. The reason for such a suggestion (that it might have been before) is to clear Peter of the charge of inconsistency in view of his stand on the issue at hand in that

meeting in Jerusalem. But that is not called for, since it is not claimed that an inspired man is not capable of personal error in conduct. Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 9: 27 shows that it is possible for an old soldier of the cross, an inspired apostle and preacher of the Gospel, to commit a sin so grievous as to cause him to be rejected by the Lord. From these considerations it should not affect our confidence in Peter's inspired teaching, to see him here give way to human weakness. Paul being also an inspired man was able to give the proper teaching on the situation. Hence his statement that *Peter was to be blamed* is an inspired one, and states the truth about the un-inspired conduct of the other apostle. Incidentally it disproves all claim that Peter possessed any superiority over Paul or any of the other apostles as the Romanists teach.

Verse 12. *Certain came from James*. There is no definite information available as to whether these men were sent by James, or that Peter was merely intimidated by the fact that they came from the vicinity of that outstanding man, and would doubtless carry a report back to him of what they saw at Antioch. *Did eat with the Gentiles*. On the significance of eating with others, see the comments at 1 Corinthians 5: 11. There was nothing actually wrong in eating with Gentiles, and Peter had done so before (Acts 11: 3); but his feeling for what he imagined was James' exclusiveness on the matter, induced him to act in this inconsistent manner.

Verse 13. *Dissembled . . . with* are from the Greek word SUNUPOKBINOMAI, which Thayer defines, "to dissemble with." Robinson defines it, "to play the hypocrite with any one, to dissemble with." *Dissimulation* has the same meaning, but being a noun it is from HUPOKRISIS, defined by Thayer at this place, "dissimulation, hypocrisy," and Robinson defines it in the same way. Hence we have the sad information that Peter acted the part of a hypocrite; also that his example caused Barnabas and the other Jews to be *carried away* (over influenced) with the unscriptural procedure. But the reader should again see the comments at verse 11 on the difference between Peter's authority as an inspired apostle, and the correctness or incorrectness of his personal conduct.

Verse 14. *Walked not uprightly* means improper conduct whether it concerns the moral or the legal laws.



*According . . . the Gospel* shows these people were going wrong as measured by that high standard. *Before them all.* Peter was the leader in the defection, but the others were also to blame for allowing themselves to be misled; therefore it was proper to give the chastisement publicity. (This principle is taught in 1 Timothy 5: 20.) *Livest after the manner of the Gentiles.* There were certain customs that both Jews and Gentiles observed as a manner of life socially, which were not a part of their religion. With reference to such, neither was required to cease the observance. Nor was a Jew or Gentile required to take up the customs of the other, although he might do so if he wished. Paul did so in 1 Corinthians 9: 20, 21, and Peter had been doing that in our present case. His inconsistency was shown in his association (socially) with the Gentiles voluntarily for a while, then withdrawing from them unless they conformed (which would not have been voluntarily) to the practices of the Jews. An unfortunate feature of this performance of Peter was the leaving an impression that the Gentiles would be required to go farther than the social customs of the Jews to be saved, and that they also must conform to the ordinances of the Mosaic law to be saved, as was done in the case of Acts 15: 1.

Verse 15. The Jews had always considered the Gentiles to be *sinners* as a class, and so inferior as a class that the term "dogs" even was applied to them (Matthew 15: 26, 27). In this verse Paul is not ignoring the field of history, nor is he denying all claims of superiority for the Jews. However, he reminds Peter that such a rating is from a national standpoint and not due to any moral or personal goodness that they possessed. (He had refuted such an idea in Romans 3: 9-18.) That is why he makes the statement that they were Jews by nature.

Verse 16. The time was past when the national standing of the Jews meant anything to them religiously. No man (whether Jew or Gentile) could be justified or saved by the works of the law. That system had been "nailed to the cross" (Colossians 2: 14), and the observance of the social customs was voluntary only, and could not be forced upon any person of either nation. But all justification before God must be obtained through faith in Christ—by a working faith in Him, and *not by the works of the law.*

Verse 17. *We ourselves are found sinners.* The last word is used in the sense explained at verse 15. By jumbling the two nations together (as Peter was doing by his inconsistent conduct), it would cause the Jews to be *found sinners*, and that, too, right while professing to expect justification through Christ. Such a procedure would imply that Christ had become a minister of sin. Paul puts the challenge to Peter in the form of a question, but interposes his own negative answer by the words *God forbid*, which means "by no means."

Verse 18. Such inconsistent conduct would be like overthrowing a building because it "had served its purpose," then immediately trying to rebuild it with the ruins of the "wrecked" structure. Paul closes this chastisement of the apostle Peter with the severe charge that his inconsistency made him a transgressor.

Verse 19. *Through the law am dead to the law.* The law itself predicted its own end, to be replaced by the law of another prophet who was to be raised up from among the Jews. (See Deuteronomy 18: 18-20.) Hence a Christian was to be regarded dead to the law (for religious purposes), that he might live unto God through Christ.

Verse 20. To be *crucified* means to be put to death, and whether it is figurative or literal depends on how the word is used. Of course we know it is figurative in this case since Paul is living and active in his service to Christ. Chapter 6: 14 shows a practical use of the word, which is that the things of a worldly life had been put to death by the conversion of Paul to Christ. The same thought is set forth in Romans 8: 13 and Colossians 3: 5, where the apostle commands us to mortify (put to death) the deeds of the flesh. Paul was induced to do this by his faith in Christ. Being crucified *with* Christ shows some kind of association with Him in connection with sin. That relation may well be expressed by saying that Christ died *for* sin and Paul died (figuratively) *to* sin. After his life of sin was put to death through Christ, his spiritual being was enabled to live through Him. (See Romans 6: 8-12.) *Live in the flesh* denotes that his life of faith is accomplished while living in the fleshly body.

Verse 21. To *frustrate* means to hinder or set aside. In accepting the law of Christ, Paul did not show any disrespect for God's grace that was

given to previous dispensations, but rather he was carrying out the very things that were divinely intended in those ages. (See the comments on verse 19.)

### Galatians 3

Verse 1. The original for *bewitched* is defined by Thayer, "to bring evil on one by feigned praise or an evil eye, to charm, to bewitch one," and he explains it to mean, "of those who lead away others into error by wicked acts." The ones who were doing this with the Galatians were the Judaizers who were deceiving them into thinking they should go back to the old law. *Before whose eyes, etc.* The Galatians had seen the evidence of Christ's great sacrifice in the lives of Paul and other true teachers of the Gospel among them, so that they had been given full opportunity for seeing the superior spiritual life in a service to Him.

Verse 2. The argument Paul makes in this verse may be said to be one that has a factual basis. The Galatian brethren knew they were in possession of the Spirit, for whenever and wherever an apostle led men and women into the service for Christ, they were shown evidence of the Spirit by the gifts bestowed upon those receiving the hands of the apostle. And these brethren also knew that they had never received the gifts except through *hearing of faith*, which means the Gospel, though the law had been in existence for centuries.

Verse 3. It is certain that God's dealings with man would not decline in degrees of perfection or completeness, but would advance as humanity became able to receive them. On this principle, the things to be accomplished through the "ministration of the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3: 8) would be an advancement over that which was possible by *the flesh*, a term given to the ordinances of the law of Moses, because of its consisting of "carnal ordinances" (Hebrews 9: 1, 10). The Galatians were reversing the order and leaving the completeness of the system under the Spirit, in which they had *begun* their religious life, and going backward to finish (*be made perfect*) their religious lives by the ordinances of the law.

Verse 4. *Suffered . . . in vain.* The Gentiles who accepted the Gospel were persecuted by the Judaizers who wished them to be satisfied with the law of Moses. They could have avoided these persecutions had they yielded to

the pressure of the Judaizing teachers. Now, after having stood firm at first in spite of the persecutions, if they backslide and take up the ordinances of the law, it would render all of their past sufferings for Christ to be vain. (See Hebrews 10: 32-35.)

Verse 5. This is the same as verse 2.

Verse 6. In all of the systems of religious conduct that God has offered to man, individual faith was necessary for divine acceptance, even though the system as a whole was not termed one of faith, as the Christian or Gospel system is. Hence we are told that Abraham (in the Patriarchal Dispensation) was regarded righteous because of his faith. Abel belonged under the same dispensation and he also was blessed because of his faith (Hebrews 11: 4). Likewise the Jews who were under the dispensation of the law, did not receive the blessing of God without faith (Hebrews 4: 2).

Verse 7. It was generally regarded an honor to be related to Abraham. (See Matthew 3: 9; Luke 19: 9; 2 Corinthians 11: 22.) In their zeal for persuading the Gentiles to take up the ordinances of the law, the Judaizers tried to make capital of the respect for the great patriarch by connecting him with the law of Moses. Paul does not overlook the greatness of Abraham, but shows that his greatness was due to his characteristic of faith. However, that had nothing to do with the ordinances of the law, for he lived six centuries before the law was given. (See the comments on Romans 4: 1-13 in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.)

Verse 8. *Scripture foreseeing* denotes that God could see ahead what would be done, and caused it to be written in the Scripture. *Faith* is used in the sense of *the faith*, a term applied to the New Testament system of religion. *Heathen* means the Gentiles, who were not included with the Jews under the law of Moses. (See the comments, at chapter 2: 9.) The Gentiles were going to be offered justification through *the faith*, and hence God revealed this beforehand to Abraham. Not in all its details, of course, but the fundamental truth that Jesus would bless *all nations* (and not the Jews only), was foretold to him in the words *in thee shall all nations be blessed*.

Verse 9. *Which be of faith* applies to all individuals who manifest the same degree of faith in God as was

true of Abraham. *Blessed with him* means they will receive the blessing of God as being true servants of Him.

Verse 10. The Bible recognizes a distinction between a literal and a figurative, or a physical and a moral impossibility. Unless we observe such a distinction we will have difficulty with the apparently contradictory passages in 1 John 1: 8 and 3: 9. Peter said the fathers "were not able to bear" the yoke of the old law (Acts 15: 10). That passage is explained in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary. Yet Paul cites a passage in the Old Testament that says that all who did not do so were *under the curse*. The original for the last word is defined by Thayer, "an execration, imprecation, curse." In severe cases the curse amounted to an unmerciful death (Hebrews 10: 28), but the law of Christ makes one free from such a curse (Romans 8: 2). By going back to the works of the law, the Galatians placed themselves under this curse.

Verse 11. *Evident* means it is clear—the conclusion is unavoidable. The basis for the conclusion is the inspired statement that *the just shall live by faith* (Habakkuk 2: 4). The old law was always considered to be one of outward works as a system, while the principle of faith existed from the days of Abel onward, and the New Testament is the first and only system that is referred to as *the faith*. Since faith and formal works are opposites, it follows that if a man is justified in God's sight by one, it cannot be by the other. This explains why Paul uses the word *evident* as he does in this verse.

Verse 12. *The law is not of faith*. The full significance of this is as if it said, "the law of Moses is not the same system as the faith of the New Testament." *Shall live by them*. The Jew who carefully observed the ceremonies imposed by the law of Moses, was able to live or be contented with the thought that his life was according to the outward forms of that system. Only God would know whether he was "mixing" faith with his work (Hebrews 4: 2), hence as long as he performed the deeds prescribed by the law, he could not be penalized by the congregation, and therefore he would escape the curse of the law.

Verse 13. The particular curse meant here is that of hanging on a tree, which was accomplished by crucifixion. By giving us a system that does not require such physical punishments,

Christ took away that kind of curse. And He was able to bring about the change only by going through such a curse himself on our behalf, which is the reason He had to be crucified.

Verse 14. *Blessing of Abraham* denotes the blessing of God that was pronounced on Abraham because of his faith. If such a blessing was possible only through the outward deeds like those imposed by the law, then the great patriarch would have missed the said blessing, for he lived several hundred years before the law. But in adopting the principle of faith instead of the formalities of the law as that on which the blessing would be given, God could include Abraham in the divine blessing. And by the same token, such an arrangement made it possible for the Gentiles (who did not have the provisions of the law) to be blessed with Abraham, provided they manifested the same principle of faith as was shown by the noted patriarch.

Verse 15. *I speak after the manner of men*. For an illustration, Paul is using the usual customs of mankind regarding covenants or legal agreements, and the rules followed in observing them. To *confirm* means to ratify by some formality under the supervision of the proper authority. Hence Paul says that *though it be but a man's covenant*, yet if it has been confirmed it cannot be lawfully annulled, although it must be confirmed to make it sure.

Verse 16. *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made*. This states the first instance that the promise of Christ was ever made to any human individual, notwithstanding a popular notion to the contrary. The reader should see the comments on Genesis 3: 14, 15, in volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary. *Seed* is a word that may be used in either a singular or plural sense, hence Paul settles which meaning he is attaching to it here by saying *not seeds, as of many; but as of one*. He further specifies the one seed meant by the words *thy seed*, to which the apostle adds *which is Christ*. Thus we have the interesting information that when God made the promise to Abraham of universal blessings through his seed (Christ), He made the same promise to that Seed who was then with the Creator in Heaven. This sheds light on Hebrews 10: 5-7, which represents the attitude of Jesus when he left Heaven and came to the earth. He

already knew (having been told at the same time that Abraham was) that He was to come into the world to bless "all nations," and He was submissive to his Father's will. That is why he said, "I come to do thy will, O God."

Verse 17. *Four hundred and thirty years* corresponds with the terms in Genesis 15: 13 and Exodus 12: 40, 41, which is the time the children of Israel were in Egypt. The reader is urged to see the comments on this subject at Genesis 15: 13-15, in volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary. The present verse also shows that the period of four hundred and thirty years is the time the Israelites were in Egypt. It states that the law was four hundred and thirty years after the covenant was—not first given—but after it was *confirmed*. Psalms 105: 9, 10 plainly says it was confirmed unto Jacob. We cannot interpret that on the general basis that the name Jacob is used as including Abraham and Isaac, they being two of "the fathers" often spoken of, for in this place the writer mentions the three separately, and distinctly says the covenant was *confirmed* unto Jacob. It was in the days of Jacob the children of Israel went down into Egypt (Genesis 46: 1-6), and it was within three months after coming out of that country that they came to Sinai where the law was given (Exodus 19: 1). So the conclusion is clear; they entered Egypt in the days of Jacob, to whom the covenant was *confirmed*, and the law was given at the end of their sojourn, which Paul says was four hundred and thirty years after the covenant was *confirmed*. Paul makes the point that the giving of the law even that many years afterwards cannot disannul the covenant, because it had been *confirmed*. (See the comments at verse 15.)

Verse 18. *The inheritance* means the blessing that was to be offered to all nations of the world through his seed. The argument of the verse is that if the blessing was to come through the law (as the Judaizers were teaching), then it could not have been connected with the promise first made to Abraham, for that was done many centuries before the law. And yet it was well known that God actually did give the promise of universal blessing to Abraham. The grand conclusion, then, is that the blessing intended for all nations (not the Jews only) was not the product of the law.

Verse 19. With the foregoing con-

clusion before them, it was natural for the readers to ask, *wherefore then serveth the law?* That is, for what purpose was the law given, if the promise of universal blessing through the seed of Abraham had already been given to the world as made known to the patriarch? The question is answered in the rest of this verse. The law *was added* (to the promise); not because God had made any change in His mind about the covenant, but *because of transgressions*. Members of the Patriarchial Dispensation became so unsatisfactory in their conduct, that it was doubtful if there would be a sufficient number of them in line of service to God to receive the Seed when he came. As a supplementary rule of behaviour, the law was given to bolster the nation descended from Abraham in its service to God, pending the final dispensation to come through Christ. But this addition of the law was not to be permanent (as the Judaizers were contending) but was to be in force only until the coming of the Seed to whom (see verse 16) the promise was made. In other words, the law was to be attached to the promise and in force only until Christ came into the world. *Ordained by angels*. God never appeared in person to mankind, but was always represented by angels when speaking to Moses and others. (See Acts 7: 53; Hebrews 2: 2.) *In the hand of a mediator*. The last word is from MESITES which Thayer defines, "a medium of communication, arbitrator," and he explains it as follows: "One who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and friendship, or to form a compact, or for ratifying a covenant." The mediator was Moses, who acted between God and the Israelites. This is all in agreement with the statement at the beginning of the verse, namely, that the law was added *because of transgressions*.

Verse 20. The very meaning of the word *mediator* indicates that two persons are on unfriendly terms, and the work of a mediator is to get them reconciled. There can be no need for nor work of a mediator in a case where only one person is interested. *But God is one* (only), therefore the presence of a mediator means that another party is involved. God is always righteous and no unrighteous person can be considered as being on good terms with Him. That is why a mediator was employed, and the party who needed to be reconciled to God was the Israelite

nation, which had estranged itself from God by its "transgressions," and the law of Moses was the document by which the reconciliation was to be accomplished.

Verse 21. It must be constantly kept in mind that an outstanding evil that troubled the church in the first century was Judaism; the doctrine that the law of Moses was necessary to salvation. Paul is exposing that in the epistle to the Galatians. His argument in the few verses preceding the present one might raise the suggestion that the law was against the promises of God because it was added to those promises. He answers, God forbid, a term frequently used in the New Testament that denotes "by no means." The law could not be regarded as a competitor of the things set forth in the promises, for it did not claim to give (spiritual) life to its followers. It was added to the promises only for the purpose of stabilizing the conduct of the people of that dispensation, so that they would be ready to receive the "life" indicated in the promises when the time of fulfillment arrived. The law given through Moses was never intended in itself or by its merits, to give to its adherents that something regarded as spiritual life. Had such a law been given, then the obedience to it would have been acknowledged by the Lord as *righteousness*, and it would have been continued permanently.

Verse 22. *Concluded all under sin* does not say that God caused them to sin. The truths and facts regarding their conduct by the children of men, disclosed to God that all had sinned, hence He just declared what was true which was that all were sinners, which would make them all the subjects for divine mercy. Since all were actually sinners as a class, all would require the same means of spiritual redemption. The said means could not be by the merits of the law of works, therefore the Lord used that document as a hold-up or preparatory measure (see verse 19), at the same time pointing man to the coming of the promised seed of Abraham, that was to provide all nations with a system to be known as *the faith*, which would be able to assure the believers that they would be justified in Christ.

Verse 23. The thought in this verse is virtually the same as verse 19. *Faith* is a term for the Gospel of Christ, to distinguish it from the law of Moses. *Kept under the law* is the same as "it

was added" in verse 19, and shut up unto the faith corresponds with "till the seed should come" in the same verse.

Verse 24. *Wherefore* means the apostle is drawing a conclusion from the facts of the preceding verse, and it is stated in the form of an illustration. *Schoolmaster* is from PAIDAGOGOS, which occurs only three times in the Greek New Testament; twice in Paul's present argument and once in 1 Corinthians 4: 15, where it is rendered "instructors." But neither of these English words is used in the same sense as they are today. The original word is defined by Thayer as, "a tutor," and Robinson defines it, "a pedagogue." Thayer furnishes some historical information on the subject that will be useful as follows: "A guide and guardian of boys. Among the Greeks and Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them [were "shut up"—E. M. Z.] before arriving at the age of manhood." The apostle likens the law of Moses to this guardian of the child, because it was given charge of the "children of the Abrahamic promise" until such time as the fully-empowered Schoolmaster (Christ) should come, who would take charge of the pupils and administer spiritual education under the curriculum of *the faith*.

Verse 25. Having been brought into contact with the real teacher (Christ), there is no further need for the authority of the guardian (the law).

Verse 26. I again remind the reader that the main object of this epistle is to show that the old law is replaced by the Gospel as a rule of conduct for salvation. In order to be an heir to the estate of God, it is necessary to be a child of His. Paul declares that such a relationship is possible for these Galatians (who were Gentiles) only by *faith in Christ Jesus*.

Verse 27. Continuing the same line of argument expressed in the preceding verse, Paul refers his readers to the event of their obedience in baptism. The force of the argument will be best realized by laying the emphasis on the name *Christ*. It is as if the apostle said that those who had been baptized into Christ had *put on Christ* and not Moses.

Verse 28. *There* is an adverb of place, referring to the position named in the preceding verse of those who have "put on Christ." In Him there is no distinction made between the various classifications mentioned as far as their spiritual relationship with the Lord is concerned. They are all made to compose one group in the sight of God, by their obedience to Christ and not because of any other relationship they previously sustained, either under the one or the other dispensation of religion.

Verse 29. However, the aforesaid statement does not nullify the importance of Abraham, for he was promised a descendant who would be a blessing to all nations (whether Jew or Gentile), and such a blessing was to be acquired through faith in that descendant, who was Christ.

#### Galatians 4

Verse 1. There is a sense in which all men (whether Jews or Gentiles) were the children of God, namely, in that they were subject to Him either under the Jewish or the Patriarchal dispensation. Notwithstanding this, all were restrained from enjoying the full benefits of the blessing promised through Abraham, until the time should arrive that the promised Seed came into the world. This period of waiting is here likened by Paul to the years of minority in a child. During that period, even though a man were a child and hence an heir of God, yet he had no more access to the property of his Father, namely, the possessions with Christ, than a servant would have to the estate of his master.

Verse 2. Continuing the line of comparison started in the preceding verse, the world of mankind is considered as minors, and hence under *tutors and governors* (see comments at chapter 3: 24), waiting for the *time appointed of the father*. As far as the disposal of an estate is concerned, a child is a minor until such time as the father has designated, when his child should be released from the rule of these *tutors*, and his share of the estate be turned over to his full use.

Verse 3. *When we were children* is still used in reference to the years before the Gospel Dispensation was introduced. The *bondage* means the preparatory state already described in several preceding verses. *Elements* is from *STOICHEION*, and Thayer's general definition is, "any first thing, from

which the others belonging to some series or composite whole take their rise; an element, first principle." As the word is used in our verse, he explains it as follows: "The rudiments with which mankind, like minor children, were indoctrinated before the time of Christ, or the ceremonial precepts common alike to the worship of Jews and Gentiles." *World* is from *KOSMOS*, one definition of which is "the inhabitants of the earth, men, the human race." It is used in the present connection in that sense because such elements as pertain to moral and religious conduct could apply only to intelligent beings.

Verse 4. *Fulness of the time* means the time designated by the Father when his minor children (the Jews under the Mosaic Dispensation and the Gentiles under the Patriarchal Dispensation) were to be considered "of age" and ready to receive the full enjoyment of His provision for his children. That event was to be accomplished by the ushering into the world of His "only begotten Son" (see the comments at Luke 1: 35 in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary). *Made* is from *GINOMAI*, which has a wide range of meanings in the New Testament. As it applies to an intelligent creature, the proper one of Thayer's definitions is, "to become, i. e., to come into existence, begin to be, receive being." In this verse it means that the Son was brought into being in this world through the use of a woman. (Again see the comments cited in the parentheses above.) *Under the law*. Jesus was born, lived and died while the law was in force, for it was not entirely replaced until Pentecost in Acts second chapter.

Verse 5. As a minor would be *redeemed* or released from the rule of his guardian when he became "of age," so the minors (Jews) were redeemed or released from the authority of the law when Christ brought the Gospel age into the world. *Adoption of sons*. Paul makes a slight change in the use of his illustration. The Jews (as well as the Gentiles, though in a less specific sense), have been referred to already as sons not of age, now they are said to require adoption in order to become sons. But the point of comparison is not so far away after all. Verse 1 says that as long as the heir is a child (a minor), he is virtually the same as a servant. Harking back to that item in his parable, Paul switches from his first use of the servant-heir character, treating him as if



he were a servant in the ordinary sense only, and permitting him to become a son of the head of the estate, in order that he might become not merely an heir apparent, but one in fact. However, since this servant cannot be the begotten son of the head of the estate, the relation can be accomplished only by *the adoption of sons* as it is here worded.

Verse 6. *Because ye are sons* has been perverted by religious leaders, and made to teach as if it said, "to make you sons," etc. The sons of God are given possession of the Spirit, to be sure, but it is after they have become sons and not to make them such. However, the possession of this great gift is used in a special sense in this verse, which is evident by the affectionate effect its possession has on the recipients, namely, it causes them to address God as their Father. Hence the term is used to refer to the disposition or attitude toward God that is created in the mind of one who has been adopted into the family of God, through the service of His elder and only begotten Son, Jesus the Christ. *Abba, Father*. Both words refer to the same relationship, but the first is of Chaldean origin and the second is from the Greek. By using the two, Paul shows that when a man is adopted into the family of God, regardless of his national ancestry, he is led to look upon God affectionately as his spiritual Father. In other words, in Christ Jesus there is no distinction made as to whether the children of God are Jews or Gentiles, learned or unlearned, male or female, bond or free.

Verse 7. This verse is explained by the comments on verse 5, with an added thought as to the advantage of being a son. It entitles one to share in the riches of the Father in Heaven, who is the Creator and owner of all things.

Verse 8. *Howbeit* is an old word, coming from ALLA, which has been translated by "but" 572 times. It has also been rendered "notwithstanding" 10 times. It is used in this verse to introduce a statement about the past conduct of the Galatians, most of whom were Gentiles who had been worshipers of idols. But that was before they had been brought to know the true God, which was done through the preaching of the Gospel. *By nature were no gods*. Most of the objects of worship among the idolaters were articles of their own formation, or were the creatures of their imagina-

tion. Even such things as planets and animals, the works in creation, were not made into intelligent beings by nature, and hence were *no gods* in the true sense of the term, since a god is expected to have intelligence enough to plan and power to execute the plan, and thus direct human beings in their religious and moral conduct.

Verse 9. God made himself known to the Galatians, who for the greater part were Gentiles and idolaters, by having the Gospel taken to them. They had never been under the bondage of the law, but under the service to false gods, and the Gospel had delivered them from that bondage. But after their escape from that bondage and introduction to the liberty that belongs to Christians, they were invaded by Judaizers who were leading them in a backward direction toward the ordinances of the Jewish law. The word *again* is rendered "back" in the margin which is correct, since these Gentiles had never been under the law of Moses and therefore could not be taken back to it *again*. In other words, they had been led out of their bondage of idolatry, and were now being turned into another bondage (that of Judaism) that was equally displeasing to God. *Beggary* literally means to be poverty-stricken, and is here used of something that is not able to bestow any spiritual wealth on one. *Elements* is from the same word that is used in verse 3, and the comments on that place should be read again. The Galatian brethren were acting as if they desired to be in bondage again, only it was the bondage of Judaism.

Verse 10. Paul specifies some of the *elements* to which he referred in the preceding verse, namely, the observance of *days, and months, and times, and years*. This refers to the holy days and seasons that were required of the Jews under the Mosaic law, but which had ceased to be in force for religious purposes even to Jews; the Gentiles had no connection with them at any time for any purpose.

Verse 11. Paul's labors included his preaching the Gospel among the Galatians, in which he induced them to accept Christ and His law as their rule of faith and practice. If the Judaizers should persuade them to take up with the law of Moses, it would make void the work of Paul and thus render his labor *in vain*.

Verse 12. *Be as I am*. Paul, a Jew, had given up his religious devotion to the law of Moses in order to be true

to Christ (Philippians 3: 9). The Galatians had similarly given up their worship of idols in order to become a worshiper of Christ. In this respect Paul could say *I am as ye are*. But the apostle had continued in that devotion to Christ, and he wished these brethren also to continue in their faithfulness to Christ. It is in that sense he wishes them to *be as I am*. *Ye have not injured me*. This is an affectionate statement to show that he did not have any personal complaint to make against them, for they had not shown him anything but kindness when laboring among them. Instead, his reason for the various rebukes he has been giving them is to rescue them from the evil effects of Judaism.

Verse 13. *Through infirmity of the flesh*. That is, in spite of this infirmity, Paul preached the Gospel to these Galatians and they gladly accepted it. For more comments on this infirmity, see those at 2 Corinthians 12: 7.

Verse 14. *Ye despised not*. The Galatians did not belittle the apostle because of this infirmity, which was something that might have suggested such an attitude, since it was placed upon him to humble him. (See the passage cited in the preceding verse.) In spite of it they respected him as if he had been an angel of God.

Verse 15. *Blessedness* means some great favor or good fortune, and the Galatians had congratulated themselves on having Paul in their midst. Their appreciation of him was apparently so great, that had it been possible they would have given him their eyes. This is an illustration drawn from the great value that anyone would place upon his eyes. Now the Galatians had become so changed in their attitude, Paul asks where their good estimate of him had gone.

Verse 16. *Therefore* indicates a conclusion drawn from certain truths or facts. The conclusion, however, is named (in the form of a question) before the basis, which is that Paul had told them the truth. The time when he told it to them evidently was when he was with them in person. Yet his becoming their enemy did not occur then, for we have just seen (verses 14, 15) that all was agreeable while he was in their midst. The change in their feeling for Paul came afterwards, and it was brought about by the meddlesome Judaizers, which is clearly shown by the next verse.

Verse 17. *They* means the Judaizers who have been referred to so many

times. *Zealously affect* is from ZELOO, which Thayer defines, "to desire one earnestly, to strive after, busy one's self about him," and he explains it to mean, "to seek to draw over to one's side." Paul says the Judaizers were greatly concerned about the Galatians, but not for their good. *Exclude* is from EKKLEIO, and Thayer's definition here is, "to shut out," and he explains it as follows: "From intercourse with me and with teachers cooperating with me." *That ye might affect them*. The Judaizers hoped that by getting in between the Galatians and Paul, they would turn their attention toward them (the Judaizers), and be zealously affected, or be concerned to be attached to them instead of to Paul.

Verse 18. *Not only when I am present* confirms the comments on verse 16. While Paul was among these Galatians they seemed to be very much attached to him. He reasons that such was the right attitude, but that it should be maintained even when he is absent. (See Philippians 2: 12.)

Verse 19. *Little children* is from TEKNION which is used only 9 times in the Greek New Testament, and is always rendered by this term. Thayer explains that "in the New Testament it is used as a term of kindly address by teachers to their disciples." Robinson defines and explains it in virtually the same way. *Travail in birth*, etc. The sentence is used figuratively, and no figure or other illustration can be applied literally in all of its items. The main thought should be considered, and the over-all application of the figure be applied accordingly. An expectant mother will be concerned and at times will feel some uneasiness (travail) over the child that is being formed within her. Paul uses the circumstances to illustrate his concern for the Galatians. He is anxious that the spirit of Christ be formed in their minds, and given birth by proper devotion to Him and not to Moses in their lives.

Verse 20. *Desire to be present*. Since the Galatians seemed to be better inclined toward Paul when he was in their midst personally, he wished to be with them again. *Voice* is from a word that means speech, either written or spoken. The apostle believed that if he were with these brethren personally, this better attitude would permit him to be milder in his spoken words than he was in his written words. *Stand in doubt of you* corresponds with "I am afraid of you" in

verse 11. (See the comments at that place.)

Verse 21. The very document (the Old Testament) that the Judaizers professed to respect so much, predicted in numerous places that there was to be a new prophet come into the world, who would give another system of religious government. Paul is challenging them to hear that law, which means for them to respect its predictions, and cease disturbing Gentile Christians with their subversive teaching.

Verse 22. To avoid confusion, it is well to keep in mind that no parable or other illustration is big enough to include every detail of the subject to which comparison is made. As a result there may be some items in one illustration that do not apply to the subject at hand, and may even seem to contradict some parts of another illustration on the general subject. But the whole story has to be told in order to make it understood at the point where it does apply. Furthermore, the same facts or truths may be used at different times to represent different subjects, or different phases of the same subject. It is generally understood that Christians are under the law of Christ, which was given at Jerusalem in Palestine, while the Jews were under the law of Moses that was given at Sinai in Arabia. Yet in this and the following verses, Sarah is represented as the mother of Christians, notwithstanding she was an ancestor of Moses by whom the law for the Jews was given. All of this will clear up by simply remembering that Abraham and Sarah were not only the parents of Isaac as the one from whom the Jewish nation was derived, but also were the parents of Isaac as the one from whom was to come the seed (Christ) that was to bless "all the families of the earth" by giving them the Gospel to take the place of the law of Moses. It is in the latter sense that the present use is made of the two sons of Abraham.

Verse 23. *After the flesh.* Ishmael was conceived and born according to the established laws of fleshly reproduction; the account of it is in Genesis 16. The mother of Isaac was barren and a miracle was needed to enable her to conceive. But God had promised her a son, hence He performed the miracle upon her so that she could become a mother, and that made him a son *by promise*. (See Genesis 16: 1, 2; 21: 1, 2.)

Verse 24. *Allegory* is another word for illustration or figure. The events concerning these two women were literal and actually happened, but Paul is showing how the facts illustrate some other truths pertaining to God's dispensations of religion among mankind. An illustration does not prove a point under discussion unless it has been selected by some acknowledged authority. That is what Paul has done in the present case, for he cites Isaiah 54: 1-6, where the context plainly shows that a spiritual use is made of the experience of Sarah. And this was an appropriate authority to quote, for the Judaizers professed to have great respect for the prophets. *The two covenants* means the law of Moses and the Gospel. In the illustration the apostle connects *Agar* (Hagar) with the law of Moses. *Gendereth to bondage* means to bring forth children who are destined to bondage under rites and ceremonies of the law.

Verse 25. The literal fact is that Sinai (represented by Agar) is in Arabia, and was the place where the law of Moses came forth, with all of its burdens of ordinances, which are termed the *yoke of bondage* in the next chapter. The location of Jerusalem in Palestine is another literal fact, but Paul makes a figurative use of the fact because of the conditions of servitude involving the city in his day. That is why he says that Agar and Sinai *answereth* (meaning to correspond with or be in the same rank or condition) *to Jerusalem which now is*. It is true that Jerusalem was the place, geographically, from which the Gospel was given to the world. But at the time of Paul the city was still clinging to the law of Moses as far as the Jews were concerned, and hence was yet under the bondage imposed by the Sinaite law.

Verse 26. This *Jerusalem* is figurative and means the church that was started in that city. Hebrew 12: 22, 23 connects the name of this city with the church, which is the institution through which Christians obtain their spiritual relation with Sarah, the mother of the great Seed that was to bless all nations.

Verse 27. Some comments on this verse are offered at verse 24. The barren woman is Sarah who *travaileth not* (does not have pains of childbirth) for the most of her life, and hence was *desolate* in that she had no child over which to rejoice until near the end of her life. *Many more children.* Isaac was the only son whom Sarah

ever bore, but he was the person through whom Christ came into the world, by whom "all nations" were destined to furnish spiritual children for God. *Hath an husband.* Hagar was but the handmaid of Sarah, yet she was permitted to receive Abraham in the relation of husband and wife. However, the descendants from this union though numerous, were people of the heathen world and not spiritual children of God, as were the descendants of Sarah through Christ.

Verse 28. *As Isaac was.* The comparison is in the fact that Isaac was promised to Abraham and Sarah, and God performed a miracle so that the son could be produced. From that child of promise came the Seed that was to bless all nations (whether Jew or Gentile) by giving them the Gospel plan of salvation. Whoever, therefore, accepted this plan became children of God. They are termed *children of promise* because it is through the noted Seed that was given the world as promised to Abraham.

Verse 29. *Persecuted him.* The account of this is in Genesis 21: 9, but all that is said in that place is that Sarah saw Ishmael "mocking." It was on the occasion when the weaning of Isaac was celebrated with "a great feast." The original for "mocking" has several renderings in the Old Testament, some of which are more severe than others. But Paul says that Ishmael *persecuted* Isaac, hence we must conclude that some of the more severe definitions are applicable. (See my comments on Genesis 21: 9, in volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary.) *Even so it is now.* In the comparison that Paul has been making, the descendants of Ishmael represent the Jews, and those of Isaac stand for Christians. As Ishmael persecuted Isaac, so the Jews were persecuting Christians, especially those from the Gentile nation.

Verse 30. *Nevertheless.* The idea is that the persecutor was stopped, and Paul quotes the passage that proves it; the statement is in Genesis 21: 10. Sarah was acting purely because of her motherly resentment against the envious treatment being accorded her son by Ishmael. However, her performance proved to be a prediction of another important one, namely, the rejection of the Sinaite covenant as a religious system for God's people.

Verse 31. The grand conclusion of this unusual argument is that Christians are spiritual children (or descen-

dants) of the freewoman and not the bond. It means they are not under the bondage imposed by the law of Moses.

## Galatians 5

Verse 1. Continuing from the thought in the closing verse of the preceding chapter, Paul exhorts his readers to maintain the freedom from the burdens of the old law. While that system was in force, it was commendable for those under it to be loyal to its requirements. But since Christ has given them liberty under His law through the Spirit, it is foolish for them to go back and try to take up the *yoke of bondage*. The word *again* might leave the impression that the Galatians had all formerly been under the law of Moses. That was not the case, for most of them were Gentiles and not under it. But many were now being induced by the Judaizers to take up that system, and thus entangle themselves with that yoke, which would be as severe a bondage as was that of idolatry from which they as Gentiles had been delivered. (See the comments on chapter 4: 9.)

Verse 2. *I Paul* is a phrase that is used to impress the Galatians with the seriousness of the matter at hand, and the authority that was behind the teaching being delivered. The general subject of this epistle is the issue between the law of Moses and the Gospel of Christ. Circumcision was only one item of the Mosaic system, but the Judaizers made more ado over it than any other part, so that accepting or rejecting it was virtually the same as thus treating the whole system as far as the logical requirements were concerned; indeed, Paul brings out that conclusion in the next verse. Since the Galatians were Gentiles, the only reason they could have for adopting circumcision was for its religious use, because only the descendants of Abraham had any right to it from a national standpoint. Hence, in adopting that rite, the Galatians would be going to the law for their religious rule of life. In so doing they would be bypassing Christ and his religious system, since He and Moses were never in authority at the same time.

Verse 3. In adopting circumcision as a religious rite, it committed them to the entire law if they were to be consistent. (See comments on the preceding verse.)

Verse 4. *No effect* is from KATARGEO, and in the King James Version it is rendered abolish 3 times, bring to

nought 1, cumber 1, deliver 1, destroy 5, do away 3, loose 1, make of none effect 2, make void 1, make without effect 1, put away 1, put down 1, become of no effect 1, be to be done away 1, cease 1, come to nought 1, fail 1, vanish away 1. The Englishman's Greek New Testament translates the first part of this verse as follows: "Ye are deprived of all effect from the Christ." *Justified* is a key word in the present discussion, meaning to obtain spiritual or religious benefits from the law. A Jew was never deprived of the observances of the law if he did it only from the national standpoint, but he had no right to use it for any other purpose after Christ came. (See Romans 10: 4.) *Fallen from grace* means to lose out in the divine favor. This statement of the apostle completely overturns the doctrine labeled "once in grace always in grace."

Verse 5. *We* means Christians whether Jews or Gentiles, who have been taught by the law of the Spirit and not the law of Moses. *Righteousness by (the) faith* gives hope to those who *wait for* (rely on it and live and abide by its instructions) the reward held out to be given at the end of the race.

Verse 6. Circumcision was given to Abraham and his immediate family descendants, to be observed as a national mark as long as the world stands. When the law of Moses was added to the promise of Christ that was made to Abraham, it incorporated circumcision within its other rites as a part of that system of religion. When Christ gave the Gospel to the world as the final "rule of faith and practice," He left circumcision out of his system, which meant that the rite was again where it was at first, namely, a national mark only and restricted to the fleshly descendants of Abraham. Having lost all religious significance, it was of no avail in Christ whether a man was circumcised (being a Jew), or uncircumcised (being a Gentile). Instead, all works of the law were rejected for religious purposes, and a man's acceptance depended on the *faith which worketh by love*. That phrase means that a man's faith in Christ is such that he will work for Him from the pure motive of Love. (See John 14: 23.)

Verse 7. *Ye did run well*. This refers to the time before the Judaizers got among them and did their evil work. *Not obey the truth* means they

failed to hear the requirements of the Gospel to the rejection of the works of the law.

Verse 8. The present attitude of the Galatians did not come from Christ, who had called them by the Gospel. Neither does Paul believe they had of themselves formed such a conclusion as was bringing about so much confusion. He is certain that some busy person is responsible for the trouble, by injecting himself among Gentile brethren.

Verse 9. There might be only one or perhaps a few men who were making all the trouble, but the apostle wants them not to be misled by the smallness of number among the disturbers. He illustrates the idea by the well known truth that a small amount of leaven is all that is necessary to affect the whole mass. This same truth is used in the case of the fornicator at Corinth (1 Corinthians 5: 6).

Verse 10. Paul still has confidence in the "rank and file" of the Galatian brethren that they will finally adjust themselves in conformity with the mind that he has expressed to them. But he warns that it will be unpleasant for the one or ones who are troubling them.

Verse 11. Some Judaizers charged that Paul was practicing or advocating circumcision as a religious rite. A pretext for such a false claim may have been drawn from the fact that he had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16: 3), disregarding the fact that he had Jewish blood in his veins, and thus had a right to it from a national standpoint. In our present verse Paul shows the foolishness of such a claim. Circumcision was the main issue between him and the Judaizers, and they were also the ones who were persecuting the apostle. If he was advocating the practice of circumcision, then nothing would be left in connection with the religion coming from the cross that would be so offensive to the Jews.

Verse 12. *They were even cut off* all comes from the Greek word ΑΠΟΚΟΠΤΟ, which Thayer defines, "to cut off, amputate," and he explains it to mean, "I would that they (who urge the necessity of circumcision would not only circumcise themselves, but) would even mutilate themselves (or cut off their privy parts)." Robinson defines the word as does Thayer, and also gives the following explanation: "Would that for themselves they

would (not only circumcise but) even cut off the parts usually circumcised, i. e. make themselves eunuchs." Strong defines and explains the word virtually the same as Thayer and Robinson. The idea of Paul is that the Judaizers were making so much of circumcision that they deserved "an overdose of their own medicine."

Verse 13. From here to the close of the epistle Paul will make only a few references to the law, the main argument of the letter having been given a thorough treatment. Matters of interest to Christians in their personal lives will receive attention. This verse warns that the liberty of which Paul has said so much, must not be abused and made an occasion to gratify the desires of the flesh. *Serve one another* is said in the sense of rendering loving service to each other in the work of Christ.

Verse 14. The Judaizers would claim that giving up the law would be losing an important rule of conduct for one another. Paul shows that no principle that was required under the law is given up, for the Gospel requires its believers to *love thy neighbor as thyself*, which virtually includes every command contained in the Mosaic law. *All the law* means all of the commandments that pertain to the proper conduct between man and man. Exodus 20: 12-17 gives the six of the ten commandments that pertain to this subject. In the very nature of the case, if a man loves his neighbor as himself, he will observe all things required by these six commandments. The *one word* is Paul's term for the one commandment about love for one's neighbor.

Verse 15. *Bite, devour* and *consume* are used figuratively, referring to the treatment the Galatians were giving to each other. The main difference in the meaning is the degree of intensity with which they pursued their campaign of opposition. The apostle means to show them that a continuation of such a course would finally destroy their unity in Christ. One of the effects of such evils as Judaism when it is injected into a congregation, is to work up bitterness among the members, so that they get into a state of mutual conflict such as described by the three words italicized.

Verse 16. This verse clearly indicates that such conduct as described in the preceding one is prompted by the *lust* or desires of the flesh. The

opposite would be that prompted by the Spirit, which gives to God's people the "rule of faith and practice" that belongs to the religion of Christ, as against that contained in the law of Moses, which the Judaizers were urging among the Gentile Christians.

Verse 17. *Lusteth against* means the desires of one are opposite of the other; their desires are not the same. This thought is treated at length at Romans 7: 15-21, in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary. It is true that the teaching for the guidance of Christians has been given through the work of the Holy Spirit, but in this verse the word should not be capitalized as it is used for the spirit or inner part of man, as against his outer or fleshly part. *Cannot do the things that ye would*; cannot follow both at the same time. (See again the passage just cited.)

Verse 18. The Spirit here has direct reference to the Holy Spirit, since He was the instrument by which the New Testament system of religion was given to take the place of the Mosaic law.

Verse 19. *Works of the flesh are manifest* on the principle that a tree is known by its fruits (Matthew 7: 15-20). *Adultery, fornication*. The difference between these words is only technical and legal. The laws of the land define adultery as the unlawful intimacy between married persons, and fornication is that between the unmarried. The Bible does not require such a distinction, but uses the words both as applying to a married person as well as to another. In Matthew 19: 9, Jesus gives fornication on the part of a wife as the only ground for divorce and remarriage of the innocent husband. And in Matthew 5: 32 where the same subject is considered, if the wife is innocent and her husband puts her away, he "causeth her to commit adultery." That is, such a woman would be tempted to marry another man, and in so doing she would be guilty of adultery. The two passages together show us that in the estimation of Jesus, a married woman can be guilty of either fornication or adultery, and hence there is no actual difference. But the distinction is thought of in some cases, and the apostle makes sure of eliminating any possible excuse by naming both words in the same condemnation. *Uncleanness* is from a word that means impurity of either mind or body. *Lasciviousness*



is from *ASELGEIA*, and it must have been a strong word in the Greek language, for Thayer defines it as follows: "Unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence."

Verse 20. *Idolatry* being a word that belongs to religious activities, it might be wondered why it is named as a work of the flesh. The general explanation is that all activities not prompted by the law of the Spirit must be classed with those suggested by the flesh. (See verse 17.) The special explanation is in the definition of Thayer for the original word, and his comments on it as it is used in the New Testament; he defines it, "The worship of false gods, idolatry," and he explains it, "used of the formal sacrificial feasts had in honor of false gods." Since a feast would be interesting from the standpoint of the appetite, we can see why it is classed with the works of the flesh. A similar explanation will apply to a number of other things to be seen in this list, which, though not consisting literally of physical activities, yet are prompted by evil motives and hence must be attributed to the flesh. *Witchcraft* is from *PHARMAKEIA*, and its first definition is, "the use or administering of drugs." The next definition is, "sorcery, magical arts." It means any attempt to accomplish a result by means of pretended supernatural power or knowledge, such as fortune telling, palm reading, astrology, etc. Thayer defines the original word for *hatred* as, "cause of enmity." It means that attitude toward another that would tend to cause trouble between the two. *Variance* is a disposition to wrangle or quarrel. *Emulations* is from *ZELOS*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "envious and contentious rivalry, jealousy." Thayer defines the original for *wrath* as "passion, angry heat." *Strife* is from *ERITHEIA*, which is a very strong word. Thayer defines it, "a courting distinction, a desire to put one's self forward, a partizan and factious spirit which does not disdain [object to] low arts." It describes one who is determined to win, "by fair means or foul." *Sedition* means the disposition to bring about cliques and parties in the congregation, which might result in confusion and disunion of the whole body. *Heresies* is from *HAIBESIS*. Thayer's definitions are, "1. act of taking, capture. 2. choosing,

choice. 3. that which is chosen; chosen opinion, tenet. 4. a sect or party. 5. dissensions," and according to his comments in connection with the word, it means something that a man chooses and uses, not because it is right, but because it happens to suit his personal taste.

Verse 21. The simple word *envy* is the only definition the lexicons give for the original Greek word, hence we are left to the English dictionary for information. Webster defines it "Chagrined or discontent at the excellence or good fortune (of another); to begrudge." Such a state of mind is a violation of Romans 12: 15. *Murder* literally means the unlawful slaying of a human being, which all will admit to be a work of the flesh. However, one can be guilty of murder in God's sight without the literal performing of it (1 John 3: 15). *Drunkness*. Thayer gives the simple fact of intoxication as his definition of the Greek. Robinson gives a somewhat fuller definition, "strong drinking, drunkenness, a drunken-frolic." *Revelings* is from *KOMOS*. I have consulted seven lexicons, including Thayer and Robinson, and they all give virtually the same definitions and explanations. However, I shall quote from Groves because his definition is more concise and will require less space: "Festivity, feasting, revelry, riotous mirth; dancing and song; wantonness, dissoluteness, debauchery; luxury, indulgence, voluptuousness; a company of revelers, troop of bacchanals; any company, society, party." The definitions, together with the connections in which the original word is used in the New Testament (Romans 13: 13; Galatians 5: 21; 1 Peter 4: 3), clearly indicates loud or boisterous conduct, which should not be any part of the conduct of Christians.

*Such like* is rendered by the Englishman's Greek New Testament, "things like these." Thayer defines the word for *like*, "like, similar, resembling; may be compared to." The phrase is very significant in that Paul knew that as time passed, men would be originating new forms of sin, and he thus includes all such in the condemnations, even though a person might deny guilt of the ones specified. Any conduct, therefore, that resembles or may be compared to any of the evils named would be wrong for Christians. The question arises, who is to decide in any given case, whether it

comes under the classification? Hebrew 5: 14 shows that such ability should come from use or practice in the Christian life. But if a disciple refuses to use his ability thus acquired, then 1 Corinthians 11: 31, 32 shows that some other person must exercise the judgment in the case. Hebrews 13: 17 says the rulers (elders) watch for the souls of the flock, hence the sheep are commanded to obey them. Elders must be the final judges on the unspecified things, as to whether they are to be considered "such like" or compared to the works of the flesh enumerated in this passage. The importance of this teaching is seen in the words that *they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Verse 22. *Fruit of the Spirit* is said on the same principles as was stated about the *works of the flesh*, namely, a tree is known by its fruit. Many extravagant claims are made by some people about their being in possession of the Spirit. The sure way of determining the question is to observe the kind of lives they are showing. If they are truly living within the line of conduct prescribed in the New Testament by the inspiration of the Spirit, the things named in this and the following verses will be produced in their conduct. *Love* in this place is from the Greek word AGAPE. A full explanation of this word as indicated by the Greek is given in comments on Matthew 5: 43, volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary. *Joy* is defined in the lexicon also to mean "gladness." Certainly a Christian has much for which to be glad, and the connection in which the word is used in this passage, indicates that the rejoicing is over the proper things. (See 1 Corinthians 13: 6.) The general meaning of *peace* is a state of harmony between individuals, but whether that condition is pleasing to God depends on the terms of the agreement. If they are those authorized by the Spirit (as implied by the present passage), then the peace will be pleasing to Him. *Long-suffering* is from MAKROTHUMIA, and Thayer defines it at this place as well as at a number of other places, "patience, forbearance, long-suffering, slowness in avenging wrongs." It does not apply to cases pertaining to principles of right and wrong, for in such matters it is not expected that Christians will agree to any compromise. But where it is only a question of

one's personal treatment, he should be slow in maintaining his "rights." *Gentleness* is another word for kindness, and a Christian can manifest it without any compromise of righteous principles. *Goodness* is general in application, being defined in the lexicon, "uprightness of heart and life." The idea is that a person wishing to bear the fruit of the Spirit, will regulate his life by the teaching that comes from that divine source. *Faith* is from PISTOS, and in the King James Version it is rendered assurance 1 time, belief 1, fidelity 1, faith 239. The lexicon gives it a wide range of meanings, depending on the connection in which the word is used. The main thought is that Christians will accept the testimony of the Spirit as given in the New Testament, and fashion his life accordingly.

Verse 23. *Meekness* is virtually the same as mildness or gentleness in one's attitude toward another. One who is meek will not be severe or harsh in his approach to another, even though the latter may be in the wrong. *Temperance* is from EGKRATEIA, and Thayer defines it, "self-control," and explains it to mean, "the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual [fleshly] appetites." In popular usage, the word is made to have direct application to the use of intoxicating liquor as a beverage. It cannot be properly so used, because no amount of indulgence in drunkenness, however limited, is permitted for Christians. The scripture term for such things is "abstain" (1 Thessalonians 5: 22). *Temperance* can be used only in reference to things that are not wrong except when carried to excess. *Against such there is no law.* Paul has had much to say about the law of Christ as against that of Moses, because that was the most outstanding issue in the church at that time. The statement here means that the Lord has never had any law in force that would have been violated by the virtues just mentioned in this and the preceding verse.

Verse 24. *They that are Christ's* means the same people described by the words "led of the Spirit" in verse 18, and the ones who bear the "fruit of the Spirit" in verse 22. They became His by obeying the Gospel, given by the inspiration of the Spirit. *Crucified the flesh* denotes that the works of the flesh were killed or put out of action. *Affections* and *lusts* are vir-

tually the same in principle, meaning the passions and evil desires of the flesh.

Verse 25. It is actually impossible to *live in* the Spirit and not *walk in* the Spirit, hence the thought is that our daily life should harmonize with our profession; it is about the same in thought as verse 16.

Verse 26. *Not be desirous* is rendered "not become" by the Englishman's Greek New Testament. *Vain glory* is defined as "self-esteem" in the lexicon. Such a spirit is not only wrong in the person himself, but it has an evil effect with his influence over others. *Provoking* is from PROKALEO, which Thayer defines, "to irritate," and a spirit of self-esteem will have that effect upon others. *Envy* is explained at verse 21, and such an attitude will be a logical result when one permits himself to become controlled by the spirit of self-esteem.

### Galatians 6

Verse 1. The word *overtaken* is from PROLAMBANO which Thayer defines at this place as follows: "To take before; to anticipate, to forestall; to take one by forestalling him, i.e. surprise, detect." The word does not apply to a man who deliberately goes in the direction where he knows he may be tempted. Such a person could not truthfully say he had been "surprised" into doing wrong. The word means a case where a man is brought unexpectedly into contact with a strong temptation and under the "spur of the moment" yields to sin. *Spiritual* is from PNEUMATIKOS which Thayer defines, "One who is filled with and governed by the Spirit of God." Hence it means any faithful member of the church, not the elders only as is generally thought. It is a duty of every member of the congregation to act in trying to restore the one who has been overtaken. *Restore* literally means to mend or repair, which denotes that the man has been damaged by sin, and the effort should be made to repair the damage. *Meekness* is the same as in chapter 5: 23, and the explanation offered there should be applied here. In approaching a brother who has been surprised into sin, the would-be restorer should not have a feeling of self-esteem, as if such a misfortune could "never happen to him", for he does not know what effect an incident of "surprise" might have on him.

Verse 2. To *bear* means to take up

and carry a load. *Burdens* is from BAROS which Thayer defines, "heaviness, weight, burden, trouble." It means the hardships and trials of this life, and Paul instructs Christians to help each other in such experiences. *Fulfil the law of Christ*. His teaching all through life was that the disciples should love each other, and that would be shown by lending a helping hand in the hardships of human existence.

Verse 3. *For* carries the thought back to verse 1 where self-esteem is condemned. If a man felt so conceited that he had no fear of being overtaken in a fault, the truth might turn out to be that he would have no background of character at all, when it came to meeting the tests of life. Such a man is here described as one who thinks himself to be *something* when he is *nothing*. The first word is from a neuter pronoun of very indefinite meaning as to degree or amount. The second is properly translated, and means absolutely *nothing* as far as any claim of any importance is concerned. The difference between *something* (however small) and *nothing* is infinite, yet Paul implies that a self-deceived man is that far off from the truth.

Verse 4. One of the common weaknesses of man is to feel justified because he thinks his life compares favorably with that of others. Paul condemns that in 2 Corinthians 10: 12, and he is again dealing with that subject here. *Prove* is from DOKIMAZO, and in the King James Version it is rendered allow 2 times, approve 3, discern 2, examine 1, like 1, prove 10, try 4. Thayer defines it, "To test, examine, prove, scrutinize; to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy." Of course such an examination cannot be made without the use of a proper standard. 1 Peter 4: 11 (and many other passages too numerous to cite) shows that the true standard of right and wrong is the word of God. The important thought in this verse is for each man to prove his *own* work instead of another's. Whether he would do better than the man he is supposed to be trying to "restore" is not the issue at stake, for being better than some other brother does not prove that one is what he should be. But if he tests his life by the divine standard of God's word and finds it in harmony therewith, he will then have the right to rejoice. And that rejoicing will not be because someone else has done his duty, but because

he *himself alone* has measured up to the divine rule.

Verse 5. This verse might seem to contradict verse 2, but they are in perfect agreement for they are speaking of *burdens* that are altogether different; the word in this verse is from PHORTION. Thayer explains that the burdens in the Greek word indicated are, "the obligations Christ lays upon his followers," and it is clear to all that no man can discharge the "obligations" of another. He can help others in the trials and hardships of life, but each man is individually responsible to God. That is the reason he should test his life by the word of God, and not by comparing it with the lives of others.

Verse 6. In 1 Corinthians 9: 14 it is said that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." No preacher can literally live on the word of God, hence the passage means he is to get his living from those who receive the preaching; such is the meaning of the present verse. To *communicate* denotes the act of giving, and *good things* means the things necessary to life. The man who devotes his time to the preaching of the Gospel, should be financially supported by those who get the benefit of the preaching.

Verse 7. *Mocked* is from MUKTERIZO, and both Thayer and Robinson define it, "To turn up the nose or sneer at; to mock, deride." This is the only place where the word is used in the Greek New Testament. The term is used in connection with the thought of a man's responsibility to God, which will finally require him to answer for his conduct in this life. God has commanded his creatures to follow the proper course; to do that which is spiritual and not that which is dictated by the flesh. Moreover, He has told man that he will reap the kind of harvest that he has been producing. Paul is warning his readers not to be deceived or misled into thinking he can ignore (snub or by-pass) God and avoid the undesirable consequences of an unrighteous life. God will not suffer any man to "get by" with such an attempt, but will sustain His law already established on the relation of "cause and effect." On that basis the apostle affirms that a man will reap as he sows, a truth that is taught by nature.

Verse 8. The word *to* is from EIS, and Thayer uses three and a half pages of his lexicon in defining it in its various shades of meaning. However, his introductory paragraph gives the gen-

eral meaning of the word as follows: "Into, to, towards, for, among." We should use the word that is best adapted to the connection in which it is found. When a man sows a field, he does it (or is supposed to) *for* the purpose of raising a certain kind of crop, hence the word italicized would be the proper one of the definitions for our use here. In temporal matters no man thinks he can sow his field with weeds and expect to raise wheat. Yet in moral and spiritual matters man seems to think he can ignore that law, sow the seeds that are qualified for the production of a fleshly crop, and then gather a spiritual harvest from it. The apostle warns that it will not be so, but that a man will reap as he has sown. There are only two kinds of seed and hence only two kinds of harvest possible. The fleshly seed will produce *corruption* which Thayer defines, "the loss of salvation, etrnal misery." The opposite is *life everlasting* to be reaped at the harvest which will be at "the end of the world" (Matthew 13: 39). The two kinds of seed are described as the kinds of human conduct in verses 19-23 of chapter 5. Every man is sowing just one or the other of these kinds of seed, and he will reap accordingly at the day of judgment.

Verse 9. God never commands that which is impossible, nor forbids that which is unavoidable. *Weary* does not pertain to the body or material part of our being, for if we exercise ourselves we cannot avoid becoming tired; such a result is beyond our control. The word is from EKKAKEO, and Thayer defines it, "to be weary in anything, to lose courage, flag, faint." Robinson defines it, "to be fainthearted, to faint." Hence it is clear the word refers to the mind and not the body. A man may become literally worked down or "worn out" by his toils for the Master, but if he has the proper interest in the work he will never become tired in mind, but will always feel keen and alert in the duty for Christ. (See 2 Corinthians 4: 16.) This all agrees with the reasoning of the latter part of our present verse.

Verse 10. *Good* is from AGATHOS, which has a wide range of meanings, including both material and immaterial subjects. Among the definitions given by Thayer are the following: "Excelling in any respect, distinguished, good; useful, salutary; pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy; benevolent, kind,

generous." It is right for the church or an individual Christian to bestow a favor upon those of the world, but where the opportunities are limited, preference must be given to members of the church.

Verse 11. According to several lexicons, the original word for *letter* has two meanings; first, the size of the characters that make up an alphabet; second, the size or length of a composition formed by the letters. There is nothing in the connection here to indicate that Paul was making any point out of the size of the characters he was using, hence the conclusion is that he uses the second meaning. As a rule the apostle dictated his epistles and then signed them to make them authentic (2 Thessalonians 3: 17); but because of his great concern for the interests of the Galatian brethren, he wrote this entire epistle with his own hand. Considering the rule of not doing the writing of the body of his letters, it would make the present one comparatively *large*. Robinson defines the original for the last word as meaning "of dignity." Strong defines it, "figuratively, in dignity." Thayer defines it, "how distinguished."

Verse 12. *As many* refers to the Judaizers among the disciples. *Fair show in the flesh* means they wished to make a favorable impression on the unbelieving Jews who were jealous lest the law of Moses should be neglected. By constraining the Gentile Christians to become circumcised, they thought it would please the unbelieving Jews, and hence they would not be so apt to persecute them (the Judaizers) for their association with the Gentile Christians.

Verse 13. *Neither they . . . keep the law*. These Judaizers were like the Sabbatarians of our day, who make a great ado about the law and pretend that it is still in force. Yet they spend most of their energy in condemning Christians because they do not "keep the sabbath holy." The inconsistency of these modern Judaizers is shown in that they violate the very commandment they pretend to observe. (See Exodus 20: 8-11.) This forbids working the beasts of service on the sabbath, yet it is not uncommon to see these pretenders drive their horses to the "sabbath school" on Saturday. This puts such false teachers in the same class with the Judaizers of Paul's day. They did not keep the law, but wished to induce the Christians to accept cir-

cumcision, so that they (the Judaizers) could boast about it.

Verse 14. *God forbid*. There is no word in the original for the name of God, and it has been supplied by the King James translators by way of comment. The American Standard Version renders this as follows: "But far be it from me to glory," etc. *The world is crucified unto me*. When *crucified* is used figuratively, it denotes that something has been killed or put out of action. Paul became dead to the sinful things of the world, and that spiritual state was caused by his devotion to the cross, or the spiritual service made possible by Christ's death on the tree.

Verse 15. This verse is the same in thought as chapter 5: 6; *a new creature* being equivalent to "faith which worketh by love"; please see those comments again.

Verse 16. *This rule* means the one stated in the preceding verse, namely, being a new creature in Christ Jesus. *The Israel of God*. None but those who believe in Christ Jesus would walk according to the *rule* mentioned, hence the first consideration is given the Gentiles who have accepted the Gospel. That places the italicized phrase with the believing Jews. The Jews were formerly the people of God before Christ was offered to the world, hence they are referred to here as being the *Israel of God* in this special sense. (See James 1: 1.)

Verse 17. Paul's apostolic authority had been questioned by some of the Judaizers. They made great claim on the ground of the fleshly mark of circumcision. In that respect they had no advantage over the apostle since he was circumcised also, but he had that mark as a Jew and a lineal descendant of Abraham. However, he was not claiming any special connection with Christ on that account, for the time had come when being in Him did not depend upon whether a man was circumcised or not. (See verse 15.) But Paul had other marks in the flesh that were significant, and that proved his close relationship as a servant (slave) of Christ. *Marks* is from STIGMA, and Thayer defines it, "a mark pricked in or branded upon the body." He then gives the following historical information: "According to ancient oriental [eastern] usage, slaves and soldiers bore the name or stamp of their master or commander branded or pricked (cut) into their bodies to indicate what master or general they belonged

to . . . hence the marks of (the Lord) Jesus, which Paul in Galatians 6: 17 says he bears branded on his body, are the traces left there by the perils, hardships, imprisonments, scourgings, endured by him for the cause of Christ, and which mark him as Christ's faithful and approved votary [one devoted], servant, soldier." If a man was suspected of being a run-away slave, or for any other reason his identity should be questioned, the matter could be settled by unclothing him and looking for the brands. Paul is making the point that it is unnecessary for any man to *trouble* about examining him; he freely admits that he is a servant of Christ, and that the brands could be seen on his body. As in many illustrations, there are some points that are exceptions. In the case of temporal slaves, the brands were stamped on their bodies by their masters, while Paul's marks were inflicted by the enemies of his Master. Also, Paul was not a run-away slave but was happy to admit his relationship of service to Jesus Christ.

Verse 18. Paul wished that the grace (favor) of Christ would be with the *spirit* of his brethren; if so, their temporal needs would be supplied also.

### Ephesians 1

Verse 1. Unlike the preceding epistle, this one is addressed to a single congregation, which was located in the city of Ephesus. It is the same congregation that is mentioned in Revelation 1: 11, which had its start in Acts 18: 19. *Saints* and *faithful in Christ Jesus* are not different people. The second term is just one description of the first.

Verse 2. *Grace* and *peace* are commented upon at Galatians 1: 3. In every instance of this kind of passage the point is emphatic that God and Christ are the source of these good things.

Verse 3. When man blesses God it means he gives Him the credit for all blessings or happiness. It is important to note that God is called the Father of Christ. This refutes the doctrine of Rome which is followed by most of the denominational world, that God and Christ are one and the same person. It is foolish to imply that a father and his son could be the same person. *All spiritual blessings* denotes that no blessings of that kind can be obtained from any source but God and Christ. *Places* has no word in the original and it is not useful in this connection.

*Heavenly* is an adjective and used to describe the kind of blessings that are enjoyed *in Christ*. They are called *heavenly* because they originated in Heaven, and are unlike the favors produced on earth.

Verse 4. From this verse through 12, the passages have special reference to the apostles. This truth should be kept in mind in order to avoid confusion on the subject of predestination. God never decreed that any certain person should be saved, but He has predetermined what kind of character would be given salvation, then left it to the individual to qualify for the favor. However, God has predestinated certain official facts to be accomplished, and has selected certain ones to be His instruments in bringing about the predestined results. Among the persons who were chosen beforehand for special work were the apostles, referred to here by the pronoun, *us*, whom Paul says God has chosen *in him*, meaning Christ. This foreordained plan was formed before the foundation of the *world*, which means the inhabitants of the earth. The work for which they were previously selected will be named in the next verse, but this one tells the kind of character the apostles must have before they would be permitted to go on with the work. They must be *holy* and *without blame*, which pertains to their personal character. This may sound like the doctrine of salvation by predestination, but it is not since they were left as their own agents as to those qualities. If they chose not to qualify for the work they were put out of the plan as was done in the case of Judas.

Verse 5. The pronoun *us* stands for the apostles, whose work (not personal destiny) had been foreordained by the Lord. That work is designated by the phrase *adoption of children*. The term *adoption* is proper, since becoming children by birth can be accomplished only by the actions of the prospective parents. But it is possible for "outside" parties to work upon the individuals concerned, in persuading and arranging for them to be adopted into a family. The apostles did such work through the prospective Elder Brother, Jesus Christ. *Good pleasure of his will*. Sometimes a man will adopt an orphan from a humane motive or feeling for an unfortunate. But God has a pleasure in adopting the needy ones hence He *willed* it to be done according to the divine plan,



Verse 6. The *grace* or favor of being adopted into the family of God is a glory to Him as well as a credit of praise for His great benevolence. Receiving men into the close relationship of members in the divine family is an unspeakable blessing to man, but the Lord ordained that such a situation was to be fully acceptable to all parties concerned, and not merely one that was tolerated through a spirit of pity.

Verse 7. *Whom* is a pronoun that stands for *the beloved* in the preceding verse, who is Christ. The blood of Christ not only made men free from the bondage of the old law, but it brought forgiveness of sins to all who appropriated it through obedience to the Gospel. It is true that the servants under the law received forgiveness of their sins when they offered their sacrifices or animals, but that favor was given them on the merits of the one and final offering of the body of Christ. Hence when a man obtains the forgiveness of sins under the system put forth by Christ, that favor is done by virtue actually invested in the blood so applied. That is why Paul says it is *according to the riches of his grace*.

Verse 8. At verse 4 it is stated that many of these verses have special application to the apostles and their official work. It is also noted that even they had to develop certain personal qualifications in order to be retained for that special work. If they chose to maintain such traits (all of whom did except Judas), then the special and miraculous powers necessary for the work were given to them. Hence we have the statement here that God *hath abounded toward us* [the apostles] *in all wisdom and prudence*.

Verse 9. A *mystery* is anything not known, whether that is due to its never having been revealed to anyone, or that the story has not yet reached the ears of those to whom it is said to be a mystery. Hence the word does not necessarily mean something that is complicated or made up of ideas that cannot be understood by the human mind. The Gospel is a plain document, and its terms of salvation are within reach of the most ordinary understanding. But it was a mystery as far as the complete system is concerned, until it was made known by the Lord. He chose the apostles as the ones through whom the revelation was to be made, and it was done by giving them the Holy Spirit in great measure. All of this was according to God's *good*

*pleasure*, and it was a purpose which He formed in himself long before it was revealed to man.

Verse 10. *Dispensation of the fulness of times* means when the time has fully come for the final dispensation of religion. *Gather together in one all things in Christ*. God has always had people on earth that were His from a religious standpoint, some of them under the Patriarchal Dispensation and some under the Jewish Dispensation. It was the divine plan to discontinue both of these systems and form a new one in Christ. *Which are in heaven*. Angels are not required to obey the commands of the Gospel as men are, but they are called upon to recognize Christ as the King and spiritual Ruler through the centuries of the final Dispensation; in this way they are a part of the body of Christ and in that sense are *in Christ*. (See Matthew 28: 18; Philippians 2: 9; Colossians 1: 20; Revelation 5: 13.)

Verse 11. The *inheritance* has special reference to the honorable work of extending the knowledge of the Gospel to all mankind. This was the work for which the apostles were predestinated. *Worketh all things*. God is powerful enough to accomplish anything that is right, hence whatever he predestines he can bring to pass. *Counsel* means purpose and advice, and when God formed his purpose concerning the plan of salvation through his Son, *his own will* was that it should be carried out.

Verse 12. The pronoun *we* represents the apostles, who were chosen beforehand to be the instruments of God in making known to the world the Gospel. Even the decree that the apostles were to be these special agents of God, would not have been completed through them had they not personally become believers in Christ to begin with. This explains why Paul was not given the commission as an apostle until he had *first trusted* in Jesus, (See Acts 9: 6; 26: 16-18.)

Verse 13. *Ye also* refers to the Ephesian brethren in general, to whom the apostle is writing this letter. What he says to them as Christians applies to all others in contrast with the apostles. This italicized phrase is proof that what has been said so far in this epistle applies to the apostles officially, and hence does not teach predestination of any man's personal salvation. There are some truths that can be said of all Christians, whether they are apostles, elders, deacons or unofficial members

of Christ's body. That is why it will be well for the reader to go back and again take note of all that has been said in the comments on this chapter from the first verse on, then resume his study of the present verse, etc. *Trusted* has no word in the original at this place, but it is implied in the preceding verse and is therefore justified here. Note the brethren trusted *after* they heard the truth of the Gospel. This shows that becoming a disciple of Christ is not done by any miracle, except that the whole scheme of salvation is a miracle. *In whom* is a pronoun standing for Christ (last word of verse 12), in whom only is a Christian sealed (furnished with assuring evidence) by the Spirit which reveals the truth of salvation, by having dictated to the chosen writers (the apostles) the revelation of the Truth. The outward proof of being in the Spirit is the fruit borne by disciples (Galatians 5: 22).

Verse 14. This verse is an illustration drawn from a familiar business transaction involving a considerable value, in which one party makes a "down" payment as an evidence of good faith. It binds the parties to the contract until the time when full payment is to be made and the contract completed. God has promised eternal life to all who enter into this covenant with Him, which is to be bestowed in fact at the day of judgment. This, of course, is on condition that both parties fulfill all the terms of the agreement until the final time comes. This "down" payment is here called the *earnest*, which literally means a pledge. The pronoun *which* means that God's *earnest* or pledge payment is the favor bestowed through the Spirit as shown in verse 13. When the time arrives and God delivers the crown of eternal life to all the faithful "signers" of the agreement, all *praise* and *glory* will go to Him.

Verse 15. *Heard of your faith* does not indicate that Paul had never had personal knowledge of these brethren, for Acts 18: 19 shows he was present when they began their service to Christ. But some time had passed since he saw them, and hence his present knowledge of their continued faithfulness would come through some reliable report. *Love unto all the saints*. Faithfulness to Christ includes love for his people (John 13: 35). *Saints* is another name for disciples or Christians, because the word means those who

have been made holy or spiritually clean by obedience to the Gospel.

Verse 16. Paul was thankful for the encouragement of faithful brethren, for that was of more value than temporal favors. *Making mention of you*. It is a common thing for brethren to specify to God the "objects of their prayers" when asking for divine favors on their behalf, but it is seldom that personal mention is made of those for whose services we should be thankful. Paul's example should have our careful consideration, in which he not only thanked God for the faithfulness of these brethren, but also prayed for the continued favors of the Lord upon them as we shall soon see.

Verse 17. This verse states some of the things Paul requested of God on behalf of the brethren at Ephesus. The Almighty is called the *God of our Lord Jesus Christ*. This statement is not favorable to the heresy that God and Christ are the same person, for it would be nonsense to say anyone could be his own god. *Father of glory* means that God is the originator and protector of all true glory. *Spirit of wisdom*. Those were the days of spiritual gifts (chapter 4: 7-11), and the gift of wisdom was one of them (1 Corinthians 12: 8). *Revelation* was another gift (1 Corinthians 14: 26), and Paul wished the brethren to receive it to the extent that it would increase their *knowledge of him*, meaning God.

Verse 18. *Eyes* is used figuratively because the physical body gets its light through those organs. It is used to compare the *understanding* or mental man as being enlightened by the sources of information mentioned in the preceding verse. With such enlightenment the brethren would *know* or realize the value of their *hope* that was held out for them by *his calling*, which means the Gospel call to salvation. On the same principle, they would see how *rich* is the glory that the *saints* (this word is explained at verse 15) may inherit in Him.

Verse 19. A fundamental thought in this verse is that God's power is great *to usward who believe*. The power of God does not mean anything to a man who is an unbeliever in the Gospel, which rests upon the resurrection of Christ; but it has saving power to one who does believe (Romans 1: 16).

Verse 20. The particular *working* to which the preceding verse refers is here explained to be the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. But the mighty

work did not stop with the resurrection; others had been raised from the dead previously. In the case of Jesus, he was raised to die no more (Romans 6: 9; Acts 13: 34), and then was placed in a position of great honor and power at the right hand of his Father.

Verse 21. *Principality* is from a Greek word that has virtually the same meaning as our word "seniority," and is used of Christ because he existed before all other beings or things except his Father. *Power* especially means "authority," and Jesus said in Matthew 28: 18 that all "power" (same Greek word) was given to him in heaven and in earth. *Might* is a little stronger word in the original than the one for *power*, meaning not only the right or authority to do things, but also the ability to accomplish them. *Dominion* has special reference to the extent of territory over which one may rule. The statement of Jesus just cited in Matthew 28: 18 shows that His territory is heaven and earth. *This world* means this age or the Gospel Dispensation. Jesus will not rule as king after this age closes (1 Corinthians 15: 24, 25), but He will always be exalted above angels and men while the eternal ages roll.

Verse 22. This verse is virtually a repetition (in different words) of the thoughts expressed in the preceding verse. *All things under his feet* means that Christ was made superior to all things. The original word for *head* is used both for fleshly and spiritual things. When used for the latter, Thayer defines it, "supreme, chief, prominent, master, lord." *All things* is from one Greek word that is equivalent in meaning to "everything." *All things* that rightfully is connected with the church is subject to or is regulated by Him. Any movement or work or organization that cannot be shown to be directed by Jesus, has no scriptural relation to His church.

Verse 23. *Which is his body*. This is a fundamental statement, showing that the church of Christ and the body of Christ are one and the same. *Fulness of him* means that all the spiritual blessings of God are offered to man through the body of his Son.

## Ephesians 2

Verse 1. *Hath he quickened* is in the Greek text in verse 5, and the King James translators have inserted the words in this verse to clarify the thought. To *quicken* means to make

alive, whether used figuratively or literally. It is in the former sense here as the last part of the verse indicates, for the Ephesians had been *dead in sins*, which is a figurative phrase. When two things are separated they are dead to each other. Hence when men are living in sin they are separated from God, for sin cannot have any connection with Him. (See Isaiah 59: 2.) This is the same kind of death and life that Jesus meant in John 5: 25, which will be noticed further in verse 5.

Verse 2. Absolute sinless perfection does not exist in any man (1 John 1: 8), but to *walk* in sin which is referred to here means to lead a life whose general practice is one of sin. Such a walk was done by the Ephesians prior to their obedience to the Gospel. Such a life is *according to the course of this world*, which means that when a man lives daily in sin he is "running true to form" for those following the ways of the world. *Prince . . . the air*. Many of the words of human language have their origin in the opinions of the people using the language. Thayer says in connection with this place: "in the air, i. e., the devil, the prince of the demons that according to Jewish opinion fill the realm of the air." Paul recognizes this popular impression and uses it to describe the former manner of life that was practiced by the Ephesians. *The spirit* means the spirit of the evil *prince*, who is considered as the leader of all who are living in sin. *Children of disobedience*. The first word is from *HUIOS* and is used figuratively; it is explained by Thayer to mean, "one who is connected with or belongs to a thing by any kind of close relationship." Before the Ephesians became Christians, their life as a whole was one of disobedience against the law of righteousness. Such a life would produce a class of offspring (*children*) of like character, hence Paul calls them children of disobedience.

Verse 3. The pronoun *whom* refers to the *children of disobedience* who are mentioned in the preceding verse. *Conversation* is from *ANASTREPHO*, which Thayer defines, "to conduct one's self, behave one's self, live." So the term means the Ephesians formerly behaved themselves after the manner of disobedient children. The apostle specifies by saying it was the desires and lusts of the flesh that they were gratifying. *By nature the children of wrath*. By following the desires of their fleshly

nature they did wrong, and that threatened them with the wrath of God.

Verse 4. *Rich in mercy.* Riches do not consist solely in the amount of one's possessions, but also in the character of them. The richness of God's mercy was indicated by the kind of love with which He regarded mankind while in the bondage of sin. This is the same thought that is the outstanding subject of the familiar but underestimated verse in John 3: 16, where the word "so" has reference to the *kind* of love God had for the world.

Verse 5. The first part of this verse is explained at verse 1, and the reader is requested to see that place again. This verse adds the information that the quickening is done *with Christ*, which means that it is through Him that we are made free from sin (Romans 6: 11). *By grace are ye saved.* This may be understood by the meaning of the second word. See the comments at 1 Corinthians 1: 3.

Verse 6. *Places* is not in the original as a separate word; it is explained at chapter 1: 3. The association of Christians with each other in the church of Christ is heavenly, because the entire arrangement originated in Heaven.

Verse 7. *Ages* often is used in the sense of eras or dispensations, but it is here more general and only means that "in the years to come," etc. Through the years, God was to show how rich is His grace in the form of kindness, and it was all to be accomplished through Christ Jesus.

Verse 8. The matter of being saved involves two parties; the one being saved, and the one doing the saving. God is the latter and is indicated by the word *grace*; man is the former and is represented by the word *faith*. Since grace is the unmerited favor of God (see comments at 1 Corinthians 1: 3), it includes the entire plan of salvation as far as the Lord's part is concerned. *Faith* is on the part of man, and it includes all of the things a man must do to prove his faith. *Not of yourselves.* Man could not have provided any plan whereby he could be saved. *It is the gift of God.* The subject under consideration is salvation, therefore it is the gift of God. A father might promise his son an automobile on condition that he work for him long enough to plant a crop. No boy can earn such an article in a few weeks, therefore the car would rightfully be considered a gift. Likewise, a lifetime of service to God could not merit eternal life, and

therefore it will truly be the gift from God.

Verse 9. *Not of works.* See the illustration in the preceding paragraph drawn from a father and his son. The merits of our work for Christ would never have obtained salvation for us; had they done so, then man could have boasted that he had earned his salvation by what he had done.

Verse 10. *Workmanship* is from *POIEMA*, which Thayer defines, "that which has been made." When a man makes a piece of mechanism, he does so with the intention of getting certain things done with it, and he so forms it that it will be equipped to turn out such work. When it is accomplished, the mechanism would not be entitled to any credit for the work, for its maker has formed it for that particular production. Likewise the *good works* a Christian may perform are but the products that God had in mind when He created or formed him in the great Assembly Plant, the Lord Jesus Christ. The word *ordain* has such a great variety of meanings that I request the reader to see the complete definition of it at John 15: 16, in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary. In our verse it is defined, "To prepare before, to make ready beforehand." It means that God in his wisdom foresaw what would be the best kind of works for His children to follow, and so prepared a plan in His Son whereby they would be furnished with all the necessary equipment for such work.

Verse 11. *Gentiles in the flesh* denotes that the Ephesians were in the class of mankind that was distinguished from the Jews, and that the distinction was a fleshly one. *Called circumcision.* This rite was the fleshly mark that designated the classification as to which nation a man belonged. Hence the terms *circumcision* and *uncircumcision* were used to identify Jews and Gentiles.

Verse 12. *At that time* means the time before the Gospel Dispensation was brought into the world. *Without Christ* because the Patriarchal Dispensation did not specifically show any connection with Him, even though the spiritual benefits which God bestowed upon the faithful members of that dispensation, were done in view of the part that Christ was to play in the salvation of any man in any age. The Gentiles were *aliens* or foreigners from the *commonwealth*, nation or government, of Israel or the Jews. *Strangers*

is from XENOS which Thayer defines, "without knowledge of, without a share in." Although the promises made to Abraham applied to the Gentiles (since Christ was to bless all nations), yet it was not known to them, hence in that sense they were *strangers* to the promise of Christ. *Having no hope* as far as the commonwealth or government of Israel was concerned. *Without God* is from ATHEOS; it is the origin of our English word "atheist." The Gentiles were without God as far as the provisions of the law of Moses were concerned, in the same sense that they were *without Christ* as explained earlier in this paragraph.

Verse 13. The ones *far off* were the Ephesians and all other Gentiles; they were far off as far as the Jewish Dispensation was concerned. *Made nigh by the blood of Christ*. This is said in contrast with the animal sacrifices that were offered under the Mosiac system, which were done for the benefit of the Jews only. It also is in contrast with the sacrifices that were offered upon the family altars under the Patriarchal Dispensation. It is to be understood that those sacrifices which were made under both the former dispensations, gave to the members thereof the favor of God, including the forgiveness of sins. But that was because God knew that the blood of Christ was to flow at the cross as a ransom, to make good the pledge of forgiveness that He had made to every Jew or Patriarch when he had performed his duty at the proper place of sacrifice. This is clearly shown in Hebrews 9: 15, which the reader should see in connection with the present verse.

Verse 14. *He is our peace*. The first word is a pronoun that stands for Christ, and the third is one that means the Jews and Gentiles. These two groups had been separated religiously by the partition wall of the Mosaic law which was given for the Jews only. This wall was removed by cancelling the religious function of the Jewish system, and giving a new one through Christ, adapted to the needs of Jews and Gentiles.

Verse 15. *In his flesh* refers to the crucifixion of Christ, whereby He nailed the old law to the cross and opened the way for the new law of the Gospel. Paul explains *enmity* to mean the "ceremonial" *ordinances* and *commandments*, which kept the Jews and Gentiles separated religiously. *Twain* means the two nations just mentioned,

and *one new man* is a figurative name for the church, in which all men of every nation may be united in Christ.

Verse 16. The original word for *reconcile* is defined by Thayer, "to reconcile completely," and he explains it to mean, "to bring back to a former state of harmony." A significant word is "back," which indicates that a state of harmony had existed before. That is true, for man was at peace with God until Satan persuaded him to sin. That separated him from God and made it necessary for something to be done before he could be received into the divine favor again. The *one body* is the church (chapter 1: 22,23), and the death on the cross made it possible for both Jews and Gentiles to serve God in one religious system. *Slain the enmity*. (Enmity is explained at verse 15.)

Verse 17. Jesus did this preaching through the apostles first, and then by other devoted evangelists. The *peace* applies to the relationship of mankind in general to God, and the Jews and Gentiles to each other, who had been separated by the Mosaic law. *Far off* were Gentiles and *nigh* were the Jews; explained at verse 13.

Verse 18. *Him* means Christ and *both* denotes Jews and Gentiles. *Access* means the privilege of approaching the Father to receive the divine favors. *By one Spirit*. The Holy Spirit gave the apostles their instruction for setting up the church, and also to fill that body (the church) as a divine Guest (the original form for Ghost). The same apostles were also enabled to furnish the members of the church the necessary information for their service to God, including their *access* or approach to Him for his favors.

Verse 19. *Strangers and foreigners* means the same as "aliens" and "strangers" as explained in verse 12. *Fellowcitizens* means they are all citizens of the same government. This government is composed of *saints* which means those who have been made righteous by obedience to the Gospel, and it is called a *household* because the group called the church is regarded as a great family of God and Christ.

Verse 20. *Foundation of the apostles and prophets*. It has been thought by some that these prophets were those of the Old Testament, who prophesied the coming of the church. It is true they did make such predictions, and in that figurative manner could be re-

ferred to in connection with the church when thinking of the basis of truth upon which the divine institution was founded. However, Paul declares these prophets were a part of the foundation itself, hence they were the spiritually-gifted prophets that the church contained in the first century. This is specifically stated in Acts 13: 1 and 1 Corinthians 12: 28. That these prophets in the church were among those who received spiritual gifts is declared in Ephesians 4: 8-11. *Chief corner stone* is from the one Greek word AKROGONIAIOS which Thayer defines, "placed at the extreme corner." He also gives the historical information, "For as the corner-stone holds together two walls, so Christ joins together as Christians, into one body dedicated to God, those who were formerly Jews and Gentiles."

Verse 21. Most of the buildings in old times were built of stones, and Paul is using such as an illustration of the church. *Fitly framed together*. We generally think of wooden buildings only as being "framed," whereas the church is here likened to a stone structure. The three words in italics are from one Greek word which Thayer defines, "to join closely together." The statement means that all of the building, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, is fitted into the structure of which Christ is the binding stone at the corner. Such a building becomes a holy temple in (or on behalf of) the Lord.

Verse 22. Every building is erected for some special purpose. This divine structure is no exception, and the present verse tells us the purpose. It is the dwelling place of God on the earth. Not that He is dwelling in it personally, for in that sense God dwells only in Heaven (Acts 7: 48, 49); but He dwells in the church *through the Spirit*, or in a spiritual sense. (See 1 Peter 2: 5.)

### Ephesians 3

Verse 1. *For this cause* means as if Paul said, "in view of what I have told you concerning what God has done for us through Christ," etc. What the apostle intends to say *for this cause*, he does not mention until he gets to verse 14 which begins with the same three words, where he goes on and completes the thought he has in mind. All the other verses from these first three words at the beginning of the chapter through verse 13, are put in as explanatory information. As Paul was writing this epistle he was actually a

prisoner in Rome, and it was brought about by his preaching the Gospel to these and other Gentiles. (See Acts 21: 33; 28: 17, 20; Ephesians 6: 20.) Christ had taken possession of Paul or "apprehended" him for the very purpose of doing such work and receiving such treatment (Acts 9: 16; 26: 16-18; Philippians 3: 12).

Verse 2. *If ye have heard* has the sense of saying, "I take it for granted ye have heard," etc., yet Paul considers it well to give them further information on the important subject. *Dispensation* is defined in Thayer's lexicon, "the management, oversight, administration, of others' property; the office of a manager or overseer, stewardship." The phrase means that the apostle had been given charge of administering the *grace* or favor of God unto the Gentiles.

Verse 3. According to the lexicon, the word *revelation* means "a disclosure of truth, instruction, concerning divine things before unknown—especially relating to the Christian salvation—given to the soul by God himself, or by the ascended Christ." An outstanding thought in the meaning of the word is that the communication was done by addressing the intelligence of the apostle, and not by some impression made upon his emotions. By this intellectual method, God made known to Paul the truths of the Gospel, that he might be able to tell them to the Ephesians and others. It is called a *mystery* because that word merely means anything not known, whether that be something that is complicated or simple in its nature. (See the definition of the word at chapter 1: 9.) *Wrote afore* refers to chapter 1: 9 and 2: 11-13, where the apostle wrote about the call of the Gentiles to share in the benefits of the Gospel.

Verse 4. *Whereby* denotes that when the brethren would read what Paul had written, they also might understand his knowledge of the subject. All that Paul or any other inspired writer knew of the Gospel was what had been revealed to them through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when an uninspired man reads what has been thus written, he may have the same knowledge of the subject as does the inspired writer. This completely disproves the notion that people today cannot understand the Bible when they read it unless they have some miraculous assistance of the Spirit.

Verse 5. The promise made to Abra-



ham in Genesis 12: 3 and 22: 18 really meant that both Jews and Gentiles were to be blessed by the Gospel of Christ. That same truth was repeated in various forms by many writers in the Old Testament. But the system as a whole was never revealed by them, hence Paul here declares that it was not made known to men in those years *as it is now revealed* by the Spirit. That revelation was made through the services of the *apostles and prophets*. (See the comments on chapter 2: 20.)

Verse 6. This verse states the specific feature of the Gospel that was not realized by the people in Old Testament times, namely, that the Gentiles were to be placed on an equal footing with the Jews in the Gospel.

Verse 7. *Whereof* refers to the Gospel of which Paul was made a *minister*. This word is from DIAKONOS, and it is elsewhere translated "deacon." Thayer's general definition is, "one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a servant, attendant, minister." The word does not necessarily denote an official, and when it is so used, the connection in which it is found will determine it so. In the present verse it has a special application because it refers to Paul who was an inspired apostle, and possessed with that measure of the Holy Spirit that enabled him to execute his official position. Such is the meaning of *effectual working of his [God's] power*.

Verse 8. *Less than the least* is described by both Thayer and Robinson as a double comparison that is permitted on the principle of what today is called "poetic license." Paul uses it for the sake of emphasis, to describe his feeling of unworthiness in being entrusted with the Gospel. He regards it a great honor to be selected by the Lord to be the one to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, who had for generations past been "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." *Unsearchable* is defined in Thayer's lexicon, "that cannot be traced out, that cannot be comprehended." It is the *riches of Christ* that is unsearchable, not the terms on which a man may obtain them. A person could completely understand all of the conditions on which he would obtain possession of a fine automobile, without fully realizing all the wonderful perfection of its mechanism.

Verse 9. The *mystery* again is the truth that the Gospel was to be given to the world for the benefit of both Jews and Gentiles. *Fellowship* means

the mutual enjoyment of all nations in their equal relationship to Christ as their Saviour. *Been hid in God* is the same thought that is expressed by verse 5. *Created all things by Jesus Christ*. This was true of the creation of the material world (John 1: 1-3), but it is true also that all spiritual blessing are provided through Him. (Colossians 1: 16.)

Verse 10. *To the intent* denotes that God's intention in keeping the "mystery" hid through the past ages, was to let it be made known by the church. *Heavenly places* is from EPOURANIOS, which Thayer defines at this place, "the heavenly regions," and then explains his definition to mean, "heaven itself, the abode of God and angels." It is true that men in various ranks on earth were kept uninformed as to the complete system of righteousness to be brought into the world through Christ (Luke 10: 24), who would be benefitted by the fuller revelation. But even the angels in Heaven also were not given the information notwithstanding their desire to know about it. (See 1 Peter 1: 12.) *Might be known* is a verb and comes from the Greek word GNOBIZO, which Thayer defines, "to make known." *Manifold wisdom of God* denotes that the many items of wisdom that God had in store for the world, were to be made known by the church. This wisdom includes all the religious instruction that mankind needs for proper service to God. He kept the full plan for such instruction from men and angels for four thousand years, in order that it might fully be made known by the church. It is the height of folly, therefore, for men to think they can establish educational and other organizations that can give this information "better than the church." Any human organization that pretends to give spiritual or moral benefits to man, is an infringement upon the exclusive rights of the church, for which God was making preparations through the centuries, and which He finally established through the blood of his Son.

Verse 11. *Eternal* is from AION, which means age or ages. Throughout the ages since the beginning of the world, God was planning for the complete plan of redemption for man, and that planning is here called the *eternal purpose*. It was to be perfected through Christ Jesus, who was promised to Abraham (Genesis 12: 3 and 22: 18).

Verse 12. *In whom* refers to Christ, who was foreordained of God to be the

one through whom this eternal purpose was to be accomplished. *Boldness* does not mean a spirit of self-importance, but a feeling of abiding faith because of one's confidence in Christ. This confidence is produced by our faith in Him, and it bids us enjoy access to the Father through the Son.

Verse 13. To *faint* means to falter or become downhearted. Paul bids the brethren not to become thus affected over his tribulations caused by being a prisoner at Rome. *Which is your glory*. It should be regarded as an honor to be the brethren of a man whose faith causes him to keep cheerful under such conditions. The disciples in Acts 5: 41 rejoiced in the honor of suffering such treatment because of their service to Christ.

Verse 14. *For this cause*. This phrase is commented upon at length in the first verse of the chapter; please read that again. The apostle now proceeds to tell what he will do on the basis of the wonderful story of Jesus as just described in the foregoing verses. *Bow my knees* is mentioned incidentally as far as the posture of the body is concerned. We know it is not intended as a binding example for general practice, thus disfavoring other positions of the body while in prayer. Such a theory would contradict too many instances where prayer was offered while in some other position, and where the prayer is recorded in a favorable connection. In Matthew 26: 39 Jesus "fell on his face" and prayed; the publican's prayer was acceptable though he prayed "standing" in Luke 18: 13; Jesus gave thanks while sitting (Luke 22: 14-17). The validity of prayer depends upon the condition of the heart and not the position of the body; a hypocrite could pray as well in one position as another. God is again called the Father of Christ, which disproves the foolish notion that God and Christ are the same person.

Verse 15. *Of* is from ΕΚ, which means the source or authority by which the naming is done; that source is mentioned in the preceding verse, namely, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Family in heaven and earth* includes saints on earth and angels in Heaven. (See comments on chapter 1: 10.) As to what name or names are meant is not the question. The point in this verse is that a father of a family has the right to name the members of it. That truth rules out all of the multitude of names that have been

applied by men to the professed children of God.

Verse 16. This verse begins the prayer that Paul proposed to offer to the Father. *According to the riches of his glory*. It would not be reasonable to ask a favor of anyone that is greater than the possessions of that person. The glory of God is so rich that Paul is encouraged to ask for enough of it to strengthen his brethren. God does his favors for the members of the divine family by the agency of the Spirit that fills the church. This is for the benefit of the *inner man*, which means the spiritual being, which can be affected only by spiritual help.

Verse 17. With two or three exceptions, the word *heart* in the King James Version comes from the Greek word ΚΑΡΔΙΑ, and it is not translated by any other word, which occurs 158 times in the New Testament. I shall quote Thayer's various definitions of the original, which will give the reader a fair view of the range that it covers: "The heart; the vigor and sense of physical life; the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors; of the understanding, the faculty and seat of intelligence; of the soul so far forth as it is affected and stirred in a bad way or good, or of the soul as the seat of the sensibilities, affections, emotions, desires, appetites, passions; the middle or central or inmost part of any thing, even though inanimate."

In this quotation I have copied only the words in italics, which means they are the direct definitions of the author of the lexicon. In this vast list of definitions, the reader can see just two real general meanings of the heart as used in the New Testament, namely, the literal or fleshly as one, and the mental or spiritual as the other. The one to be taken in each given case must be determined by the connection in which it is used. Since Christ does not dwell literally or personally in any place on earth today, we know this verse does not use the *heart* in the fleshly or literal sense. This is also shown to be correct by the phrase *by faith* which Paul uses. Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10: 17), and when a man receives that word into his heart, he has the teaching of Jesus constantly with him, which is the meaning of the apostle's thought that He is to *dwell in your hearts by faith*. *Rooted and grounded*.

There is virtually not much difference between these words, and they could well be used interchangeably. In a technical sense, the first means for a plant to take deep root, and that will give it a solid groundwork as a basis from which to make its growth. The soil in which this rooting is to take place is love—the love of God and Christ for this “plant” that was predicted in Ezekiel 34: 29. With such ever-fertile soil from which to grow, this divine plant is prepared to bring forth much fruit for the Keeper of the vineyard.

Verse 18. *Comprehend* is from a word that has different shades of meaning. In the present instance the first two definitions of Thayer are the most appropriate. “1. to lay hold of so as to make one’s own, to obtain, attain to. 2. to seize upon, take possession of.” Our word, therefore, does not mean that the human mind may fully know all about the greatness of God’s loving system, but that it can take full possession of it under the terms that are offered by the Lord. The reader should see the comments on the word “unsearchable” in verse 8. *With all saints* (or Christians) means that no partiality is shown by Christ for any portion of His followers, but each has the same privileges to enjoy the great love exhibited in the Gospel. All solids have only three dimensions literally, so that *depth* and *height* would be the same. However, in the illustration Paul is thinking of a building which is the divine structure. Its *length* and *breadth* are important because it takes in the entire territory of human existence, both Jews and Gentiles. And its *height* signifies that it towers above all other institutions in dignity and efficiency. Also its *depth* means that its foundation is laid deep, even down to the rock of Truth.

Verse 19. *To know . . . which passeth knowledge* may seem to be a contradiction, but it will be clear in the light of the comments on the preceding verse and those on verse 8. The love of Christ is indeed so great that it surpasses all human knowledge. However, that need not prevent man from having some knowledge of it. *Filled with all the fulness* is a phrase so formed for the purpose of emphasis. When a man complies with the terms of salvation, he becomes the possessor of all that God has provided for him in this life. There is nothing lacking in his spiritual needs (Colossians 2:

10), even though he does not fully understand all its divine greatness.

Verse 20. This verse should be regarded as an inspired comment on Romans 8: 26, as they mean virtually the same thing. It does not say that God will do for us all that we ask, for He knows better than we what is good for us. The thought is that God *is able* to do whatever He deems best; also, God will even do us such favors in a better form than we are able to express it. *Power* is from DUNAMIS, one of the strongest words in the Greek language for the thought of might or ability. That power is used by the Lord as he answers our prayers, and it is *in us* or on our behalf.

Verse 21. The pronoun *him* stands for God, whose name is mentioned in verse 19. *Glory is from DOXA*, which occurs about 163 times in the Greek New Testament, and is rendered by “glory” 144 times. The outstanding definition in Thayer’s lexicon as it applies to God, is expressed by the three words, “praise, honor, glory.” Men are expected to honor God, but they are not left to follow their own devices in offering honor to Him. Unless they proceed in the way that God has directed, their pretensions of honor will not be recognized by Him. It is stated by the apostle that the glory (or honor and praise) that is offered to God is to be done *in the church*. This decree rules out all other attempts, devised by man. Even admitting that the show of honor performed by men outside the church are as expressive as any that are done in the church, yet it will not be accepted because He has ruled that it must be done through the divine organization. This is in agreement with the divine purpose that all religious instruction must be done by the church (verse 10). The further stipulation that the glorying must be done *by Christ Jesus* is not done arbitrarily, but is logically necessary if it is to be done *in the church*, for chapter 1: 22 declares that Christ was given to be head over all things to the church. Therefore, anything that is done in the church is done by Christ Jesus, and vice versa. *Throughout all ages*. There are men who teach that the church was sufficient for the Lord’s purposes in the beginning of the era, but that modern conditions make it necessary for new methods to be used. This italicized phrase disproves that heresy, for it declares the honor given to God in the church must be so done through-

out all ages. As a matter of further emphasis Paul adds *world without end* which is the same as saying "to the end of the world." *Amen* is explained at Matthew 5: 18 in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.

#### Ephesians 4

Verse 1. *Therefore* means that a conclusion is being drawn from the truths stated at the close of the preceding chapter. *Prisoner of the Lord* is explained in the comments on chapter 3: 1. To *beseech* means to entreat very earnestly. To *walk worthy* is to walk or conduct one's self in a manner suitable to his *vocation*. The last word technically means first the divine call or invitation to serve the Lord, and next it denotes that service itself. The same Greek word is used in 1 Corinthians 7: 20, where it is rendered "calling" and where the connection clearly shows it means a man's chief occupation. A Christian's chief occupation or *vocation* is service to the Lord.

Verse 2. *Lowliness* and *meekness* are virtually the same in meaning, but when used in combination, the first pertains to the state of mind and the second denotes the manner of approach. The phrase as a whole denotes a spirit of humility, which is indicated by the rest of the verse. *Longsuffering* does not indicate the least degree of compromise where principles of right and wrong are involved. It means patience in dealing with those who are uninformed and who thereby are led to make things unpleasant for others. *Forbearing* means about the same thing, and the apostle names the motive that will cause Christians to treat each other as he has been instructing them to do, and such motive is accounted for by the fact they have love for each other.

Verse 3. The "seven units" as they are so familiarly termed will be itemized soon, and in view of that combination the apostle gives a significant exhortation in this verse. All who are in the church are partakers of the one Spirit that animates the spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 12: 13; Ephesians 2: 18.) In this formal sense all members of the body of Christ are a unit since they are in the one and only institution that has been organized by the Lord. However, members of the church sometimes make their unity "doctrinal" only, and while maintaining a "united front" against the encroachments of false teachings and organizations of

men, they may not observe the degree of love for each other that they should. As a result, there will not be the *peace* with that organic unity that is so necessary for the welfare of the cause of Christ.

Verse 4. Having introduced the subject of unity in the preceding verse, Paul now names the items involved in the setup, consisting of six or seven, depending on the classification named in verse 6, to be considered when we come to that verse. *One body and one Spirit*. This is logical, for it is universally admitted that there is but one Spirit, hence if there were more than one body (which is the church) then all but one would be without a Spirit and hence would be dead, since a body without a spirit is dead. There can be but *one hope* because God has called us with only one purpose in view, namely, the life eternal beyond this age.

Verse 5. The primary meaning of *Lord* is "ruler," and God is generally thought of as the Ruler of the universe. At the same time we commonly think of Christ as Lord; why, then, does Paul say there is *one Lord*? There is a special sense in which Christ is Lord, in that he is "head over all things to the church" (chapter 1: 22); hence He is this *one Lord*. Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10: 17); since there is but one inspired Word there can of necessity be but *one faith*. We frequently hear people speaking about the various "faiths" in the world. Doubtless there are many systems of religious doctrines in the world, but they can only be those produced by human wisdom, and are thus vain beliefs since the apostle definitely declares there is *one faith*. *One baptism*. The simple meaning of this word is "immersion" or "an overwhelming," regardless of who is baptized, the element in which it is done or the purpose for the act. The New Testament tells us of four different baptisms; that of suffering (Matthew 20: 22, 23), of fire (Matthew 3: 11), with the Holy Ghost (same reference), and with water (Acts 10: 47, 48). We are sure that Paul was aware of all these, yet he says there is *one baptism*. The apparent difficulty will clear up by observing that the first three are not commanded of sinners while the fourth one is. Whatever the Lord wished to take place by His action, whether that be some kind of baptism or anything else, was sure to happen without the cooperation of man. But

something that must be done in response to a divine commandment, requires the willing act of needy mankind. Of such kind of baptism there is but one, and that is water baptism. Hence we find it here in a list of things that pertain to man's *endeavoring* in response to the apostolic command. More information on the meaning of the word *baptism* is given at Acts 8: 38, in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 6. God and the Father are actually the same person, and hence give only one item of the "units" referred to at verse 4. The first term refers to Him as a deity, a fact applying to him regardless of all other persons in the universe. The second states His relation to other individuals as the Heavenly Parent. The words *above*, *through* and *in* are used for the purpose of emphasis. Paul wishes us to think of God as the one supreme Being who is superior to all others in existence.

Verse 7. Several verses following this one deal with the spiritual gifts that Christ caused to be given to disciples in the first years of the church. This verse refers to them as *grace* because the possession of them was certainly a favor, which is the meaning of *grace*. *According to the measure* denotes that not all disciples received the same kind or amount of this spiritual favor. (See 1 Corinthians 12: 4-7.) But whatever degree of this grace that was bestowed upon the various members of the church, it was all a part of *the gift of Christ*.

Verse 8. *Wherefore he saith* indicates a quotation is about to be made, which is from Psalms 68: 18, and it is a prediction of the ascension of Jesus to Heaven, which is the meaning of *on high*. *Captivity* is from a Greek word that is translated "a multitude of captives" in the margin of many Bibles. This rendering agrees with the definitions and comments of both Thayer and Robinson. The fact that Jesus did this leading of the captives *when he ascended up on high* indicates it applies to some special group. Evidently that consisted of the saints who are mentioned in Matthew 27: 52, 53, who came from their graves after the resurrection of Jesus. It will be well for the reader to see the notes on Romans 8: 29, 30, in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary. These saints had been prisoners (captives) in Hades, but they were released from

their "narrow chambers of death" by the resurrection of Jesus, who then led them with Him *when he ascended* to the Eternal Abode of those who are never to die again. As soon as Jesus arrived in the presence of his Father, he prayed that the Holy Spirit (Comforter, John 14: 16, 17) would be sent down upon the apostles. That was done, enabling them to bestow spiritual gifts upon them who had obeyed the Gospel (Acts 8: 15-18). The purpose of these gifts will be explained a little farther on in this chapter.

Verses 9, 10. These verses are a break into the direct line of thought that the apostle is discussing. However, are related to it in that they show the importance of Him of whom so much is being said. Having just referred to the ascension of Jesus, the apostle deems it well to say a few words about that subject. There have been two persons who have ascended to Heaven before: Enoch (Genesis 5: 24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2: 1, 11). But these persons were natural men prior to their ascension, hence that experience would not prove them to be divine. Paul at once meets that situation by declaring that this one who was said to have *ascended*, had before that time *descended*, and of necessity we would understand the descension to have been from the same place to which he afterwards ascended, which was Heaven, and that proves the divine origin and character of Jesus. *Lower parts of the earth*. Some explain this to mean the grave; it could not mean Hades since that is no part of the earth. Others teach that it refers to the lowly state which Jesus took upon himself and the humble life that he lived. I believe the statement embraces all of these and any other facts that were true of His stay on this earth. As proof that Paul has these great facts in mind, I will use the space to quote as follows: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2: 6-8). The first half of the tenth verse virtually repeats the statement of the preceding one, and then adds the phrase *above all heavens*. Since the heavens were all created by Christ in cooperation with God, it follows that in going back to his

Father, Jesus would be raised above those things he had assisted in making. *Fill all things* is said in the sense of fulfilling all things that He had promised to do, including the bestowal of the Comforter (promised in John 14: 16) to give to the apostles miraculous power, and the work of conferring spiritual gifts upon others, which gifts will be discussed soon.

Verse 11. *And he gave some.* Many translators and commentators insert the words "to be" after this italicized phrase. But the grammatical inflection does not require nor justify it, so that the words must be regarded as an insertion upon no inspired authority. On the other hand, the word "unto" is in the text in verse 8, where the subject matter is the same as it is in our present verse, and thus the word may be inserted after the phrase with inspired example. It is true that bestowing the office of apostleship and the other offices mentioned, could be regarded as an honor and hence as a gift. But if that is the gift Paul meant, then we are confronted with the thought that the apostleship and eldership were to be discontinued after the first ages of the church, for verse 13 shows the gifts were not to be permanent. In truth, that very heresy is today advocated by some extremists. No, it means that Christ bestowed some of the spiritual gifts upon the various persons named. That is not strange, for even the apostles needed miraculous qualifications while the New Testament was in the making. But the office of the apostleship itself was not to cease after the miraculous gifts ceased, but they (the apostles) were to continue in authority unto the end of the world (Matthew 28: 20).

These *prophets* were the ones referred to in chapter 2: 20. *Evangelists* is from EUAGGELISTES, which Thayer defines, "a bringer of good tidings, an evangelist," and he adds this comment: "This name is given in the New Testament to those heralds of salvation through Christ who are not apostles." Robinson defines it, "In the New Testament, an evangelist, a preacher of the Gospel," and adds the explanation, "not fixed in any place, but travelling as a missionary to preach the Gospel and establish churches." Groves defines it, "an evangelist, preacher of the Gospel." Greenfield gives the definition, "one who announces glad tidings, an evangelist, preacher of the Gospel, teacher of the Christian religion." I

have quoted from a number of lexicons because of the confusion that some are under concerning this word. The general trend of the various definitions, together with the connections in which the word is found in the King James Version, gives us the conclusion that it means a preacher whose special work is to preach the Gospel in new fields, then call the converts into assemblies for regular services, take charge of their development until men have been qualified for the eldership, then after appointing the elders to take himself from the management of the congregation and go on to other fields of labor. (See Titus 1: 5; 2 Timothy 4: 5; 1 Timothy 5: 19-21.) *Pastors* is from POIMEN and Thayer's definition is, "a herdsman, especially a shepherd; the presiding officer, manager, director, of any assembly." It applies to the elders of a congregation. This is shown in 1 Peter 5: 1-5 where the elders are mentioned in connection with Christ whom the apostle calls the chief Shepherd, thus representing the elders as shepherds, that being one of the words in the definition of our word *pastors*. *Teachers* is indefinite and applies to any disciple engaged principally in giving instruction to others.

Verse 12. This verse is a general statement of the purpose of spiritual gifts mentioned in the preceding verse. *Perfecting* means the strengthening of the saints (or Christians). *Work of the ministry* denotes the service of Christ in general. *Edifying* means upbuilding or making firm and being braced against attack.

Verse 13. *Till* is a preposition and denotes the termination of something. As used in this place it means that the things named in the preceding two verses will cease at the accomplishment of those mentioned in the present verse. *In the unity*. The first word is from EIS and may more properly be rendered "into." *Of the faith*. Verse 5 declares there is *one faith*, hence it is always a unit, and the statement of Paul does not mean that something was to be done to bring the faith into a unit, for it is already so. The thought is that *all* professed disciples would come into or embrace that unity. *And of the knowledge*. The word *unity* has already been introduced in connection with *faith*, and it is implied in connection with the phrase about knowledge. That would make it mean as if it said "and into the unity of the knowledge," etc. Since not all kinds



of knowledge is desirable, Paul specifies the kind he is writing about, namely, that of the Son of God. *Perfect man* is a figure of speech and means a full-grown man in contrast with an immature child. The illustration is to show the difference between the time when the church had to depend on spiritual gifts, and when it would have the complete New Testament. The contrast is likened to the immature thoughts and activities of a child, as against those of a man. *Stature* is from HELIKIA, which Thayer defines, "age, time of life; adult age, maturity; stature." It refers both to the age and size of a person, hence is a fitting illustration of the subject at hand. *Fulness of Christ* denotes that completeness of spiritual advancement that Christ makes possible through the complete revelation of the New Testament. I shall urge the reader to consider again the comments on 1 Corinthians 13th chapter.

Verse 14. The preceding two verses and several following the present one, show what is to be accomplished affirmatively by the complete New Testament. The present one states some of the things to be avoided by the complete volume. The original word for *children* is defined "untaught, unskilled," in Thayer's lexicon, and it is used to illustrate the unreliable standing of disciples who have no complete volume to guide them. *Tossed to and fro* is another figure for the same purpose, representing the untaught disciples as a frail raft tossed about by the waves. Waves are usually caused by *winds*, and the ones Paul has in mind are the false doctrines of men. Without the help of special guidance, the disciples would not be able to detect the false doctrines. *Sleight and cunning craftiness* refers to the trickery and deceptive language that false teachers use to mislead the untaught.

Verse 15. *Speaking the truth in love*. It is possible for one to be very strict in his compliance with the demands of truth from a "doctrinal" or technical motive, and yet not manifest the proper spirit toward those whom he addresses. Paul speaks of certain ones who received not the *love* of the truth (2 Thessalonians 2: 10). Those people would outwardly admit the truth because it is so evident they could not deny it, yet they had no real love for it and hence did not profit by it. In our passage the apostle teaches that full-grown Christians will love to speak

the truth. Truth is the substance upon which the disciple of Christ may grow—*grow up into Him in all things*. Physical bodies will not thrive unless they are under the control of the head where all the directing impulses originate. Likewise it is necessary for the spiritual body (the church, chapter 1: 22, 23) to have its growth and activities controlled by Christ its head, which will be considered in full detail with the next verse.

Verse 16. This verse as a whole may be regarded as a compound-complex sentence, but the central thought is expressed by the words *the whole body maketh increase*. All the rest of the verse is related to these words, enlarging and explaining how the body (the church) makes this increase. It is one of the most informative passages in the apostolic writings on the subject of "mutual edification," otherwise and more accurately termed mutual ministry; let us analyze the verse very carefully. *From whom* means from Christ who was named in the preceding verse as the head of the body. *The whole body*. If any part of a human body is thrown out of connection with the head, a state of ill health will result. Likewise the entire body or church must be subject to Christ the head, or spiritual illness will develop. *Fitly joined together*. In 1 Corinthians 12: 18 Paul is using the fleshly body as an illustration where he says: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." The same is true of the spiritual body or church, of which he is writing in this verse. *Compacted* is similar in meaning to the last italicized phrase, only it is a stronger term. The phrase means the members are so constructed that they fit each other, while the word *compacted* denotes a closer knitting of the parts as if they were welded together to compose this body of which Christ is the head. *Every joint supplieth*. The joints are the members of the body, and the phrase clearly teaches that each member of the church is expected to contribute something toward the edification of it. Any discrimination that is made against a member of the body is wrong, and any member who fails to contribute whatever he can to the advancement of the church is a dead joint that is a detriment to the body of Christ. This *effectual working* must be according to *the measure* or ability of the parts, since the members do not all have the same

talents. When all of this process is observed, it will result in the increase or growth of the body, and it will be edified or built up in love for the Head and for each other as members.

Verse 17. *Testify in the Lord.* The first word means to exhort, and Paul is doing it in the Lord or by His instruction. The Ephesians were Gentiles mainly and had previously walked after the ways of the ungodly world. Having accepted Christ and started in His service, they were exhorted to discontinue their life of sin. *Other Gentiles* means those who had not become Christians.

Verse 18. This and the following verse describes the unrighteous way of life that the Gentiles practice who are still under the darkness of heathenism. It is much like the description of them in Romans 1: 18-24. *Understanding* means the mind, and it was darkened by their being *alienated* or separated from Him. The situation is accounted for by the fact of their *blindness* of heart. The other word for blindness is hardness of heart, or stubbornness.

Verse 19. *Being past feeling* all comes from the one Greek word *APALGEO*, and Thayer defines it, "to become callous." They were so hardened by sin that the truth had little or no effect on them, until they were even not concerned whether a thing was right or wrong. Such a state of mind would cause them to abandon themselves to the grossest kind of practices. *LASCIVIOUSNESS* means vile and vicious thoughts and desires. *All uncleanness* would include both physical and mental kinds. These people not only practiced such things, but did it *with greediness*, which denotes an active appetite for that kind of life.

Verse 20. *But ye have not so learned Christ.* The thought of this verse is as if it said, "you did not learn such practices from Christ." The Ephesian brethren had evidently become tinctured with such corruptions, for the exhortations so common in the rest of this chapter, as well as in many other places in the epistle, indicates such a conclusion. We recall this is the same church that is accused by John of having "left its first love" (Revelation 2: 1-4).

Verse 21. *If so be* is not said in the sense of any doubt, but it means that it really was true they had heard about Christ, and had been given the truth concerning Him. That being true, the apostle would repeat what he had said

in the preceding verse, then go on and give his readers some exhortations concerning righteous living in Christ.

Verse 22. To *put off* means to cease doing things that belong to men of the world. *Conversation* refers to the general conduct including the speech used with their fellowmen. *Old man* is a figurative name for the fleshly desires that people of the world try to satisfy. It is the same "old man" that is described in Romans 6: 1-6. *Deceitful lusts*. Such lusts are deceitful because they lead a man to think he is enjoying genuine pleasure, and yet they will be disappointing in the end.

Verse 23. *Spirit* and *mind* means virtually the same thing in a sentence like this, but the two are used for the purpose of emphasis. Paul wants them to realize that he is not writing about things that the fleshly body desires, but of those that are higher, and of a spiritual character. To be *renewed* denotes a change in their mind from an interest in carnal things, to desire the things that are spiritual.

Verse 24. *Put on* is the opposite of *put off* that is used in verse 22, and *new man* is the opposite of *old man* in the same verse. In ordinary language it means to cease doing worldly things and begin doing those that are spiritual. God is the creator of the material universe and also gives man his fleshly body. And He also is the creator or originator of the spiritual life that is to be practiced in Christ. *True holiness* does not imply there could be such a thing as false holiness. The phrase means that holiness is that kind of life that is according to truth.

Verse 25. Genuine repentance means a reformation of life, and it includes both the ceasing of practices that are wrong, and the doing of those that are right. Hence Paul teaches that lying should be put away, and truthful speaking be done instead. *Members one of another* is true because all Christians are members of the one body, namely, the body of Christ. (See Romans 12: 5:.) It would not be good for the different parts of the physical body to oppose each other, for that would have a bad effect upon the whole body (1 Corinthians 12: 26). On the same principle, the members of the church should be interested in each other to such an extent that they would not do each other any harm by being untruthful in their dealings together.

Verse 26. The mere fact of being angry does not constitute sin, for

Jesus looked upon the people with anger (Mark 3: 5), and God is angry with the wicked every day (Psalms 7: 11). The sin consists in what one allows his anger to lead him into doing. That is why the apostle adds the warning not to let the sun go down upon one's wrath. That is, do not harbor the angry thoughts, but banish them before the day comes to a close, lest they finally tempt us into committing some sin.

Verse 27. *Neither give place to the devil.* Do not furnish the devil any room in your heart, for he will be sure to occupy it and go to work with his schemes. If a person harbors wrath from day to day, he is making an opportunity for the devil, and that is the same as giving him place.

Verse 28. Many of the admonitions throughout these verses deal with the two sides of practices, namely, the wrong and the right. The reader is instructed to avoid the first and do the second. The thief must cease obtaining property by stealing, then go to work that he may obtain it in an honest way. This is not only to supply his own needs, but also those of others. There are persons who are unable to support themselves, and that makes it the duty of the strong to help them in their need.

Verse 29. *Corrupt* is from *SAPROS*, which Thayer defines, "Of poor quality, bad, unfit for use, worthless." Robinson defines it, "Bad, decayed, rotten; corrupt, foul." *Communication* is from *LOGOS*, and it has been rendered by "word" in the King James Version at least 220 times. Hence the first sentence of this verse means that Christians should not use any language that is filthy and useless. Paul gives his explanation of what constitutes *good* language, namely, that which will edify or build up and strengthen the hearer. Such speech will further help the hearers by ministering or serving them with *grace*, which means favor of a spiritual kind.

Verse 30. A part of Thayer's definition of the original of *grieve* is "to offend." The Bible was given to the world through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If we show any disrespect for the Sacred Volume, then, we will *grieve* or offend the Spirit. *Whereby ye are sealed* means they are furnished with assuring evidence by the Spirit which reveals the truth of salvation through the apostles. *Day of redemption* refers to the day of judgment when all faithful servants of God will receive

their eternal crown of redemption from sin.

Verse 31. *Bitterness* is the same as strong hatred. The three words, *anger*, *wrath* and *malice* are used in this one verse, indicating that there is some distinction between them, although they have a similarity of meaning and may generally be used interchangeably. The three words are used in immediate succession in Colossians 3: 8. The difference is chiefly in the degree of their intensity. *Anger* is the temper when stirred up, but which should not be retained beyond the sunset. If it is so retained it may develop into a more fixed state and then it is *wrath*. If it is still cherished against another it will become *malice* which is a form of hateful spite. *Clamor* means a disorderly outcry or noisy demonstration against someone whom we consider as being in the wrong. *Evil speaking* refers to unfavorable remarks against another that are made from the motive of injuring him. All of the evils named in this verse must be *put away* or avoided by those who have become Christians.

Verse 32. *Kind* and *tenderhearted* does not require any compromise of the right, but it means that we should be considerate in our criticism of others in view of our own weaknesses. (See Galatians 6: 1.) *Forgiving one another, even as.* The point is that God has given us a divine example of the act of forgiveness, and we should be influenced by that example also to forgive our brethren.

## Ephesians 5

Verse 1. *Dear children* means beloved or favorite children. If a child could think of his father only as a tyrant, and a man who regarded his offspring merely as subjects whom he could rule with a cruel hand, it would be an unpleasant task to obey his commands. On the other hand, if he believed that his father was directing his conduct because of a deep love for his child, it would certainly be a joy to obey such a parent. God has given numerous evidences of His love for the children in the divine family, and Paul asks the Ephesian brethren to obey Him from that motive.

Verse 2. *Walk in love* is along the same line as the preceding verse; love to walk so as to please the loving Father. An additional motive is in the fact that Christ as well as God loved us—even before we loved Him. The

love of Christ for us was proved by the supreme sacrifice that He made for us by the death on the cross. *Sweet-smelling savor* is said in view of some sacrifices that were offered to God under the law of Moses, in which sweet incense was burned as an odor that was sweet.

Verse 3. *Fornication* is the unlawful intimacy of the sexes. For a detailed explanation of the word in its relation to "adultery," see the comments at Galatians 5: 19. *Uncleanness* means impurity in general, whether of the body or the mind. *Covetousness* is from PLEONEXIA which Thayer defines. "greedy desire to have more." A reasonable desire for the good things of the world is not wrong, for they are necessary to man's existence in this life. But a greedy desire for them will take a man's mind away from spiritual matters and may lead him back into a life of sin. *Not be once named*. We should not interpret any statement in the Bible in such a way as to contradict some other plain one. The fact that Paul just named these things shows he is not forbidding his brethren even to mention them, for that would be condemning himself. The explanation is in the last three words of the verse, namely, *as becometh saints*. Hence he means these things should not be mentioned with approval.

Verse 4. The Greek word for *filthiness* in this *passage* does not appear in any other place in the New Testament. It means something that is low grade in character, either in word or deed. *Foolish talking* and *jesting* mean virtually the same thing, but the two are used for the sake of making a stronger impression. Christians are not required to be glum and unhappy, yet they should not indulge in conversations that are undignified and meaningless. *Not convenient* means unbecoming; anything that would be out of place in a Christian. *Rather giving of thanks*. The children of God have so much to be thankful for, that such a frame of mind should influence their speech.

Verse 5. Even one single act of unlawful sexual intimacy constitutes fornication or adultery, but a *whoremonger* is a man who makes it a common practice; especially one who patronizes a woman who receives men for money. *Unclean person* means one who is corrupt either in body or mind. *Covetous* is explained in the comments at verse 3. Paul does not say that such a man is merely as bad as an idolater,

but says he is one. That is because idolatry consists of being devoted to any thing or person except the one true God. A man who is greedy for the temporal things of this world will be chiefly interested in them, and will give his greatest devotion along that line, hence is an idolater. An *inheritance* is a share in the property of another either through a relationship with him, or by some provision in his will. God has offered to adopt any person who will, into His family, and thus make him an heir of the Heavenly Estate. Paul states that such evil characters as the ones just mentioned will be denied any share in the good things of God. It is called the kingdom of Christ *and* God, because both the Father and the Son are one in spirit and purpose. Christ is the active king, ruling under his Father, but at the last day he will give up the rule that the Father may be the exclusive King. (See 1 Corinthians 15: 24-28.)

Verse 6. *Vain words* are those that sound very well on the surface, but which are deceptive in reality. Some men might be able to speak in such a way as to make it seem that the things Paul had just mentioned were not wrong; he is warning his brethren against such false teachers. God's wrath is never shown against anything that is right, yet it has been expressed concerning these practices; therefore they must be wrong. *Children of disobedience* is a figurative term that means a group of persons who do not have enough faith in their professed father to obey Him.

Verse 7. A *partaker* with a person is one who either actually joins with him in doing the same things, or who encourages him in it by friendship with him.

Verse 8. *Were sometimes darkness* refers to the time when these Ephesians were in the darkness of heathenism. Having been led into the light of divine truth in Christ, their *walk* or general conduct should be in harmony with such divine truth. *Children of light* is a figure similar to the one in verse 6 except that it applies to truth instead of unbelief.

Verse 9. A tree is known by its fruit (Matthew 7: 16-20), and the kind of character a man maintains can be known only by the fruit or outward deeds in his life. The Spirit cannot produce anything but that which is *goodness and righteousness and truth*.

This important subject is treated also in Galatians 5: 22, 23.

Verse 10. When men walk according to the truth that has been given to them by the Spirit (through the inspired writers), it produces the good fruit of righteousness just mentioned. That will *prove* (make a practical demonstration) the Lord's way is best.

Verse 11. To *have fellowship* has the same meaning as being a partaker, which is commented upon at verse 7, but Paul adds another command in this verse, namely, to *reprove* the evil. The word is from ELEGCHO, and Thayer defines it at this place, "by conviction to bring to light, to expose." According to the laws of the land, even, "to conceal a crime constitutes another crime." If the servants of God know of the existence of sin and do not condemn it, they thereby become partakers thereof. All active things whether good or bad produce some kind of fruit (Matthew 7: 17), hence the word *unfruitful* in our verse means that it does not bear any proper fruit. *Works of darkness* refers to the evil practices that are performed under the cover of the darkness of error and the absence of spiritual light of truth.

Verse 12. The workers of darkness mentioned in the preceding verse are the persons meant by "them" in this verse. To *speak of* cannot mean the mere reference to the things done, for Paul has just done that very thing. The word *speak* is from LEGO, and one part of Thayer's definition is, "to enumerate, recount, narrate, describe." *In secret* denotes that the things they were doing were not open to the public, not that no people knew anything about it. Paul had to know about it, else he could not have spoken of it as he did. Neither is that because he was an inspired man, for some historians have given accounts of such proceedings. But they were often so vile and immoral that it would be a shock to the decent mind to describe them in detail.

Verse 13. *Reproved* means to be exposed or made known to all, and that would be done by turning on the *light* of truth. That is why those deeds were done "behind closed doors." This subject is treated in John 3: 19-21, which shows the same spirit of men who do not want their actions to be known, because they fear that good people would refuse to have any fellowship with them.

Verse 14. The terms used in this verse are figurative or spiritual, and pertain to the proper conduct of Christians. Divine truth is referred to as light, because it makes known many things that could not be known otherwise. Isaiah 60: 1-5 is a passage that deals with the subject of light, and our verse evidently refers to that. Paul is exhorting the brethren to bestir themselves from their spiritual slumber, and arise from their spiritually-dead condition so as to be ready for the light that Christ offers.

Verse 15. The original for *circumspectly* is defined by Thayer, "exactly, accurately, diligently." To *walk* in such a manner, it is necessary for one to *see* or take heed to the divine law that is given to direct his steps. Jeremiah 10: 23 says "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Hence it is necessary for the Lord to give the directions, which He has done in his word of truth. The sentence may well be expressed by the familiar phrase appearing in many public places, "watch your step." The original for *fools* does not appear in any other place in the Greek New Testament. It does not mean a person without intelligence, for such an individual would not be responsible and hence should not be given any religious commands. The word is defined in the lexicon, "unwise, foolish," and Robinson explains it, "without true wisdom in Christ." This shows the word means a person who does not consult the Lord's instructions as to the proper way to walk; the *wise* person is the one who does give them heed.

Verse 16. *Redeeming* is from EXAGOBAZO, and Thayer's definition (the part in italics) at this place is, "to make a wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good." *Time* is from KAIROS, and Thayer defines it at this place, "opportune or seasonable time," then adds the comment, "with verbs suggestive of the idea of advantage." This definition fits in well with the meaning of redeeming just explained. We should make use of every advantage that comes before us for doing something good. If that is done, it can be said that the time we spend is not in vain. *Days* is from EMERA, and it has such a wide range of meaning that Thayer uses two pages of his lexicon in defining it. Paul means there is much evil present in these days, and Thayer's definition of *evil* at this place is, "bringing toils, annoyances, perils."

To overcome these *evils* and make the time count ~~for~~ good, we are exhorted to "redeem the time."

Verse 17. This verse is related to the preceding one in that it recognizes the contrast between wisdom and the lack of it. The man who understands the will of the Lord is regarded by the apostle as a wise man, and vice versa. Such wisdom is necessary to enable one to walk in the ways of righteousness.

Verse 18. *Excess* is from ASOTIA. Thayer and Robinson agree on the meaning of this word, but I shall quote the definition of the latter because he uses a more common language. "Debauchery, revelry, riot." The American Standard Version also renders it "riot." The heathens generally filled themselves with wine and then engaged in their idolatrous performances, which often were disorderly even to the extent of being immoral. In contrast to that, Paul instructs his brethren to be filled with the Spirit. That can be done by drinking deep from the fountain of truth as it is produced by the Spirit through the preaching and teaching of the apostles. Instead of making them drunk and leading them into riotous actions and filthy conversations, it will produce the kind of thought exchange that is indicated in the next verse.

Verse 19. There is so much misunderstanding in the religious world over the proper kind of "music" to be used in the services of the Lord, that I believe it will be well to go into much detail at this verse. I shall first give the meaning of the different words in the passage. *Speaking* is from LALEO, which means words uttered by mouth, regardless of whether it is done merely as expressions of speech, or performed by singing. In the present verse it is used only in the form of singing. *Psalms* is from PSALMOS, which Thayer defines, "a pious song, a psalm." *Hymns* is from HUMNOS, and the same lexicon defines it, "a sacred song, hymn." *Songs* is from ODE and Thayer defines it, "a song, lay, ode," and explains it to mean, "in the Scriptures a song in praise of God or Christ." *Making melody* is from PSALLO. This word originally referred to a musical instrument and is defined in Thayer's lexicon, "to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang; to touch or strike the chord, to twang the strings; to play on a stringed instrument, to play the harp; to sing to the music of a harp." Many words in the old classical language

came later to have a more restricted meaning, and that is the case with PSALLO. Hence, Thayer defines it further as follows: "In the New Testament, to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song." Since the word literally has reference to a musical instrument, but Paul uses it figuratively, he tells us what instrument Christians are to play, namely, the heart. *Spiritual songs* means those exhibiting the effects and character of the Holy Spirit as taught in the New Testament. Any composition that combines the qualities of PSALMOS, HUMNOS and ODE would be a scriptural song, and such a composition is possible according to a footnote in Thayer's lexicon.

Verse 20. In Colossians 3: 16 Paul writes a passage on the same subject as the preceding verse at this place, but there is some difference in the wording as to what is to be accomplished by the singing. The brethren are to teach and admonish each other, and in the next verse they are told to give thanks to God, after having told them to do everything in the name of Jesus. We should consider our present passage in the same light as the one in the letter to the Colossians. *Whatever* ye do is directly connected with the command in the preceding verse to "teach" themselves in song, hence they were to speak on the subject of doing things for the Lord's cause, just as the instructions are given in our present passage. *In the name* means by the authority of Jesus, and all of the deeds performed for Him will prompt the true disciple to offer thanksgiving for the privilege of doing things for the Lord.

Verse 21. Whatever the New Testament says in one place must be considered in the light of what it says elsewhere on the same subject. We know there are certain men in the church who have ruling authority over others (1 Thessalonians 5: 12, 13; Hebrews 13: 17). By this we must understand our present passage does not teach a promiscuous exercise of rulership, for that would be divisive in its results. Thayer explains the original for *submitting* in this place, "to yield to one's admonition or advice." Such an explanation is correct since Paul adds the proviso *in the fear of God*. If a brother fears or reverences God, he will not give another disciple any admonition that is not in harmony with God's will. Therefore, if any member of the body of Christ, whether



official or private, gives another some admonition that is according to the will of the Lord, it is the duty of that person so admonished to heed the advice. Such an attitude if manifested by the various members of the church would prevent much of the confusion that so often divides the body.

Verse 22. This verse should be understood on the principle set fourth in the preceding one. A wife must *submit* to the authority of her husband as long as he requires nothing that is contrary to the will of God. When she does that, she is doing so *as unto the Lord*, for He has willed the husband is the head of the wife.

Verse 23. A comparison is made between a husband as head of his wife, and Christ as the head of the church. No institution or organization or body, whether temporal or spiritual and whether physical or moral, can prosper without a head, and the body must be under the control of the head. *Saviour of the body*. Chapter 1: 22, 23 says the body of Christ is his church. Hence, unless a person is a member of the body or church of Christ, he has no promise of salvation.

Verse 24. All normal human bodies are subject to and controlled by their head, and likewise the church is subject to Christ its head. Since the husband is the head of the wife (verse 23), she is to be subjected to him. *In every thing* is modified by the proviso mentioned and explained at verse 22.

Verse 25. When a man asks a woman to become his wife, it is presumed that he loves her; but too often he ceases to have the affection that prompted his proposal, and he may even become "bitter" against her as the companion passage in Colossians 3: 19 expresses it. The love of Christ for his church is cited as an example of the love a true husband has for his wife. Christ proved his love by giving his life for the church, and a devoted husband will do all he can for the sake of his wife.

Verse 26. The comparison between a husband and wife on one hand, and Christ and the church on the other, is used for the purpose of illustration as far only as the two are similar. However, the case of Christ is far more extensive than is required of a husband. Christ literally died to produce the cleansing blood for the purification of the institution that was to become His bride. *Washing of water* refers to the ordinance of baptism, by which men and women are made members of the

divine body. (Acts 2: 38, 41, 47; Titus 3: 5.) *By the word*. *Baptism* will mean nothing to a man unless he submits to it in obedience to the *word* of the Lord (Romans 6: 17).

Verse 27. *Present it to himself*. When a man looks upon a woman who is to become his bride, he delights in seeing her properly attired, with garments that are suitable for the occasion, being unsoiled and free from wrinkles. Jesus wished his bride (the church) to be thus qualified, and the phrase in italics first applies to the way the church appears to Him in this world if it is what it should be. But the actual marriage is to take place at the judgment day, and Christ desires that when the time comes, the bride will have adorned herself properly, in character and appearance (2 Corinthians 11: 1, 2; Revelation 19: 7, 8). To enable her to be so adorned, He has provided her with garments that have been cleansed from all blemishes by his own blood. *Spot* or *wrinkle*. A wedding garment should be free from stains, and be smooth in its physical form. The figure means the church should be "unspotted from the world" (James 1: 27), and free from such evil blemishes as *wrinkles* that may be caused by contact with the pressure of sin. To be *holy* denotes a life that is righteous according to the rules that have been left by the bridegroom.

Verse 28. The apostle continues his comparison that was started at verse 22, because there are so many points of likeness between the family and the church, the two and only divine organizations on earth today. *Wives as their own bodies*. When a man joins himself to his wife they become one flesh (Genesis 2: 24; Matthew 19: 5, 6). That is why it is said that *he that loveth his wife loveth himself*.

Verse 29. Self-interest will cause a man to be concerned about his own body, and if he is neglectful of his wife's welfare, it indicates that he does not realize she is a part of him. Christ never forgets the relationship between Himself and the church, hence he has always been mindful of its needs.

Verse 30. The terms of this verse are literal as they pertain to the members of the fleshly body. That is why the blood of Christ is not mentioned, for He did not have any blood even after coming from the grave (John 19: 34; Luke 24: 39). However, the application is to our relationship with

Christ and with each other (Romans 12: 4, 5; 1 Corinthians 12: 27).

Verse 31. *For this cause.* Since the union of a man and woman makes them one flesh, the man should *leave his father and mother*—consider himself no longer under their authority as a specific part of their group—and should give undivided faithfulness to the new union he has formed with his wife.

Verse 32. A mystery is anything that is not known, whether complicated or simple in its character. It is also something that could not be discovered by human investigation alone. No uninspired man would have thought that the joining of a male and female in sexual intimacy would actually merge their bodies into one. But the word of God has declared it so, and the fact will be acknowledged by all who respect Him. Paul recognizes the great reality, but says he is referring to it as an illustration of Christ and the church.

Verse 33. *Nevertheless.* Because of his statement as to why he was referring to the great *mystery* of the marriage relation, some people might conclude that what the apostle said on that subject was of minor importance. He here avoids such an error by direct instructions on the duties of a husband to his wife, repeating what he said in several preceding verses on that subject. He then adds instructions for the wife in her proper attitude toward her husband. *Reverence* is from PHOBEO, which Thayer defines at this place, "To reverence, venerate [regard with respect], to treat with deference [court-courteous regard] or reverential obedience." It does not have the sense of regarding her husband as a superhuman or divine being, as the word "reverend" generally (but erroneously) is thought to mean.

### Ephesians 6

Verse 1. The fundamental commands by which one becomes a Christian are the same for all persons, regardless of their place in society and the nation. But there are various duties assigned to Christians that are adapted to them in the different relations of life. The preceding chapter deals with husbands and wives, while the present one starts with the special duties of children toward their parents. The original word for *children* means offspring, regardless of age or sex, and whether temporal or spiritual. But the connection here shows it means fleshly children of either sex, but old

enough to have become Christians and thus subject to the religious instructions from the apostle. We learn also that a son or daughter may be old enough to obey the Gospel while still under the control of the parents. *In the Lord* means they are to obey as long as the parents do not require them to do something contrary to the word of the Lord. The proviso is similar to "in the fear of God" in chapter 5: 21. *For this is right* states the highest motive that can prompt anyone in obeying the commands of the Lord.

Verse 2. *Honor* does not contradict the preceding verse. If a parent asks his child to do something that is contrary to the word of the Lord, then he is not required to obey it. But while refusing to obey the request of his parent because it is unscriptural, he should do so in a manner that does not show disrespect for the parent. The overbearing attitude that so many boys and girls manifest toward their parents is never right under any circumstances. *With promise.* (See next verse.)

Verse 3. This is the promise referred to in the preceding verse. It pertains to a temporal reward consisting of long life on the earth, particularly that part given to the Lord's ancient people. The promise is not literally extended to Christians, but it is mentioned to indicate the importance of the command. If children obey this command (together with all others given to Christians), they have the promise of sharing in the new earth promised the righteous. (Matthew 5: 5; 2 Peter 3: 13.)

Verse 4. *Provoke not . . . to wrath* all comes from PARORGIZO, which Thayer defines, "to rouse to wrath, to provoke, exasperate [vex bitterly], anger." Parents who fail to control their children sometimes try to find justification by this passage. The rest of the verse shows they are wrong in such a course. The phrase means for a father to correct his child firmly, but in a spirit that shows he is doing it for his good. *Bring them up* refers to the supporting and rearing of one's children. *Nurture* is from PAIDEIA, and in the King James Version it has been rendered by chastening 3 times, chastisement 1, instruction 1, nurture 1. Thayer defines it, "the whole training and education of children." He adds by way of explanation, "which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employes for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punish-

ment." Robinson's definition and comments are virtually the same as Thayer's. The correction that is included in the word *nurture* is to be accompanied with *admonition* or exhortation, which means an earnest plea for the children to give heed to the correction administered by the parent. *Of the Lord*. The third word is in the possessive case, and makes the phrase mean, "such as belongs to the Lord or proceeds from him." This would apply to a father's duty to discipline his children (including minors) in a way acceptable to the Lord.

Verse 5. The word *servant* in the King James Version comes from a number of Greek originals. The one in this verse is the most frequently used, and it means a slave or servant as we commonly use the term. It is from *DOULOS*, and Thayer defines it, "a slave, bondman, man of servile ["slavish"] condition." In the time of Christ and the apostles the Roman Empire contained millions of slaves. These were not all inferior persons as to intelligence, but were the victims of war or other conditions over which they had no control. The prevalence of these persons explains why so many references are made to them in the New Testament. Jesus did not intend to interfere with the relation of master and servant, but He did give many instructions about the duties of each to the other when either became a Christian. Hence our verse commands the servants to obey their masters. *According to the flesh* denotes they were their masters in temporal things only. *With fear and trembling*. Not fear of punishment from the master, for that would be equivalent to "eyeservice" which is condemned in the next verse. Following his definition of the original for *trembling*, Thayer gives the following comment: "Used to describe the anxiety of one who distrusts his ability completely to meet all requirements, but religiously does his utmost to fulfill his duty." *Singleness* means with sincerity from the heart. *As unto Christ*. A faithful servant of Christ will strive to do his duty because it is right, and a slave also should be conscientious in serving his master.

Verse 6. Both Thayer and Robinson explain *eyeservice* to be "service performed only under the eye of the master." Such service would not spring from a conscientious motive, and would indicate that if the master were absent the servant would come short of his

duty. *Doing the will of God*. It is the Lord's will that all men who are employed by others shall fulfill their obligation with a pure motive.

Verse 7. *As to the Lord* is the same as the preceding verse.

Verse 8. Earthly masters may not always reward their slaves fully for their services, nor even give them due credit for the good work done; but one wrong act does not justify another. The slave who does his duty from the heart will not be forgotten by the Lord, and will be duly rewarded in the day of Final Accounts.

Verse 9. *Do the same things*. The masters were to conduct themselves as the servants were exhorted to do, namely, remembering their obligation to the Lord. *Forbearing threatening*. The first word means to cease using threats as a means of forcing the servant into obedience. This would not bar all reference to possible punishment for disobedience, for the apostle makes direct reference to the Heavenly Master in connection with the subject, and we know He has threatened to punish all of the disobedient servants. (See 2 Corinthians 5: 11.) The phrase is clarified by the one at the close of the verse, namely, *neither is there respect of persons with him*. Doubtless there were masters who felt superior because of their relation as masters, and took advantage of it to frighten their slaves. Also there were certain slaves for whom they had a personal dislike, and would be influenced thereby to utter spiteful threats against them. Paul instructs them that the Master in Heaven will not make any distinction between any *persons* in the exercise of His judgments, whether between masters and slaves, or between one slave and another.

Verse 10. *Finally*. In this and the preceding chapter Paul gives special instruction to husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants. He now addresses his words to them all as his brethren, and the instructions he is about to deliver will apply to them all, as well as to other disciples of Christ. *Be strong in the Lord*. The apostle is about to introduce an illustration from a soldier in the Roman army. One of the first things to be considered when a war is being planned or expected, is to make sure that every possible preparation has been made to strengthen the forces soon to engage in battle. Accordingly, Paul tells his brethren to obtain such

a strength from the Lord. *Power* and *might* mean virtually the same thing, being items added to the general instruction to obtain strength from the Lord. It is as if the apostle had said, "equip yourselves for the war by calling upon the Lord, for he is powerful and mighty."

Verse 11. A few verses are devoted to general remarks about warfare, after which Paul will specify the parts of equipment that make up the armor and fighting implements for the conflict. It is necessary to put on the *whole* armor, not merely the parts that may be the most agreeable to wear. *Wiles* is from a Greek word that Thayer defines, "cunning arts, deceit, craft, trickery." The *devil* (from *DIABOLOS*) uses all sorts of tricks in his warfare against Christians, hence it is necessary to have on the whole armor, for there is no way of knowing just which piece will be needed most.

Verse 12. Paul likens the Christian warfare to a wrestling contest which was a common form of athletics in those days. In that bout the winner was required not only to throw his rival, but must hold him down with his hand upon his neck. A Christian must not only "win a point" against the devil, but must continue his victory until the antagonist acknowledges his defeat. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4: 7). *Not against flesh and blood* means the warfare is not a temporal one, but one in which the issue is religious or spiritual. (See 2 Corinthians 10: 3-6.) *Principalities* means rulers with seniority, and *powers* denotes that these rulers have authority from some effective source. The source is denoted by the phrase *darkness of this world*, which is a figure for the doctrines of error taught by false leaders. *Spiritual wickedness* is rendered "spiritual powers of wickedness" by the Englishman's Greek New Testament. *High places* is rendered "heavenly" in the margin. The Greek word *OURANOS* is the word for the three heavens—the air, the starry region, and the dwelling place of God. In our verse it means the first heaven, because the devil and his angels were said to have that region for their dominion. Hence we read of "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (chapter 2: 2).

Verse 13. After describing the kind of warfare the Christian is to fight, the apostle repeats his exhortation for

taking on the *whole* armor, which is necessary for him to withstand the enemy. *Evil day* means any day in which the enemy appears. *Having done all* comes from the Greek word *KATEBCAZOMAI*, and it is defined by Thayer, "to perform, accomplish, achieve; to work out, i.e., to do that from which something results." Hence the last five words of the verse means, "having taken on the whole armor and thus made full preparation, then make good the use of it and *stand* firm against the enemy." The Christian soldier who avails himself of this complete armor, then follows up with faithful use of it, is assured of final victory (Romans 8: 31, 37).

Verse 14. *Girt* is from *PERIZONNUO* which Thayer defines, "to fasten garments with a girdle," and he explains it to mean, "to fasten one's clothing about the loins with a girdle." Robinson defines it, "to gird oneself around, to be girded around," and his explanation is, "spoken in reference to the long flowing garments of the orientals [people of the East], which they gird up around them while engaged in any business." Further light will be shed on the passage by a similar word in 1 Peter 1: 13, which Thayer explains by the following information: "A metaphor [illustration] derived from the practice of the Orientals, who in order to be unhampered in their movements were accustomed, when about to start on a journey or engage in any work, to bind their long and flowing garments closely around their bodies and fasten them with a leathern girdle. Robinson gives the same definition and explanations. It explains the words "loins girded" in Exodus 12: 11, and "cast thy garment about thee" in Acts 12: 8. Paul uses the circumstance as an illustration; that truth will help the Christian to "get himself together" and be unhampered for the service at hand. The *breastplate* was a piece made of metal, covering the body from the neck to the hips, thus protecting the heart and other vital parts of the body. If a Christian's life is one of *righteousness*, the attacks of Satan cannot harm him. O, he might be put to death physically, but that will not injure his soul. (See Romans 8: 31, 38; Philippians 1: 20.)

Verse 15. *Feet shod*. The Israelites were told to have their shoes on their feet as they ate the passover. That was in order to be ready to travel on a moment's notice (Exodus 12: 11). The Christian is to be *prepared* to

travel as a spreader of the Gospel (Isaiah 52: 7) by means of the story of peace—peace in the great warfare for all the forces in the enemy's ranks if they will surrender to Christ.

Verse 16. The *shield* was a protective instrument supplementary to the breastplate, but smaller, and was carried by one hand and could be turned toward various danger spots independent of the general movements of the body. Firebrands in the form of darts were hurled by the hand in the close-up conflict. The shield was made of metal and could receive the *fiery darts* without any harm. The shield of the Christian is his faith in the great Commander, who has given assurance of victory. When a disciple of Christ gives up to the attacks of the enemy, it is because his faith is weak, and he acts as if the experience had come upon him as an unforeseen incident. Such is not the case, for 1 Peter 4: 12 warns Christians not to look upon the circumstance as some strange thing that has happened to them.

Verse 17. The *helmet* was a cap for the head, made of metal as a protection from the darts of the enemy. The term is more definite in 1 Thessalonians 1: 8, where it is called "the hope of salvation." A Christian can face any foe and even rejoice in the presence of death, because of his hope for salvation after death. Mohammed inspired his soldiers to "fight to the finish" by his assurance that faithful servants who died on the field of battle, would be taken to a land filled with the things that gratify the lusts of the flesh. Christ promises that faithful soldiers of the cross will live after earthly death in a country that will give unending enjoyment of spiritual pleasure. This completes the armor, all of which is for the forepart of the body, indicating that Christ expects his servants to be always facing the foe.

The only weapon that is furnished the Christian soldier is a sword, which denotes that the struggle is to be one of close contact—no long distance fighting. The sword consists of the word of God, which Paul declares is "sharper than any twoedged sword" (Hebrews 4: 12). It is the sword that Jesus used against Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4: 4, 7, 10). Paul calls it the *sword of the Spirit* because the word of God is inspired by that source. Since the days of the apostles the Holy Spirit operates and speaks to

man only by means of the Bible, hence the Christian soldier can "fight the good fight of faith" only if he knows what that Volume teaches.

Verse 18. *Praying always* is a general phrase, denoting that the soldier of the cross must never cease to be a praying man. *With all prayer* is rendered "with all manner of prayer" by Moffatt, and the lexicons agree with it. That is because the addresses offered to God are of various kinds and degrees of intensity, and Paul mentions some of them here. The simple word *prayer* is general and means any request or plea. *Supplication* is a more intense pleading for the thing desired. *In the Spirit* denotes the prayer must be spiritual, which means it is in harmony with the teaching of the Spirit in the word of God. *Watching*. Jesus taught his disciples to "watch and pray" (Matthew 26: 41). The soldier of the cross must always be on the alert against the tricks of the enemy. *Perseverance* means patient continuance in the service of Christ, even when conditions might seem to be unfavorable. *For all saints*. We should pray for ourselves and likewise for our brethren everywhere.

Verse 19. *And for me*. If an inspired apostle needed the prayers of his brethren, it is certain that other disciples need them also. However, Paul was not so much concerned about his personal welfare in the present instance. He was in Rome and was a prisoner, having been taken there upon his appeal when in the court of Festus (Acts 25: 9-12). He was anxious that *utterance* (opportunity to speak) might be given him to preach the Gospel boldly. *Mystery* is explained at chapter 1: 9.

Verse 20. *Ambassadors* is from PRESBEUO, which is used only twice in the New Testament (here and in 2 Corinthians 5: 20). Both Thayer and Robinson give us the simple word that is used in our verse as their definition, which shows they understand the Greek term to mean the same as the English, namely, "the official representative of his own government or sovereign." The term is never used in reference to any person but the apostles in the New Testament. Hence there are no ambassadors for Christ living on earth today, for the apostles are still in authority (Matthew 28: 20). *Bonds* is from ALUSIS which Thayer defines "a chain, bond," then adds the explanation "by which the

body, or any part of it (the hands, feet), is bound." It is an apparent contradiction that an ambassador would be shackled with a prisoner's chain. But we need to observe that the chain attached to Paul was not placed there by the government of which he was an ambassador. Hence, while bound in a literal chain by an enemy government, he might be able still to represent the sovereign in a foreign land. "The word of God is not bound" (2 Timothy 2: 9). Paul's mouth was still free, and he wished the brethren to pray for divine help that he might speak the Gospel of Christ with boldness.

Verse 21. Thayer says TYCHICUS was "an Asiatic Christian, friend and companion of the apostle Paul." Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary gives the same information, with additional notes that he carried the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.

Verse 22. Tychicus was near Paul much of the time and was acquainted with the state of affairs concerning the apostle. He could comfort the hearts of the brethren by the information that Paul was standing firm in his faith.

Verse 23. Paul's manner of salutation was not always the same as it pertained to the persons addressed. Sometimes he singled out certain individuals, at others he made it general as he does in this verse. Hence there is nothing significant in the form used.

Verse 24. Paul wishes the *grace* (favor of the Lord) to be with the brethren; that is, with those who professed to love Him and who were sincere.

### Philippians 1

Verse 1. The account of starting the church at Philippi is given in Acts 16, and the reader should now take time to study that entire chapter before going further with these comments. This epistle was written in Rome, under circumstances similar to those connected with the one to the Ephesians, for Paul was a prisoner in chains on account of the persecution of the Jews in Palestine (Acts, chapters 22 to 26). *Timotheus* is another form for Timothy, who was a faithful companion of Paul in his travels (Acts 16: 1-3), and hence with whom the brethren at Philippi would have some acquaintance. Paul mentions him as joining in the loving salutation to the church. The epistle is addressed to *all the saints*, which means all the Christians

in Philippi since the two words mean the same. The salutation includes both official and unofficial members, because the quality of being a saint is not an official one. However, the apostle makes special mention of the two and only classes of officials in the New Testament church. *Bishops* is another name for the elders or rulers over the congregation, which will be fully discussed at 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2. *Deacons*. The work of these officials is explained at Acts 6: 2, in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 2. *Grace* is from CHARIS, and one part of Thayer's definition is, "kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved." This phase of the word explains why the apostle specifies that it is the grace from God he is wishing for his brethren, since all of God's favors are bestowed upon man undeserved by him. They are bestowed only through the Lord Jesus Christ. That is because the sacrifice of Christ provided the way for God to maintain his justice and at the same time extend this unmerited favor to humanity. *Peace* is from EIRENE, which is used 90 times in the Greek New Testament, and is rendered by our present word 88 times. As it applies to individuals, Thayer defines it, "peace between individuals, i.e., harmony, concord." As to disciples and the Lord he defines it, "the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatever sort it is."

Verse 3. The original Greek word for *remembrance* is so rendered 3 times in the King James Version, and by "mention" 4 times. The various translations and commentaries differ as to their preferred rendering. The truth is that the difference between them is slight. However, I believe the connection favors the marginal rendering, namely, the word "mention." In Romans 1: 9 and Ephesians 1: 16 this Greek word is used in virtually the same kind of connection, and in each of those places it is rendered "mention." The verse could well be understood as if it said: "Every time I have occasion to mention you in my prayer, it is with thanksgiving for what you have meant to me in my service to Christ." Several verses following bears out this thought.

Verse 4. *Request with joy*. The record of helpful service extended to Paul



by the Philippian brethren enabled him to expect further good work by them. Hence his requests were made with the joyful feeling that God would grant his requests for them.

Verse 5. One of the things for which Paul believed God would bless the church at Philippi was their *fellowship in the Gospel*. The first word is from KOINONIA, which means anything by which one person shares with another the same experience. This can be done either by direct joining with him in the activities concerned, or by support of the same by contribution of money and other necessities of life. *From the first day* means the first of their acquaintance with Paul in his work among them, in which he got them started as a church of Christ. *Until now* indicates they did not cease their support of him as soon as he left their community. Chapter 4: 16 shows they sent contributions to him more than once when he was in Thessalonica.

Verse 6. The pronoun *he* refers to the Lord, to whom Paul gives the credit for all the good work accomplished at Philippi. *Will perform it*. The apostle's confidence in the faithfulness of the brethren prompts him to say this, for as long as disciples are faithful, He will continue to help them in their good work. *The day of Jesus Christ* literally means the coming of Christ, but it is equivalent to saying that He would be with them as long as they lived.

Verse 7. In the preceding verse Paul expresses his confidence in the perseverance of the Philippians to the end of life, thereby obtaining the continued favor of the Lord. He now affirms that such a feeling about them is *meet* or natural, and then gives his reason for the statement, namely, that they were constant in their fellowship with him under the *grace* or favor of God. *I have you in my heart*. The marginal rendering of this is, "you have me in your heart." I have consulted a number of translations and they are about equally divided between the two renderings. However, the Englishman's Greek New Testament gives the same as the margin. Since that work is a literal word-for-word translation I would prefer its form of the rendering. The difference, though, is not great, for the thought is that Paul and the brethren had a heartfelt interest in each other with reference to the great work of the apostle. *Bonds* refers to the chain that made Paul a prisoner,

but which did not keep him from making a *defence* of the Gospel, which refers primarily to the first proclamation of it. *Confirmation* means the assurances which the apostle gave of the truth of the preaching, which he accomplished through his inspiration and miraculous power.

Verse 8. *Record* means a witness; the apostle means that God knows all about what is in his heart with reference to the brethren at Philippi. *Bowels* is from SPLAGCHNON, which Thayer defines, "bowels, intestines." But it is used figuratively in the New Testament, which Thayer explains as follows: "In the Greek poets the bowels were regarded as the seat of the more violent passions, such as anger and love; but by the Hebrews as the seat of the tender affections, especially kindness, benevolence, compassions; hence is equivalent to our heart, tender mercies, affections, etc." As the apostle uses the term, it means that he longs after the brethren with a tender affection like that of Christ.

Verse 9. A meaningless love would be of no avail for any persons concerned. Paul wishes the love of his brethren to grow according to knowledge. *Judgment* means discernment or recognition of what is morally proper. The apostle prayed for such progress to be made by the brethren, and he wrote this epistle as a help along that line.

Verse 10. *Approve* means to try or test (by the scriptural standard of right and wrong). *Excellent* denotes things that differ from others for the better. The complete thought is that they may be able to recognize what is better after making the lawful test. Such a course would prove them to be sincere, which would also keep them approved by Christ until he came again.

Verse 11. The same thought as the preceding verse is expressed in this, but in different words. *Being filled* means the brethren were working in the Master's vineyard faithfully, and the result was a full crop of righteousness. *Which are by Christ Jesus* denotes that no good works can be done except as are authorized by Him. Such works will always reflect glory and praise to God, for he has willed that all service must be done through the Son.

Verse 12. *The things which happened unto me*. This includes Paul's entire experience of persecution, begin-

ning with his arrest and binding with a chain, and the unfavorable events being thrown around him since being in Rome. He did not wish his brethren to be unduly disturbed over the report of his situation, hence he made the present explanation which might well be expressed by a familiar phrase, "evils are often blessings in disguise." Such is the meaning of his statement that the happenings had *fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel*. The several verses following give the details of his remarks.

Verse 13. *Bonds* refers to the chain by which Paul was made a prisoner, and it was *manifest* literally since he had an actual metallic chain fastened to his body. *In Christ* is said because the apostle's persecution was an account of his service to Him. *Palace* is from PRAETORION, a military term, and is defined by Thayer at this place, "the camp of praetorian soldiers." Paul was under guard of the soldiers, even though permitted to occupy a house which he hired for himself (Acts 28: 30-31). Under these circumstances he would come in contact with a great many persons of various ranks, and to those who came within the sound of his voice he preached the Gospel, the subject because of which he was wearing the chain.

Verse 14. *Waxing confident by my bonds*. The brethren coming and going could see the chain attached to Paul's body, and could also behold his unwavering faith in Christ. Yes, they could see the chain and also hear him as he preached the Gospel to those who came near him. Such an example had the effect of strengthening their own faith, and causing them to go out among the people and repeat the sweet story of the cross. In this way Paul meant his persecutions had produced the good effect of *furtherance* (advancement) of the Gospel.

Verse 15. *Some* is general, but cannot apply to the persons mentioned in the preceding verse, for Paul speaks of them in a favorable way. Doubtless they were the Jews who had professed Christianity but who were inclined to Judaism. Such characters would naturally envy Paul's great work among the people who had heard him. *Preach Christ*. This is indefinite as to how much of the Gospel they preached. We are sure, however, that what was preached was correct, or else Paul would not have *rejoiced* in it as he does in verse 18. But these Juda-

izers spread the word that this Christ whom Paul was preaching was the Messiah of the Old Testament. This would be objectionable to the Romans since the predicted one was coming into the world as a king. With the mistaken idea that it was to be a temporal kingdom, the Romans would resent having such a king advocated among their people.

Verse 16. *The one* refers to those of the preceding verse who preach Christ from *envy and strife*. Paul adds a word to their motive which is *contentions*, and according to Thayer this word has the idea of such activities as are practiced by what is familiarly called a "politician." It is easy to see why they would do that kind of public teaching, for it would rouse the opposition of the Roman citizens. That in turn would bring forth an inquiry as to who had introduced such propaganda into the community. Upon being informed that it was Paul, it would enrage the Roman leaders (as the Judaizers thought), and cause them to do something that would *add affliction* to the bonds already fastened upon the apostle.

Verse 17. *The other* means the ones in verse 15 who preached Christ of *good will*. Seeing that Paul was *set* (determined) to proclaim and defend the Gospel, these brethren were encouraged to join in the good work.

Verse 18. *What then?* This denotes that Paul is about to draw a conclusion from the foregoing facts, namely, that in either case he is glad that Christ is preached. Great abuse has been made of this circumstance by some who wish to apologize for the erroneous methods that are used in the religious world for the spreading of the Gospel. It is claimed that if Paul would rejoice in the work of these evil persons, then we should rejoice in what is done even by unscriptural organizations for the spreading of truth. It should be noted, however, that what these envious preachers proclaimed was the truth—their motive only was what was wrong. Also, no unscriptural organization or methods were used in their work, while the modern use of this case is to justify the institutions of men in their professed teaching of the Scriptures.

Verse 19. The pronoun *this* means the same as *the things* in verse 12, with the additional items pertaining to Paul's conduct under the circum-

stances. *Shall turn [out] to my salvation.* The last word has a wide range of meaning, and the primary definition of the original is given by Thayer, "deliverance, safety, preservation, salvation." The word can apply to physical or spiritual deliverance, and to the present or eternal age. The connection in each case must determine the particular application of the term. In Paul's case it may well be taken in both the physical and spiritual sense. The epistle was written when Paul was a prisoner the first time, and we know that he was actually delivered from his chain and permitted to go out among the churches. *Through your prayer.* No doubt the brethren prayed for his deliverance as the church did on behalf of Peter (Acts 12: 5). *And the supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus.* Of course the prayers of Christians would avail nothing except they were offered in connection with the Lord's plan. The spiritual salvation of the apostle would also be on condition that he be true to Christ regardless of how the situation might terminate

Verse 20. *Earnest expectation* is from one Greek word, and it means virtually the same as *hope* that is used here, except that it is a more intense word, implying some anxiety. The whole statement means that it is Paul's earnest expectation and hope, etc. He means to conduct himself in such a way that he would have nothing of which to be ashamed. Instead, he is determined to continue his present boldness in preaching the Gospel, regardless of whether he was permitted to live, or would be put to death by his persecutors. By submitting his body to whatever his enemies might decree against him, whether it be life or death, he would be doing honor to Christ. *Magnified* is from MEGALUNO, and Thayer's explanation of the word in this passage is that Christ would "get glory and praise" from the service that Paul's body would be rendering by this devotion.

Verse 21. If Paul is permitted to live in the flesh, he will use his time for the service of Christ. But if his earthly life and service are cut off by the enemy, he will not be to blame for it because he will die in a good cause. That is why he says in the last phrase, *to die is gain.* If a man loses his physical life for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, he will gain the reward of spiritual life (Matthew 16: 25).

Verse 22. The pronoun *this* refers to the service for Christ mentioned in the preceding verse. On the basis that if he lives he will serve Christ, he will expect the *gain* also mentioned as the fruit of his labor for Him; said gain to come after death. Since both parts of the proposition—life of service and gain after death—are important, Paul is undecided as to which he prefers. *Wot not* is an old expression meaning "know not."

Verse 23. *Strait* means Paul was under pressure from two different desirable experiences, which were of such a character that he could not have both at the same time. One of these is stated in this verse, which was *to depart and to be with Christ.* Of the two desirable experiences he says this would be *far better.* This gives us a very significant truth. We know that Christ was not personally on earth, and hence to be with Him it would be necessary for Paul to leave this earth. That would require him to leave the fleshly body as the next verse clearly shows. This disproves the materialistic theory which claims that man is wholly mortal, and that when he dies, everything about him dies and hence would remain wherever the body does. The passage teaches also that after a man's body dies, the part of him that *departs* from this world is conscious. Furthermore, if such a man was a faithful servant of the Lord until death, he will have an enjoyable consciousness after death, else it would not be *far better* to depart.

Verse 24. This verse states the other thing that was causing the *strait* or pressure in which Paul found himself. *To abide in the flesh* is equivalent to saying he would continue to live on the earth in his fleshly body. *More needful for you* expresses the reason why this side of the *strait* was regarded as something that was desirable in the mind of Paul. He knew that after death he could not continue to serve his brethren personally, for the only assistance they could receive from him would be the good example and teaching that he would leave in their memory. Of course such a benefit would be available to all true disciples as long as the world stands.

Verse 25. *Having this confidence.* That is, being confident of the truth of the statement in the preceding verse. Things that were "more needful" for the church would be more important than something desirable to

Paul personally. For that reason he was sure that he would remain a while longer for their *furtherance* (advancement) in the faith, and the joy that such advancement would give them.

Verse 26. Paul was made a prisoner in Rome two times (2 Timothy 4: 16), and this epistle was written when he was there the first time. He was released and permitted to go out among the churches for a while. I shall quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary as follows: "In this epistle [the one to the Philippians] Paul twice expresses a confident hope that before long he may be able to visit the Philippians in person. (Chapter 1: 25; 2: 24.) Whether this hope was fulfilled or not has been the occasion of much controversy. According to the general opinion the apostle was liberated from imprisonment at the end of two years, having been acquitted by Nero in A.D. 63, and left Rome soon after writing the letter to the Philippians." The release of Paul would be regarded as an answer to the prayers of the church. This would cause their *rejoicing* to be *more abundant*. *In Jesus Christ for me* denotes their rejoicing would be in regard to Paul and his victory through Jesus Christ over his enemies.

Verse 27. *Conversation* means conduct or manner of life, and *becometh* is defined to denote that which is becoming or suitable to a thing. The sentence means for them to conduct themselves in a way that shows respect for the Gospel of Christ. Such conduct would become known to others, so that Paul would learn about it even though he never got to see them again. The apostle did not write this in a spirit of doubt, for these brethren had already shown such kind of faithfulness (chapter 2: 12). The subject is mentioned as a kindly exhortation from a loving apostle. *Stand fast in one spirit* has the same meaning as *unity of the Spirit* in Ephesians 4: 3. *With one mind* denotes that each mind is being guided by the same rule, and that rule is the one provided for them by the inspired word. *Striving together* is from one word that Thayer defines, "to strive at the same time with another." The idea is that all the brethren would join their forces in the contest for one cause. *Faith of the Gospel* means the "one faith" Paul mentions in Ephesians 4: 5, which is made known through the Gospel.

Verse 28. A glance at the next verse will help in arriving at the meaning

of this one. The verse starts with *for*, which indicates that a reason is about to be given for the statements of the preceding passage. Since the servants of Christ are the ones who are *given* the honor of suffering for Him, the very fact that they are having such an experience, and are holding firm under it, is proof that they are the accepted of the Lord. That is why it means so much to these Judaizing enemies of the Philippians, to observe that they are *in nothing terrified* by the persecutions. It means that they (the Philippians) are the Lord's faithful servants and hence are heirs of *salvation*. By the same token it means that they (the adversaries) are threatened with perdition for their enmity against the true disciples of Christ.

Verse 29. It would be foolish to pretend that any physical enjoyment can be had from persecution, for the bodies and sensibilities of Christians are like those of all other human beings. Their joy comes from what such experiences indicate on their behalf. The thought is well stated in Acts 5: 41 where the disciples rejoiced because "they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" All of this supports the comments on the preceding verse.

Verse 30. *Conflict* is from AGON which Thayer defines, "a contest." The Christian life is likened to the athletic contests that were so common in old times. Paul means these brethren were engaged in the same contest that he had encountered in their presence (Acts 16th chapter), and in which he is now engaged as they had been informed.

## Philippians 2

Verse 1. *If* does not mean Paul had any doubt of the things he is about to mention. It is used in the sense of "seeing there be," or "inasmuch as there does be," etc., then he names the things he believed assuredly to exist. All true consolation is to be found only in Christ through the kingdom (Matthew 5: 4). All who love Christ and his disciples, will find untold comfort in their fellowship with each other. *Fellowship* is from a word that means the sharing of something with another. The Spirit, through the divine law which He has dictated to the inspired writers, creates a partnership in spiritual things not to be found in the world. *Bowels* is used with reference to the affections, because the people in old times believed that part of the body was the seat of

those sentiments. See a detailed definition of the word at chapter 1: 8. The primary meaning of the original for *mercies* is pity or compassion. It will lead us to be considerate of another's misfortunes (1 Corinthians 12: 26).

Verse 2. The epistle to the Philippians contains no rebukes nor reproofs, but it has admonitions and exhortations, and much instruction intended to improve their already excellent state of spirituality. The present verse is one passage of this kind. It would make Paul's joy full for them to be *likeminded*, which means to be united in mind in their work for the Lord. (See chapter 1: 27.) *Having the same love* denotes their love for each other was to be mutually complete. *Of one accord* means to work together harmoniously for the "faith of the Gospel."

Verse 3. *Strife* is an attempt to put oneself ahead of others for the purpose of being pre-eminent. *Vainglory* is the same as self esteem, which would cause a man to seek the pre-eminence just mentioned. In contrast to all this, the apostle would have his brethren show *lowliness of mind*, which is the same as humbleness. Instead of considering oneself worthy of special honor, he should think of his brother as being better than himself. That would cause him to push the other person forward instead of seeking to be prominent for his own gratification. (See Romans 12: 10.)

Verse 4. Christians should not be concerned in their own things only, for that would be selfishness. Instead, they should be interested in the welfare of others.

Verse 5. *This mind* does not mean that the mind of man can be equal to that of Christ. The original word is *PHRONEO*, and a part of Thayer's definition at this place is, "to seek one's interests or advantage; to be of one's party, side with him." As Jesus was unmindful of himself and thoughtful of others, we should be likeminded.

Verse 6. *Form* is from *MORPHE* which occurs only three times in the Greek New Testament. *Robbery* is from *HARPAGMOS*. I shall give Thayer's definition and explanations of this word first. "A thing seized or to be seized, booty," and he explains it to mean, "to deem anything a prize—a thing to be seized upon or to be held fast, retained." In his definition and

explanations of *MORPHE*, Thayer includes some statements pertaining to verse 7. I shall quote his definition of the Greek word, also his explanations (the parts in parentheses). "The form by which a person or thing strikes the vision; the external appearance . . . (this whole passage is to be explained as follows): who, although (formerly) he bore the form (in which he appeared to the inhabitants of heaven) of God, yet did not think that this equality with God was to be eagerly clung to or retained, but emptied himself of it so as to assume the form of a servant, in that he became like unto men, and was found in fashion as a man." My comments on the verse, based on the connection and the lexicon definitions of the words, is that Christ was willing to underestimate the great honor of being equal in form with the Father, and condescend to becoming even lower than the angels, so that He could suffer and die as a man.

Verse 7. *Made himself of no reputation* all comes from two Greek words, and they are rendered "emptied himself" by the Englishman's Greek New Testament, and four other translations that I have consulted render it the same. Paul means that Christ divested himself of the glorious form He had before he came to the earth. (See the comments on the preceding verse.) Christ became like a servant in form only, because all slaves in the various ranks were men (not angels), in order that He might be capable of death for the sake of mankind.

Verse 8. *Being found* or appearing on earth in *fashion* (form and manner of life physically) *as a man*. *Humbled himself* means Christ subjected himself to voluntary humiliation, which will be made clear by further comments on this verse. *Obedience* implies a commander giving law to be obeyed, and Jesus was subject only to his Father. *Unto* means "as far as, to the extent of," and it is used here to denote that Jesus obeyed his Father to the extent of submitting to death. *Even* used in connection with *death of the cross* is more significant than is generally realized. Jesus not only submitted to die in obedience to his Father and for the benefit of sinful man, but to die the most horrible and humiliating form of death. Smith's Bible Dictionary gives a description of this performance, which I shall quote for the information of the reader:

"Crucifixion was unanimously considered the most horrible form of death. Among the Romans [by whom Jesus was crucified] the degradation [disgrace] was also a part of the infliction, and the punishment if applied to freemen was only used in the case of the vilest criminals. The one to be crucified was stripped naked of all his clothes, and then followed the most awful moment of all. He was laid down upon the implement of torture. His arms were stretched along the cross-beams, and at the center of the open palms the point of a huge iron nail was placed, which, by the blow of a mallet, was driven home into the wood. Then through either foot separately, or possibly through both together, as they were placed one over the other, another huge nail tore its way through the quivering flesh." A little farther on in the article the author says: "A death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of the horrible and ghastly,—dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, traumatic [shock] fever, tetanus [spasm caused by infection], publicity of shame, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of unattended wounds . . . the unnatural position made every movement painful; the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbed with incessant anguish," etc. Besides this historical description of the physical suffering, we have the statements in the Bible of the shame attached to crucifixion (Deuteronomy 21: 22, 23; Galatians 3: 13; Hebrews 12: 2). From all the foregoing information, the reader can realize the reason for Paul's use of the word *even* in connection with Christ's death on the cross.

Verse 9. God rewarded the humility and obedience of his Son by exalting him with a name that denotes authority. Matthew 28: 18 states that all power (authority) is given Him in heaven and in earth. Our present verse makes the general statement that His name is above every name. Of course it is to be understood with the exception shown in 1 Corinthians 15: 27.

Verse 10. The preceding verse gives a general declaration of the authority vested in the name of Christ; this one names the three regions in which that authority is to be recognized. The three regions include all intelligent creatures that are in existence, namely,

heaven, earth and under the earth which means Hades or place of departed spirits and demons. For a full explanation of the last place, see the comments at Matthew 5: 30, in first volume of the New Testament Commentary. A foretaste of the recognition of His authority by creatures from these three regions was accorded him when on the earth. Matthew 4: 11 shows the angels (*things in heaven*) paying their respects and serving Him. The instances of *things in earth* (men) are too numerous to need special citation. *Things under the earth* (demons) acknowledge Him (Mark 5: 1-6).

Verse 11. This verse expresses the same recognition of authority by means of the tongue, that the preceding verse does with the bended knee. An added thought is that it is all to be to the glory of God the Father. That will be true, whether the acknowledgment is made willingly by friends of the Lord, or unwillingly by enemies. But if it is by the enemies, they will get no reward for it, while the friends will have themselves confessed in the presence of God (Matthew 10: 32).

Verse 12. In chapter 1: 27 Paul exhorts the brethren to be faithful whether he is present with them or not, and in this one he acknowledges just such faithfulness on their part. Brethren cannot do more than obey, hence the words *much more* only means an expression of degree. It is more commendable for them to be obedient in his absence, for that is proof that their work is not "eyeservice" (service performed only under the eye of the master), which is condemned in Ephesians 6: 6. *Work out* comes from one Greek word which Thayer defines, "to do that from which something results." They were to do the work under Christ that would result in their *own* salvation; no person could do it for them. *Fear and trembling*. The first word means reverence and the last means anxiety. Christians should have reverence for God and be anxious to obey His law.

Verse 13. God works in his children through the inspired word. That word instructs them not only to profess the *will* to serve the Lord, but also to *do* His will; such a life will be pleasing to God.

Verse 14. *Without murmurings* means to do one's duty cheerfully, not secretly resenting the task required. The original for *disputings* is defined



by Thayer, as "hesitating, doubting." Disciples should not question the right of the Lord to command them, nor be curious as to why He has given them the duty.

Verse 15. *Blameless* denotes a life against which no charge can be truthfully made. *Harmless* is rendered "sincere" in the margin, and the lexicon agrees with it. The fuller definition would be "without mixture" with the evil things of the world. The sons of God should be *without rebuke*, which they will be if they comply with the forepart of the verse. *Crooked* and *perverse* mean virtually the same, and are used for the purpose of emphasis. It refers to people who will not walk in the straight path of righteousness, but stubbornly persist in doing that which is evil. Christians must live *in* such a nation while in this world, but they should not live *as* such a nation lives. Instead, their lives should reflect the light of divine truth by practicing the good works directed by Christ (Matthew 5: 14-16).

Verse 16.  *Holding forth the word of life* means to hold the Gospel up before the world so it will be seen as the truth coming from the apostle. In 1 Timothy 3: 15 Paul says the church is the pillar (or support) of the truth, and the Lord does not permit any other organization to offer His word to mankind. Paul gave the Gospel to the Philippians, now he expects them to continue the good work by holding it up in their lives and teaching.  *Labored in vain*. No preacher's salvation depends on the faithfulness of his converts if he is himself faithful in teaching them their duty. But if they do not carry out their part of the great plan, their salvation will be a failure. Such a result would make Paul's work among them *in vain* as far as they are concerned. If they are faithful to the end, it will give Paul a cause a rejoicing on their behalf, and such rejoicing would constitute the "reward" such as 2 John 8.

Verse 17. This verse contains a very beautiful thought concerning the unselfishness of Paul.  *Offered* is from SPENDO which means literally "to be poured out." Paul did not know how his present situation would terminate (verse 23), or whether he would have to give up his blood on the executioner's block (as he finally did after the second arrest according to 2 Timothy 4: 6). However that may be, he was willing to make such a sacrifice if

called upon to do so. But even such a service was regarded by him as small in comparison with the services of the church at Philippi. The figure of being  *offered* ("poured out") is drawn from a service under the law of Moses. (See Exodus 29: 40, 41; Leviticus 2: 1, 6; 23: 13, 18, 37.) These liquid offerings were "poured" upon the main sacrifice to combine a service to God. They might well be called a minor offering or sacrifice, and that upon which they were poured a major one in comparison. Paul was willing to represent himself as a minor sacrifice, poured upon the major one of the faithful service of the Philippians. Even that humble service would cause him to  *joy and rejoice* with the brethren.

Verse 18. Paul bids the Philippian brethren to share his joy with him, which would constitute one of the finest examples of fellowship in Christ that is possible.

Verse 19.  *Trust in the Lord* is equivalent in thought to "if the Lord will" in James 4: 15. Everything Paul expected to do was subject to the will of the Lord. Timothy had been with Paul as a "companion in tribulation," and the apostle desired to send him to the church at Philippi to get first hand information concerning conditions there. Paul's general confidence was strong, but he craved the satisfaction that comes from a direct report. That would be especially true when coming from one who would take sincere interest in the welfare of the brethren, as he believed Timothy would.

Verse 20.  *Likeminded*. Paul means he had no other person with him with a mind like that of Timothy, namely, would  *naturally* (sincerely) care about their state.

Verse 21.  *All* is used in the sense of the general rule; there were exceptions, such as Timothy. But most people were self-concerned and not much interested in the things that belong to Jesus Christ. This is an instance that shows that when a man is concerned with the welfare of the church, it is counted as for Christ. (See Matthew 25: 45.)

Verse 22.  *The proof of him*. The conduct of Timothy gave the proof of the correctness of Paul's estimate as just stated, namely he had been as near and attentive to Paul as if he had been his father. And all this service was on behalf of the Gospel for

which they both were devoting their lives.

Verse 23. Paul did not plan to send Timothy at once; not until he saw how it went with him. This means the case that was pending before the Roman authorities.

Verse 24. This verse indicates one reason Paul wished to retain Timothy until his case was decided. If he should be released, he might find it possible to make the journey to Philippi with him; at least he hoped to make the trip soon after.

Verse 25. He did not retain *Epaphroditus* for further developments as he did Timothy. That was because he was in Rome as a personal messenger between the church at Philippi and Paul, sent to take him necessary supplies. It was appropriate to send him back home to report on his mission.

Verse 26. Here is an unusual case of worrying; that is, the cause for it. As a rule a person worries over his own situation. But here is man who is very sick (or has been), and yet he is not concerned about himself. Instead, he knows his brethren back home have heard about his sickness, and he is grieved for fear they are overly worried. It is a striking case of unselfishness and suggests 1 Corinthians 12: 26.

Verse 27. *Sick nigh unto death*. The question might arise why Paul did not heal him since he had miraculous power. Such a query overlooks the primary object of miracles, namely, the making of believers (John 20: 30, 31). Unless some good reason for using miraculous healing existed in a given case, it was the Lord's will to let it depend on the provisions of nature; hence a miracle was not always resorted to. A similar case of this kind is mentioned in 2 Timothy 4: 20.

Verse 28. To relieve the tension was another reason for sending *Epaphroditus* back to Philippi at this time, besides the one mentioned at verse 25. When the brethren saw their messenger in their midst again, recovered from his serious illness, they would have the load of anxiety lifted and all parties concerned would rejoice together.

Verse 29. *Receive him* does not imply any doubt about their attitude toward this messenger, but rather it is a friendly recommendation from Paul, induced by his appreciation for the good services that the messenger had rendered to him while in Rome. *Hold*

*such in reputation* means give him the honor that his faithful services deserved.

Verse 30. This verse tells the cause of the serious sickness of this messenger. After arriving in Rome, he was detained for some time because the supplies from Philippi were not sufficient to care for Paul, and he had to do some kind of secular work to obtain the needed things. Just what caused the situation is not revealed, but we know it was not through any fault of the brethren at Philippi, for chapter 4: 10 says they "lacked opportunity." And we know this has reference to the temporal necessities of life, for several verses following the one just referred to show clearly that Paul was writing on that subject in this part of his epistle.

### Philippians 3

Verse 1. *Finally* is from *LOIPOS* and one term Thayer uses in his definition is "moreover," signifying that Paul has something more to say; or, that he is going to repeat what has been said previously. *Rejoice in the Lord*. There are two important thoughts in this expression. One is in the first word, and indicates that Christians should be joyful. The other is that it is in the Lord that rejoicing may be had. *To write the same things*. To repeat what has been said at various times, giving such wholesome exhortation as this one about rejoicing in the Lord. Such a repetition was not any unpleasant task for Paul, and besides it was a safe kind of advice for the readers.

Verse 2. *Dogs* is from *KUON*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "a man of impure mind, an impudent man." The editor of Thayer's lexicon says the word is always used in a reproachful sense when it is used figuratively. Robinson gives the same definition, and says it is used figuratively in Philippians 3: 2, "where it is spoken of Judaizing teachers." Paul literally calls them *evil workers*. The original for *circumcision* is *KATATOME* which Thayer defines with the one word "mutilation." We know Paul is writing about the rite of circumcision, but he designates it by the other word because of the unlawful use that the Judaizers were making of it. Circumcision was given to the descendants of Abraham as a national mark, and later was included in the Jewish system as a religious ordinance. When

that was replaced by the Gospel system, the religious feature of circumcision was taken away and the rite was left just where it was in the beginning, namely, a fleshly mark for the Jews only. The Gentiles were never given the rite for any reason, hence it is unlawful to perform it on any of them. When a doctor circumcises a new born infant he violates the law of Christ, and Paul would accuse him of mutilation.

Verse 3. *We are the circumcision.* The original word for the rite in this phrase is the one for the fleshly act, but Paul is using it in a spiritual sense. The Judaizers taught that fleshly circumcision was necessary to make one a part of God's true people. The apostle is teaching that since physical circumcision has lost its religious significance, true circumcision is of a spiritual kind. It is the action of those who *worship God in the Spirit*, or according to the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8: 2), and not after "the law of sin and death," which called for fleshly circumcision, and which was the system the Judaizers were trying to impose upon the Gentile Christians. (See Romans 2: 29; Colossians 2: 11.)

Verse 4. *Confidence in the flesh.* This phrase occurs in the preceding verse as well as the present one. Such an expression usually refers to the evil desires of the carnal mind. However, such desires have been regarded as wrong all through the Bible. But Paul is using the phrase in a special application, based on the fleshly relation the Jews bear to Abraham, which is indicated by the rite of circumcision, a fleshly performance. The Jews laid much stress on this relationship and even felt such a "confidence" in the time of John the Baptist (Matthew 3: 9). The Judaizers might say that Paul's attitude against them was from envy, or prompted by the feeling that is familiarly expressed by the figure, "sour grapes." He asserts that such is not the case, but that instead, he could truthfully boast of greater accomplishments while professing the religion that included this fleshly rite, than others; he then proceeds in two verses to enumerate them. (See also the comments at Galatians 1: 13, 14.)

Verse 5. *Circumcised the eighth day* (Leviticus 12: 3). The parents of Paul had attended to this rite according to the detail as to the exact age when it should be done. Even Moses

was not that faithful (Exodus 4: 24-26). *Stock of Israel* or Jacob. He was the descendant of Abraham who was selected even before he was born to be in the blood line for the Messiah. (See Romans 9: 7-12.) *Tribe of Benjamin.* He (Benjamin) was the son of Rachel, of tender memory, and his tribe gave the nation its first king (Acts 13: 21). *Hebrew of the Hebrews.* Both parents of Paul were of that race, whereas some members of the nation were not full blooded (Acts 16: 1). *Touching the law, a Pharisee.* Among the various sects of the Jews, the Pharisees were regarded as the most exacting in their demands of religious duty. (See Acts 26: 5.) There is a lengthy comment on this sect at Matthew 16: 12, in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary, which also includes information concerning the Sadducees.

Verse 6. The Greek word for *zeal* is used in both a good and bad sense in the New Testament. When used in the former, it means ardor or enthusiasm, and that is its meaning in this verse. The reader may be surprised that I would say this, when Paul used his zeal in *persecuting the church*. Yes, he had the right *kind* of zeal, but made a wrong use of it, even as a man might have the right kind of money but make a wrong use of it. Paul believed the church was an unscriptural institution, and to be consistent, he was required to oppose it. *Blameless.* This means Paul lived up to all requirements of the law, which proves that it was not physically impossible to do so as some teach. The parents of John the Baptist lived up to them according to Luke 1: 6.

Verse 7. In the lexicon the original for *gain* is defined "advantage," and that for *loss* is defined "damage." There was a time when Paul thought it was a great advantage to have all of the fleshly accomplishments named above to his credit. But after learning what it means to have Christ, he could realize that it would have been a disadvantage or *loss* to him, had he clung to them. Indeed, the "damage" would have been to the extent of losing the grace or favor of God (Galatians 5: 4).

Verse 8. The first half of this verse repeats the thoughts of the preceding one, and Paul extends it to include *all things*, not only those Jewish claims which he once trusted. He became aware of this great advantage through *the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, Suffered the loss of all*

*things*. This denotes a complete sacrifice by Paul of whatever would hinder him from wholehearted service to Christ, regardless of how near and precious they may have seemed. Yea, he did not count his own life valuable enough to sacrifice Christ for it (Acts 20: 24). *Do count them but dung*. The last word is used figuratively, meaning something that is worthless and objectionable. It is not enough for a disciple of Christ just to "ease up" or lessen his interest in the things of the world, he must spurn them as he would a vessel of filth.

Verse 9. *Be found in him*; now or at any time the Lord calls him to account. Paul's desire was to be found acceptable to his Lord, in that he would not be having or holding on to the form of *righteousness* that was prescribed by the law. He designates this form as *mine own righteousness*, although he says it *is of the law*, a document that came from God. Here is set forth a very significant principle. When God changes his own law and calls upon man to receive the new one, if that man persists in clinging to the old one, he is guilty of wanting to have his own way.

Verse 10. The word *know* means more than a mere acquaintance of one's identity; it includes a personal realization of whatever is being considered. Paul wanted to know what it means to have experimental knowledge of Christ by serving Him wholeheartedly. *Power of his resurrection*. That power first demonstrated itself by inducing man to repent of sin and follow a spiritual life in Him. It will be finally demonstrated when it brings the "dead in Christ" from the grave to die no more. *Fellowship of his sufferings*. A faithful Christian will suffer persecution for the sake of Christ, and in so doing he is a partner (having fellowship) with Him in his tribulations. *Conformable unto his death*. Christ died for sin, and if Paul serves Him faithfully even with the possibility of dying in the Cause, his experience would partake of a like death.

Verse 11. *Resurrection of the dead*. The resurrection of all mankind whether good or bad, is clearly taught in John 5: 28, 29; Acts 24: 15. Since this will not depend on the kind of life a man has lived, we know Paul is using the word in a special sense. He therefore means the resurrection of the just as mentioned in the passages cited in this paragraph. In order to

take part in that kind of resurrection, one must die in Christ; and that will be true only of those who have been faithful until death.

Verse 12. The *gain* or advantage that Paul obtained immediately upon his becoming a Christian, was not considered as the complete experience he expected. Lest his readers might get the wrong impression, the apostle explains that he had not yet attained to it, or that he was *perfect* which means complete as regards the good things to be enjoyed through Christ. *Follow after* is from the Greek word *DIKO*, and the Englishman's Greek New Testament renders it, "am pursuing." *Apprehend* is from *KATALAMBANO*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "to lay hold of so as to make one's own, to obtain, to attain to." Christ Jesus had laid hold upon Paul, and through the obedience to the Gospel, He wished that the convert would finally "lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6: 12). Paul is declaring that his reason for this "pursuing" is that he may lay hold upon the reward for which Christ had laid hold on him.

Verse 13. The first sentence of this verse is a repetition in thought of the preceding verse. The apostle makes no claim to a victory he has not won, but he can and does affirm what are his determinations. *Forgetting* means to cease cherishing a memory of the things he once loved, not that his memory would become a blank on the subject. The apostle now adopts the ancient foot race for an illustration of the Christian life. *Reaching forth* is from *EPEKTEINO* which Thayer defines, "to stretch out to or towards." A runner in a race will lean toward the goal for which he is contesting.

Verse 14. *Press* is from the same word as *follow after* in verse 12, and is a somewhat stronger word than the one for *reaching forth* in the verse preceding our present one. That term indicates the direction toward a man's goal, while the one here denotes that he will use pressure in progressing toward that goal. Every foot race has a goal which the contestant wishes to reach in time to win the prize or stake. That is what is meant by the *mark* in this verse. Needless to say that no literal thing or specific date constitutes that mark or goal in the Christian race. It may well be expressed by the words, "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2: 10). This passage

states the goal (death), and also the prize which is the crown of life. A *calling* is a man's chief occupation in life, and the one Paul had chosen was the service for Christ. It is called *high* because it came from God through Christ. This occupation does not promise any temporal prize or reward, but assures every "faithful" (not successful) worker a prize that is fadeless.

Verse 15. *Perfect* means mature in spiritual matters, such as those described in Hebrews 5: 14. Paul believed such disciples were able to be *thus minded*; that is, were prepared to make the same resolution that he just declared for himself. *Otherwise minded*. If some among them had not yet reached that point in their Christian growth, they need not despair; if they will continue partaking of the truth of God, this advanced thought possessed by Paul will finally be *revealed unto them*.

Verse 16. *Nevertheless*, as to those who have not attained that degree of *perfection* or maturity of thought that Paul has, they should use what knowledge they have to guide them in their *walk*. *Same rule and same thing* means that their conduct must differ in degree only, and not in kind.

Verse 17. To be a *follower* means to be an imitator. Paul told his brethren at Corinth to be followers (imitators) of him as he was of Christ (1 Corinthians 11: 1), and the same restriction holds good on our present verse. *Mark* means to take note of certain ones who were walking *so*—were following the pattern set by Paul—*as ye have*, or since ye have the apostles as examples.

Verse 18. Not all professed Christians were walking after the example Paul was setting before them. The conduct of some was so evil that it caused the apostle to weep as he told them about it. It was not because of any personal loss to him that he wept, but because such characters were *the enemies of the cross of Christ*.

Verse 19. *End* means fate or final outcome, and that which is awaiting those characters described in the preceding verse is eternal destruction. The word *god* should not be capitalized, for it refers to a wrong object of devotion, namely, the *belly*. The original Greek word has different shades of meaning, but it is here used in reference to the fleshly desires. Some

people are more devoted to such interests than they are to the true God, who wishes His children to make their devotion to Him first in their lives, and all other matters (even those that are right of themselves) secondary. *Glorify in their shame*. Not that they admit having pride in their shame, but Paul is asserting that the things these evil workers take glory in, are truly shameful. The reason such people act as here described is due to the fact they *mind (care) earthly things*.

Verse 20. *Conversation* is from *POLITEUMIA*, which is not used anywhere else in the Greek New Testament. Thayer defines it, "a state, commonwealth." Robinson defines it in virtually the same way, then adds the following explanation of his definition: "Figuratively, of Christians in reference to their spiritual community, the New Jerusalem in heaven." The idea is well expressed by some words of an old hymn: "I'm but a stranger here; Heaven is my home." (See Hebrews 11: 13-16; 13: 14; 1 Peter 2: 11.) Our stay on the earth should be used in preparing for the eternal residence in our true Home, for this world is to pass away. *From whence* denotes that Jesus is now in that Country, but will come from it sometime to call His own from the earth.

Verse 21. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15: 50), hence the fleshly bodies of faithful children of God must be changed from a fleshly to a spiritual form. This will apply to both the living and the dead when Christ comes (1 Corinthians 15: 51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4: 14-17). *Change* is from *METASCHEMATIZO*, which Thayer defines at this place, "to change the figure of, to transform." The original for *vile* is defined by Thayer, "lowness, low estate"; it is applied to the body because it is fleshly and subject to decay. Let it be noted that *it* (the body) is to be changed and fashioned like unto that of Christ. The possibility of making such a change is accounted for by the fact that He has been able to *subdue all things unto himself*.

#### Philippians 4

Verse 1. *Therefore* indicates a conclusion, and it is drawn from the wonderful truths expressed by the closing verses of the preceding chapter. This verse is in the form of a kindly exhortation, but really it is telling the Phi-

lippians that they have much reason to *stand fast in the Lord*. The record of Paul's work in starting this church, also the constant devotion the brethren had shown him, will fully explain the words, *dearly beloved and longed for*. They were a *joy* to him because of their faithfulness in the cause of the Lord. *Crown* is from *stephanos*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "that which is an ornament and honor to one." Paul felt honored by the faithfulness of these brethren, since they were the product of his labors, and their continued devotion was due to their respect for the truth he had delivered to them.

Verse 2. To *beseech* means to plead earnestly, hence it is a stronger word than a mere request, but not as strong as an admonition. *Be of the same mind in the Lord* means they should be united in their work for Him, regardless of any personal difference they might have. *Euodias* and *Syn-tyche* were sisters in the church at Philippi.

Verse 3. *Intreat* has practically the same meaning as "beseech." The *yoke-fellow* evidently was Epaphroditus, for in chapter 2: 25 he is referred to as Paul's "companion in labor." This man was sent to Philippi with an epistle which contained a request for himself. *Those women* are the ones named in the preceding verse. In some way they had assisted Paul in his work of the Gospel, but just when or how they did it is not revealed. Young calls *Clement* "A fellow laborer with Paul at Philippi." He is not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. *Names are in the book of life*. No literal book is meant here, but whatever and wherever the book is, we know it is possible for man to do something to get his name written in it, since it is mentioned in a manner that implies responsibilities. See Luke 10: 20; Hebrews 12: 22, 23; Revelation 3: 5; 13: 8; 20: 12.

Verse 4. See the comments at chapter 3: 1 for the explanation of this verse.

Verse 5. Thayer defines the original Greek for *moderation* as follows: "equitable [just], fair, mild, gentle." An act might be technically right according to the knowledge of a Christian, but it would not appear so to the public. This instruction means for a person not to do that which would raise doubts in the minds of others. The same thought is expressed in Ro-

mans 12: 17 and 2 Corinthians 2: 21. *The Lord is at hand* means that He is always near, beholding all that is done by His disciples.

Verse 6. *Careful* is from MERIMNAO which has a variety of meanings. Thayer defines it at this place, "to be anxious; to be troubled with cares." Paul does not mean that Christians should be indifferent about the responsibilities of life, but they should not permit such things to absorb their minds so that it will detract them from useful activities. Instead, they should trust in the Lord and make their troubles a matter of prayer. (See 1 Peter 5: 7.)

Verse 7. *Peace of God* denotes the peace that He grants to those who are faithful to the divine law. Man will not be the judge in the last great day, hence it is unimportant whether a disciple is at peace with him or not. *Passeth* is used in the sense of "surpasseth," because the peace that comes to those who form their lives according to the law of God, is far beyond anything the mind (*understanding*) of man ever thought of. Such a state of contentment will keep the servants of God in a settled attitude. *Hearts* and *minds* refers to the same part of the human inner man, but to different characteristics of his being when used as separate terms. The first refers to the sentiments and the second to the reasoning faculty.

Verse 8. The words *true*, *honest* and *just* are not used with any new meaning, the point being as to the standard by which they should be measured. (That will be shown in the next verse.) *Pure* means "unmixed," and requires that the principles of right living should not be adulterated with the things of the world. *Lovely* has reference to things that a Christian has the right to love, too numerous to name here. *Of good report* is from one Greek word, and Thayer defines it, "sounding well; uttering words of good men," and this also is subject to the next verse. *Virtue* means "moral excellence" according to Thayer's lexicon. *Praise* applies to things worthy of being commended. *Think on these things* means to consider them; meditate on them; give them serious attention.

Verse 9. This verse completely rules out the idea that man is to decide for himself as to what comes under the list of things named in the preceding verse. They are restricted to and



bound by what has been received from Paul (or any other inspired man). They may have been received either by his example (*seen in me*), or by his words (*heard*). *God of peace* means the peace described in verse 7, which is promised only to those who comply with the conditions just stated.

Verse 10. *Care* and *careful* are from the same Greek word, and have a different meaning from "careful" in verse 6. (See the comments at that verse.) In the present verse it means to be mindful of the welfare of others. Something had interfered with the support the church at Philippi was giving Paul (chapter 2: 30), but the hindrance was removed, whatever it was. As soon as they had the opportunity, they *flourished* or revived their support of the apostle. He rejoiced *in the Lord* because he regarded all good things as coming from Him.

Verse 11. Paul's expression of joy in the preceding verse might leave an impression that his motive was a temporal one; he hastens to explain that such is not the case. He had already become accustomed to the various circumstances of life, so that he was contented with whatever came upon him. The cause of his rejoicing in this case will be explained at verse 17.

Verse 12. The apostle would not pretend to see something favorable where nothing of the kind existed. The terms *abased* and *abound*; *full* and *hungry*; *abound* and *need*, are sets of opposite terms that are used figuratively, intended to enlarge upon the thoughts of verse 11.

Verse 13. Human strength alone cannot surmount the difficulties that one may encounter in life's pathway, hence Paul explains he does the things of his experience *through Christ which strengtheneth me*.

Verse 14. Paul's life and even his comfort did not depend upon the contributions of the Philippians. For their own sakes, however, it was the right thing for them to come to his aid, for in so doing they *communicated* (had fellowship) with him in his affliction, and it entitles them to the favor of Christ as in Matthew 25: 40.

Verse 15. *Beginning of the Gospel* refers to its beginning in Macedonia, recorded in Acts 16. Before leaving that province, some other churches were started, as may be seen in Acts 16 and 17. *Communicated* means to have fellowship with another, and it

could apply to any subject in which both were interested; hence Paul explains that he is applying it to the subject of financial support. Many churches think their obligation on this matter pertains to their own locality only. Here we see that none of the Macedonian churches supported Paul beyond their borders, but the Philippians.

Verse 16. *Thessalonica* was Paul's next field of labor after leaving Philippi (Acts 17: 1). We do not know how long he remained in that city, but it was long enough to require extra supplies for his living. He did manual labor in order to relieve the brethren of the burden (1 Thessalonians 2: 5-9; 2 Thessalonians 3: 7-9). But even with his own toil, he was unable to secure sufficient for his needs. That is the reason the Philippians *sent once and again unto his necessity*.

Verse 17. This verse repeats the statement in the forepart of verse 11, then adds the reason for Paul's attitude. He wished the brethren to receive credit from the Lord for having done something for His disciples. While Paul was the one who received the temporal benefit from the *fruit* of their liberality, yet it would *abound* (add to) the *account* or record of good deeds done by the congregation at Philippi.

Verse 18. Paul would have been satisfied, as far as his personal interests were concerned, had he not received any provisions from Philippi. Yet he wished to have the contribution from them for the reason shown in the preceding verse. Now that a full supply was sent from them, the apostle wishes to make full and grateful acknowledgement of it. Epaphroditus was the messenger by whom the supplies were sent, and the disciple who personally contributed to the apostle's needs by his manual labor (chapter 2: 25-30). *Odor* and *sweet smell* are used figuratively, based on the use of sweet incense that was offered to God under the Old Testament system (Exodus 30: 1-8). Paul calls it a sacrifice *well-pleasing to God*. Since the apostle is writing about the necessities of life that were given to him, why does he speak of it as if it were given to God? It is on the principle mentioned before, namely, Matthew 25: 40.

Verse 19. This verse is similar in thought to Matthew 6: 33. The Philippians were chiefly interested in the

kingdom of God, which is the reason they gave of their means to Paul, so he could continue to advance that kingdom. In turn, he assures them that God will take care of their needs. He teaches the same principle in 2 Corinthians 9: 8-10, where he is exhorting those brethren to contribute for the relief of the needy ones in Judea. *Riches in glory.* God is the giver of all good things (James 1: 17), and He bestows the divine favors through Christ Jesus.

Verse 20. *God* and *Father* are the same person; the first refers to His eternal, self-existent and infinite power. The other to His affectionate relation to the creatures of His care. The term *for ever* actually covers as long a period as *for ever and ever*. The words are used for the sake of emphasis, and the significance is that God is worthy of endless glory. For an explanation of *amen*, see the comments at Romans 16: 24, in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 21. *Salute* and *greet* are from the same Greek word. It has a wide scope of meanings, but the central thought is that all Christians should manifest a friendly attitude toward others, whether it be by word of mouth on personal meeting, or by a friendly word in writing; a *saint* is the same as a Christian. The brethren that were with Paul (personally) requested him to *greet* the brethren at Philippi for them.

Verse 22. This is the same kind of salutation as in the preceding verse, but is more general in its source. It comes from the *saints* (Christians) throughout the area where Paul was located since coming to Rome, and is based upon expressions he had heard from them in various conversations. He was especially impressed with what he had heard from the group he calls *Caesar's household*. The last word is so general that it could mean either the immediate members of Caesar's family, or his servants or attendants. In any case, it means persons closely connected with the emperor of Rome. It indicates the good influence and standing Paul had, in spite of his humiliating situation.

Verse 23. This verse is a kindly wish that the *grace* (favor) of Christ would be with the brethren at Philippi. The word *amen* is explained at verse 20.

## Colossians 1

General remarks. The date and by whom the church at Colosse was planted is uncertain. I have consulted a goodly number of reference works, and nothing more definite than "perhaps" or "maybe" was found in any of them. We know it was not by Paul, for chapter 2: 1 indicates he had not even seen those brethren when he wrote this epistle. A little information about conditions in Colosse as it pertains to religion and social life, will help to understand the various passages in the epistle. The Colossians were mostly Gentiles, but some Judaistic teachers had come among them. In addition to this, some theories of philosophy had been injected among them. Smith's Bible Dictionary refers to such a condition in the following words: "The main object of the epistle is to warn the Colossians against a spirit of semi-Judaistic and semi-Oriental philosophy which was corrupting the simplicity of their belief." Summing up, a mixture of Judaism, philosophy, idolatry, and a form of extreme bodily self-denial, had to be encountered when Paul wrote this epistle.

Verse 1. An *apostle* means one who is sent by another on a mission. Paul was sent into the world by Jesus Christ on the mission of preaching the Gospel, hence he was His apostle. The entire arrangement was according to the authority of God, which caused it to be by His will. *Timotheus* is another form of Timothy; he was with Paul and joined in the salutation to the Colossian church.

Verse 2. *Saints* and *faithful* are not different people. The second term is just one description of the first. A saint is a person who has accepted the Gospel through obedience to its commands, and who has promised to continue in the service consistently. The term *faithful* is added to show that these brethren were actually making good their promised loyalty to Christ. *Grace* is the unmerited favor of God, and *peace* is that state of mind that is made possible by accepting the salvation coming from God, and bestowed upon man through the *Lord Jesus Christ*.

Verse 3. It is important to note that God is called the Father of Christ. This refutes the doctrine of Rome, and most of the denominational world, that God and Christ are one and the

same person. It is foolish to imply that a father can be his own son, or vice versa. In the beginning of the verse Paul says *we give thanks*, and in the close he says he is *praying* for the brethren. This is because there are various forms of addresses to God; thanks being offered for past favors, and prayer being requests for future ones.

Verse 4. *We heard of your faith.* According to chapter 2: 1, Paul had not seen these brethren (see "general remarks"), but had received a report of them through others. It is significant that their faith in Christ Jesus is coupled with their love for all the saints. This agrees with 1 John 3: 14; 4: 7, 8; it is morally impossible to love God and not love His children.

Verse 5. *For* is from DIA which means "on account of." It is connected with the preceding verse which asserts the love the Colossians had to all the saints. The idea is that the hope for heaven they had, was an inducement for them to act the part of true brethren in Christ by showing genuine love for them. *Heard before* refers to the fact that they had heard these great truths in the beginning of their contact with the Gospel, by the ones who brought the good news to them.

Verse 6. *World* is from a Greek word that means the people of the earth. It is sometimes limited to the people of the Roman Empire by various commentators, yet that is rather insignificant, since virtually all the civilized world was under the rule of that Empire at the time the New Testament was written. Besides, verse 23 of this chapter says the same Gospel was preached "to every creature which is under heaven." It all gives the conclusion that the commission that Christ gave the apostles in Matthew 28: 19, 20 and Mark 16: 15, 16, had been fulfilled in the time of Paul's writings: the same fact is taught in Romans 10: 18. *Bringeth forth fruit* refers to the effect that was produced by the hope given to those who believed the Gospel. *Grace of God in truth* means the favor of God is for those only who accept the truth.

Verse 7. *Epaphras* had been associated with the church at Colosse, but when this epistle was written, he was in Rome and a prisoner on behalf of the Gospel. This is indicated in Philemon 23, where Paul calls him his "fellowprisoner." *A faithful minis-*

*ter.* The last word is from DIAKONOS, and in the King James Version it is rendered deacon 3 times, minister 20, servant 7. Thayer defines it, "one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a servant, attendant, minister; deacon; a waiter, one who serves food and drink." It is never used to designate a preacher as a separate class, for the preachers of the New Testament church are never called "ministers" in that sense. Epaphras is called a *minister*, because he faithfully served the interests of the church at Colosse, which included his preaching of the Gospel.

Verse 8. Epaphras had been associated with the church at Colosse, and could give a first hand report of its conduct to Paul and the other brethren in Rome. *Love in the Spirit* denotes their love was spiritual because it was prompted and directed by the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 9. *For this cause* refers to the good things that Paul (and his companions) had heard about the Colossian brethren. Ever since he heard about it, the apostle had continuously prayed for them. Such good disciples are worthy of further encouragement and assistance, hence he desired that they might be filled with knowledge of the Lord's will. For all practical purposes, *wisdom* and *understanding* may be used with the same sense, but when a distinction is made by using them in one sentence, the first refers to the mind or intellect, and the second to the proper use of it in applying the truths at hand. Paul specifies that he is speaking of truths that have been revealed by the Spirit.

Verse 10. To walk worthy of the Lord means to walk in a way befitting a servant of His. *Unto all pleasing: walk in a way pleasing to the Lord.* *Being fruitful* or producing *every good work*, which consists in doing the good things required by the Gospel. *Increasing* indicates that a Christian should not be satisfied with his present degree of good works. However, his growth must be in accordance with the knowledge of God; this knowledge is to be obtained through Christ (chapter 2: 2, 3).

Verse 11. When used as distinguishing terms, *might* means strength or ability, and *power* means dominion or authority to use that ability. All authority in heaven and earth was given to Christ (Matthew 28: 18), and He gives his disciples the right to operate

under that power; this is what will *strengthen* them in the service. The special meaning of *patience* in this passage is endurance or perseverance, and *longsuffering* refers to the unresentful attitude of one's mind while under difficulties.

Verse 12. Thayer defines the original for *meet*, "to make sufficient, render fit." No human being can ever be worthy of the salvation provided by the Lord, if measured by the strict rule of justice. But He has made it possible for the faithful disciples to be "sufficient" or entitled to it through the merits of Christ. The passage in Romans 3: 24-26 should be considered in connection with our verse. It should be understood that no man will ever enter into eternal reward unless he has a right to it (Revelation 22: 14), but he may obtain that right through Jesus. *Saints in light* means those who have fashioned their lives after the light of divine truth as revealed in the Gospel.

Verse 13. *Power* means authority or rule, and *darkness* is explained by Thayer as "ignorance respecting divine things and human duties." It applies to all who have renounced their interest in things of the world and taken the proper steps to get out of such a situation. Our verse, continuing the thought in the preceding one, tells us that it is the Father who can deliver men from such a state of darkness. *Translate* signifies to move something from one place or condition into another, and Paul tells us that the disciples had been *translated* (moved) into the kingdom of his dear Son. It is impossible to move a person into anything that does not exist. Therefore, the kingdom of Christ was in existence when Paul lived, thus disproving the heresy that the kingdom is still in the future.

Verse 14. The pronoun *whom* refers to the Son, whose blood redeems men from the bondage of "darkness" as stated in the preceding verse. No man is free from the bondage of sin until something is done that can satisfy God, against whom all sin is regarded as being committed. That satisfaction can be accomplished only through the merits of the blood of Christ. When a sinner "obeys from the heart" (Romans 6: 17) the doctrine or commandments of the Gospel, he is "then made free from sin," which is what our present verse declares.

Verse 15. No man can see the face

of God and live (Exodus 33: 18-23), yet he needed to be shown how to conduct himself. The situation was met by having Christ come into the world in the nature of man, but in the form or image of God. That is why Paul calls Christ the *image of the invisible God*. *Firstborn of every creature* means that Christ existed before all other persons or things in all creation. That enabled Him to take part with the Father in the creation of the universe, and it accounts for the plural form of the pronoun (us) in Genesis 1: 26; 3: 22; 11: 7. (See also John 1: 3; Ephesians 3: 9; Hebrews 1: 2).

Verse 16. The existence of Christ before all other things in the universe (God, of course, being excepted) is still the subject under consideration. Paul is dealing thus particularly with this matter because of the pretensions of philosophy that were being injected into the Colossian community. (See the comments in "general remarks.") This verse is more specific, mentioning things both material and spiritual, and both visible (to man) and invisible.

Verse 17. *Before* is used in the sense of time or order of existence, and it denotes that Christ existed before anything else in the universe of creation. *Consist* is the same as "exist," and it means that all things were created through Him, but also they continue to be through Him. This is the same thought that is expressed in Hebrews 1: 3 which says of Christ, "and upholding all things by the word of his power."

Verse 18. The *church* is declared to be the *body*, which is taught also in Ephesians 1: 22, 23. In Ephesians 4: 4 Paul declares there is one body, so that is equivalent to saying there is one church; our present verse says Christ is the head of that one church. All of this is not only scriptural, but is logical or reasonable. A body with more than one head in nature would be a monstrosity, likewise a head with more than one body would be one. Hence it is easy to understand that since there is but one Christ (which is admitted by all professed Christians), there can be but one church recognized by the Lord. *Who is the beginning*. This is true of Christ in many respects, but here it means he is the beginning of the new creation or age of the *one body*. *Firstborn from the dead* does not mean Jesus

was the first person to die and rise again, for there are numerous cases in the Bible where it occurred before the time of Christ. It means He was the first person to come to life never to die again. (See Romans 6: 9.) The chief purpose of making Christ to be the first person to come from the dead never to die again, was that He might have the *preeminence*. That means to be above all other persons who would go through death and rise to die no more, in that He was the first to have that honor.

Verse 19. The word *fulness* means that nothing is lacking in Christ that is necessary for the spiritual welfare of mankind. *The Father* is not in the Greek text directly, but is of necessity implied. This "preeminence" of Christ was accomplished through His resurrection, and that event was made possible by the Father. (See Acts 2: 24; 10: 40; 1 Corinthians 15: 15.)

Verse 20. *Made peace* pertains to the satisfaction which Christ gave his Father by shedding His blood on the cross. In other words, such a supreme sacrifice was enough to answer the demands of God, and that opened up the way so that the Son could bring about reconciliation between God and the forces arrayed against Him. *Or things in heaven* would necessarily be the good angels, since an angel who sins is cast out (2 Peter 2: 4). Good angels, however, have never offended God, and hence they do not need reconciliation in the strict sense of the word. But they are called upon to recognize Christ as King and spiritual Ruler through the centuries of the final dispensation. In this way they are a part of the body of Christ, and thus participate in the grand plan of reconciliation through Christ. (See Matthew 28: 18; Hebrews 1: 6; Philipians 2: 9; Revelation 5: 13.)

Verse 21. *Alienated* is from APALLOTRIOO, which Thayer defines, "to be shut out from one's fellowship and intimacy." Paul tells the Colossians they were once in that condition with God, but that it was caused by their own wicked works. Such a state of mind and conduct rendered them the enemies of God.

Verse 22. The condition of enmity mentioned in the preceding verse was overcome (*reconciled*) by the flesh'y body of Christ. This work of reconciliation was accomplished through death, thereby making the "supreme sacrifice" that took the place of all

those offered under the Jewish law (Hebrews 10: 1-9). This great plan made it possible for Christ to present his followers *unblameable* and *unrebukeable* in His (God's) sight. Not that men can become "as sinless as angels," but the blame will be removed by the blood of Christ, so that when they are presented to the Father, there will be nothing for which He will reprove them.

Verse 23. The blessings promised in the preceding verses are based upon an important *if*, which is that they must *continue in the faith*. This requires that they be *grounded and settled*, which means to be fixed in their determination to serve Christ, and hence are steadfast in their service to Him. Such a life will prevent them from being *moved away from the hope of the Gospel* which they had heard. The Colossians were not the only ones who had heard the Good News, for it *was preached to every creature which is under heaven*. This fact fulfilled the commission that Christ gave his apostles in Matthew 28: 19, 20 and Mark 16: 15, 16, and it is also declared to have been accomplished in Romans 10: 18. This teaching refutes those who quote the "great commission" and apply it to preachers of the Gospel in our day. No uninspired man can "preach the Gospel to every creature," for there are too many languages in the world.

Verse 24. The afflictions which Christ personally suffered were complete so that God was satisfied (Isaiah 53: 10, 11), hence this verse does not mean there was anything *behind* on His part. But Christians are expected to have fellowship with Jesus in his sufferings (Romans 8: 17; 2 Timothy 2: 12; 1 Peter 4: 1), and if Paul had shrunk from suffering for the sake of Christ, then he would have been the one to be *behind* as to his duty. But in undergoing tribulation in service to the brethren, he would be credited with doing so on behalf of Christ, since the church is His body. This great truth caused Paul to "rejoice in my sufferings for you."

Verse 25. Paul calls himself a *minister* because the word means a servant, whose duty it is to administer the affairs of his master. Such ministrations are to be done according to the directions of the master. God had commissioned Paul to dispense (dispensation) His word by preaching (or

writing) it to the Colossians and to all others where opportunity appeared.

Verse 26. A *mystery* is anything unknown, regardless of whether it is complicated or simple in its form. The mystery Paul is referring to had been kept back *from ages and from generations*. Not that the Old Testament writers were entirely silent on the subject, but it was couched in prophetic passages to such extent that the New Testament preachers had to explain the subject in light of the Gospel. (See the following verse.)

Verse 27. The pronoun *whom* refers to the "saints" in the preceding verse. All Christians are saints, but the ones to whom the *mystery* was to be directly made known were the inspired preachers and writers of the New Testament. After such revelation was made known, others would also be able to understand it. That is why Paul writes in Ephesians 3: 4, "when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." The particular part of the great mystery was that which pertained to the Gentiles, namely, that they were to be given the same privileges as the Jews. Of course this is to be enjoyed through Christ (not Moses), and it is *in you* (the Gentiles), extending to them *the hope of glory*. For centuries the Jews overlooked the predictions of the Old Testament, which pointed to the final acceptance of the Gentiles.

Verse 28. *Whom* refers to Christ who is the subject of Paul's preaching. *Warning* is from NOUTHETEO, which Thayer defines, "to admonish, warn, exhort." It has a somewhat milder meaning than it generally has, and signifies an earnest piece of advice to accept Christ (in the place of Moses), as the lawgiver who is in authority now. *Teaching every one*. It would not be of much use to exhort people to follow Christ unless they know what Christ wishes them to do, hence Paul states he is teaching them. *In all wisdom* means the instructions that the Holy Spirit would impart unto the apostle. *Perfect* means complete or rounded out in knowledge of divine things. By giving full information to them concerning the Gospel for the Gentiles (which was not fully known before), they would have their knowledge advanced as *perfect* (complete) *in Christ Jesus*.

Verse 29. *Whereunto* denotes the purpose to which Paul was laboring, as described in the preceding verse.

*Striving* is from AGONIZOMAI, and the lexicon of Thayer defines it, "To enter a contest; contend in the gymnastic games; to contend with adversaries, fight; to contend, struggle with difficulties and dangers; to endeavor with strenuous zeal, strive." Paul uses the athletic contests of his day to illustrate the struggles connected with his labors for Christ and his disciples. *His working* refers to the use that Christ was making of the apostle in the great conflict against sin. *Mightily* is from DUNAMIS, which is one of the strongest words in the Greek New Testament for power or ability. Paul uses it to indicate the help his Trainer is giving him in the contest going on in the arena of life.

## Colossians 2

Verse 1. Much of the thought in the last verse of the preceding chapter is continued in this verse. The Greek word for *conflict* means virtually the same as "striving" in the close of the preceding chapter. It refers to the great care and anxiety Paul felt for the Colossians, and he wishes that they knew about it; this feeling was extended to the brethren at Laodicea (a city near Colosse). *As many as have not seen my face in the flesh*. This clause indicates that Paul had not been personally in the presence of the Colossian brethren, hence he could not have been the one who started the church there nor at Laodicea. (See the comments under "general remarks.")

Verse 2. Paul connects the comfort of the brethren with their being knit together in love. Such a state is a great source of satisfaction, for if the disciples of Christ are thus bound together, they will be of mutual help and can meet the trials of life as a unit. David expressed this thought in Psalms 133: 1. This condition will result in the *riches of full assurance* that comes from *understanding*. Of course all of this blessed state will come only after their *acknowledgment of the mystery*. The last word refers to the mystery that is explained in chapter 1: 26. God the Father and Christ are named together because they are both concerned in the subject. The relation between the names *God* and *Father* is explained at Ephesians 4: 6.

Verse 3. *In whom* is supposed to refer to Christ, who is last named in the preceding verse. However, some



confusion might come from the marginal rendering which gives "wherein," making it apply to the *mystery* mentioned in the preceding verse. But the following verses all show that Christ is especially meant and hence the text as we have it is correct. That does not do any injustice to God, for everything He does for mankind is done through the Son. This verse is a direct denial of the theories of philosophy that were mentioned in "general remarks." Whatever wisdom and knowledge there is in the world that is worthy of the attention of man, all is found in Christ.

Verse 4. Paul is saying the present things as a warning against false teachers. To *beguile* means to deceive, and *enticing words* are those that sound well and are of a persuasive nature. These false teachers used a mixture of philosophy and Judaism in such a way as to mislead unsuspecting disciples away from the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ. Most of this chapter is written to expose both philosophy (so called) and Judaism, especially the latter.

Verse 5. The Colossian church had not yet departed from the faith, but it was in danger and the apostle is warning them. For the present, he is pleased with their excellent devotion to Christ, and wishes to have them continue in the same status. He was not in their midst bodily but was there in spirit or mind, and took joy from what he could behold through the things he had "heard" (chapter 1: 4). *Order* is from TAXIS, which Thayer defines at this place, "orderly condition." It does not mean any set routine to be followed in a mechanical order, but denotes that the church at Colosse had some system in its procedure. It is the same thought expressed in 1 Corinthians 14: 40, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

Verse 6. *As* is used in the sense of "since"—*since ye have received*, etc. Having *received* or accepted Christ as the Lord (which means Ruler), to be consistent, they should also *walk* or conduct their life *in Him*. That can be done only by doing His will.

Verse 7. *Rooted* and *stablished* have virtually the same meaning, namely, to be firmly fixed in something. In this passage it means to be established *in the faith* or in the Gospel. Of course if something has taken firm

root in a fertile spot, it will be able to produce a stalk or body above the ground. Likewise, Paul says the brethren will be able to grow or be *built up* as a stalk of righteousness in the world. And as a plant thus rooted and developed will be able to produce fruit, so the brethren would be able to *abound* (grow and produce), being thankful for the opportunity of being of service to Christ.

Verse 8. The apostle again comes to the subject of the Judaistic philosophers, who claim to have something to offer the brethren that is better than their simple belief of the Gospel. They would make them think that something of value was being lost if they did not accept the ideas of philosophy as a part of their religious life. Paul is warning them to *beware* of these false teachers. To *spoil* means to take from a man that which is his valuable possession. The simple faith of the Gospel is the most valuable thing one can possess, and if he permits the false teacher to cause him to give up that faith, he will be robbed of a costly treasure. A thief accomplishes his work with instruments adapted to his evil work, and likewise this false teacher has his instruments which are named in this verse. *Vain deceit*. The ideas offered by these philosophers were not only deceitful, but they were empty (*vain*). They were *traditions* or things handed down from man and not from Christ. *Rudiments* denotes elements and *world* means the people of the earth. These deceitful philosophies were elements produced in the minds of men and not by Jesus Christ.

Verse 9. *Godhead* is from THEOTES, which Thayer defines, "deity; Godhead," then explains it to mean, "the state of being God." *Bodily* refers to the form in which Jesus appeared while on earth, so that the entire *fulness* or virtue of the Deity was represented in Him. That is why Jesus said to Philip, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14: 9). Not that Jesus was the Father personally, but he was a full representation of God in human form.

Verse 10. Since the entire Godhead is represented by Christ, nothing of value will be lacking to those who are in Him. *Principality* is the same as seniority or priority, and *power* means authority. He is senior because he is the "firstborn of every creature" (chapter 1: 15), and He is head of all

power or authority because it was all given to Him after his resurrection (Matthew 28: 18). If we believe the teaching of Paul in this verse, we will not clamor for things in our religious life that Christ has not authorized.

Verse 11. I have consulted several translations, and they put the word *are* in the past tense, showing it refers to a specific event of the past. The occasion when it was accomplished will be noted in the following verse. *Circumcision* means a cutting round or off, and when used figuratively it refers to the separation of a man's sins from his life by his obedience to the Gospel. It was *without hands* because while its outward form was done by a human act (see next verse), the real performance was spiritual or inward. (See Romans 6: 17.) *Circumcision of Christ* denotes that the whole transaction was accomplished by His authority.

Verse 12. The final act of the spiritual circumcision is by baptism, and men are said to be *buried with him*, that is with Christ. This phrase is used because in baptism the person is placed under the water and then raised again, thus going down and up in the form of a burial and resurrection. It is said to be with Him because he commands it, and also because he died and was buried in the tomb, from which he rose again. Such a like burial and resurrection is recognized as an act of faith in Christ and God. *Operation* means the energy or divine activity by which God raised Christ from the dead. Much has been said as to what constitutes "valid baptism," and we have some direct information in this passage. If a man believes that God raised Christ from the dead, and he is baptized in view of his faith in that act, then Paul declares that such a man has been *risen with him*, which certainly would prove that his baptism was valid. This thought is given also in Romans 10: 9.

Verse 13. All statements in this verse except the last one are figurative. Death means a separation, and as long as these people were living in their sins they were separated from God and hence were dead to Him. They likewise were uncircumcised during that time since their sins had not been cut off. To be *quicken* means to be made alive, or have the condition of death just described, reversed by obedience to the Gospel.

*With him* means with Christ, which was done when they were "buried with Him" in baptism. When all this was done, God forgave them all trespasses.

Verse 14. *Blotting out* is from a word that denotes something has been erased or canceled. However, since this refers to the Old Testament, we know it means that the enforcement of it as a religious law only was canceled, for the document is still in print and its national customs were still permitted to the Jewish Christians in Paul's day (Acts 21: 21-24). It is called *handwriting* from the fact that God wrote it with his own fingers on the stone, then authorized Moses to write it all in a book with his hand. *Against* and *contrary* literally means to be an enemy, but it is not used in that sense here, for the law of Moses should not be thought of in that light. The idea is that no one could form his religious life by that law and be under the law of Christ at the same time. (See Galatians 5: 1-4.) *Nailing it to his cross*. As long as a note or bond is in force or unsatisfied, it stands as an obligation "against" those who are under it. But when its demands have been met, it is canceled and its debtors are no longer held. Then such a document is rendered void by having a punch make a perforation through it, as a ticket is punched. This was done to the law when Jesus suffered himself to be punctured or nailed to the cross.

Verse 15. To *spoil* anything means to take away its valuables. The most valuable possession of a power or government is its authority. Jesus took that away from the law, as far as religious obligations were concerned, when He died on the cross and gave to the world another law and government. *Make a show of them openly* by being crucified in the view of the world. In this great event, though Jesus died and apparently was overcome, yet he came forth again from the dead to die no more. In so doing, Jesus triumphed over them (all other powers) *in it*. The last two words are rendered "in himself," which is correct since He was the one who triumphed.

Verse 16. The law of Moses had certain regulations concerning what they might eat and drink, and how (Leviticus 7: 10-27). It had various days that had to be observed as holy days. Among these were the new moons (2 Chronicles 31: 3; Numbers

28: 11), and all the sabbath days (Exodus 31: 13). Since that law has been replaced by the Gospel, no man should be allowed to *judge* the Christians concerning these regulations, by trying to force their observance on them.

Verse 17. The lexicon explains the original for *shadow* to mean, "an image cast by an object and representing the form of that object," and *body* is from SOMA, which the same lexicon of Thayer defines as, "the thing itself which casts the shadow." The ordinances of the Mosaic law were types or shadows of those to be given through Christ, and that is the reason He is said to be the body that casts the shadow. By insisting on the ordinances of the old law, the Judaizers were preferring the shadow of something to the thing itself.

Verse 18. *Beguile you of your reward* is from a Greek word that is used literally in reference to the athletic contests, where a judge or umpire would decide who is the winner. Thayer defines the word, "To decide as umpire against one, to declare him unworthy of the prize; to defraud of the prize of victory." As Paul uses it the meaning is, not to let the Judaizers cheat the disciples out of their reward from Christ by means of the evil things mentioned in the rest of this verse and the next. *Voluntary humility* means a pretended or self-imposed show of humility that is outward only. *Worshiping* is from THRESKEIA, which Thayer defines, "Primarily fear of the gods; religious worship, especially external, that which consists in ceremonies." It is used here in reference to some formalities that were claimed to be pleasing to the angelic hosts or beings in the unseen world, which Paul describes as an *intruding into those things which he hath not seen*. These Judaistic philosophers did all this because their *fleshly* or carnal mind had puffed them up over their imaginary importance.

Verse 19. The head of a body is that which directs its movements, hence if the body should become disconnected from the head, its performances would become disorderly (such as a fowl when its head has been severed by an ax). These deceptive teachers are likened to a body thus disconnected from its head, because they have rejected Christ who is "the head of the body." *Joints and bands* refers to the parts of the body, which must

depend upon the head for proper control. When that is done, it will result in *having nourishment ministered*, and hence will be *knit together* into a well ordered body. The grand result will be a proper development and *increase* (growth), because it will be *the increase of God*. (See Ephesians 4: 16.)

Verse 20. In his deunciation of false teachers, the apostle has reference to both Judaism and so-called philosophy in the rest of the chapter, but chiefly the former. *Rudiments of the world* means the elements or ordinances of the law that were types of the Gospel. Since Christ has released them from their obligation to the former *rudiments*, why (Paul asks) are they still subjecting themselves to them as if they were still under them.

Verse 21. Paul did not give this verse as his command, but quotes it as one of the human ordinances from which Christ has made men free. The restrictions of the law, such as *touch not, taste not, handle not*, referred to the eating and drinking of certain things. Those regulations had been lifted by the Gospel, so that trying still to fasten them upon Christians was considered as forcing upon them a human regulation.

Verse 22. *Perish with the using*. The things the Judaizers insisted that Christians should "touch not; taste not; handle not," were the articles of food and drink that were restricted by the law. Paul is reasoning that the restrictions were not made because of any bad effect such things would have on the body, for they perished with the using. That is, as articles of food, they were soon cast out of the body, leaving it unharmed. (See Mark 7: 15-19) The ordinances against them, therefore, were purely ceremonial, and when the law was canceled, the said restrictions were canceled also. After that was done, any continuance of them would be regarded as being *after the commandments and doctrines of men*. Paul taught the same idea in Philippians 3: 9, where he designates the righteousness of the law "mine own righteousness," after the law had been replaced by that of Christ.

Verse 23. *Show of wisdom* denotes that these unauthorized theories and practices have an appearance of wisdom only. This verse has special reference to the items of so-called philosophers, and the practices of people called ascetics. Such extremists be-

lieved it was a virtue to torture the body in the name of religious philosophy. *Will worship* means that which is suggested by the human will instead of by the will of God. *Humility* is the same as "voluntary humility," and it is explained at verse 18. *Neglecting of the body* is defined by Robinson as "harsh bodily discipline." *Not in any honor* denotes that these things are of no real value, and *to the satisfying of the flesh* means they are prompted by the fleshly or human notions.

### Colossians 3

Verse 1. Some translations render the first part of this verse as follows: "Since, then, ye have been risen with Christ." That is correct, for the first word is from the Greek term *εἰ* which is defined in the lexicons as a conditional term. It means a condition that something is based upon, and the condition in this case is that the Colossians had been risen with Christ. However, there is no doubt implied, for chapter 2: 12 plainly states that they had done so, and says it was when they were baptized. That act entitled them to the things mentioned in our verse. The preceding chapter shows them the folly of depending on human elements, hence they should look elsewhere for something worth having and seeking for. The instruction is to seek the things which are *above*, and the word is defined by Thayer, "in a higher place." But the apostle leaves no place for uncertainty as to where that is, for he says it is *where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God*. Baptized believers, then, have a right to these things, but they must *seek* for them. Romans 2: 7 and Revelation 22: 14 will tell us how the seeking is done.

Verse 2. *Set your affections* are from the Greek word *φρονέω*, and Thayer defines it, "to direct one's mind to a thing, to seek or strive for." The verse is virtually the same in meaning as the preceding one.

Verse 3. Death means a separation, and when the disciples turned from a sinful life, they were separated from sin and thus died to it. The life or activity that had been devoted to a worldly practice then became devoted to Christ and so was *hid with Him*. Of course it was *in God*, because everything pertaining to righteousness and salvation, must be accomplished jointly with the Father and the Son.

Verse 4. *Christ who is our life*. To be hid with Christ gives assurance of enjoying the provisions that He has made for his faithful servants. Those provisions include eternal life; and all of the interests of Christians that have been *hid with Him* will be revealed—will come out of hiding—when Christ appears at the last day. "When that illustrious day shall rise," it will be in a halo of eternal glory, betokening victory over the sinful world.

Verse 5. In the preceding chapter Paul condemns the extremists who considered it a virtue to torture the body. In the present passage he instructs the disciples to *mortify* (put to death) certain evil things that are often practiced in the *members* or parts of the body. *Fornication*. According to Thayer's explanation of this word, it means unlawful intimacy in general, between the sexes, whether married or not. *Uncleanness* is a general term and applies to any kind of defilement whether of body or spirit. *Inordinate affection* is from *πάθος*, which Thayer defines, "depraved passion;" it is the word for "vile affections" in Romans 1: 26. *Evil concupiscence* is a term for evil desire, and it is described by Thayer as, "desire for what is forbidden, lust." *Covetousness* is from *πλεονεξία*, and Thayer defines it, "greedy desire to have more, covetousness, avarice." *Idolatry* is from *ἰδωλατρεία*, and its primary meaning is as the King James Version renders it. Thayer explains it at this place to mean "avarice [greed], as a worship of Mammon." The last word is derived from the Chaldean language, and means "what is trusted in," which shows us why Paul says that covetousness is (not just as bad as) *idolatry*.

Verse 6. The theory of predestination that many human creeds teach, is disproved by this verse. It shows that the wrath of God comes on people only who are guilty of the evils described in the preceding verse. Such conduct puts them in a class called *children of disobedience*. The first word is described in Thayer's lexicon as, "those who are connected with a thing by any kind of close relationship."

Verse 7. The Colossians were once living in sin but are now disciples of Christ, having been baptized into Him. The words *walked* and *lived* are used in the same sense, showing that a

man's walk is classified by the way he lives.

Verse 8. When they obeyed the Gospel they were made free from all guilt and stood pure before God. However, being in the beginning of their service to Him, they were like children and would need to make further advancement in their contest against sin. *Anger, wrath, malice*. If used alone, these words would have virtually the same meaning. When used in one sentence, they represent a growing of intensity of evil temper, finally becoming fixed in a deep feeling and evil intention called *malice*. *Blasphemy* is any kind of evil speaking, especially that which is prompted by the kind of heart just described. *Filthy communication* is foul and indecent language.

Verse 9. *The old man* is a figurative name for the kind of life the Colossians had lived, which was *put off* when they ceased such a life of sin. One of the evils they formerly committed was falsehood, which is to be replaced with truth.

Verse 10. When a person puts off one suit of apparel, it is usually for the purpose of putting on another. In like manner, after discarding their old garb of sin, the Colossians had *put on* the new one that was *renewed* (modeled) after a divine pattern like Christ who *created* or designed it.

Verse 11. This verse does not mean that the groups named cannot be in Christ, but that in Him no distinctions are made for or against any of them. When *Greek* is used in contrast with *Jew* it means a Gentile. *Circumcision* and *uncircumcision* also mean Jew and Gentile, because that rite was a distinguishing mark between the two from a national standpoint. *Barbarian* means a foreigner, and *Scythian* means a class of people considered below the average in culture and intelligence. *Bond* and *free* refer to slaves, and those not under slavery. All of these classes have equal right to be in Christ upon obedience to the Gospel, and when they comply with it, they are united as one religious group in Him.

Verse 12. What the Colossians had *put on* is mentioned in general in verse 10, and this verse gives some items of that new attire. *Elect of God* means people who have obeyed the law of God and therefore are elected or chosen by Him, and are regarded as

*holy* and *beloved*. *Bowels* is used figuratively in the New Testament, which Thayer explains as follows: "In the Greek poets the bowels were regarded as the seat of the more violent passions, but by the Hebrews as the seat of the tenderer affections." Paul partly gives the same definition by adding the rest of the words of this verse. *Humbleness* and *meekness* are about the same in meaning, and *long-suffering* denotes patience under trials and unjust treatment.

Verse 13. *Forbearing one another* is virtually the same as "longsuffering" in the preceding verse, denoting a spirit of patience with the faults of others. This will be manifested by a willingness to forgive one who has trespassed against us. *Quarrel* means complaint that one feels he has against a brother. *Even* comes from KATHOS, which Thayer defines, "according as, just as, even as." The idea is that we should be willing to follow the example of Christ in forgiving those who have offended us.

Verse 14. *Charity* is from AGAPE, which means love that is prompted by a genuine interest in another, which is manifested by a willingness to contribute to his welfare. *Above all these things* means that love is more important than all the other things that were mentioned in the preceding verses. That agrees with 1 Corinthians 13: 13, where the last word is from the same Greek term. *Bond of perfectness* signifies that charity (or love) will make a perfect (complete) bond between brethren.

Verse 15. *Peace of God* would be that calmness of mind provided by Him. *To rule in their hearts* means for such a state of mind to predominate in their minds. Such a condition can be had only in the *one body* which is the church (Ephesians 1: 22, 23). Such a blessedness with God is enough to cause them to *be thankful*.

Verse 16. The body of this verse is the same in thought as Ephesians 5: 19; a full explanation is given at that place, which the reader should see; some additional comments will be offered here. The *word of Christ* is recorded in the New Testament, hence a knowledge of that book is necessary for it to dwell in one's mind richly and *in wisdom*. Such a knowledge will enable the disciples to *teach* and *admonish* each other. To teach means to impart instruction, and to admonish

means to insist on doing one's duty, with an intimation of danger in neglecting it. *Singing with grace* indicates that the service is prompted by the grace (favor) of God.

Verse 17. *Word or deed*. According to Luke 6: 43-45, a man's words are the fruit of his heart or thoughts. Therefore, the phrase in italics includes one's entire conduct, and the command is that it must be all *in the name* of the Lord Jesus, otherwise it will be wrong. That cannot mean that merely professing the name of Christ in connection with a thing will make it right. Matthew 7: 22; 24: 5 shows persons doing things "in the name" of the Lord, who we know were not doing right. The phrase can mean only to do all by the authority of Christ. Since His authority is known only in the New Testament, it follows that Christians have no right to any thought, word or deed, that is not authorized by that volume.

Verse 18. The relationship between God and Christians is a religious and spiritual one, yet He gives certain regulations regarding conduct of the disciples, in all of their relations and dealings with each other, in their various connections with social, political and industrial activities. The general law that should always prevail when a question is raised as to right and wrong in the cases to be mentioned soon, is stated in Acts 5: 29 as follows: "We ought to obey God rather than men." That is why our present verse instructs wives to submit themselves unto their husbands *as it is fit in the Lord*. As long as a wife can obey her husband without violating any law of the Lord, it is her duty to do so.

Verse 19. *Love* is from AGAPAO, which Thayer defines, "to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of." It does not necessarily include the "romantic sentiments," although such a feeling should exist for a woman before a man seeks to make her his wife. *Be not bitter* means for him not to show an angry or irritated feeling toward his wife in ruling over her.

Verse 20. *In all things* should be understood with the same proviso as "in the Lord" at Ephesians 6: 1. A full explanation of this subject is given in that passage which the reader should consult. As long as the commands of parents are not in conflict with the law of the Lord, children

must obey them, even though they are old enough to have obeyed the Gospel.

Verse 21. The words *to anger* are not in the primary definition given by the lexicon. *Provoke* means to irritate one's children in a way that will discourage them. It does not oppose proper disciplining of them, even though such correction may be unpleasant. It should be considered in the light of Hebrews 12: 11.

Verse 22. It was not the purpose of the Lord to interfere with the relation of master and servant, for that is a temporal one. But He gave regulations for their conduct toward each other when either or both became disciples, which frequently occurred. *Eye service* means "service performed only under the master's eye."—Thayer. *Singleness* is another name for sincerity, and such service here termed *eye service* would not be sincere, and would not be prompted by the fear or respect for God.

Verse 23. They were to serve their masters with the same sincerity that they do their service to the Lord. In truth, since He requires servants to obey their masters, such service could well be considered in a sense as having been done for the Lord.

Verse 24. *Reward of the inheritance* merely denotes the Lord will see that a faithful servant will receive his due reward. The last clause is the same as the preceding verse; Lord Christ means the anointed ruler.

Verse 25. As surely as the Lord will see that a faithful servant will receive his due reward, so He will see that an unfaithful one will be punished. *No respect of persons*. No unfaithful servant will be shown any partiality on account of some personal preference, as earthly masters sometimes do. (See the comments at Ephesians 6: 9.)

#### Colossians 4

Verse 1. Masters who become disciples were under the authority of Christ as well as were their servants, hence were given instructions as to the proper treatment to be accorded them. *Just and equal* means they should furnish their servants with such wages as their labor deserved and their needs required. Remembering that they have a Master in heaven should prevent them from being unduly severe with their own servants,



and cause them not to withhold from them their just dues.

Verse 2. To *continue in prayer* denotes a life that is devoted to God, and that makes all activities for Him the subjects of Prayer. Prayer has to do with one's attention to the Lord, and watching pertains to the care a disciple will have as to his own conduct. *Thanksgiving* is appropriate because of the consideration God gives to the faithful child of His.

Verse 3. *Withal* is defined "at the same time" by Thayer, which connects this verse with the preceding one. As they "continue" in prayer for themselves, Paul wishes them to include a prayer for him. Not for his personal benefit, but for the work of Christ in which he is engaged. He wished for a *door of utterance*, meaning an opportunity for speaking the *mystery* (Gospel) of Christ. *For which* refers to this mystery or Gospel, meaning that his *bonds* or chain was upon him because he wished to preach the Gospel, which was displeasing to so many Jews and others.

Verse 4. A mystery is anything that is not known, whether complicated or simple in its character. Paul refers to the mystery of the Gospel in the preceding verse, now in this he wishes to be able to make it *manifest* or known to those with whom the "door of utterance" would bring him into contact.

Verse 5. *Walk in wisdom*. Let the conduct be according to good judgment, considering the effect it will have upon *them that are without*, meaning the ones who are not in the church. The people of the world often have a better knowledge of how Christians should live than we realize. *Redeeming the time* means to make good use of our time, by devotion to the things that will build up a character acceptable to God.

Verse 6. The instructions in the preceding verse have special reference to the bodily conduct of disciples, and the present one pertains to their language in conversation with others. *Grace* is from CHARIS, and it is used in the New Testament with reference to both the Lord's dealings with man, and to the dealings of men with each other. When used in the latter sense, it is defined by Thayer as follows: "Sweetness, charm, loveliness; goodwill, lovingkindness, favor." Salt has the quality of preserving that with

which it comes into contact, and also of rendering it more agreeable to the taste. Our verse means that by proper talk with people on the outside of the church, disciples may be true to the Gospel teaching, and yet not give unnecessary offense. Such a rule or attitude towards others will show that a disciple *knows how to answer every man*, and thus his good influence may be preserved as *with salt*.

Verse 7. Thayer says Tychicus was "an Asiatic Christian, friend and companion of the apostle Paul." Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary gives the same information, with additional notes that he carried the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, and the same would apply to the present letter. It should be kept in mind that all Paul's epistles were sent by messengers, since there were no postal arrangements for carrying private letters such as exist in our times. When delivering the epistle to the Colossians, Paul expected Tychicus to give information as to the personal circumstances that his work in the Gospel had caused.

Verse 8. *Same purpose* refers to the subject of welfare mentioned in the preceding verse. Tychicus was to inform the Colossians of the state of Paul, and he wished also to learn that of them. *Comfort your hearts*. Thayer defines the Greek for the first word, "to encourage, strengthen." In spite of the restricted situation surrounding the apostle, there was much in which to rejoice, because of the great amount of good that he was doing for the Gospel's sake.

Verse 9. Onesimus was the runaway slave of Philemon (Philemon 10-16) who got in company with Paul in Rome and was persuaded to obey the Gospel. His master being a resident of Colosse, he was sent back there with Tychicus as the epistle of Paul was sent to the church in that city. *Who is one of you* pertains both to his being a resident of the city, and also a brother in Christ. He was expected to join with Tychicus in reporting on the state of Paul.

Verse 10. A number of brethren were in Rome when Paul composed this epistle, and many of them joined in sending friendly greetings to the Colossians. *Aristarchus* was a citizen of Thessalonica (Acts 27: 2), who became a traveling companion of the apostle (Acts 19: 29; 20: 4). He be-

came a fellow-laborer with Paul (Philemon 24), and because of his zeal in the work he was finally taken captive by the authorities and made his fellow-prisoner as our verse states. *Marcus* is another form for Mark, who was in Rome, having been restored to the confidence of the apostle (2 Timothy 4: 11). *Sister's son* is from *ANEPSIOS*, which Thayer defines, "a cousin." The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders the phrase, "Mark, the cousin of Barnabas." *Ye received commandments*. We are not told what those orders were, but the necessary inference is that they pertained to the attitude that was to be shown toward Mark. That accounts for the instruction to *receive him* if he came to Colosse.

Verse 11. This *Jesus* is distinguished from others of the same name by giving us his surname; *called [surnamed] Justus*. *Of the circumcision* means they were Jews converted to the Gospel. *These only* refers to the Jewish Christians mentioned in this and the preceding verse. They were the only ones of that nationality who were *fellow-workers* with Paul, and who thus had been a comfort to him. Certain Gentile converts also co-operated with him, some of whom have been already mentioned, and others will be named later in this chapter.

Verse 12. *Epaphras* had been associated with the church at Colosse, but when this epistle was written, he was in Rome and a prisoner on behalf of the Gospel. This is indicated in Philemon 23, where Paul calls him his "fellow-prisoner." He joined in sending salutations to the Colossian brethren. *Laboring . . . . in prayers* for the "home congregation" was a natural thing because of his personal interest in those brethren. *Perfect* and *complete* mean about the same if used separately in various places. In the present use of the words, the former means to be fully developed, and the latter shows why; that it is because they would be fully supplied with necessary spiritual principles.

Verse 13. Laodicea and Hierapolis were cities not far from Colosse, and Epaphras had expressed a fervent interest in the disciples at those places.

Verse 14. Luke was a physician by profession, but became a devoted companion of Paul, both in his travels and also in his tribulations at Rome. He

is also the writer of the Gospel record bearing his name in the heading, and of the book of Acts (Luke 1: 3; Acts 1: 1). Demas was yet in Rome and devoted to the apostle also at the time this letter was written; he deserted him afterward (2 Timothy 4: 10).

Verse 15. The salutations of this verse are general as a whole, but Paul makes some specifications. Laodicea is mentioned in verse 13, and Nymphas was a disciple in that city. The original for *house* sometimes means "the inmates of a house, the family." This disciple had a group of others in his house who composed the church in that city, and Paul sends greetings to it through the Colossian brethren.

Verse 16. Laodicea was not far from Colosse, and Paul directed the brethren to read this epistle among themselves first, then pass it on to the brethren at Laodicea to be read by them. There is some uncertainty as to what epistle is meant that was to come *from Laodicea*, but whatever it was, the brethren at Colosse were instructed to read it. The common conditions in these two churches were such as to make the two epistles appropriate for both.

Verse 17. *Archippus* is described by Thayer as, "a certain Christian at Colosse." He was a teacher in the church there, and Paul sends this exhortation to him to be expressed by the brethren on behalf of the apostle. *The ministry* means the service of teaching that the Lord had delivered to him.

Verse 18. Paul occasionally did the writing of his epistles (Galatians 6: 11), but as a rule he dictated them to someone else, then signed his name to them which made them authentic. *Remember my bonds*. This was not written to obtain sympathy, for the apostle was not the kind of disciple to complain. The reference was for the benefit of the brethren, to stimulate their zeal on behalf of the Gospel.

## 1 Thessalonians 1

Verse 1. The planting of the church in Thessalonica is recorded in Acts 17th chapter, and soon afterward Paul wrote this epistle to it. According to Thayer, Silvanus is another form of the name for Silas, who was chosen to travel with Paul in his second journey (Acts 15: 40). When they reached

Lystra they met a disciple by the name of Timotheus (same as Timothy), and Paul took him along on this journey. These brethren were with Paul and joined their salutations to his as he composed this epistle to the church of the Thessalonians. God and Christ are not the same person, but they are one in spirit and purpose, and no relation can be had with either that ignores the other; hence the church is said to be *in* them both. In their specific relations to the church, God is the Father and Christ is the ruler, that being the meaning of *Lord*; this is in agreement with Matthew 28: 18 and 1 Corinthians 15: 24, 25.

Verse 2. *Making mention of you in our prayers.* Here is a specific example of direct or personal mention of those for whom we wish to pray to God, and not the unnecessary and indefinite request for Him to "bless all for whom we should pray."

Verse 3. This verse states the reason for thanksgiving as mentioned in the preceding verse. It contains three distinct items in the conduct of the Thessalonians which Paul remembered with thanksgiving. *Work of faith.* Romans 10: 17 tells us that faith comes by hearing the work of God. Hence no work can be done by faith unless the word of God authorizes it. But there is another item in this phrase that is often overlooked, namely, it must not only be according to the word of God, but it must be put to *work* in order to please the Lord. *Labor of love.* Christians should not only do those things that are authorized by the word of God, but they must love to do them, else their labor will not be acceptable. (See Galatians 5: 6.) *Patience of hope.* The two parts of this phrase cannot exist separately in the life of a Christian. If he does not have any hope for the reward, he will not have the patience to labor for it (Romans 8: 24, 25). Likewise, if a man does not have the patience to continue in a faithful life, he will not have a right to hope for the reward promised to the faithful.

Verse 4. *Election* is from EKLOGE, and Robinson defines it with the words, "choice, election, selection." The term refers to those who are selected by the Lord to be the ones upon whom He will bestow the divine blessings. The selection, however, is not made independent of the conduct of man. It is from the same word used

in 2 Peter 1: 10 where the apostle exhorts the disciples to "make their calling and election sure," which shows that the selection is determined by their conduct.

Verse 5. *Not in word only* denotes that it was not the word of Paul as a man only. It was in *power* (Greek ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ) because the source was the Holy Ghost (or Spirit). With such a foundation for his teaching, Paul could come to the Thessalonians *in much assurance.* The *manner of men* refers to the teaching and conduct that was manifested among them by Paul and his companions. One motive they had for such conduct is revealed by the words *for your sake*, and it had the desired effect as the next verse shows.

Verse 6. The original Greek for *followers* is defined "an imitator" by Thayer, and it is connected with the thoughts in the close of the preceding verse, regarding the conduct of Paul and his companions while in Thessalonica. It is noteworthy that the apostle says they imitated *us and the Lord*, which is according to his instruction in 1 Corinthians 11: 1, to follow him as he followed Christ. *Received the word in much affliction;* this experience is recorded in Acts 17: 5-9. *With joy of the Holy Ghost.* The Gospel which these disciples received was given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost (or Spirit), and the joy was due to their assurance that they were suffering for the sake of the Gospel of Christ. (See Acts 5: 41.)

Verse 7. The example of righteous living set by Paul did not stop with the people in Thessalonica, for it was taken note of by disciples in other places. *Macedonia* was the province in which Thessalonica was located, and *Achaia* was a name given to Greece by the Romans after they got possession of the country.

Verse 8. *From you sounded out the word.* The effect of a good example is still the subject uppermost in the mind of the apostle. These brethren did not actually preach the word by mouth in all these areas, but their good lives spread a report for the good cause. That is why Paul says their *faith is spread abroad*, to such an extent that he did not feel the need of publishing it in those parts.

Verse 9. *Manner of entering in* is the same as "manner of men" in verse 5, and the meaning is that the teaching and conduct of Paul's group was

reflected by the brethren in different places. This reflection did not consist in indefinite compliments only, but they specified some of the good things that resulted from their example. Among them was their conversion from idolatry (the Macedonians being Gentiles and worshipers of idols) to the worship of the true God. He was *living* and not made of wood or stone.

Verse 10. *Wait for* is from ANAMENO which Thayer defines, "to wait for one," then explains it to mean, "to await one whose coming is known or foreseen." It is true that all people must wait for the coming of Christ in the sense that nothing can be done by them to hasten His coming. The idea is that Christians are waiting with confidence that He will come again. The interest in Christ's second coming is in the truth that he overcame death when in this world and thereby provided deliverance from the wrath of God that is to come upon the disobedient. His coming will be the time when those who have accepted this deliverance will be gathered to Him.

## 1 Thessalonians 2

Verse 1. The coming of Paul and his companions to Thessalonica resulted in the conversion of some of its citizens, which proved that it was not in vain.

Verse 2. The shameful treatment mentioned is recorded in Acts 16: 19-24, after which they came to Thessalonica. But the persecution did not keep them from continuing their good work of preaching the Gospel. Instead, it made them *bold* ("confident"—Thayer) in speaking it to them. *Contention* means earnestness and anxiety, which describes the attitude of Paul on account of the opposition that had been waged against him. In other words, Paul regarded the issues as being a contest between truth and error, and he was determined to perform his part of the struggle with the same zeal that men showed when they entered the arena of the athletic games.

Verse 3. Paul could not have had any wrong motive when he was exhorting the Thessalonians, for his conduct under persecutions while at Philippi showed that he had nothing to gain by practicing *deceit* or *guile* which means trickery. His conduct and teaching also had nothing unclean either physically or spiritually as he labored among them.

Verse 4. *Put in trust* is rendered "be entrusted" by The Englishman's Greek New Testament, which expresses the idea better. It denotes that even an apostle was to handle the word of God as a faithful agent, and not as if he were managing his own business. As long as he or any other disciple holds the law of the Lord in that light, he will not violate Revelation 22: 18, 19. That is why Paul says he was speaking *not as pleasing men, but God. Trieth our hearts*. The first word is defined to mean "to examine" or "scrutinize." If Paul should handle the Gospel with a view to pleasing men, that motive would be seen by the Lord when He examined his heart (or mind).

Verse 5. *Flattering words . . . nor a choke of covetousness*. Paul did not use flattery to hide a motive of covetousness, for he was not covetous, but was interested in their spiritual welfare and not their wealth.

Verse 6. Paul did not seek the praise of men when he was preaching the Gospel among them. This was true, whether he was with the Thessalonians or with others. *When we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ*. Paul could have used his authority as an apostle, but he did not burden them for his own advantage.

Verse 7. Instead of using the stern attitude of authority, Paul manifested that of an affectionate nurse toward the children under her care.

Verse 8. The word *souls* is from PSUCHE which has a wide range of meanings. Sometimes it refers to the inner man as distinguished from the body, and at others it means the part that makes one a living creature and not a dead one. It is used in the latter sense in our verse, and Paul means he and his companions would have been willing to die for the brethren at Thessalonica, had it been necessary for their welfare. He explains that the cause of it was their affectionate desire on behalf of these disciples, who had shown such courage after hearing the Gospel.

Verse 9. *Labor* and *travail* mean very much the same, and are used for the purpose of emphasis. When taken together, the idea is to show hard bodily toil, performed in connection with an intense concern for the comfort of the brethren. The apostle worked at his trade of tentmaking (Acts 18: 1-3), in order to relieve the

Thessalonian brethren from the burden of supporting him. Being inspired, he did not have to spend time in reading and meditating as did other preachers of the Gospel (1 Timothy 4: 13-16).

Verse 10. It is certain that God knows everything that is going on, and the fact is mentioned in connection with the knowledge of the Thessalonians to signify the unity of interest between God and his people. *Holily* and *justly* both mean virtually the same thing, but the first has special reference to one's responsibility to God, and the second toward his fellowman. In being unblameable on both counts, Paul could claim to have a conscience "void of offence toward God and man" (Acts 24: 16).

Verse 11. The tender attitude of Paul toward the Thessalonian brethren was due to his close association with them in the beginning of their service to Christ. There was so much opposition from the enemies that it bound the apostle and his converts with a nearness that was like that between a father and his children. That relationship of feeling caused him to exhort them toward their duty and to encourage them in their work for Christ.

Verse 12. To *walk worthy of God* means to walk or conduct themselves in a way befitting those belonging to God. This is especially true, since their call from Him was not into a work of a temporal nature, but was *unto his kingdom and glory*.

Verse 13. Paul was thankful for the respect shown the word of God that the Thessalonians manifested. Although it was delivered to them by the mouth of man, they regarded it as of divine authority. *Effectually worketh* means to work with energy and power in those who believe it; it has no effect on those who disbelieve it.

Verse 14. *Followers of the churches*. Not that the churches were looked to for authority, but as good examples of right living in Christ Jesus. Judea was the place where the first churches were planted, amidst persecution, and the Thessalonians imitated them by enduring opposition brought by the Jews. (See Acts 17: 5-9.)

Verse 15. The Jews did not directly kill Jesus, because they did not have that authority (John 18: 31), but they caused it to be done, and for that reason they were charged with His

death. Jesus and Stephen accused them of killing the prophets before them (Matthew 5: 12; 23: 27-36; Acts 7: 52). *Persecuted* is rendered "chased us out" in the margin. That is correct, for the original word is defined by Thayer as follows: "To drive out, banish; to pursue; to persecute, oppress with calamities." Paul was virtually chased out in Acts 16: 39, 40. *Contrary to all men*. The Jews were forbidden to participate with the heathen in their false worship, but they were told not to oppress them (Exodus 23: 9). These instructions were observed for many years, but in later times, especially after the Greek and Roman Empire took control of the world, the Jews became suspicious of the Gentiles in general, and became bitter in their treatment of all who would not submit to their religious bigotry.

Verse 16. The feeling of the Jews toward the Gentiles as described in the preceding verse, will help to explain why they forbade the apostle to speak to the Gentiles, to offer them salvation through the Gospel. An example of their jealousy against any favor shown to them is recorded in Acts 13: 42-45. *To fill up their sins alway*. Such an attitude of the Jews toward their fellowmen was so evil that Paul used the phrase in italics, meaning that it rounded out or completed a very sinful character, which was destined to bring upon them the wrath of God *to the uttermost*. This was brought to pass when the nation was rejected and their temple destroyed by the Romans.

Verse 17. *Being taken from you for a short time*. In Acts 17: 10 is the account of Paul's departure from Thessalonica, and his pause at Berea. He was still present with them in heart (or mind), and he desired and planned to return to them in body soon.

Verse 18. Acts 17: 13, 14 tells how *Satan hindered* Paul's return to Thessalonica. When the Jews persisted in their opposition to Paul's work, by even pursuing him to Berea, it was regarded as the work of Satan that hindered him from his plan.

Verses 19, 20. No man's salvation depends on the faithfulness of his converts if he has done his duty in teaching them. However, there is an added joy in seeing them remain true, and this is the *crown of rejoicing* meant in this verse. They must be faithful until Christ comes again (or until death). This is the reward that is meant in 1 Corinthians 3: 14, 15; 2

John 8 and 3 John 4. While the reward will not be given to the converts until Christ comes, yet the *hope* that it will be done was possible for Paul to enjoy in this life, by observing the faithfulness of his brethren.

### 1 Thessalonians 3

Verse 1. *Left at Athens alone.* This means the time when Paul had Timothy sent from him to go and visit the Thessalonians and inquire after their condition. Acts 17: 15 states that the brethren who conducted Paul from Thessalonica to Athens, were to return with a command for Silas and Timotheus (Timothy) to come immediately to him. However, when the apostle went to Corinth, both Silas and Timotheus joined him, coming from Macedonia (Acts 18: 5). This indicates that only Timotheus really went to Athens, the reason for which is not stated.

Verse 2. The notes on the preceding verse will explain why our present one mentions Timotheus only as being sent from Athens back to Thessalonica (in Macedonia), there to be rejoined by Silas when he came back from Athens; then together they left and went to Paul who was in Corinth. Paul calls Timotheus a *minister*, which is from DIAKONOS. Thayer's general definition of the word is, "one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a servant, attendant, minister." It is the word for "deacon" in every place in the King James Version. The word "minister" is never used in the New Testament as applying to preachers as a special class. *Fellowlaborer* means one who labors with another for a cause in which they both are interested; in the present case it was *the Gospel of Christ*. To *establish* denotes that they were to be further strengthened by being *comforted* through the message sent to them by Paul.

Verse 3. *Moved* is from a Greek word that means "to agitate, disturb, trouble," and Paul did not want the brethren to be disturbed by their *afflictions* or persecutions. *Are appointed* means to be destined to a thing, and it denotes that opposition is bound to come against those who are true servants of God. The reason is that such a life is a rebuke against the people of the sinful world, and they show their resentment by persecuting the doers of the righteous life. (See 2 Timothy 3: 12.)

Verse 4. "To be forewarned is to be forearmed" is as true on this subject as on any other. Paul wished that the brethren in Thessalonica would not be surprised by persecutions, lest they might thereby be "overtaken in a fault" (Galatians 6: 1). To prevent such a result, he told them to be prepared for the trials awaiting them.

Verse 5. In spite of the precaution mentioned in the preceding verse, Paul wished to reassure himself of their steadfastness, and hence he sent Timotheus to them (verse 2) to strengthen them in the faith.

Verse 6. Paul was not disappointed by sending Timotheus to inquire into the state of the Thessalonians, for he brought back a good report of their *faith* and *charity*. The first word has special reference to their service to God. The second is from one of the words that are elsewhere translated "love," and it is the form of love that is manifested in service to the brethren. *Desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you.* This sentence shows the close feeling that existed between Paul and the brethren whom he had led into the service of Christ. When men and women are sincere disciples of Christ, they will prize each other's company above all others.

Verse 7. Paul's afflictions were not removed by the service of the Thessalonians, but their example of steadfastness made it easier for him to bear them.

Verse 8. *We live* is a figurative or comparative term, not that Paul's physical life actually depended on the faithfulness of the brethren. Robinson defines the original in this place, "to live and prosper, to be happy, blessed." It is somewhat like the familiar expression of one whose circumstances have been changed from unfavorable to favorable; he will remark, "now this is more like living."

Verse 9. *What thanks can we render* means Paul thought he could not be thankful enough for the joyful feelings their faithfulness had brought him. *For your sakes* means Paul was rejoicing because of the benefit that would result for the Thessalonians for them to be true to God, before whom or in whose sight all conduct is known.

Verse 10. Having been so favorably impressed concerning the Thessalonians, it was natural that Paul would desire further association with them.



He offered daily prayers that he might have that privilege. There was nothing wrong about their faith, but they were still but babes in Christ, and Paul wished to impart more inspired information to them, to strengthen and build them up, and in so doing to *perfect* (make more complete) their faith.

Verse 11. There are just two persons named in this verse, but each of them has more than one name. *God* is the supreme ruler of the universe, and he is *Father* to all who will become His children by obedience. *Lord* means ruler, *Jesus* means saviour, and *Christ* means anointed. Paul invoked the help of these two great Beings in making a way for him to revisit the Thessalonians.

Verse 12. All good things can be made better; that is what is meant by spiritual growth. The good brethren at Thessalonica loved each other, and had an interest in the welfare of all men. The apostle exhorts them to increase in all such qualities.

Verse 13. *Stablish* is from the same word as "establish" in verse 2, and the meaning is to strengthen or confirm. *Unblameable in holiness* signifies a life of righteousness that avoids the evils of the world to such an extent, that they cannot be truly blamed with committing them.

#### 1 Thessalonians 4

Verse 1. The gist of this verse is that the brethren in Thessalonica had been informed by Paul about how they should live. To please God, it was necessary that they grow or *abound more and more* in that good manner of walk.

Verse 2. Paul always made it plain that he was not preaching on his own authority. He had learned that nothing would be acceptable to God that did not agree with his Son. He understood that the former system under the law was replaced by that under Christ. (See Philippians 3: 9.)

Verse 3. The Thessalonians were Gentiles in the flesh, and had formerly lived in the indulgences of carnal pleasure, prominent among them being that of fornication; some even mixed it with their idolatrous exercises. *Sanctification* is from HAGIOSMOS, which Thayer defines, "consecration, purification." Acts 15: 9 says that the hearts of mankind are purified by faith, and Romans 10: 17

says that faith comes by hearing the word of God. All of this shows that sanctification is the result of hearing (in the sense of heeding) the word of God, thus giving another name for righteousness.

Verse 4. *Possess* is a key word in this verse. It comes from KIAOMAI, which Thayer defines, "to acquire, get or procure a thing for one's self." The sexual desire is a natural one, and God has provided a lawful means of gratifying it, namely, the marriage relation. A wife is called a vessel (1 Peter 3: 7), and Paul means for a man to *possess* (acquire) a wife as the means of lawful gratification, instead of finding satisfaction by committing fornication. The same thing is taught in 1 Corinthians 7: 2 as to the proper means of sexual gratification.

Verse 5. The original Greek word for *concupiscence* is defined by Thayer, "desire for what is forbidden, lust." The verse means the opposite of the preceding one. To commit fornication would be to obtain that which is forbidden by the Lord. The Thessalonians were Gentiles, but they had been made acquainted with God, and hence were expected not to do like the Gentiles who do not know Him.

Verse 6. *Defraud his brother*. When a man commits fornication, he has the relation with a woman who is another man's wife or some man's unmarried daughter. To do so is "to gain or take advantage of another, to overreach," which is Thayer's definition of the word *defraud* in our verse. God will revenge all who do this, and Paul gives warning in this epistle, even as he had done previously when among them.

Verse 7. This verse gives us a clear meaning of *holiness*. The subject being discussed is fornication, which is still under consideration in this verse. Hence the conclusion is that refraining from the uncleanness of fornication would be to show a quality of *holiness*.

Verse 8. Thayer defines the original for *despiseth*, "to reject, refuse, slight." When a man commits fornication he rejects the law against that evil and does wrong against *man*; that is, a human being. However, Paul means that it is not only a sin against man, but it is also against God, the giver of law against the evil act. It is just that God should restrict us in our bodily practices, since

He has given unto us his holy Spirit. The practical use of this Spirit with us is the teaching which He offers through the inspired word, that shows man a higher life in the use of his body.

Verse 9. The duty of mutual love is not new to the New Testament teaching. Leviticus 19: 18 commanded, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and the same thought is expressed in Psalms 133: 1. But the command is given new meaning for Christians by the unspeakable example of love that was shown to the world by Jesus.

Verse 10. These remarks were not in the nature of criticism, for the brethren in Thessalonica had shown their love for others in that they displayed the good example to the other Macedonians (chapter 1: 7). The point is that Paul wishes them to increase in the good spirit.

Verse 11. To *study* means to be concerned, and *be quiet* denotes to be settled and not meddlesome. It is explained by the apostle in the same sentence where he says *to do your own business*. To *work with your own hands* means to engage in some manual labor or occupation that will bring them an income. Paul had given these instructions orally when he was in their midst. (See 2 Thessalonians 3: 10.)

Verse 12. To *walk honestly* means to walk in a becoming manner. To be dependant upon others for the necessities of life is not always a fault, but it is so if one brings the condition on himself by a spirit of idleness. *Them that are without* refers to the people of the world. If they see Christians who are not willing to work for their own living, they will have an unfavorable opinion of the Gospel. In 2 Thessalonians 3: 10, Paul teaches that if a man will not work when he is able, he has no right to the good things of life. It is very plain that a lazy man is not a true Christian.

Verse 13. *Would not have you to be ignorant* simply denotes that Paul did not wish the brethren to be uninformed on the subject he was about to discuss. *Them which are asleep* means the Christians who had died, the last word being a figure of speech based on the apparent condition of those who are dead. The term is used with reference to death in the following passages. Acts 7: 60; 13: 36; 1

Corinthians 15: 6, 51; 2 Peter 3: 4. Sorrow over the death of loved ones is natural and right, which Jesus showed by his attitude toward the sisters of Lazarus (John 11: 35). But there is a difference between the sorrow when it is for those who "sleep in Jesus," for in that case there is a hope of a happy life after the resurrection.

Verse 14. *If we believe*, etc., means that it is as reasonable to believe one part of this verse as the other. The resurrection of Christ is a fact, hence the same God who brought his Son from the dead and up to Heaven, is able to bring others from death into Heaven. The same thought is expressed in other words in Hebrews 2: 10, where it is said that God will be "bringing many sons unto glory." It should not be overlooked that it is only those who *sleep in Jesus* who are being given such a prospect. All the dead will be resurrected at the last day (John 5: 28, 29; Acts 24: 15), but the resurrection of the unsaved is not being considered at all in this chapter.

Verse 15. Paul, speaking on authority of *the word of the Lord*, takes it for granted that there will be Christians living when the resurrection day arrives. The same is taught in 1 Corinthians 15: 51, and hence we have the assurance that no matter what may happen among the people of the world, true Christianity "shall not perish from the earth" while it is permitted to exist. *Prevent* is from PHTHANO, which Thayer defines, "to precede." The faithful disciples who are living when Christ comes will not precede the ones in their graves in going up to meet Him to be taken to heaven.

Verse 16. *Shout* is from KELEUSMA, which occurs only once in the Greek New Testament. Thayer defines it, "an order, command, specifically a stimulating cry." He then explains that by which animals are roused and urged on by man, as horses by charioteers, hounds by hunters, etc., or that by which a signal is given to men, such as to rowers by the master of a ship; to soldiers by a commander; with a loud summons, a trumpet-call." The Englishman's Greek New Testament translates it, "a shout of command." Matthew 16: 27 shows that when Jesus comes again, he will be "with his angels." They will be accompanied by the archangel (whose name is Michael, Jude 9), whose voice will announce the coming of

the great Master and Judge. Trumpets have long been used to signal the approach of important events, especially those of conquest (Exodus 20: 18; Numbers 10: 1-9; Joshua 6: 1-5; Judges 6: 34, 35; 1 Samuel 13: 3; and many others). The second coming of Christ will mark his final victory over all his enemies (1 Corinthians 15: 24-26); it will be fitting, therefore, that the event be signaled with the *trump of God. Shall rise first.* This cannot mean the first resurrection numerically, implying a second, for there will be only one literal resurrection; everybody will rise in the same hour (John 5: 28, 29). The word is explained in Thayer's lexicon to mean "before anything else is done." The idea is that the dead in Christ will be raised before the living in Christ are changed and taken up to meet Christ.

Verse 17. *Alive and remain* refers to the Christians who will be living on the earth when Christ comes. *Caught up together* means that after the dead in Christ have been raised incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15: 52), and the living in Christ have been changed (same verse), then all will ascend in one group to meet the Lord in the air. *So shall we ever be with the Lord.* The first word refers to the condition just described, namely, the righteous changed into an incorruptible body, and living in the constant presence of the Lord. This denotes that no sin will ever be committed by the righteous after the resurrection. The same grand truth is taught in Revelation 22: 11.

Verse 18. *Comfort* is rendered "exhort" in the margin, and that is one of the definitions given in the lexicon. However, verse 13 indicates that Paul wrote these verses for the comfort of those who were sorrowing over the dead, hence the word in the common version is correct.

### 1 Thessalonians 5

Verse 1. *Times and seasons* refer to the events described in the closing verses of the preceding chapter, namely, the second coming of Christ and the resurrection. *No need that I write.* Paul could not write the date of these events for no one but God knows that (Matthew 24: 36). Neither was there any *need* to write as a warning, if they are living as they should, for in that case they would

be prepared to meet Him when the day arrived. (See verse 4.)

Verse 2. Jesus had taught the world that His second coming would not be announced beforehand (Matthew 24: 42-44). There could be no advantage for the faithful disciples to know the exact date when Jesus is to come. In truth, it might be an incentive to carelessness if they knew the date, for they would act on the impression that "there is plenty of time yet." As *a thief in the night* applies to the arrival of *the day of the Lord*, and not a comparison of the Lord himself. A thief does not give any information of his plans, neither will there be any previous announcement of the coming of the last day.

Verse 3. *Shall say, peace and safety* is a figurative expression, representing the state of indifference that the people of the world will be indulging regarding the day of judgment. They will have scorned the warnings of the Lord, spoken to them through the teaching of the Word, and settled themselves in the false *peace and safety* of their life of sin. The pangs of a woman with child are sharp and sudden, throwing her into a state of fear or dread that can be fully understood only by one who personally has such an experience. (See Psalms 48: 6; Jeremiah 6: 24; 49: 24.) Paul uses it to illustrate the terrible state of mind into which the hordes of sinners will be thrown when they suddenly realize that they are faced with the doom of the judgment day. *Shall not escape.* When that awful day comes, it will be impossible to find a hiding place from the wrath of God, for the earth and all things therein will be melting with fervent heat, leaving them in the grasp of Him whose righteous law they have despised. (See 2 Peter 3: 10.)

Verse 4. *Not in darkness.* The brethren had been warned of the surety of the coming of Christ, although the time was not known. They had manifested confidence in the apostolic teaching by accepting it and living according to its precepts; in this sense they were not in the dark to be surprised as by a thief.

Verse 5. *Light and day* are figurative names for the truth, and are opposite night and darkness.

Verse 6. The hours of night are the natural ones for sleeping in the temporal realm. By the same token,

the disciples were expected not to be asleep (indifferent) concerning these spiritual matters, since they were living in the light and day of the truth. They should *watch* (be on the alert) and *be sober*, which means to be thoughtful and take life seriously.

Verse 7. Those who *sleep* (are indifferent) are in the night of spiritual darkness, which means they are lacking in understanding of the things that concern their soul. But that shortage of knowledge is not the Lord's fault, for He has offered full opportunity for the necessary information. *Druken in the night*. With the increase of indulgence in intoxicating drink, this phrase would not have the same application as in former times. When there was such an abhorrence for the practice that most people literally chose the cover of darkness for the shameful vice. (See Acts 2: 15.) The principle is true, also, in the spiritual realm, for those who hate the truth, prefer to shun the investigation of their teaching.

Verse 8. *Who are of the day* is the opposite to the ones who sleep in the preceding verse, meaning that they have taken advantage of the light of truth that has been offered by the Lord. Paul exhorts all such to make good their advantage and their profession, by *being sober* which means to be seriously minded concerning the great affairs of the soul. The parts of a soldier's equipment are mentioned with greater detail in Ephesians 6: 11-17, taken from those used by the Roman soldier. The *breastplate* was a piece made of metal, covering the body from the neck to the hips, thus protecting the heart and other vital parts of the body. No greater protection can be provided a Christian than his *faith* in the Lord and his *love* for his brother. The former will prevent him from going into error, since faith comes by the word of God (Romans 10: 17), and the latter will keep him from making the fatal mistake of harming his brother. The *helmet* was a cap for the protection of the head. A Christian can face any foe and even rejoice in the presence of death, if he has the *hope of salvation* in his heart.

Verse 9. *Not appointed us to wrath*. If people come under the wrath of God, it is not because He prepared them for that purpose. Instead, the plan of the Lord is that men might be

saved through the Lord Jesus Christ. The cause why the wrath of God comes on men and women is shown in Ephesians 5: 6 and Colossians 3: 5, 6.

Verse 10. Christ showed his interest in the salvation of man in that He was willing to die for him. *Wake or sleep* means alive or dead when Jesus comes. (See 1 Corinthians 15: 51; 1 Thessalonians 4: 15-17.) *Live together with him* will take place after the second coming of Christ and the resurrection, referred to in the last-named passage.

Verse 11. *Comfort yourselves* is the same exhortation that is stated in 1 Thessalonians 4: 18. *To edify one another* means to build each other up in the faith by mutual support in spiritual instruction. These brethren had been doing this, hence the instruction of Paul is not a complaint against them, but rather an encouraging word for them to continue in the good work.

Verse 12. *Know* is from EIDO, and Thayer defines it in this passage to mean, "to have regard for one, cherish, pay attention to," *Labor among you* is indefinite and could refer to any friends of truth if nothing specific had been added by the apostle. But he shows of whom he is speaking by the words *over you in the Lord*. Acts 20: 17, 28 and 1 Peter 5: 1, 2 plainly teaches that the elders are the ones who have rule over the congregations. *Admonish you* is one of the duties of the elders, and they do it for the sake of the souls of the flock (Hebrews 13: 17).

Verse 13. *To esteem them* has about the same meaning as to "have regard for" as defined in the preceding verse. *Be at peace among yourselves*. If the members of a congregation would always endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4: 3), it would simplify and lighten the task of the elders in their rulership.

Verse 14. To warn always implies a possible danger or unpleasant experience; and since it is the *unruly* (disorderly) who are warned, it denotes that the unpleasant experience would be brought on them by their own conduct. The unpleasant experience might consist either of disciplinary action by the church (2 Thessalonians 3: 6), or the sentence of punishment at the last day (Matthew 25: 46), or both. *Feebleminded* does not mean folks who are irresponsible mentally,

for such would not be in the church. The word means "faint-hearted" according to Thayer; disciples who are inclined to be easily discouraged in the presence of trial. *Support the weak.* Some members have less ability than others, and Paul would have the stronger ones to support them. (See Romans 15: 1.) In all the various conditions of human society, it is a gracious attitude to be patient or long-suffering.

Verse 15. *See that none render* is the same as saying "let none render evil for evil." The so-called golden rule (Matthew 7: 12), and Paul's teaching in Romans 12: 21 also will agree with the present verse. *Follow that which is good* is opposite rendering evil for evil. This kind of conduct was to be practiced among the disciples, and also was to be done toward all others. A Christian does not have the right to return evil for evil at all, whether to his brethren or to men of the world.

Verse 16. *Rejoice evermore.* We need to look elsewhere to learn what it is that Christians may and may not rejoice in. (See Romans 5: 2; 1 Corinthians 13: 6.)

Verse 17. *Pray without ceasing.* This would not mean that Christians are to spend every minute of their waking hours in prayer, for that would not leave them any time for other duties. It means for them never to cease being praying disciples, in the same sense we would say a man should not cease to partake of food or he would die.

Verse 18. This verse gives one specific form of prayer, namely, giving of thanks for *every thing*. Of course it means things that are good, and we should give thanks to God for them, since all such gifts come from Him (James 1: 17). Paul is still more specific in 1 Timothy 4: 5, where he shows we should give thanks to God for our food. Since this is *the will* of God, it follows that if disciples fail to give thanks for their necessities of life, they are failing to do the will of the Father.

Verse 19. *Quench* is from SBENNU, which Thayer defines, "to suppress, stifle." The Spirit guided the writers of the New Testament (John 16: 13), hence to quench or try to hinder the word of God would be to quench the Spirit.

Verse 20. To *despise* means to be-

little or treat with indifference. *Prophesyings* refers to the speeches of the inspired prophets in the church in those days. Sometimes such were predictions of events still in the future, and at other times they consisted of exhortation and edification (1 Corinthians 14: 3). Verses 21-24 of the same chapter would indicate the importance Paul attached to prophesyings, and hence why he exhorted the Thessalonians not to treat them with indifference.

Verse 21. *Prove* is from DOKIMAZO, which Thayer defines at this place as follows: "To test, examine, prove, scrutinize," and he explains, "to see whether a thing be genuine or not." The passage applies to the various doctrines that were being offered by the teachers in religion. Disciples were warned not to take the mere word of any stranger, but to test his teaching by comparing it with the truths that had been delivered to them by inspired men. The same kind of warning is given in 1 John 4: 1, 2. After the disciples have applied the scripture test, they are to accept and hold fast to everything that passes inspection.

Verse 22. *Abstain* is from APECHO, which Thayer defines in this passage, "to hold one's self off, abstain." Hence it means that we should wholly refrain from the thing being considered. *Apparance* is from EIDOS, and in the present passage is defined by Thayer with the simple words, "form, kind," and he explains it to mean, "every kind of evil or wrong." Robinson defines it, "form, manner, kind." It therefore does not mean "resemblance of evil" as a popular theory claims. It is true the scriptures elsewhere teach that Christians should not indulge in anything that is doubtful or that might possibly be wrong, but that is not the meaning of our present verse. Nor does this explanation lessen the responsibilities of Christians in avoiding evil, as some fear, but rather does it make it more strict and far-reaching. Some professed disciples would cheerfully give up a number of evil practices, but insist on retaining some others on the ground that they are not in the same class, or that they are not as bad a "kind" of evil as the others. Our passage allows no distinction to be made between the so-called worse and lesser of evils. They are all—"every kind"—forbidden to Christians.

Verse 23. Every good thing is of God, but he is here said to be of *peace* because that is an outstanding result of being wholly *sanctified*. The word means to be devoted to the service of God, and such a condition is accomplished by the word of God (John 17: 17). As a general statement, the rest of this verse is a prayer of Paul that the entire being of the brethren be kept blameless, which means in obedience to the truth of God that has sanctified them, and that such a condition would exist until Christ comes again. *Spirit* and *soul* and *body*. This is the only place in the Bible where the three parts of the human being are named in one sentence. There is not much difference between the first two, for they are used interchangeably at various places in the sacred writings. However, since Paul uses them together in the present passage, there must be some difference, although they both refer to the inner or immaterial part of man, in contrast with the material or bodily part. Genesis 2: 7 states the origin of the body and soul of man. But God did not stop with the creation of those two parts. Zechariah 12: 1 states that God formed the spirit of man within him, thus completing the three parts of the human being. From the forgoing considerations, I will give to the readers the three parts of man as follows: The body is that part that is composed of the ground, made in the form of an animal (not a vegetable or mineral); the soul is the part that makes him a living animal; the spirit is the part that makes him a human, living animal. It should be added that God intended this being to have an endless existence, beginning with his stay on the earth, during which he was to be given opportunity to serve his Creator intelligently and spiritually. Because of this exalted purpose, God gave to this being a superior personality over all other living creatures, both as to his material and to his immaterial formation.

Verse 24. We usually think of the term *faithful* as applying to one who is true and obedient to another unto whom he is obligated. Yet it would not be appropriate to regard the Lord in that light; hence it means that He will make good all of the promises he has made to man. Such promises were made when He *called* man by the Gospel and promised him spiritual

benefits in this life, and endless joys in the life to come. *Who also will do it*. God not only has always been faithful, but always will be.

Verse 25. It is interesting that the apostle Paul felt the need for the prayers of the brethren, although he was an inspired man. That was because inspiration was not any special protection against misconduct in one's personal life; it guaranteed only that he would not make any mistake in his teaching. An inspired man could go wrong in his life, even though he had done his duty in his teaching (1 Corinthians 9: 27).

Verse 26. Paul was not starting any custom by this command. The salutation of a kiss was a common one in that age, and still is in some countries. The emphasis should be placed on the word *holy*, and the thought is for the brethren to be sincere when they greet each other.

Verse 27. There were no duplicating devices known in old times, whereby multiple copies of an epistle could be made and sent to all individuals of a congregation. The inspired documents were sent in care of some responsible person, who was expected to see that the other members would learn of their contents; hence the command to read this epistle to them. *Holy brethren* simply means righteous men and women of the congregation, since holiness and righteousness are names for the same quality.

Verse 28. Grace is the unmerited favor of Christ, which Paul wishes for the Thessalonians. It was a benediction with which he closed most of his epistles.

## 2 Thessalonians 1

Verse 1, 2. These verses are the same in thought as the opening verse of the first epistle to the Thessalonians. See that place concerning *Silvanus* and *Timotheus*.

Verse 3. In the preceding epistle Paul expressed thanks for the good report of the brethren in Thessalonica. He repeats it in this place, and adds the word *bound*, meaning he is urged toward his attitude by the great truths connected with the work of that congregation. *It is meet* denotes that it is proper because the good influence of their work made them deserving of such consideration. *Faith groweth* means they were increasing their good works as a result of their faith. (See



1 Thessalonians 1: 3.) This growth included their *charity* (love) for each other, which is the meaning of the word *aboundeth*.

Verse 4. *We ourselves glory in you* is not said in the sense of vanity or puffed-up boasting. It means that Paul spoke very commendably of their good work, when he had any contact with other churches. *Churches of God* is the same as "churches of Christ" (Romans 16: 16), because God and Christ are one in spirit and purpose. *Patience and faith* are very logically coupled together, for a Christian's patience will be no greater than his faith. These brethren were put to a special test of these qualities by their enemies among the Jews (Acts 17: 1-9). *Persecutions* and *tribulations* are virtually the same, the former having special reference to the disagreeable treatment of the body, the latter to its effect on the mind by way of worrisome concern.

Verse 5. It is God's judgment that the faithful servants shall prove their faith by enduring persecutions (2 Timothy 3: 12), such an experience being a proof that they are true disciples. Knowing that such persons will actually endure their trials, He has regarded such a truth as rendering them worthy of the test. (See Acts 5: 41; James 1: 2, 4; 1 Peter 4: 12-14.) This is why Paul refers to the matter as a *manifest token of the righteous judgment of God*. The Lord knows how much the true disciples can withstand, hence He will not suffer them to be tried beyond that (1 Corinthians 10: 13); and when they come out of their trials as victors over evil, it proves the righteousness of His judgment.

Verse 6. God will suffer evil men to persecute His children in this world, knowing they will withstand the test and thus prove their worthiness to be counted as heirs of the kingdom. But these evil doers will get their just dues after a while, and such a dealing with them is declared to be a righteous thing. *Recompense* means to repay or "deal out"; *tribulation* denotes trouble or punishment. The verse means that God will deal out punishment to the ones who have been troubling His children.

Verse 7. The word *rest* is a noun (not a verb), and it is the object of the verb "recompense" in the preceding verse. The two verses contain a

sentence that has two objects. God is the actor or subject; *recompense* is the verb or predicate; *tribulation* and *rest* are the objects. Since these objects are opposite in kind, it follows that they will not be recompensed to the same people. The preceding verse says the *tribulation* will be recompensed to the troublers of God's children; this verse says the *rest* will be recompensed to the ones who are troubled by these evil workers. *With us* means that faithful Christians will join with the apostles in enjoying this rest—the rest that "remaineth to the people of God" (Hebrews 4: 9). The time when all this is to take place will be *when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his angels*.

Verse 8. *In flaming fire*. The first word is from the Greek EN, and Thayer's general definition is, "in, on, at, with, by, among." In the King James Version it has been rendered through 37 times, by 142, with 139. In Luke 21: 27; Acts 1: 9-11; Revelation 1: 7 it is shown that Jesus will actually be accompanied with clouds when he comes, yet there is no teaching that clouds will be used as instruments for the punishment of the unrighteous. On the other hand, there is plenty of scripture that teaches us that fire will be the element used in their punishment. (See Matthew 3: 12; 25: 41; Mark 9: 43-48; 2 Peter 3: 7; Revelation 20: 15; 21: 8.) From this information the conclusion is that when Jesus comes he will be prepared to administer the fire upon the unsaved. All fire will burn, but a flame is more active and penetrating, so the phrase *flaming fire* is used to indicate the intensity of punishment that is to be inflicted upon the wicked. *Vengeance* is not used in the sense of spite or the "get-even" spirit as men often do, but it is from an original that means legal and judicial punishment on one who has shown disrespect for some law. *Know not God* means those who refuse to recognize H.M., and that attitude is manifested by their refusal to obey the Gospel of Christ who is the Son of God.

Verse 9. The preceding verse names the element the Lord will use in punishing the disobedient. This verse shows the nature or extent of that punishment, that it will be everlasting. The unrighteous will first be sentenced to this fate, which is one meaning of the word for *punished*. It

is the same Greek word translated "judgment" in Acts 25: 15, where Festus says he was asked to have *judgment* (meaning a sentence) against Paul. So our verse means Jesus will pronounce the sentence when he comes, and the verdict will begin to be served on that day. The punishment to which the unsaved will be sentenced is described next. *Destruction* is from OLETHROS, which Thayer defines, "ruin, destruction, death," and he explains it to mean, "the loss of a life of blessedness after death, future misery." The word does not mean total annihilation as certain false teachers claim. The wicked will not cease to be, but their right to happiness will be totally destroyed. Hence they will be driven from the presence of God, and the separation will be everlasting.

Verse 10. The nature and extent of the punishment to be pronounced against the unsaved are set forth in the preceding two verses, and the occasion when such a sentence will be announced is stated in this verse, namely, when Jesus comes again. *Glorified in his saints*. Other believers are mentioned in addition to these *saints*, hence these are the "ten thousand of his saints" mentioned in Jude 14. Their presence with Him at that time will be a glory to him, in the same sense that a person of great dignity is honored upon his entry into a place, by a vast escort of other persons of high rank. This distinction is indicated further by what is said of others who are called *believers* who will admire Jesus when he comes. It is made definite by the words *among you*, in direct connection with the fact of the testimony of the apostles having been delivered to them, and believed by them. Another conclusion is justified by these several verses, namely, that the sentencing of the wicked, and the resurrection and ascension of the righteous (1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17) will occur at the same time, although the entire story is not told in any one place.

Verse 11. In Ephesians 4: 1 Paul exhorts brethren to walk worthy of their calling, and in this verse he expresses the same thought in a different wording. He prays that God would *count* or consider the Thessalonians worthy, which would require that they live as they should, since God will not favor any unworthy persons. God is perfectly good, and will not take

pleasure in the disciples unless they *fulfill* the conditions on which such grace is promised. Those conditions must be a work of faith, and that means according to the Gospel, since it is the *power* that directs men and women into salvation (Romans 1: 16).

Verse 12. When Christians prove their faith by their works, they will thereby glorify the Lord. By the same token the glory of the Lord will be given upon them, for both Lord and servant are to work together (1 Corinthians 3: 9). This entire workmanship is *according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ*.

## 2 Thessalonians 2

General remarks. The background of most of this chapter is historical, involving the original government of the church as it was established by Christ and the apostles. The ruling men were called by three different names as rendered in the King James Version; they are elders (Acts 20: 17), overseers (Acts 20: 28), and bishops (1 Timothy 3: 1). There is some difference in the meaning of the words, because the duties of the men are so various that one word will not cover them. However, no distinction is made between their authority because of these names; each of them wore all the names. This is proved by the two verses in Acts 20 referred to above, where the same men are called elders and overseers. Incidentally I will add that bishop and overseer come from the same Greek word which is EPISKOPOS, and elder comes from PRESBUTEROS. The qualifications and work of these men will be explained when we come to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. For the present their authority and function as governors or rulers is what is to be considered. There was a plurality of elders in each congregation (Acts 14: 23; Titus 1: 5), and their authority did not extend beyond their own congregation. As proof of this it is well to consider the case recorded in Acts 15. When the dispute arose in Antioch over circumcision because of the teaching of some from Judea, a group of them went to Jerusalem to consult the church. While the decision arrived at was sent to the brethren at Antioch, it was concerning the agitation among them caused by these who came from Jerusalem. Besides, this matter was enforced by the apostles, and they had authority everywhere.

The time came when some of the elders became thirsty for more power than the others had, and they worked it around so as to dominate them in the affairs of the congregation. This was one thing that Paul had in mind in Acts 20: 30, where he says "of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." This ambition for power continued until in most of the congregations, one elder became virtually the head over the others, assuming the exclusive right to the title "bishop" and leaving the simple role of "elder" to the others. But human nature is such that when a man becomes desirous of more authority than he is supposed to have, he will not stop until he tries to obtain the rule outside his allotted realm. Hence these dominating bishops reached out and gained control over other churches in their general area. Such a movement as I have just described was going on in many parts of the world, until the government fell into the hands of the bishops in such centers as Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Jerusalem, Rome, and others. The next struggle was among the bishops, to obtain superiority over all the other bishops, with a hungry mind upon a possible attainment of universal rule of one bishop over the brotherhood.

But this concentration of power among the bishops was held back by another mighty force, which I will now describe as briefly as I can. The Roman Empire was the secular government in power, which was the fourth one of the "world powers" predicted in Daniel 2: 31-45. These world powers made their religion a state affair, so that whatever the state religion was, it was regarded as a mark of disloyalty to the government to oppose that religion. The religion of the Roman Empire was the pagan or idolatrous system, and its presence presented an obstacle to the growing ambition of these bishops in the church, for if they went too far in their activities, they were apt to run into trouble with the government. But a change took place in the Empire which turned out to the advantage of the bishops. Constantine became emperor and was pursuing a military course in behalf of his government. On his way to what proved to be one of the "decisive battles of the world," he claimed to see a cross in the sky,

with an inscription that said, "by this sign conquer." He won that battle which he professed to believe was caused by the influence of the cross, the emblem of Christianity. On the basis of that victory and its causes, Constantine (as emperor) announced his support of Christianity with the weight of the empire in support of his decision. After that the Roman Empire presented no obstacle to the enlargement of the power of the bishops, since their religious professions were the same. That circumstance virtually united church and state, bringing on the apostasy and the Dark Ages, called by Paul the "falling away." With the foregoing paragraphs to consult frequently, the reader is now asked to consider the several verses in order.

Verse 1. *By* is from HUPER, which Thayer defines at this place, "concerning, of, as respects, with regard to." It is the word for "concerning" in Romans 9: 27. Paul beseeches the brethren concerning some very important events to occur in the future. One is the coming of Christ, and the other is our *gathering together unto him*. These events are prophesied in 1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17.

Verse 2. There seemed to be a state of unrest among the disciples over the coming of Christ, thinking that it was "just around the corner," to use a familiar figure of speech. This doubtless was suggested by Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 4: 17, "we which are alive and remain." It might seem to teach that Paul and some others would be living when Jesus comes, and hence that the event was due and might occur at any hour. As a result of such a notion, business and religious activities were at a standstill. Why should anything be done when the end was just at hand? To correct that error, the apostle takes occasion to make the famous predictions of this chapter, to tell them that all of this revolution will take place before the Lord comes. *Soon shaken in mind* refers to the unsettled condition which I have just described. To add to this disturbance, certain false teachers made claims of having "first hand" information on the subject, just as Jesus said some would do at the time preceding the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24: 5, 24). Paul mentions three sources of false information that might deceive the disciples, and he wants them to know

that any theories claiming to come from such sources, that predicted the immediate approach of Christ, were false and not according to truth. Those three so-called sources were *spirit, word, and letter*. The first refers to those who claimed to have a gift of the Spirit. The second claims that they had received word from the apostles on the subject, and the third refers to some letters that had been forged as coming from the apostles. *At hand* is from ENISTEMI, which Thayer defines, "to stand in sight, stand near, to be upon, impend, threaten." This is commented upon at the beginning of this paragraph.

Verse 3. All who accepted this disquieting teaching were being deceived, and Paul bids them not to be deceived *by any means*. The words in italics denote that any information, from whatever source, that claims to teach this disquieting theory, is false. The second coming of Christ will not occur until after the *falling away*. Those words are from the Greek word APOSTASIA, which Thayer defines, "a falling away, defection, apostasy," which is a name for the formation of centralized rule in the church, described in "general remarks" at the beginning of this chapter. *Man of sin* would be a term of general application, were it not for the description that follows through several verses. It shows it means the bishop who finally got to the head of the church as it came to be, and he was finally known as the Pope of Rome. He is called the *son of perdition*, because the first word means "one who is worthy of a thing" (Thayer).

Verse 4. *Opposeth and exalteth himself above* is the same as saying, "he exalts himself in opposition to all" of what is to be named next. *That is called God*. Any person or thing that might be related to God or be claimed to be so related, would come under this phrase. *Or that is worshipped*. This is an extension of the thought expressed in the preceding phrase in italics. The thought is that this *man of sin* (the pope) will not recognize any being or object of worship as his equal, regardless of whether it pertains to the One in heaven or the many earthly rulers who receive homage from men. *Sitteth in the temple* means in the church, for it is said to be the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3: 16, 17; 2 Corinthians 6: 16). It is true that the institution called

the church in history at this period of development, was so corrupt that we could not acknowledge it to be the true church. But the pope and the system of centralized power over which he was head, was professed to be the church, and Paul is speaking of the subject historically, and from the standpoint of the pretensions of the Romish institution. At this point it will be well to state that all through these centuries that the apostasy was forming, there were some exceptions where congregations would not join in the departure, so that during the entire time of the Dark Ages there were faithful congregations here and there, which kept the pure church in existence, although as a woman persecuted for righteousness' sake, she had to flee to the wilderness of comparative hiding or obscurity, caused by the apostasy, to preserve her existence. (See Revelation 12: 1-3 and verse 14 of that chapter.) *Showing himself that he is God*. No man can actually show or display proof that he is God, but he can claim such a high rank, and display himself under such a guise, hence the pope is presented to his people as "Lord God, the Pope."

Verse 5. *I told you these things*. Since signs of the apostasy, namely, desire for power were being manifested in those early years of the church (3 John 9), it was natural that Paul would warn his brethren about it when laboring in their midst. He also instructed Timothy to remind the brethren where he preached, of this very defection that was to come into the world. In 1 Timothy 4: 1-3 is such a prediction, and verse 6 directly advises the evangelist to do this service of remembrance for the brethren.

Verse 6. *Withholdeth* (likewise *letteth* in next verse) is from KATECHO, which Thayer defines, "to restrain, hinder," and he comments on it as follows: "That which hinders, namely, Antichrist [the pope], from making his appearance; the power of the Roman empire is meant." I urge the reader to consult "general remarks" again, to learn why the Roman emperor was a hindrance to the coming of the pope into universal power over the church. In verse 5 Paul refers to previous information which he had given to the Thessalonians, to the effect that certain men were already showing signs of wanting this great power, and who finally would come out in the open and strive for

it. The brethren might wonder why such a development did not then come to the fore, and he is explaining that this Roman power (which then professed the heathen religion), was withholding or hindering such a movement. *Revealed in his time* means when the time came that the religion of Rome would not be any hindrance, then would be the *time* for the pope to be *revealed* or come out in the open.

Verse 7. This verse virtually has the same thoughts that have been already explained, but in different words that give additional points. *Mystery of iniquity* means the concentration of power described in "general remarks." *Doth already work*. The thirst for power was already manifesting itself in those days (3 John 9). *He who now letteth* (hindereth) *will let*. He (the Roman heathen religion) will continue to be a hindrance to the growing movement in the church for universal power. *Until he be taken out of the way*. This means until the pagan or heathen religion of the Roman Empire is replaced by the professed Christian religion that was claimed by the ambitious bishops. Again, let the reader consult "general remarks" at the beginning of comments on this chapter.

Verse 8. *Then* means when the pagan religion is replaced by the profession of the Christian, which finally resulted in the union of church and state. *That wicked be revealed* refers to the bishop who was to succeed over all the others in obtaining supremacy at the head of the church, and who later took the title of Pope of Rome. He was *revealed* or came out in the open after the hindrance of the pagan or idolatrous religion had been removed. *Consume* and *destroy* mean virtually the same if either of them is used alone. When both are used in one sentence, the former means a gradual using-up of something, and the latter denotes the final result of that consuming, namely, the complete canceling out of the thing spoken of. *Spirit of his mouth* is a figurative term for the truth spoken by the Lord through the apostles and others who were proclaimers of the inspired word. *Brightness of his coming* is the same as saying "the appearance of his presence." This does not mean that Christ was to appear in person, but would be present in the world or represented by the teach-

ers of divine truth, which was finally to counteract the power of the pope, by breaking up the union of church and state. This great event was accomplished by the Reformation, when the Bible (*the spirit of his mouth*) was given to the people in their own languages.

Verse 9. *Even him whose coming*. When the predicted *man of sin* does come, it will be like the coming and working of Satan. He is compared to Satan in that his power will consist of *signs and lying wonders*. The first italicized word is used in both a good and a bad sense in the New Testament, and it means an omen of something to come, or a supposed proof of something already in existence. It is used in a bad sense in this verse, since the signs are coupled with lying wonders. That refers to the deceptive means the pope and his associates will use, whereby the unsuspecting subjects of the Romish institution will easily be deceived.

Verse 10. *Deceivableness and unrighteousness*. All kinds of unrighteousness are to be condemned; but some kinds are naked and open so that everyone can understand them. However, the kind that this *man of sin* will use is such that his followers will be misled into doing it, with the notion that they are doing the right thing. *In them that perish*. The pope will not be able to deceive every individual on whom he tries his trickery. He will succeed only on those who are not honestly disposed to eternal life, and they are the ones who are destined finally to perish. The explanation for such an attitude is in the fact that they do not have enough *love of the truth* to obey it and be saved. In other words, since they do not love the truth, they will be "easy marks" for the agents of the pope, and consequently they will not be saved.

Verses 11, 12. *And for this cause*. Because of the conditions just described, these people who are devoted to the pope and his system, will receive some deserved punishment. *Strong delusion*. This phrase is rendered "a working of error" by the Englishman's Greek New Testament. A correct and short term would be "active errors." The word *that* is a poor translation for it is from EIS, and that word has the idea of "unto" or "to the end that" or "with the result that." It is a statement of what results from the thing spoken of, and

not intended as a term to show any motive on the part of God. Also, God *sends* things in other ways than by direct force; sometimes it is done merely by suffering a thing to happen. In Romans 11: 8 it is stated that "God hath given them the spirit of slumber," yet we know it only means that He had given them over to their own determination to be blind to the truth. So in our passage it is preceded by the statement "they received not the love of the truth." For that reason God determined to "let them have their own determined way," and in so doing He sent them these errors that were so active that it resulted in their believing the lies of the leaders of the pope's system; this agrees also with verse 12. It does not say that they all would be damned because God had arbitrarily decreed it so, but it was because they "believed not the truth, and had pleasure in unrighteousness." That is the principle upon which God has always dealt with mankind. The Bible in no place teaches that God ever forces a man to sin, then punishes him for the wrong-doing. Neither does He compel man against his will to do right, but has always offered him proper inducements for righteous conduct, then left it to his own responsibility to decide what he will do about it.

Verse 13. With the preceding verse, Paul concludes his great prophecy of the apostasy and formation of the church of Rome. He now comes to matters more directly pertaining to the Thessalonians. He is thankful for their standing with God, which was brought about by their acceptance of the truth. This is far different from the characters described in the foregoing verses, who were condemned because they did not accept the truth. *From the beginning* is both general and specific. It was always God's plan to choose any who would accept the truth. The Thessalonians did so at the first opportunity, or *from the beginning* of the preaching of the Gospel among them. On the Lord's side of the plan, they were chosen through sanctification, which means a setting apart for a holy purpose, and it was by the Spirit because the truth that sanctified them (John 17: 17) was given by the Spirit. But this alone would not have caused them to be chosen; it required also the *belief of the truth* on their part.

Verse 14. *Called you by our gospel.* God does not call people into His service from the world, for the sake of their personal salvation, by any direct contact with them. In every case of conversion recorded in the New Testament, there was a third person or other means used for the purpose. The people of Samaria heard the word through Philip (Acts 8: 5, 6). The eunuch heard the Gospel from the mouth of Philip (Acts 8: 35-38). Saul was instructed to go where he could be told what to do (Acts 9: 6). Cornelius was to be told "words" whereby he could be saved (Acts 11: 14). The Philippian jailer became a saved man by hearing the word of the Lord (Acts 16: 30-33). All this is in keeping with 1 Corinthians 1: 21, which says it is by the foolishness of preaching (called foolishness by the critics) to save them that believe. Hence our verse says the Thessalonians were called by the Gospel. Paul calls it *our gospel* in the sense that it was the Gospel which he preached. The word is not used with the meaning of possession, but to show relationship. When a man speaks of "my country," he does not mean he owns it, but that he is related to it and not to some other. The result of having been called by the Gospel was that the Thessalonians might obtain the glory of our *Lord Jesus Christ*. Stated in other words, the italicized phrase means that the salvation coming from Christ is the most glorious or praiseworthy thing a man can obtain.

Verse 15. *Stand fast* denotes that they were to remain firm in their belief of this Gospel, and not be deceived by the tricky teachers of the Romish system. *Traditions* is from PARADOSIS, which Thayer defines, "a giving over, giving up; i.e. the act of giving up, the surrender. A giving over which is done by word of mouth or in writing." The word is used in both a good and a bad sense in the New Testament. Any doctrine or rule of conduct becomes a tradition when it has once been given over from one person to another. Whether it is good or bad, and whether it is of any authority or not, depends upon the person or persons handing over the doctrine. Hence the traditions Paul is recommending to the Thessalonians are of authority since they come from him, either "by word of mouth" (oral preaching), or by his epistle.



Verse 16. God and Christ are again named in a manner that proves they are two separate individuals, although they are a unit in spirit and purpose. The title of *God* denotes his supreme deity as head over all creation, while that of *Father* pertains to his spiritual relationship to all who will become members of the spiritual family through obedience. *Lord* is a title that means ruler, and the Son has been given the rule over the church (Matthew 28: 18). *Jesus* means saviour and is given to him because he is the Saviour of the world (Matthew 1: 21). The title *Christ* belongs to him because he was anointed (figuratively crowned) to be over the kingdom (Acts 10: 38). *Everlasting consolation* is thus named because the consolation that comes from God and Christ is not temporary. *Good hope* simply means that the things for which Christians can hope are good in the highest sense. *Through grace* denotes that the entire benefit is a gift from on High, and not a return for labor, since that cannot earn or merit eternal life.

Verse 17. The preceding verse gives a general statement of the provisions or spiritual benefits possible for man, and this verse expresses Paul's wish for all such good things to come upon the Thessalonian brethren. One result of such comfort would be to *stablish* (make firm) them in *every good word and work*; no other kind of works will be blessed of God.

### 2 Thessalonians 3

Verse 1. *Finally* is defined "moreover" in Thayer's lexicon. It merely indicates that the apostle has some additional instructions to give the brethren, and not that it was to be the final or last of his remarks. *Pray for us*. In 1 Thessalonians 5: 25 Paul makes this same request. (See the comments at that place.) It is sufficient here to say that not even an inspired man has any special immunity against temptation. *Us* is the plural form of the first personal pronoun. It is true that all of the apostles needed the prayers of the faithful, and Paul could properly include them in his request. However, this use of a plural pronoun is like that of "we" which is a form of "editorial modesty" with reference to one's personality. In this verse the request is not for some favor to Paul especially, but for the *word of the Lord*. *Have free course*

means that it may not be obstructed by any foe. *Be glorified* denotes that it would receive its proper recognition from those who heard it. *As it is with you*. The Thessalonians had given such respectful attention to the word of the Lord, and it was the wish of Paul that others accord it the like treatment.

Verse 2. *Be delivered*. Be rescued or be protected from falling into the hands of them. *Unreasonable* literally means "out of place"; men who do not keep their place in society. *Wicked* has the regular meaning, referring here to the men who do not stay in their proper places nor mind their own business. *All men have not faith*. Paul regards this as the explanation of why some men are *unreasonable and wicked*. If a man does not believe the word of the Lord, he will not have any motive for respecting righteous people.

Verse 3. *Lord is faithful*. We usually think of the term *faithful* as applying to one who is true and obedient to another to whom he is obligated. Yet it would not be appropriate to regard the Lord in that light; hence it means that He will make good all his promises. Among the things God has promised to do for his obedient servants is to *stablish* or make them firm. A means of doing so is to protect them *from evil*, by not suffering them to be tempted beyond endurance (1 Corinthians 10: 13).

Verse 4. *Confidence in the Lord touching you*. This phrase combines Paul's estimate of the steadiness of the brethren, and his feeling of assurance that the Lord will perform his part of the relationship as the preceding verse states. The outward proof of the truths the apostle here expresses is the present life of obedience among the Thessalonians, which he is sure will be continued.

Verse 5. This verse is a prayer of Paul for the Lord's direction of their hearts. Under His guidance, they will come under the enjoyment of God's love, which can never be obtained except by faithful service to Him (John 14: 23). Such a degree of devotion to God will beget in the mind of a true disciple the quality of *patience* as the apostle desires him to have. The word is from *HUPOMONE*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "a patient, steadfast waiting for." It means that while faithful disciples will be eager for the coming of Christ

(2 Peter 3: 12), they will not become fretful and wavering because of their desire for it.

Verse 6. The command is in the name of Christ which means by his authority; hence to disobey would constitute disobedience against Him. *Disorderly* is from ATAKTOS, which Thayer defines as follows: "disorderly, out of ranks; irregular, inordinate, deviating from the prescribed order or rule." The word originated in the conduct of soldiers who got out of line in the march. When used in religious affairs, it applies to any kind of misconduct, although Paul is here specifically dealing with indolent persons, who are neglecting to perform the manual labor necessary for a living. But he states the rule by which any conduct may be classified, namely, the *tradition* that had been delivered by him. This word is explained by the comments at chapter 2: 15. Any conduct that is not in harmony with apostolic tradition is disorder; and when such is continued it constitutes *walking disorderly*. *Withdraw yourselves* is from the single Greek word STELLO, and Thayer's definition at this place is as follows: "To remove one's self, withdraw one's self, to depart; to abstain from familiar intercourse with one." It would be impossible to obey this command without excluding the guilty one from the congregation. Opponents of formal discipline claim this command can be obeyed without excluding the party; that it only requires the faithful to abstain from friendly association with him. But that would be out of the question if he is retained in the fellowship of the congregation, for that would entitle him to partake of the Lord's supper and other parts of the congregational services. It is certain that such an association would require great intimacy, the very thing that the command for withdrawal forbids.

Verse 7. The apostle now comes to the specific case of disorderly walking that he introduced in the preceding verse. There were some brethren who would not perform manual labor to obtain the necessities of life, and all such were guilty of disorderly conduct and subject to final discipline. The apostle reminds the congregation of his own example that he set when among them, saying they ought to *follow* (imitate) him—be willing to perform labor.

Verse 8. This verse is another refer-

ence to Paul's practice when he was among the brethren in Thessalonica. The subject is mentioned in the first epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter 2: 9, which shows that he labored for his own support very diligently, in order to relieve the brethren of that burden.

Verse 9. *Power* is from EXOUSIA which also means right or authority. Paul had the right to live from the support of the brethren, since the Lord has ordained that "they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel" (1 Corinthians 9: 5, 14). However, he had voluntarily refrained from using that privilege, in order to set an example of getting one's living from his own labor.

Verse 10. *When we were with you* refers to the time after coming from Philippi. The teaching now put in writing in this epistle, was given to them in person when among them, which is referred to in his first epistle, is very severe on people who are lazy; such have no right to the provisions produced by others. Of course we know the apostle does not expect these idlers to go on a "hunger strike" and die of starvation. However, he does lay the command before them that they go to work, and as a means of enforcing the order, he states that if they are not willing to work, they have no right to eat. This brings the brethren into the command, forbidding them to feed those who are not willing to work.

Verse 11. In this verse Paul makes it plain whom he especially means by the ones *walking disorderly* in verse 6, namely, the idlers. One might wonder why Paul would call an idler a *busybody*. The term is from a Greek word that Thayer defines as follows: "To bustle about uselessly, to busy one's self about trifling, needless, useless matters." Our own observation will verify this definition. Men who will not work, are often seen intruding into the affairs of those who are willing to work, even to the extent of trying to interfere to prevent them from working.

Verse 12. The idlers are first given a *command* which makes the thing under consideration a positive obligation. Then the *exhortation* is given which is an appeal to the conscience, to persuade them to do their duty in the case. This command and exhortation did not come from the personal impulse of the apostle, but it was

by our Lord Jesus Christ. *Quietness* is from HESUCHIA, and the one word "quietness" is Thayer's definition of the Greek word. He then adds by way of explanation at this place, "descriptive of the life of one who stays at home doing his own work, and does not officiously meddle with the affairs of others." *Eat their own bread* shows Paul means for them to work at something to earn a living.

Verse 13. *Weary* does not pertain to the body or material part of our being, for if we exercise ourselves we cannot avoid becoming tired; such result is beyond our control. God never forbids that which is unavoidable; the original word refers to the mind and not to the body. A man may become literally worked down or "worn out" by his trials for the Master, but if he has the proper interest in the work he will never become tired in mind, but will always feel keen and alert in the duty for Christ. This thought is treated by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4: 16-18.

Verse 14. When Paul was with these brethren he gave them instructions about the evils of idleness, but we are not told what commands, if any, he gave the congregation as to how the idle persons should be treated. Here the information is given that the same command is delivered in this epistle and that it must be obeyed as if the apostle delivered it in person. *Note that man* means to pay particular attention to him, to make sure that he comes under the classification of men whom Paul has been condemning. If it is seen that he does, then the brethren were to *have no company with him*. Since the apostle is writing about the same case that he has been for several verses, we know the words in italics have the same meaning as "withdraw yourselves" in verse 6. Let the reader consult the comments at that place in connection with the present one. The purpose for the discipline upon the disorderly one is *that he may be ashamed*. Indeed, the first object of discipline is the salvation of the guilty one (1 Corinthians 5: 5), and the second is to save the church (verses 6, 7 of the same chapter).

Verse 15. In a sense, every person who does wrong is an enemy of righteousness and of the church. The idea here is that this man is not an enemy in the same rank as an outsider who has always been in the army of the foe. He has been in the congregation,

but had to be dealt with on the principle of discipline, hence he should be regarded in the light of a member of the family who has gone wrong. By such a token, the admonition should be as to a wayward brother and not as to a member of a foreign family. The word *admonish* implies that some undesirable result may follow if the wayward member does not return to the government of the Father's family.

Verse 16. *Peace* is from EIRENE. As it pertains to individuals, Thayer gives a very complete definition of the word, and it is in full agreement with the teaching of the New Testament; the definition follows: "The tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is." This certainly describes something that is good; and since all good things come from the Lord (James 1: 17), it is appropriate for Paul to refer to Him as *the Lord of peace*. He adds his wish that the Thessalonians be given such peace from Him. *The Lord be with you all* is another form of the wish for His peace to be with them.

Verse 17. Some impostors had forged the name of Paul to their letters, and thereby had deceived the brethren. (See chapter 2; 2, 3.) However, the uniformity of his handwriting would finally make them acquainted with his genuine signature. As a safeguard against further deception, Paul states that his signature would be seen at the the end of every one of his epistles, and it was to be understood as a *token* or sign of the genuineness of the epistle. *So I write*. This is to call their attention to his style of writing, for his signature would be done in the same manner, which would help them to recognize it and know it to be genuine. For a discussion further into the subject of the actual writer of his epistles, see the comments at Galatians 6: 11.

Verse 18. This is a closing benediction to indicate Paul's personal concern for the happiness of the brethren. The grace of the Lord is his favor to be given to them as a gracious gift, for the word means something that is not received upon the principle of merit. For the significance of *amen*, see the comments at Romans 16: 24, in volume 1 of the New Testament Commentary.

## 1 Timothy 1

Verse 1. Thus far in the New Testament, according to the compilation in the King James Version, all of Paul's epistles have been addressed to congregations in cities that are named, or in other designated areas. He now changes his plan and will address some to individuals. He calls himself *an apostle of Jesus Christ*. The significance of the phrase will be appreciated more by considering the meaning of the word *apostle*. It is from *APOSTOLOS* which Thayer defines, "a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders." Hence the italicized expression means Paul was sent forth with orders from Jesus Christ. The weight of authority behind his apostleship is increased by the fact that God commanded it to be so. God is called *our Saviour* because he is the one who provided a sacrifice that could save mankind. *Our hope* means that all hope of eternal life is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 2. *Son* is from *TEKNON*, which occurs more than 75 times in the Greek New Testament, and it is always rendered by child, with a few unimportant exceptions. Its various shades of meaning have to be determined by the connection in which it is used. Paul did not have any family of his own begetting, hence we know the word is used in a figurative sense in this verse. With reference to such a meaning, Thayer says of it historically, "With the possessive, it is used of a person who depends on another or is the follower; one who is connected with or belongs to a thing by any kind of close relationship; pupils or disciples are called children of their teachers." *In the faith* means the close connection between Paul and Timothy, just described by these historical statements of Thayer, which was brought about by their common faith in Christ. Paul had instructed Timothy in the faith of the Gospel, hence he is here called his *son* according to the phrase "pupils or disciples" as cited above. *Grace, mercy and peace*, etc., is the same kindly salutation by which Paul begins many of his epistles. (See the comments on such a salutation at 1 Corinthians 1: 3).

Verse 3. Timothy was selected by Paul to travel with him (Acts 16: 1-3), and he was in his company much of the time. However, at times the apostle appointed him to certain tasks, while he went on to other territories.

Such special journeys were made by Paul on more than one occasion, hence we are not informed when the one occurred referred to in this verse. But this item is not essential to our study and conclusions upon the matters mentioned. When Paul was ready to depart from Timothy, he requested him to remain at Ephesus for the purpose of defending the truth against false teachers. And now in this epistle he refers to the matter and repeats the program he expects the evangelist to follow. This repetition of the instructions constitutes them virtually as an order. *Teach no other doctrine* than what was taught by the apostles. The false doctrine has special reference to that being circulated by the Judaizers, namely, that the law of Moses was binding on all Christians. There was also a mixture of traditions from the pretenders of learning that was injected into the ordinances of the law, and pressed upon disciples as items necessary to salvation.

Verse 4. *Fables* has the same meaning as myths, and the ones spoken of here are those put forth by the Judaizers. They were a part of the commentaries that were composed with the claim that they were necessary to understand the law of Moses. It was easy to use such a notion as an opportunity for devising all sorts of speculative theories, and Paul's instruction is to pay no attention to them. *Endless genealogies*. The Jews laid much stress upon their descent from Abraham (Matthew 3: 9), yet many of them were not content with the literal line from that patriarch, but ran off into some vague notions of an immaterial or mystic ancestry. However, in their wild speculations upon such a line of genealogy, though still professing much interest in their relation to Abraham, such unreasonable mixtures of genealogies would cause persons to become unsettled. As a result, the patriarch Abraham was left behind as the speculations went on and on into the dim past without any certain conclusion. That is why Paul calls them *endless genealogies*. It is evident why he says they *minister questions*, meaning they raise disputes among the people that will be of no edification since they are not *in faith*. *So do*. These words have no originals at this place in the Greek text, but the King James translators thought they were justified by the repetition in the epistle of the exhor-

tation Paul had given Timothy in person when he was with him. The idea is as if Paul said: "When I was with you in person I besought you to see after how certain ones taught. Now I am more particular about it, and insist on your doing as I requested."

Verse 5. *End* is from TELOS, and Thayer defines it at this place as follows: "The end to which all things relate, the aim, purpose." *The commandment* refers to the charge that Paul had given Timothy regarding the kind of teaching he was to require among the people at Ephesus. The *end* or purpose of the charge was that it would produce *charity* or love. *Out of a pure heart* denotes that it was to be a sincere love and not a mere pretended one. Such a pure love would be in harmony with a good conscience; it could be professed conscientiously. *Faith unfeigned* means a genuine faith and not an empty pretense for personal advantage such as the evil Judaizers displayed.

Verse 6. *From which* refers to the good things mentioned in the preceding verse. *To swerve* means to deviate from some established path or way of life. If a person gets off of the proper road, he generally gets mixed up in some uncertain situation. Hence if a disciple departs from the road marked out by an unfeigned faith, it is no wonder if he falls into *vain jangling*. This term means "idle talking" according to Thayer's lexicon, and certainly the fables and endless genealogies mentioned in verse 4 would fall into that class.

Verse 7. *Desiring to be teachers of the law* could not of itself be wrong. However, these teachers were not motivated by the right principle, or they would not have swerved from the faith in search of an opportunity to do their teaching. Besides, they were not qualified to teach the law, because they did not understand it themselves. *Affirm* is a stronger word than *say*. The latter merely means to speak without any special emphasis; even that should not be done about something that one does not understand. The former denotes a strong utterance in which the speaker is positive about his declarations. It is the height of folly to behave in such a manner concerning something which the actor does not understand.

Verse 8. The pretended teachers of the law would try to justify their

activities by saying that law is a good thing. Paul does not deny that claim, but explains that in order for the law to bring good results, it must be used *lawfully*. One word in Thayer's definition of the original word is "properly." The correctness of the definition is evident, for we know that the best of things in any of life's relations will work harm if misused.

Verse 9. *The law is not made for a righteous man*. 1 Peter 2: 14 says that governors are not only for the punishment of evildoers, but also for the praise of them who do well. Also in Romans 13: 3, 4 it is clearly shown that the same ruler who is to punish them who do evil is also expected to praise the righteous. Hence we know that Paul is here speaking only of the penal section of law. *Lawless and disobedient* refers to the members of society who are disturbers of the peace. *Ungodly* and *sinner*s could well be used interchangeably if taken separately, but when combined in one phrase there is some distinction. The Greek word for the former has special reference to the personal attitude toward God. Such a person practices a life of sin, but he does not even have any concern whether such a life is displeasing to God or not. The Greek word for the latter term has chief reference to the kind of life the man is living, without any consideration of his mental attitude about God; that idea is not in the word. *Unholy* is a general term applying to all people who are unrighteous, since holiness is another word for righteousness. *Profane* means those whose lives are such that they can scarcely be distinguished from men of the world who make no profession of righteousness. *Murder* is a capital crime no matter against whom it is committed, but when perpetrated against one's parents, it also violates all the laws of affection that are intended to keep families united. *Manslayers*. The law of the land makes a distinction between manslaughter and other degrees of killing. Murder strictly consists of the unlawful taking of human life which is performed intentionally, while other instances of killing may be designated only as manslaughter. Yet if that is done as a result of carelessness, or in other ways that could have been avoided, it is also wrong and the law of God as well as of man provides some penalty for the act.

Verse 10. Even one act of unlawful sexual intimacy constitutes fornication or adultery and is a grievous sin. But a *whoremonger* is a man who makes it a common practice; especially one who patronizes a woman who receives men for money. In some extreme cases the original word applies to a man who engages in the business for money (such as described in Ezekiel 16: 30-34). Some lexicons define the original word as "a male prostitute." Regardless of whichever phase of the crime is considered, it is one against God and man, surpassed perhaps only by that which is named by the words *defile themselves with mankind*. These italicized words are all from the one Greek word ARSENOKOITES, which Thayer defines as follows: "One who lies with a male as with a female, a sodomite." The wicked character that is described just preceding this one sometimes is defined "a sodomite." However, when that is the case it is a man who permits another to use him instead of a female. The one now being considered is the man who so uses this other man instead of a female. The reader should see the comments on these two characters at 1 Corinthians 6: 9. *Menstealers* is from ANDRAPODISTES, and Thayer defines the word as follows: "a slave-dealer, kidnapper, man-stealer." He refers to the historical origin of the word and gives the following information: "As well one who unjustly reduces free men to slavery, as one who steals the slaves of others and sells them." *Liars, perjured persons*. All perjured persons are liars also, but they are those who falsify under oath, or other form of legal testifying. The last clause of the verse is a generalization of the subject introduced at verse 3. Hence anything that is contrary to the doctrine taught by the apostles would be *contrary to sound doctrine*.

Verse 11. This is Paul's explanation of the term *sound doctrine* in the preceding verse. To be such, it must agree with the glorious Gospel. *Blessed* in the original is defined also as "happy," but when it is applied to God it means he is the source of true happiness. He is the giver of the *glorious Gospel*, and that is the reason He is credited with that which will make men happy. *Committed to my trust* denotes that Paul was entrusted with the preaching of this holy document.

Verse 12. This verse is related in thought to the previous one concerning the trust that the Lord had in Paul. Christ counted the apostle as a faithful servant, hence was worthy of being put into the *ministry* or service of preaching the Gospel.

Verse 13. One of the strongest evidences of Paul's sincerity was the radical change in his conduct toward the cause of Christ. A *blasphemer* is one who speaks with strong and bitter language against another, and a *persecutor* is a man who puts such bitterness into action against the object of his blasphemy. *Injurious* is from HUBRISTES which Thayer defines as follows: "An insolent [overbearing] man, one who, uplifted with pride, either heaps insulting language upon others or does them some shameful act of wrong." We have no information that Paul ever saw Christ personally, much less that he could have injured him directly. But in persecuting the disciples of Christ he was mistreating Him. (See Matthew 25: 44, 45 and Acts 9: 4, 5.) *Obtained mercy* does not say that he was excused for what he did. A jury may recommend mercy for a defendant, although it has found the man guilty, because there are circumstances that justify an easier punishment than strict application of the law might demand. This is the case in Paul's instance, so the Lord showed him mercy because he was an unbeliever—had made no profession toward Christ—and was ignorant of the facts in the matter.

Verse 14. *Grace* is the unmerited favor of the Lord, which explains why Paul was accorded mercy after his opposition to His people as just stated in the preceding verse. *With faith and love*. Even the "unmerited favor" of Christ will not be given to a man unless he does his part in the transaction. Paul accepted the testimony of the divinity of Christ which produced *faith*. He then began at once to labor for the new-found religion, which showed his *love* for the cause.

Verse 15. *Faithful saying*. The first word is defined "that can be relied on" by Thayer; it means that it is true. Of course if a saying is true, it is *worthy of all acceptation*. The *saying* Paul has in mind is that *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*. It could not be untrue, for He made the same declaration himself (Matthew 18: 11; Luke 19: 10). *Chief* is from



PROTOS, which means "principal" in the sense of being outstanding and noted. This again refers to his former activities against the cause of Christ.

Verse 16. In verse 13 the apostle says he obtained mercy because of his misunderstanding of the case. In our present verse he repeats his statement and adds the Lord's other motive for extending the favor to him. It was that he could be used as a pattern for the encouragement of other believers. When they learn of the great long-suffering that Christ showed toward such a "chief" sinner as Paul, they will be induced to depend upon Him for grace to assist them toward a working belief that will bring them to eternal life.

Verse 17. *Eternal* is from two Greek words at this place, which are ΤΟΝ ΑΙΩΝΟΝ. In the composition they are plural in number and in the possessive case, and the Englishman's Greek New Testament translates them "of the ages." There have been three ages or dispensations of religion given into the world, namely, the Patriarchal, the Jewish and the Christian. God has been and is the supreme ruler or King over each of them, although the Son has been placed in charge of the third. *Immortal* means He is not subject to decay as were the idols that were worshiped as gods by some. *Invisible* is another distinction between the true God and those made of "gold or silver or stone," which could be seen literally with the eyes of man. *Only wise God* has the sense of saying: "He is the only God, and he is wise." *Be honor and glory* means these qualities should be attributed to this one true God. *For ever and ever* is an emphatic form of expression, meaning these virtues will be possessed by Him endlessly. *Amen* is defined by Thayer, "so be it, so it is, may it be fulfilled."

Verse 18. *This charge* refers to the one recorded in verses 3 and 5. The term *son* is explained by the comments on verse 2. *Prophecies* is from ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΙΑ. Thayer does not define the word at this passage, but he does for chapter 4:14 where the same Greek word is used "on" Timothy, which means concerning him. His explanation of the word for that passage is as follows: "Specifically of the prognostigation [prediction] of those achievements which one sets apart to teach the Gospel will accomplish for the kingdom of Christ." Robinson explains the word at our verse as fol-

lows: "Refers to prophetic declarations respecting the labors and success of Timothy, made by those having the gift of prophecy, on occasion of his being sent forth." This verse means as if Paul said, "it was predicted at the time of your appointment to the work, that you would be able to 'war a good warfare,' now I repeat my charge already made, that you make good the prediction."

Verse 19. *Holding* means to keep a firm grip on a thing because of its necessary use. *Faith and a good conscience*. This phrase involves the entire conduct of a Christian. Faith is the result of testimony, hence divine faith requires divine testimony (Romans 10:17). A subject, then, on which the word of God furnishes no information, is one on which a man cannot have any divine or scriptural faith. A man can have faith in anything that is authorized by the word of God, and such a matter is bound to be right. However, a man can be sure that a certain act is right if done at all, yet he might not be concerned about whether he did it or not, and there is where a good conscience comes in. Thayer's main definition of the Greek word for *conscience* is as follows: "The soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other." A good conscience is that part of a man that "prompts" him to do that which is right. However, a man's conscience might be mistaken as to what is right (as Paul's was when he was persecuting Christians). Because of this, it is necessary also that a man be guided by the word of God, then he will be acting by faith. To sum up; the conscience will prompt a man to do something, and his faith (produced by the word of God) will assure that what he does is right. *Shimwreck* is a figurative reference to what happens if the steering apparatus becomes defective; the ship will be misguided with the result of a wreck. If either faith or good conscience is lacking in a man's life, he will fail to be guided aright and will wreck his soul.

Verse 20. According to 2 Timothy 2:17, Hymenaeus was a false teacher. We have no certain information concerning Alexander, but he was a blasphemer according to Paul's statement in this verse. *Delivered unto Satan* means they were excluded, as the

same thing is said in 1 Corinthians 5: 5 of the fornicator who was excluded.

### 1 Timothy 2

Verse 1. *Therefore* indicates a reference to some former considerations. They especially are to be found in chapter 1: 3 and 18, where the apostle reminds the evangelist of what was expected of him after being given his charge. Resuming his directions for the carrying out of the great work in the "warfare" amid the various conditions of the world, he instructs the evangelist that he will *begin* the details (*first of all*) with the subject of prayers in their various forms. Some commentators think this instruction has reference to the public services of the congregation. Doubtless it includes that, but verse 8 commands that men pray *every where*, which makes the exhortation general. Any address made to God may be called a prayer generally speaking, but there are various forms or classes of the addresses, and they are specified in this verse which I shall define briefly. *Prayers* are requests of any degree of intensity that may be chosen. *Supplications* are the more earnest requests made under intense necessity. *Intercessions* are prayers on behalf of others who are in need of the mercy of God. *Giving of thanks* are expressions of gratitude for favors that have already been received from the Lord. *For all men* is a general statement as to "the subject of our prayers."

Verse 2. In this verse the apostle specializes on the ones for whom Christians should pray, namely, for those who are in positions of authority, and whose rule may have some effect on the liberties to be enjoyed by the citizens. The object of such prayers is that Christians be undisturbed in their desire to lead a godly life. We know Paul did not expect these prayers to affect the rulers directly, for they would not hear them. The only conclusion possible is that if the prayers are scriptural, then God will take some hand (in His own divine way) to see that the rulers govern aright as to our liberties. If that is not the intention, then He would certainly not require the disciples to pray for the rulers. This is not a new doctrine, for Nebuchadnezzar had to eat grass seven years to be convinced "that the most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men" (Daniel 4: 25). It may be replied that it was in

Old Testament times that this was said. Well, we will come to the New Testament, to Romans 13: 1-4, where the temporal ruler is declared to be "the minister of God," and we can see how the subject is treated, and that God has never repealed what he told the king of Babylon.

Verse 3. See comments at chapter 1: 1 as to God being titled Saviour. The immediate occasion for the term in this verse is what follows in the next verse. *This is good* refers to the results of a life of honesty and godliness that may be practiced by the disciples, when not hindered by improper legislation. God is desirous that rulers as well as private persons may be saved, and a godly life displayed before them by faithful servants of God will be a help in showing them the value of the plan of salvation as provided by the Father. (See Matthew 5: 16.)

Verse 4. It should be noted that the salvation of men is connected with *the knowledge of the truth*; the latter is necessary for the former.

Verse 5. Idolatry and the worship of many gods was a common condition in the world when the Gospel was first proclaimed. Kings and other rulers knew something about hearing the causes of their subjects. The dignity of the office was such that a citizen had to be represented by an agent who could act between the ruler and his subject. These same rulers were often among the believers in many gods, and they (like their own subjects) approached some one of their many objects of worship by means of a priest officiating for them at the heathenish altar. It was appropriate for them to learn that if they are saved through the doctrine preached by the Christians, they must abandon the idea of many gods and realize that there is only one God and hence only one mediator, who is the *man Christ Jesus*. He was a *man* in order to represent fairly the human seeker after God, and he was *Christ Jesus* in order to be good enough to receive recognition before the throne of this God.

Verse 6. Being man as well as God, it was possible for Christ to be used as a ransom in the form of a sacrifice. *For all* is in contrast with the sacrifices offered under the law, for they were on behalf of the Jews only; Christ died for both Jew and Gentile. *To be testified*. The fact that Jesus

died as a ransom, and then came back to life that He might complete the plan of salvation, was to be proved and testified or borne witness to by the chosen proclaimers. *In due time*. When the fact of His resurrection had been accomplished, and the Holy Spirit came upon these chosen proclaimers to qualify them to speak, it was then only that the *due time* had come. That is why Jesus gave the instructions recorded in Luke 24:48, 49 and Acts 1: 7, 8.

Verse 7. *Whereunto* refers to the testifying to the truth of Christ's ransom mentioned in the preceding verse. For the purpose of engaging in this testimony, Paul was *ordained a preacher*. The first of the italicized words is from TITHENI at this place, and Thayer's definition is, "To set, put, place." For the complete information of the word "ordain" as given in Thayer's lexicon, see comments at John 15: 16, in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary. Paul was not only ordained a preacher but also an apostle. Any Christian may preach the good news (Acts 8: 4), but only an apostle could speak with miraculous inspiration and have power to bestow the Holy Spirit on others (Acts 8: 15, 16). *I speak the truth in Christ and lie not*. Paul could say this because he had been ordained as an apostle, hence the things he preached were bound to be the truth. *Teacher of the Gentiles*. Any disciple had the right to tell the story of the cross to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, but Paul was given the special commission to be "the apostle of the Gentiles" (Acts 9: 15; Romans 11: 13). *In faith and verity*. Paul was to lead the Gentiles into the faith of the Gospel, and out of the myths of heathen errors. This could be done only by giving them the divine truth that he as an inspired apostle could do; *verity* is a Greek word for the truth.

Verse 8. *Lifting up holy hands* means hands of men who are living holy or righteous lives. The lifting up of the hands is merely an allusion to the ancient practice of presenting the uplifted hands in respectful petition to God (Nehemiah 8: 6; Psalms 141: 2; Lamentations 3: 41). The command pertains to the kind of hands being lifted up, and not as to the posture of the body during prayer; the Lord is not concerned about that matter. That the men were to pray *every where* shows the apostle was

not especially writing of prayers in the public assembly of the church. *Wrath and doubting*. The first word means anger that would be disposed to inflict punishment on someone. The last word denotes a disposition that is given to questioning. Not that discipline or discussion should be done without prayer, but the outstanding thought of the apostle here (as will be seen in several following verses) is a time of earnest but calm approach to the throne of grace. A man under the impulse of the italicized phrase would not be in a frame of mind suitable for such a season of prayer.

Verse 9. *In like manner* is all from the Greek word HOSAUTOS, and one word in Thayer's definition is "like-wise," and that word does not necessarily mean a repetition of some previous action, but rather that the writer has something more to say. It is as if the apostle said, "furthermore, I have something to say about the women." Neither does the use of the words *men* and *women* in these verses support those who take extreme views on the "woman question." If the fact that Paul mentions the *men* in verse 8 means that they only are the ones who may pray, then the women are prohibited entirely from that act of devotion. It will not do to say that it is in the public assembly where they are thus forbidden, for the apostle said the prayers were to be offered "every where," and even the most radical objectors will admit that women have the right to pray outside the public assembly. What proves too much proves nothing, hence we must conclude that Paul was not writing about which sex could pray, but what *kind* of men might do so, and that they might do so in every place.

The proper general demeanor of women, especially as it respects her relationship to man in all walks of life, is the subject of the rest of this verse and of the rest of the chapter. Neither does it apply to the public assemblies any more than to the social life. Therefore it is a perversion of this chapter to make it a regulation of "women's duties and privileges in the church," for the passage was not written for that purpose. It is God's intention for woman to be attractive in the eyes of man (1 Corinthians 11: 7-9), but He instructs her as to what shall constitute her attractiveness. *Apparel* is from KATASTOLE which Thayer defines, "a garment let down,

dress, attire." It is evident that *modest apparel* means a woman's clothing should not be such as would expose her body in a way to suggest evil thoughts. *Shamefacedness* means womanliness; the opposite of brazenness. The Greek word for *sobriety* is also defined "self-control" in Thayer's lexicon. This restriction will serve as a regulation in the things named in the rest of the verse. Immodest women braided their hair as a means of holding more of their showy jewels here enumerated, in order to excite the attention of the opposite sex. They likewise depended on the costliness of their clothing to attract the men. A woman who possesses this *sobriety* (self-control), will not use these things to such an extent that she will suggest improper thoughts in the minds of men. Hence a controlled use of these feminine trinkets is not forbidden as far as this passage is concerned.

Verse 10. The adornment of women is introduced in the beginning of the preceding verse, and the subject has not been changed. That shows the present verse is in line with the same subject, for it closes with the phrase *good works*. We know Paul has not been writing exclusively of the public assembly; in truth, he has not been considering that subject as much as in other places, for we do not regard the assemblies as the places for the practice of *good works* as that expression is commonly used. Furthermore, the matter of feminine adornment pertains to the social sphere of human life, in which the question considered is what is the proper and what the improper means a woman should use in order to interest the opposite sex. If a woman who professes to be godly in life will back it up with *good works*, she will be making herself attractive in the highest sense of the word. These remarks are not restricted to unmarried women in the matter of being adorned in the eyes of men, for the success and happiness of the married state is dependent to a great extent upon the regard the husband can have for his wife. If she maintains the same modesty of bodily adornment after marriage that attracted the man and induced him to obtain her for his wife, he will continue to be happiest when in her society.

Verse 11. *Learn in silence*. Even the extremists must admit from this phrase that the woman has a right to learn. However, they insist that she

must be silent while learning, making a literal use of the word. But it is a principle universally recognized by all courses of learning throughout the world, that the best method of imparting and receiving instruction is by the question and answer system. Jesus used it in the temple (Luke 2: 46, 47). Even in the case of 1 Corinthians 14: 35, Paul permits the woman to learn about the special matters her gifted husband knows about; she may "ask her husband." It may be replied that she is to do so "at home." Certainly, and the chapter we are studying applies to the home more properly than any other place. She is not very silent while asking a question. Are we to suppose that she must keep her ears open and her mouth closed? Certainly not if she is to "ask" her husband for the information.

The apparent difficulty is caused by misunderstanding the word *silence*. It is from the Greek word HESUCHIA, and Thayer's first definition is the word "quietness," and his explanation is, "descriptive of the life of one who stays at home doing his own work, and does not officially meddle with the affairs of others." It is the word for "quietness" in 2 Thessalonians 3: 12. Paul surely does not expect a man to work for a living and at the same time maintain silence in the literal sense that is attached to the word by many well-meaning disciples. But this is not all the apostle says in the same sentence about the way a woman is to learn, for he says she is to do so *with all subjection*. The last word is from HYPOTAGE which Thayer defines, "obedience, subjection." It is the word for "subjection" in 1 Timothy 3: 4, and we know that a child can be in subjection to his father, even while using his tongue for conversation. The verse as a whole means that a woman has the right to speak and ask questions of men, but it should be in the spirit of humility and not forgetting that she is not to act as one in authority.

Verse 12. This verse very properly follows immediately after the preceding one, since the outstanding thought in that place is the subject of authority as it pertains to the relation between men and women. *I suffer not a woman to teach*. I am quoting this much of the verse only for the present, because it is the part that is usually relied upon by the extremists on the "woman question," to prove their notion on the subject. These same disciples will condemn the denomina-

tional world for taking a part of the scripture out of its connection in order to make a point. But for the sake of the widespread argument, let us consider this so-called proof-text as it is quoted, which makes no exception or provision for one. It is an established principle that an explanation of a passage that makes it contradict another passage, is bound to be wrong since the Bible does not contradict itself. Well, the extremists' use of this clause makes it contradict Colossians 3: 16 where we know the women are included, and the verse says for them to teach one another, and the same Greek word is used in both passages. It is true that "everybody" joins in the singing, even those who are not members. That is no valid argument since two wrongs do not make one right. Furthermore, if the underscored clause is to be taken generally, then the women members of the congregation should be forbidden to participate in the singing, also the people of the world should be informed not to sing, in the same manner that we notify the audiences that only faithful members have any right to the Lord's supper. The foregoing remarks would be appropriate even though the italicized clause had been written with regard to the public assembly only, which would be impossible to prove. So then, since "what proves too much proves nothing," it follows that the words marked do not prove that women are entirely prohibited from teaching.

Now let us give this subject fair treatment and see what else the apostle has to say about it. The next word is *nor* and it is properly translated. It is from the Greek word *οὐδε* which Thayer defines, "and not," and he explains by saying "continuing a negation" [something denied or forbidden]. Webster defines the word *nor* as follows: "Likewise not; and not; or not," so that what is said of the words preceding *nor* is on the same proviso as what follows the next negation, namely, *usurp authority over the man*. If a woman presumes to teach over the man and hence act in an authoritative way, she violates this verse, whether it be in the public assembly or in the social circle. The case in Acts 18: 24-26 is in point here. A preacher of the Gospel was in error on an item and *they* (both the man and the woman) took him unto themselves and expounded or taught him in the way of the Lord more perfectly. Thus a wo-

man helped to teach a preacher in the doctrine of the Gospel. But nothing indicates that she assumed an authoritative attitude, in disregard for the authority of her husband or the presence of the other man. Had she done so she would have violated the teaching of this passage. *Silence* is the same in the original as in verse 11, explained at that verse which the reader should see.

Verse 13. In this and the following verse, Paul gives two reasons for his restrictions upon the woman, which are not identical but are related. The one in this verse is based upon the prestige one has by reason of priority; *Adam was first formed*. The man was not created for the sake of the woman, but it was the other way around, which indicates that the man possessed some precedence or importance over the woman.

Verse 14. Eve was deceived but Adam was not. Both of them sinned, but the statement is made with regard to their talents or reliability, more than to their moral character. The main object with Paul still is to show why the man and not the woman is to be entrusted with authority. Since a woman is more easily deceived than a man, she is restricted from authoritative teaching, and when she teaches it must not be over the man, but under his supervision; and such a work may be edifying to others even though it is not the expression of authority. *Was in the transgression*. It is a sin to transgress the law of the Lord, even though one is induced to do so by being deceived. Jesus taught this same truth in Matthew 15: 14, and it proves that the mere fact of being honest (all deceived persons are honest at the time) will not save a person.

Verse 15. While Eve was the first woman, and the one who brought transgression into the world, all women bear the same relation to God as to responsibility. We know Paul means to include them in the argument, for he has been writing to women of his day, and referred to Eve only to show the reason why he placed the restrictions on her—on women in general. However, such restrictions as he placed on woman need not endanger her salvation as we shall see. *She shall be saved in childbearing*. This cannot mean the woman is given assurance of passing safely through childbirth, for the salvation is made

conditional that she *continue in faith*, etc. It would be foolish to say a woman will live through childbirth provided she lives right afterward. Neither can it mean she will be saved through the birth of Christ, for that is true also of man, if he is saved at all. But it is replied that a woman was chosen to bring the Saviour into the world, hence she and her kind have the promise of salvation through her act. Again, that is just as necessary for the man as for the woman. The part that Mary performed in nurturing and bringing forth Jesus into this life was just like the experience of all mothers. It was the conception that was different, and that was not anything done by her personal choice. The italicized words are preceded by the word *notwithstanding*. Although the first woman transgressed, and as a result all her daughters down through the ages are destined to suffer the increased inconvenience and added sorrow of childbirth, yet that very thing will be one of the conditions on which she can save her soul. There are regular terms of salvation set forth in the Gospel, and all men and women must observe them regardless of their station in life. But there are special duties that apply in particular to those who are parents or children; husbands or wives; and neither of them can take the place of the other, and no two of them have the same obligations. The special duty of woman is to bear children, which is one of the conditions on which she may be saved. Of course, motherhood alone will not assure a woman of salvation, but she must follow it up with a life of *faith and charity and holiness with sobriety*. In 1 Timothy 5: 14 Paul commands women to marry and bear children. It is therefore one of the conditions of salvation imposed upon woman. A woman who is able to bear children and refuses to do so, will find herself in trouble on the judgment day.

### 1 Timothy 3

Verse 1. For the meaning of *bishop*, see "General remarks" at 2 Thessalonians 2. *The office of a bishop*. These words all come from EPISKOPE which Thayer defines, "inspection, visitation: oversight, i.e. overseership, office, charge, since the words are two terms for the same men. Paul calls this office a *good work*, which shows that a bishop (or elder) has something on his shoulders besides "hold-

ing down an office." *Desire* and *desireth* are from different words but have virtually the same meaning. The word is used both in a good and a bad sense in the New Testament. Strong's definition is, "To set the heart upon, i.e. long for (rightfully or otherwise)." It is possible, then, for a man to desire the office with proper motives. However, if the wrong kind of man pretends he wishes the office for the right purpose, the qualifications immediately following, when he is examined under the requirements, will expose his unworthiness for the office, thus proving his desire for it is improper.

Verse 2. *Blameless*. This word has been distorted out of its true meaning by saying it requires a bishop to be free from sin or any other defect. Such a definition would make it impossible to have scriptural elders, since the scripture clearly teaches that no man is perfect in that sense. The word is from ANEPILEPTOS which Thayer defines as follows: "Not apprehended, that cannot be laid hold of; hence that cannot be reprehended, not open to censure, irreproachable." It is plain that the word has reference to the standing a man has among men. That no one is able to make any specific accusation against his character or conduct. That is, no one must be able to make such accusation and support it with the truth. This item is shown by the words in the lexicon definition, namely, "that cannot be laid hold of." The foregoing is a general statement of the character required of a proposed candidate for the office, as it pertains to disqualifications. The particular items required, both positive and negative, will follow in this verse and extend through verse 7. But before considering the detailed list of qualifications, it should be remembered that all of them are preceded by the word *must* in the beginning of this verse. That term is from the Greek word DEI, which Thayer defines, "It is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper." Strong defines it, "It is (was, etc.) necessary (as binding)." Robinson defines it, "In N. T. it behooves, it is necessary, it must needs, one must or ought." From these definitions it is clear that the requirements of qualifications for bishops (or elders) are positive, and that no man can be scripturally appointed to the office who lacks any one of them; the *degree* to which he must have them



will be discussed when we come to Titus 1: 9-11.

*Husband of one wife.* Some people say this means that he has never been married but once, and that the word *be* in the beginning of the verse should be rendered "having been," making the word include the past as well as the present tense. I have six translations and they all render it the same as the King James Version, namely, by the single word "be," which restricts it to the present tense, at the time of appointment. Another theory is that it means "one wife only." But the third word is added without any authority from the original, for there is no word in the Greek that justifies it. Besides, that doctrine would imply that the church had in its fellowship men who were polygamists, and such a character is not permitted in the church concerning any of the men. The necessary conclusion is, then, that a man who is appointed to the office of bishop must be a married man at the time of his appointment. *Vigilant* means he must be watchful for the spiritual safety of the flock; must "watch for their souls" (Hebrews 13: 17). *Sober* is from SOPHRON which Thayer defines, "Curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate." A man lacking self-control would certainly be unfit to be placed in control of a congregation. *Of good behavior.* It would seem that many of the qualifications for a bishop already requires good behaviour in him, so why this phrase? It is a somewhat general expression, meaning that his life as a whole is orderly; one that is commendable in the eyes of his fellowmen. *Given to hospitality.* This does not require that an elder must keep "open house" constantly, so that he cannot have the satisfaction of home privacy, and that the general public may feel free to run in and out at will. Such a condition would often interfere with one of his own obligations about maintaining government over his household. But if the relations between him and the members of his flock are as they should be, they will wish to counsel with him over their troubles and trials in the Christian life. It should be understood that the home of the elder is one to which all worthy persons will be welcome. *Apt to teach.* Titus 1: 9 requires that elders must be able to expose false teachers who have become unruly. This cannot be done privately in many

cases, therefore an elder must be able to teach publicly.

Verse 3. *Not given to wine.* In old times wine was used as a medicine (1 Timothy 5: 23), and that was before the discovery of means for preserving it sweet. Hence the kind used was necessarily the fermented, except in the grape-growing season. But the amount needed for medical purposes ("a little wine") would not make a man drunk. Thus if a person manifested drunkenness, it was evidence he was not using it for purposes of health. *No striker.* This word is from PLEKTES which Thayer defines as follows: "Bruiser, ready with a blow; a pugnacious [like a pugilist], contentious, quarrelsome person." Groves defines it, "A striker, smiter, disturber; a reviler, calumniator [false accuser]; a boxer, pugilist; quarrelsome, turbulent; impetuous [rash], violent." It means a man who wants to settle his arguments with his fists. *Not greedy of filthy lucre.* All but the first word is from AISCHROKERDES, which Thayer defines, "eager for base gain." It is similar to the last word of the verse, except that our present word specializes on the idea of making money by any means, good or bad, while the other considers only the eager desire for money. A man who is so intent on making money that he shows he loves it, will not likely give proper attention to his duties as elder of a congregation. *Patient* means the elder should be mild and gentle in dealing with the members of his flock. He can do this without compromising the right or encouraging the wrong. A *brawler* is one who is contentious over matters that come up. This does not contradict the command to contend for the faith (Jude 3), but one should not insist in a quarrelsome spirit. *Not covetous* is explained in the forepart of this paragraph under *lucre*.

Verse 4. *House* is from OIKOS which Thayer defines as follows: "The inmates of a house, all the persons forming one family, a household." A man might not rule his own household because he does not know how, or because he is not willing to exert enough moral and/or physical force to do so. In either case he is unfit to be appointed as a ruler over the household of God (the church). *Having his children in subjection.* In specifying this part of the household, the apostle shows where a man may need to use both moral and physical

force. *Having children* must still be considered in connection with the word "must" in verse 2, hence a man who has no children cannot be scripturally appointed to the eldership. Does this necessarily mean that he must have a plurality of children? No, the form of the language does not so require it if it is taken in the same way that a like expression is understood. A captain of a sinking ship gives orders, "women with children to be placed in life boats first." Yet if a woman with one child should be present, she would not be denied the favor. Sarah remarked in Genesis 21: 7, "Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have borne him a son." We know that Sarah never had but one child, yet she used the plural form of the word in the same sense that Paul uses it. And must an elder's children be his own bodily offspring? The language does not require it, for it is said in direct connection with the mention of his *house*, which we have seen is composed of "the inmates of his house." Rulership and not fatherhood is the point in question, and that can be shown whether the children are his own flesh and blood dependents, or are orphans or otherwise persons who are placed lawfully in his charge. *Gravity* means the children must be taught to obey and respect him as the head of the house.

Verse 5. See comments on the preceding verse.

Verse 6. A *novice* is one who has recently become a Christian, regardless of his age in years. A man of seventy-five years would be a novice if he had become a believer at that age. *Lest being lifted up with pride*. If a man were placed in the eldership who had only lately come into the church, it might give him a wrong impression of his importance. This would puff him up until his conduct would make him deserve being condemned the same as was the devil. This passage incidentally tells us the motive (pride) which prompted Satan to make war in heaven (Revelation 12: 7), so that he was cast out and fell as lightning (Luke 10: 18).

Verse 7. *Good report* denotes that he has a good reputation among people outside of the church. *Lest he fall into reproach*. Not that the questionable reputation would cause the reproach, but if a man's standing is in doubt, it will indicate that his conduct

has not been the best in the eyes of the world. If that is the case, then he might again be caught in some of his former irregular habits and thus be *snared* by the devil. And if such a man had been put into the eldership, it would present an embarrassing and damaging problem for the church. Hence the warning of Paul means that such a man should not be appointed, "lest" this unfortunate situation might develop.

Verse 8. *Likewise* does not necessarily mean that all of the foregoing items are to be said of the deacons. The word is used as a kind of notice that the writer has something to say, somewhat along the line that he has been considering. It is from the same Greek word as "in like manner" which is explained at chapter 2: 9; the reader should see the comments at that place. While many things will be repeated as to personal qualifications, that were said regarding the bishops or elders, yet the subject as a whole is changed to another official that the Lord placed in the New Testament church; they are called *deacons*. The work of these officials is not stated in this chapter, except as it may be indicated by some of the qualifications required of them. That subject is explained in detail by the comments on Acts 6: 1-3, in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary.

The word *deacon* is from DIAKONOS, and in the King James Version it is translated by deacon 3 times, by minister 20, servant 7. When the word is in verb form it is from DIAKONEO, which has been translated by administer 2 times, minister 7, minister to 1, minister unto 15, serve 10, use the office of deacon 2. Thayer's general definition of DIAKONOS is, "One who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a servant, attendant, minister." His specific definition is, "a deacon" and he explains it to mean, "one who, by virtue of the office assigned to him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use." Considering all of the foregoing information, we should understand that the word "deacon" could apply to any member of the church. However, if it is to be used officially (as it is in the present chapter), then the connection will show that it has such a meaning. There is a case where the word has an unofficial meaning and that is the one concerning Phebe. It is explained at Romans

16: 1, in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary.

*Grave* is from SEMNOS which means honorable and dignified. *Double-tongued* is from DILOGOS which Thayer defines at this place, "doubletongued, double in speech, saying one thing with one person, and another with another." In familiar language it means a man who tries to "be on the fence" or who wants to "carry water on both shoulders." Such a person would certainly not be fit to have such a responsible office as that of a deacon. *Not given to much wine.* This is explained at the first clause of verse 3. *Not greedy of filthy lucre* is commented upon at the same verse.

Verse 9. The work of deacons pertains to the temporal things of life (see Acts 6: 2), yet they are expected to be interested in spiritual matters also. *Mystery of the faith.* Anything is a mystery until it is made known, regardless of whether it is something complicated or only a simple matter. Hence *the faith* (another name for the Gospel or salvation through Christ) was a mystery for ages, but was made known fully by the apostles. The deacons are required to maintain a *pure conscience* on the subject, which means they will be true to its teaching while administering their duties with the temporal needs of the poor members.

Verse 10. *Proved* is from DOKIMAZO and Thayer defines it as follows: "To test, examine, scrutinize; to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy." It is understood that some rule or standard is necessary by which a thing may be tested. The rule in this case consists of the qualifications required of the man who is to be appointed to the office. The apostle says for the deacons to be proved *also*, which indicates he applies the requirement (of being proved or tested) in the case of elders as well as of deacons. It does not mean, then, that the men are to be "put in office on trial" as some people teach. They are to be placed therein only after examination, and even not then unless they are *found blameless*, which means they are found not lacking any of the required qualifications. *Use the office of a deacon* all come from DIAKONEO, and this is one of the places referred to in the comments at verse 8; the other place is in verse 13 below.

Verse 11. *Even so* is from the same Greek word as "likewise" in verse 8

and takes the same comments. The pronoun *their* is not in the original, also the Greek word for *wives* is the same as for "women" in general. Because of these facts, some commentators say that Paul is giving instructions for all women in the congregation. It is true that all women should manifest the qualities described here, but it is especially important that the wives of these officials should do so, since without them the work of their husbands would be hindered. *Grave* means their conduct is such that others will respect them. *Slanderers* is from the same word as "devil," and the word is also defined as a false accuser. It is easy to see that a woman who is free with her tongue in falsely accusing others, will make it difficult for her husband to perform his official duties. *Sober* means to have self-control regarding all of the things permitted for a Christian; does not apply to things that are wrong of themselves. *Faithful in all things* is a summing up of the items mentioned or implied, showing a life devoted to the service of the Lord.

Verse 12. *Husbands of one wife* is to be understood in the same way as a like expression in verse 2. *Ruling their children* corresponds with "children in subjection" in verse 4. *Houses* are composed of the same persons defined in the fourth verse.

Verse 13. *Used the office of a deacon* is the other expression coming from the Greek word DIAKONEO, referred to in the comments at verse 10. *Well* is from KALOS, which is a word describing the kind of service the deacons have rendered in their office. Thayer defines it at this place as follows: "Good, excellent in its nature and characteristics, and therefore well-adapted to its ends." *Purchase to themselves* means they acquire or secure for themselves, etc. Thayer explains the word for *degree*, "of a grade of dignity and wholesome influence in the church." *Good* is from the same word as *well* in the beginning of this verse. *Great boldness* means courage and assurance of the things that are right. Nothing can give a man more moral support than the knowledge of having discharged his duty in the best possible manner. It strengthens his faith in Christ, when he sees the good fruit of serving Him on behalf of the disciples. This work is performed in connection with the funds of the church, but the disposition to use

them for the benefit of poor but worthy disciples, springs from the same spirit that would prompt him to do so out of his own possessions (Matthew 25: 40).

Verse 14. Timothy was at Ephesus and Paul was at Laodicea when he wrote this epistle. Hoping to be with him before long, he would have waited to instruct him personally. However, due to the uncertainty of making the journey for quite a while, he thought it best not to risk the welfare of the church too far, hence he wrote the instructions we have been considering.

Verse 15. This verse states the reason for writing the foregoing instructions as they might affect Timothy's own responsibility with reference to the church. It was to inform him of his proper conduct in the *house of God*. That term is immediately explained to be the *church of the living God*. The words thus far would clearly identify what institution the apostle meant, but he adds some important truths about the position of it in the great plan of God's truth. There is virtually no difference between the *pillar* and the *ground* of the truth. The figure is taken from the architecture of ancient buildings. Many of the structures were largely supported by a few main pillars (Judges 16: 26, 29), but of course the pillars would need to be resting on a good base. Paul means the church is both of them, and hence that God expects the church to be the sole means (on the human side) of propagating and defending the truth. This great principle is taught also in Ephesians 3: 10 and 21. No other organization, whether it be religious, fraternal or educational, has any right to offer moral or religious instruction or other benefits concerning the Bible, and any such activities that are so professed among men are competitors of the institution for which Christ gave his blood.

Verse 16. *Without controversy* denotes something concerning which no one would express any doubt. That which is so evident that all must admit it, is the truth about to be stated, namely, *great is the mystery of godliness*. The last word means the system of faith given to the world through Christ, to take the place of the Patriarchal and Jewish religions. It is called a mystery because it was not revealed to mankind for many centuries, even though God had it planned in his mind. *God was manifest in the*

*flesh*. We should bear in mind that the word *God* is a family name, and that each member of the Deity or Godhead is entitled to the name. Hence the present passage means God the Son, for he it was who was on the earth in the flesh. He is called "God" in Acts 20: 28 where Paul is talking to the elders of the Ephesian church. Before coming into the world He was called the Word (John 1: 1), and verse 14 of that chapter says "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," which is the same declaration that is made by our present verse. *Justified in the Spirit*. To justify one means to declare and prove him to be what he claims to be, and to disprove all false accusations that may be made against him. Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, and his enemies accused him of being an imposter and put him to death. But the Spirit enabled Him to be raised from the dead (Romans 8: 11), and that fact proved he was the Son of God (Romans 1: 4), which is what he claimed to be, and hence He was *justified* as our verse says. *Seen of angels* (Matthew 4: 11; 28: 2; Mark 16: 5; Luke 22: 43). This is very significant considering the importance of angels as agents of God in serving those who are heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1: 14). *Preached unto the Gentiles*. This was not true of the system that had been used under the law of Moses. It was restricted to the Jews while Jesus was offered to all mankind. Had no one believed the Gospel, it would not have been perpetuated after the death of the apostles, for no others were inspired to preach it to the people of the world. *Received up into glory*. This was done when he ascended from the earth to go back to his Father (Luke 24: 51; Acts 1: 9). The ascension of Jesus is predicted in Psalms 24: 7-10. In view of these wonderful facts about the story of Christ, it is no wonder the apostle says it is great and above all doubt as to its reality.

#### 1 Timothy 4

Verse 1. *Speaketh expressly* means to speak in express or exact words. This is what is known as verbal inspiration, where the Spirit gives the apostle or other hearer the message in the exact words to be received and communicated to others. That is not the usual method of inspiration, but instead, the Spirit reveals the truth on the subject being considered, but leaves it to the one being inspired to use his own words in handing the

message over to others. This accounts for the fact that the various writers can be distinguished from each other by their own peculiar manner of speech; such as that of Paul or Peter or John, etc. But since the Spirit supervises the whole revelation, it assures us that the writings of all these men are inspired and hence what they say is divine truth. *Latter times* represents an indefinite date, only that it is in the future from the time the apostle is writing. *Depart from the faith* denotes a foresaking of the true faith in Christ as it is revealed in the Gospel. While the original Greek word is not the same as that used in 2 Thessalonians 2 regarding the apostasy, the meaning is the same. It is a prediction of the false doctrine of Rome, that came out from those headquarters after the "man of sin" (2 Thessalonians 2: 3) came into being in his full power. *Seducing spirits* refers to the deceiving men who pretend to speak by inspiration, such as the clergy of the church of Rome. *Doctrines of devils*. The last word means demons, spirits in the intermediate state, which is usually translated by the word "devil." The Romish church makes great claim of having communications with beings in the unseen realm, and the doctrines (or teaching) that were claimed to have come from the intermediate state were put out by Rome as of great significance, and were believed by the disciples of the "man of sin."

Verse 2. *Speaking lies in hypocrisy*. The last word is from ΗΥΠΟΚΡΙΣΙΣ, and its primary definition in Thayer's lexicon is, "the acting of a stage-player." When a person goes on the stage to act the part of a certain character, he and everyone else knows he is not really that person—that he is only acting. The word has been appropriated by composers of moral speech to mean a man who pretends to be what he knows he is not. The speakers of Rome, then, know they are expressing lies when they put forth their false doctrine. The question arises, why will these teachers express what they know to be false? The answer is in the rest of the verse, namely, their conscience has been *seared with a hot iron*. This is figurative, as we understand, but is used because when a part of one's body has been seared over, it becomes dull to pain, so that it will not even flinch from a contact that would at other times cause much resistance. At this point I insist that

the reader see the comments at 2 Thessalonians 2: 11.

Verse 3. *Forbidding to marry*. This is a specific prediction of the doctrine of Rome, for no one of the clergy of that institution, from the pope down to the ordinary priest is permitted to marry. It makes no difference to them that Paul declares that "marriage is honorable in all" (Hebrews 13: 4). The edict of the "man of sin" is of more weight to them than a declaration of an apostle. *Abstain from meats*. The last word may include anything that is used as food, but in this passage it refers to the flesh of animals. Even in our day the members of the church of Rome are told not to eat the flesh of animals on any Friday. They make an exception by permitting the use of fish on that day. Their inconsistency is proved by Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15: 39, that the bodies of fishes is flesh also. This is another one of their "lies in hypocrisy." Paul declares that every creature that God made is good for food, and is so regarded by them which *believe and know the truth*. This gives us the conclusion that the devotees of Rome do not believe the truth.

Verse 4. Paul is not posing as an authority on diet, or presuming to decide on what might be liked or disliked as an article of food. He means there is nothing that is wrong from a religious standpoint. There were certain things forbidden by the law of Moses, but that system as a religious course of conduct, was taken away by the Gospel and therefore no one has the right to impose restrictions on the people of God concerning what they may eat. (See Colossians 2: 16.) The privilege of eating the various articles of food is on condition that they be received with thanksgiving. It is an obligation upon all disciples to give thanks for their food (Ephesians 5: 20; Colossians 3: 17). The writer has been in homes of disciples where the practice of offering thanks for food was evidently not done. This was indicated by the embarrassment manifested by the host in requesting the guest to "please ask a blessing."

Verse 5. To be *sanctified* means to be set apart or devoted to a righteous use. The word of God says it is right to use these creatures as food, and the thanksgiving prayer gives the disciple a right to eat it; the two factors thus sanctify the food.

Verse 6. Brethren need to be told over and over again the things they have known as the truth (Hebrews 2: 1; Peter 3: 1). Timothy was an evangelist and would be in various places to work with the Gospel. The present verse states a qualification that would make him a *good minister*. That term is not a title as the present day usage of religious language would express it. The word *minister* is not used in any place in the New Testament as a special class of public speakers. It comes from the same Greek word as servant, and may apply to any member of the church. Paul shows that doing one's duty toward his brethren, in reminding them of their obligations, will constitute him a good minister (servant) of Jesus Christ. Being equipped with the wisdom of the world does not constitute one a good minister, although such seems to be what is demanded by the popular notions of the day. Instead, being *nourished up* (informed) in the words of faith which constitutes *good doctrine*, will equip him for acceptable service to the Lord. *Wherunto thou hast attained*. This denotes that Timothy was not lacking in these qualities, and other passages indicates the same accomplishments in him (1 Timothy 1: 18, 19; 2 Timothy 1: 5; Acts 16: 1, 2). But Timothy was no exception to the rule that servants of Christ need to be reminded of their obligation to Him.

Verse 7. *Profane* means something that is common or worldly; heathenish and useless. *Old wives fables* refers to myths originating with foolish old women who have no substantial basis for their shallow stories. Timothy had no time to waste on such useless subjects. The kind of exercise worthy his attention was godliness or piety.

Verse 8. *Bodily exercise* refers to the gymnastics or training that the Greeks and other ancient nations practiced, in order to get themselves prepared for the combat in national games. *Profiteth little*. Those performances brought some advantages of a temporal nature, but the benefits were small and did not last very long. The exercise that counts most is of a spiritual kind, consisting of a godly or pious mode of conduct. Such training did not restrict its benefits to this life, although it included that in the highest sense. That is, such a life helped the body to have a healthy condition, which has many advantages even in

this world. But that kind of training prepared one to win in the combat against evil in the world, and also developed a character that will be acceptable to the Lord in the life to come. The man who performs bodily training only, gets nothing out of it but a victory over another like contestant, with nothing to look forward to after this life ends.

Verse 9. *Faithful saying* means that what Paul has been saying is true, and hence is worthy of being fully accepted. Of course, if a man does accept it wholeheartedly, he will regulate his life accordingly, and prepare himself for the greatest possible usefulness in this world, and for eternal happiness in the world to come.

Verse 10. Paul's confidence in the principles that he had just expressed, induced him to labor (spiritual exercise or gymnastics of the inner man), even though it would bring reproach upon him from the enemies of righteousness. The apostle was so certain of the promises of the living God, that he looked upon the mistreatment coming from the enemies as a "light affliction," and that as a result it would work for him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4: 17). *Saviour of all men, especially*, etc. If one man is saved at all, how could another be *especially saved*? The idea involves the sense in which *all men* are saved, which is that God provided salvation for the whole world (John 3: 16), but only those who believe (and obey) will actually get the benefit of the plan; in that sense they will be *especially saved*.

Verse 11. *Command and teach*. Not being an inspired man, Timothy could not speak with authority. However, he could deliver the communications as the express commands of the apostle, then explain their meaning and urge their observance.

Verse 12. Moffat translates the first clause, "Let no one slight you because you are a youth." Timothy could avoid being belittled (the meaning of despise) or his teaching underestimated by proper conduct. Otherwise it might be said that he was but a youth, and it would not be necessary to take him very seriously. When he would insist on others leading a life of devotion and self-denial, they would be convinced he was in earnest if he led the way by an example in his own life. *In word*. His speech should be



pure and respectful towards God and man. *Conversation* means conduct or manner of life. *Charity* means a sincere interest in the welfare of others. *In spirit*. By the proper kind of conduct, Timothy would show that he was mindful of the teaching of the Spirit; that his own spirit was being regulated by the influence of the Spirit of Christ. *In faith*. His manner of life should be such as that of one who believed from the heart in the Saviour he professed to serve. *Purity* denotes a life unmixed with the evils of people in the world who care not for the Lord.

Verse 13. *Till I come* is a repetition of Paul's expressed purpose, which he stated in chapter 3: 14. Timothy was not an inspired man, and hence needed to obtain his instructions by hearing another or by reading what was written for him. Likewise, when he preached to others, he had to give them what had been written in the law of Moses or by the apostles. Furthermore, he needed to make a personal examination of all such reading matter, so that he could make the proper application to others. (See 2 Timothy 2: 15.) To exhort another means to insist on his doing what he has learned to be his duty. Teaching includes the impartation of truths hitherto not known, and/or the explanation of those truths after having been communicated to others.

Verse 14. *Given thee by prophecy*. This refers to the prediction of those achievements which one set to teach the Gospel will accomplish for the kingdom of Christ. The prediction was made by those having the gift of prophecy, at the time hands were laid on Timothy and he was about to be sent forth. We do not know just what the gift was, but we do know that it was not the gift of inspiration as that term is usually taken, for such a gift could not be *neglected*, which Timothy was told not to do. (See the comments at chapter 1: 18.) *Presbytery* means the group of elders over the congregation. Acts 8: 14-18 shows us that it required the hands of an apostle to confer the spiritual gifts. However, when such a performance was to take place in a locality where there were elders, it was fitting that it be done in conjunction with them, in respect for the dignity of their office. In such a circumstance, the laying on of the elders' hands would only be a formality to show their approval, in much the same spirit that the "right hands

of fellowship" were given to Paul and Barnabas in Galatians 2: 9.

Verse 15. Thayer defines *meditate*, "to care for, attend to carefully, practice." The definition agrees with the rest of the verse, for it emphasizes the thought by the instruction to *give thyself wholly to them*, which is to result further in his improvement as a teacher. *Profiting* refers to the good fruit that would be borne of his meditation, and it would be so practical that all people could see it.

Verse 16. This verse sets forth an idea that is couched in a familiar saying, namely, "practice what you preach." Timothy was to take heed unto himself (his practice) and unto the doctrine or teaching (that which was preached). This sort of conduct was not to be observed occasionally only, but he was to *continue in them*. This kind of life would benefit two groups; himself and his hearers. That is because such a life would be carrying out the conditions on which a man may be saved, and it would be convincing to the hearers of the righteousness of the doctrine, to the end they would also accept it and be saved.

## 1 Timothy 5

Verse 1. The word *rebuke* occurs twice in this chapter, but they are from Greek words with very different meanings, so that no real disagreement exists between them. In this verse it is from *EPIPLESSO* and Thayer defines it, "to chastise with words, to chide, upbraid, rebuke." The word *elder* is always from the same Greek word, but it does not always mean an official elder; it may even refer to a woman, as it does in the next verse. The connection will have to be considered each time in discovering which sense of the word is to be applied. Since Paul mentions both men and women, and those of different ages, we know he means the older men, and that it would not be right for a young evangelist to chide an older man. That does not mean he should overlook what he conscientiously believes is wrong in the life of older men. No, he may show his disapproval, but should do it with such language as is befitting a young man when entreating an older one. On the same principle he should show an attitude toward the younger men that recognizes their equality in years.

Verse 2. The elder women were to be given the consideration proper for

their age, on the same principle as that expressed for the elder men in the preceding verse. Timothy was a young man, hence it was especially appropriate to mention the subject of *purity* or chastity in his conduct toward the younger women in the congregation.

Verse 3. It would not be right to show dishonor to anyone of any age or either sex, to use the word in its ordinary sense, hence the term is used with some special meaning in this passage. The verses following through 16 indicate the meaning of it as Paul uses it, namely, to give them the honor of being supported out of the funds of the church. (See Acts 6: 1, 2.) The bestowal of temporal needs is spoken of as an "honor" in Acts 28: 10, and it has that meaning in our verse. Some commentators say that the widows were appointed by the church to teach the younger women in the principles of the Christian faith, and were given this financial support to care for them as they discharged their work. I am not in possession of the history on this matter, but am not disposed to doubt it. We may be certain that Paul is not writing of incidental misfortune or distress that is to be cared for, because the scripture teaches that any person in distress, whether young or old, and whether women or men or whatever their social situation, if necessity calls for it, the church must come to their relief. But in such cases there would not be required such a train of qualifications as is described in this chapter. But to place a widow in the permanent appointment as teacher of other women, to be supported out of the funds of the church, would call for these items as to her worthiness as a teacher, and the genuineness of her personal needs. *Widows indeed*, then, means those who are actually unable to furnish their own living while giving their time to this ministry of teaching. Moffat renders this verse as follows: "Widows in real need must be supported from the funds."

Verse 4. The original word for *nephews* includes descendants in general, so that the phrase *children or nephews* means children or other descendants. *Let them learn first* denotes that these descendants should learn that the duty of supporting the widows is first upon their shoulders. *Show piety* means to manifest proper respect concerning their rightful obli-

gation toward the *parents*, which means near ancestors. To *requite* denotes the performance of that service that is needed for these relatives. Such service is what God desires and hence it will be acceptable to Him.

Verse 5. *Widows indeed* is the same as in verse 3 as to her actual condition of need, but her worthiness to receive it is also considered in this verse. She is *desolate* because her husband is dead and she is lonely. However, if she is a worthy disciple and puts her trust in God, she will spend her time in prayer to God, and not in the frivolous pleasures of the world. It would certainly be a good work to lift the burden of her living needs from her, and give her the valuable employment of teaching the young women. This would not only relieve her of the strain of temporal necessities, but it would give her the spiritual joy of associating with her younger sisters, as well as be a benediction to them.

Verse 6. This verse is a specific instance of one's being dead and alive at the same time. It means she is living in sin and hence is alive to pleasure. But that kind of life separates her from the favor of God which causes her to be "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2: 1).

Verse 7. *Give in charge* means to insist gravely upon the rules described, lest the cause of Christ be blamed for corruptions in the membership.

Verse 8. *His own, and especially*, etc. A man might have a widowed mother or sister or aunt, living alone and desolate; or they might be residing within the group that he calls his own household. In either case it is his duty to see that their needs are taken care of so that the church will not be charged. *Denied the faith*. The faith is the system of righteousness under Christ, a part of the obligations of which is to care for the worthy poor. To refuse doing this duty is equivalent to backsliding from the religion he professes to practice. *Worse than an infidel* because this man makes no profession of believing in the teaching of Jesus, and hence is not committing any inconsistency when he refuses to observe these obligations in his conduct of life.

Verse 9. *Taken into the number* means to be placed with the widows who were to be supported out of the funds of the church. *Under threescore years old*. These widows were to be

placed on the permanent list of dependents of the church. It was supposed that they were lonely and in the declining years of life. Some line needed to be drawn to show when they had reached that period, and no mere human judgment could have been certain when that was. Hence the apostle, writing by inspiration, directed it to be set at this age. *Having been the wife of one man.* In the case of an elder (chapter 3:2), it was shown that the verb "be" was used purely in the present tense, and that the requirement was merely to show he must be a married man at the time of his appointment. There is an apparent similarity in the language of the case of widows, yet the circumstances are different. A person can be a man without being married, while one cannot be a widow who has not been married. Hence the requirement in this case means to restrict the number of times she has been married, which is once. The Lord did not limit the number of times a woman might be married (if lawfully; 1 Corinthians 7:39), hence the restriction in this case was not because of moral considerations. The matter was one of inspired judgment, very much on the same principle as the age limit. If a widow was sixty years old and had been satisfied with one marriage, it would indicate a control over her nature that is not the most usual. Such a person, coupled with the list of good points in life to be mentioned next, would be a "safe risk" to be put on the permanent support and employment of the church.

Verse 10. *Well reported of for good works.* It should be noted that this verse begins and ends with a general statement of good works. It indicates that the items in the body of the verse are classed as good works and not ordinances for the public services of the church. To be well reported of means she has been so generally engaged in doing various good deeds that it has gained her a favorable reputation among the people where she has lived. *Brought up children.* These may have been her own and also any others who were in need of home care. It was never the Lord's plan for children to be reared in human organizations, but they should be given the influences and joys of the family life. (See Psalms 68:6.) When orphans are kept out of family homes and herded as groups in human institutions, they are deprived of the train-

ing that can be given only in a private home. Hence when this widow has performed such a service for children, she has done a good work and done it in the Lord's way. *Lodged strangers.* In the days before she was needy and lonely, she bestowed hospitality upon the wayfarer, including disciples who might have been fleeing from persecution. (See Hebrews 13:1.) Now she is unable to perform such services, but must herself have her needs provided by others. *Washed the saints' feet.* This was another good work and not a church ceremonial performance. The subject of feetwashing is treated in detail at John 13:5, in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary. *Relieved the afflicted.* This could be done by nursing the sick, or by extending comfort and sympathy to those in sorrow, etc. *Diligently followed.* She did not merely perform these good works incidentally or halfheartedly, but gave her best attention to all opportunities for doing good. Now that her age and financial circumstances make it impossible to continue such services, she is entitled to be cared for by the church, if she has no relatives who can do so for her.

Verse 11. *Younger widows refuse* means not to take them into the list of those who are to be supported by the funds of the church. *Begun to wax wanton* is all from KATASTRENIAO, which Thayer defines, "to feel the impulses of sexual desire." *They will marry.* This phrase if taken by itself would not state any sin, for it is the Lord's own plan for the lawful gratification of the desire (1 Corinthians 7:2). But in the case of these women, they would have been received among those who were supposed to be past the ordinary age when marriage would be thought of, and were lonely and ready to give their entire attention to the work of the Lord and dependent on the church.

Verse 12. *Having damnation* denotes they are worthy of being condemned. *Cast off their first faith* means they have reversed their former claim of being alone, and ready to be devoted exclusively to the work of the Lord; they have gone contrary to the claim.

Verse 13. It would be a natural outcome for such women who had lost their spirit of devotion, but who were still on the financial support of the church, to cease their activities on behalf of the disciples. Such persons would not be quiet on account of

their restless emotions, and would become what are familiarly called gadabouts. Neither might such characters be expected to have much care about their conversation, for they would naturally see things to talk about and thus become *tattlers*. Such a person would also not be satisfied merely with talking "out of turn," but Paul says they would become *busybodies*. That is from *PERIERGOS* which Thayer defines as follows: "Busy about trifles and neglectful of important matters, especially busy about other folks' affairs, a busybody."

Verse 14. There is no word in the Greek at this verse for *women*, but there is in verse 11 where the translators give us "widows" for the word *CHERA*, where we know the apostle is speaking of the same class of persons. Hence we should conclude that in the present verse, Paul means to say for the younger widows to marry, bear children, etc. The restrictions for widows who may be taken into the number of dependents of the church, clearly describe one who is past the childbearing age. Hence it is consistent that the ones "refused" are expected to be still able to bear children, and the apostle commands them to marry and do so. In so doing they will not only be cured of the frivolous habits described in the preceding verse, but will be doing one of the conditions on which women may be saved. Since childbearing is a condition of salvation for women in general (chapter 2: 15), there is no disagreement with that for Paul to make special references to young widows in this verse. His occasion for doing so is the fact that he has been writing on the subject of widows in relation to the funds of the church. *Guide the house*. We know the Bible does not contradict itself, and it teaches that the husband is to have rule over his wife and the household (1 Corinthians 11: 3; Ephesians 5: 22; 1 Timothy 3: 4, 12). The apostle's meaning, then, is that a wife should take charge of the work of her home, exercising discipline over her children and thus being a good homemaker (Titus 2: 5), and doing all this subject to the authority of her husband. Such a life will not give the adversaries, enemies of the cause of Christ, any excuse for reproaching her manner of life. Vicious critics may wag their tongues in slanderous remarks in spite of the godly life of such a "mother in Israel," but let it

not be truthfully said she gave them room for it.

Verse 15. *Some* necessarily refers to widows who had unfortunately been employed by the church, and had proved the very things Paul warns against in verse 11. When their fleshly desires became active, they forsook the consecrated work they had espoused, and broke out into the disorderly conduct, proving the mistake that was made by taking in the younger widows. Since Satan is the sponsor of all evil, this backsliding of the young widows is attributed to that great enemy of righteousness.

Verse 16. This verse is virtually a repetition of verses 3 and 8. It concludes Paul's teaching in this chapter about widows.

Verse 17. *Elders* are the same rulers who are called bishops in other places. The meaning of the three names applied to the rulers over the churches of Christ is explained in detail by "general remarks" before 2 Thessalonians 2. *Rule well* denotes a lead or management of the flock that is very efficient. *Double honor*. The first word is from *DIPLOOS*, and both Thayer and Robinson define it, "twofold, double," and the latter also explains it. "put for any greater relative amount." Then it is not a precise mathematical figure, such as saying that two is double of one, etc. *Especially* designates one item that entitles this elder to the double honor, and the argument in verse 18 clearly shows that financial support is included in the honor. This is not the only place where temporal support or favors is referred to as an honor. (See the comments at verse 3.) *Labor in word and doctrine*. This cannot mean merely that they are teachers over the flock, for chapter 3: 2 shows that all of the elders must do that. Hence the phrase is bound to mean those elders who give their whole time to "the ministry of the word" (Acts 6: 4); the next verse confirms this conclusion.

Verse 18. In immediate connection with the preceding instruction about double honor for certain elders, Paul here cites an Old Testament scripture pertaining to the reward of a laborer. Furthermore, in 1 Corinthians 9: 1-14 the apostle refers to the same passage, then applies it to temporal support for those who preach the Gospel. Hence our verse (together with the preceding one) means that if an elder devotes his entire time to his work

as ruler and in teaching the word, he should be "honored" by being financially supported by the funds of the church.

Verse 19. The eldership is very important, and because of its public character of rulership, bringing it into contact with all classes of persons, it is exposed to the suspicions and little jealousies of those who might desire to injure the good name of the men in office. On the other hand, these officials are human and might fall a victim to their own unrighteous ambitions. (See Acts 20: 30.) As a safeguard, then, both to the eldership and the congregation, Paul directs that at least two witnesses be available before the evangelist may *receive* (which means to consider) an accusation against an elder. The word *before* is from the Greek word ΕΠΙ, which occurs several hundred times in the New Testament, and Thayer uses five pages of his lexicon in defining the word. Among its many renderings in the King James Version, I shall list some as follows: Before 14 times, in 51, on 71, upon 158. It is clear that whether we render the word by "before" or by "upon," the thought is that unless there are at least two witnesses to support an accusation against an elder, the evangelist must not act in the matter.

Verse 20. *Them that sin* is often made to apply to the congregation in general. There is teaching elsewhere that indicates the necessity for every person who sins (publicly) to be exposed publicly. But the whole connection in this passage shows Paul means the elders who have been accused to the evangelist and found guilty. *Rebuke* is the same English word as the one in the first verse, but comes from an entirely different original. It is from ΕΛΕΓΧΩ, and I will quote Thayer's entire definition (the words in italics), including that for our verse and several other passages: "To convict, refute, confute; by conviction to bring to light, to expose; to find fault with, correct; to reprehend severely, chide, admonish, reprove; to call to account, show one his fault; to chasten, punish." From the various shades of meaning in the word at hand, it is evident that the evangelist in charge is to hear the testimony of the two or more witnesses. If he believes the accusation is true, he should so state it in the hearing of the congregation. What final disposition he

makes of the case will depend on the reaction of the elder to the public rebuke. If he refuses to make the adjustment, then he must be "punished" (one part of the definition of the original word) by removal from office, which will conclude the official work of the evangelist in the case. The reason this is to be done before all is *that others also may fear*. They would be impressed with the seriousness of public exposure of sin, and thereby be induced to watch their own conduct.

Verse 21. *I charge thee before God*, etc. Timothy was to realize the seriousness of the charge by knowing that Paul was not the only one who was concerned in the matter, and that others would be witnesses of the way he conducted the duties of his work as an evangelist in charge. *Elect angels*. The first word is from ΕΚΛΕΚΤΟΣ, and Thayer's general definition is, "picked out, chosen." He offers the following explanation of the phrase in connection with this verse: "Those whom God has chosen out from other created beings to be peculiarly associated with him, and his highest ministers in governing the universe." (See Hebrews 1: 13, 14.) *Doing nothing by partiality*. There might be a temptation to prefer one person or perform one act instead of another under pressure of prejudice. Timothy is charged to be fair and execute his duties unpleasant though they may be, "without fear or favor," regardless of who may be involved in any case coming up.

Verse 22. *Lay hands* could not refer to the laying on of hands literally for the purpose of conferring a spiritual gift; that required the hands of an apostle (Acts 8: 14-18; 19: 5, 6). The rest of the verse, which is the opposite of laying hands *suddenly*, indicates the meaning of the phrase. Paul had just dealt with the disciplining of elders, hence this verse means for Timothy not to be hasty in laying hands of discipline on any man. Neither should he be indifferent or unduly tardy in handling the charge, for that would encourage such a man in his wrong, and the evangelist would thereby become a *partaker of other men's sins*. By avoiding both extremes, Timothy would *keep himself pure* as regards the evil at hand.

Verse 23. Travelers through the territory of Ephesus testify to the unwholesomeness of drinking water avail-

able there. And this verse directly mentions that Timothy had oft-recurring infirmities, involving a condition of his stomach. It is generally known that wine is a good tonic in ailments of the stomach, satisfying both to the demands of thirst, and soothing to the delicate tissues of this digestive organ. But the amount of wine necessary for such medical and nourishing purposes would not meet the craving of one who wished to drink it as a beverage. Hence Paul tells him to *use a little wine*, on the same principle he requires elders and deacons to be "not given to much wine" (chapter 3: 3, 8; Titus 1: 7). Some commentators think this verse is misplaced as to its appearance in the epistle here, since it seems to be an abrupt change of subject. But the evangelist was working under difficult and trying tasks, and it was especially necessary, therefore, for him to take the best care of his body and conserve his strength for the responsibility.

Verse 24. The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders the first clause, "The sins of some men are manifest" [are plainly seen]. *Judgment* is from KRISIS which Thayer defines, "opinion or decision given concerning anything." *Going before* denotes that people can form their judgment as to whether the man's conduct is right or wrong before much time passes. *Some men they follow after*. Their sins are so unapparent that people will not realize the man's real character for a long time after he has committed them; sometimes not until after he is dead.

Verse 25. This verse has the same meaning as the preceding one, except that it is about the actions of good men instead of evil. A righteous man's good deeds are not always realized at first, but they will become known finally; they cannot always be hid. The truths of these two verses show why an evangelist should not be too hasty in forming his verdict concerning an accused elder.

## 1 Timothy 6

Verse 1. A great portion of the people in the Roman Empire were slaves when the Gospel was brought into the world. Neither Christ nor his apostles tried to interfere with the status of master and slave, but only to regulate the proper conduct of each to the other. The salvation through Christ was offered to slaves as well as to masters, and this verse is addressed to the slaves who had accepted it.

*Yoke* is used figuratively, and Robinson says the word means "an emblem of servitude." Some slaves might think more highly of themselves than they should on account of having been given the privilege of becoming Christians. Such conduct would be blamed by their masters on the name and doctrine (teaching) of God, which would cause them to blaspheme (speak evil) of the divine cause. On the other hand, since the Lord requires servants to obey their masters, if they are careful to manifest all the more respect for them after becoming Christians, it will speak well for the religion which their servants have embraced, and possibly might even induce them to become Christians also, being thereby convinced that the faith which the servants have espoused is bound to be desirable, seeing it has improved the service and disposition of their slaves.

Verse 2. Masters sometimes were among those who became Christians. A slave might think that when his master became a believer, that he (the master) would not be as particular about requiring good service of his slaves, and so he would become indifferent about his duties and services. Instead, the servant was not to *despise* (belittle or think lightly of) his master, but must recognize him in even a higher relationship, that of a brother. *Partakers of the benefit*. Master and slave alike, after becoming Christians, become partakers of the benefit of the improved service of the Christian slave. *Teach and exhort*. This is a significant phrase as the words are arranged. To exhort means to insist that one perform his known duty. It was in order, then, to insist on the brethren that they do their duty, after being taught what it was.

Verse 3. *Teach otherwise* means to teach contrary to that stated in the preceding two verses. Naturally, if a man was disposed to go contrary to this teaching of the apostle, it would be because he did not want to agree with *wholesome* (spiritually sound or healthy) words. *Even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ*. The man being described would be opposed to this apostolic teaching, notwithstanding it was the doctrine of Christ. It also was *according to godliness*, yet this contrary man would reject such holy doctrine.

Verse 4. *He is proud* means he is conceited and puffed up over his pretended learning, when in truth he knows nothing of any account. *Dotin*



is from *noseo* and defined by Thayer, "to be sick"; it is similar to the English word "nausea." The word is used in a figurative sense, and means about the same as when we speak of some person acting like a man in his dotage. The object of this man's dotage is his extreme love of strife over unimportant words. Not only is such a contention fruitless of any good, but it produces a number of harmful results which the apostle names. *Envy* is the spirit that begrudges another his prosperity or other success. *Strife* is a contention for the sake of being different from another. *Railings* consist of severe and unjust expressions against others, and such expressions as would not be justified even against a person in wrong. (See Jude 9.) *Evil surmisings* means evil suspicions about the character of another, without any evidence to support them. A self-conceited person might be expected to be guilty of such thoughts against those whose sound teaching he did not like.

Verse 5. *Perverse disputings* is defined by Thayer, "Useless occupation, empty business, misemployment," and Robinson defines it in virtually the same language. *Men of corrupt minds* would very naturally come under such a description as the foregoing. *Destitute of the truth* denotes a mind that never has any truth for its wild outbursts such as the apostle has been describing. *Supposing that gain is godliness*. These people evidently came into the church for the personal advantage they thought it would be to them. They reasoned that if a person obtained some gain after professing an interest in religion, that would prove that such gain was to be considered as a part of godliness or piety. Such characters are not worthy the association of righteous men, therefore Timothy was told to withdraw himself from them.

Verse 6. Paul reverses the foolish notions of the vain characters he has been describing. Instead of temporal gain being the object of godliness, true gain is godliness itself, if a person is contented with it, for it is a form of wealth that will not pass away when this world comes to an end.

Verse 7. In this verse Paul enlarges on the thought of the preceding one, and shows why godliness is real gain while the temporal wealth of this world is not. *We brought nothing into this world*. This is expressed by Job, chapter 1: 21 as follows: "Naked came

I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither," and David says in Psalms 49: 17, "For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away." All of this shows the folly of making material things of the world the chief interest in life.

Verse 8. Food meets the internal needs of the body, and raiment the external. These facts have originated the familiar phrase *food and raiment*, used not only in this verse, but it is one of almost universal use, and is really meant to cover all of the actual temporal needs of this life. (See Genesis 28: 20.) *Let us be therewith content*. Not that we should limit our secular activities to what is absolutely necessary at the moment, for such a conclusion would contradict other statements of the New Testament (Acts 20: 35; Ephesians 4: 28). But while we are doing what we can to obtain the good things of this life, let us be thankful for what we have, even though we may not be as successful as some others.

Verse 9. *Will be rich* is not a mere statement of a fact that is to come to pass, meaning that someone is going to be rich, but it is a stronger term. It means those who eagerly intend to become rich and who exert themselves to that end. There is no sin in the simple fact that one is rich, for Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man and a disciple of Jesus, yet he is never referred to in any unfavorable light (Matthew 27: 57-60; Mark 15: 43-47; Luke 23: 50, 51; John 19: 38). In verses 17-19 of our present chapter, the rich are not told that their wealth is an evil, but only that they must not trust in it and that they should make the proper use of it. It is not a question of how rich a man is, but how did he obtain his wealth and how is he using it? If he obtained it by his own determination, urged by an eager desire to be rich, he will be tempted to engage in wrongful conduct that will *snare* him in sin. *Hurtful lusts* means foolish desires that are injurious to one's moral and spiritual character. *Drown* is used figuratively because a drowning man is one who is sinking into the water until he is overwhelmed and finally dies. These evil practices of the man so eager to become rich will cause him to be overwhelmed by them until his soul will meet *destruction of perdition*, which means eternal condemnation.

Verse 10. This verse is similar to the preceding one (which the reader

should again see in connection with the present one). *Love of money* corresponds with "will be rich" in the other verse. And again, the love of money is where the sin comes in, not the mere possession of it. A man might have that love and yet never become rich because he is not a "financial success." But the "eager desire" is there, and that is what leads him into sin. By the same token, a man might possess money without having the *love* of it in the unfavorable sense used in this verse. (See again the case of Joseph in the preceding verse.) *The root of all evil.* The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders this phrase, "a root of all evils," and Thayer renders *all evil*, "all kinds of evil." These renderings are correct from the very truth of the case. Love of money is not *the* root because there are many other motives for doing evil. On the other hand, there is no kind of evil that cannot be induced by the love of money, as well as by other unrighteous motives. The latter half of this verse is virtually the same in thought as that in the preceding verse; to *err from the faith* will bring to a guilty man the sorrow of perdition.

Verse 11. *Man of God* is in the possessive case, denoting that Timothy belonged to God. However, that is true of all true disciples (1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20), hence it is not a title that applies to Timothy only. Furthermore, the same phrase is used in 2 Timothy 3: 17, where Paul is writing of those who are completely furnished by the inspired word unto all good works, and we know that is true of all servants of God. It is true also that Timothy had some special duties to perform, that were peculiar to his place in the great system of the kingdom, but that also is true of various disciples. So it leaves all as men of God, seeing they belong to Him and are doing his service. *Flee these things* means more than a mere negative attitude towards evil; it means to abhor it and lose no time or effort in getting away from it. (See Romans 12: 9; James 4: 7.) Fleeing away from evil denotes only the proper attitude towards it. The man of God must also follow the proper course that is opposite the evil. *Righteousness* and *godliness* are really the same in effect. They mean to do that which is right when measured by the law of God. *Faith* requires that one not only profess a belief in the word of God, but also to be faithful in keeping its precepts.

*Love* is from a word here that denotes a sincere interest in the welfare of others. *Patience* is another word for endurance or steadfastness in service to the Lord. *Meekness* signifies a spirit of humility in all of one's activities for God.

Verse 12. It is a *good fight* because it is on behalf of a good cause and against an evil one (2 Corinthians 10: 3-5; Ephesians 6: 10-12). It is the *fight of faith* because the Christian soldier does not fight according to his own strategy, but goes on into battle because of his faith in the great Commander, who will not fail to obtain final victory. The soldier of the cross is not fighting to gain any temporal property or worldly possessions, but is expecting to win the crown of *eternal life*. Timothy, like all other warriors in the Lord's army, was called to enlist voluntarily in the army, for there are no draftees in this conflict. When a man goes into the army of his country, he is expected to declare allegiance to that country and help to defend it against the enemy. *Hast professed* [confessed] *a good profession* [confession]. Every person wishing to become a soldier of the cross (become a Christian), is required to make a public confession (Matthew 10: 32; Romans 10: 10). *Many witnesses* include whoever were present when Timothy made his confession, also the invisible (to him) witnesses mentioned in the next verse.

Verse 13. These are some of the witnesses referred to in the preceding verse who knew of Timothy's confession of faith. To *quicken* means to give life to anything, and all life originates with God. *Before Pontius Pilate.* The first word is from EPI, which is rendered "in the days of" two times, and "in the time of" once, in other places in the New Testament. Jesus actually made the confession of his divine Sonship in the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26: 63, 64; Mark 14: 61, 62; Luke 22: 70); this was "in the time of" Pilate which would be a more accurate translation. However, Jesus made virtually a like confession directly before Pilate (Matthew 27: 11; Mark 15: 2; Luke 23: 3), hence either translation is correct. An important conclusion upon the argument of Paul is, since Jesus made this good confession and died for it, Timothy should live for Him for whose sake he had made the same confession.

Verse 14. *Without spot, unrebukeable* means for Timothy to be wholehearted

in his obedience to the command of the apostle. *Until the appearing*. Neither Paul nor any other man knew whether Christ would come in the lifetime of Timothy or not. But when a man dies, his record is complete and will remain as it is until Christ comes. Hence to be "faithful until death" is equivalent to being so until He comes. (See Revelation 2: 10.)

Verse 15. *In his times* means the time for Christ to make his second appearance on the earth, the date of which no man knows. *He shall show* denotes that Christ will then display or give evidence of the facts about to be mentioned. God is said to be *blessed* because he is the source of all true blessings or happiness. (James 1: 17.) The word *potentate* means a ruler of great and unusual power. God is here said to be the *only* such ruler, because all other rulers in the universe are subject to Him. There are many *kings* and *lords* among the various intelligent creatures in the universe, but God is the King and Lord above all of them. Jesus is "acting" as potentate now (Matthew 28: 18), but he will give that up to his Father again (1 Corinthians 15: 28), and that is when and how He will *show* that, after all, God is the *only* final and supreme Ruler.

Verse 16. *Who only hath immortality*. This should not be taken to mean that no person but God may ever have immortality, for that would contradict 1 Corinthians 15: 53, 54, where the same Greek word is used, and where Christians are promised immortality at the resurrection. But in their case it will be something bestowed upon them. When anything is bestowed upon a person, someone has to be the giver of it, and that someone can only be an individual who did not have to receive it from another. God is the only being who has that peculiarity. He always was immortal, which means endless existence both past and future, hence a personality incapable of decay in any sense. *Dwelling* is from a word that means to have a permanent and uninterrupted residence. Whether considered figuratively or literally, *light* denotes a condition where nothing is obscured or impure or undesirable in any way. Such a condition is that where God has the *dwelling* just described. *Man* is from ANTHROPOS, and Thayer's primary definition of it is, "a human being, whether male or female." It therefore means man in the natural state since that is the only time that a

human being has any sex (Matthew 22: 30; 1 John 3: 2). Being human and mortal is why he cannot even approach unto the infinite light that haloes the Eternal One. Of course when the righteous receive their glorified bodies, they will be able to dwell with God in glory in the glory world. *No man hath seen nor can see* is to be explained in the same way as just described. *Honor and power* will belong to God without end. *Amen* is added by the apostle as an expression of emphasis for the foregoing declarations concerning God.

Verse 17. The rich are not criticized for being rich, nor told they must dispose of their wealth. A man can be rich and at the same time be a good man (Luke 23: 50, 51). The rich were charged not to be highminded (proud) over their possessions, nor to put their trust in them. Jesus taught the same thing on the subject (Mark 10: 24). Riches are called *uncertain* because there are so many things that can happen, often beyond the control of the owner, that can cause them to be lost (Proverbs 23: 4, 5). If a man's trust for the future is based on earthly riches, such a hope will be disappointed if the wealth is lost. The trust that never can bring a disappointment, is that which is based on God, for he is *living* (always), hence the hope that is in Him is bound to be sure. A logical reason for the surety of such a hope is in the fact that all good things come from Him (James 1: 17).

Verse 18. *That they do good*. A rich man can do some good that cannot be accomplished by one who has no wealth. If there were no "capitalists" in the world, very few of the advancements in the industrial department of human endeavor could be made. The command in Genesis 1: 28 for man to subdue the earth would be difficult if not impossible of obeying were it not for men of great capital, hence the popular prejudice against that class of men is not justified. It is significant that the fundamental principle of communism is its cry against "capitalism." Men of wealth are told to be *rich in good works*, and that is supplemented by the words *distribute* and *communicate*. Not that they must give their wealth all away and render themselves without possessions, for that would make it impossible for them to continue in the requirement to be rich in good works. The only thing that men with an abundance of means are required to do in the way of distribut-

ing or giving to others is to "give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4: 28). Further than that they are permitted to use their wealth in promoting such "good works" as will be beneficial to mankind in general. Of course if the rich men are Christians, they should use their wealth in advancing the cause of Christ in such situations that require financial support.

Verse 19. If a rich disciple will use his wealth as described in the preceding two verses, he will be "laying up for himself treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6: 20), in that by such use of his earthly possessions he will gain the friendship of God and Christ, who will admit him into their home at the judgment (Luke 16: 9). Such a preparation for the future is figuratively called a *good foundation*, and it promises an actual reward of *eternal life*.

Verse 20. Timothy had been entrusted with the Gospel, and he is exhorted to *keep* (guard) it by avoiding *profane and vain* (empty and useless) *babblings*. Science is from the same word as "knowledge," hence there is no such thing as false science, but error is often falsely called science.

Verse 21. If a man professes to believe this falsely-called science, it logically will lead him from the faith, which is based on the truth from the Lord.

## 2 Timothy 1

Verse 1. Paul began his first epistle to Timothy by saying his apostleship was by the commandment of God and Christ. This one begins by saying it is by the will of God; hence a command of God is an expression of His will. In the other he says Christ is our hope, and in this he says it is according to the promise of life in Christ. The general thought in each place is the same as in the other.

Verse 2. *My dearly beloved son*. The last word is from *huios*, and it is explained in detail at 1 Timothy 1: 2. The salutation or good wishes expressed here are virtually repeated in all of Paul's epistles, and are commented upon at 1 Corinthians 1: 3.

Verse 3. *Serve from my forefathers* means he had been a servant of God all his life, and that he had served Him according to what they had taught him. *Pure conscience* denotes that Paul had always done what he thought was right. Since we know that he did grievous wrong when he was persecuting Christians, we should under-

stand that it is not enough just to be conscientious, but the conscience must act in harmony with faith which is produced by the word of God. (See Romans 10: 17 and 1 Timothy 1: 19.) Paul *thanked God* for his favorable remembrance of Timothy, so that he offered daily prayers concerning him.

Verse 4. *Mindful of thy tears* refers to some occasion when they had to separate. Since no definite information is available as to when it was, we must be satisfied with the thought that Timothy had a tender feeling for Paul as his father in the Gospel. The memory of those tears made Paul likewise to have a longing to see again his own "beloved son."

Verse 5. *Unfeigned faith* means one that is sincere and not merely a pretended one. Faith cannot be inherited, but it can be induced by righteous parents or other relatives. Paul attributes the faith of Timothy (at least in part) to the influence of his mother and grandmother. There is a lesson in the case for all parents, to encourage them in training up their children in the way they should go.

Verse 6. Timothy is here told to *stir up the gift*, and in 1 Timothy 4: 14 it is "neglect not" the gift. Both phrases mean the same, for if a man stirs up a gift, he certainly will not neglect it. This was not the gift of inspiration, for such a gift could not be stirred up. An inspired man speaks or writes "as the Spirit gives him utterance" (Acts 2: 4). This gift, whatever it was, came to Timothy by the laying on of the hands of Paul, with endorsement of elders. (See Comments at 1 Timothy 4: 14.)

Verse 7. The word *fear* is from an original here that is always used in a bad sense, meaning "timidity, fearfulness, cowardice."—Thayer. Christians do not need to have such feelings, for God wishes them to be "strong in the Lord and the power of his might" (Ephesians 6: 10). The *love* considered in this passage is a sincere desire to do that which will be beneficial for others, even though it might require some unpleasant reproof. Such service would call for good judgment or discretion, which is the meaning of *a sound mind*.

Verse 8. Timothy was still at Ephesus where there had been much encountering with false teachers. Under such conditions it was appropriate that Paul exhort him not to be ashamed to bear *testimony* (declare

the evidences in favor of) for Christ. *Nor of me his prisoner.* Paul was in Rome when he wrote this epistle, having been arrested and brought into the jurisdiction of Nero Caesar the second time. Timothy was urged not to be backward about pressing the claims of the Gospel upon the people, even though the great apostle was at the time a prisoner for that very Cause. *His prisoner* means that Paul was being held in chains because of his devotion to Christ. To be a *partaker* denotes that he should be willing to endure similar persecutions for the sake of Christ, and in so doing he would be having fellowship with the apostle. *According to the power of God.* Romans 1: 16 says that the Gospel is the "power" of God unto salvation, and it is from the same Greek word as the one in our verse. Hence a sincere belief in the Gospel will enable one to meet and overcome all persecutions for His sake.

Verse 9. *Who hath saved us* refers to God, because he is the source of all good things, and who arranged this salvation through his Son. *Before the world began.* The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders this phrase, "before the ages of time." Moffatt renders it, "ages ago." The idea could well be expressed by saying that God had the plan of salvation decided upon before anyone else even heard about it. The plan did not predestinate any certain persons to salvation, but God did determine to save all who would accept the *holy calling* when it was given to them. And while all who accept the call on its divine terms will be saved, it will not be on the merit of works performed, for man cannot do anything to "earn" salvation. The whole arrangement is based on the grace (unmerited favor) of God, and made possible through the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross.

Verse 10. The plan of salvation through Christ was not fully revealed to man for ages, even after some of its preliminaries were being arranged with certain special servants (Matthew 13: 17; Ephesians 3: 5; 1 Peter 1: 12). But when Jesus came to the earth he opened up the complete plan, which began with His death and resurrection. These are the facts of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15: 1-4), and when they occurred, the hope of *life and immortality* was brought to light—was revealed to the world.

Verse 11. After the facts of the Gospel had taken place, they had to be

made known to mankind, in order that they might be heard of and believed (Romans 10: 14). For this purpose Paul was appointed as one of the preachers as stated in the passage just cited. But a mere preacher could not spread the good news without being sent with power to speak with inspiration, as Romans 10: 15 declares, hence Paul now states that he was appointed to be an *apostle*, which is defined in the lexicon as, "a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders." *Teacher of the Gentiles.* All nations were to be offered the blessings of the Gospel, but Paul was chosen by the Lord to be sent especially to the Gentiles (Acts 9: 15; Ephesians 3: 8; 1 Timothy 2: 7).

Verse 12. *For the which cause I also suffer.* It might seem strange that a man would be persecuted for preaching the good news of salvation. The mere fact of offering salvation was not what brought persecution to Paul, but it was because he claimed that it was obtained through Christ. The Jews were the ones who caused the persecutions, because they had rejected Christ and disliked all men who professed faith in Him. In Acts 4: 2 the Jews did not all object to the preaching of a resurrection (some of them professed to believe in it themselves), but it was because it was being preached "through Jesus." *I am not ashamed.* Paul's confidence amidst persecutions is because of the knowledge he has of Christ in whom he believes. Paul had committed his entire interests of soul and body into the care and keeping of Christ, and he firmly believes that it is all in good hands. *Against (or until) that day* means the day of judgment. It is often referred to in such indefinite language because of the unequalled importance of it, for which reason it needs no other specification.

Verse 13. *Form* means pattern or example, and *sound* denotes a condition of good health. The verse means for Timothy to adhere to the pattern of (spiritually) healthy words which he had received from Paul. He was to maintain such a course in *faith* and *love*. He should do so because he believed them and because he had *love* (interest in the welfare of all) in his heart. All of these motives were desirable and possible *in Christ Jesus*.

Verse 14. *That good thing* refers to the "faith" that is mentioned in the preceding verse. Timothy was to *keep* it by *holding fast* to it and exposing any false teaching that might be attempted against it. The Holy Ghost

(or Spirit) is in the church or body of Christ, and all faithful members of that body are made strong by the comforting influence of the divine Guest.

Verse 15. Regardless of whether this refers to residents of Asia, or former professed friends of Paul, the significant fact is that he was deserted in the midst of his persecutions for the cause of Christ. Such treatment was to be expected, for Jesus taught his disciples while he was with them that they would be hated for His sake (Matthew 10: 22; 24; 9), and Paul teaches the same thing in chapter 3: 12 of this epistle. Nothing more is known of Phygellus and Hermogenes than is stated here. Paul's specifying them among the large number who had turned against him, indicates that they had been especially active in opposing the apostle's work.

Verse 16. According to Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary, Onesiphorus was a former resident of Ephesus, but his household only is mentioned directly in this verse, also in chapter 4: 19. This indicates that he was dead at the time this epistle was written, but his memory was to be honored by well-wishing for his family. While he was living he often *refreshed* the apostle. That word is from ANAPSUCHO, which Thayer defines, "to refresh," then he explains it to mean, "one's spirit, by fellowship, consolation, kindnesses." Robinson defines it, "to refresh, to cheer." Such ministrations could be accomplished by either the bestowal of bodily needs, or by words of cheer, or both. *Not ashamed of my chain.* Paul was literally fastened by a chain and was under sentence of death. But Onesiphorus did not let that keep him from showing friendship for the apostle, as some others might do according to Mark 8: 38; being ashamed of a disciple of Christ is counted as being against Him (Matthew 25: 45).

Verse 17. Onesiphorus "proved his faith by his works" in that his interest in Paul was not profession only. He could have contributed material refreshment to him while absent, by sending necessities of life to him. Such a service would not have exposed him to danger for his life or to shame of being a friend to a prisoner in chains, had he been unwilling to suffer any inconvenience to himself. But his interest in and devotion to Paul was more intense than that as we shall see. When he had occasion to be in

Rome, he made diligent inquiry until he contacted the apostle, so as to give him the comfort of his presence.

Verse 18. *That day* is commented upon at verse 12. The reward prayed for on behalf of the faithful brother was to be given at the day of judgment. This is especially significant if he was dead at the time of this epistle according to verse 16. Paul refers to some kindnesses that he bestowed upon him while he yet lived and the apostle was at Ephesus, Timothy also being in that city at the same time.

## 2 Timothy 2

Verse 1. See comments at 1 Timothy 1: 2 for explanation of *son*. Being a pupil of Paul, his teacher was desirous that he do the good work that was entrusted to him (1 Timothy 1: 3, 4). Grace is the unmerited favor of the Lord, but it may be obtained by faithfulness to His cause. Timothy is directed to be strong in that favor, and that can be accomplished by properly handling the inspired truths that His apostle has communicated to his "son."

Verse 2. Timothy was not an inspired man, but had to receive instructions from Paul or others who were inspired. The *witnesses* evidently included those referred to in 1 Timothy 4: 14 and 6: 12. It is true also that the truths about the divinity and authority of Jesus that Paul had declared to Timothy, had been attested by many who could speak from personal knowledge. With such an array of basic support, Timothy should be fully persuaded of their genuineness, and of their right to be transmitted to others. Hence Paul instructs him to commit them to *faithful* or trustworthy men, not to men of ambition for prominence but perhaps lacking in sincere interest. These faithful men thus equipped with the truths coming to them from Paul through Timothy, would be able to teach others in the principles of the Gospel.

Verse 3. A good soldier is one who is willing to endure *hardness* or hardships on behalf of his country. He cannot always be resting in the comfort of his own camp, but must be out on the firing line before the enemy. Likewise the soldier of the cross must face the many persecutions as he battles against the enemies of the Lord.

Verse 4. There are two applications of this verse, a specific and a general



one. The former is concerning a person like Timothy who has gone into the special "work of an evangelist" (chapter 4: 5). Such a person must give his entire attention to that work, not being involved in temporal affairs. The latter is applied to all Christians, and pertains to matters that would interfere with the kind of personal conduct a true disciple of Christ should practice. Specifications would be too numerous to mention in this space, but any kind of occupation, whether it is right or wrong of itself, that will prevent a disciple from doing his duty, would constitute the entangling affairs mentioned in this verse.

Verse 5. The apostle takes up another subject for the purpose of illustration, and that is the athletic performances that were popular in those days. *Strive for masteries* is rendered "contend in the games" by the Englishman's Greek New Testament. It is the same exercise mentioned in 1 Corinthians 9: 25 and commented upon in that place. In those games there were certain rules that the contestants were required to observe, and if they did not *strive* according to the rules, they were denied the prize even though they appeared to have outdone their rivals. The lesson is that in the great contest where the crown of eternal life is the goal, no one will receive that prize unless he complies with the rules. Of course those regulations have been laid down by the Lord, and they are recorded in the New Testament (John 12: 48; Matthew 7: 21). As in the case of the temporal contests, no matter how earnestly a professed contestant labors for the prize of salvation, his earnestness will not count unless it is guided by the law of Christ. Such "zeal" will be unavailing because it is "not according to knowledge" of the authorized rules prescribed by the "righteousness of God" (Romans 10: 1-3).

Verse 6. According to the Greek text, the words of this verse should be arranged as follows: "The husbandman must labor before partaking of the fruits." This is both scriptural and logical, for no man can expect to partake of the fruits of the ground, until after he has labored to produce them. Likewise no one may expect to reap eternal life unless he first sows the proper seed for such a harvest (Galatians 6: 7, 8).

Verse 7. The Lord gives things in various ways; sometimes direct and sometimes through the agency of an-

other. In the present case, He will give Timothy understanding of the proper application of his duties by considering what Paul says to him. *Consider* is defined by Thayer, "to think upon, heed, ponder, consider." The simplest statement may convey no proper meaning to one if he treats it with indifference. For this reason Timothy was also told to "give attendance" to reading, etc. (1 Timothy 4: 13). The ancient Israelites failed to know what they could have known, because they did not "consider" what the Lord said unto them. "Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (Isaiah 1: 3). Furthermore, Paul named a large number of important subjects, then exhorted the brethren to "think on these things" (Philippians 4: 8).

Verse 8. Among the things Timothy was to *consider* and *remember* was the great fact of the story of Christ. He was of the seed of David—was a lineal descendant of the ancient patriarch, yet that relationship did not keep Him from dying. In truth, He was predestined to die in harmony with the aims of that lineage. His death was not permanent, however, for his resurrection was accomplished which was the final fact of the Gospel. Paul calls it *my Gospel* with the meaning of saying "the Gospel which I preach." He words it in that very way at 1 Corinthians 15: 1.

Verse 9. *Wherein* means for which cause Paul was in trouble, being falsely accused as an evildoer. *Even unto bonds* is literal, for he was fastened to a real chain as a prisoner held for execution. *Word of God is not bound*. The exact date set for the slaying of Paul is not stated, and we do not know whether he was informed of it. However, he was still able to tell the story of Jesus to those who came within the sound of his voice, and to write it as he is doing in this epistle, which is the reason he said the word was not bound. That is not the only sense in which the word of the Lord cannot be bound. Others who received it, and especially those who learned that Paul was being persecuted because of his devotion to it, would be thereby roused to speak out boldly on its behalf (Philippians 1: 12-14).

Verse 10. The over-all meaning of *elect* is given in Thayer's lexicon as, "picked out, chosen." All special meanings, such as who does the choosing and on what condition the choice is

made, must be determined in each case by the connection in which it is used. In the present passage it means those whom God has chosen as heirs of salvation, because they have complied with the terms that He has made known to man. Each disciple must work out his own salvation (Philippians 2: 12), but he can be greatly assisted in that conflict by the co-operation of others who likewise are engaged in the struggle. Such encouragement is especially helpful when it comes from one who has "borne the brunt of battle" as Paul has been doing. Hence he says he is enduring his sufferings for their sakes, to the end they may win the reward of salvation made possible only through Christ. *Eternal glory* signifies that which will be enjoyed by the residents of Heaven, in contrast with the glitter and tinsel of this world which will soon fade away.

Verse 11. *A faithful saying* is one that is based on the truth. An example of such a saying is that now expressed, namely, that the dead in Christ shall also live with him. Of course this means in a figurative or spiritual sense, for all mankind whether good or bad will live bodily at the resurrection (John 5: 28, 29). But those who die to sin by obedience (Romans 6: 7, 11, 17, 18), will enjoy the life referred to.

Verse 12. *Reign with* is from *SUMBASILEUO*, which Thayer defines, "to reign together." Since Christ is the sole king in the realm of religious government (Matthew 28: 18; Ephesians 1: 22, 23), we know this reigning is not in the sense of sharing in His authoritative rule. Thayer explains his definition as follows: "Figuratively to possess supreme honor, liberty, blessedness, with one in the kingdom of God." But Christians are expected to "take the bitter with the sweet." Christ had to suffer to establish his kingdom, hence the citizens must be willing to share in the persecutions heaped upon the kingdom by the enemy. To refuse to endure sufferings for the sake of Christ, is equivalent to denying or disowning Him. Those who do such an unworthy thing will be disowned by the Lord; not only in this world but in that to come (Mark 8: 38).

Verse 13. Unbelief on the part of man is here put as a contrast with the faithfulness of God. This is hardly a clear presentation of the subject, for it is inappropriate to speak of God either as believing or disbelieving; He

*knows* everything. When the faithfulness of God is mentioned it means that He is always true to his word. This verse means, then, that regardless of whether man believes on the Lord or not, he will maintain his divinity and will make all divine declarations come true. Since God cannot lie (Titus 1: 2), it would be impossible for Him to deny or disown his personal divinity and eternal existence.

Verse 14. Timothy was left in Ephesus to guard the truth against false teachers (1 Timothy 1: 3). He is still there and the same kind of instruction is repeated in this verse. *These things* are the facts and truths in the preceding verses. *Charging them* means he is to insist earnestly and religiously *before the Lord*. Let them know that all they do and say is known to Him. *Strive not* denotes they should not spend their time disputing over unprofitable words. Such contentions do no one any good, but rather result in *subverting* the hearers. The italicized word is from the Greek word *KATASTROPHE* which Thayer defines, "overthrow, destruction." We know how serious a catastrophe is considered as the English word terms it, and Paul considers the result of heeding unprofitable words as a happening amounting to a calamity.

Verse 15. *Study* is from *SPOUDAZO*, and Thayer's definition at this place is as follows: "To exert one's self, endeavor, give diligence." Robinson defines it, "To give diligence, to be in earnest, to be forward." Hence the word does not especially apply to the mental process of investigating a literary subject, although it includes that. The general meaning is to be diligent in trying to show one's self approved unto God, whether in the actions of the body or the mind. If one's work is the kind that God will approve, the workman will have nothing of which to be ashamed. One important task for a workman employed in the service of God, is to make the proper application of *the word of truth*. *Rightly dividing* is from *ORTHOROMEO*, and Thayer's definition at this place is as follows: "To make straight and smooth; to handle aright." The familiar use of this passage, that it means to divide rightly between the Old and New Testament is correct as a human comment, but it is not what the original word means, for the New Testament had not been composed when this epistle was written. Hence the word covers all phases of one's

treatment of the word of God, and requires the teacher to give it the respect due a document coming from the Lord.

Verse 16. *Shun profane and vain babblings* is the same instruction that is stated in 1 Timothy 6: 20, and refers to empty and foolish talk that has no good use. But any kind of activities on the part of human beings is bound to produce some kind of results. Paul says these vain babblings will advance along the wrong lines, namely, *more ungodliness*. Thayer defines the last word, "want of reverence towards God." That is logical, for everything pertaining to God and the speech originating with Him, is full of helpful principles. Hence if one is concerned with such foolish lines of thought as are here described, it can be only from lack of respect for God.

Verse 17. *Canker* is from GAGGRAINA which Thayer defines, "a gangrene." He explains the word as follows: "A disease by which any part of the body suffering from inflammation becomes so corrupted that unless a remedy be seasonably applied, the evil continually spreads, attacks other parts, and at last eats away the bones." An evil influence, whether it is in the form of false teaching or sinful conduct, is sure to spread and increase. This truth is illustrated by various figures in the Bible. The spread of bad leaven is used in 1 Corinthians 5: 6, and the eating of a gangrenous infection is the illustration in our verse. Hence it should be attacked and destroyed as soon as it is discovered. Hymenaeus is mentioned in 1 Timothy 1: 19, 20 as one who had given up the faith, but nothing is specified. In our chapter (verse 18) his false doctrine is revealed. Philetus is called a heretic by Thayer.

Verse 18. *Concerning the truth have erred*. The last word means to wander from the path, and the men just named had departed from the truth concerning the resurrection. They taught that no resurrection was to come in addition to what had already occurred. That same heresy was taught at Corinth, and the fifteenth chapter of Paul's first epistle to that church deals with the subject. *Overthrow the faith of some*. The most cherished item of a Christian's faith, is that of the resurrection from the dead at the day of judgment. This heresy of the false teachers, that no future resurrection was to occur, naturally destroyed

the faith of all who received the false doctrine.

Verse 19. *Nevertheless*. The preceding verse states that the faith of some men was being overthrown by false teaching. A man's faith must be resting upon some foundation or base, and the faith in God is based on the facts of the Gospel. If a man is seduced by false teaching to forsake that divine foundation, it will be the ruination of his faith, yet he cannot take the foundation along with him into ruin. In spite of the desertion of some professing believers, the foundation remains unmoved. Because of these precious truths, the ones who remain faithful need not be discouraged, for the Lord *knoweth* (recognizes and cares for) his own. That is, amid the turmoil and confusion of the backsliders, the Lord will not lose sight of those who are remaining on the unmoveable foundation. A *seal* is an inscription attached to a book or other document or any other important article, that signifies the approval of an authority concerned. This is used figuratively to denote the surety of acceptance for all who will remain true to God. However, to receive and keep such a seal, each man must keep himself apart from *iniquity*. The last word is from ADIKIA, which Thayer defines, "unrighteousness of heart and life." But in order to be free from it, the professors of faith (those who *nameth the name of Christ*) must *depart from such a life*, and not expect God to perform a special miracle to rid them of sin.

Verse 20. *A great house* literally refers to the material structures made by men, but it is used to illustrate the church which is also called a house (1 Timothy 3: 15). In the material buildings there are various kinds of *vessels* (defined "house-hold utensils" in Thayer's lexicon). These vessels will be made of different kinds of material, depending on the service expected to get from them. *Honor and dishonor* in a material building means only that the use of some utensils is more special or particular than that of others. When such a service is wanted, the householder will use the utensils that are made of the best materials, and those most in keeping with the dignity or importance of the occasion. A utensil made of gold or silver could be used on occasions when those of wood or clay would not serve the purpose.

Verse 21. In the illustration, a ves-

sel is whatever kind its owner decrees for it. But in the house of God every man may be an "honorable" vessel if he will. Hence *if a man therefore purge himself from these*, meaning the objectionable principles referred to in the preceding verses, he can be the kind of vessel that is desirable. *Sanctified* means he is cleansed from *iniquity* by obedience to the truth, and set apart for a righteous use, namely, that of the Master's. Such a reformation in his life prepares him for the work that is designed by his Owner. Note that nothing is said about doing great or highminded work, but *every good work*.

Verse 22. *Youthful lusts*. Thayer defines the first word, "peculiar to the age of youth, youthful." The phrase means those desires that are more common in one who is young. The Lord will not overlook a misdeed of one on the ground of his "early years." Joseph was scarcely out of his "teens" when his mistress tried to seduce him, yet he was able to resist her advances by the faith he had in God. In 1 Timothy 4: 12 the evangelist is told not to let anyone despise or belittle his youth. Our present passage is similar in its purpose, and he is to maintain the respect of others by practicing the things that both young and old should do in order to please God, and be an example to others. *Righteousness* is a general term and always means the practice of that which is right. To *follow* after it requires that one make it his daily conduct, not merely when it is convenient. *Faith*, when used with reference to one's manner of life, means the conduct of one who is true or faithful to the will of the Lord. *Charity* in this passage denotes a sincere interest in the welfare of others. *Peace* must be in accord with *the wisdom that is from above* (James 3: 17). Such a peace is not always agreeable to others, hence Paul specifies that Timothy may have it with those who are pure in heart in the sight of the Lord.

Verse 23. *Unlearned questions* means subjects that are not instructive. Many times we hear brethren worrying and laboring over matters that are not set forth in the scriptures, and often it is concerning inquiries that would not be of any profit even if they could be solved. Such conversations are foolish, and Timothy is directed to avoid them. They not only are without any lawful result, but rather will they *gender* (beget) *strifes*. The last word

is from *MACHE* which Thayer defines, "A fight, combat; quarrel." Sincere contention on behalf of a revealed principle is right and is commanded (Jude 3), but an argument over useless words is always wrong.

Verse 24. The Bible does not contradict itself, and when there seems to be a disagreement there is always a proper explanation. This verse says a servant of the Lord must *not strive*, while other passages show he may (verse 5). But it is from a different original in the present verse which Thayer defines, "to quarrel, wrangle, dispute." The connection shows Paul is writing about Timothy's work among those who are out of the way because of being uninformed; he should be gentle and patient toward such. *Apt to teach*. This phrase is from *DIDAKTIKOS*, which occurs only twice in the Greek New Testament. Thayer's definition is, "apt and skilful in teaching." The other place where the word is used is 1 Timothy 3: 2 where it is applied to the elders, while in our verse it is applied to anyone who is a *servant of the Lord*, which might not always be an evangelist even. In one place it is applied to a man with authority in the church, in the other the connection does not indicate authority. Since the definition does not state *how* skilful he must be in teaching, we must consult some other passage for that. Titus 1: 9 is considering the qualifications and work of a bishop (or elder), and it shows he must be able by "sound doctrine" (teaching) to convince the gainsayers. Unless a man is able to do that kind of teaching, he is not qualified for the eldership, while a man without that degree of teaching ability might be an acceptable servant of the Lord.

Verse 25. *Meekness* means humbleness and is about the same in effect as gentleness in the preceding verse. *Oppose themselves* refers to those who place themselves in opposition to the truth that Timothy was teaching. *Peradventure*. God wishes every person in sin to repent (2 Peter 3: 9), and never prevents him from so doing if he becomes penitent in mind. Hence the uncertainty expressed by the word is on the question of whether these people in error will be persuaded by the means that God will be using through the services of Timothy. Such repentance or reformation must begin by *the acknowledging of the truth* that was offered to them.

Verse 26. These people engaged in opposition to the truth are compared to a victim caught in a snare or trap. The trap has been set by the *devil* (from *DIABOLOS*), who uses various means to capture the people of the Lord. Sometimes he is overt and vicious after the manner of a roaring lion (1 Peter 5: 8), at other times he captures them with his wiles or snares. *Taken captive* is from *ZOGREO* which Thayer defines, "to take alive." The last clause is a very interesting use of an illustration. It pictures a scene where the Lord finds a human being who had once been His servant, but was caught in the trap of the devil. The victim is released and taken captive by the Lord, who originally had possession of him anyway, and who now will again be turned into the kind of service that is in harmony with His will.

### 2 Timothy 3

Verse 1. *Last days*. I shall explain these words separately, then comment on the phrase as a whole. The first is from *ESCHATOS*, and Thayer's general definition is, "Extreme, last in time or in place," and some variation in shades of meaning must be determined by the connection in which it is used. The second is from *HEMERA*, and Thayer uses two pages of his lexicon in defining its various meanings. I here give his three outstanding definitions (the words in italics), followed by his explanations of the definitions. "Of the natural day," then explains. "the interval between sunrise and sunset, as distinguished from and contrasted with night." "The civil day," and explains, "the space of twenty-four hours (thus including the night)." "The last day of the present age," and he explains this to mean, "the day in which Christ will return from heaven, raise the dead, hold the final judgment, and perfect his kingdom." By the last three words is meant the completion of Christ's personal reign and his delivering it up to his Father (1 Corinthians 15: 24). We should conclude from the various meanings of the separate words, that when combined into a phrase, no absolute date or dates can be affirmed as the necessary application. The term *shall come* indicates that Paul is making a prediction and that he is writing of things then in the future. (How far into the future is not shown.) Since about all of the evils named in the chapter have always been committed, we must conclude that they

were to become worse, and therein lies the prediction phase of the passage. (See verse 13.) *Perilous* is from *CHALEPOS*, and Thayer defines it as follows: "Hard to do, to take, to approach; hard to bear, troublesome, dangerous; fierce, harsh, savage." Of course these *times* means certain periods then in the future when the conditions about to be named were to increase upon the world. They were not to come by any decree of God, but would be caused by the actions of men according to the items now to be listed.

Verse 2. *Lovers of their own selves*. They will be selfish and interested chiefly in that which gives themselves the enjoyments of life. Such characters will often insist on such gratification even when it causes discomfort to others. *Covetous* is from *PHILARGUROS*, which Thayer defines, "loving money, avaricious." It is easy to understand how such characters would make it hard for others to get along. *Boasters* is from *ALAZON* and Thayer defines it, "an empty pretender, a boaster." It is unbecoming for a man to manifest the spirit of a boaster, even when he has accomplished something worth while. It is more so when one boasts of some merit that he does not actually have. *Proud* includes much of the same spirit as the word just explained, and goes further to include an exalting of one's self above others. It means a person who is overbearing and shows a "holier-than-thou" attitude toward others. *Blasphemers*. I can do no better at explaining this word than to quote the definition of the original given by Thayer as follows: "Speaking evil, slanderous, reproachful, railing, abusive;" and that of Robinson, "Hurtful to the good name of any one, detractive." *Disobedient to parents*. The simple fact of disobedient children was nothing new when Paul wrote this epistle, as may be seen by reading Deuteronomy 21: 18; Proverbs 19: 18; Hebrews 12: 9-11. Hence it is well to consider again the comment at verse 1, that it was the increase of the evils that was predicted. We do not know how soon after Paul's day this predicted increase began, but we do know that disobedience and other forms of disrespect to parents are rampant today. However, the children are not the only ones who are responsible for this condition; parents also are to blame. They will throw up their hands in a gesture of despair, and wonder

what is to be done about the "problem of the young people," as if a radical change had come into the natural relation between parents and their offspring. Nothing of that kind has happened, for the children have always been just as they are now, except that their natural tendency toward disobedience has become worse according to the prediction. The change has come on the part of parents, in that they are too indolent to exercise the discipline they should. This situation is made worse by the modern teaching of public schools, where it is said that the youth should be left to form their own conclusions regarding their personal conduct. They have always wanted to do that, hence it is no new idea. Another thing that encourages this increased rebellion is the daily public press. Many of the "columns" in the papers advocate such notions as "proper handling" of our children. In some instances, this "advice" comes from persons who never had any children of their own, and may even never have been married. The world would be better off if these features were ruled out of the papers. *Unthankful*. Ingratitude is one of the worst characteristics manifested by humanity. Many people will grasp the favors that come within reach, and act as if such things were to be taken for granted, and that the obligations all traveled in one direction. *Unholy*. This is a general term, and applies to all forms of evil conduct considered in this passage. Any form of unrighteousness may truly be described as unholy.

Verse 3. *Without natural affection*. These words all come from the Greek word *ASTORGES*, and the only other place it is used is in Romans 1: 31, and in each place the translation is the same, which is also according to Thayer's lexicon. The word is derived by inflection from the Greek word *STORGE* which means "love of kindred," the inflection giving it a negative meaning. The thought is that children should be inclined to obey their parents from the motive of the close kindred if from no other. But if they do not have such love, that will help to explain their disobedience to parents mentioned in the preceding verse. *Trucebreakers* is from the same word as "implacable" in Romans 1: 31, and Thayer defines it. "without a treaty or covenant; that cannot be persuaded to enter into a covenant." Such people are so unwilling to be at peace with

others that they will not even talk about "terms" of agreement. *False accusers* is from *DIABOLOS* which is one of the names of Satan, and is elsewhere translated "devil." This is an appropriate name since he is the father of lies (John 8: 44). *Incontinent* means "without self-control, intemperate." *Fierce* is from a Greek word that is defined "savage" in the lexicon of Thayer. Such a characteristic does not necessarily mean bodily attacks, but is a vicious attitude toward those who oppose their unrighteous ways. *Despisers of those that are good*. There is no personal pronoun in the original, but the statement means they despise or belittle anything that is good. Not being good themselves, they pretend to have no respect for anything that is good.

Verse 4. *Traitors* are those who will turn against their best friends if they oppose their evil ways, using underhanded means to overcome them. *Heady* means to be rash, inclined to plunge forward without "thinking twice before the leap." *Highminded* is another word for "proud," and it is used for those who are puffed up over some imaginary personal merit. *Lovers of pleasures*. The last word does not occur here as a separate term, hence we cannot give a specified definition of it as we can in other passages. It is also true that the simple word "pleasure" is not definite as to whether lawful or unlawful enjoyment is meant; the context in each case must determine that. But regardless of this distinction, the sin in our passage consists in loving pleasure *more than loving God*. Even things that are right in themselves will become evil if they are preferred above God. (See Matthew 10: 37.)

Verse 5. *Having a form of godliness*. They make a profession of some form of religion that is supposed to cause a man to do right. *Denying the power thereof*. These people claim that they have a system of religious conduct that is adapted to the right kind of life, yet they will not let that system have any effect upon their own lives. They *deny* the system the chance to have the said good effects upon their own conduct. Timothy not only must not join with these empty pretenders in their inconsistent course, but he must *turn away* from them.

Verse 6. *This sort* refers to the characters described in the preceding verses. Such persons might be expected to accomplish their unrighteous



schemes by means of this kind. *Creep into houses*. According to the Greek sense of the words, they mean men who manage to get inside the houses after the manner of an insistent salesman. They make their approach to the *silly women* ("little women"—Thayer) who are already in a state of uncertainty on account of their many sins. Since they are already *led away* with their various lusts, they would be easy prey for these intruding men who will capture their attention for evil purposes.

Verse 7. *Ever learning* means these silly women are always curious to hear something different, hence they eagerly listen to these corrupt men. But while they are thus *ever learning*—are always seeking to hear something—it is not the truth they obtain.

Verse 8. Jannes and Jambres were the magicians who stood against Moses and Aaron in Exodus 7: 11, 12. According to Thayer, their names were given in the Jewish commentaries. Paul is making the comparison of the simple fact that both sets of evil workers resisted the principles of truth that would have been accepted of the Lord. Out of the heart the mouth speaks (Matthew 12: 34), and since these were *men of corrupt minds*, it was in line for them to act against the principles of righteousness. *Reprobate* (unfit or useless) *concerning the faith*. There was nothing in the character of these men that was of any use for the faith.

Verse 9. The first two pronouns (*they* and *their*) refer to the men being considered in this chapter, the third one (*theirs*) means Jannes and Jambres. The magicians finally were exposed as frauds, and likewise these evil men in Paul's case were destined to be brought to shame.

Verse 10. *Hast fully known* all comes from PARAKOLOUTHEO which Thayer defines as follows: "To follow faithfully, namely, a standard or rule, to conform one's self to." Robinson defines it, "To follow, to conform unto." I have consulted four translations which also render the word according to these lexicon definitions. So that Timothy not only learned the truth from his father in the Gospel, but he imitated the example of faithfulness that was shown amidst various trials. *Doctrine* refers to the teaching, and *manner of life* is the putting of that teaching into practice. (See 1 Timothy 4: 16.) *Purpose*. Timothy had heard

and seen enough from Paul to learn his sincere motive in life; that it harmonized with his conduct. It also was a practical demonstration of his *faith* which was according to the Gospel. *Longsuffering* means a submissive spirit under persecutions, and *patience* denotes that submission to his lot was enduring or followed with perseverance. *Charity* in this passage means sincere interest in the welfare of others.

Verse 11. *Persecutions* and *afflictions* denote the same experiences referred to in the preceding verse, but are repeated in connection with the places where the apostle had the experiences. At *Antioch* (Acts 13: 14, 50), at *Iconium* (Acts 14: 2), at *Lystra* (Acts 14: 6, 19). Paul does not mention these things out of a desire to "feel sorry for himself," but to give force to his next declaration that *out of them all the Lord delivered me*, which is added for the encouragement of Timothy and others.

Verse 12. This verse is Paul's comment on the preceding two verses, to the effect that his experience was no exception to the rule of the faithful in Christ. Persecutions are caused by people who are enemies of the Lord. They generally do not make much ado over the mere fact that a man is not a bad character in his personal life, hence to *live godly* means more than merely abstaining from evil practices; it includes activity against the things that are evil. A Christian must not only "have no fellowship" with the sinful conduct of others, but he must "rather reprove it" (Ephesians 5: 11). When this is done it will arouse the anger of evil workers, and their usual procedure is to persecute the one who opposes them. It is no real compliment to say of a man that "he never had an enemy," as we frequently hear. Jesus said, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you" (Luke 6: 26). This is why the apostles in Acts 5: 41 could rejoice over the shame they were enduring for His name.

Verse 13. *Evil men* is general and could apply to all persons who are not righteous, while *seducers* specifies one of the evil things such men will do. The word is from GOES, a Greek term which originally meant "a wizard, juggler," according to Robinson, and a "juggler, enchanter," according to Thayer. Such a word is appropriate, because in verse 8 the apostle makes reference to the magi-

clians in Egypt. Both lexicons give the word also the meaning of "impostor," which would apply to any of the means these evil men might use to mislead the people. *Deceiving and being deceived*. It is possible for a man to formulate and utter false doctrines so persistently, that he will come to believe in them himself and thus be deceived. The magicians in Egypt evidently were devoted to their witchcraft until a shameful defeat convinced them that they had been misled, for they admitted that "this [the work of Moses and Aaron] is the finger of God" (Exodus 8: 19). Paul says that all of this *shall wax worse and worse*, which is really the prophetic phase of this chapter.

Verse 14. This verse is an exhortation for Timothy not to be swerved from the course of truth that had influenced him all his life. The assurance of being right is based on the reliable source of his information, of which he was fully aware. His mother and grandmother had taught him the scriptures, which is the subject of the rest of this chapter. (See chapter 1: 5.)

Verse 15. *From a child* has the same meaning as "from my forefathers" (chapter 1: 3). The thought is that he had been reared in the spiritual surroundings that are mentioned here and in chapter 1: 5. *Holy scriptures* refers to the Old Testament, for the New had not been written when Timothy was growing up. *Able to make thee wise*. The Old Testament was the law for salvation with the Jews, it being the one that was in force during that age. And its use as a source of wisdom or information was still available for the evangelist, even though he had become a disciple of Christ; and that is one reason that volume was preserved unto the Christian Dispensation (Romans 15: 4). However, the wisdom that was possible through the Old Testament would not alone bring salvation, now that Christ has put an end to that law "for righteousness" (Romans 10: 4). Hence Paul adds what is necessary for Timothy (and all others) to do that he might be saved, namely, accept the faith (the New Testament system) *which is in Christ Jesus*.

Verse 16. *All scripture*. Having proceeded to include the faith in Christ in the general subject of divine law, the term *scripture* here means both the Old and New Testaments as to their divine source. *Given by inspiration of God*. All of these words are

from the Greek term THEOPNEUSTOS, which Thayer defines, "inspired by God," and which Robinson defines, "God-inspired, inbreathed of God." When an author puts his ideas in a book, the volume is said to be inspired by the said author. That is true whether he does the writing bodily himself, or dictates it and has some other person to do the writing. Likewise, God dictated (by means of the Holy Spirit) to the writers of the Bible what He wished to go into the Sacred Text, and for that reason it is said to be a volume inspired of God. *Profitable* means it is useful or serviceable for the following purposes. *Doctrine* is the same as teaching, stating what is the truth about the whole system of "the faith," and *instruction in righteousness* is the information that shows how to put the above *doctrine* into practice. All *reproof* is *correction*, but not all *correction* is *reproof*; the difference is mainly in the degree of intensity. If a man is in error through weakness or lack of information, he needs *correction* only. But if he is wrong when he knows better or could have known better, then he deserves to be *reproved*. (See Jude 22, 23.)

Verse 17. *Man of God*. This phrase is used of the evangelist in 1 Timothy 6: 11, and I wish the reader would turn back and see the comments at that place, for they include a reference to our present passage. *Man* is from ANTHROPOS, and the universal meaning as given in Thayer's lexicon is, "A human being, whether male or female." Any human being, therefore, who has given himself to God may truly take the phrase underscored. It is expected that a servant of God will work for Him, and to do so he needs the kind of equipment that is adapted to the work that his Master will approve. The inspired scriptures will provide such an equipment, making him *perfect* which is another word for "complete." With the word of God, a Christian has the complete outfit necessary in his service for the Lord. The rest of the verse is along the line of emphasis, specifying what Paul means by being perfect. *Thoroughly furnished* means completely prepared unto all good works. It is evident, then, that if a man attempts or desires to do something in his religious life for which the scriptures do not furnish the authority and instruction, he is seeking to be active in something that is not a good work.

## 2 Timothy 4

Verse 1. To *charge* means to make an earnest plea to the evangelist; and to do so *before God*, etc., signifies that He is a witness to the charge, and that to Him the preacher will have to give an account. The name of Christ is connected with the charge because He is the one who will have direct handling of the judgment, at which all men will receive the final sentence that will announce their eternal state. The *quick* and the *dead* mean the living and dead when Jesus comes. *At his appearing* tells when the final judgment is to take place. This completely sets aside the notion that Christ is first to appear, and that the judgment will be a thousand years later. *And his kingdom*. Not that the kingdom will then begin, for 1 Corinthians 15: 24-26 shows that Christ is now reigning in his kingdom, but will cease to do so after the judgment. The phrase means that the authority of Christ as head of the kingdom will fully appear, when He is shown executing final judgment on the world.

Verse 2. *Preach the word*. This is consistent with the declarations in the closing verses of the preceding chapter. Since the word is inspired and complete, it is logical that it should be preached. *Be instant* means to be at hand and ready for the work when any opportunity occurs. *In season, out of season*. There are times when the prospect is apparently more favorable than at others, but the true preacher of the word should not wait until he finds it more convenient (for himself) to press the claims of the Gospel. *Reprove* and *rebuke* are virtually the same in effect, and means to disapprove of the wrongs committed by professed disciples of Christ. *Exhort* means to insist on one's doing what he has learned to be his duty, and in order that men may be ready for exhortation, the preacher must first deliver the *doctrine* (teaching) that is applicable in the case. He will need to be *longsuffering* or patient in all this work, because of the conditions to be described next.

Verse 3. Among the things predicted to get worse (chapter 3: 13), was the growing dislike for the teaching of the word, especially that part of it that condemns a sinful life. When the term *sound* is used with reference to the physical body, it means to be in good health. When used of doctrine or teaching, it signifies the kind of in-

struction that will result in good moral and spiritual health. But evil men are not interested in that kind of health, hence they will not *endure* or put up with such teaching. They want the kind that will allow them to feel comfortable in the midst of their corrupt practices. To do so, they seek to obtain men who will give them that kind of teaching. A faithful proclaimer of the word will not try to tickle the *itching ears* of these lustful pretenders, hence they seek for the kind of teachers who are as bad as they—men whose lives are also fashioned after the lusts like those of the hearers with itching ears. This verse might seem clearer if the construction would be arranged as follows: "They will not endure sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, they will heap to themselves teachers who practice their own lusts."

Verse 4. These teachers with lusts like the people who employed them, would naturally be disposed to furnish the kind of speeches that were acceptable. Hence *they* (the lustful teachers) *will turn away their* (the people with itching ears) *ears* from the truth. In place of the truth, they will entertain them with *fables* or fictions.

Verse 5. *Watch thou* is a kindly warning for Timothy to maintain his composure under all circumstances, for many tests of his perseverance were likely to come. Encouraged by the example of Paul, he should be equal to the occasion even when persecutions come. *Do the work of an evangelist*. We may learn two important items of information by this statement. One is that Timothy was an evangelist, which has sometimes been questioned. Paul certainly would not tell anyone to do a work that did not belong to his position in life. The other is that an evangelist has a work to perform that is peculiar to his office. By consulting 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, we will learn that an evangelist is the one to appoint elders and deacons, and in 2 Timothy 5 it is shown that an evangelist is the one to discipline an elder when charges are preferred against him. It is also taught in Titus 1: 5 that an evangelist is to take charge of churches that have not been established, and hold that charge until matters are set in order and elders are appointed to take oversight of the congregation, at which time the evangelist is to go to other fields of labor.

*Make full proof of thy ministry* is rendered "fully carry out thy service" by the Englishman's Greek New Testament.

Verse 6. *For I am now ready to be offered.* The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders this as follows: "For I already am being poured out," and the Greek text justifies the translation. The word for *offered* is defined "poured out" by Thayer, and Paul used it because he knew he was actually to have his blood poured out of his body on the executioner's block. Of course the execution was not actually started, and was not to start at once, for Paul still expected to do some writing (verse 13). But he was a captive in chains, condemned to die for the Gospel's sake, and he regarded his sacrifice as having been started. One item in the Mosaic system consisted of pouring blood out about the altar of sacrifice (Exodus 29: 12; Leviticus 4: 7), and Paul compares the pouring out of his blood, to those sacrifices. In other words, here is one instance where an act (pouring out) is used in both a literal and a spiritual sense, since his death was to be occasioned by his religious devotion to God. *Departure* is from ANALYSIS, which Thayer defines, "An unloosing, a dissolving, departure." The unloosing refers to the separation of the soul from the body, and departure pertains to the flight of the soul to the intermediate region after it leaves the body. *At hand* denotes it is comparatively near only, for the apostle expected still to do some more work for the Lord as the chapter will later show.

Verse 7. A *good fight* is one that is waged on behalf of a good cause and against a bad one. A *course* means one's career or race of life, and *finish* means to complete or make full. Paul's active work was over because of his chains, and in that sense his race was run. But the teaching of the scripture is that Christians must be faithful until death in order to gain the crown (James 1:12; 1 Peter 5: 4; Revelation 2: 10). That is true, but a man can be faithful even when prevented by unavoidable circumstances from further activity in the work. Paul's activities were stopped by the enemy, and in that sense his course was *finished*. *Kept the faith.* The law of God, which is the basis of the faith, will live until it has accomplished its divine purpose, hence it is not left for man to "keep" the faith in the sense of pre-

serving its existence. So the phrase means that Paul had kept himself true to the law of divine faith, always advocating it whenever he had the opportunity.

Verse 8. *Henceforth* means "hereafter" or "from now on." It is equivalent to the preceding thought that the prospect of a crown is held out only to those who complete a life of *righteousness*. The last word denotes that the crown is a "medal of honor" to be bestowed upon a person who has lived a righteous life. *Lord, the righteous judge* is significant, because in earthly contests the judges are sometimes influenced to decide with partiality, while He will decide strictly on the basis of faithfulness. *That day* refers to the day of judgment, and it is often referred to in such indefinite language because of its unequalled importance, for which reason it needs no other specification. *Love his appearing.* The first word is defined by Thayer, "To welcome with desire, long for." If a man has not been living a righteous life, he will dread to see the Lord come. But a faithful servant (Luke 12: 41-46) will be glad to look forward to the coming of Christ (Revelation 22: 20).

Verse 9. Though he was an apostle, Paul had the same craving for companionship that any Christian will have for another. He knew he was not to live much longer (how much longer is not stated), and he wished to have his son (in the Gospel) with him again before he left this world.

Verse 10. According to Colossians 4: 14 and Philemon 24, Demas had been associated with Paul in his travels, and for a while even after the apostle was taken to Rome in chains. But he failed to stand the test when persecution threatened, being more interested in the pleasures of this world than in the cause of Christ. No unfavorable comment is made about the departure of Cresens and Titus, hence we may conclude they left with Paul's consent. Such a conclusion is reasonable since verse 12 expressly says that the apostle sent another disciple away for some purpose (not stated).

Verse 11. *Only Luke is with me* means of the ones who had traveled with Paul, for verse 21 shows that several brethren were still associated with him in his trials and labors for the Lord. *Mark* is the disciple who deserted Paul, recorded in Acts 13: 13; 15: 36-41. But he seems to have

reclaimed himself in Paul's confidence, for he calls for him that he might be of use in the *ministry* or service.

Verse 12. This is referred to and commented upon at verse 10.

Verse 13. A *cloak* is a loose outer garment, especially needed in winter. *Books* means the documents already composed and the *parchments* are writing materials. His calling for all these articles indicates that while death was "at hand," yet he expected to be able to do some more reading and writing, and as a faithful servant (even "unto death"), he determined to "die fighting."

Verse 14. *Alexander the coppersmith*. The last word is given merely to identify the one Paul means, as there were several men with the same name. We have very little information about him except what is given here, that he did the apostle much harm. The last sentence denotes that Paul expects Alexander to receive punishment from God.

Verse 15. Alexander evidently was going about since Paul warns Timothy about him. This verse indicates that the "evil" he was doing against Paul was to oppose his teaching; he was doubtless a Judaizer.

Verse 16. *First answer* means Paul's first defense before Caesar's court. It may be learned by history as well as by Acts 28: 30, that when Paul arrived in Rome from Caesarea, he was turned over to the Roman authorities who placed him in chains, but permitted him to live in a house which he rented. After this two-year period he was released, and traveled out among the churches a short while, then came back to Rome and was again arrested and brought before the court and made his own defense (called his *first answer* in our verse), but was not further punished as yet. (See next verse.) He was still held in chains and was soon to be condemned to die. It was at this *first answer* that all his associates deserted him or failed to stand by him. He was unresentful over it, though, and prayed God not to hold it against them.

Verse 17. The Lord stood by Paul as he faced the Roman court, and for the time being prevented him from being slain. The purpose was that the apostle might round out his work of preaching to the Gentiles of that city, thus making *fully known* the Gospel for which cause he was there in chains.

Christians were sometimes thrown to the lions, literally, to die for their faith. That fact is used figuratively of Nero, who threatened to have Paul executed immediately. But he was given a temporary respite, and in that sense he was *delivered out of the mouth of the lion*.

Verse 18. *Shall deliver me*. Not that he was to be prevented from being slain at last, but that his death would not keep him from enjoying the *heavenly kingdom*, which is the same as the "everlasting kingdom" of 2 Peter 1: 11.

Verse 19. *Prisca* is another form for Priscilla. She and her husband Aquila had been faithful friends of Paul, and he is here "speaking a good word" for them. See chapter 1: 16 for comments on the *household of Onesiphorus*.

Verse 20. Erastus had been with Paul (Acts 19: 22), but later came to Corinth to reside (Romans 16: 23). On his way back to Rome, Paul left Trophimus at Miletum because of his being sick. Not that the apostle was unable to heal him miraculously, but neither Christ nor his disciples were to perform miracles when there was no question of testimony at stake.

Verse 21. *Come before winter*. (See the comments at verse 9.) It might have been an additional reason for this instruction in the fact that sailing was difficult in the winter season. The other persons named were friends and disciples who joined with Paul in sending their greetings to the evangelist.

Verse 22. This verse is Paul's affectionate benediction to his "son in the Gospel."

## Titus 1

Verse 1. Paul mentions his relation to God as *servant* before that of apostle, which is a mark of humbleness. *Faith of God's elect*. God elects or chooses as His own, all men who fully embrace *the faith* or New Testament system of religion. This service of Paul was *according to that faith* which embraced *acknowledging of the truth*. The *truth* meant here is that which is *after godliness* or piety.

Verse 2. The motive for such service as the preceding verse describes, is the hope of eternal life; nothing pertaining to the world. *God cannot lie*. These words are from the Greek term *APSEUDES*, which does not occur in any other place in the New Testament. Thayer and Robinson define it just as it is rendered in the King James ver-

sion. It is to be understood on the basis that God is able to do that which is right only, but is not able to do wrong. *Promised before the world began.* The first recorded promise of eternal life is that made to Abraham (Galatians 3: 16). But that was after man began to live upon the earth, hence the *world* which is from a Greek word that means "age," must mean the Jewish age or Dispensation. Such an explanation clarifies the apparent difficulty as to when the promise was made. It was after man began living on the earth, but *before* the period when the organized "age" (the meaning of *world*) or the Jewish Dispensation began.

Verse 3. The promise of salvation through Christ (the seed of Abraham) was made to the patriarch in prophetic language, but was revealed in its fullness by preachers.

Verse 4. Titus was Paul's son in the same sense as was Timothy (1 Timothy 1: 2), and it was after (or according to) the *common faith*, which means the faith adapted to all people who will accept it. Paul expresses the familiar salutation that has been commented upon sufficiently before this.

Verse 5. Between the first and second imprisonment of Paul, he traveled among the churches in a few places, and Titus was with him a part of the time. When they came to Crete (a large island off the coast of Greece), they found the churches on the island somewhat out of order and without rulers. Paul went on his journey, but left Titus there as evangelist in charge to bring the work to a scriptural establishment. This consisted in whatever was necessary to bring conditions into line, and then *ordain* (or appoint) elders. Note that he was to appoint a plurality of elders and it was to be in every city. The plan of human practice is to have a plurality of churches under one elder, while the scriptural plan is a plurality of elders over one congregation. It was the duty of Titus under the instruction of Paul, to remain in Crete until he had completed this evangelistic work. For more detailed explanation of the work of an evangelist, see the comments at 2 Timothy 4: 5.

Verse 6. In order that Titus might know whom to appoint as elders (also called bishops here and elsewhere), the apostle devotes several paragraphs to describing their qualifications and work. *Blameless, the husband of one*

*wife.* This is fully explained at 1 Timothy 3: 2. *Having faithful children.* This phrase has raised a question among students of the Bible, and two different views have been maintained. One is that it means children who are faithful to the Lord, or who are believers in Him to the extent of having become members of the church. The other is that it means children who are faithful or obedient to their fathers. I shall first give the reader the benefit of information I have in support of the first position, which is as follows. The word *faithful* is from the Greek word ΠΙΣΤΟΣ and Thayer defines it, "One who has become convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and the author of salvation." Robinson defines it, "A believer, Christian." I have consulted four other lexicons, and they define it virtually the same as the two just quoted. I have consulted also five translations that render it "believing." I shall now give the other view, and state that I am not fully convinced that it is required that an elder's children be faithful members of the church, and shall give my reasons for saying so. It is true the lexicons and various translations generally render the word as "believing," but that would still leave unsettled the question whether the child is to be a believer in Christ or in his father; for if he believes in his father, he is likely to be obedient to him. That would show that the father has control over his child, which is really the point that Paul was making. In 1 Timothy 3: 4, 12, where the same point is under consideration with reference to children of elders and deacons, there is no intimation of their religious relation to the Lord, but that the father is to have control of them. Therefore, my conclusion is that "faithful children" in Titus 1: 6 is equivalent to controlled children in 1 Timothy 3: 4, 12, and hence that they are to believe in and be faithful to their father, regardless of whether they are members of the church or not, or even that they are old enough to be members. *Not accused of riot or unruly.* This is significant in view of the foregoing comments. *Riot* is from ΑΣΟΤΙΑ, which Thayer defines, "an abandoned, dissolute, life; profligacy [wastefulness], prodigality [extravagance in expenditure]." *Unruly* is from ΑΝΥΠΟΤΑΚΤΟΣ, which is defined by Thayer, "that cannot be subjected to control, disobedient," etc. The fact that a son is not a member of the church cannot be



blamed upon his father, for a man cannot use his parental authority to bring his children into it. But he does have authority as a father to control his son against the above described conduct.

Verse 7. *Blameless* is from the same word as that in the preceding verse, and takes the same general definition. But it is given a special significance here by calling the bishop (or elder) the *steward* of God. That means one who has charge of the affairs of another, which is true of a bishop, since he has charge of the flock of God. A steward or agent is expected to be faithful in the administration of his employer's property. The qualifications, both affirmative and negative, are next given. Those in the rest of this verse are negative; that is, qualities that he must not have. *Not selfwilled* means he must not be selfish, insisting on having his own way regardless of the rights of others. *Soon angry* denotes one who becomes angered at the slightest provocation. *Not given to wine*. This is explained by the comments at 1 Timothy 3: 3. *No striker*. This also is defined at the passage in Timothy just cited. It can be seen that it means one who does not generally resort to physical assaults whenever he is opposed; that it does not refer to some incidental or isolated act. *Given to filthy lucre* is defined by Thayer to mean, "eager for base gain." It means one who not only covets money, but who is willing to gain it in any kind of way, whether it be right or wrong.

Verse 8. *Lover of hospitality*. It should be known that the elder's home is one in which any worthy person is welcome. *Lover of good men*. The last word is not in the original as a separate term, although it may be included in the phrase. The meaning of the phrase concerns a man who loves that which is good. *Sober* is defined as one who curbs his desires; he is self-controlled. *Just* signifies one who is considerate of the rights of all, in his exercise of rulership over the flock. *Holy* is another word for righteous. If an elder does not live rightly himself, he can have but little influence over others. *Temperate* has virtually the same meaning as *sober*, and it is added for the sake of emphasis.

Verse 9. This verse should be considered as an explanation of the phrase "apt to teach" in 1 Timothy 3: 2, in that it shows *how apt* or able a man is as a teacher. *Holding fast* means

he holds to the *faithful* (truthful) *Word*. The elder is not an inspired man, but he *hath been taught* what is the truth by those who are inspired. *Sound doctrine* literally means wholesome teaching; and when used of spiritual matters, it denotes the kind that will result in spiritual health. When a disordered condition comes or threatens to come into a human body, a treatment must be used that will counteract the threatened disease. Likewise, an elder must have the ability to *exhort* those who are threatening the spiritual health of the body. Then if exhortation does not stop them, he must use a stronger remedy, namely, *convince* them. That word is from ELEGCHO, which Thayer defines, "To convict, refute, confute." Elders are required to be able to convict and expose false teachers, called here *the gainsayers*.

Verse 10. *Unruly and vain talkers* are those who will not submit to the apostolic rules, and who deal in useless conversation for the purpose of misleading unsuspecting disciples. *They of the circumcision* means the Judaizers, who were the most prominent trouble makers in Paul's day.

Verse 11. *Mouths must be stopped*. Neither the evangelist nor an elder can use force literally to close the mouth of a false teacher. But he can use the means stated in verse 9 to expose him, and thus counteract the evil effects of his mouth. *Subvert whole houses* denotes that they sometimes mislead whole families with their false teaching. *Filthy lucre's sake*. By their perverted use of the law of Moses, they sought to please their hearers, in the hope that it would bring them some money as a sort of "tip" from the dupes for their good feeling.

Verse 12. *One of themselves* means one of the natives of the island of Crete. One of their own writers accused the people of that region of being habitual liars, which would account for their disposition to pervert the truth when they had hopes of gain from it. *Evil beasts* is a figure of speech to indicate the low type of character the islanders possessed. *Slow bellies* is rendered "lazy gluttons" by the Englishman's Greek New Testament. If a man's chief interest is his animal appetite, and he is too lazy to obtain wherewith to satisfy it honorably, he would naturally take the unprincipled course that has been described in these verses.

Verse 13. Paul agrees with the Cretan prophet who said the accusing things about his countrymen. Such people do not deserve much compassion, hence the apostle bids Titus rebuke them sharply. *That they may be sound in the faith* states the motive for the sharp rebuke, not that it is certain to have that result.

Verse 14. The mention of Jewish *fables* or myths, confirms the remark at verse 10 about their being Judaizers who were disturbing the brethren in Crete. *Commandments of men* signifies doctrines that have no divine authority behind them. Such teaching cannot be true, hence it will cause all who accept it to *turn from the truth*.

Verse 15. *Unto the pure all things are pure*. This is said because of the agitation being made by the Judaizers. The law of Moses had certain regulations regarding the eating of the flesh of animals. But those rules were not based on any actual impurity of the meat, for "there is nothing unclean of itself" (Romans 14: 14). The uncleanness was ceremonial only and was a part of the law. But that law has been cancelled, so that no reason exists any more for regarding the meats as impure. But these pretenders were impure in life themselves, hence they professed to believe that it was still wrong to eat the meats. If a man is pure in heart, he will see nothing wrong in eating these articles, since the only thing that ever did make it wrong, namely the legislation of the law, has been taken away.

Verse 16. While these Judaizers were busying themselves in disturbing the churches, they professed it was because of their love of God and their knowledge of His law. But, like many other religious frauds, their personal life was a contradiction of the purity of doctrine which they professed. *Abominable* pertains directly to the corrupt practices they were performing, and *disobedient* designates the relation of their practices to the law of God; they were in rebellion against it. *Unto every good work reprobate*. The last word means "useless," denoting that the conduct of the Judaizers had nothing good in it.

## Titus 2

Verse 1. Instead of doing false teaching as the Judaizers were, Titus was to counteract it by speaking that which *becomes* (is befitting to) *sound doctrine*. That means teaching that will

cause spiritual health to all who accept it.

Verse 2. The apostle then specifies what will constitute *sound doctrine*. The items are appropriate for the persons in the various age groups and other places in the walks of life. The *aged* or elderly men were to "act their age" by being *sober* or watchful, *grave* or sober-minded, *temperate* or self-controlled. *Sound in the faith* means to be true to the word of God which is the basis of faith (Romans 10: 17). *In charity* requires them to be interested in the welfare of others. *Patience* means for them to be constant in their devotion to the Lord, enduring whatever it brings without complaining.

Verse 3. *Aged* is from the same Greek word as that for the men in the preceding verse, and signifies that the women are to keep in mind their years of life and behave accordingly. *As becometh holiness* means that a righteous life requires that they realize their responsibility in view of their age. *False accusers* is from the same word as "devil," and when used to describe character it means slanderers. *Given to much wine* is explained at 1 Timothy 3: 3. *Teachers of good things* is general, and they will be specified in the next two verses.

Verse 4. *Teach* is from a Greek word that has a general meaning, and is defined by Thayer, "to make or cause one to come to his senses; to moderate, control, curb, discipline; to hold one to his duty; to admonish, to exhort earnestly." When the young women are *sober* or self-controlled themselves, and then exert such influence upon others of their age class, it will cause them to love their husbands and children. They will show that love by the proper kind of behaviour.

Verse 5. They will be *discreet* or moderate, and *chaste*, which means to be pure in heart and life. *Keepers at home* is from οἰκουρος which Thayer defines, "The (watch or) keeper of a house. Keeping at home and taking care of household affairs, domestic." A woman cannot display the kind of character and conduct as this and the preceding verse describes, if she follows the example of many modern wives, who spend much of their time running round in the neighborhood, or devoting their attention to clubs and other social gatherings. *Good* has virtually the same meaning as *chaste*, except that the apostle adds the specification that they be *obedient to their*

*own husbands.* Ephesians 5: 22-24 teaches that the husband is the head of the wife, hence she is required to be subject to him. *That the word of God be not blasphemed.* The world in general understands that a wife is supposed to be subject to her husband; but if she is otherwise while making a profession of being guided by the Bible, it will reflect unfavorably on that profession. To *blaspheme* means to speak evil, and hence such inconsistent conduct on the part of a married woman will give occasion to speak against the Book she claims to love.

Verse 6. *Sober minded* means having a mind of self-control.

Verse 7. Since Titus was himself a young man, as may be gathered from the fact of his being Paul's "son after the common faith" chapter 1: 4), it was proper that he show an example of righteous living before other young men by practicing good works. *In doctrine showing uncorruptness* denotes that his teaching was to be pure. *Gravity* denotes dignity and seriousness. *Sincerity* is from an original term that means especially a continuous life of pure conduct.

Verse 8. *Sound speech* is that which will have a good effect on those who accept it. *Cannot be condemned.* Such speech may be opposed and misrepresented, but it cannot be shown to be wrong. The opposers will therefore be put to shame when they are unable to say anything (truthfully) against it.

Verse 9. See the comments at 1 Timothy 6: 1 on the subject of servants. *Not answering again* means to refrain from "talking back" to their masters, but to do what they are told without arguing the matter.

Verse 10. *Purloining* means the taking of the property of another in a secret or underhand manner. A slave would have many opportunities for doing that, in connection with the services he has to render with the possessions of his master. *Showing all good fidelity* means for them to be honest and faithful with the goods of their masters as they go about their work. *Adorn* is from a Greek word that means to honor. In its details, it denotes that use of or handling of anything that recognizes order and harmony. If a slave is faithful in his service to his master, at the same time he is professing a belief in the doctrine or teaching of Christ, it will show that a man can be such a be-

liever, and at the same time be under the yoke of servitude. The result will be to make a favorable impression on the mind of the master.

Verse 11. All of the words in this verse are correctly rendered, but the order in which they are arranged is different from the original. In its present form it means that the Gospel has appeared to all men. That is true, which may be seen also at Romans 10: 18 and Colossians 1: 23. But that is not the particular truth the apostle is stressing at this place. The order of words according to the Greek text should read as follows: "For appeared the grace of God which brings salvation for all men." This brings out the important truth that the Gospel is for all men, not for the Jews only as was the law of Moses.

Verse 12. *Teaching us that, etc.* This denotes that something more than the favor of God is involved in the salvation of man, and that he is required to do something in order to obtain this salvation. *Denying* does not mean to question the existence of the things mentioned, but that we must deny them the opportunity of affecting our lives. *Ungodliness and worldly lusts.* There is not much difference between the meaning of these terms. The first is a somewhat stronger word in the original, meaning a life that is wrong because it is vicious and wicked. The second concerns chiefly things that are wrong in that they conform to the world, and hence are interested in this life instead of that which is to come. *To live soberly* means to use judgment and wisdom such as that which is "from above" (James 3: 17). *Righteously* signifies a life that is patterned after the law of righteousness which is the Gospel. *Godly* is so termed because it requires a man to live in the way that will be pleasing to Him.

Verse 13. Christians may have the blessed hope in this life even, but they are *looking for* the fulfillment of it in the future. The glorious appearing of the *great God* and that of *our Saviour* refers to the same person. The Deity (Godhead) is composed of three persons, namely, the Father and Son and Holy Ghost (or Spirit), hence God is a proper term to be applied to either of them.

Verse 14. *Gave himself for us* shows that Christ is the particular one of the Godhead who is meant in the preceding verse, since He is the one who was

given as a sacrifice. To *redeem* means to rescue something from a state of bondage. A condition of *iniquity* or sin was that from which Christ offered himself as a ransom. After being rescued from iniquity, we are purified and are ready to become the Lord's *peculiar* (special possession) *people*. Such a people are expected to have the distinction of being *zealous of good works*.

Verse 15. Titus was to *speak* so as to inform them of their duty. He was then to *exhort* them, which means to insist on doing what one knows to be his duty. If they refuse to perform their duty, the next thing is to rebuke the disobedient ones. *With all authority* means that Titus was fully authorized to speak all these things. To *despise* means to belittle, and Titus was to conduct himself in such a manner that people would look with respect upon him.

### Titus 3

Verses 1, 2. *Put them in mind* means for Titus to remind the brethren in Crete of the following obligations. *Principalities and powers* refers to the units of authority in the civil government in force over the country. *Magistrates* are the particular officers who execute the government referred to in the preceding sentence. This obligation of Christians to the law of the land is taught also in Romans 13: 1-7. *To be ready to every good work*. If the country calls upon Christians to perform some kind of service, they should be ready to serve. All of this is with the proviso expressed at Acts 5: 29. *Speak evil of no man* does not prohibit us from condemning a man who does wrong, but we should not use evil expressions that are not founded upon facts. To be *no brawler* means not to be contentious, or dispute merely for the sake of opposition. *Gentleness* does not mean we need compromise with evil, but in our approach to persons in error, let us use language that is appropriate. *Meekness* is the same about as humility.

Verse 3. The separate items of this verse have been considered in many places. The main point the apostle is making is one of consideration for others. If we think back over the time before we became Christians, we will the better realize what it means to "turn round" and give up the practices that have been followed a great part of our life.

Verse 4. This verse is similar in thought to verse 11. In that place the grace of God is given credit for the offer of salvation to man. In the present passage it is the *kindness and love of God* that appeared in behalf of sinful man.

Verse 5. Man must perform the works of righteousness in order to be saved, but it was not such works that caused God to bring forward the plan. It was because of God's mercy that the offer of salvation was made for poor fallen humanity. *Washing of regeneration* refers to the same act as that in Hebrews 10: 22. *Renewing of the Holy Ghost* refers to the spiritual nourishment that children of God need to sustain their life of service to Him. That nourishment is the *sincere milk of the word* (1 Peter 2: 2). This word was given by men who were inspired by the Holy Ghost (or Spirit).

Verse 6. The pronoun *which* stands for the favor of salvation that is mentioned in the preceding verse and in chapter 2: 11. This salvation was *shed on us* or was brought within our reach by Jesus Christ.

Verse 7. The original word for *justified* has a great many shades of meaning, depending on the connection in which it is used. In this place the definition of Thayer is, "To judge, declare, pronounce, righteous and therefore acceptable." No man can be called just on his personal merit, but by the grace or favor of God, a sinner can be pardoned upon obedience to Christ, and then he will be "pronounced acceptable." After being thus freed from sin, he becomes an heir to eternal life toward which he may hope.

Verse 8. *This is a faithful saying* means it is a truthful one, referring to that in the following words, namely, that believers should follow up their conversion with good works. They will be *profitable* because they will bring much spiritual gain to man.

Verse 9. *Foolish questions* are those which are unprofitable. *Genealogies*. This subject is treated at length by the comments at 1 Timothy 1: 4. *Contentions* means useless arguments conducted merely from a motive of opposition. *Strivings about the law* refers to the disturbances caused by the Judaizers. Titus is told to avoid all these because they are *unprofitable* (bring no gain) and *vain* (or useless).

Verse 10. A *heretic* is a false teacher according to Thayer's lexicon. When

Titus came in contact with such in his work on the island, he was to admonish him to cease his false teaching because it was divisive. He was to be given a second opportunity to cease his heretical teaching, and if he persisted in it, Titus was to *reject* him, which means he was to avoid all association with him.

Verse 11. *Subverted* means to be turned aside from the proper course. Since nothing outside the proper course can be right, it follows that when a man leaves that course he *sinneth* as it is here stated. *Condemned* of himself. Not that he acknowledges his wrong, but is condemned by the things he *himself* is doing.

Verse 12. Chapter 1: 5 states that Titus was "left" in Crete for some extensive work. Hence this instruction for him to meet Paul at Nicapolis (of Macedonia), was for consultation. *Artemas* and *Tychicus* were friends and companions of Paul, whom he was planning to send to Crete, at which time Titus was to come to the apostle as instructed. That particular meeting place was designated because Paul had decided to pass the winter there.

Verse 13. *Zenas* was a *lawyer*, meaning an expert in the law of Moses. He and *Apollos* were to be escorted by Titus to the presence of Paul, and be provided with all things necessary for their transportation.

Verse 14. *Ours* refers to the disciples in Crete, who are commanded to *maintain good works*. This is rendered "profess honest trades" in the margin, which is a correct translation. The reader should see the comments at 1 Thessalonians 4: 11, 12 and 2 Thessalonians 3: 10. The subject is the importance for disciples to work for a living and not be a parasite upon others. A man who is too lazy to work has no right to eat. If he is unable on account of things beyond his control, that makes him a just object for the care of others. But all men are expected to contribute to the maintenance of himself and all who are depending on him lawfully for support.

Verse 15. Paul usually had brethren and friends with him who were interested in the work he was doing, and who also were kindly disposed towards the disciples to whom he wrote his epistles. When the apostle wrote them, it was common for them to join in sending salutations to the brethren thus separated from them. Such expressions indicated the love and in-

terest they had for their fellow disciples. In turn, Paul asked for like greetings for those who were his friends in the island. Grace or favor was wished by the apostle for all the saints in the island. *Amen* means emphasis on the things that have been written.

### Philemon

Verse 1. According to Thayer and Strong, and some commentators, *Philemon* was a resident of Colosse, and was converted to Christianity by Paul. *Timothy* is not mentioned as of any authority, but as an associate of Paul. His name is joined by way of friendly interest in *Philemon* and endorsement of the epistle. Paul calls himself a *prisoner of the Lord* because his imprisonment was caused by his service to Him. *Philemon* is designated *fellow laborer* because he was working for the Lord in the same cause as was the apostle.

Verse 2. *Apphia* is described by Thayer merely as "name of a woman." Some commentators say she was the wife of *Philemon* and that *Archippus* was his son. The suggestion is given by the next phrase, *church in thy house*. In early times the congregations in some places were small, and had their services in the homes of the brethren. Or, the whole congregation may have consisted of the members of one household, if there were as many as two disciples in it (Matthew 18: 20). If *Philemon's* wife and son were disciples, they might well have composed the *church in his house*.

Verse 3. This is a familiar salutation of Paul, which he used in most of his epistles. See the comments on it at 1 Corinthians 1: 3.

Verse 4. The next verse shows what it was for which Paul thanked the Lord. Since the faithfulness of *Philemon* was a help to the apostle, he would consider it as a blessing, and it is stated in James 1: 17 that all good things come from God.

Verse 5. *Love* as used here means a sincere desire to help in the welfare of others in the work of the brethren, and an interest in the progress of the cause of the Lord. *Faith* means one's practice of the ordinances of the Lord's commandments.

Verse 6. The fellowship that *Philemon* had with others concerning the faith, had the effect or was tending to have a good effect on them. It would be manifested by their acknowledgment

of the good example that he set before them.

Verse 7. *Love* in this passage is from a Greek original that means to be interested in the welfare of others. This is borne out by the rest of the verse, for it speaks of the refrething that Philemon had brought to the *saints*, which means the Christians. *Bowels* is used to mean the intellectual part of the saints, from the ancient theory that the affections were seated in the intestines.

Verse 8. Paul was an apostle and had the authority to *enjoin* (or order) Philemon to do what was desired for him to do, had he thought it necessary to use that strong a form of speech.

Verse 9. Because of his love for Philemon, the apostle preferred to use a milder basis for his instruction, namely, his age and also his situation. Respect for age should incline Philemon to heed the request of Paul. Also, his imprisonment would indicate his sincerity which should prompt Philemon to heed the request.

Verse 10. The special request referred to in the preceding verses was concerning Onesimus. He was a slave of Philemon, but not the most satisfactory kind of one. (See next verse.) He had run away from his master, and in some way had come to Rome and fallen into the company of Paul. The apostle taught him his duty to the Lord and induced him to obey it. On this principle he calls him his *son*, in the same way he referred to Timothy as his son (1 Timothy 1: 2).

Verse 11. Servants are commanded to obey their masters (Ephesians 6: 5; Colossians 3: 22). The teaching Paul gave Onesimus, therefore, would include his duty to his master. That would explain why he would be *now profitable* to Philemon, and also to Paul because of being in fellowship with him.

Verse 12. In keeping with his duty as a part of the life of a Christian slave, Onesimus returned to his master at the instruction of Paul. *Thou therefore receive him* is a kindly commendation. *Mine own bowels*. A child is brought forth from the bowels of his parents, and since that part of the human anatomy is used figuratively of mental and spiritual matters, Paul uses it here to signify that Onesimus had been begotten by him in the sense that he had brought him to obey the Gospel.

Verse 13. *I would have retained*. Had Paul felt free to follow his personal desires, he would have kept Onesimus with him as a helper in his struggles for the Gospel under the handicap of imprisonment. Had such a thing been done, Paul would have considered the service the same as if it was coming from Philemon.

Verse 14. Such a service, however, would have been equivalent to taking some benefit from Philemon without his consent, and the apostle would not do anything like that.

Verse 15. This could not mean that Onesimus left his master with the motive of some advantage to him. A slave who had been *unprofitable* would not likely be that much interested in the welfare of the man from whom he was fleeing. The meaning is as if it read, "Perhaps it will turn out to be an advantage to you, after all, for him to leave, for now the way that things have happened, he will be a better servant than ever."

Verse 16. *Not now as a servant*. Onesimus was to continue as a servant to Philemon, but not in that relation only. He was to be regarded as a brother also, which was a spiritual relationship, and far above that of an earthly servant. *Especially to me* is said because Paul was the one who converted him to Christ. Yet because of prior relations, he was to be appreciated by Philemon all the more, both as a servant in *fleshly* or temporal matters, and as a brother in the Lord.

Verse 17. On the ground that Philemon would agree to all these considerations of relationship, Paul asks him to indicate his recognition of the partnership by accepting Onesimus back into his love the same as if he were the apostle.

Verse 18. *If he hath wronged thee*. A slave would have many opportunities for doing wrong to his master by taking some of his possessions (Titus 2: 10). Whether that is meant here, or only the wrong he did by his "unprofitable" service (verse 11), we do not know. But in either case, Paul was offering to make it up to Philemon. *Put that on mine account*. Whatever was the obligation that Onesimus owed his master, Paul agreed to have the debt transferred to his account against Philemon.

Verse 19. This obligation or account of Paul against Philemon was not a material one, but a moral one due to



what he owed the apostle for having led him into the service of salvation. *Albeit I do not say*, etc. This unusual sentence is a sort of explanation, to assure Philemon that what he said was not for the purpose of reminding him of his indebtedness (morally) to the apostle for his conversion to Christ.

Verse 20. *Let me have joy of thee*. This he could do by receiving Onesimus in the way that Paul requested. Such an act of cooperation would constitute a *refreshing* or encouragement for the *bowels* or heart of the apostle.

Verse 21. *Do more than I say*. Not that Philemon would go beyond and add to the inspired word of the apostle, for that would be wrong (Revelation 22: 18). But it means he would even be more thoughtful in good deeds than Paul was requiring.

Verse 22. Paul had hopes of being released and permitted to go out among the churches, and the testimony of history indicates that it was accomplished. In view of such an experience, he asked that Philemon make provision for his lodging.

Verses 23, 24. The names mentioned are of some brethren who were with Paul. They were either in chains also, or were otherwise engaged in defence of the Gospel. As Paul was writing this letter, these brethren joined in friendly greeting to Philemon.

Verse 25. *Grace* is the favor of Christ, which Paul wished to come to Philemon. *With your spirit*. This is significant, for a true Christian is bound to have unpleasant experiences as it pertains to his body (2 Timothy 3: 12); yet he may be comfortable and refreshed in spirit all the while. (See 2 Corinthians 4: 16.)

### Hebrews 1

General remarks. Much has been said on the subject of whether Paul, or some other person, is the author of this book. I shall offer a few statements in view of the importance of the question due to the general agitation. I believe Paul is the author because it has the same logical form of reasoning shown in his other epistles. Also, 2 Peter 3: 15, 16 declares that Paul had written an epistle to the brethren, and his description of it ("some things hard to be understood") indicates one consisting of logical discussion. It is true also that many of the Nicene writers (known as Apostolic Fathers) ascribe the epistle to Paul. These men

lived only a few centuries this side of Christ, and hence had access to evidences that were well founded. Furthermore, there is no negative reason for ascribing it to any other writer, for the whole epistle contains nothing that differs in a single feature from the manner of Paul's language or reasoning.

Verse 1. The principal subject of this book is the law of Christ over that of Moses and the prophets. The revelation of God's will was made known through Christ in the place of all other means in former times. The most outstanding disturbance of the first century of the Gospel Dispensation was caused by Judaizers. That means Jews or any others who insisted that Christians should conform to the Mosaic system in connection with their profession of faith in Christ. This book was written to show the errors in such a teaching. *Sundry times and in divers manners* refers to the many instances and various plans under which God used to give his revelations of truth to the prophets, to be given on by them to the heads of the units of His people.

Verse 2. *Last days* means the closing days of the Jewish Dispensation, since that was when Jesus lived in his personal ministry. The Son gave the words of the Father to the apostles (John 17: 8) and they to us, and that is the way in which we of this age have been spoken to of God. *Appointed heir of all things*. Heir is used in the sense of possessor (John 17: 10) because God turned all things pertaining to the new dispensation over to Him (Matthew 28: 18). *By whom also he made the worlds*. This refers to the cooperation which Jesus showed in all of God's works. See the plural "us" in Genesis 1: 26; 3: 22; also read John 1: 3.

Verse 3. Thayer defines *brightness* by "reflected brightness," meaning that when Jesus was on earth he reflected the glory of his Father. *Express image* is from CHARAKTER which Thayer defines at this place, "A mark or figure burned in or stamped on, an impression; the exact expression (the image) of any person or thing, marked likeness, precise reproduction in every respect." God is not composed of substance as that word is commonly used, hence the word *person* as in the King James Version is a good translation. It means that when Christ was on earth, he had the form or image

of his Father. That is one reason why He said, "he that hath seen me hath seen the father" (John 14: 9). All of this agrees with the words of God that the man was to be created in "our" (God's and Christ's) image (Genesis 1: 26). *Upholding all things by the word of his power.* All power (or authority) being given to Christ (Matthew 28: 18), the arrangement of all things pertaining to the new system of salvation was disposed of according to His will and direction. *By himself purged our sins.* This took place when He died on the cross, thereby making the supreme sacrifice that was sufficient to purge all men from their sins who would accept it. By the death on the cross, the plan was made completely efficient, which is why He said "it is finished" (John 19: 30). By coming alive from the grave, Jesus validated the purchase price of man's salvation, and then He was ready to return to his Father. He did so and was seated at the right hand of the throne of God, having been welcomed by the angelic hosts in the city of everlasting glory. (See the wonderful reception given Christ in Psalms 24: 7-10.)

Verse 4. *Better* does not apply to the personal character, for the angels who are living in heaven are perfect in that respect. Thayer defines the original word, "It is more advantageous." The meaning of the phrase is that Jesus was given a greater advantage in the great plan of God than the angels. The word *excellent* is to be understood also in the sense of advantage. *By inheritance* means that Jesus received this mentioned advantage through his relationship with God. It was not merely given to him as a man might see fit to give something to a stranger, but this was his by right of being the Son of God; he inherited it. While the favors or honors that the angels enjoy were given to them by the Creator of all things.

Verse 5. The *more excellent name* mentioned in the preceding verse is that of Son, as we may observe by the argument of this verse. God never said *Thou art my Son* to a single one of the angels, as he did to Jesus. *This day have I begotten thee* occurred when Mary conceived of God by the services of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1: 27-38). The angels were not brought into being by any personal relations between God and another being as was Jesus, but was created directly by

the power of God. The rest of this verse restates the same relationship already mentioned.

Verse 6. When Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, God directed all the angels to *worship him*. That word in the Greek New Testament comes from several different words, and has a variety of meanings, depending on the connection in which it is used. In the present passage it means to "do homage" or manifest great respect for one. There are myriads of angels, and all of them were told to render homage to the babe in Bethlehem. The argument the apostle is making is that if such great beings as the angels were commanded to acknowledge the superiority of the babe that was laid in a manger, He certainly is to be ascribed a great giver of law. (If angels worshipped the humble babe thus posed in the city of David, common mortals like us should regard it an honor to be permitted the act of worshipping him today, when He is sitting at his Father's right hand, reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords.)

Verse 7. But even this contrast with angels would not mean so much, unless the angels themselves were important beings. Accordingly, Paul says God makes his angels ministering spirits, thus being very important personages in the great scheme of grace.

Verse 8. The superiority of Christ over all other beings (except his Father) is still the main subject. *Thy throne O God*. Jesus is called God because that is the family name of the Godhead. He is called God in Acts 20: 28, where his blood is mentioned as the purchasing price of the church. The throne of Christ is declared by his Father to be *for ever and ever* because He is to reign to the end of the age (1 Corinthians 15: 24-26). A scepter is a rod or instrument that a ruler holds that is a token of his authority. The scepter connected with the kingdom of Christ is a righteous one, because it requires the citizens of the kingdom to live a life of righteousness only.

Verse 9. *Loved righteousness and hated iniquity*. This phrase expresses two completely opposite terms. *Hated* is from a Greek word that sometimes has a milder meaning than it does here. In the present passage it is defined by Thayer, "To hate, pursue with hatred, detest." Because Christ had these qualities, He was given the great honor that the verse states. The speci-

fication, *God, even thy God*, is made because the name "God" is the family name of the Deity, and Christ had that name by virtue of his being a member of the family. But in the work assigned to Him as head of the kingdom, He was to be a king and the Father was to be God over him (1 Corinthians 11: 3). In old times it was customary to anoint kings with oil at their coronation. Christ was figuratively anointed with the *oil of gladness* or exultation. *Above thy fellows* means that Christ was exalted higher than any other ruler that had ever been on earth.

Verse 10. This and the following two verses are quoted from Psalms 102: 24-27. David was the famous ancestor of Christ, yet he recognizes him as his Lord (Matthew 22: 43-45). The work of creation is ascribed to Christ because he was associated with his Father in that work. It is so taught in John 1: 1-3, and it is indicated likewise by the plural pronoun "us" in Genesis 1: 26; 3: 22.

Verse 11. The main subject of this epistle is the superiority of Christ over all other persons or things (except his Father). The works of creation, in the making of which He had a part, will cease to be even though He will continue. *They* means the things of creation mentioned in the preceding verse. *Wax old as doth a garment* is an illustration drawn from a garment that has reached the end of its usefulness. When a garment gets into that condition, it is discarded and treated as the next verse states.

Verse 12. A *vesture* is a covering piece, to be folded up or discarded when no longer useful. *Changed* is from ALLASSO which Thayer defines, "To exchange one thing for another." This is said with reference to the earth and the other parts of the material universe related to it. They are finally to be discarded and dissolved, and other things will be used in their place. (See 2 Peter 3: 10-13; Revelation 21: 1.) *Thou art the same*. Not that Christ will never change his position in the great plan of God, for He will cease to be the king after the judgment day (1 Corinthians 15: 24-27). But He will never cease to be (as will the material universe), and in that sense His years *shall not fail*.

Verse 13. The second part of this verse is a quotation from Psalms 110: 1, in which David states something

that God said of Christ. The point that Paul is making is that since nothing like this was ever said to any one of the angels, Christ is to be regarded as superior to them. Making His enemies his footstool is equivalent to subjecting all things to him, which is the thing predicted in 1 Corinthians 15: 25, 26.

Verse 14. Unless the angels also are important beings, there would not be much significance in being made superior to them. Paul recognizes this point by the statement made here in question form. Angels are among the instruments or agencies which God uses, in his treatment of and care for His own. (Read the following passages. Genesis 24: 7; Daniel 6: 22; Matthew 2: 13; Acts 12: 11; 27: 23.)

## Hebrews 2

Verse 1. *Therefore* means in view of the things set forth in the preceding chapter, the following conclusions should be observed. *More earnest heed* signifies that we should be all the more concerned about it, since we have heard our duty taught by the Son of God and his spokesmen. *Slip* is from PARARREO, which Thayer defines, "To flow past, to glide by; lest we be carried past, pass by." He then explains his definition to mean, "Lest the salvation which the things heard show us how to obtain slip away from us." Thayer also quotes from Greek literature to show the word to mean, "A thing escapes me, slips away from my mind." Even if Christians do not deliberately discard the sayings of Christ, they may forget about them unless they give earnest heed to them.

Verse 2. *Spoken by angels*. There were times when God delivered some special messages to individuals through the services of angels (Genesis 16: 9; 19: 17, and others). But the main thing Paul has in mind is the use God made of the angels in delivering the Mosaic law to the people (Acts 7: 53; Galatians 3: 19). *Was stedfast* means it was fairly established on the authority of Christ. *Transgression* denotes a going over and beyond an established law; not only the doing what it expressly says must not be done, but also the doing of what it does not give any authority to do. *Disobedience* means the simple failure to do what the law requires, regardless of the cause or motive for such failure. *Recompence of reward* is all from one Greek word that means the treatment

one receives on account of his conduct. *Just* signifies that what was done to those who transgressed or disobeyed the law of Moses, given through the services of angels, was proper and what they deserved.

Verse 3. *How shall we escape our just fate? If we neglect* is fully as dangerous as to be guilty of active wrongdoing. *So great salvation* is said because of the greatness of the means by which it was made known to us, which means will now be described. *Began to be spoken by the Lord.* Jesus spent more than three years in the personal work of preparing the foundation or fundamentals of His kingdom among men. *Was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.* This refers to the apostles who were chosen by Christ to be with him all of the time between His baptism and ascension (Acts 1: 21, 22). The apostles had first-hand information from Christ when he was on earth, and they afterward received "all truth" pertaining to the Gospel as the plan of Christ for salvation (John 16: 13). This word was *confirmed* by the miracles which they and their converts were enabled to perform (Mark 16: 20).

Verse 4. These miracles are to be attributed to God also, because He bestowed the Holy Ghost (or Spirit) on the apostles in answer to the prayer of Christ (John 14: 16). *Gifts according to his own will.* The miraculous gifts which the disciples were enabled to perform in the early years of the church were regulated by the Lord in the best way for the good of the work of salvation (1 Corinthians 12: 7).

Verse 5. Paul is still considering the superiority of Christ over the angels, and of His law over that which was "spoken by angels." Those beings were inferior even to all men that they were not to have dominion over the earth at the time of creation, while it was given to man. (See Genesis 1: 26-28.) The *world* means the inhabited part of the universe, and *to come* is said because when the dominion was given to man, the population of the earth was still in the future.

Verse 6. *One in a certain place* means David in Psalms 8: 4-6. *Testified* is a strong word in the original, and denotes a solemn and earnest declaration, as if the speaker felt surprise and admiration over something. *What is man* is not meant to lower the importance of man, except as a contrast

with so great a Being as the creator of all things. That God would be mindful of such a creature to the extent of the facts referred to, caused David to express himself as it is in this passage. *Son of man* is virtually the same as the simple term *man* above, except that it indicates a being that is reproduced by another like himself, and hence that he is inferior to his Creator. *Visitest* is from *EPISKEPTOMAI* which Thayer defines, "To look upon in order to help or to benefit, equivalent to look after, have a care for, provide for."

Verse 7. *Little lower than the angels* This same thing is said of Jesus in verse 9, and the sense in which it is said is explained, namely, *for the suffering of death.* Hence we understand that this inferiority of man to the angels in the present verse refers to the nature of his body, that it is possible for him to die which the angels cannot do (Luke 20: 36). Notwithstanding this humble status of man, God did crown him with the glory and honor of being placed over the works of His hands.

Verse 8. *Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.* This is said in reference to what is declared in Genesis 1: 26-28. From here on the apostle extends his remarks to include Jesus, which is not considered in the original passage in the Psalms. This is not the only instance where a New Testament writer makes a second or extended use of an Old Testament passage. Hosea 11: 1 is said regarding the departure of ancient Israel from Egypt, but Matthew 2: 14, 15 quotes it and applies it to Christ. Likewise Matthew 1: 23 cites Isaiah 7: 14 and applies it to Christ, yet the passage in Isaiah first referred to an infant born to the prophet and his young wife. *See not yet all things put under him* is said of Jesus, and the next two verses will indicate what it is that is not yet *put under* or been conquered by Jesus, and what he must first suffer before His final victory over all except his Father.

Verse 9. Jesus was made lower than the angels in regard to his body only, as explained in verse 7; it is further explained in the present verse. In order to be able to taste death for every man, He must himself be able to die, which required such a body. It was by the grace or favor of God for mankind, that Jesus was enabled to die (and live again) for humanity.

It was a *glory and honor* for Jesus to be crowned with such an exalted privilege as that of dying for the salvation of man.

Verse 10. The pronoun *him* refers to God, and it *became him* or was befitting that He should do the things mentioned in the verse. *Whom* also is a pronoun standing for God, because all things were originally for and by Him. He planned to bring many (as many as would) persons unto the glory of spiritual service in this life, and eternal glory in the life to come. For such a grand accomplishment it was necessary to have a captain who could lead them in the manner. Such a captain was to be Jesus, and he was made *perfect* (completely qualified) by suffering. Such an experience was all that Jesus lacked before he came to the earth, and hence He was given a fleshly body that was capable of suffering and death.

Verse 11. This verse and on through the chapter, carries the main subject of the oneness and fellowship that was designed to exist between Jesus and those whom he planned to save. To be *sanctified* means to be devoted to the service of God. Such a state of devotion is accomplished through Jesus who is *he that sanctifieth*. They are *all of one* in that both Jesus and his disciples are united in reverence for God who makes all good things possible that exist. In this sense they are all brethren and Jesus is not ashamed in the happy relationship.

Verse 12. Paul verifies his statement of the preceding verse by a quotation from the Psalms 22: 22, which is a part of a chapter composed of predictions about Christ. *In the midst of the church*. In Matthew 18: 20 Jesus promises to be present in every scriptural assembly, and in such a meeting He will be joining in the praises.

Verse 13. This verse is a quotation from some Old Testament sayings, parts of them from David, pertaining to the close fellowship between the Lord and his disciples.

Verse 14. The fellowship is continued in this verse. The motive for sharing in a nature of flesh and blood is the same as indicated in verse 9. *Destroy* is used in the sense of counteract, for the devil will never be literally destroyed. But he had the *power* of causing death to come upon mankind, and Jesus died and rose

again in order to bring all men to life again.

Verse 15. *Bondage* is from DOULEIA which is literally defined by Thayer as follows: "Slavery, bondage, the condition of a slave." He then explains it to mean, "The slavish sense of fear." With no prospect of living again, mankind would have a feeling of dread for death that would be like the terror caused by a harsh master over his slaves. Such a fear of death would indeed be a cruel bondage, but the resurrection of Christ dispelled that fear in the minds of all who believe in Him.

Verse 16. *Nature* is not in the original text because angels are not natural beings. The thought is that Jesus did not come into the world with a body like those of the angels, for then He could not have died (Luke 20: 36). He came instead as a fleshly descendant of Abraham.

Verse 17. It was necessary for Jesus to be like his brethren with regard to His body, in order to have a sympathetic interest in their trials and other tests. Being so formed, He could have a feeling of mercy toward them in their transgressions. One meaning of *faithful* is to be "worthy of trust; that can be relied on." Christ became such a high priest by partaking of the nature of fleshly man, while not surrendering His divine character and likeness to God. This qualified him to make *reconciliation* (satisfaction with God) for the sins of the people.

Verse 18. Jesus was clothed with the flesh and was actually tempted (yet never yielded; chapter 4: 15) as we are. This made Him able to *succour* (support) others who were taken in their sins, or who are in danger of being so taken.

### Hebrews 3

Verse 1. Let the reader keep constantly in mind the leading thought in this book, namely, the superiority of the system of Christ over that of Moses. *Holy brethren*. Not that worshipers under Moses were not holy, for they were required to be so (Leviticus 11: 44, 45). But they did not become brethren by their holiness; they were born into that relationship regardless of their knowledge of God. (See 1 Samuel 3: 7.) To be brethren of Christ requires a life of righteousness (Matthew 12: 50), hence Paul calls these people by the term itali-

cized. *Heavenly calling* is used mainly as a mark of superiority for the service under Christ over the old one. The word *apostle* means one who is sent on a mission with authority to speak and act. Jesus was sent from Heaven to earth to carry out a mission of salvation. After shedding His blood in a supreme sacrifice, Jesus was qualified to reenter the court of eternal glory, there to act as the High Priest for the Christians on the merits of His shed blood, even as the high priests in the Mosaic system entered the second court of the tabernacle and temple with the blood of animals.

Verse 2. *Who was faithful . . . as also Moses.* All of the good points about Moses were equalled and some of them were excelled by Christ. They were equal as to being faithful over their own houses or religious institutions.

Verse 3. *This man* means Christ, and a point in which he excelled Moses is stated, namely, that He was the builder of his own house (the church). The house over which Moses presided was the Jewish nation of which he was not the originator.

Verse 4. The word *man* is not in the original and *some* is an indefinite pronoun. The idea is that as a rule, each house has its own particular builder whose activities are limited to the one house. On the other hand, God is the Master builder whose architectural powers include everything in the universe.

Verse 5. Moses did not build the house (Jewish nation), but he was given the honor of being a servant over it. Since he was a faithful servant, his behaviour and teaching became a *testimony* or background for the *things which were to be spoken afterward*, meaning the ordinances under Christ. (See Romans 15: 4.)

Verse 6. Christ was even more than a faithful servant; he was a son, and was given the honor of presiding over His own house (the church), which his Father gave to him. *Whose house are we* refers to Paul and all others who are faithful. The faithfulness consists in maintaining our *confidence* or trust in Christ, which causes us to rejoice in the hope that such a divine house contains. It is necessary that our conduct in these matters be continued *unto the end* (of life).

Verse 7. Paul now makes a quotation from Psalms 95: 7-11, but strengthens it with the declaration

that it is the Holy Ghost (or Spirit) that says it. That means that David was inspired to make the statement. *Hear his voice* means to hear God who speaks to us through his Son (chapter 1: 1).

Verse 8. *Harden not your hearts* is a warning not to set their minds against the teaching of Christ. *As in the provocation* refers to the disobedience of ancient Israel by which they provoked God into punishing them. Paul specifies the circumstance to which he refers by mention of the days they were going through the wilderness.

Verse 9. The apostle gives further explanation of his preceding warning by the words of this verse. *Your fathers* means the first heads of the Jewish nation. *Tempted* and *proved* occurred when the disobedience of the Israelites put the patience of God to a test. Such conduct on their part was without cause, for they had abundance of evidence that He was able to care for them under all conditions, and also that He would punish them for their rebellion. All of this was manifested to them during the *forty years* in the wilderness.

Verse 10. To be *grieved* means God was "wroth or displeased with" them according to Thayer's lexicon. *That generation* has reference to the heads of the nation who were leaders in the rebellious actions. Their misconduct was due to a heart or mind filled with error. As a result of such an attitude toward God, they failed to become acquainted with *His ways* or the ways the Lord wished the people to follow.

Verse 11. God *swore* or made a solemn decision against the disobedient people. This was caused by His wrath or *grief* as mentioned in verse 10. The decision was that they should not be permitted to *enter into my rest*. This rest refers to their settlement in the promised land, which the Lord had designed should come to his people after the weariness of the wandering. God calls it *his rest* because he designed it to be an antitype of the rest on the seventh day from His works of creation.

Verse 12. *Take heed* is the same warning made in verse 8, for these Christians not to make the same mistake their Jewish forefathers made in the wilderness. *Unbelief* is shown to cause man to have an *evil heart*. Such a heart will cause a man to *depart from the living God*. This is the same



warning Paul gave in his epistle to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 10: 1-11). We should profit by the mistakes of others and thus avoid a like falling from the favor of the Lord. The record of these things is placed in the Old Testament for our benefit (Romans 15: 4).

Verse 13. To *exhort* means to insist on doing what we know to be our duty. These brethren knew it was their duty to listen to the teaching given by Christ, for they just had the instruction in this epistle. They were told to do the exhorting *daily* which would require frequent contact with each other. Such an intimacy was expected of the people of Christ, and it was even predicted that it would be so. In Malachi 3: 16 we may read, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often to each other." *While it is called to day* is equivalent to saying, "While the days are going by." This teaching of Paul is not very favorable to the notion of half-hearted disciples who insist that Christians have no need to assemble except on Lord's Day to "partake of the communion." *Hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* The Lord knew that frequent contact with each other was necessary to prevent disciples being deceived by sin.

Verse 14. This verse is virtually the same as verse 6. To be a partaker of Christ is to have part in the good things He has in store for his faithful disciples.

Verse 15. *While it is said* signifies that the admonition will not always be given, hence while it is *to day* is the time to heed the admonition given by the apostle.

Verse 16. Again the apostle wishes his readers to profit by the mistakes of their forefathers. *For some* indicates that Paul has reference to a certain part of the Jewish people in the wilderness. We may often hear some such a remark as the following: "Of the vast congregation that left Egypt only two ever reached the promised land." This will be said in spite of the positive statement that the failure to go through did not happen to *all that came out of Egypt by Moses*. This kind of statement would indicate a greater number of exceptions than only two.

Verse 17. This verse explains that the forgoing sad fate pertained only to the sinners—those able to be responsible for their actions. Those were the ones only *whose carcasses fell in*

*the wilderness*. The identity of the class that fell is made still more definite in Numbers 14: 22-31. By considering these several verses it may be seen that only the men of war are considered when just two were to be permitted to enter the land of promise. We have no definite information as to how many women and children made the entire journey from Egypt to Canaan.

Verse 18. The ones who were to be unable to enter the land of promise are again mentioned under the general description of *them that believed not*.

Verse 19. All of the shortcomings the Israelites committed in the wilderness are charged up against *unbelief*. This is significant and teaches the fundamental truth that whenever professed disciples fail to do their duty, it may be laid to their lack of faith.

#### Hebrews 4

Verse 1. The word *fear* in this verse means anxiety or extreme caution, not to make the same mistake the Israelites made. There is a promise made to the disciples of Christ, to be considered a few verses below, and they might *come short* or miss it.

Verse 2. The simple meaning of *gospel* is "good news," hence any announcement of good news or promises may rightly be termed gospel. The Israelites had good information that they were to be given a land of rest from their wanderings. The disciples of Christ are given the promise of a rest from their worldly cares after this life is over, provided they are faithful to the end. The promise did not profit the Israelites under consideration because they did not believe it. (See chapter 3: 18, 19.)

Verse 3. *We which have believed* are the only ones who are promised the privilege of entering into rest. *As I have sworn*, etc., means God deals with all people on the same principle. That is that He declared to ancient Israel that their unbelief would keep them out of the promised land. *Although the works were finished*. A rest period implies a preceding one of work, and that took place in the beginning of creation. Hence the rest after the labor was established, which was to serve as a type of the next rest; the one in Canaan after the wandering in the wilderness.

Verse 4. The *certain place* where this is spoken is Genesis 2: 2, 3, and

that is where the Lord set the pattern of rest after labor that was to be a foreshadowing of another rest far into the future.

Verse 5. But the ones whom God planned to enjoy that second rest made themselves unworthy of it, hence He swore that they should not enter into it.

Verse 6. *Remaineth that some must enter therein.* God is sure to "have His own way" at last, even though certain ones may be rebellious and thus lose the benefits that He intended for them. Even if unbelief cuts off the ones first intended to have been favored, the Lord will find another outlet for the divine mercy.

Verse 7. *Limiteth* is from a Greek word that means "to determine, appoint" according to Thayer. *Saying in David* means it is said in the writings of David, namely, in Psalms 95: 7, 8. The thought of this verse is that God "determined" to have another rest and caused David to write about it, and to exhort the ones living before it not to make the mistake the former ones did.

Verse 8. The Greek word for Jesus is also defined "Joshua" in the lexicon, and should be so translated in this verse. Joshua led the few faithful ones across the Jordan into the Canaan rest, but God had already determined upon another rest, seeing so many of the candidates for the rest in Canaan had proved unworthy. In justice to the faithful ones at that time, they were permitted to be led by Joshua into the land of Canaan, but that circumstance was not to be regarded as the final arrangement of the Lord for a better rest. That is why our verse states that Jesus (Joshua) did not *give them rest*, meaning he did not give them the third and final rest. This truth is further indicated by the Lord's statement afterwards that there was to be *another day*.

Verse 9. This verse is the climax of the reasoning in the preceding verses. *There remaineth* signifies that the final rest is still in the future, and that is the one which Christians are warned not to miss on account of unbelief. It may be well to observe that three rests have been discussed by Paul, and he shows that God speaks of them as "my rest." That is because He originated them and determined the conditions affecting them. Briefly stated, the three rests are the seventh day after the creation, the national

rest in Canaan, and the rest in Heaven after the judgement.

Verse 10. This is a comment on the relation of the rest to work. The mere mention of *rest* implies a preceding period of *work* to be followed by the rest.

Verse 11. Verse 9 states the grand conclusion upon the line of reasoning the apostle has been giving. The present verse states the exhortation that would logically be given upon such a conclusive background. Since the term *rest* implies a preceding one of *labor*, the apostle makes his exhortation upon that basis. Disciples who are not willing to labor for the Lord, should not expect to share in His rest. If they at last "come short of it," the cause will be attributed to their disobedience or *unbelief*.

Verse 12. The original Greek word for *quick* is defined in the lexicon as "alive" and that for *powerful* is "active." The meaning of the clause is that the word of God is alive and active. When it is absorbed as spiritual food its effect should be to make one a living and active servant of the Lord. A *twoedged* sword is extra sharp because such instruments are made of the best material. Likewise the word of God is composed of the best material, namely, the wisdom of divine inspiration. It would not indicate any unusual keenness for a knife to sever between things that do not resemble, or that are not closely adhering to each other. The ability of the "sword of the Spirit" to distinguish between the *soul and spirit* of man is mentioned as a proof of its keenness. This indicates that there is not much difference between them, and yet that some difference exists. This subject is explained in the comments at 1 Thessalonians 5: 23. *Joints and marrow* are other parts of the human system that pertain to the flesh, and are used figuratively for the same purpose as the preceding illustration, showing the sharpness of the divine instrument. *Discerner* is from KRITIKOS which means a measuring rule or standard, by which things are measured and judged. The statement means that the word of God is the standard by which all our thoughts and intents are to be regulated. It is sometimes insisted that Christians may think whatever they please as long as they keep it to themselves. This verse condemns such a notion, and it is contradicted also by Philipians

4: 8, 9 which tells Christians the subjects on which they have a right to think.

Verse 13. The foregoing verse and remarks have special reference to the Word of God as an inspired volume. But if God can produce a book that has such qualities, then He certainly has a mind that is likewise able. Everything that we think (or do) is seen by the eyes of the Infinite One, because his "eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15: 3).

Verse 14. Jesus is a *great high priest* because he is the Son of God. Another item of His greatness is his entrance into *the heavens* or the place where God is, whereas the high priests of the Mosaic system entered into the buildings on earth, which were only the figures or types of the ones above. Paul uses this truth as a basis for our holding *fast* or firm to our profession of faith; not going back to Moses.

Verse 15. In taking on a body with the same nature as ours, Jesus was able to have the same experiences as we. *Touched with the feeling* means to sympathize with our infirmities. Whatever would be a temptation to us would be likewise one to Him, and he came in contact with all kinds of temptations which are on the earth, yet never yielded once to them.

Verse 16. *Come boldly* denotes a feeling of confidence that we may have on account of such a sympathetic Intercessor. The Israelites came near the tabernacle or temple, relying on their high priest to officiate on their behalf, by making intercession for them before the mercyseat in the most holy place, which was a type of the *throne of grace*. Accordingly we as spiritual Israel may approach by faith unto this throne where Jesus is acting as our High Priest. Our prayers through Him will reach the ears of God, calling for *grace* or favor to help us in the *time of need* while in this world of temptation.

### Hebrews 5

Verse 1. The superiority of the system of Christ over that of Moses continues to be the subject of this book. The discussion is especially formed around the priesthoods, making comparison to show wherein they are alike as well as where they differ. This and a number of verses following will deal (generally) with many of the points in which they are similar.

The high priests of the Mosaic system were men—human beings—who were *ordained* (appointed) to act on behalf of the nation's relation to the things of God. These priests acted in these things by offering the *gifts* and *sacrifices* for their sins. The two words are much alike in many respects. The first means the offerings that were made voluntarily, consisting of money or fruits that could be used for the living of the priests or the maintenance of the temple. The second has reference to animals that were to become victims on the altar; the blood of some of these was taken by the high priest into the most holy place.

Verse 2. The *ignorant* means those less informed than the priests who were better acquainted with the matters of the service. (See Leviticus 10: 8-11; Deuteronomy 17: 8-13; John 11: 49-52.) Out of the way denotes those who err in their ways on account of their lack of knowledge. *Can have compassion* means the same as "being touched" as was explained by the comments on chapter 4: 15. *Compassed with infirmity* means those priests had the same fleshly tendencies as others of the nation.

Verse 3. This can apply to the high priests under the old law only, since Jesus had no sins to be atoned for.

Verse 4. The apostle again takes up the points in which the high priests of both systems were similar. Numbers 16 and 18 will clearly show that Aaron did not seek the office of high priest, but that he was called into that service by the Lord.

Verse 5. Thou art my Son, etc., was not what made Jesus the High Priest of the Christian Dispensation. It is quoted as an identification of the One who did call Christ into that office. David is the one who wrote the statement by inspiration, and it was written many centuries before Christ was born.

Verse 6. This verse cites another passage in David's writings (Psalms 110: 4) that predicts the priesthood of Jesus, even specifying one of the particulars in which He was to be superior to the Levitical priests (which is another of the points of difference referred to above); being like Melchisedek in that it was not to be changeable as were the Levitical priests. Having been determined upon and predicted of God long before he was born, Jesus could not be accused of usurping the office.

Verse 7. *Days of his flesh* means while Jesus lived on the earth before his crucifixion. He often prayed to his Father, but we are not always told what was the subject of the prayers. The one in the garden (Luke 22: 41-44) is an instance of *supplications with strong crying and tears*. Our present verse indicates one subject of His prayers was to be saved from death. This could not mean that when He prayed in the garden he was asking God to shield him from death on the cross. Peter was rebuked for trying to shield his Master from death (Matthew 26: 51-54; John: 18 10, 11). But the prayer of our verse received a favorable answer, for it says He *was heard*. *Save* is from the Greek word *sozo* which Thayer defines. "To bring safe forth from." Jesus was saved from death in the sense that He was brought "safe forth from" the grave, hence the conclusion is established that He prayed for that favor from his Father, intensifying the prayers with the *supplications and tears*.

Verse 8. *Though he were a Son*, Jesus was not excused from undergoing the program his Father planned for him. Jesus learned by practical experience what it means to obey his Father, when the trials of His life led up to his suffering and crucifixion.

Verse 9. The word *perfect* means complete and fully qualified or equipped. The experience of suffering is what gave Jesus this completion. *Author* is from a Greek word that primarily means "cause." Jesus suffered many trials and finally went to His death on the cross. This qualified Him to cause a plan of eternal salvation to be effected for mankind. *Eternal* is from *AIONIOS*, which Thayer defines at this passage, "Without end, never to cease, everlasting." The salvation offered by Christ will go on endlessly after the world ceases to be. However, the important condition on which men may obtain this salvation is that they obey Him.

Verse 10. Melchisedec had no successor in his priesthood, neither will Jesus have any, for He is now and will continue to be High Priest.

Verse 11. *Of whom* has direct reference to Melchisedec because he was the last person named. But the apostle concluded his readers were not ready for the fine points in the comparison between this man and Christ. He drops that line of argument for the

present, and will take it up again (in chapter 7) after giving them other instructions that may prepare their minds for the further study of types. *Hard to be uttered* means "difficult of explanation" according to Thayer's lexicon. *Dull of hearing* denotes a mind that is slow in apprehending what is said.

Verse 12. These disciples had been in the church long enough *time* to have become teachers, but were still in need of being taught by others. There is no criticism to make merely because someone needs to be taught—all people need that. The fault is in being so indifferent as not to advance beyond the "kindergarten grade." The word first means "beginning," and *principles* denotes "steps or elements." The phrase means the beginning steps of the oracles of God. These steps include the types revealed in the Old Testament, that pointed forward to the institution of Christ. The system of the Levitical priesthood and that of Melchisedec were steps or elements that looked forward to Christ. Being unable to grasp the comparisons, Paul described them as being like babes who can partake of milk only.

Verse 13. *Unskilful* is defined "inexperienced" by Thayer's lexicon. This does not mean that the lack of experience is due to their babyhood, but it is the other way around. They were still babes because they had not launched out after further activities or experiences, such as a normal babe will do.

Verse 14. The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders *strong meat* as "solid food." *Of full age* means those who are adults instead of babes. *By reason of use* denotes the experience a Christian has in practicing the things taught in the "oracles of God." *Senses* is defined "Faculty of the mind" by Thayer, and he explains it further, "For perceiving, understanding, judging." The Bible is like an appliance that has been obtained for the home; it must be used to be understood and appreciated. But in order to make the proper use of it the owner must observe "instructions" that are given by one who furnished him the appliance. Likewise the Lord has provided instructions in the "oracles" for the proper use of the items making up the system of Christian living. By following these instructions the disciples will learn to make correct distinctions between the various situ-

ations in life, accepting the right and rejecting the wrong. (See 1 Thesalonians 5: 21.)

### Hebrews 6

Verse 1. *Therefore* signifies that a conclusion is being drawn from the truths set forth in the preceding chapter. *Leaving* does not mean to desert or disregard, but not to remain with the beginning steps thus making no advancement. A builder *leaves* the foundation and goes on with the building. He should not find it necessary to *lay again* the foundation, for that was done in the "beginning" of the project. Likewise Christians should advance beyond the *principles* ("beginning") of their service to Christ and become *perfect* or full grown. *Not lay again the foundation*. These Jewish disciples had begun their service to Christ (had laid the foundation) by turning from the things on which they had been relying all their lives. Some of those things consisted of items commanded by the law of Moses, while others were the erroneous notions taught by some of their leaders. These disciples had begun their new life—had laid the foundation—by no longer adhering to the former practices or observances. A number of these items are considered in this and the next verse. *Dead works* means the works of the old law which are no longer able to impart spiritual life; they have become dead works. *Faith toward God*. Christians are not told to turn away from faith in God, for then they could not please Him (Hebrews 11: 6). The Jews had faith in God *only*, not including Christ since they had not been taught concerning Him. This verse means that disciples must have faith in both the Father and the Son.

Verse 2. *Baptisms* is from the Greek word BAPTISMOS which Thayer defines "A washing, purification effected by means of water." It refers to the washing of animals prescribed by the Mosaic law. (See Exodus 29: 4,17; Leviticus 1: 9; 9: 14.) The word is never used for the ordinance of Christian baptism. *Laying on of hands*. Under the Mosaic system the priests or others laid their hands on the animals that were to be offered in the service (Leviticus 3: 2; 4: 4, 13; 16: 21). *Resurrection of the dead . . . eternal judgement*. These phrases must be considered together, for they are connected with one of the erroneous theories that were maintained in

those days, and were shared in by the Jews. The theory was false but Jesus never bothered about exposing it in His day. However, when the apostles came to induce the Jews to accept the Gospel, it was necessary to tell them they must give up such notions; that they must do "repentance from" such errors. The false theory referred to is known in historical literature as "Transmigration of souls," The doctrine taught that when a man dies his soul passes into the body of another, thus enabling him to live again or experience a resurrection. If the person had been unrighteous, he would be punished by being sent into some other being who was afflicted, or into an abnormal child then being born. (See John 9: 1-3.) If necessary this form of punishment or *judgement* would be repeated again and again. (a form of "eternal judgement") as here expressed.

Verse 3. *If God permit*. No passage should be interpreted so as to contradict another in the Bible. 2 Peter 3: 9 says that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." The italicized phrase, then, does not imply that God will prevent any man from doing what is right. The thought is as if Paul would say, "We who are determined to be right, will go on unto maturity in the spiritual life, God being our helper."

Verse 4. *It is impossible*. The thing that is impossible and the reasons for it will require a number of lines of the text to explain. After the simple announcement of an impossibility, the apostle drops the subject and gives a description of the characters concerning whom it is said, then tells what it is that is impossible. We shall carefully study this description before attempting to state the conclusion. *Enlightened* is from PHOTIZO which Thayer defines, "To enlighten spiritually, imbue with saving knowledge." Thayer defines the original for *taste* as follows: "To feel, make trial of, experience." It means to have experienced enough of the *heavenly gift* of Christianity to know how precious it is. The Holy Ghost (or Spirit) was bestowed upon the church (Romans 5: 5; 14: 17; 1 Corinthians 6: 19), hence when people become Christians they are *made partakers of the Holy Ghost*.

Verse 5. *Tasted the good word of God* means to have "experienced" the help of that word enough to know

what its benefits are. When a person knows by experience what effect for good the Gospel will have on one in preparing for the *world to come*, he may truly be said to have tasted of that coming *power* even in this life.

Verse 6. To *fall away* means to desert or purposely turn away from a thing. It here applies to those who have had all the experience just described, then deliberately pull away from such a manner of life. Now we are ready to see what it is that is impossible, namely, to *renew such a person to repentance*. The impossibility is upon the part of the would-be restorer and not on the one who falls away. It does not say he cannot repent, but it is impossible for anyone else to induce him to. The reason is that the apostate already knows as much about the subject as the one who wants to renew him, and hence the exhorter cannot offer any new arguments or reasons. On the basis of the foregoing statements of the apostle, it is proper to say that if persons fall away after all those experiences, then "It is impossible . . . to renew them again unto repentance." If they ever come back to Christ it will be on their own change of heart, which will always be possible for them. Paul describes this falling away as another crucifying of the Son of God, since it puts them outside the church and in the class of the enemies who actually did crucify Him. It is an *open shame* because the radical turning from a life of righteousness is apparent to the world about the apostate.

Verse 7. Paul is making an illustration out of the earth and its products. Not all ground is desirable as the parable of the sower in Matthew 13 teaches. The blessing of moisture will fall on the earth regardless of the character of some particular spots. If any portion responds by producing useful herbs, it will be blessed of God and be worthy of additional showers.

Verse 8. On the same basis as the preceding verse, if some spot receives the rain but yields only the thorns, such products will be burned, and that spot will be rejected by the owner as unprofitable.

Verse 9. Paul expected his readers to understand the general lesson in the parable, but he does not mean for them to make a personal application of it as yet. Hence he makes the kindly remark that he is counting on a better

showing from them than was indicated by the thorny ground. However, we are sure the apostle intended the illustration as an exhortation for them to be thoughtful and not fail at last. It is similar to the warning given in chapter 3: 12 and 4: 1.

Verse 10. This verse is consistent with the preceding one. The Hebrew brethren were given credit for the good work they had done. We are not told the particulars of what they were doing, but it has the highly commendable credit of being a *labor of love*. An important part of their motive for the work is indicated by the statement that it was *toward his name*. Such a motive corresponds with Matthew 25: 40.

Verse 11. It is not enough to be doing one's duty just at intervals and then stop, but it must be persisted in until the end of life.

Verse 12. To be *slothful* means to be sluggish or indolent. A *follower* is an imitator, but a person cannot imitate those who are patient (persistent) if he is indolent.

Verse 13. Persistence was the outstanding characteristic of Abraham, and he manifested it because of his faith in the promises of God. Until the Christian Dispensation there was no command against taking oaths. God made use of an oath in the promise to Abraham, but it was necessary to swear by himself because He is the greatest Being in existence. In making such a personally-supported oath it was similar to the statement of a man who says, "I give you my word of honor."

Verse 14. The particular blessing promised to Abraham meant in this verse was that he was to have a son with whom the covenant was to be established (Genesis 17: 19).

Verse 15. He finally obtained that son as a reward for his patience (Genesis 21: 1).

Verse 16. The usual practice of men as to oaths is cited by the apostle by way of illustration. If a contract is bound under an oath it will prevent any dispute.

Verse 17. God had no one greater by whom He could swear, yet he wished to provide some means of assurance to those interested in His *counsel* or promise. *Immutability* means that it is unchangeable—nothing can be done to change it. God accomplished the



assurance by adding His oath to the promise thereby *confirming* it.

Verse 18. The *two immutable* (unchangeable) *things* were the promise and the oath of God. It was impossible for God to lie concerning either the promise or the oath, and hence by applying both for the sake of the heirs, it gave them the *more abundant* evidence. As a further result, the heirs of that promise (meaning all who believe in Christ as the seed of Abraham that was promised) have a *strong consolation* for the future, because that is the direction toward which hope must look. *Fled for refuge*. This phrase is based on a provision under the Mosaic system whereby persons accused of crime (whether guilty or not) could "flee" to a place called a city of *refuge*. (See Numbers 35.) Today men are all under accusation, justly, of being sinners and in danger of punishment at the hands of the avenger of sins. But a city of refuge (the church) has been built and those who will hasten (flee) to enter this institution may be saved from their past sins. And if they will remain in that city as faithful citizens, they have the promise of salvation in the world to come.

Verse 19. This prospect of eternal salvation is the *hope* that stimulates Christians in this work for Christ. It is fastened, like an anchor, to Christ who is our High Priest. He has entered *within the veil*, the phrase being based on the veil in the temple that enclosed the most holy place, which was a type of Heaven.

Verse 20. Jesus is called the forerunner because he has gone on before us to be the intercessor for His people. For this purpose He was made a High Priest like the order of Melchisedec. The advantage of being after that order instead of the order of the Levitical form was predicted in the Old Testament (Psalms 110: 4), and it will be discussed in the next chapter.

### Hebrews 7

Verse 1. This epistle was written for the special benefit of the Hebrews (or Jews) who had become Christians. The Judaizers in those days were very busy in trying to force the Mosaic system upon Christians, claiming it to be still in force. The argument of this book is based on both contrasts and likenesses between the two systems. But a special argument is

made in connection with the priesthood of Melchisedec. All readers of the Old Testament know it was predicted that the "other priest" (verse 11) was to be more like Melchisedec than Aaron. The present argument, therefore, is concerning that remarkable character. Salem is a short name for Jerusalem (Psalms 76: 2), where this man was located as both king and priest. The Jews made great claim of being related to Abraham, yet this verse (citing Genesis 14: 18-20) shows that Melchisedec blessed Abraham. And since a person would need to be greater than another in order to be able to bless him (verse 7), this circumstance shows that even their father Abraham was not as great a person as Melchisedec. Proper nouns in Bible times often had distinctive meanings, and Thayer says that the name Melchisedec means, "King of righteousness," which is the statement in our verse. *Salem* is defined in this verse as *King of peace*, and the brief information given in Thayer's lexicon does not contradict it. Melchisedec is set forth as a type of Christ, hence it was fitting to connect him with a place signifying "peace." (See Isaiah 9: 6.)

Verse 2. Another fact showing Melchisedec to have been greater than Abraham, is that the latter paid tithes (a tenth) of his personal property to the former.

Verse 3. The key to this misunderstood verse is in the meaning of the phrase *without descent*. It is from the Greek word AGENEALOGETOS which Thayer defines as follows: "Of whose descent there is no account." This was no accident nor is it due to a lack of custom or facilities for recording *descent* which means a record of family names. Many other persons of those times had their pedigrees or family names recorded in the Bible. (See Genesis 10.) This shows that God had a purpose in leaving out all record of Melchisedec's family, namely, so that he would appear in that sense to be like that "other priest" who actually was not to have any descendants. (See Isaiah 53: 8; Acts 8: 33.) In other words, the verse describes the situation of Melchisedec as God permitted it to *appear* in history, in order to form a type of Christ whose situation as to family relationship was to be *actually* that way. *Without father and without mother* means he did not obtain his priesthood from his ancestors as did the Levitical priests (Exodus 29: 29,

30; Numbers 20: 28). The *beginning* of the days of Melchisedec and the *end of life* are all kept from the record for the purpose of carrying out the type, and it is to be understood on the same principle as "without descent" explained above. In this way he was *made like unto the Son of God*. This shows they were two separate persons, but were *like unto* each other in certain respects. If no record is given of the death or replacement of Melchisedec, then logically his priesthood was continuous. This was true of him *apparently*, as it was true of Christ *actually*.

Verse 4. Paul did not underestimate the greatness of Abraham; he emphasized it. However he used that fact in support of his reasoning, since it was made clear that notwithstanding his greatness, he was inferior to Melchisedec who was declared in so many points to be like Jesus in the priesthood order.

Verse 5. This verse continues the argument based on likenesses and contrasts between important characters. It is evident that he who *pays* tithes is less than the one to whom he pays them. Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec hence was of less importance than he. But the Levite priests (who descended from the great man Abraham) took tithes from the people. The argument is that although the Levitical priests were great enough to *receive* tithes from the people, yet their great ancestor was not great enough to receive tithes from Melchisedec, but rather had to *pay* them to him. All this is according to the teaching, that the priestly order of this great man Melchisedec being more like that of Christ than was that of Levi, it follows that the priesthood of Christ should be accepted over all previous ones.

Verse 6. The reasoning of this verse is virtually the same as the several preceding ones. There is one additional point on the greatness of Abraham, namely, he was the one to whom God made the first promise of Christ.

Verse 7. *Without all contradiction* means it is so evident that it cannot be successfully disputed. *Blessed* is from EULOGEO which Thayer defines at this place, "To invoke blessings." In order for a good wish to have any assurance of fulfillment, it must be uttered by someone endowed with special knowledge and authority. Mel-

chisedec had such qualification since he was the *priest of the most high God*.

Verse 8. The word *here* stands for the Levitical priesthood, and *there* refers to that of Melchisedec. *Men that die* is said because the priests under the Levitical order ceased to serve because of death and the event was recorded. Whereas there is no record of the death of Melchisedec, and as far as the historical account is concerned he is still living. The point is that while the priests designated by *here* had tithes given them, yet they were subject to death. The priest designated by *there* also received tithes, but there is no account of his death. This makes him superior to the other priests notwithstanding both orders received tithes.

Verse 9. Another contrast between Melchisedec over Levi is that the latter (though being given tithes), himself paid tithes to Melchisedec while in Abraham's body.

Verse 10. *Was yet in the loins*, etc. Paul takes advantage of a common theory believed by the Hebrews concerning the seat of the reproductive function. The word for *loins* is OSPHUS which Thayer defines. "A loin . . . the (two) loins," and then explains it by, "The Hebrews thought the generative powers resided in the loins." Strong defines it, "The loins (externally), i. e., the hip; internally (by extension) procreative powers." There was a pure blood line from Abraham to Levi, who was only the fourth generation from his great ancestor. In this sense Levi was represented by Abraham as he paid the tithes to Melchisedec. This is a phase of the argument based on the superiority of Melchisedec over Levi.

Verse 11. The law of Moses was inspired and served the purpose of the Lord, but it was not intended to be permanent as to the duration of its force. (See Galatians 3: 18-25) The Judaizers (Jews who tried to force the law of Moses on Christians) maintained that it was to be permanent. Paul reasons that since the law was received under the Levitical priesthood, such law would necessarily be changed whenever the priesthood was changed. But it was well established that *another priest* was to arise like Melchisedec more than like Aaron (father of the Levites), therefore the point is made that the law was not longer in force.

Verse 12. This is a repetition of the argument in verse 11.

Verse 13. *These things* refers to the statements about *another priest* who was to bring a change in the law. That priest belonged to *another tribe*, which had nothing to do with the altar service.

Verse 14. *Evident* denotes something that is plainly established and understood. *Juda* is a short spelling of Judah, the tribe from which Christ sprang or was produced. The genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3 show Christ to have descended from David, who all readers of the Bible know was a descendant of Judah the fourth son of Jacob. And the writings of Moses concerning the system of priesthood were completely silent about the tribe of Judah.

Verse 15. *Yet far more evident* means the testimony on behalf of the priesthood of Jesus is still more clearly shown. Paul refers to the comparison made between Melchisedec and Him, and the point is made stronger by the fact that Melchisedec lived several centuries before the Mosaic system was started. And it was concerning Melchisedec that *another priest* was to arise; that is, another besides him.

Verse 16. *Carnal* means pertaining to the flesh; the Levitical priests received their office through their fleshly birth. Melchisedec was made a high priest by the Lord independent of any fleshly relationship to anyone. *Endless life* is used in the sense set forth in verse 3, namely, his life is still continuing as far as any record of his death is concerned. This makes Melchisedec's priesthood more like that of Christ than was that of the priests in the Levitical order.

Verse 17. The pronoun *he* refers to God, who *testified* or declared that the Son was to be priest *for ever* (unchanging, throughout the age) after the order of Melchisedec.

Verse 18. To disannul signifies to cancel the force of the law which *went before*. God declared that such an act would be done by changing the priesthood and also the *commandment* (law of Moses). The reason for this annulling was the *weakness and unprofitableness thereof*. This weakness was not through any failure of God, for it was not brought into the world with the idea of its being final and complete. (See Galatians 3: 18-25.)

Verse 19. *Law made nothing perfect*. The last word means something complete regardless of the quality of the thing spoken of. Since the law was added for a limited time only (see reference in Galatians cited above), it follows that God did not equip it with the entire requirements of a spiritual life. *Better hope* is a term used to designate the hope that is held out to those who serve under the priesthood of Christ in the place of the Levitical one.

Verse 20. Another contrast in favor of Christ is that he obtained the priesthood under the oath of God (verse 21).

Verse 21. *Without an oath* is a negative statement, based on the truths that are recorded in the books of Exodus and Leviticus. In all those passages where so much is said about the priesthood of the Levites, the reader will not find one instance of an oath in connection with their office. On the other hand we find a positive declaration (Psalms 110: 4) that an oath was made in reference to the priesthood of Christ. *Will not repent* means that the Lord will never change his mind concerning the priesthood of Christ, namely, that it is to be after the order of Melchisedec.

Verse 22. *By so much* refers to the oath by which Jesus was made a High Priest, and it enabled Him to make a *testament* (or covenant) that was *better*. The last word does not infer that the first one was not good as to its qualities or principles of righteousness. Paul elsewhere (Romans 7:12) declares the law to be good and holy, but the second is better in the sense of having more advantages and being more useful.

Verse 23. The first system was served by priests whose terms were terminated by death, which made it necessary for it to have many priests.

Verse 24. *This man* refers to Christ who *continueth ever* because He never died after becoming a priest. *Unchangeable* means the priesthood did not pass or change from one man to another, hence it necessarily was a stronger system.

Verse 25. An advocate or representative may start pleading for a client, and be getting the case in good shape. Then if something makes it needful to change representatives, he may be unable to do as satisfactory a service as the previous one because of the break in the procedure. Christ never died and hence he is always on

the case and is at all times "up to date" on the conditions.

Verse 26. *Became us* means it was fitting that we of the last dispensation should have a High Priest having the best of qualifications. *Holy, harmless, undefiled* all means a character that is perfect, and Christ has such because He is *separate from sinners*; has no association with them. *Higher* refers to rank or importance rather than bodily position; Jesus is more lofty as a High Priest than all the heavens.

Verse 27. There are two contrasts between Christ and the Levitical priests, namely, they had to offer sacrifices *daily* and also needed to atone for their own sins. Christ had to offer a sacrifice only *once* for the people, and not one time for Himself for he had no sins for which to make atonement.

Verse 28. The priests made under the law were infirm in that they were subject to death. *Word of the oath* came after the law since David (to whom the oath was made) lived some centuries after Moses (through whom the law was given). The point is that since the oath came after the law, it proves that document was not considered absolutely perfect. This later act (the oath) *maketh the Son* (High Priest). The grand total conclusion is our High Priest has a service that continues *evermore*.

### Hebrews 8

Verse 1. *Sum* is from ΚΕΦΑΛΑΙΟΝ which Thayer defines, "The chief or main point, the principal thing." It refers to what Paul said in the preceding chapter, together with what follows in the present one, concerning the priesthood of Christ. *Such an high priest* has virtually the same significance as *sum*. *The Levitical priests* served in Jerusalem while Christ is at the right hand of his Father. *Majesty* pertains to the greatness of the throne of God. *In the heavens* has the same significance as "higher than the heavens" in chapter 7:26.

Verse 2. The building used in the Mosaic system was regarded as a sanctuary (holy place) and a tabernacle as truly as is the one in the service under Christ. The difference is in the description given in the rest of this verse. *True tabernacle* means that of which the first one was a type. *Pitched* is defined by Thayer as follows: "To make fast, to fix; to fasten together, to build by fastening

together." The Lord directed the building of the Old Testament tabernacle, but it was made of literal material and the work was actually done by human hands (See Exodus 36-40.) The last tabernacle employed the services of man also, but the materials were not literal and the formation of the system was the handiwork of God.

Verse 3. *Every high priest* refers to those under the Old Testament line. Thayer defines *ordained*, "To appoint one to administer an office." *Gifts and sacrifices* were in the same general class, but the first refers especially to articles that were not intended to be used as victims on the altar. *This man* means Christ who was called upon to make a *somewhat* offering. That is, Christ offered many contributions to the New Testament service, and then made the "supreme sacrifice" of himself on the cross just before ascending from earth to his Father in Heaven.

Verse 4. *If he were on earth*. This means as long as Christ was on earth he could not act as a priest. That is because the law was in force all the time He was on earth, and it already had its priests to offer according to that law.

Verse 5. The institutions of the Mosaic system were *examples* and *shadows* (patterns or types) of the *heavenly things* (the institutions under Christ). *Who* means the priests mentioned in the preceding verse. In Exodus 25:40 is the instruction that God gave Moses to make all things according to the "pattern" shown to him in the mount. The idea is that when God mentioned this pattern for the tabernacle service, He had in mind that it was to be a type or pattern of the greater things to come, as well as to serve the purpose of that first dispensation.

Verse 6. Several words of comparison in the second degree are used in this verse which should not be misapplied. God never made any mistakes and all that He ever did was good from the standpoint of being righteous. But the purposes to be accomplished by His plans were not always considered as final. He had a terminal to be reached in the preparation of mankind for the Hereafter, and until the final plan had been reached (that which was "perfect" 1 Corinthians 13:10), each step in the unfolding of the divine plan may be considered as looking forward to something *more excellent* and *better*.

Verse 7. A part of the *fault* of which the Lord complained was concerning the shortcomings of the people. They did not do even as well as they could with the system which God had given them. However, God has always been inclined to give His creatures every opportunity for developing a desirable character. In view of this, He regarded the old law as not the best that could be accomplished in the future, and in that sense He would not consider the old covenant to be *faultless*.

Verse 8. *Finding Fault* is explained at the preceding verse. It should be constantly borne in mind that most of this book, as well as many parts of the New Testament, was called for by the disturbances from Judaizers (Hebrews trying to bind the Jewish law on Christians). Had all people understood and been satisfied with the New Testament as the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, these books would not have been needed. But they maintained that the Mosaic system was intended by the Lord to be permanent. That made it necessary for the apostles to cite many places in the Old Testament (being disregarded by the Judaizers) that clearly predicted a change in the whole religious system. *The days come* has reference to the days of the New Testament. *Saith the Lord* is citing Jeremiah 31: 31-34 where the prophet plainly declares that He was going to make a new covenant. *Israel* and *Judah* are mentioned because at the time of Jeremiah the nation was divided, the ten tribes being called *Israel* and the two tribes called *Judah* (recorded in 1 Kings 12). The tribes were destined to be reunited after the captivity, but the two parts are named to show that every Jew (as well as the Gentiles) was to be included in the new covenant.

Verse 9. *The day* refers to the period in general when Sinai was the principal place of interest. (See Jeremiah 34: 13, 14.) The shortcomings of the Israelites was the reason on the human side for a change. (See verse 7.)

Verse 10. This verse states one of the main differences between the old and the new covenant. When a male child was eight days old he was circumcized, and that made him a full member of the covenant, notwithstanding he had no mind to receive anything; the law was put in the flesh instead of the mind. The new covenant

laws were to be put in the mind (or heart) instead of the flesh.

Verse 11. Samuel was a full "brother" to Eli although he "did not yet know the Lord" (1 Samuel 3: 7); his circumcision introduced him into the brotherhood (Genesis 17: 9-14). That is why it was necessary for Eli to make his brother Samuel acquainted with the Lord. It was done in verse 9 of the same chapter where he told Samuel to say, "Speak, Lord: for thy servant heareth," which is the same as *know the Lord* in our present verse. Such an introduction in the brotherhood under Christ will not be necessary because *all shall know me from the least to the greatest*. That is because under the New Testament system a person cannot become a member until he is old enough and has mind enough to receive the law of Christ intelligently. This would completely rule out all such conditions as "cradle rolls" or infant church membership in the New Testament church. All must have mind enough to "know the Lord" through the law of the Gospel before they can come into the church.

Verse 12. This verse contains a likeness and a contrast between the two covenants. God showed mercy under the old, and the passages that show it are too numerous to mention. (It should be stated what was overlooked at verse 10, that another likeness between them is that in each case the relation of *God* and *people* holds good.) The contrast in this verse is that the sins would be remembered *no more*. The word "against" is often added, in quoting this subject which is incorrect, for God never did remember a sin against a man after he had been forgiven. This point will be dealt with in detail by the comments on chapter 10: 3.

Verse 13. The main point in this verse is a conclusion based on the term *new covenant*: it proves that the other one was considered old. Since old things are expected to disappear, the conclusion is that the old covenant was to be replaced by the New Testament.

## Hebrews 9

Verse 1. The apostle now enters into more of the typical features of the Mosaic system, occasionally pointing out some of the places in which it differed from the one under Christ. *Ordinances* means ceremonies that

were ordained to be observed in the service. *Worldly sanctuary* is used because that part of the tabernacle was a type of the church that is in this world, and not in Heaven where God lives.

Verse 2. This verse names what was in the *first* part of the tabernacle, the part called "worldly sanctuary" in the preceding verse. This room is called the *sanctuary* because the word means "holy," a type of the church which is said to be holy (Ephesians 5: 27). The placing of the articles named is recorded in Exodus 40: 4.

Verse 3. *After the second vail*. The entrance to the tabernacle was enclosed with a vail (Exodus 26: 36). That makes the next one the *second* as it is called here, and it is described in Exodus 26: 31-33. The room of the *tabernacle* enclosed by this vail is called *Holiest of all*. It is so called because it contained the ark and was a type of Heaven, into which our High Priest (Christ) has gone (chapter 6: 19, 20). This service of Christ will be considered further when we come to verse 24 of this chapter.

Verse 4. *Golden censer*. According to Leviticus 16: 12 the high priest burned incense in the most holy place on the day of atonement. A censer is a vessel to be carried in the hand and used in the manner of fumigating. This instrument was necessary because the golden altar of incense was in the first room or holy place of the tabernacle. As proof of this we read in Exodus 40: 24 that the candlestick was placed in the "tent" of the congregation. Then in verse 26 it says the golden altar also was in the "tent" or the same place where the candlestick was. Hence, the golden altar of incense was in the holy place or first room of the tabernacle, making it necessary to have this censer in the most holy place. *Ark of the covenant* is so called because it contained the *tables of the covenant* (Deuteronomy 10: 1, 2). For the history of the pot of manna and Aaron's rod, see Exodus 16: 32-34 and Numbers 17: 1-11.

Verse 5. The mercy seat was made of solid gold and served as a covering for the ark as well as a resting place for the cherubims. (See Exodus 25: 17-21.) *Cannot speak particularly* means he was not ready to enter into detail about the separate services of these parts.

Verse 6. *Ordained* signifies to be prepared or made ready, and refers to

the articles in the two rooms of the tabernacle. The priests *went always* is said in the sense of going daily or frequently, in contrast with "once a year" as in the next verse. *First tabernacle* refers to the first room of the tabernacle, and the common priests might enter this place any time it was necessary, and they were the ones who did most of the service of that room.

Verse 7. *The second* means the most holy place which was "within the vail" (chapter 6: 19, 20), and no one but the high priest was permitted to enter this room while it was in service. *Once every year* means on the one day only, for he made more than one entrance into the most holy place on that day. (See Leviticus 16.) *Not without blood*. The passage just cited explains where and how he got the blood. *Offered for himself*. That was necessary because those priests were all erring creatures (contrary to our High Priest). *The people* signifies that the service performed in the most holy place by the high priest was for the sake of the nation as a whole. If any individual was personally indebted to the Lord because of his sin, he was required to attend to that as his own personal duty. (See Leviticus 4: 27-35.)

Verse 8. The Holy Ghost (or Spirit) inspired the writers of the Bible, and in the present case it signified something by the "setting" of things in the tabernacle. The thing signified was the idea that the *way into the holiest*—the way by which man could reach the holiest place, or Heaven—was still unrevealed. The vail is what kept the most holy place out of sight, for the high priest only was ever permitted to enter that room, and that on one day of the year only. As long as that tabernacle was standing the vail also was standing between. But the death of Christ and his resurrection, after which He entered Heaven, was equivalent to removing the vail to the extent at least of giving others a glimpse (by the eye of faith) into Heaven. That is why the vail was rent from top to bottom at the death of Christ (Matthew 27: 51). This vail is connected with the flesh of Christ in chapter 10: 19, 20.

Verse 9. *Which was a figure* means these things were types of the institutions of Christ. *Gifts and sacrifices* is explained at chapter 8: 3. *Not make him . . . perfect*. A popular notion is



that sins were not forgiven under the Mosaic law. This subject will be dealt with fully when we come to chapter 10: 4.

Verse 10. *Meats and drinks* has reference to the regulations under the law of Moses concerning what they were to eat and drink. *Washings* is explained at chapter 6: 2 on the word "baptisms." *Carnal ordinances* refers to the outward ceremonies such as animal sacrifices and burning of incense, not that they were "carnal" in the sense of being sinful. *Imposed* is not used in the sense of forcing something unjustly upon them in the sense that we usually understand the word. Its meaning is that the ordinances were put in force over the people of that dispensation. *Time of reformation* means the institution of Christ. It is so called because Christ remodeled (reformed) the scheme of human redemption, by bringing into the world the last or final religious plan, of which those in force under the Mosaic system were types or figures, which were to be used until the Lord was ready to set up the completed form.

Verse 11. *Not made with hands* has the same meaning as "pitched" in chapter 8: 2. *Good things to come* signifies that the greatest values to be obtained from the New Testament institution will be enjoyed in the future. *This building* refers to the tabernacle all parts of which were on the earth, while that part called the holiest of all typified Heaven which is not on the earth. That is why the institution of Christ is called a *greater and more perfect tabernacle*.

Verse 12. This verse states another of the contrasts between the two dispensations. The first used the blood of dumb animals, while the second used that of the High Priest himself. *Eternal redemption* contains the special idea of spiritual benefits, and not those that pertain to bodily or fleshly ones. Since this redemption is *eternal* and hence is endless, it was necessary for Christ to provide it only *once*.

Verse 13. The cleansing of fleshly or bodily impurities (which might be either physical or "ceremonial" or both), is fully described in Numbers 19 which should be carefully read. With that ceremony as a background it will be easier to appreciate the argument of our verse and the next one.

Verse 14. The Hebrews admitted that the blood of animals could cleanse

the bodies of men from outward impurity. That should enable them to believe in the greater sterilizing power of the blood of Christ. The animals used under the old law were required to be without spot. Likewise the sacrifice of Christ was perfect since He had no blemish either in body or mind or spirit. This sacrifice was made possible through the Spirit, which was necessary because the literal blood of Christ was poured out on the ground and never reclaimed. But the *spiritual* worth of it was taken into the Most Holy place (Heaven) by Him (verse 12). *From dead works* means to draw the Christians from the works of the law. (See comments at chapter 6: 1.) *To serve the living God* in this age can be done only by accepting the perfect sacrifice made through the Son.

Verse 15. The argument of this verse will receive further attention when we come to chapter 10: 4. For the present it is well to state that whenever a man was forgiven under the Mosaic exercises, the sins were charged up against the blood of Christ (not "rolled forward"). Hence when Jesus came into the world in the form of flesh, it was necessary for Him to make all of those instances good by His own blood. Thus Christ was not required merely to give "a pint of blood" but He was made to give it all, and thus assure the whole world of the possibility for *eternal inheritance*.

Verses 16, 17. This paragraph may be regarded as a companion passage of chapter 8: 4, in that the New Testament which is the covenant or will of Christ was not in force until after His death. This is a rule that is generally recognized concerning testaments (or wills) that men make, in that such wills are not in force during the lifetime of the men who make them.

Verse 18. *Death* is the central idea in this part of Paul's argument, hence he states that the first testament was *dedicated* (consecrated) with blood. Since the shedding of blood requires the death of the creature furnishing it, the circumstance makes the type and antitype complete. The animals died in order to dedicate (or put into force) the Old Testament or covenant, and Christ died and gave his blood to dedicate and render forceful His New Testament. (See Matthew 26: 28). Therefore the animals slain in sacrifice under the law constituted the *testator* of that system.

Verse 19. In keeping with the truth just referred to, Moses used blood to put into force the words of the law after he had spoken them. Regardless of the excellence of the words of that law, it required the blood of the testator (the animals) to render them valid. Likewise the words of Christ spoken in his personal ministry and to be spoken by the apostle afterwards, required the blood of Him who was to be the testator of the new law or new covenant.

Verse 20. This language is similar to that spoken by Jesus when he was instituting the ceremony that was to symbolize the dedicating virtue of the New Testament. (See Matthew 26: 28 and 1 Corinthians 11: 25.)

Verse 21. The passages in Exodus and Leviticus that record this use of the blood of animals are too numerous even to cite at this place.

Verse 22. Paul confirms the remark made in the preceding paragraph, by the general statement that *almost all things are by the law purged with blood*. He was therefore considering only the blood of animals when he said *without the shedding of blood there is no remission*. He had no reference to the blood of Christ in this statement. His blood is not even referred to until the latter part of the next verse, and then indirectly only. The statement is frequently quoted by brethren when presiding at the Lord's table and applied to the blood of Christ. Such a use of the passage is not only a perversion of it, but it destroys the interesting argument the apostle is making.

Verse 23. *It was therefore necessary*, etc. Paul is still speaking about the *patterns* or types in the Old Testament, that even they had to be purified or dedicated *by these*, meaning the blood of animal sacrifices. The blood of Christ has not been considered as yet. Then the apostle introduces by inference only the necessity of the blood of Christ. If the *patterns* or types of heavenly things required such blood (without the shedding of which there was *no remission* for the Hebrews), then the heavenly things themselves—the things pertaining to the New Testament—called for *better sacrifices*. This is Paul's introduction for the blood and sacrifice of Christ, which has not been the subject for several verses.

Verse 24. Christ never did any official or priestly services in the temple

at Jerusalem while on earth, for the priests of the law were still in that service (chapter 8: 4). Hence He entered that place of which the one made with hands was a figure or type. He is there to be in the presence of God *for us* or on our behalf as our High Priest. This is another item in Paul's reasoning with the Hebrew Christians. He is showing them that in clinging to the service of the Levitical priesthood, the Judaizers are repudiating the One who has actually entered into the presence of God.

Verse 25. Another contrast is in the frequency with which the two priests performed their services in the most holy place. The high priests of the Levitical order had to repeat theirs often (*every year*). *Blood of others* means that the high priest of that law used the blood of a victim and not his own blood.

Verse 26. If the sacrificial service of Christ was exactly like that of the Levitical priests, then He would have been required not to wait so long before beginning it. He would have needed to begin it at the same time the world (inhabitants of the earth) began to exist. Since one time only was necessary because the sacrifices of the old system were taking care of the sins for the time (to be explained at chapter 10: 4), He could wait until the *end of the world* to perform His *World* in this place is from  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omega\sigma$  which means age or dispensation. Jesus died in the last weeks of the Jewish Dispensation; fifty days after His death the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, thus cancelling the Old and ushering in the New Testament Dispensation. Unlike the high priests of the Levitical system, Christ performed his by the *sacrifice of himself*.

Verse 27. The preceding verse maintains that Christ needed to make his sacrifice only once. However, that is on the ground that man will go through death and the judgment but once. Hence this verse proceeds on that principle to affirm that it is appointed unto man to die *once*, and the judgment will come afterwards.

Verse 28. Having but one sacrifice to offer, Christ waited until the typical dispensation was at its end before He did it. *Bear the sins of many*. The sacrifice of Christ was for the sins of the whole world (John 1: 29). That means that by His one great sacrifice Christ made provision for the remis-

sion of sins for all men who will avail themselves of it under whatever dispensation they live. The rest of the verse is a beautiful likeness drawn from the procedure of the high priest of the Mosaic system. While he was in the tabernacle (or temple) performing the services for the people, they were on the outside waiting for him. After the services were completed he would come out and bless the waiting throng. (See Leviticus 9: 15-24; Numbers 16: 15-17; Luke 1: 9, 10.) Likewise faithful servants of God who are looking (with pleasure 2 Timothy 4: 8) for Christ, will see Him come to earth the second time. *Without sin* means He will not come to make another sacrifice for sin. (One offering was all that was necessary.) When He comes it will be *unto salvation*; that is to complete the salvation of those who will be faithfully looking for Him.

### Hebrews 10

Verse 1. The difference between *shadow* and *very image* is the same as between type and antitype, or between form and substance. The sacrificial system under the law was a figure of the one under Christ. *Can never . . . make . . . perfect* which means complete. (See the comments at verse 4.)

Verse 2. Had those sacrifices been complete (of themselves or by their own virtue) they would have ceased to be offered. When a devoted Hebrew nation had made one full program of atonement for sin, it would have been permanent and would not have to be repeated. Such a conclusion is logical, and it should have convinced the Judaizers that something was to come in the place of those institutions.

Verse 3. *Remembrance again made*. But it does *NOT SAY* that the sins were remembered *against* them as it is so frequently expressed. Every year when the national atonement day arrived, the nation had a public and formal *reminder* of sin by the entrance of their high priest into the most holy place with the blood of atonement. Contrary to that, our High Priest entered once and forever into the presence of God with the blood of the New Covenant, and it has never had to be repeated.

Verse 4. *It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins*. Any explanation of a passage that contradicts another plain

one is bound to be wrong, for the Bible does not contradict itself. To say that sins were not forgiven under the Old Testament is a contradiction of the following. Leviticus 4 describes the sin offerings under the Mosaic system that were required of various Hebrews who had sinned. Verses 20, 26, 31 and 35 state these persons are to offer these sacrifices for sin, and in each case after doing it the passage plainly declares, "And it shall be forgiven him." Perhaps someone replies that it does not say they were to be forgiven *then*. Well, we will consider another place in the Old Testament, namely, 1 Kings 8. After the temple was completed, Solomon offered a prayer on behalf of the people in which he asked God to forgive them upon their prayer to Him. Verse 30 makes it definite as to when the forgiveness was to take place, for it says, "When they shall pray toward this place; hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and *when thou hearest, forgive.*" This is very definite; when they prayed was the time God was to hear and when He heard was the time the forgiveness was to be granted. But was this prayer of Solomon granted? Chapter 9 and verse 3 of that book says, "And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me." That settles the point that sins were actually forgiven under the Old Testament times.

This is another place where we should remember the main subject of this book. The Judaizers were insisting on the permanence of the old law and its ordinances of religious service. They thought that the benefits to be obtained from those performances were by reason of the virtue of those things and hence that they were good enough to be continued. Were Paul to write an epistle to many disciples and others today, he would use the same argument about baptism and the other items of service to Christ. He would say that it is impossible for baptism and the other formalities of the Gospel to take away sin. Indeed, the denominational world actually does see that and that only with reference to the ordinances. They will say "there is no salvation in water," and that is true in the same sense that the blood of animals could not take away sins. No, the saving virtue is in the blood of Christ and *it* is the purchasing power for salvation on behalf of mankind in what-

ever age he lives. But He will not apply that blood to any man unless he has enough faith in the Lord to do whatever he is told to do. That may be the command to offer animal sacrifices or be baptized, depending on what age he is under. Hence in any of the dispensations that God has placed among men, all who will do whatever they are told to do, will be forgiven on the strength of the blood of Christ. The virtue in the blood is why it never had to be repeated.

Verse 5. The two pronouns *he* and the one *me* refer to Christ, and the two pronouns *thou* stand for God. When Christ was ready to come into the world He knew it was to fulfill the promise made to Abraham (Galatians 3: 16, 19), also that He was to make of himself a sacrifice to replace the animal sacrifices of the old law. Yes, Christ existed before he was born of the virgin (John 8: 58), and hence when God made the promise to Abraham, He made it also to Christ. (See the passages in Galatians referred to above.) The coming of Christ into the world by way of the virgin birth was therefore voluntary on His part, in the spirit of obedience to his Father. He also knew that a spiritual body could not die, and hence that a fleshly body would be needed. That is why it was said that God had prepared a body for Him, to be produced within the fleshly body of the virgin and consisting of one that could be made to die.

Verse 6. This verse represents Christ as explaining why the plan was needed referred to in the preceding verse, namely, that God no longer was pleased with burnt offerings offered under the law.

Verse 7. *Then said I* (Christ), *in the volume of the book it is written of me*. Christ knew that the Old Testament predicted His coming into the world as a sacrifice for sins. The great respect Christ had for the Father, also for the majesty of the ancient writings, induced Him to cooperate in the great plan. That is why He said, *I come to do thy will, O God*.

Verse 8. This verse is mostly an explanation or repetition of the preceding ones, to the effect that the displeasure of God was concerning the sacrifices of the law. Of course it should be understood that such a condition of mind came after those sacrifices had served the divine purposes.

Verse 9. The forepart of this verse is a repetition of verse 7. The antecedent of *first* is *will*, referring to the old will or covenant consisting of the ordinances of the Mosaic law. God took away the first one that He might establish the second. He never had two systems of religion in force at the same time for the same people. This verse is a complete refutation of the Sabbatarian heresy even if there did not exist a single other passage on the subject.

Verse 10. *By the which will* means that by the *second* will or system of salvation, we are sanctified (or consecrated) through the body of Christ, (not that of animals).

Verse 11. This is explained by the comments at verse 4.

Verse 12. *This man* refers to Christ, and *for ever* means His sacrifice would be permanent and would not have to be repeated as did those of the old law.

Verse 13. *From henceforth expecting* signifies that He expects to remain *on the right hand of God till his enemies are made his footstool*. (1 Corinthians 15: 25, 26.)

Verse 14. This is equivalent to chapter 9: 26; and verse 12 in this chapter.

Verse 15. *Holy Ghost* (or Spirit) *also is a witness to us*. The prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New were all inspired by this Spirit.

Verses 16, 17. This makes specific reference to one of the Old Testament predictions, and it is to be found in Jeremiah 31: 31-33, which is explained at chapter 8: 8-13.

Verse 18. See the comments at verse 3.

Verse 19. *Boldness* does not mean a spirit of forwardness but rather one of strong confidence. *Enter into the holiest*. Not literally but by faith through the merits of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Verse 20. *This new and living way . . . through the veil* is explained by the comments at chapter 9: 8. It is *living* in that it need not be repeated.

Verse 21. This verse shows one of the likenesses between the two systems in that each had the services of a high priest. The distinction is the truth that Christ is over the house of God which is said in the sense of the church and Heaven.

Verse 22. *Draw near*. The nearest the people of the first priesthood could

get to the most holy place was by way of or near the veil. Likewise Christians may get very near the throne of God (by the *full assurance of faith*). The *heart* and *conscience* are the inner and invisible part of man, hence we know that *sprinkled* is used figuratively and means to be cleansed spiritually. The figure is drawn from the fact that the blood was actually sprinkled on men to consecrate them for the priesthood under the old law (Exodus 29: 21). Our bodies are literal and hence they are literally washed in the water of baptism. *Pure water* has no reference to the subject of sanitary conditions. The word means "unmixed" and is a contrast from the water of purification used under the law. That water was mixed with the ashes of an animal (Numbers 19).

Verse 23. *Hold fast* means to be faithful to the end. *He is faithful* denotes that the Lord is always true and makes His promises good.

Verse 24. *To provoke* means to induce or stimulate others to do that which is good. We should *do* this by exhortation and that will require the following verse.

Verse 25. *Forsaking is from* ΕΓΚΑΤΑΛΕΙΠΟ, which Thayer defines, "To abandon, desert, to leave in straits, leave helpless; leave in the lurch." The word does not refer to those who are "irregular in attendance" or who "just come occasionally." (There are other scriptures which take care of such delinquents.) But it means those who remain away from the assemblies so long that they can no longer be considered as a part of the group. *Assembling of ourselves together*. This does not apply to any one of the public gatherings of Christians any more than it does to another. The assembling to have the Lord's Supper is included in the passage, but it does not apply to that any more than to any other scriptural gathering of the church. Malachi 3: 16 is clearly a prediction of conditions to exist in the dispensation of Christ, and it says "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." They cannot do this unless they are together, and coming together once a week cannot truly be said to be "often." *The day* first refers to the day when the city of Jerusalem was to be destroyed, which was then near at hand. At that time a general disturbance was expected when many opportunities for assembling would be hindered and in some places would be completely im-

possible. Since that event is now past, *the day* means the judgment day when all opportunities for Christian assembling will be forever ended on earth. We can see *the day approaching* by faith, for each day brings us "One day nearer our Father's house than ever we've been before" (Romans 13: 11).

Verse 26. *Sin wilfully* means to sin deliberately or purposely, in contrast with that committed incidentally or through weakness. *No more sacrifice* does NOT SAY there is no more chance of forgiveness. Jesus taught that all manner of sins would be forgiven except that against the Holy Spirit. This passage is in the same class or principle as chapter 6: 4-6, in that it mentions that the persons had *received the knowledge of the truth*. The point is that Christ made one sacrifice for sin and will make no other. If this one is repudiated there is no other to which we can look as the Hebrews could in the Mosaic system. Those sacrifices were repeated over and over again and after every transgression the guilty ones could look forward to another sacrifice. If we reject the one in Christ there will be no one and nothing else to which we may look (Galatians 5: 4). But that does not say we cannot change our mind and return to the sacrifice that is still available for all who will receive it on the Lord's terms.

Verse 27. If we do not return to Christ then we must look for that which is fearful, namely, the judgment of God at which He will exhibit *fiery indignation*. *Devour* is from a word that literally means to eat. However, we do not eat that which we dislike, hence the thought is that God will dispose of these adversaries by abandoning them to the regions of endless destruction.

Verse 28. *To despise* means to disrespect and refuse to obey. The punishment for disobeying the law of Moses in extreme cases was death without mercy (Numbers 35: 30; Deuteronomy 17: 5, 6).

Verse 29. The law of Christ is so much more final and far-reaching that the violation of it deserves a much *sorer* (worse) punishment than an unmerciful death of the body. But since such a punishment as that is the most severe of any that can be imposed on a human being in this world, the *sorer* punishment will have to wait until the next world to be inflicted. That is why the unjust are to be "reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished"

(2 Peter 2: 9). All of the wrongs mentioned in the rest of this verse may be charged against the Judaizers, because they have *trodden under foot the Son of God*. They did so by rejecting Him and going back to the sacrifices that were offered under the law. *Blood of the covenant* refers to the blood of Christ because it was shed to make good all the promises God made to the descendants of Abraham. To reject it and go back to the sacrifices for salvation is equivalent to *counting it an unholy thing* in that it implies that it is no better than the blood of animals. *Spirit of grace* is a phrase signifying the New Testament since it is the final system under the favor of God, and it was given through the means of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 30. Paul cites a statement of God recorded in Deuteronomy 32: 34-36, in regard to the determination of God to *judge* (execute punishment) the people who reject His terms of mercy.

Verse 31. All men and all things are ever in the hands of God in a general sense, and hence cannot *fall into* His hands. The verse therefore has a special meaning which is related to the mediation of Christ. There is no being in the universe who is between God and man but Christ, by whom man may escape the judgment mentioned in the preceding verse. Hence if a man repudiates Christ (as the Judaizers were doing), he deprives himself of any intercessor, and must take his chances with an avenging God who has declared vengeance against all who are not pardoned by the blood of Christ.

Verse 32. *Illuminated* means to be enlightened by the Gospel. Soon after these people became Christians they were persecuted by the unbelievers of both Jews and Gentiles. Paul terms this experience with afflictions as a *fight*, and of course it would be a "fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6: 12).

Verse 33. *Made a gazingstock* denotes an exhibition of something for people to gaze at with contempt. By *reproaches* and *afflictions* the enemy drew attention to the Christians with the result that they were made light of. Some did not personally have this experience, but they associated with and showed friendship for those who did, and thus brought upon themselves the same kind of reproaches.

Verse 34. Paul was a prisoner in chains for the sake of the Gospel, but these disciples manifested sympathy

for him and thus invited the darts of the enemies. As a punishment for their manifestation of faith, they were forced to submit to the *spoiling* (plundering) of their possessions. They did not even fret about such losses because they believed there were better riches awaiting them in Heaven.

Verse 35. *Confidence* means strong assurance which prompts one to face danger or affliction on behalf of the truth. The reward will be great in the end.

Verse 36. *Patience* is the same as perseverance, and it is manifested by those who continue to have confidence. We need not expect to receive the fulfillment of God's promises unless we first do the will of the Lord.

Verse 37. *Little while* is comparative, for the endless term of the reward will make even centuries of waiting seem but a short time.

Verse 38. *Live by faith* agrees with the idea of persevering on the strength of our faith. *Draw back* means to hesitate or shrink from going forward against afflictions.

Verse 39. *But we are not, etc.* In placing himself with them the apostle regards them in a favorable light. It is true that many of the Hebrews had remained true. However, many others had gone backward, and others were in danger of doing so on account of the Judaizers among them. That made it necessary for the apostle to warn them repeatedly against the disastrous results of faltering.

## Hebrews 11

General remarks. The point has been frequently emphasized that the outstanding subject of this book is the disturbances of the Judaizers. There would seem to be a shift now to the subject of unbelief. And yet it is not so much of a change at the base. All failure to do that which is right may be charged up against unbelief. In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul enumerates a number of misdeeds that contributed to the overthrow of the Israelites in the wilderness. But in Hebrews 3: 19 where he has the same history in mind, the apostle says they could not enter in because of unbelief. By the same token, the mistake of rejecting Christ for the sake of going back to the old law may truly be attributed to unbelief. Much has been said against the denominational teaching of "faith alone," and justly so. At the same time we should be careful not to under-



estimate the importance of belief or faith. It is true that we cannot be saved by faith alone, neither can we be saved without it. We cannot be saved by "faith only," but we can be lost by unbelief only. That is because it requires all the items of the plan of salvation to please God, while the omission of one fundamental item is enough to displease Him. This is especially true of such a principle as faith which is the motive power of all our actions as the present chapter will show.

Verse 1. *Substance* is from a word that means basis or foundation on which something rests. *Faith* constitutes such a basis for our hope since it is produced by testimony. Even *things not seen* but desired may be expected and thus hoped for when we have the evidence of their truthfulness.

Verse 2. *Elders* is from PRESBYTEROS and Thayer defines it at this place as "forefathers." *Good report* is used in the sense that they obtained a good reputation by their faith that was "put into practice."

Verse 3. *Through faith* does not mean that the following things of this verse were accomplished by faith, for God does not have to act on faith. He knows what he can do. It is through faith that we understand about it. *Worlds* is defined by the lexicon at this place, "The worlds, the universe," and *framed* is defined, "To fit out, equip, put in order, arrange, adjust." *Are seen* and *do appear* are both in the present tense, and *made* is from a Greek word that means "caused to be." The sentence means that the universe which we see was not made out of anything else that appears to us. But that does not say that God "made something out of nothing." Such a notion is not taught in any scripture that I have read. Just because we cannot see what God made the universe of does not prove that He made it out of nothing. *Word* is from RHEMA, which Thayer defines at this place, "The word by which some thing is commanded, directed, enjoined." This agrees with Psalms 33: 9, which says, "He spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast." Also the phrase "and God said" occurs nine times in the first chapter of Genesis.

Verse 4. *By faith Abel*. Romans 10: 17 says faith comes by hearing the word of God. Hence Abel had been told by the Lord what to do or he could not have done it by faith. When

he offered an animal *by faith*, therefore, it was because God had told him to do so. That made it a *more excellent* (superior) sacrifice than the one Cain offered, for God had not told him to offer the fruit of the ground. *Obtained witness* means that testimony was borne him that he was a righteous man. *Dead yet speaketh*. Although Abel is dead physically, yet the record of his righteous performance is preserved down to the present time, and it *speaks* or testifies to the good deed that was done through his faith in the word of God.

Verse 5. *Translated . . . not see death*. The last phrase explains the first word, and *was not found* any more on earth because he was taken to Heaven. *Had this testimony*. It is recorded in Genesis 5: 24 that *Enoch walked with God*, which means he walked or conducted himself according to the "word of God" which produces faith.

Verse 6. The apostle interrupts his line of special instances to state the general principle of faith. Regardless of whatever apparent good there might be in one's actions, it will not be pleasing to God unless he has authorized it. *Believe that He is* means to believe in the existence of God. *Furthermore*, unless a man believes that God will reward a diligent seeker, he will not make any effort to come to Him.

Verse 7. The flood of which Noah was warned was over a century in the future (Genesis 6: 3), yet he prepared an ark according to the Lord's instructions. That was because he believed what God told him and acted accordingly. *To the saving of his house* from the flood that destroyed the rest of mankind. *Condemned the world*. Thayer defines the first word at this place as follows: "By one's good example to render another's wickedness more evident and censurable." *Heir of righteousness*. The last word is what is done and not inherited, hence the phrase means to inherit the reward that comes to one whose faith leads him to seek a righteous life.

Verse 8. The main point that showed Abraham's faith was his obedience even when he did not know where he was going. But God promised that it was to be towards a place which he should some day inherit.

Verse 9. *Strange* means "belonging to another"; Abraham considered himself a sojourner which means a temporary dweller. That is why he lived

in tabernacles (or tents) because he regarded himself as well as his immediate descendants as heirs only. He believed the land would sometime be actually possessed by the nations coming from him.

Verse 10. Abraham did not expect to possess personally the land of Canaan, hence he did not provide himself any permanent building for a home. He believed that his descendants would finally get possession of it. As for himself, he chose to be faithful to God while sojourning in the land, then finally enter the city with *foundations*, which means the permanence of the Eternal City or Heaven.

Verse 11. Being delivered of a child was not the miracle in this case, but it was the ability to conceive one to begin with. Sarah was ninety years old and thus was past the usual age of child-bearing. She also had been barren all her life so that she was not at any time able to conceive by the natural process of reproduction. Hence she would have felt no urge to cooperate with her husband in carrying out their part of God's plan. But on account of her faith in the promise of God she acted and was rewarded with the *strength* (ability) to conceive.

Verse 12. *As good as dead*. The second word is not in the original as a separate term. The phrase is used figuratively because all appearances were that way. We know Abraham's reproductive powers were not gone, for at least thirty-seven years later he married the second time and begat six sons (Genesis 23: 1; 25: 1, 2). There is no evidence that a miracle was performed to enable him to beget these sons. Besides, they were not needed to fulfill the promise made in the beginning. *Stars* and *sand* are used to indicate the vast number of his descendants.

Verse 13. *These* means Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who never lived to see the fulfilment of the promises. *Died in faith* means that their faith remained with them as long as they lived. *Seen them afar off* (by the eyes of faith). Being *strangers and pilgrims* (temporary dwellers), they did not expect to possess the land personally, but they never doubted that their descendants would according to the promises.

Verse 14. The faith described in the preceding verse implies a belief in some other country than was then visible.

Verse 15. The country *from whence they came out* (Mesopotamia) was visible and would require no faith to realize it. Moreover, it was still obtainable and had they been *mindful of it* or cared for it, they could have returned to that place, although in so doing they would have lost their favor with God.

Verse 16. This verse expresses the same hope mentioned of Abraham in verse 10. God is pleased to own people who are trusting Him, and as a reward he will admit them into the heavenly city in the "sweet by and by." Such a home will be a *better country* than the one from which they came, or even than the one in which they were "sojourners."

Verse 17. *When he was tried* means when his faith was put to a test. *Offered up Isaac*. Abraham did not literally sacrifice his son, but he went as far as the Lord permitted him to go. Not knowing that God would change the order, Abraham was put to as strong a test of his faith as if he had slain his son. *His only begotten son* is mentioned to emphasize the severity of the test.

Verse 18. Regardless of how many other sons he might have had, that would not have lessened the severity of the test for the promise was restricted to Isaac.

Verse 19. Abraham never doubted God's ability and faithfulness in fulfilling the promise, even though his only son should die. The reason for that faith is explained in this verse in that he expected God to bring his son back to life. *Received him in a figure*; this may be regarded in two senses. The performance came so near to actual death for Isaac that the change in God's order was virtually the same to Abraham's mind as if the son had died. It was in the nature of a case where it is said that one "is snatched from the jaws of death." Another phase is the truth that it all was a figure or type of the restoration of the Son of God from death after having been slain and made an offering at the cross.

Verse 20. This blessing is recorded in Genesis 27, and it pertains to favorable experiences that were to come to his sons in the future. Being a patriarch, Isaac could speak as by a revelation from God, but he would not have done so had it not been for his faith in the declarations of God.

Verse 21. Jacob was another patriarch and could speak by the Lord's

instruction. The favorable predictions he made for Joseph's sons are recorded in Genesis 48.

Verse 22. When Joseph was taken into Egypt it was said that "the Lord was with him" (Genesis 39: 2), and He continued to be with him all the time. Hence he was able to make the prediction (by faith) that is mentioned here and at Genesis 50: 24, 25.

Verse 23. It should be understood that it was the parents of Moses who had the faith. They were true servants of God and believed that He would protect their child if they did what they could to help him live. *Not afraid* means they were not frightened by what the king of Egypt had ordered to be done to the infants.

Verse 24. *Come to years* corresponds with "full forty years old" in Acts 7: 23. At that time he repudiated his relation to the daughter of Pharaoh in order to join himself with the Hebrews. The circumstance of becoming related to Pharaoh's daughter referred to here is recorded in Exodus 2: 5-10.

Verse 25. *Pleasures of sin* refers to the life he was connected with while a part of the royal family of Egypt. A *season* would be the comparatively short time in this world, for sinful pleasures will all cease at the judgment and endless punishment will follow. On the other hand the faithful people of God, though afflicted by the enemy in this life, will enjoy endless pleasure in the world to come.

Verse 26. *Reproach of Christ*. Moses did not yet know the full system of salvation of which Christ is the central figure, but Paul considers any suffering endured in service to God as also being for the sake of Christ. *Treasures in Egypt* were the luxuries experienced by the royal group of Egyptians. (See comments at verse 25.)

Verse 27. *Forsook Egypt*. This was forty years later than the preceding verse, referring to the time he led the Israelites out of the land. *Not fearing the wrath* means notwithstanding the wrath of the king. *Seeing* (by the eye of faith) *him who is invisible* to mortal eyes.

Verse 28. This event is recorded in Exodus 12, where the sprinkling of blood was to save them from death. Since such a means could not naturally prevent death, the observance of it was necessarily done *through faith* as an act of obedience.

Verse 29. There was no natural cause for the Red Sea to open up and stand as walls, hence the Israelites marched down between them because they believed God would hold them up until His people were passed over. Egyptians *assaying* (trying) to go through the same passage were drowned because God was not with them.

Verse 30. There was no physical force in the marching and shouting of the Israelites to bring down the walls of Jericho. The power of God brought them down, but it would not have been done had they not believed in God who told them (through Joshua) to march around. The power was in God as in other cases, but He would not have used it had the people lacked the faith to obey.

Verse 31. Joshua 6: 25 says that Rahab was preserved "because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho." But she hid them because she believed the reports of the favorable things the Lord had done for His people. Acting on that faith she cooperated with the messengers in escaping the wrath of the king of Jericho. As a reward for her faith she was permitted to dwell with the Israelites, and was honored by being permitted to be in the line of ancestors of Christ. (See Joshua 6: 25; Matthew 1: 5.)

Verse 32. *What shall I more say?* Why go into details further in illustrating the fruits of faith by the lives of ancient worthies? *Time would fail me*. This is an accommodative expression, meaning that the time that would be used in going on into the same details concerning the following cases individually, would be more than is suitable to an epistle of the length of this one. Paul therefore groups a number of outstanding characters and also groups a list of things they did among them. The remainder of the chapter will be devoted to a description of heroic deeds performed through the incentive of faith. If the reader wishes to get the details of the particular persons named he may see Gideon at Judges 6: 11; Barak at Judges 4: 6; Samson at Judges 13: 24; Jephthah at Judges 11: 1; David at 1 Samuel 16: 1; Samuel at 1 Samuel 1: 20.

Verse 33. *Subdued kingdoms*. An instance of it is in 2 Samuel 8 where David overcame the Philistines; God gave him the victory because of his faithfulness. *Wrought righteousness* means to do righteous work through

the motive of faith. *Obtained promises* means they obtained the fulfilment of them because they had the faith to comply with the conditions on which the promises were made. *Stopped the mouths of lions*. This was done directly by Samson in Judges 14: 5, 6, and by Daniel indirectly in Daniel 6. In each case God gave the victory because of the faith of the men.

Verse 34. *Quenched the violence of fire* occurred when the three companions of Daniel were cast into the fiery furnace (Daniel 3). *Escaped the edge of the sword*. Instances of this are too numerous to mention all, but a notable one is in 1 Samuel 20. *Out of weakness were made strong*. An outstanding instance was that of Samson in Judges 16: 28-30, where his strength was given back to him because of his returning faith and dependence upon God. *Waxed valiant* means the servants of God were strong and brave in their contests with the enemies of God. The unassisted strength of man is a failure when faced with the might of worldly hosts, but God rewards his faithful servants with victory when the attack is made. *Aliens* refers to those of another nation. Gideon routed the Midianites in connection with his war cry, "The sword of the Lord and Gideon" (Judges 7: 20-23).

Verse 35. The phrase *raised to life again* and the word *resurrection* are from the Greek word ANASTASIS, and the phrase is a good definition of the word. Two cases of such a favor shown to women are in 1 Kings 17: 17-24 and 2 Kings 4: 18-37. *Were tortured*. This was done to force the servants of God to renounce their faith. They were promised relief from the torture if they would turn against the Lord, but they would *not accept* deliverance on such terms. Their motive for such resistance was that they might obtain a *better resurrection*. All mankind will be resurrected, but only those who are faithful till death will come forth to a happy life (Daniel 12: 2; John 5: 29.)

Verse 36. Not all the persecuted ones were put to death, but they were mistreated in various ways. Jeremiah was placed in prison (Jeremiah 37: 15-21), and afterward was put into the dungeon (Jeremiah 38: 1-6).

Verse 37. *They were stoned*. Two instances of this are recorded in 1 Kings 21: 1-14 and 2 Chronicles 24: 21, 22. *Sawn asunder*. This is a correct translation according to Thayer, and he says that an ancient tradition claims

that the prophet Isaiah was put to death in that way. This was one manner in which the ancient worthies *were tempted* or put to a test of their faith. Others were put to death by having their head severed from their body, or by being thrust through the bowels. The reason for their wandering *in sheepskins and goatskins* is explained by the next phrase, namely, *being destitute*. Of course the condition of destitution was brought about by the cruelty of their enemies, who *afflicted and tormented* them in whatever way they could devise.

Verse 38. *Of whom the world was not worthy*. The world of mankind that mistreated those faithful servants of God was not fit to have their presence. They wandered in these places to escape their enemies. (See Judges 6: 2 and 1 Samuel 13: 6.)

Verse 39. *Good report* signifies they were well spoken of on account of their faith. The passage says they received not *the promise* which refers to the promise of the seed of Abraham who was to bless the nations of the world. It means they did not live to see the fulfillment of the promise, but their confidence in the promises of God was so strong that they maintained their faith until death.

Verse 40. The *better thing* is the New Covenant established on "better promises" (chapter 8: 6), that was to be brought into the world through Christ. God's purpose was to provide this institution for *us* (Christians). Because of such a plan He did not bring the fulfillment of the promise in the lifetime of those worthies. *Not be made perfect* or complete, denotes that the scheme that was started in their days could not be completed until the time of *us* (Christians).

## Hebrews 12

Verse 1. This is an illustration drawn from the footraces that were popular in ancient times. There were always some witnesses whose business was to look on to see that the runners observed the "rules of the game." Knowing that they were being watched, the contestants would be more careful to do their best to run according to the regulations. The word *cloud* means a great throng, and the *witnesses* refers to the list of worthies who are described in the preceding chapter. Those persons were dead and hence could not actually be looking on as the Christians were running the race. The

idea is that the examples of faith that were performed by those characters should serve as an incentive for us to do our best also. *Weight* is from a Greek word that is defined in the lexicon as anything that might be a hindrance. The contestants in the races would discard all extra clothing or whatever was attached to their bodies that would make it more difficult or uncertain in running the race. Likewise the Christian should put off all practices or other conditions that would interfere with the service to Christ. Paul specifies one such hindrance which is the *sin which doth so easily beset us*. That sin is evidently unbelief, since the importance of belief (or faith) is the subject of the entire eleventh chapter. A lack of faith in the Lord would necessarily hinder anyone from rendering acceptable service. *Patience* means endurance or perseverance, and the Christian must not be irregular or unsteady in his service, but should continue steadfastly to the end. *Race* is from AGON which means any kind of contest in general use, but is here applied to the contest of the footrace. *Is set before us* denotes that the contest is open for us, but we must voluntarily enter it if we engage in it at all.

Verse 2. A runner would forget the things behind him and be looking toward the goal and what it would mean to reach it. Likewise the Christian should have his eyes on Jesus who has set the goal at the end of a faithful life. *Author* means one who sets an example for others to follow, and *finisher* is one who carries out that example by a faithful life unto the end. The pronoun *our* is not in the original and is not necessary to the thought in the mind of the apostle. The sentence denotes the faith of the Gospel as it is demonstrated by the life of Christ. The *joy* that was set before Jesus was that of being the Saviour of the world, even though it required Him to die on the cross. *Despising* means to belittle or count as nothing the *shame* of such a death. It was bad enough to die at all, the just for the unjust, but it was more humiliating to die by crucifixion because only the worst of criminals were usually executed by that means. That is why Paul makes the remark that Jesus obeyed his Father unto death, "even the death on the cross" (Philippians 2: 8). Christ was rewarded for his humble service by being seated at the right hand of God, and those who fashion their lives

after the pattern set by Jesus will be permitted to live with him and God.

Verse 3. Christians were persecuted for the sake of Jesus and often thought their sufferings were unnecessary. On this account they sought to avoid it by deserting Him and going back to Moses as their lawgiver. But Jesus also suffered for righteousness' sake, including mistreatment from sinners who were usually contradicting His teaching. Christians should consider this example and take courage for the conflict. *Faint in your minds* means to be discouraged on account of trials.

Verse 4. They had not suffered as much as Jesus did, for he was compelled to defend His faith to the extent of shedding his blood.

Verse 5. The *exhortation* referred to is in Proverbs 3: 11, 12. This exhortation by Solomon is based on a truth that is in force under all ages of the world, hence Paul cites it and applies it to the servants of God in the Christian Dispensation. *Despise not* denotes that they should not belittle or disrespect the correction. *Chastening* refers to the discipline that a righteous parent will exercise upon his son for disobedience. To *faint* means to become despondent over the rebukes of our Heavenly Father.

Verse 6. The Lord chastises his children because of His love for them, even to the extent of scourging (suffering them to be afflicted) for their training.

Verse 7. Paul is making his comparison to an earthly parent who is the proper kind, not one who fails in his duty of controlling his children. God chastens his children for their good as do fleshly fathers their sons. Christians are exhorted to submit humbly to the chastisement from God, on the principle that His love for them prompts the correction.

Verse 8. *Bastards and not sons*. Even so-called "illegitimate" boys are sons of men and women, and are brought forth by the same law of reproduction that is the source of all human beings. Hence the term as used in contrast with *sons* is employed in a technical or legal sense. The idea is that if a man refrained from using discipline on a boy it would be on the ground that he was not his son; that he belonged to another outside his own family. Likewise, if a professed Christian objects to being chastised by the Lord, it implies that he does not claim to be a son of the Lord.

Verse 9. All good persons remember with appreciation the punishment they received from their fathers in the days of their minority, for they realize that it was for their good. How much more should we accept with humility the correction from *the Father of spirits* (our spiritual Father) and live a life of uprightness.

Verse 10. *For a few days*. During the days when we were minors which was a comparatively short time in the light of the endless future. *Their own pleasure*. Not that the fathers obtained any enjoyment from the punishing of their children, but the word means that it was according to their best judgment. God is infinite in judgment and totally unselfish in His motive for chastising his children, and does it solely for their own advantage.

Verse 11. Punishment is always unpleasant to the body and cannot bring any enjoyment for the time being. The good done is to be realized in the form of a better line of conduct by having been corrected from a life of waywardness. Of course this is on condition that the children are *exercised thereby*, which means they take the correction properly and amend their ways.

Verse 12. Hands hanging down and feeble knees indicate a spirit of despair or aversion to the chastisement for the punishment of wrong. Such persons should take a different attitude in the matter and look upon the situation as one where they really have been favored.

Verse 13. *Make straight paths*. Christians are not permitted to devise their own plan of religious life; that has been done by the Lord. The meaning is that they should be careful to walk in the path that has been prepared for them. They should do this not only for their own sake, but for others who may be influenced by their example. Otherwise if they do that which is not right, those who have less knowledge or ability might be confused and caused to lose the way. Instead of such a result, their lives should be such that the *lame* or weaker ones may be *healed* or led aright.

Verse 14. *Follow peace* should be on the basis of James 3: 17 which requires the peace to be in harmony with the pure wisdom from above. Paul recognizes the necessity of this proviso in Romans 12: 18 where he says "if it be possible." *Holiness* is the same as righteousness and without it no man

shall *see the Lord* which means to enjoy Him.

Verse 15. *Look diligently* denotes the idea of being careful how one conducts himself, otherwise he may get out of the right path and fall from the grace or favor of God. *Root of bitterness* means a feeling of hatred against others, which could be only a source of *trouble* among disciples that would spread defilement among them.

Verse 16. This verse specifies some of the things referred to in general terms in the preceding one. Fornicators should not be permitted to remain among the disciples because of their evil influence (1 Corinthians 5: 6, 7). A *profane* person is one who makes a temporal use of a sacred thing. That is what Esau did when he sold his *birthright* (a sacred possession) for a mess of food (a temporal article). In general practice it means any disciple who would try to obtain some earthly advantage out of his profession of faith in Christ.

Verse 17. *Found no place for repentance*. Repentance means more than sorrow or regret for a mistake, but also requires that it be corrected. Esau knew afterward that he had acted foolishly in selling his birthright, but he had no opportunity for getting it back, for Jacob would not give it up.

Verse 18. From here through several verses the apostle returns to the leading subject of the epistle, namely, the contrasts between the system under Moses and that under Christ. The mount that *might be touched* was Sinai because it was a literal one (Exodus 19: 12), and it was from this mount that the old law was given. The rest of the verse is descriptive of the conditions when the Israelites approached the area.

Verse 19. This continues the conditions at Sinai which are recorded in Exodus 20: 19 and other passages in connection therewith.

Verse 20. *Could not endure that which was commanded* sounds as if God required something that the people could not do, which we know was not the case. The meaning is that the conditions were so awe-inspiring that it overwhelmed them with terror. The things mentioned in the latter half of the verse are recorded in Exodus 19: 12, 13.

Verse 21. This remark of Moses is not recorded in Exodus, but Paul was inspired and was able to report this



part of the circumstance for our information.

Verse 22. The preceding verses describe the mount to which Christians do *not come* (as the Israelites did); the apostle now will describe the mount to which they have come. He does so by a series of points of identity which apply to the one divine institution under Christ, which was set up in Jerusalem which is termed *Mount Zion*. Christians do not actually go to the city of Jerusalem, but they come to the institution that was set up in that city. In coming to this divine institution we are brought into near relation with other spiritual places and things, to be named in this and the next two verses. *City of the living God* is that one in which He lives and which is the one "which hath foundations" (chapter 11:10). *Heavenly Jerusalem* is a contrast between Heaven above and the literal one below. The angels live in Heaven but are used in service for the people of God (chapter 1:14). By coming into the church it brings us into the benefit of these holy services.

Verse 23. *General assembly* is from PANEGURIS, which means the same as a mass meeting, and refers to the universal membership of the church of Christ. The same institution is composed of the *firstborn* which is plural in the original Greek and also is in the possessive case. The members of the church are called *firstborn* in a figurative sense. In old times the firstborn child was heir to the possessions of his father. Since all faithful members of the church are heirs of the spiritual possessions of Christ, they are here called the *firstborn* (ones). The phrase *church of the firstborn* is not a scriptural title or name of the church as it is erroneously used often by our brethren. *Written in heaven*. The names of the faithful children of God are enrolled in heaven (Luke 10:20; Revelation 21:27). Membership in the church of Christ brings us into fellowship with God who is the *Judge of all*. It also makes us have relationship with the *spirits of just men made perfect*, meaning those who have reached the complete state under the providence of God, such as those described in Matthew 27:53; Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:20; Ephesians 4:8; Jude 14.

Verse 24. Jesus became the mediator of the new covenant by giving that law into the world to take the place

of the law of Moses. *Blood of sprinkling* is so worded because under the system of Moses the blood of animals was literally sprinkled on the objects to be affected. The blood of Christ is sprinkled figuratively when men obey the Gospel which brings them into the benefits of that blood. (See 1 John 1:7.) *Speaketh better things than that of Abel*. The blood of Abel cried for vengeance (Genesis 4:10 and 15), while the blood of Christ calls for mercy (chapter 2:17). The word *better* means "more useful or serviceable." The blood of Christ opened up a way of salvation for all mankind, which was not true of the blood of Abel.

Verse 25. *Him that speaketh* means Christ whose blood speaks better things than that of Abel. Judaizers would have the Christians *refuse* Jesus by going back to Moses for their law. Moses *spake* on earth (at Sinai) and even his law dared not be refused (chapter 2:1, 2; 10:29). Jesus *spake from heaven* when he sent the Holy Spirit down to the apostles in order to give them the new law. Paul asks how can we escape rejection from the Lord if we refuse His law.

Verse 26. *Whose voice* means that of God, speaking in conjunction with that of Christ who was always associated with God in all that was done (Genesis 1:26; John 1:3). *Then shook the earth* occurred at Sinai as described in verses 18-20. That shaking brought in a new system of religious practice, but it was one that was not destined to be permanent. Instead, God purposed to bring about one more shaking that was to be more extensive and would involve both heaven and earth; the event is predicted in Haggai 2:5-9. The prediction refers to the time when the Lord was to bring in the New Covenant and thereby disannul all other systems that had been in use.

Verse 27. Paul explains that since there was to be but one more shaking, it signified that what would be left in force after the shaking would be so firm that it would be useless to try the shaking again. Such was the case, for when the great shaking took place at Jerusalem on Pentecost, the Jewish and Patriarchal Dispensations were gone and only the kingdom of Christ was able to *remain* as our verse says.

Verse 28. *We* (Christians) *receiving a kingdom* takes place when people renounce the worldly life and come into the kingdom of Christ. *Cannot be*

*moved* is explained in the preceding verse, and in Daniel 2: 44. With such an institution in which we may live, there is much reason for our serving God acceptably, and the apostle prays that divine grace may be had in the service. *Reverence* and *godly fear* are virtually the same, meaning profound regard for God and resolve to treat him with full devotion.

Verse 29. God is merciful to all those who will accept His mercy, but he is a revenging God upon those who do not respect His law (chapter 10: 28, 29; verse 25).

### Hebrews 13

Verse 1. The main argument of this epistle is completed and the present chapter is given to various subjects pertaining to the church and individual duties. *Brotherly love* signifies the love extended to others by reason of the common relationship in the family of God.

Verse 2. *Entertain strangers* is from a Greek word that is defined in the lexicon as hospitality, especially toward those outside one's immediate personal acquaintances. *Entertained angels unawares* was done by Abraham in Genesis 18. However, Jesus taught the principle of discretion in the bestowal of favors (Matthew 7: 6), hence a Christian is not required to keep "open house" for all stragglers regardless of circumstances.

Verse 3. The *bonds* were the chains fastened upon disciples because of their devotion to Christ. Those who are fortunate enough not to be in chains as yet, should consider themselves as partakers of the same persecutions. *Also in the body* refers to the body of Christ (the church); being in the same body with the persecuted ones should create a feeling of brotherly sympathy.

Verse 4. *Marriage is honorable* because it is the Lord's arrangement for the perpetuation of the race, hence the marriage bed should be regarded as undefiled. As an inducement for man to cooperate with God in this plan, He has made the intimate relation a pleasurable one. All good things may be abused, hence there are people who use this relationship for the one purpose only. Such people should remember the case of Onan in Genesis 38: 8-10 and beware. The fact of having contracted legal marriage does not justify Christians in counteracting God's original purpose for the insti-

tution. *Whoremongers* refers especially to men who are immoral and *adulterers* to either sex.

Verse 5. Conversation means one's conduct or manner of life, and the sentence means that their lives should not be influenced by an overmuch desire for the wealth of this world. *To be content* does not deny one the right to "look out for a rainy day," or to acquire more of the good things of life than he needs for his own personal use; such a theory would contradict Ephesians 4: 28. The thought is that while we are making lawful efforts to produce the desirable things of life, we should not be fretting because we are not as successful as others or as much so as we had expected to be ourselves. We may always have the assurance that we will be cared for in some way.

Verse 6. We may *boldly* or confidently say that the Lord is our helper. Men may persecute us even to the extent of depriving us of the comforts of life, yet we should not fear about the outcome if we are faithful to Him.

Verse 7. *Remember* means to be mindful of these rulers which means the elders. They have spoken the word of God in their work as shepherds over the flock (Acts 20: 28). *Whose faith follow*. That is we should imitate the example of faithfulness in the discharge of their duties. Verse 17 is more direct in its requirements of the treatment of the rulers in association with the flock, hence the present verse has especial reference to the ones who have gone on out of life, but whose examples of faith were still worthy of imitation. The disciples are told to consider the object and outcome of those noble lives of faith.

Verse 8. This verse continues the thought begun in the preceding one, telling us what was the *end* or object or motive of the faithful lives of the rulers, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. Since He is *the same yesterday, and today, and forever*, to have Him as the motive of one's life would insure a life of faithfulness till death.

Verse 9. The *divers* (different) and *strange* (from the outside) *doctrines* (or teachings) refers especially to the disturbances of the Judaizers. *To be carried about* indicates something that can be moved with the wind and hence having very little weight. Paul wishes them to be *established* or firmly set with the *grace* or favor of Christ, instead of relying on the regulations of

the old law regarding meats. A few more verses are devoted to some contrasts and likenesses between the two dispensations.

Verse 10. The Mosaic system had a literal altar service on which animals were burned in sacrifice. Some parts of the beasts were reserved for food to be eaten by the priests who performed the service. We Christians also have an altar that is not a literal or temporal one; it is the sacrificial service of Christ. Those who accept the teaching of the Judaizers in going back to the old tabernacle, forfeit their right to the benefits of Christ's sacrifice; they have fallen from grace (Galatians 5: 4).

Verse 11. *The bodies of those beasts*, etc. (See Exodus 29: 14.) The blood of those beasts was used in the most holy place while the bodies were taken to the outside of the camp and burned as a sacrifice for sin.

Verse 12. There is a beautiful parallel drawn here between the bodies referred to and that of Christ. He was taken outside the city of Jerusalem to be put to shame by death on the cross as the worst of criminals.

Verse 13. But this humiliating treatment of Jesus was imposed upon him by his enemies, although it was a part of God's great plan of salvation to be accomplished through His only begotten Son. True followers of Him therefore will not be ashamed to "stand by" Him in his humiliation and will take joy in sharing in the reproach.

Verse 14. The material things of this world are all finally to pass away. Even the cherished city of Jerusalem in which was located the temple and center of the Mosaic worship, was then about to be destroyed by the Romans. Then why not give attention to the service under Christ which will prepare one for the city which is *to come* and which will never pass away.

Verse 15. Instead of the material incense that was used with the sacrifices of the Mosaic system, let us offer the kind that is spiritual. Instead of the fruit of the field or sheepfold, let it be the *fruit of our lips* in the form of praise to God for all the wonderful blessings which we have received.

Verse 16. Not that all physical or temporal services are to be dropped from our activities. We may still do good to others by *communicating* or sharing with them the good things necessary to their personal wellbeing.

God is still pleased with that kind of sacrifices.

Verse 17. *Obey* is from PEITHO and Thayer defines it at this place as follows: "To listen to, obey, yield to, comply with." The definition agrees with the connection in which it is used here. The persons are said to *have the rule* which could not be accomplished unless they were obeyed. This thought is repeated by the word *submit* which is from HUPEIKO, which Thayer defines in the same passage as follows: "To give way, yield, to yield to authority and admonition, to submit." No institution can succeed without government, and that calls for governors or rulers. But such officers cannot govern unless they are obeyed, hence the members of the church are commanded to be obedient to the rulers which means the elders. *They watch for your souls*. Since the souls of men cannot be seen it follows that the elders must watch the actions of their bodies. The members sometimes resent their elders and seem to think they have a strong complaint when they say "we are being watched." But the elders are not doing their duty unless they watch the actions of the members. The elders will have to *give account* for the conduct of the flock, and if the members do not live in obedience to their rulers the account will not be a joyous one. If the facts require an unfavorable report to the Chief Shepherd, such an account will be unprofitable for the sheep for it will cause their souls to be rejected at the day of judgment.

Verse 18. *Pray for us*. Inspired apostles felt the need of fellowship and the benefit of the prayers of their brethren. Paul professes to have a good conscience which was doubtless suggested by the accusations that had been made against him, making him a prisoner in Rome. The original for *honestly* is really a stronger word than it, for a man could be honest while doing wrong. It truly means to live "so that there shall be no room for blame"—Thayer. In order for a man to have a *good conscience* in the sight of God, it is necessary that his life be right as measured by the will of God.

Verse 19. Evidently the Hebrew brethren to whom this epistle was written were principally those living in Judea. Paul was in Rome and detained as a prisoner on account of his testimony for Christ. He besought the brethren to pray for his deliverance so that he might again come

among them and labor in the work of the Lord.

Verse 20. *God of peace* is said of Him because he is the source of all genuine peace that is in harmony with divine wisdom (James 3: 17). He brought his Son from the dead in order to give the assurance of genuine peace to all true servants of righteousness. *Great shepherd of the sheep* is Christ who is called the "chief Shepherd" in 1 Peter 5: 4. This emphasized title is given to Christ because elders are referred to as shepherds in that they are told to "feed the church of God" which is termed the flock (Acts 20: 28). The things Paul wishes God to do for them in the next verse are to be accomplished *through the blood of the everlasting covenant*. It is called everlasting because it was not to be replaced by any other as was the Mosaic covenant.

Verse 21. *Make you perfect* means to equip them completely for every good work in doing His will. It is to be done through Jesus Christ which will make it *well-pleasing in his* (God's) *sight*.

Verse 22. *Exhortation* means to insist on doing one's known duty, and Paul has clearly made known to them their duty to serve under Christ and not Moses. *Few words* is a comparative term. The epistle to the Hebrews though consisting of several chapters, yet it embraces arguments covering the books of Exodus and Leviticus and parts of others in the Old Testament. That makes the book of Hebrews comparatively "few words."

Verse 23. This is the only place I have found that mentions the imprisonment of Timothy. Paul's confidence in the prospect of his own release (verse 19) was so strong that he planned on joining Timothy soon in going to meet with these brethren.

Verse 24. *Salute* means to give a friendly greeting which implies a wish for the wellbeing of the one saluted. This was to include the rulers (elders) as well as other saints (Christians). Others in Italy (of which Rome was the capital) joined Paul in his salutation for the brethren in Judea.

Verse 25. *Grace* means the unmerited favor of the Lord and it was the sincere wish of Paul that his brethren everywhere should so live as to receive that favor. *Amen* is from a Greek word that is spelled the same as English. In the King James Version it

is rendered "amen" 50 times and "verily" 100 times.

### James 1

Verse 1. I have consulted a number of works of reference such as commentaries, lexicons, dictionaries and histories, as well as the various passages in the New Testament that are related to the subject, and my conclusion is that the author of this epistle is "James the Lord's brother" (Galatians 1: 19). In the passage just cited he is called an apostle but not one of the twelve. He was an important man as may be seen by the following passages. Acts 12: 17; 15: 13-21; 21: 18; Galatians 1: 19; 2: 9, 12. James calls himself a servant of God *and* of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is significant, for it indicates that both of these members of the Deity must be recognized as having divine authority. The epistle was especially written to Jewish Christians who were scattered among the Gentiles. The term *twelve tribes* is used figuratively only, for in Christ there are no tribal distinctions. It is used in the same sense as Paul used it in Acts 26: 7, where we know he was speaking of them as Christians. The truth is that there were disciples of Christ made from all the twelve tribes. *Greeting* means a friendly salutation from one who wishes well for the one greeted.

Verse 2. *Count it all joy* cannot mean to pretend that they get enjoyment out of that which is disagreeable, for that would be an act of insincerity. The idea is they should regard it as something that would result in a benefit. *Temptations* refers to adversities or hardships such as might be imposed upon them by their enemies.

Verse 3. *Patience* means endurance and if the disciples remain true to Christ amidst the trials, it will demonstrate the genuineness of their faith.

Verse 4. Since the good result of trials that have been endured through faith is to demonstrate *patience*, the disciples are urged to "let the good work go on." The word *perfect* means complete, and if the good work is allowed to continue to the end, it will result in a life that is completely devoted to God or that is willing to go far enough that it will be *wanting* (lacking) *nothing*.

Verse 5. The word *wisdom* is from the Greek word SOPHIA which occurs 51 times in the New Testament. It

has many shades of meaning concerning which Thayer makes the following statement: "Used of the knowledge of very diverse [different] matters, so that the shade of meaning in which the word is taken must be discovered from the context [connection] in every particular case." We are sure that God will not change the physical conditions of any man's brain, therefore the wisdom which James says He will give in answer to prayer cannot mean the natural gift colloquially called "horse sense." Hence the passage means to ask God to help us in our efforts to use our faculties in acquiring useful knowledge. *Upbraideth not* means God will never tire of hearing the requests of His children.

Verse 6. Regardless of what may be said as to how or when God answers prayer, we are sure He will not grant any petition that is not in harmony with His word. Therefore to *ask in faith* means to ask for such favors that are in harmony with that word since faith comes by hearing it (Romans 10: 17). Furthermore, we must believe that word after we hear it or else our attitude will be a wavering one. James likens such a mind to a wave that is unsteady because it changes its position every time the wind changes.

Verse 7. Again, regardless of how or when God answers prayer, He will not grant any petition made by a person such as the preceding verse describes.

Verse 8. *Double minded* means to be uncertain or doubting. Thayer defines it at this place as one who is "divided in interest." Since the passage says he is *unstable in all his ways* it puts him in the class described in verse six.

Verse 9. *Low degree*. Those in the humble or lowly walks of life may take satisfaction from the *exaltation* or honor of being a servant of Christ. That is the most dignified station or manner of life that any man can maintain.

Verse 10. *The rich* man who trusts in his wealth (Mark 10: 24) has no just cause for rejoicing unless he become *low* or humble. The uncertainty of the wealth of this world is likened to the flowers that are flourishing so briefly.

Verse 11. As the sun overcomes the beauty and show of the blossoms, so the test of time will finally put an end to the vanity of riches. *Ways* means purposes or schemes that a man has

that have the accumulation of wealth as their chief motive. This does not condemn the lawful production of property that is intended to be used for doing good. (See Ephesians 4: 28.)

Verse 12. *Temptations* means trials same as in verse 2. They are bound to come especially to a man who is determined to serve Christ in the midst of sinful men. But such experiences are calculated to become a test of his faith. The test will not be completed until the end of life (Revelation 2: 10), and if the disciple is thus faithful he will receive the crown promised by the Lord.

Verse 13. The Bible does not contradict itself, so when it says for us to consider temptations as cause for joy (verse 2) then here tells us that God does not tempt any man, we know there is a difference between temptations. The key to the subject is in the word *evil* which is not the same as trials or adversities. It is from an original word that always means the opposite of good; is always morally bad. Of course God does not use such means to test His creatures in their religious life.

Verse 14. James uses the process of natural reproduction to illustrate the course of sin. First a man's lust (evil desire) entices the object or victim of wicked design.

Verse 15. With the consummation of the evil design, that is, when it has accomplished its gratification the conception takes place. After the conception the next step is the *bringing forth* of the creature that was conceived. The name of the creature so conceived and brought forth is *SIN*. The final destiny of such a creature is *death* or separation from God. The way to avoid such a regrettable reproduction is for a man to resist all of the enticements as a virtuous woman should resist all who would lure her into a life of shame.

Verse 16. In the preceding two verses the writer draws an illustration from the natural process of reproduction. In this and the following verse he makes one out of the motions of the heavenly bodies. *Err* is from the Greek word *PLANAO*, and it is the verb form of a noun in the same class which is "planet," coming from the Greek word *PLANATES*, which Jude 13 uses where he speaks of "wandering stars." Since these planets or stars were believed to wander from side to side, their action was adopted into

language to describe men who stray from the straight path. The verse means that Christians should not imitate the action of those planets here translated by the word *err*.

Verse 17. We may rightly feel indebted to any thing or person that is the source of benefits to us. The planets are not such a source in the sense of being the giver, but instead are themselves a gift to us. The giver of them is God and James calls Him the *Father of lights*, the last word meaning the planets because they are luminous bodies. Since the Father (or creator) of these lights is the giver of all good things, we should imitate Him and not the planets which have the habit of *erring* or wandering about. God does not waver and as an indication of the steadiness of His example. James declares that He does not even produce a shadow by *turning*. The figure is drawn from the circumstance that at certain seasons and at particular places on the earth, when the sun is straight over the equator it cannot cause any shadow. But when it *turns* to go either north or south (as it seems to do), it will then cast a shadow. James thus describes God as more fixed in His characteristics than the sun.

Verse 18. The writer again uses the thought of reproduction for an illustration. A father begets his own children and they become of the same *kind* of creatures as himself. God begets men by the word of truth concerning Christ (1 John 5: 1). *First-fruits* is used in the sense of seniority because Christians are the first creatures who are said to have been born to God through faith in Jesus who is the "only begotten" Son of the Father in the sense of personality of being.

Verse 19. *Wherefore* means because of such a truth, namely, that belief of the word concerning Christ begets one unto God, it is a great reason for giving respect to that word. *Swift* means eager or ready to hear the word of the Lord. No man can be too eager to hear the word of God, but he should be *slow* or discreet in what he says. Likewise he is not condemned for the mere fact of becoming angry (Ephesians 4: 26), but he should bring himself into control and not be inclined to fly into a rage at every provocation.

Verse 20. A man who controls himself may do right in spite of his anger, but no person will work the righteousness of God because he is worked up by wrath.

Verse 21. *Lay apart* signifies that a man must put his evil practices out of his life himself, and not expect God to work some special influence over him to purify him. *All filthiness* means any kind of impurity either of body or mind. *Naughtiness* is a stronger word than is usually attached to it, and means that which is injurious and wicked. *Superfluity* signifies something that is extra or that is useless as an item of a man's character. The sentence denotes that any evil principle is such an item when it is a part of a man's conduct. *Receive with meekness* means to accept the word in humility and not in the spirit of resentment. *Engrafted* signifies to be implanted or received in the heart with the spirit of obedience. If it is so received the word of the Lord will save the soul.

Verse 22. Even a good seed that is implanted in the soil will produce no fruit unless it becomes active. So the *engrafted* word will be fruitless unless the receiver of it becomes active and does what it directs. It is a matter of self-deception to imagine that hearing the word is all that is required to be acceptable to the Lord. Even men will not be deceived (much less the Lord) by such a character, for it will be apparent to all that such a person is not producing anything useful to others.

Verse 23. While a man is standing before a mirror he is seeing himself in reflection but no action is being shown. Likewise as long as a person is only hearing (or reading) the Bible he is seeing his duties portrayed but seeing nothing being done.

Verse 24. The moment he leaves the mirror the image disappears from his mind, and he will need to return to it again to "see himself as others see him." If he could remain constantly before the glass he would never forget the vision of his appearance. However, in a literal sense a man could not remain always in front of the mirror and also attend to his other business, but that is not the part of the subject James is illustrating.

Verse 25. In mental and spiritual matters it is possible to accomplish things that are impossible with material activities. Hence it is possible to be constantly in the view of the spiritual mirror and at the same time be actively engaged in the Lord's work as the writer now insists. It is called the *perfect law of liberty* because it makes us free from our sins



and gives us the spiritual liberty that cannot be had from any other source. (See Romans 8: 2) It is necessary to look into the Bible in order to learn what kind of work the Lord desires, then what is done will be correct as to activity and such will bring the blessing of God.

Verse 26. Thayer defines the original for *religious* as "Fearing or worshipping God," and *religion* is the noun form of the same term. *Bridleth not his tongue* would violate verse 19, and such a person is considered self-deceived (verse 22). Such a religion is *vain* which means "without any force" according to Thayer's definition.

Verse 27. *Pure* means unmixed and *undefiled* denotes something that is unsoiled. There is not much difference between the two words, but the former has the idea of something not attached to another ingredient to begin with, while the latter denotes that it remains so afterward. *Visit*. One definition of the word is "To look upon in order to help or benefit"—Thayer. It has to do with one's actions toward others. *Unspotted from the world* means to be free from the vices commonly practiced by mankind.

## James 2

Verse 1. *Have* is from ECHO which requires two full pages in Thayer's lexicon for definitions. The specific meaning of it in any given passage must therefore be determined by the way it is used. In this verse the writer discusses the subject of proper treatment for others and hence it means they are not to hold or exercise the faith as stated. *Respect of persons* comes from one Greek word that means "partiality." *The faith* is used as a term for the whole system of religious practice under Christ. Therefore the verse means they should not show partiality in the exercises that pertain to the public assembly. (See verse 4.)

Verse 2. This verse merely describes two men in different classes as to their possessions and personal appearance. Nothing is said of character or anything that pertains to actual merit.

Verse 3. This verse indicates they had the services of ushers, and they would seat the audience as they were coming in, showing a preference for the "well-dressed" ones by giving them the most desirable places.

Verse 4. Here the writer uses the very word of our definition by saying

they are *partial*. *Judges of* is rendered "judges having" by The Englishman's Greek New Testament. The passage means those people had evil thoughts when they were judging or deciding on who should sit where.

Verse 5. A man will not be given any special credit in the kingdom of heaven by virtue of his being poor. The conditions of salvation are such that the poor have the same chance as the rich. Moreover, since the conditions require a great deal of humility and sacrifice, the poor generally are the more ready to accept it. In that sense the poor are *chosen* to be *rich in faith*. Such richness in faith is what makes them heirs or entitles them to the advantage of the kingdom. This is also according to the promise that has been made by Christ and the apostles.

Verse 6. To *despise* means to belittle or look down upon, and some of the disciples had been guilty of such an attitude toward people who were poor. It is usually the rich people who resort to the courts in suits of oppression in order to squeeze a little more money out of unfortunate debtors.

Verse 7. Thayer defines the original for *blaspheme* as follows: "To speak reproachfully, rail at, calumniate [accuse falsely]." The *worthy name* is Christ whom oppressors would be inclined to belittle because His teaching condemns their practices.

Verse 8. *Royal* means kingly and the greatest laws ever given to men have come from the King of heaven. Among those laws is the one which commands to "love thy neighbor as thyself." James says if we obey this we will do well.

Verse 9. No man who loves his neighbor as himself will mistreat him because he is poor. Hence he will not show *respect to persons* which we have seen is defined as "partiality." *Convinced of the law* denotes that the one who shows partiality is guilty under the law of being a transgressor of that law.

Verse 10. *Whole law* as James is using it refers to the ten commandments. Not that the decalogue is still the law of God as it once was, for it has been replaced by the law of Christ. But it is used to illustrate the point which the writer has under consideration, because it is formed into a certain number of separate commandments each of which is a complete

unit of law. Thus if a man rejects a single one of these ten commands he is guilty of all because they all were given by one authority.

Verse 11. The command at the end of verse 8 is not in that exact form in the first account of the decalogue but it is so worded in Leviticus 19: 18. It is also virtually included in the last six of the ten, for if a man loves his neighbor as himself he will observe all those six. In our verse the writer mentions two of the original ten commandments. The point he is making is that since the same God who gave one of them gave the other also, therefore no matter which a person rejects he is rejecting God. So the verse has no application to the mistakes that all people are liable to make through forgetfulness or other weaknesses of the flesh. In other words, the whole matter that James is considering pertains to the question of the Lord's authority.

Verse 12. *Law of liberty* is the one named in chapter 1: 25 and refers to the New Testament. *So speak ye and so do.* Since that law is the one by which we will be judged, our lives should be regulated by it now.

Verse 13. Matthew 5: 7 says the merciful shall obtain mercy, which is the affirmative side. The present verse deals with the negative and teaches that if a man shows no mercy to others, he likewise shall *have no mercy* given him at the day of judgment. *Mercy rejoices against judgment.* If a man is merciful to others he will not have any fears of the judgment day as far as this subject is concerned.

Verse 14. The writer is still treating the subject introduced in the early verses of the chapter which concerns the proper conduct toward the poor. This verse states a principle that has general application in the Christian life, but it will be used for a specific purpose at present with reference to those in need.

Verse 15. The conditions mentioned designate needs that are actual and not merely some imaginary ones, so that the persons deserve assistance of their brethren.

Verse 16. It is well to have sympathy for those in need if the expressed wishes are supplemented with actions. But the most touching sentiments that can be spoken will not put any clothing upon a naked body.

Verse 17. Faith is a grand principle and no man can be a Christian without it. Neither will he be regarded by the

Lord as one unless he makes his faith a living one by good works, such as supplying the comforts of life to those in need and worthy.

Verse 18. The first sentence represents a man who seems to think that faith and works are two distinct virtues of equal worth, and that a person is at liberty to make his own choice of them and the reward from the Lord will be the same in either case. James replies with a remark that shows he will not endorse either without the other. *Show me thy faith without thy works* only states what the pretender claims to show, not that James is admitting that the claim is true. He does not ask anyone to take his word but proposes to prove his faith by actions.

Verse 19. It is well to believe there is one God if a man does not stop there; if he does he is no better than the devils (or demons). Matthew 8: 29 gives one account of the trembling of these beings. But while they trembled their expressions of terror did not bring them any benefit, which shows that trembling or belief is not enough.

Verse 20. *Vain* means empty or useless, and James so considers a man who makes a profession of faith but does not back it up with something helpful.

Verse 21. Hebrews 11: 17 says Abraham's faith was tried by the event about his son. The present verse says it was *works* that did it or that justified him. There is no disagreement between the passages. It was his faith that caused him to offer up his son; his works put his faith into a practical proof.

Verse 22. The word *perfect* means complete, and thus the works of Abraham completed or rounded out the character which was founded upon his faith.

Verse 23. *Scripture was fulfilled* or made good. This refers to Genesis 15: 6 where God had just assured Abraham that he would have a great many descendants. He knew that Abraham would finally prove his faith by his works, and hence he was regarded as a righteous man. Abraham is called the *friend of God* in 2 Chronicles 20: 7 and it is repeated by James. This is on the same principle that Jesus uses the word "friend" in John 15: 14. He says they are His friends "if ye do whatsoever I command you." There are people today who glory in calling

themselves "friends," yet they stoutly disobey and even resist many of the commands of Christ. According to Jesus they are not His friends; if not friends then they must be considered enemies.

Verse 24. The *works* that James means consist of doing what the Lord commands. He is not considering the works of the law of Moses, for at the time of this epistle those were termed "dead works" (Hebrews 6: 1; 9: 14).

Verse 25. Rahab was justified by works in the same sense as that of Abraham. (See the comments at verse 21.)

Verse 26. The spirit or soul of a man does not operate in this world separate from his body. Neither can the body act without the spirit and hence when alone the body is dead. The circumstance is used to illustrate the difference between faith and works.

### James 3

Verse 1. *Masters* is from DIDASKALOS, and it is the same word rendered "teachers" in Hebrews 5: 12. In that place Paul says the brethren ought to be teachers, using the word in a good sense, while James says for the brethren not to have many of them. We must therefore consider the connection in which it is used in order to get the meaning in any given case. In our verse it is plain that James is writing of men who put themselves up as teachers who do not properly control their tongues. Such people are to be condemned all the more because they do harm by their words.

Verse 2. *For in many things*. If we do have too many of such professed teachers we will *offend all* or all (of us) will *offend* or stumble. The importance of our language is the subject in several verses. If a man does not *offend* (or stumble) with the improper use of his tongue he will prove to be a perfect or complete man, controlling even his body.

Verse 3. The great influence of apparently small things is the idea James is illustrating in this and the next verse. In size and weight a bridle bit is very small, yet with it we control the direction of the entire animal.

Verse 4. The same thing is true of the *helm* or rudder of a ship. It is but a few inches or feet long, yet it may guide a ship that is many hundreds of feet in length.

Verse 5. The application of the illustration is made to the *tongue*. The last word is from GLOSSA, which means as its first definition the literal organ that is a member of the fleshly body. The Greek term is used because the tongue is the instrument by which the speech or words of a person are produced. Actually it is the language of the individual that is being considered, although the form of the phrases is related to the physical organ of speech. James uses another illustration for the same purpose as that in verses 3 and 4. If a man wished to burn a structure as tall as a tower, he would need only to use a torch an inch long.

Verse 6. James calls the tongue a *fire* because he had just used the illustration of "a little fire." It is called a *world of iniquity* because the original word for *world* means mankind. The evil use of the tongue will affect mankind in general if it is not curbed. *Defiles the whole body*. Our organ of speech if allowed to work sinfully will result in evil conduct of the whole body. *Course* literally means "a wheel" according to Thayer, and *nature* means the procedure of human existence. The figure represents it as a wheel that is rolling onward. James means that the evil tongue sets this wheel on fire. *It is set on fire of hell* (GEHENNA); not literally, of course. But a torch has to be "lighted" from some source, and James regards a wicked tongue as so bad that he represents its owner as having applied to hell to "get a light."

Verse 7. The facts of controlling a horse with a bit, guiding a ship with a rudder or training a beast by man all have one thing in common, namely, the feat is accomplished by another party; the things controlled are acted upon by an outside force.

Verse 8. Such a feat cannot be accomplished upon the tongue because of its characteristic of poison which defies being subdued by another man than its owner. James does not say a man cannot subdue his own tongue; in truth he teaches that a man can and should bridle his own tongue (chapter 1: 26).

Verse 9. The main point in this and the next verse is to show the inconsistency in the uncontrolled tongue. Man is made *after the similitude of God*, therefore He should be regarded with respect. Yet the evil tongue will bless one and curse the other.

Verse 10. This repeats the thought of the preceding verse in another form of expression. The words *same mouth* emphasize the inconsistency in a more direct way.

Verses 11, 12. James refers to the consistency of the things in the natural creation, to shame the man who is double-minded in the use of his tongue. The same God who made the inanimate things named also created man and gave him a tongue wherewith to express his intelligence. How inexcusable it is therefore in him to make such an evil use of the blessing of speech.

Verse 13. *Wise man* is one who has learned to exercise good judgment, and *knowledge* means information concerning which he may exercise that good judgment. James gives some specific suggestions on how such a man may manifest those traits in his *conversation*, which means conduct or manner of life. He is to do it with *meekness of wisdom*; a truly wise man will be *meek* or humble and not boastful of his knowledge.

Verse 14. *Bitter envying* denotes a mind that is resentful toward another person who is fortunate. The original word for *strife* means an attempt to outdo some other person by fair means or otherwise. Should such a person succeed he is admonished not to glory in it. *Lie not against the truth*. Certainly all lies are against the truth, but the special thought is that an envious person cannot oppose a righteous or fortunate one without contradicting the truth involved.

Verse 15. *Wisdom* is from a Greek word that has a great variety of meanings. Thayer comments on this phase of the subject as follows: "Used of knowledge of very diverse matters, so that the shade of meaning in which the word is taken must be discovered from the context [connection] in every particular case." In general the word refers to knowledge or information that a person may have (or claim to have), whether it be good or bad, true or false. This should prepare us to see why James calls something by the word *wisdom* when he is speaking of that which he disapproves. Earthly is used as a contrast to *above*; *sensual* pertains to the natural or animal part of our nature; *devilish* is an adjective and means something that has the character of demons.

Verse 16. James verifies his description of *this wisdom* (preceding verse)

by repeating virtually the sentiments of verse 14. He emphasizes it by adding the results of such "wisdom," namely, *confusion and every evil work*.

Verse 17. In verses 14-16 James designates the kind of wisdom that does not come from above (or heaven); the present verse describes the kind that does come from the higher source. *First pure* signifies that it is of the most importance for a man's information to be *pure* or unmixed with anything false. *Then peaceable* indicates that peace is not to be desired unless it is according to the truth. That is why Paul placed it on condition in Romans 12:18. *Gentle* means to be mild and fair in one's temperament even when insisting on truth as being preferable to peace. *Easy to be intreated* is all from one Greek word that means to be of a yielding disposition and not stubborn when the heavenly wisdom is presented. *Full of mercy* means that one's life is merciful toward those in difficulties whenever the occasion arises, and not only when it is the most convenient to be so. *Fruits* are the deeds that are performed and heavenly wisdom will prompt one to produce *good* deeds. *Without partiality* denotes an attitude that does not show respect of persons. (See chapter 2:1-4.) *Without hypocrisy* means that our expressions of friendliness to others will be sincere and not a mere pretense. A tree is known by its fruit, hence if a man is being influenced by the wisdom that is from above, he will exhibit the characteristics that are described in this verse.

Verse 18. If a man possesses good fruit he usually wishes to reproduce it by sowing or planting it. Hence he will sow it righteously by conforming to the rules of peace that have been formed in harmony with the *pure* wisdom.

#### James 4

Verse 1. *Wars and fightings* are virtually the same except the first refers to a state of conflict in general and the second to the single battles of the war. James is writing of spiritual or moral things and not of warfare in its usual sense. *Lusts* refers to unrighteous pleasures and the strife after such gratifications is bound to bring conflicts between different *members* of the body of Christ.

Verse 2. *Lust and have not*. They had the unholy desires but were not

always able to obtain what they craved, and that caused them to *kill* (have murderous thoughts, 1 John 3: 15) those who resisted their unrighteous desires. *Fight and war* is the same as *wars and fightings* in the first verse. In some cases they might have obtained things they had asked for had they asked for them in a lawful manner.

Verse 3. While they did not ask in the proper way, some did make unlawful demands but were refused because of the impure motive that prompted the requests. That unrighteous motive was that their personal cravings might be gratified and not that lawful benefits might be obtained. The passage as a whole (verses 1-3) pictures a group of professed disciples who were confused and unsettled in their lives, trying to partake of the same practices as those of the world, at the same time pretending to be serving the Lord in things spiritual.

Verse 4. In the temporal world a person who commits unlawful intimacy is guilty of immorality. Likewise in the realm of the family of God, those who are intimate with the sinful pleasures of the world are guilty of spiritual adultery because they are untrue to Christ, who is their lawful partner. This intimacy is here called *friendship* and James says it is *enmity* (at war) with God. On this principle James declares that a person cannot be a *friend* (be intimate with) of the world without being an enemy of the Lord. This is the same thing that Jesus teaches in Matthew 12: 30.

Verse 5. *Envy* and jealousy have some phases of meaning in common and hence are used to show God's great concern for the purity of His people. Exodus 20: 5 says He is a jealous God and Paul writes on behalf of the Lord and says he is jealous about his brethren (2 Corinthians 11: 2). In Genesis 6: 3 the Spirit of God is said to be striving with man, that is the same Spirit that our verse says *dwell-eth in us*. James asked if they think that this concern of the Spirit is in vain or to no purpose. A negative answer is implied and means that the brethren should take the admonition seriously and not provoke the Lord too far.

Verse 6. James does not wish his brethren to become too downcast over the stern remarks of the preceding verses, hence the consoling remark that *he giveth more grace* (or favor)

is made. In order to profit by His grace it is necessary to be submissive, so the statement is made concerning the *proud* and the *humble*.

Verse 7. *Submit yourselves* calls for a voluntary act on the part of man, else his pride will come up against the resistance of God. *Resist* requires more than a mere aversion to the devil; it calls for active opposition. If a disciple will put up that kind of fight he is assured of victory over the enemy.

Verse 8. This verse also indicates a voluntary action on the part of man. The Lord has made full provision for the spiritual welfare of the human creature, hence it is necessary for man to make the next move. *Cleanse your hands* specifies what is to be done, and *ye sinners* designates to whom the demand applies. No person is accused nor even specifically admonished except the guilty ones. To *purify* means to remove all mixture of evil desires, and the heart can be thus purified only "by [the] faith" Acts 15: 9. *Double minded* is explained at chapter 1: 8.

Verse 9. This verse is directed toward those who are unconcerned about their worldliness, and who are finding joy in such activities. They should reverse all of such false grounds of gratification, after which they will have something real and lasting in which to take joy.

Verse 10. This is virtually the same admonition as in verse 6.

Verse 11. *Speak not evil* means to say that which slanders another and injures his reputation. This bad use of the tongue is treated in several verses of the preceding chapter. *Speaketh evil of the law*. One of the commandments is not to bear false witness against another (Exodus 20: 16), and the same is taught in many places in the New Testament (Matthew 19: 18; Romans 13: 9). If a man claims the right to ignore this law he is thereby assuming that such a law is unnecessary. That is why James says such a person becomes a judge of the law instead of a doer.

Verse 12. *There is one lawgiver* who is the Lord, and no man should dare put himself up as a judge of His law. The author of the true law is able either to *save* or *destroy* ("To give over to eternal misery"—Thayer). *Who art thou*—why do you dare judge another or slander him?

Verse 13. *Go to* is from AGE, a Greek word that Thayer defines, "Come!

come now!" It is a pointed expression made to someone, calling attention to foolish presumptions. The things mentioned are not necessarily wrong in themselves, but the folly is in taking it for granted that nothing can prevent it.

Verse 14. The foolishness of the matter is in the uncertainty of human existence. Regardless of what one plans to do as to whether it is right or wrong, it cannot be carried out unless he lives. The comparison to a passing cloud by James shows this to be his principal thought.

Verse 15. *If the Lord will* has been much strained by many whose intentions were good toward God. The expression is made to mean if the Lord does not interfere with some "providential act" that will make the plan impossible. God is not doing such things as that in these days. During the formative centuries while the Bible was being revealed and God's dealings with man were not yet fully made known, He performed various miracles to demonstrate in the ears and before the eyes of man what it means to displease Him. That is all past now and no special act is threatened to show God's favor or disfavor for what man does; that has to be learned from the written word. The thought is, therefore, that we should make all our plans subject to two provisos, namely, that the Lord wills (that it is according to His will as revealed in the Bible), and that we live to do it. The additional conjunction "and" that is in the Greek text has been omitted by the King James Version. The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders this verse as follows: "Instead of your saying [the saying expressed in verse 13; the thing they should say is], if the Lord should will and we should live, also, we may do this or that." This shows the two conditions mentioned above, and rules out any need for "special providence."

Verse 16. *Rejoice in your boastings* denotes they first presumed they could do whatever they wished, then used the presumption as a basis of boasting. *Such rejoicing is evil* because it ignores the truths set forth in verse 14.

Verse 17. *Knoweth to do good* has special reference to the information offered in the preceding verses. We should first learn if what we plan is right, then also remember the frailty of human life and plan accordingly.

This is the way to do that which is good and not in the boastful manner as described. But the principle expressed for this special case would apply to all other relations of life.

## James 5

Verse 1. *Go to* is the same phrase as that in chapter 4: 13. There it is a rebuke for those who are boastful of their expected gain, here it is against those who have obtained it by wrongful means which will be considered at verse 4. The *miseries* will come upon them at the day of judgment.

Verse 2. Wealth that is not needed and especially that has been accumulated in an evil manner, will deteriorate by the simple fact of hoarding.

Verse 3. *Witness against you* means that the fact of their cankering and rusting will prove they did not need them and that they had been hoarded. *For the last days* denotes that these treasures will be against them at the last great day of judgment.

Verse 4. The mere possession of wealth does not condemn one as may be seen from Matthew 27: 57; Mark 15: 43; Luke 23: 50, 51; Mark 10: 24; 1 Timothy 6: 17-19. The question is as to how a man obtains his wealth and the use he makes of it. In the present verse the men became rich by withholding the wages of their employees. This does not have any bearing on disputes about what should be the wages, but is considering only what was *kept back by fraud*. *Sabaoth* means "hosts" or armies, and the thought is that He who is able to command the armies of Heaven will be able to deal with all unjust men.

Verse 5. *Day of slaughter* signifies a day of great preparation for gratification of self at the expense of others. *Been wanton* means they had lived in luxury upon the things they had fraudulently taken from the poor.

Verse 6. This verse might seem to be a break into the line of thought but it is not. The poor people who had been imposed upon were not receiving their just dues, and they would naturally feel disturbed over the seeming neglect of the Lord. James mentions the fact of the condemnation and slaying of the Just One, meaning Christ, that even He did not resist. (See Isaiah 53: 7 and Acts 8: 32.)

Verse 7. James now addresses the poor brethren who had been unjustly treated, and on the basis of facts and



truths just revealed, exhorts them to be patient unto the coming of the Lord when all wrongs will be adjusted. As an example of patience he refers to the *husbandman* or farmer as he proceeds in his business. *Early and latter rain* actually means the fall and spring rains. I shall quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary as follows: "In the Bible 'early rain' signifies the rain of the autumn, and 'latter rain' the rain of spring. For six months in the year, from May to October, no rain falls, the whole land becomes dry, parched and brown. The autumnal rains are eagerly looked for, to prepare the earth for the reception of the seed."

Verse 8. *Also patient* has reference to the patience of the husbandman commented upon in the preceding verse. Christians can well afford to be patient for their interests are far more valuable than those of a farmer. *Draweth nigh*. Whether James has reference to the destruction of Jerusalem which was then only a few years away, at which time the persecutions of the disciples were to be somewhat eased, or to the personal appearance on earth of Jesus for the judgment, the time would be comparatively short when the endless duration after the judgment is considered.

Verse 9. To *grudge* means to murmur against another because of oppression. Christians not only were told to be patient under the persecutions from enemies in the world, but to exhibit the same patience toward their brethren who are so unthoughtful as to mistreat them. *Lest ye be condemned* when Jesus comes to summon all before the judgment, at which time he will condemn all who did not maintain patience under difficulties as well as those who caused the difficulties. *Judge standeth at the door* is explained by the comments on the preceding verse.

Verse 10. A few verses above James refers to the farmer who sets an example of patience under times of anxiety. He now makes reference to the teaching prophets of old time for the same purpose of a lesson in patience.

Verse 11. Those who endure afflictions are to be *counted happy* because of what it indicates for them. (See chapter 1: 2, 3.) Just after using the word *endure* James makes mention of the *patience of Job* which verifies the definition often given of the word *patience*, namely, that it means en-

durance. *End of the Lord* means the outcome of the case under the blessing of the Lord. It shows that He is merciful even though he suffers a righteous man to be afflicted for a good purpose (Job 42: 12-17).

Verse 12. *Swear not*. Jesus taught that his disciples should not make oaths in Matthew 5: 34, 35, and the reader should see the comments at that place. Sometimes an attempt is made to justify making oaths by saying Jesus was only condemning false oaths. But James spoils that theory by his words *neither by any other oath*, which rules out every shade and grade of swearing. Besides, there is nothing that should urge the Christian to make oaths, for this is a case where he can obey the command of the Lord and satisfy the laws of the land also. Instead of making an oath the Christian can notify the officer saying "I will affirm," and his word will be taken for the same value as an oath. That is what the scripture here and at Matthew 5: 37 means by directing that your yea be yea and your nay be nay. The fundamental difference between an oath and an affirmation is that the latter does not use the name of God; also that one says "I affirm" instead of "I swear." *Lest ye fall into condemnation* is another way of saying that if a disciple makes an oath he will be condemned, because both Jesus and James have forbidden it.

Verse 13. *Afflicted* is from KAKOPATHEO, and Thayer defines it, "To suffer evils; hardship, troubles." It does not refer to physical diseases which will come in the next verse. When a disciple is beset with these trials he should be in the frame of mind that would lead him to go to God in prayer for strength and encouragement. *Merry* does not mean to be gay or frivolous, for the original is defined to denote "Be of good cheer." The phrase *let him sing psalms* is from the noted Greek word PSALLO, and Thayer defines it as follows: "In the New Testament to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song." There are times when a person is not in the "mood" for singing and James recognizes that truth in this verse. David also recognizes it in Psalms 137: 2-4. Solomon likewise had the thought in mind when he spoke of the inappropriateness of the man "that singeth songs to an heavy heart" (Proverbs 25: 20).

Verse 14. The word *sick* is from ASTHENE, which Thayer defines at this

place, "To be feeble, sick." Robinson defines it, "A sick person, the sick." It is the word that is used in the Greek text at Luke 7: 10; John 4: 46; 11: 3; Acts 9: 37 and other similar passages. From the above information we are sure the word in our passage has the regular sense of bodily disease, and not a figurative or spiritual condition as some teach. This verse should be regarded in the same light as Mark 16: 17, 18: 1 Corinthians chapters 12, 13, 14; Ephesians 4: 8-13; Hebrews 2: 3, 4 and all other passages dealing with the subject of spiritual gifts. In the early years of the church the Lord granted miraculous demonstrations to confirm the truth that had been preached while the New Testament was being completed. Among those miracles was that of healing the sick and since elders (or pastors, Ephesians 4: 11) were among those receiving such gifts, it is reasonable that they should be called in such a case. The use of oil does not signify anything contrary to these remarks, for Jesus sometimes used material articles in connection with His miraculous healing, such as clay in the case of the blind man in John 9: 6, 7. Just why such things were done in connection with the miracles we are not told and we need not speculate as to why.

Verse 15. *Prayer of faith* means miraculous faith which was one of the spiritual gifts discussed in the preceding paragraph (1 Corinthians 12: 9). The forgiveness of sins is mentioned in addition to the healing of sickness. This shows that sickness is not spiritual for that would be the same as guilt of sins. It would be meaningless to speak of healing spiritual sickness or a condition of sin and then add that the man's sins also would be forgiven. That would be equivalent to saying the Lord would heal a man of his sins (would forgive him) *and* would also forgive his sins. It would not alter the discussion to say that the sins were what caused the man to be sick, for that would still leave the truth that it refers to sickness of the body.

Verse 16. *Confess your faults* does not mean merely to confess that we have faults, but the faults themselves are to be acknowledged. *One to another* denotes that we are to confess the faults that we have committed against another; we are to confess such faults to him. Sins which are known to God only need only be con-

fessed to Him. *That ye may be healed.* This is said in direct connection with the mention of faults, hence we know the last word is used figuratively or concerning a spiritual cure. No man can do another man's praying for him, but both can pray together for the forgiveness of the one at fault. *Effectual* means active or practical, and it is used to indicate a man who not only prays to God but who also makes it his business to serve Him. The prayers of such a man will be regarded by the Lord.

Verses 17, 18. The account of this event with Elias (Elijah in the Old Testament) is in 1 Kings 17: 1-7 and 18: 41-46. The prophet did not perform the feat merely to demonstrate his miraculous power, for such kinds of evidence were not necessary at that time. The connection shows that Ahab was a wicked king of Israel, and the Lord saw fit to punish him with a dearth by withholding the rain. The prayer of Elijah is not recorded, but he was a righteous man and realized that the wicked king would not be brought to repentance but by some severe judgment. Accordingly, when he prayed to the Lord on the subject his prayer was accepted as just and the chastisement was sent on the king and his country. It was therefore a miracle granted because of the righteousness of the request. Yet even at such a time, had he not been a *righteous man* his prayer would not have *availed* any, to say nothing about its *availing much*. *Subject to like passions* means he was only a human being, yet because of his good life his prayer was heard, since that was yet in the days of special providence.

Verse 19. *To err from the truth* means to wander to one side according to the comments at chapter 1: 16. *To convert* such a person means to induce him to turn and reenter the pathway of truth, since the word *convert* literally means to reverse a direction.

Verse 20. A *sinner* is any person who is doing wrong, whether he be a man of the world or an erring disciple. No man can repent for another but he may be able to persuade the guilty one to repent. If he succeeds he will *save a soul from death* because the one in error was going the way that leads to spiritual death. *Hide* is from KALUPTO, and both Thayer and Robinson explain it to mean that by reason of the repentance of the erring one, the Lord will overlook and not

punish the one who had gone astray. This act of the Lord's mercy would be equivalent to hiding the sins because they would not be brought up to judgment afterward.

### 1 Peter 1

Verse 1. The various works of reference discuss the question whether the persons to whom this epistle is addressed were Jews or Gentiles. It is my belief that both were involved to some extent, but that generally speaking they were Gentiles according to the flesh. Chapter 2: 9, 10 clearly shows they were not Jews for the writer says they were not formerly a people of God, while we know the Jews were so. *Scattered* is from a Greek word that originally means Jews who were dispersed among the Gentiles in various parts of the Roman Empire. However, the term has been used in a more figurative way, so that it may include Christians of both races as it does in this epistle. *Strangers* is from PAREPIDEMOS, which literally means a person from the outside who temporarily lives in a place. The word also may be used figuratively to designate Christians who are regarded as citizens belonging to Heaven (Philippians 3: 20), but who are dwelling on earth for the time being. Thayer defines the word in this passage, "One who sojourns on earth." It is true the epistle specifies certain localities to which it is addressed and the writer's purpose is not revealed, yet that does not conflict with the idea that all Christians as well other servants of God are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Hebrew 11: 13.) The places named were provinces of the Roman Empire located in what was known as Asia Minor.

Verse 2. *Elect*. The first or general definition of this word is "Picked out, chosen." The reason for and manner how the choosing is done must be determined by the connection in which the word is used. *Foreknowledge* denotes that He knew beforehand the needs of mankind and what it would take to meet those needs; they are indicated by the rest of this verse. *Sanctification* means consecration to God, and it is said to be accomplished by his Spirit. That is because the Spirit guided the apostles in giving the truth to mankind that would direct them in this consecration. (See John 16: 13.) *Unto obedience* denotes that a man will not become sanctified or consecrated except by obedience.

This shows that God does not predestinate a person to salvation independent of his proper conduct. *Sprinkling of the blood*. The meaning of this sprinkling is explained by the comments on Hebrews 12: 24. *Grace* is the unmerited favor of God and it brings genuine peace to those who obey the Gospel and thus become sanctified or consecrated to the Lord. *Multiplied* is a figurative term meaning the favor of God toward his faithful servants will be abundant.

Verse 3. *Blessed* means to be worthy of praise and it is ascribed to God. He is the Father of Christ which contradicts a theory that God and Christ are the same person; no one could be father of himself. *Abundant* means "much" and it is said of God's mercy for the children of men in that He did so much for their salvation. *Begotten us again* is equivalent to "born again" as in John 3: 3. *Lively hope* or living hope is thus described because it pertains to something that will never die. to be described in the next verse. This hope was made possible by bringing Christ from the dead.

Verse 4. This verse states the hope referred to in the preceding one to which disciples are begotten. An *inheritance* is something not yet possessed but looked forward to. It also is not that which a person produces for himself but what he receives by inheritance. It is so termed in this case because the preceding verse says they had been begotten of God, which makes them heirs of His eternal estate. *Incorruptible* means it cannot decay; *undefiled* denotes that it is pure or unsoiled, and *fadeth not away* means it will be perpetual. It will be unlike the earthly possessions that are with us today and gone tomorrow. To be *reserved* has the idea of being held in safe keeping and also that it is to be possessed at some future time. *In heaven* tells where the inheritance is kept and hence it is in a safe place. (See Matthew 6: 19-21.) In temporal matters when something is said to be "reserved," it is understood that only certain persons have a right to it. Such is true of the heavenly inheritance and the right persons will be described in the next verse.

Verse 5. Not only is the inheritance safely cared for, but the heirs are also assured that they will "live to see the estate settled" as the expression is often heard concerning an earthly estate. *Kept* is defined "being guarded"

and it is by the power of God. However, the heirs must cooperate by being faithful until the time of the distribution. *Revealed in the last time.* On the day of judgment all intelligent creatures in the universe will see who are to be given the eternal riches.

Verse 6. *Temptations.* These disciples were in the midst of heathen people who made things bitter with persecution. They gave the people of God an opportunity to have their faith tested. But they could *greatly rejoice* in the hope they had of a better life to come, which made the *heaviness* of their trials seem only *for a season*.

Verse 7. It was their *faith* that was more precious than gold, even after the metal has withstood the test of the fire. The reason is that the very best of precious metals or any other like substance of earthly valuables, is subject to destruction when other earthly things shall cease to be. Also even while the earth remaineth, the joys that gold may procure for us are uncertain and often flee like the dew of morning. But the happiness that is obtained by an enduring faith will not pass away. Of course this is all on condition that the faith is found to be steadfast until the *appearing of Jesus Christ*.

Verse 8. We do not have to see Jesus to love him if we believe the multitude of evidences of His love for us. "We love him because he first loved us" (1 John 4: 19.) His faith in the unseen Christ enables us to have great joy. *Unspeakable* means it cannot be fully described by human speech. *Full of glory* means it is a joy that imparts to one a sense of dignity, not a feeling of outward show.

Verse 9. The word *receiving* means "to provide for," and that is what an abiding faith will do. It will provide for the faithful one *the salvation of his soul*.

Verse 10. The *prophets* refer to those in Old Testament times who were inspired to speak of the salvation to come through Christ. *Enquired and searched diligently* has reference to the interest they had in the predictions they were directed to make. Being inspired enabled them to make the prophecies accurately, even though they did not personally understand "what it was all about" as they wished to. We recall that Jesus spoke about these persons of old time who wished to know those truths in their final

meaning but were not permitted to. (See Matthew 13: 17; Luke 10: 24.)

Verse 11. This repeats the thoughts of the preceding verse, with the addition of predictions concerning the personal sufferings of Christ which were necessary for the salvation of man. (See Psalms 22 and Isaiah 53.)

Verse 12. The only "inside information" that was offered those ancient servants of God, was that their ministry of prophecy was not for their sake, but was for those to come into the service of the Lord in the next age or Christian Dispensation. Those truths are now delivered to us by the preachers of the Gospel (the apostles) in fuller detail. They are enabled to do so by the Holy Ghost (or Spirit) that was sent down from heaven. *The angels desire to look into.* (See Exodus 25: 20; Ephesians 3: 10.)

Verse 13. *Gird up the loins of your mind.* The first two words are from the one Greek word ANAZONNUMI. Thayer gives the historical explanation of the term as follows: "A metaphor [illustration] derived from the practice of the Orientals, who in order to be unimpeded in their movements were accustomed, when about to start on a journey, or engage in any kind of work, to bind their long and flowing garments closely around their bodies and fasten them with a leathern girdle." Robinson gives the same definition and explanation. It explains "loins girded" in Exodus 12: 11, and "cast thy garment about thee" in Acts 12: 8. Peter uses the circumstance as an illustration on the use of the mind. The Christian is exhorted to "get himself together" and be unhampered for the service of the Lord. To *be sober* means to be calm and collected, and not driven to extremes by the difficulties that beset them. Such a frame of mind will enable one to maintain his hope to the end. This hope is looking for *the grace* or favor of God that will be given through Jesus Christ, to be realized at His *revelation* which means his appearance at the last day.

Verse 14. *As obedient children.* One becomes a child of another by having been begotten by him. Being *obedient* is another matter which depends on the child's own conduct. These disciples had formerly lived after the lusts of the flesh, and now they are admonished not to live any longer after that *fashion*. At that time it was *in their ignorance* that they followed

such a course of life, but now the Gospel has shown them the folly of such a life, so that they cannot plead ignorance any more.

Verse 15. The Lord is the one who has called them into divine service. Such a call would have been fruitless had they not accepted the call, thereby acknowledging it to be a righteous invitation. Hence they should imitate the character of the One who called them, which would require that they live a life that is *holy* since He is holy, which is another word for righteousness. *Conversation* means manner of life.

Verse 16. This citation is in Leviticus 11: 44 where God is admonishing the children of Israel to be holy and not like the heathen nations about them.

Verse 17. The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders the beginning of this verse, "And if as Father ye call on him," etc. The meaning is that if they approach God on the ground that He is their Father, they should have due regard for His character and act accordingly. God does not show any respect of persons in His judgments but acts according to their works. Accordingly His children should pass the time of their *sojourning* (see first verse) in *fear* or serious regard for the greatness of God and his impartial judgment to come.

Verse 18. What may be justly expected from servants who have been redeemed from bondage, will depend largely on what was exchanged for their freedom. These servants of God had formerly followed a *conversation* (manner of life) that was handed down by tradition from their heathen fathers. God did not procure their freedom by the use of silver and gold which are *corruptible* which means perishable.

Verse 19. They were redeemed, instead, with the precious blood of Christ. The reference to *a lamb without blemish* is from the requirement of that kind of animal sacrifices in former ages. The public life of Christ on earth showed one of spotless righteousness. "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2: 22).

Verse 20. *World* is from *KOSMOS*, which is used 188 times in the Greek New Testament, and in every place except one it is rendered by this word in the King James Version. It is

given 8 different definitions in Thayer's lexicon, and the particular meaning in any given place must be gathered from the connection in which it is used. The definition that will most generally fit in with the passages where it is used is the fifth one as follows: "The inhabitants of the world; the inhabitants of the earth, men, the human race." Before the existence of the human race God (whose foreknowledge is infinite) saw what was going to be needed to save mankind, namely, a sacrifice that would have the redeeming virtue of a spotless victim. He decreed that his Son should be that victim, but did not even tell any person about it until He made the promise to Abraham (Galatians 3: 16). Nor was the full significance of the promise realized even by him. That great favor was reserved to be made *manifest in these last times*, meaning the Christian Dispensation.

Verse 21. This verse tells to whom Christ has been manifest, namely, to the believers. Not that any secrecy was kept from the world in general, for the Gospel was preached to every creature in all the world. But the manifestation was realized or recognized only by those who believed in His resurrection from the dead, and the glory that was afterward given Him. The purpose of all this grand scheme of human redemption was to show that all faith and hope has to be in God.

Verse 22. The writer of this epistle is the speaker in Acts 15: 9 where he declares that the heart is purified by faith. The thought of that passage is equivalent to the one in our verse, the *heart* and *soul* being virtually the same, likewise *faith* being according to *the truth*. *Through the Spirit* is stated because the truth which they had obeyed was given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. *Unto* means in order to love the brethren, meaning that was one of the objects to be attained by this purification. Having gone that far, the apostle means for them to carry out that purpose by loving each other with a *pure heart*. That denotes a heart that is not mixed up with unrighteous sentiments. *Fervently* means earnestly and denotes a love for the brethren that is warm and sympathetic.

Verse 23. *Born again* is rendered "begotten again" by the Englishman's Greek New Testament, which is more accurate because it pertains to the

father's part of reproduction. *Not of corruptible seed* denotes that it is not by the fleshly reproductive germ. It is the spiritual new birth and hence the seed is *the word of God*. This is the same thought expressed in James 1: 18 which shows that God has begotten the spiritual creatures. For explanation of "born" and "begotten," see the comments at John 3: 5 in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary. *Liveth and abideth for ever* is said because the seed is the word of God which can never die.

Verse 24. This verse indicates the temporal nature of man as regards his flesh. It is material and subject to decay, even as the glory of vegetation is destined to pass away. The apostle is not underestimating the importance of man, for even his fleshly body is made in the likeness of God. The point is to impress upon the disciples the truth that their spiritual relation to Him is not subject to decay as the fleshly nature is. Having become a part of the Lord's spiritual race, they should honor that relationship by a righteous life.

Verse 25. The reader is not left in any uncertainty as to what is meant by the spiritual seed of reproduction. It is the word that was brought into the world by the Gospel, hence the new birth does not consist of some mysterious operation of God upon sinful man. It is the simple matter of believing and obeying the Gospel.

## 1 Peter 2

Verse 1. *Wherefore* (or therefore) indicates a conclusion; in view of the truths set forth in the preceding chapter, the readers are exhorted to do the following items. *Laying aside* denotes an action on the part of the individual, instead of expecting it to be done for him by the Lord. *Malice* means ill-will or the disposition to injure another. *Guile* is an effort to deceive another by some kind of trickery. *Hypocrisies* are the pretensions that one makes which he knows are false. *Envy* denotes a feeling of spite against one who is more favored in some way than himself. *Evil speaking* is that which would injure the good name of another.

Verse 2. The disciples to whom this epistle is addressed were not actually beginners in the service of Christ. Peter only means for them to be *as newborn babes* in that they were to be free from the evils named in the

preceding verse. This is a very appropriate illustration seeing an infant would be free from such. Also *as newborn babes* in that they would show a desire for the nourishment provided for them.

Verse 3. *If so be ye have tasted*. Sometimes an infant just arrived in the world will seem disinclined to receive the milk that nature had provided. But if the attendant is patient and urges the babe until he gets a taste he will not require to be urged further. Frequently we observe disciples who seem indifferent about the spiritual food which has been provided for them. It is fair to conclude that such persons have not as yet even tasted of the *milk of the word*, and hence they do not realize how precious or agreeable to the spiritual palate such nourishment is.

Verse 4. The figure of infantile nourishment is now dropped and the apostle takes up another illustration. Christ is represented as a *living stone* which denotes that He is not a material one such as the temples of men use for their foundation. *Disallowed indeed of men* refers to the rejection of Christ at the hands of the Jewish leaders. Jesus thus spoke of himself when talking to those self-righteous men (Matthew 21: 42). Notwithstanding His rejection by the Jewish leaders, God accepted Him and showed him to be precious by revealing the eternal riches offered thereby.

Verse 5. Jesus is represented as a living stone for a foundation, and hence it is appropriate to consider the parts of the building upon it as *lively stones* also. The foundation of the building and its parts being spiritual, it follows that the whole structure is considered as a spiritual one. Every building of whatever kind is erected for some specific purpose, and this one is no exception to the rule. In the material building of the Mosaic system, there was a practice of offering sacrifices which also were of material character, namely, the bodies of animals. In this spiritual house the sacrifices are of a spiritual character, as they are composed of the religious services of the people of God. *An holy priesthood*. Under the old system the priests only officiated in the sacrifices, and they all came from just one of the tribes. By an interesting coincidence the performances under the new system are also conducted only by the priests. But since every disciple is a



priest (verse 9 below; Revelation 1: 6), it means that each one is expected to participate in the service. The things offered in the old arrangement must be acceptable to God, and the same is required under the new which is authorized by *Jesus Christ*.

Verse 6. The apostle now quotes from Isaiah 28: 16 to show that even while the Mosaic service was in force, the Lord was planning on another one to come and made predictions concerning the same. *Lay in Sion* (or *Zion*). This literally refers to the city of Jerusalem as a whole, and sometimes to a particular portion of the city designated as the "city of David." The church was started in the city of Jerusalem and hence it is often referred to as "Mount Zion" (Hebrews 12: 22). A conclusion is given us therefore that the foundation stone (Christ) was to be laid in the church. *Chief corner stone*. The corner stone of a building was important because it served to unite the walls into one structure. Christ is called the *elect* because the word means "pointed or picked out, chosen." God chose his Son to be the chief corner stone of the final building to be erected in the Christian Dispensation. It is a *precious* stone because of the valuable benefits it will furnish those who will accept them. *To be confounded* is defined by Thayer "To be put to shame." On the day of judgement The Lord Jesus Christ will put to shame all those who refused to believe in Him in this world, since that unbelief indicates they are ashamed of Him (Luke 9: 26).

Verse 7. An unbeliever sees nothing precious or of special honor in Jesus for his interests are in the vain things of this world. That is why Paul says a man must become a believer before he can come to God (Hebrews 11: 6). Note that a *disobedient* person is placed opposite a *believer*, and that is because all disobedience is charged to unbelief. The various acts of disobedience that the Israelites committed in the wilderness kept them out of the land of Canaan, yet Paul sums it up with one word "unbelief" (Hebrews 3: 19). But the disobedience of unbelievers will not affect the authority of the stone which the Lord chose to be the head of the corner.

Verse 8. *Stone of stumbling and rock of offence*. No part of the Bible must be interpreted in a way that will contradict another part. God does

not want the anyone to do wrong or be lost (2 Peter 3: 9); but man can be saved only through Christ, and therefore it was necessary that He be sent into the world. If His presence is so objectionable to some that they permit Him to be a stone over which they stumble the Lord cannot be blamed for it. *Stumble at the word* specifies in what way certain men stumble; it is at His word. People do not like to obey that which interferes with their sinful life and hence it becomes a stumbling stone to them. James MacKnight translates a part of his verse as follows: "The disobedient stumble against the word, to which verily they were appointed." The thought is that they were not appointed to be disobedient, but to stumble at the word because of their disobedience.

Verse 9. The various things said in this verse about disciples of Christ, should cause them to exert themselves to the utmost to live up to the great honor and responsibility. *Generation* means race or kind, and the Lord has chosen them because they had been "born again" thus becoming another kind (John 3: 3). *Royal priesthood* means a kingly priesthood. Under the Mosaic law the same man could not be both king and priest (2 Chronicles 26: 18), but disciples of Christ are said to be both (Revelation 1: 6). Christians are kings (of a secondary order of course) in that they reign under Christ and the apostles (1 Corinthians 4: 8). *Nation* denotes a number of persons living together as a group, and Christians are such having become *holy* or consecrated to God by obedience to the Gospel. *Peculiar* is from a Greek word that means "purchased," and they are called that because they have been purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20: 28). When a man buys something and pays a great price for it, he expects to accomplish something of importance with it. Accordingly the Lord's object in purchasing the church was to have an institution equipped for an important work. It was that they should *show forth the praises* [virtues] *of him*, etc. This makes it plain that no institution of man has any business to engage in religious instruction. The church alone, which was obtained by the blood of Christ, has any right to such a glorious work (Ephesians 3: 21).

Verse 10. *Which in time past were not a people*. This clearly indicates that this epistle was not written to

Jews since they in the past were the people of God. *Had not obtained mercy* as a people, although the families of the Gentiles were favored when they complied with the requirements of the Patriarchal Dispensation.

Verse 11. *Strangers and pilgrims* is explained at chapter 1: 1. *Fleshly* is defined by Thayer at this place, "Having the nature of flesh," and he explains it as follows: "Under the control of the animal appetites; governed by mere human nature and not by the Spirit of God." Peter confirms this definition and explanation by saying *which war against the soul*.

Verse 12. *Having your conversation (conduct) honest (righteous) among the Gentiles*. These disciples were Gentiles in the sense of not being Jews according to the flesh, but the word is from ETHNOS which means the heathen nations generally who had not accepted the Gospel. *Speak against you*. The heathen people were in the habit of speaking evil of the Christians because they would not mix with them in their sinful practices. (See chapter 4: 4). *Good works which they shall behold*. When the test comes upon these disciples in the form of persecutions (*the day of visitation*), and the heathen see how they are patient and law abiding, it will disprove the false charges they have been making. It will then be evident that such a conduct is caused by their faith in God and as a result these heathen accusers will give God the glory.

Verse 13. *Submit yourselves*. The Lord wants his people to be law-abiding citizens of the nations in which they live. Paul teaches this obligation in Romans 13: 1-7. However, this command is subject to the proviso stated in Acts 5: 29; when the law of man conflicts with those of God then it is the duty of Christians to obey the latter. *Whether it be to the king, as supreme*. In some countries the highest temporal ruler is called a king, and if disciples live there it is their duty to respect him.

Verse 14. *Or unto governors* refers to the deputies or other executioners acting under the supreme ruler. In either case the obligation of obedience is the same on the part of the disciples. This verse shows two objects of government and they are summed up in the words *punishment* and *praise*. The first is classified as the penal code and is the one being considered in 1 Timothy 1: 9, 10. The second is

for the encouragement of those who wish to be good citizens. The two parts of government are denoted also in Romans 13: 3. All this disproves a theory that we would not need any government if everybody lived righteously. The human family could not continue in an orderly manner without some form of government, and hence the Lord's people are required to respect that form under which they are living.

Verse 15. It was sometimes charged that the disciples of Christ were opposed to the rulers of the land. Such an accusation was made against Christ and Paul (Luke 23: 2; John 19: 12; Acts 17: 7). Such charges were *foolish* and showed the *ignorance* of those who made them, for there was nothing in the conduct of the accused that even hinted at rebellion against the laws of the land. Our verse means that such ignorance may be exposed if the disciples will practice *well doing*, showing that they are good and law-abiding citizens of the community.

Verse 16. To be *free* means they had been delivered from the bondage of sin, but that does not signify they had the license to ignore all manner of service. They should therefore not take undue advantage of their liberty from sin which they had received from Christ, and use it to cover up a feeling of *maliciousness* or ill-will toward the rulers of the land. On the other hand, they should let it be known that, being *servants of God*, they were all the more desirous of living quiet and obedient lives under the government. Such an example would have a tendency to make a favorable impression on those who represent the powers that be. That is why the apostle makes the remark in verse 13 that disciples are to submit themselves to the ordinances of man "for the Lord's sake." The same thought is expressed by Paul Colossians 3: 23. The apostle is writing of the obligation of disciples toward their masters, that they should do it "as to the Lord."

Verse 17. *Honor all men*. The same command is given by Paul in Romans 13: 7, but the connection shows that the honor is to be shown to those only to whom it is due. *Love the brotherhood*. This is the whole band of brethren in Christ, and we should love them all as being in the one body, and not be partial or show favoritism. *Fear God*. Not the kind of fear that

is like being terrified, for if we love Him as we should it will cast out such fear (1 John 4: 18). We should fear God in the sense of reverencing Him and being unwilling to grieve Him. *Honor the king.* (See verses 13 and 14.)

Verse 18. The subject of *servants* is commented upon at length at Ephesians 6: 5 and the reader is asked to see that place. The masters were not all of the same temperament and they showed it in their treatment of their servants. *Froward* means to be unfair and surly, but whether they were thus or were gentle, the servant was told to obey them even though it cause them much unpleasantness.

Verse 19. To be thankworthy means to be entitled to thanks for something; to be commended for it. An instance of it is when a man is doing what is right and he is persecuted for it. If he has a clear conscience on the matter he will endure the mistreatment cheerfully.

Verse 20. To be *buffeted* means to be treated roughly for one's wrong doing. If that is done to a man who is guilty he has no room to complain. He should *take it patiently* on the ground that "it was coming to him." On the other hand, if a man is mistreated for doing what is right it should be regarded as a persecution. Christians are taught to endure persecutions, and hence if such a person is patient under the mistreatment he will be deserving of commendation.

Verse 21. *Hereunto were ye called.* The disciples of Christ are called upon to endure sufferings for His sake. (See Acts 14: 22; Romans 8: 17; Philipians 1: 29; 2 Timothy 3: 12.) Jesus does not require his followers to bear any burden that is greater than He carried himself, hence He set an example by going through the severest of sufferings. Now the disciples are called upon to *follow his steps* in that they cheerfully accept the trials that are forced upon them for His sake.

Verse 22. Jesus *did no sin* in the conduct of his own body, *neither was any guile* (deceitful language) *found in his mouth.* If Jesus who was sinless had to suffer persecution, surely His imperfect followers should expect to endure such treatment.

Verse 23. *Reviled not again.* When vile and disrespectful things were said to Jesus, he did not "answer back" but bore it meekly (Matthew 27: 39; Hebrews 12: 3). Even while Jesus was

on the cross he did not make any remarks about the cruelty of his enemies but rather prayed for them (Luke 23: 34). *Committed himself.* Jesus confided in the mercy and wisdom of his Father and left the case in His hands (Luke 23: 46).

Verse 24. *Bare our sins.* Jesus never sinned and hence none were literally attached to Him at any time. But something had to be done and some one had to "take the blame" in order to satisfy the vengeance of a just God. No mere man was good enough and no angel was human enough to accomplish the purpose, hence the Son was called upon to make the sacrifice. Thayer's first definition of the original for *tree* is "that which is made of wood . . . a gibbet, a cross." When Jesus died on the tree of the cross He became a perfect sacrifice that provided for the remission of sins for all who will accept it on the Lord's terms. Those terms require that man become *dead to sins* which denotes that he separate himself from a life of sin, then follow up with a life of righteousness. *Stripes* is from *MOLOS* which Thayer defines, "a bruise, wale, wound which trickles with blood." Since it is the blood of Christ that brings salvation from sin, we can understand why Peter says *by whose stripes ye were healed.*

Verse 25. *As sheep going astray.* All mankind went astray from God and were lost in the wilderness of sin. Continuing the language belonging to the business of a shepherd and the flock, the apostle represents these disciples as the wandering sheep who heard the voice of the Shepherd and returned to him. Jesus is not only a *shepherd* in that He attends to the feeding, but also is their Bishop in that he inspects and governs them.

### 1 Peter 3

Verse 1. One definition of *likewise* is "moreover," denoting that the writer has something more to say, but not necessarily on the same subject he has been considering. The wives addressed are disciples who have husbands not members of the church. Wives are expected to be in subjection to their husbands regardless of their religious profession. But if the Christian wives show that they can live in obedience to their companions in marriage notwithstanding their religion, it will speak well for their profession. *Be won without the word.* A man

might not be interested directly by the written word, but when he sees the principles of that word as practiced by his Christian wife, he may thereby be led into obedience to the truth.

Verse 2. This continues the thought in the preceding verse. *Chaste* means pure and *conversation* refers to the general life or conduct. *Fear* is used in the sense of a person who has respect for another and who is unwilling to do anything improper toward him. If a husband observes that his wife is that kind of woman, and that the religion she professes prompts her unto such an attitude toward him, he may become a disciple also as a result of such godly influence.

Verse 3. One definition of *adorning* is "decoration," and means the general appearance of one that is arranged for the observation of another. One of the items that Peter forbids is *putting on of apparel*. He does not specify any certain kind of dress (as Paul does in 1 Timothy 2: 9). However, we know the wife is not forbidden the putting on of clothing, hence the unavoidable conclusion is that she must not depend on the display of articles mentioned in this verse to interest her husband. Instead of a gaudy display of jewelry or showy garments, she will restrict herself within reasonable and modest bounds in her use of such feminine dainties, and rely on the better attractions named in the preceding verses and some others to follow. (See the comments on this subject at 1 Timothy 2: 9, 10.)

Verse 4. It is right for a woman to display a proper attraction for the opposite sex, but it is much more important that she appear as she should in the eyes of God; the things that will please Him are described in this verse. *Hidden man of the heart* is a figure of speech to denote the opposite of the outward body that may receive material adornment. *Not corruptible* means something not subject to decay as is the material of bodily dress. *Meek* and *quiet* are virtually the same in effect. The first indicates a mind of humbleness and the second denotes the conduct that such a spirit manifests. In God's sight such qualities are of *great price* which signifies they are of much value. That is because they are durable and destined to outlast all temporal ornaments such as those made of gold and silver.

Verse 5. The phrases *holy women*

and *trusted in God* are expressed as being related, and account for the other statement that they adorned themselves according to the principles that are discussed in the preceding verses of the chapter. It should not be overlooked that the kind of women here described will be *in subjection to their own husbands* as those were in old time called "holy."

Verse 6. *Obedied* and *lord* are related in this verse, for both in the Old Testament and the New where this circumstance is recorded, the word *lord* means "ruler." It is therefore not used as a title of rank under royalty as the term is used in the East. *Not afraid with any amazement*. This means the wife must not obey her husband because she is "scared" or frightened into it, but should do it from a motive of modesty and respect. Such women are called daughters of Sara (Sarah in the Old Testament) because they are a generation of faithful wives like the wife of Abraham.

Verse 7. *Dwell with them according to knowledge* means for the husband to act intelligently toward his wife. That will cause him to remember that she is the *weaker vessel* in that she belongs to the "weaker sex" physically, and therefore is not as rugged as he. But while there is this difference in their strength, yet they are equal heirs to the *grace of life*, which means the favors that the Lord has promised to those who live for Him. *Prayers be not hindered*. This phrase indicates that where husbands and wives are both disciples, they will engage in mutual prayer services in their homes. Yet such services would be hindered were their love not mutual also.

Verse 8. The instructions are now directed more generally and apply to Christians in the various walks of life. To be *of one mind* means to be united upon the matters that pertain to the service of Christ, especially those which have to do with their treatment of each other. *Having compassion one of another* all comes from one Greek word which Thayer defines in part as "sympathetic." *Love as brethren* denotes the love one has for another because he is a brother in Christ. *Pitiful* is virtually the same as tender hearted, and *courteous* means to be friendly and kind.

Verse 9. The first half of this verse means not to return evil for evil, but to return good for evil. It is the same thought that Paul teaches in Romans

12: 19-21. *Ye are therunto called.* When the Gospel call was made to them it was with the understanding they would conduct themselves after this manner. Disciples must be willing to bless (do good) their brethren in Christ if they expect to *inherit a blessing* from Him.

Verse 10. This is a quotation from Psalms 34: 12 and is made a part of the apostle's letter to Christians. It is presented as a higher basis for an enjoyable life than the popular standards of the world. An evil tongue is one that speaks to the injury of another's good name, and to speak guile is to use speech that is deceitful.

Verse 11. *Eschew evil* denotes that one avoids it and does that which is good instead. *Seek peace* expresses the mere desire for it while *ensue it* is a stronger term and means to take active steps to accomplish it.

Verse 12. The Lord sees everything at all times and in all places, hence the word *over* is used in a special sense here. The connection shows it means He has his eyes upon the righteous for their good, even as a faithful guardian keeps watch over his charge. On the same principle His ears are ready to listen to the prayers of His righteous servants. But the Lord will not even look toward the doers of evil; He will "turn his back to them." An ancient prophet expresses the same thought (on the favorable side) by the words, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66: 2).

Verse 13. This verse is similar in thought to Galatians 5: 23. It does not mean that nobody will oppose those who do good, for they will. They might even do a person some bodily damage which would be considered as harmful. However, in the end the true servant of God will be the victor and hence no actual harm will result. Jesus taught this in Matthew 10: 28 where he showed that real harm is that which affects the soul. Our verse means therefore that if we do that which is good, nothing harmful can happen to us even if we do lose our temporal lives.

Verse 14. This is virtually like the preceding verse as to the security of the righteous; they have much for which to be thankful. Enemies may threaten us but we need not be afraid of them. At the worst they can only kill the body while the soul may con-

tinue to live and be with "God who gave it."

Verse 15. *Sanctify* is from HAGIAZO and Thayer's first definition is, "To render or acknowledge to be venerable [sacred], to hallow." The reader should carefully note that the word has a twofold meaning, namely, either to cause another to become holy (which can be done to man by the Gospel), or to recognize another to be already that way (which can be done only to the Lord who is the author of the Gospel). The passage instructs disciples to recognize the Lord as holy and entitled a permanent place in their hearts. The way this can be done is made clear in Ephesians 3: 17 by the words, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Add to this the statement as to the source of faith (Romans 10: 17) and the subject is complete. We should make ourselves so familiar with the word of God that He will be in our hearts (minds) all the time. If all this is done we will be prepared to comply with the rest of the verse. *Answer* means an explanation that shows the basis for believing anything that might be called in question. When any man asks us to show that basis we must be prepared to do so. Neither is this to be done at stated times only or after we have "brushed up" our memory on it, but we are to be ready *always*. This will be possible if we have obeyed the first part of the verse which will have made us acquainted with the word of God. *With meekness and fear*. We should be humble and not overbearing when someone asks us to defend our position. We should have great respect for the subject and answer the questions according to Him who is living in our hearts and whom we *fear* or reverence.

Verse 16. This verse implies that at least some who call for an explanation of our faith may be unfriendly. They may approach us with a "chip-on-the-shoulder" attitude, which explains why the preceding verse instructs us to be meek and respectful; if we observe all these instructions we can have a good conscience. When the critics make their approach with the questions, they often imply that no good reason can be given for the conduct of the disciples because they (the disciples) are *evildoers* so they will say. But when the reasons are shown to be well founded in the word of God it will put to shame the false accusers. *Good conversation* means their con-

duct or manner of life is good and in harmony with the word of God.

Verse 17. If a person suffers for well doing it may be considered as a persecution, and such an experience will be something in which to rejoice. The early disciples found joy in suffering shame for the sake of Christ (Acts 5: 41). But if one suffers on account of his evil doing it is to be regarded as a chastisement, and in such a case the guilty one may well be ashamed of himself.

Verse 18. No unjust person could suffer and die on behalf of another like him, hence it was necessary for the just Christ to do this. *Put to death in the flesh*. In order to die it was necessary for Christ to take on a fleshly body. He was quickened or returned to life *by the Spirit*. The italicized phrase is an important key to the passage of several verses. The Deity or Godhead is composed of three persons, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These are all equal as being divine and pure, but the Father and Son are the makers and preservers of all things. They accomplish their wonderful works through the services of the Spirit. It should therefore be understood that the leading thought in this and the following verse is what was accomplished for Christ through the instrumentality of the Spirit.

Verse 19. *By which* (Spirit). The services of the Spirit is still the subject that was introduced in the preceding verse. Christ (in cooperation with his Father) did some preaching through the agency of the Spirit. But since the Spirit never speaks directly to sinful man concerning his personal duty, it is necessary to have also the services of a human preacher. That preacher was Noah, for 2 Peter 2: 5 says he was "a preacher of righteousness," which would mean he did the right kind of preaching. The connection shows that the ones to whom he preached were disobedient persons, hence the preaching consisted in exhortation and call to repentance. *In prison*. This is a figure of speech drawn from the direct preaching that Jesus did in person to sinners while He was on earth. In Isaiah 42: 7 and 49: 9 it is predicted that Jesus would preach to people in prison (of sin), and by that same figure the ones to whom Noah preached might be called "spirits in prison."

Verse 20. The preceding verse tells *what was done*—that some preaching

was done to people in the prison house of sin. The present verse tells *when* it was done, namely *in the days of Noah*. The reason given for the preaching is that they were disobedient. A fuller description is given in Genesis 6: 5 which says "every imagination [purpose] of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." The length of time during which God labored or "strived" with man (through Noah) is explained by *the longsuffering* of Him. The period of longsuffering included the time necessary for the building of the ark. One of Thayer's definitions of the original Greek word for *soul* is, "That in which there is life; a living being," hence it is used in this passage to mean the eight members of Noah's family. *Saved by water*. Being heavier than the ark and its contents, the water bore them on its bosom and thus kept them safe from the revages of the flood.

Verse 21. *Like figure*. The only comparison the apostle makes is between the water of the flood and that of baptism. No writer in the New Testament ever refers to the ark as a type of the church. The fact that Peter does specify the one item and call it a figure, but makes no mention of any other comparison shows it was not because he was so far away from the subject. There are too many items that are against the theory. The people are said to have been saved by water, yet that element came after the people entered the ark, while baptism is necessary before people can enter the church. Again, there were unclean beasts taken into the ark, while only those who are saved or clean are added to the church (Acts 2: 47). *Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh*. This statement indicates that baptism is a washing of the whole body. No one would have formed the erroneous idea that baptism was intended as a cleaning bath for the body had the rite been performed by sprinkling, for all would know that such an act would not cleanse anything. The explanation is suggested by the practice in Old Testament times of washing the bodies of animal sacrifices in water. *Answer* is from *EPEROTEMA* and Thayer defines it at this place as follows: "A demand; earnest seeking, i.e. a craving, an intense desire, to long for something." That which is desired is a good conscience toward God. When a sinner is taught that he must be baptized for the remission of sin, and he has the desire to do right,



he will not have a good conscience until he obeys this command. The above explanation is inserted to avoid an erroneous idea about baptism, after which the writer resumes the subject of salvation by baptism. The information is added that the salvation is accomplished *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*. Had He not come from the dead it would not have availed anything for a man to be baptized.

Verse 22. After Jesus accomplished his work on earth for the redemption of man, He ascended to heaven as the great Conqueror. Just before He left the earth he told his apostles that "All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth." That truth is here repeated by the apostle, and suggests the beautiful language of David in Psalms 24: 7-10.

### 1 Peter 4

Verse 1. *Forasmuch then* refers back to chapter 3: 18 which mentions the suffering and death of Christ in the flesh which He underwent for our sins. *Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind*. Prepare yourselves for the trials that will come upon you for being faithful disciples of Him, by a mind that expects such experiences. *He that hath suffered . . . ceased from sin*. Christ suffered in the flesh in order to make atonement for sin. The true disciple who wishes to profit from the example of Christ, will cease his life of sin even though he must suffer persecution for it.

Verse 2. This continues the thoughts of the preceding verse. It is not enough to make a break in one's life of sin, but he should practice sin *no longer*. *Lusts of men* means the lusts that men of the world practice, while *the will of God* will direct the disciple in a pathway of righteousness.

Verse 3. It is a popular notion that every person should have the privilege of some worldly enjoyment. The apostle does not endorse that idea, yet even if such a claim were allowed, the writer shows that they have had their full opportunity along that line. *Will of the Gentiles* means the manner of the nations who are still in heathendom. *Walked in lasciviousness* means to continue in the way of filthy desires. *Lusts* is repeated from the preceding verse; it especially means "desire for what is forbidden"—Thayer. *Excess of wine*. A little wine for the stomach's sake (1 Timothy 5: 23) will not make a man drunk, hence the ex-

cessive use of it would be that amount that will intoxicate. *Revellings, banquetings*. These words are similar in meaning according to the definitions of Thayer. The first he defines, "A revel, carousal," and the second is, "A drinking, carousing." The overall meaning of the two words is a reference to any disorderly or riotous conduct, including dancing and late "night parties." *Abominable idolatries*. There are no forms of idolatry that are right; the first word is used to intensify the extreme objectionable character of such practices to the loathing of God.

Verse 4. *They* means the Gentiles or unconverted nations referred to in verse 3. *Think it strange* means to be surprised at something as though a novelty had been introduced from the outside. It would especially have the idea of something very unexpected. This describes the impression that was being made on these Gentiles by the conduct of the Christians. The heathen thought there was much reason for indulging in the worldly practices because it brought them gratification for their fleshly lusts. They thought their standard of life was correct and that all normal people should follow it. When they observed the Christians' opposite way of life they concluded that something was wrong with them and expressed themselves with evil accusations. *Excess of riot*; an extreme degree of loose and disorderly conduct.

Verse 5. *Give account* denotes that these people who persecute Christians in this world, will have to answer for it to the Lord Jesus Christ, he being *ready* (authorized and qualified) to judge the *quick* (living) and the dead. There will be men living when Jesus comes (1 Corinthians 15: 51), and they will have to stand before the judgment of Christ, as well as the ones not living. (See Acts 10: 42; 17: 31.)

Verse 6. *For this cause*. For the reason that is about to be stated. This verse does not teach that people will be preached to after they die. Why give the Gospel to dead people when they will not have any opportunity of obeying it then? This is clearly taught in the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16: 19-31. It is important to observe that the words *was* and *are* do not have the same tense; the one is past and the other is present. The Gospel *was* preached at some

time before Peter was writing, but the ones who received that preaching afterward died. Hence at the time the apostle was writing this epistle he would say they *are* dead. *Judged according to men in the flesh.* At the last day men will be judged according to the way they lived while in the flesh or before they died (2 Corinthians 5:10). If they have been falsely accused notwithstanding their obedience to the Gospel, they will be permitted to live *according to God*; will live with Him *in the spirit* or in the spirit world. This grand truth should be comforting to all the true servants of Christ who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Verse 7. *End of all things is at hand* or near comparatively speaking, for "our life on earth is but a span." With the day of judgment an assured event and not far away, it behooves us to be *sober* or serious minded. *Watch unto prayer* is the same as "watch and pray" as Jesus taught while here (Matthew 26: 41).

Verse 8. The original word for *charity* means such love for the brethren as causes one to have a genuine interest in their welfare. To *cover* the sins does not mean to shield another in wrong, for that would make the two equally guilty. But there are countless instances where the sins are not positively proved, or where there might be some question as to the extent of the wrong done, if any. In such cases we should exercise that charity that will give the other person the "benefit of the doubt." If that is done the sins will be *covered* in that they will not be held against the other person nor be spread out publicly.

Verse 9. *Hospitality one to another.* This is the treatment to be shown by the brethren toward each other, and is different from that which pertains to "strangers" (Hebrews 13: 2). Since the disciples of Christ have a common relation to Christ, they ought to feel "at home" when in each other's company. *Without grudging* denotes that it will be without murmuring or complaining. When brethren extend the hospitality of their homes to each other, it should not be in the attitude of "have-to" duty, as if they were dealing with "objects of charity."

Verse 10. *Received the gift.* The preceding verse deals with hospitality, hence the present one has that subject principally under consideration, so

that the *gift* has special application to the good things of life with which one can manifest hospitality. He should not be selfish with the favors he has in possession since they all came from God and the disciple is but a *steward* (agent) under Him. Of course the principle of this passage will logically apply to any talent a man may possess.

Verse 11. *Speak as the oracles of God.* In old times certain persons were consulted who were supposed to have special or superhuman knowledge. Those who believed in them would go there for information, then *speak* or deliver that information to others. The persons thus consulted were referred to as "oracles." Myers Ancient History says the following on this subject: "The Romans, like the Greeks, thought that the will of the gods was communicated to men by means of oracles, and by strange sights, unusual events, or singular coincidences." Peter therefore means for the disciples to speak as the oracles of God (the Bible) and not those of superstition. *If any man minister* or serve, let him do whatever his ability under God will enable him to do. By such performances the glory will go to God who is the giver of all talents, and all will be accomplished through Christ. *Dominion* (rule or authority, Matthew 28: 18) *for ever and ever* signifies that Jesus is to reign until he has put all foes beneath His feet (1 Corinthians 15: 25).

Verse 12. *To think strange* has the same meaning that the word does in verse 4; disciples should not be surprised if trials and persecutions come upon them. (See verse 1.)

Verse 13. They would not rejoice in the sufferings as though they are things that give pleasure in themselves. To pretend to find such to be enjoyable would be affectation. The rejoicing is over the thought of being a *partaker* or partner with Christ. If His disciples share in his suffering they may expect to have a part in His glory when the day of redemption arrives.

Verse 14. *To be reproached* means to be reviled or have belittling things said of one. If that kind of treatment is given to a man because of his connection with Christ, he then will have much reason to rejoice on the principle set forth in the preceding verse. Such enemies unconsciously recognize the *glory* (honor) of God that has

been bestowed upon His servants by the Spirit. It should be observed that no specific wrong is charged against the disciple, only he is reproached just because of his profession of faith in Christ. *Their part* refers to the enemies who revile the disciples because of their devotion to Christ. *Your part* means that the persecuted disciples feel *glorified* or honored by such treatment, because it is an acknowledgment that the worst that can be said of them is that they are believers in Christ.

Verse 15. *Suffer* is from the Greek word ΠΑΣΧΩ, and Thayer defines it at this place (and many others) as follows: "To suffer, to undergo evils, to be afflicted." Peter applies his instruction to specific actions that are wrong, and hence to things that the disciples could commit but should not. They are forbidden to act in such a way that they could justly be made to *suffer* for it. The apostle is not expecting his readers to prevent such mistreatment being unjustly forced upon them, for that would be requiring what might be impossible. He means for them not to be guilty and thus bring suffering upon themselves as a punishment for the deeds now to be mentioned. *Murderer* and *thief* are specific and it would be proper for them to be made to suffer were they guilty of being such persons. *Evildoer* seems more general yet it refers to any violation of law and in any given instance the accusation could be made specific. *Busybody in other men's matters* all comes from one Greek word ΑΛΛΟΤΡΙΟΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ, and Thayer defines it as follows: "One who takes the supervision of affairs pertaining to others and in no wise to himself, a meddler in other men's affairs." He then gives the following explanation of the origin of the word: "The writer seems to refer to those who, with holy but intemperate zeal, meddle with the affairs of the Gentiles—whether public or private, civil or sacred—in order to make them conform to the Christian standard." The lexicons of Robinson and Strong give virtually the same definition and explanation of the word, which is not in any other passage in the New Testament.

Verse 16. *Any man suffer*. These words are not in the Greek text in this verse, but they are justified by the language in the preceding verse. To *suffer as a Christian* is the same as to *suffer for the name of Christ* as in verse 14. For the significance of

the name Christian, see the comments at Acts 11: 26 in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary. To *suffer as a Christian* does not specify any wrong-doing on the part of the accused, but only means persecution for being a follower of Christ. A man need not be ashamed for being a follower of Him and of having such an experience, for it promises him the recognition of Christ before his Father in heaven (Matthew 10: 32); for this reason he may *glorify God* or give God the glory. *On this behalf* means in this respect or because of this great honor.

Verse 17. *Is come* has been supplied by the King James Version, but the words are inserted in square brackets by the Englishmen's Greek New Testament, and they are included also in three other translations that I have examined. It is an important item in explaining this passage, for it shows that whatever Peter meant by *judgment* was not to wait until the last day of the world. Hence the word refers to the persecutions that God will let come on His people in this life, to test their faith whether they are genuine children of God. With this thought in mind I will ask the reader to see the following passages. (1 Corinthians 11: 19; 2 Timothy 3: 12; Hebrews 12: 6-11; James 1: 2-4.) *Us* and *house of God* are used in the same connection which shows who is to receive the *judgment* mentioned; it means the Christians. If good people like Christians deserve the unpleasant experiences in the form of persecutions in order to keep them in the line of obedience, then certainly those who make no profession at all will come to a sad end afterward.

Verse 18. *Righteous scarcely be saved*. The salvation of the righteous is no uncertain matter, and the Bible in no place indicates any doubt about it. As to whether a man becomes and remains righteous is another subject, and he is warned all through the word of God to be watchful and not become slack in his service to the Lord. But our passage is speaking only of the faithful and so far as the salvation of them is concerned the scriptures are definite. (See John 10: 28; 11: 26; 2 Timothy 2: 19; 2 Peter 1: 10, 11; Revelation 20: 6.) The word for *scarcely* is defined "with difficulty" by Thayer, hence we should have no trouble in understanding the statement. The trials that will be forced upon Christians by the foe will make the conflict

difficult, but if they will be faithful to the end in spite of the difficulties (which is something that all who will can do), then their salvation is as sure as that the Lord lives. If the words *ungodly* and *sinner* are used separately they mean virtually the same. Peter uses them in one sentence hence he recognizes a distinction. *Ungodly* his direct reference to a man's deliberate disrespect for God, while *sinner* has more reference to the kind of personal life he is following without any special consideration of what he thinks of God. Of course both men described are wrong and will not be saved unless they repent. The question about where they shall appear is an implied declaration that they will appear or show up at the day of judgment on the left side of Him before whom all nations will be gathered (Matthew 25: 31-33).

Verse 19. This verse is the grand and consoling conclusion from the truths that have been considered in the preceding three chapters. To *suffer according to the will of God* means to suffer persecutions for having lived in harmony with His will. *Commit the keeping of their souls*. Man can kill the body but not the soul (Matthew 10: 28). This commitment must be done *in well doing*, and since God created that soul He is the one who can and will keep it safely.

### 1 Peter 5

Verse 1. *Elders which are among you*. This phrase harmonizes with the form of government that was established for the church by the apostles. To be *among* the brethren means to be in their midst and a part of the same community. Elders have no authority over disciples among whom they are not residing. That is why we read that they "ordained them elders in every church" (Acts 14: 23; Titus 1: 5). *Also an elder* is defined "a fellow-elder" by Thayer. As an apostle Peter would have more authority than an elder, but he humbly leaves out that dignity and makes his exhortation as one of them. His experience as a witness of the sufferings of Christ would add weight to his plea. *Partaker of the glory*. As Peter not only witnessed the sufferings of Jesus, but also endured much of the same kind of persecution, he expected to share in the glory that will come at the last day.

Verse 2. *Feed* is from *POIMAINO* which Thayer defines, "To feed, to

tend a flock, keep sheep; to rule, govern." This is all logical, for if a shepherd is to attend to the proper feeding and keeping of a flock, he should have the right to rule or govern it. *Which is among you*. The same word *among* is used that is used in the preceding verse in relation to the elders and the members. In other words, both the elders and the members under their rule must be *among* or in the midst of each other. These fundamental principles disprove a popular notion that a person can be a member of a congregation even though he is too far away to be *among* the elders and the other members. The idea that a person can live in one community and "have his membership" in another has no scriptural authority. If he is so far away or is otherwise so situated that he cannot attend the services of a congregation, then he cannot be considered a member of it, and the elders can have no jurisdiction over him.

*Taking the oversight* is from a Greek word that means "To look upon, inspect, oversee, look after, care for"—Thayer. It should be understood that the phrase applies to men who have been placed into the eldership according to the scriptural procedure that is shown in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. *Not by constraint*. They should not have to be forced into the office but should accept it willingly. *Not for filthy lucre* is translated "not for base gain" by The Englishman's Greek New Testament. This refers to the temporal support that was given to elders who devoted their time to the care of the congregation. See the comments at 1 Timothy 5: 17, 18 where it is evidently shown that it is right to support an elder so he can give his entire attention to the flock in spiritual matters. But our verse warns that a man should not use the office for the sake of his personal support. He should have *a ready mind* which means he accepts the work because his mind is concerned for the spiritual welfare of the flock.

Verse 3. *Neither as being lords over God's heritage*. There have been elders dealt with on the charge that they "lorded it over God's heritage," using this statement as the basis for the action. Such an action is a misuse of the passage even though it had been properly translated, which it had not, and further because it entirely leaves out the very point the writer is making. One meaning of *lord* is "ruler," and 1 Timothy 3: 5: 5: 17; Hebrews

13: 7, 17 shows that elders are to rule. Therefore the elders are to be lords over God's heritage. Peter is not objecting to the manner of anyone's rule itself, but to the motive some might have who rule. The men who wrote the Authorized Version knew there was no original word in this passage for the name of God, hence they put it in italics. And because they misunderstood the main point the apostle was making they erred in the rendering of the original. *Heritage* is possessive and in the 2nd person as the inflection denotes. The passage, therefore, should have been rendered as follows: "Not as being lords over your own heritage." The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders it, "Not as exercising lordship over your possessions." The manner of the ruling is not the subject, but the motive or attitude of the rulers. If a man considers the church as his own, then he is indeed likely to rule in an improper manner. And so if an elder will keep in mind that the heritage or church is not his own, he will not have the incentive to bear the wrong kind of rule, which is the point the apostle is making. The wording of the passage as we have it in the King James Version not only inserts a word (the name of God) not authorized by the original, and also erroneously renders the word for *heritage*, but gives a thought that is positively contrary to that of the apostle. *Being examples to the flock*. If an elder will back up his instructions with his own example of right living his word will have more weight with the members of the flock. Such elders will win the respect of the members so that they will be led "to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake" (1 Thessalonians 5: 13).

Verse 4. The writer continues the subject of a shepherd and his flock. *Chief Shepherd* is Christ who calls himself the "good shepherd" in John 10: 11. When He is included in the parable it represents the elders of congregations as shepherds who are acting on behalf of the Chief who owns all of the groups of sheep wherever they may be in the world. If these under shepherds perform their work faithfully they will be rewarded when the chief Shepherd appears. *Fadeth not away*. The phrase is used in contrast with the crowns bestowed by men; being composed of material substances they soon fade and lose their glory or beauty.

Verse 5. The duties and authority of elders have been considered, now the *younger* or other members of the flock are to *submit* themselves to the elders. *All of you be subject one to another*. This instruction is not based upon any definite authority that one has for another, but rather pertains to the respect that each member should have for the others. Since the Bible does not contradict itself, we know this does not mean to ignore the rule of the elders which the other members are to observe. But every member of the body of Christ should wish to please his fellow-member in whatever is right, and should be willing to grant such requests that he might make. This will show the true spirit of humility and will receive the grace or favor of God who resists the proud.

Verse 6. *Humble yourselves*. When it is said that God gives grace to the humble (preceding verse), it means those who become such of their own accord. The proud will finally be made humble by the Lord (Matthew 23: 12), but such humility will bring only shame to the victim. The exaltation that is promised to the ones who willingly become humble is to come *in due time*, which means at the judgment day.

Verse 7. *Casting all your care upon him* means upon God, for the preceding verse says He is the one who will exalt the humble. Not that we are to be thoughtless about the stern realities of life, for the next verse will contradict that. It means that we should believe that our interests are His interests and that we should not always be fretting about the future. Jesus taught that we should not be overanxious about the morrow (Matthew 6: 25-34), and our present verse declares that *he careth for you*. Then let us go on our pilgrim journey with abiding faith in Him who holds the universe in the hollow of his hand.

Verse 8. To be *sober* means to be serious minded and *vigilant* denotes that the one is watchful—is on his guard, and the reason for this exhortation is next stated. The English word *devil* in the King James Version comes from the Greek words which are DIABOLOS and DAIMONION. The first refers to Satan the chief of devils, the second is a name for the evil spirits in Hades or the unseen world. The reader should see the extended description of these evil spirits or demons, at Matthew 8: 28, 29 in the

first volume of the New Testament Commentary. The word in our verse is from the first Greek word and means Satan or *the devil*. We know that Satan does not literally walk about among men, for he does not have a material or visible body and hence could not be seen by human eyes. Yet Peter exhorts the disciples to be vigilant which means watchful. But it would be useless to be on the lookout for a being whom no one can see. Matthew 25: 41 speaks of the devil and his angels. The last word means messengers of any kind, so that any being who carries messages or has communication on behalf of Satan may be said to be one of his angels. We know the Bible teaches that he has various agencies among mankind who are working for him. *Roaring lion* is said because a lion roars when he is hungry and prowling around looking for food.

Verse 9. This verse will throw more light on the preceding one. The pronoun *whom* refers to the devil, and Christians are exhorted to resist him. Then in direct connection with the subject they are told that their brethren have been experiencing the *same afflictions*. This makes it plain that when Christians are tempted and persecuted by evil men, as these disciples had been, the apostle would say it is the work of the devil, and in that way he goes about like a roaring (ravenous) lion. The reference to *your brethren* is for the purpose of encouraging them in their conflicts with the enemy. When they know that these afflictions are *accomplished* (endured to the end) by their brethren in Christ elsewhere, they may conclude they can do the same since what one can do (under Christ) another can accomplish by endurance.

Verse 10. *God of all grace*. Since grace means the unmerited favor of God, it is fitting that all such favors should be attributed to Him. This is especially true since it pertains to the favor of saving mankind from his sins, when strict justice would demand that he be condemned. God alone through his Son has the power to bestow such a favor on human beings. An item of this unmerited favor is the calling of man into the eternal glory of serving God in this world and of enjoying His presence in the world to come. This call is made *by Christ Jesus* and the instrument with which it is accomplished is the Gospel. *After that ye have suffered a while*. The last word is used in a comparative sense, and

has the same thought as Paul's remarks in 2 Corinthians 4: 17 and Romans 8: 18. The last part of the verse is a wish on behalf of the brethren for certain blessings to be given to them by the *God of all grace*. *Perfect* means to be complete in Christ; *stablish* denotes being confirmed in the faith; *strengthen* is general and means to enable them to be strong in the Lord; to *settle* signifies giving one a firm and definite position in the service of Christ.

Verse 11. The antecedent of *him* is the "God of all grace" in the preceding verse. *Glory* means honor and respect, and *dominion* has the idea of authority and rulership. Peter ascribes these qualities to God and declares they are to belong to Him for ever. For the meaning of *amen* see the comments at Romans 16: 24 in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 12. Both Thayer and Robinson say that *Silvanus* is another form for Silas. It was by him that Peter sent this epistle to the brethren designated in chapter 1: 1. *As I suppose* is not an expression of doubt, but as Peter had only lately become acquainted with Silvanus, he concluded (one meaning of *suppose*) that he was a faithful brother, basing his conclusion on commendations of the brethren from whom he had recently come. *Written briefly* is another comparative phrase, considering the vast amount of subject matter covered in the epistle. *Exhorting* pertains to the urging that the writer does for the brethren to discharge their duties, and *testifying* refers to the evidences he had as proof of his declarations. The conclusion that is reached from the truths set forth in the epistle, is that the brethren were standing in the *true grace of God*.

Verse 13. *Church that is at Babylon*. There is so much uncertainty in the discussions to be found in the histories, lexicons and commentaries on this phrase, that I shall be careful to avoid speculation. The word *church* is not the original at all but has been supplied by the translators. The Greek words at this place are as follows in the composition; HE EN BABULONI, and the literal rendering of them by the Englishman's Greek New Testament is, "she in Babylon." A number of other translations render it in the same way, which seems reasonable since the other salutations are from



individuals also. As to what person is meant the matter is equally indefinite, except that it is some Christian woman who had been *elected* or chosen by the Lord the same as the ones to whom the epistle is written. (See the word explained at chapter 1: 1.) We know that ancient Babylon was completely destroyed never to be rebuilt, according to both prophecy and history, hence the term is used figuratively and that also is subject to some uncertainty. *Marcus my son* refers to John Mark, and Peter calls him his son because he had converted him, hence he was his "son in the faith" as Paul called the evangelist (1 Timothy 1: 2).

Verse 14. *Kiss of charity* or love refers to the salutation of the kiss as was customary in old times. The custom as it is related to Christians is explained at 1 Corinthians 16: 20. The peace that Peter wishes for the brethren is on condition that they *are in Christ Jesus*. That is equivalent to the peace that is "first pure" set forth in James 3: 17.

## 2 Peter 1

Verse 1. Peter designates himself both as a *servant* and an *apostle* but mentions the servant first. The epistle is addressed to the same kind of people as his first one only it is stated differently. The first calls them the "elect" or chosen of God which was according to His prearranged plan. This epistle is addressed to those of *like precious faith* with the apostle. This faith was *obtained* (not born with them at infancy), but the means of obtaining it is clearly stated to have been the *righteousness of God*. Romans 1: 16, 17 states that this righteousness is revealed in the Gospel. Hence the conclusion is clear that men receive faith through the Gospel, which agrees with Romans 10: 17 which declares that faith comes by hearing the word of God. Note that our verse includes the righteousness of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Verse 2. This virtually repeats the thoughts of the preceding verse. The favor of God is to come through knowledge of God, and the preceding paragraph shows that such knowledge is to be obtained through the word of God in the Gospel.

Verse 3. Inasmuch as salvation is the subject under consideration, the phrase *his divine power* refers to the Gospel for Romans 1: 16 declares that

it is the *power of God unto salvation*. Our verse states that this power (which is the Gospel) hath given *all things that pertain unto life and godliness*. The negative thought would be therefore that any doctrine or practice that is not authorized by the Gospel does not have anything to do with life and godliness. The terrible conclusion that is unavoidable is that when men practice anything in their religious life that is not authorized by the Gospel, they are guilty of that which will result in death to them because it is classed with ungodliness. The offering of these life-giving items is done through knowledge of the Lord since he is the one who has made the call herein mentioned. *Glory* means honor and dignity and *virtue* means excellence or a condition of completeness. The word *to* is from DIA and its leading meaning is "by means of." The statement about the call should then be worded as follows: "Knowledge of him who hath called us by his glory and virtue." Such a rendering is also in line with the connection which shows that the Gospel, in which these qualities are contained, is the means by which men are called into the service of Christ.

Verse 4. *Whereby* means that by the kind of life that is designated in the preceding verse, we may claim the *exceeding great and precious promises*. The things promised are *great* because no one but the Lord can grant such favors, and they are *precious* because all the wealth of the universe could not purchase them. The antecedent of *these* is the *glory* and *virtue* mentioned in the preceding verse. In addition to enjoying the precious promises offered in the Gospel, we may become partakers of the *divine nature*. Divine means godlike and nature refers to the qualities that distinguish that which is godlike from that which is not. The man who attains this personality through the Gospel is that much like God. The *corruption that is in the world* is brought about *through lust* of sinful men. When one obeys the Gospel he escapes from that corruption in the sense that he has been cleansed therefrom by the "divine power." He is then prepared to proceed with the kind of life that such a person is expected to follow in his service for Christ.

Verse 5. *And beside this*. It is not enough to obey the commands that cause one to become a Christian, but he must add to his faith the practices

and qualities that are to be named in this and other verses following. *Diligence* is from SPOUDE and the definition of Thayer is, "earnestness, diligence." He explains the word as follows: "Universally earnestness in accomplishing, promoting, or striving after anything." A brief and workable definition of the word would be "thoughtful activity." Peter directs that it be used in the work of adding these necessary things to one's faith. *Virtue* is the same term that is used in verse 3. The outstanding word in the definition is "excellence," which means the quality of excelling or going beyond one's present attainments. A Christian should never be satisfied with his present growth, but should be determined to increase more and more. *Knowledge*. The general meaning of this word is "information" and the particular kind of information that is meant in any case must be determined by the connection. Colossians 2: 3 states that all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid (contained) in the Lord. Then the verses in the beginning of our chapter clearly show that such knowledge is to be learned through the Gospel. Thus the instruction of the apostle is for the Christian to study the Gospel (the New Testament) and add such knowledge to the faith he had that caused him to become a servant of Christ.

Verse 6. The lexicon defines the Greek word for *temperance* with the single word "self-control." A practical illustration of the subject is shown in James 3: 2, 3. In general the word means for Christians to use moderation in the various things of life. Of course the word applies only to things that are not wrong in themselves, but wrong only when carried to excess. Therefore it has no place in the subject of intoxicating liquor as a beverage, for that is wrong regardless of the degree of indulgence. *Patience*. The leading idea of this word may be stated by the words "constancy" and "endurance." The first term denotes a steadiness of one's activities for the Lord and the second means that he will continue it to the end. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2: 10). *Godliness* is from EUSEBEIA which Thayer defines as follows: "Reverence, respect; piety towards God, godliness." The word not only requires that a man will live as he should, but that his motive for such a life will be his respect for God.

Verse 7. The two words *brotherly kindness* come from the one Greek word PHILADELPHIA. Thayer's definition of the word is, "The love of brothers (or sisters), brotherly love: in the New Testament the love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren." The disciples of Christ should feel a nearness for each other that is stronger even than their love for flesh-and-blood relatives. *Charity* is from AGAPE which is one of the Greek words translated "love" in the New Testament. The principal meaning of the word in the present passage is to have a sincere interest in the welfare of others. The subject of love is often misunderstood by students of the Bible, due partly to the circumstance that the word comes from different Greek originals which have different meanings. There is a complete page devoted to the subject made up from the authoritative quotations from the lexicons of Thayer and Strong. The comments are at Matthew 5: 43 which I urge the readers to see and study carefully; they are in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 8. *In you and abound*. Thayer defines the original for the last word, "To superabound; to exist in abundance; to increase, be augmented." It is one of the outstanding principles of the teaching in the Bible that the life of a servant of God should be one of growth. Hence the Christian should determine to make these "seven graces" increase in his life as the days go by. If he will do so it will assure him that he will be neither *barren nor unfruitful*. These words have about the same meaning and are used together as a matter of emphasis. The first specifically means "idle or inactive," and that condition would necessarily result in absence of fruit-bearing. The particular kind of fruit just here being considered is worded *knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*. If a tree fails to bear fruit it may be attributed to a lack of moisture and other ingredients necessary to produce fruit, or to the failure of the plant to absorb those materials that are near it. Likewise if a disciple is inactive in the matter of acquiring the knowledge of Christ that is within his reach in the Gospel (verses 2, 3), it can only result in a life that bears no fruit unto God. Such a state is dangerous for Jesus declares that all such trees will be hewn down and cast into the fire (Matthew 7: 19).

Verse 9. *Blind*. Not "stone-blind" for

then he could not see at all whereas this person can see a little. The idea is as if a smoke was raised making the vision dim. *Cannot see afar off* all comes from MUOPAZO which Thayer defines, "To see dimly, see only what is near," and the Englishman's Greek New Testament renders it "short sighted." We have all seen persons who were afflicted with this defect regarding their bodily eyes and can have only pity for them. But in the case of those who are spiritually "near sighted" there is not much reason for pity, since it is a defect that they can help if they will. *Hath forgotten*. Not that his memory has become a blank, for that would be impossible as long as he maintains his faculties at all. The meaning is that he ceases to hold in grateful remembrance the glorious time when he was washed from his sins by the blood of Christ in baptism.

Verse 10. *Wherefore the rather* denotes that the disciple should not make the mistake just described, but instead he should do the following. Again the apostle advises the use of *diligence* which is explained at verse 5. By using this "thoughtful activity" the disciple may accomplish a very desirable result which certainly every person would welcome. *Calling and election*. When a man hears the Gospel and obeys it he is called into the service, and by a proper walk in life he will be "elected" or chosen of God as one of His own. It is up to the disciple to make that relationship with God permanent or sure. Such a thing is possible else the apostle would not exhort the brethren to do so. He explains how it is done, namely, *if ye do these things* which means the duties outlined in the preceding verses, and if they do he says *ye shall never fall*. While this language gives a disciple an assurance of salvation that no man can take from him, yet the condition on which the assurance is given just as clearly shows that it is possible for a man to fall even after having been "purged from his old sins." This is disproof of the Calvinistic heresy that says "once in grace, always in grace." If that notion were taught in the word of God, then a Christian could do nothing that would cause him to fall. Neither could he do anything to assure himself of final salvation were he one of the "non-elect."

Verse 11. An *abundant entrance* is a phrase of emphasis, meaning that the disciple who is faithful till death will receive all of the glory accompanying

the entrance into the delightful place. *Everlasting kingdom* does not mean the church on earth, for one has to be in that institution first before he can begin to plan for this kingdom. It means the kingdom after Christ has delivered it up to God. (1 Corinthians 15: 24).

Verse 12. *Put you always in remembrance*. Much of the writing and preaching of the New Testament times was done on the principle stated in this phrase. (See chapter 3: 1.) The human mind is inclined to forget what it has learned; that is, in the sense of the word as explained at verse 9. Paul has such a thought in mind in Hebrews 2: 1. Therefore the teachers of the present day find it necessary to repeat the same warnings and exhortations over and over again. It is not necessarily for the purpose of imparting new information, but in order to jog the memory on information already made known. Peter implies that if he should fail to do this reminding of his brethren he would be guilty of *negligence*. Let elders and evangelists and all other public workers take a lesson from this and not become impatient in their labors with indifferent disciples. *Present truth* means the information that they had received up to the present time. The New Testament had not been completed and additional inspired truth was to come as the time went by, but these disciples were pretty well fixed in their belief of the truth already received. Hence another phase of the duty of a teacher is indicated by this. He should constantly exhort his brethren who may actually be somewhat faithful, lest they should later become unmindful and fall into a state of carelessness concerning their duty.

Verse 13. *Think it meet* or suitable to continue the reminding. *Stir you up* means to rouse them to further activities by approaching them and appealing to their memory. *In this tabernacle* means as long as he is in the flesh. Paul refers to the mortal body as a tabernacle in 2 Corinthians 5: 1-6. The word is from SKENOS and Thayer defines it, "A tabernacle, a tent," and he explains that it is "used figuratively of the human body, in which the soul dwells as in a tent, and which is taken down at death." This is another suggestion of the temporary nature of our stay upon this earth, and of the folly of men in acting as if they expected to live on the earth for ever.

Verse 14. *Shortly I must put off*, etc. Peter means he was to die before long; it is stated in Smith's Bible Dictionary that Peter wrote this epistle near the close of his life. *As our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me*. This evidently refers to the conversation recorded in John 21: 18, 19 in which Jesus predicts that Peter would die a violent death at the hands of his enemies. No definite date is given for the tragic event, only he was told that it would happen *when thou shalt be old*. At the time of this epistle Peter was an old man and hence he could say knowingly that this death was near, based on the prediction of Christ.

Verse 15. *After my decease*. There is an interesting item in this phrase. The last word is from EXODUS which Thayer defines, "Exit, i. e. departure; departure from life, decease." We know by the connection that Peter is writing about his death but calls it by a word that means "departure" or going out. The meaning of this word is what gives the second book of the Bible its name, because the "going out" of the children of Israel from Egypt is the main event of that book. But the passage is fatal to the doctrine of soulsleepers and other materialists. They teach that nothing leaves the body at death; that all there is of man goes to the grave at that time. The statement of Peter about his death belies the heresy for we know that his body did not depart when he died. *Have these things always in remembrance*. By putting the teaching in writing with assurances of its truthfulness, the brethren would have the reminder before them even after the soul of Peter had "put off its tabernacle" and had made its exit from this world.

Verse 16. *Cunningly devised fables*. Certain speculators among the Jews joined with others in those days in delivering myths (here translated *fables*) to listeners, and many of them were so tricky in their wording that the uninformed were deceived. The apostles found it necessary to give warnings against heeding such speeches (1 Timothy 1: 4; 4: 7; 2 Timothy 4: 4; Titus 1: 14). Peter declares that he was not depending on such stories in his revealing of the things concerning Christ. What a man sees is a matter of positive knowledge and does not require any ingenious wording to make the report acceptable. *We* is literal and means actually that more than one were witnesses, not

just the "editorial I" as is sometimes used for the sake of modesty. If one inspired witness makes a declaration it is as true as if a hundred would say it, yet if more than one witness the same thing it will be strengthened on the basis of corroboration. *Power and coming*. The last word is elsewhere defined "presence," and since we know Peter has direct reference to the scenes of the transfiguration, the word is used in that sense and applies especially to the *majesty* (greatness) of Christ. However, the very visible demonstration of His greatness of which Peter and others were witnesses, would give evidence of the reasonableness of the predictions of the second coming of Christ to earth.

Verse 17. *He received* means Christ when he received *honor and glory* in the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17: 1-5). *Such a voice* refers to the voice of God that was heard by Peter, James and John who were taken by Christ up into the mount. The *honor and glory* consisted in the acknowledgement of Christ as the Son of God, and also the announcement that the Father was *well pleased* in his Son.

Verse 18. This is called the *holy mount* because of the sacred things that transpired there, not that any physical change was made in the spot. The first definition of the word for *holy* is, "worthy of veneration" or great respect. Certainly a place where such an awe-inspiring scene took place as the transfiguration is worthy of the most profound respect and in that sense it was holy.

Verse 19. *More sure* is from the one Greek word BEBĒIOS which Thayer defines, "Stable, fast, firm; sure, trusty." The word *more* is unnecessary because no comparison is being made, but only some additional information that corroborates the report that Peter just made of his own personal knowledge; nothing could be surer than it. No particular prediction is cited but the fact of there having been such statements made by the prophets of old time is the point Peter is making. The apostle advises his readers to take heed unto those prophecies. He compares them to a light penetrating the *dark place* meaning the (then) future. *Until the day dawn* means the day of the fulfillment of those prophecies, at which the *day star* (morning star) who is Christ (Revelation 22: 16) will *arise in your hearts*. The study of the many prophecies of Christ

in the Old Testament (too numerous to cite here), will bring one up to the fuller report in the history as given in the New Testament, and it will be like the morning star that announces to the world that a new day has dawned. In the words of the wise king of Israel, such a procedure of the study will be like the "shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4: 18).

Verse 20. *Knowing this first* is Peter's introduction to a further explanation of why the "word of prophecy" is to be considered "sure" as stated in the preceding verse. *No prophecy of the scripture.* The last word means the Old Testament because the New Testament had not been completed when Peter was writing, and besides it would not make a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ since that institution already existed while the New Testament was in the making. *Private interpretation.* The Romish church leaders make much of this phrase because they think it supports their heresy about reading the Bible. The pressure of popular sentiment has induced that institution to relax its restrictions against the reading of the Holy Book by the masses. They are now given certain limited privileges of reading it, but they are forbidden to "interpret" it on the strength of the mentioned phrase. The first definition of the original for *interpretation* is, "A loosening, unloosening," and for that of *private* it is, "Pertaining to one's self, one's own." Hence it is clear that Peter is not writing about anyone's interpreting the scripture in the sense of explaining it. He is considering the prophecies in the Old Testament and says that they were not just something that the prophets thought about. It was not their own personal production or something that was their own "brain child." A similar use of language is in John 11: 51 where Caiaphas is making a prediction. The writer explains that Caiaphas did not say it "of himself," but spoke with the inspiration possessed by the high priests.

Verse 21. The thoughts of the preceding verse are continued. *Will of man* is used in the sense of "private interpretation," meaning that the prophecies were not the production of mere human beings. Instead, they spoke as by inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

## 2 Peter 2

Verse 1. All good things can be abused and that which is true will always have pretenders or imitators. In old times the Lord had faithful prophets and many people learned to love them for their work's sake. Profiting by the respect that was rightly had for the true prophets, others attempted to put over some unrighteous schemes in the name of prophecy. Among the people of Israel were many false prophets and the number of instances is too great to enumerate, but the one in 1 Kings 18 is a noted case. Likewise in the time of the New Testament Peter says there will be false teachers (one name for prophets). *Damnable heresies* means false doctrines that will condemn all who accept them. The apostle specifies one of the false doctrines namely, a denial of the divinity of the Lord notwithstanding that He has bought them with his own blood. *Privily* means secretly; false prophets or teachers are not usually open with their wicked works for fear of being exposed by someone who knows the truth. (John 3: 19-21.) *Swift destruction* means the condemnation that God will bring on these false teachers; it will be swift in that it will be sure and the Lord will not hesitate to inflict the punishment when the time comes.

Verse 2. The leading thought in *pernicious* is something that is destruction of the truth. That definition is confirmed by the rest of the verse, for it says the way of truth shall be evil spoken of by the ones who follow the false teachers.

Verse 3. *Through covetousness* indicates the motive of the false teachers. *Feigned words* means those so formed as to deceive the hearer. *Make merchandise* denotes that they were so successful in imposing their false theories on the people that they could make a gain off of them. There are so many things that could be conducted on this principle that it would be useless to try specifying. We understand that many people are conscientious regarding the propagation of religious principles. If they can be made believe that people are working in the interest of truth, they will be willing to give liberal support to a man engaged in it. *Whose judgement now of a long time.* God has always condemned the false teacher and evil worker. *Lingereth not.* The leading definition of the first word is "to be

idle." The passage means that the judgement or condemnation of such characters is of long standing, but that God has not changed his mind about it nor even tempered His wrath against them. Thayer explains the definition as follows: "Whose punishment has long been impending and will shortly fall." However, the word "shortly" must be understood in a comparative sense, because the apostle proceeds at once to illustrate his declaration by referring to the unjust to be reserved unto the day of judgement to be punished.

Verse 4. *For if.* This phrase will be taken up with comments when we get to verse 9. *God spared not the angels that sinned.* We occasionally meet people who are troubled over the idea of angels sinning since they are in heaven. They are overlooking the truth that neither angels nor man have reached the judgement day, and until that time both classes are capable of sinning. Were that not the case there would not now be such a creature as "the devil," for he was once in heaven and was thrust out because of his pride (1 Timothy 3: 6; Luke 10: 18). But after the judgement no more changes will take place either for better or for worse. (See Revelation 22: 10, 11.) That means after that all wicked men and angels will be in the place of everlasting punishment where they can never reform, and the righteous men and angels will be in heaven where they can never sin because the divine decree is that the righteous shall "be righteous still." The English word "hell" in the King James Version comes from three different Greek words that have different meanings. In our present passage it comes from TARTAROS which means that part of the intermediate state where the wicked go at death. This whole subject of "hell" is explained in detail at Matthew 5: 30, in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary. *Into chains of darkness* is figurative and refers to the regions of the wicked dead, because that place was thought of as one of midnight darkness. *Reserved unto judgement.* These fallen angels have no prospect of deliverance but must await the final judgement day. The only relief that any of them ever had was when some of them were released temporarily to enter into men in the time of Christ and the apostles. See the long note on this at Matthew 8: 28-31 in the first

volume of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 5. *Spared not the old world* refers to the people that were living in the days of Noah, because the last word is from KOSMOS which is defined "the inhabitants of the earth." They were wicked and God did not spare them from the flood; Noah was spared because he was a man of faith. *Noah the eighth.* This could not mean that Noah was number eight in the genealogy for he was tenth. The lexicons and various translations prefer to word this place, "Noah and seven others." He is called a *preacher of righteousness* because he preached what was right and what pertained to the needs of the day. The people were wicked and living after their evil imaginations, and the situation required teaching directing them to reform. *World of the ungodly* is the same as *old world* in the beginning of the verse.

Verse 6. The history of Sodom and Gomorrah is in Genesis 19. *Into ashes* states the result of the *overthrow* which was sent on them in the *condemnation* from God. *An example.* The punishment of evildoers is not only for their own sakes, but also that the example may be a lesson for warning to others. (See 1 Timothy 5: 20.)

Verse 7. *Just Lot.* This statement is made by an inspired writer and must be accepted as true. Much criticism has been made of Lot because of the choice he made in the time of Abraham. The criticism is unjust because it is contrary to the facts of the circumstance. The reader may see a full explanation of this subject at Genesis 13: 9-12, in Volume 1 of Bible Commentary. *Vexed with the filthy conversation (conduct) of the wicked.* This has special reference to their gross immorality, for the account that is given in Genesis 19: 4-11 shows them to have been worse than dumb beasts.

Verse 8. This is the same as the preceding verse.

Verse 9. This verse resumes the thought that was introduced at verse 4, but was interrupted with a list of facts set forth as a basis for the present passage. The argument is that *if* God was able and also disposed to do all the things referred to, He is able and determined also to do the following. *Deliver the godly out of temptation.* God does not promise



to work a miracle to keep the trials from coming, but if a disciple is faithful He will care for him and help him overcome them (1 Corinthians 10: 13). *Reserve the unjust* indicates that the punishment of the unjust is to be at a future time. This spoils a wishful-thinking notion that "a man will get all of his 'hell' in this life." Wicked men as well as wicked angels will not be given their final sentence until the judgement at the last day.

Verse 10. *Chiefly* has no reference to the kind of punishment that is to be meted out to these sinners for all will receive the same doom. In Matthew 25: 31-46 we see that those whose only sin mentioned is a failure to relieve the needy, will receive the same punishment that was "prepared for the devil and his angels." The word *chiefly* means that Peter is making particular mention of these characters. *Walk after the flesh*. The connection shows they were living after the lowest desires similar to the Sodomites. *Despise government* means they belittled the laws that would curb their immoral lives. *Presumptuous* and *self-willed* mean virtually the same, referring to people who are determined to have their own way, regardless of whether it is right or wrong. *Speak evil of dignities*. The last word means any thing or any being that is glorious, but the connection shows Peter is writing of angels because of their dignity and glory.

Verse 11. The angels of whom the mentioned "presumptuous" persons are not afraid to speak evil, show more courtesy toward their inferior accusers than the accusers show to them. *Power* and *might* have virtually the same degree of importance in the lexicon definition, hence their use is for the sake of emphasis. *Bring not railing accusation* which means blasphemous charges. A specific instance of this kind of angelic mildness is shown in Jude 6.

Verse 12. *These* refers to the ungodly people described in verse 10. The Englishman's Greek New Testament translates the next four words, "as natural irrational animals," and it is these creatures that Peter says were *made to be taken and destroyed*. He compares the wicked men to these in that they act as if they were as irrational as they. He is expressing the situation as one that is surprisingly foolish, that human beings would behave no better than creatures that

were not intended to be any more important than to be taken and slain. But the comparison is just, since they *speak evil of the things that they understand not*. Certainly men who thus speak do not show much better intellect than the brute beasts. *Utterly perish in their own corruption*. This is said as a contrast to the case of the dumb animals. They are taken by others and slain, while these will be self-destroyed; perish in their *own* corruption.

Verse 13. *Reward of unrighteousness* means they will be treated as an unrighteous man should be treated; they will "reap what they have sowed." *Pleasure to riot in the day time*. It is wrong to riot at any time, but the usual practice is to use the night for it. "For they that be drunken are drunken in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5: 7). But these characters are brazen and take pleasure in flaunting their evil conduct at a time when everyone can see it. *Spots and blemishes*. Paul says the church was desired to be without spot (Ephesians 5: 27), but the conduct of these wicked men puts a terrible blemish on the institution. *Sporting themselves* is defined by Thayer, "To live in luxury," and it was done *while they feast with you*. This has reference to the love feasts that the Christians conducted in the early times. Such feasts were intended only as an expression of good will and were put on for the special benefit of the poorer Christians. But they were often abused as most good things may be, and evil persons attended the assemblies merely to indulge themselves in the good things provided by the brethren for the help of the poor. (See Jude 12.)

Verse 14. *Adultery* is from a Greek word that is defined by Thayer, "An adulteress." He explains about eyes being full of her as follows: "Eyes always on the watch for an adulteress, or from which adulterous desire beams forth." *That cannot cease from sin*. We know the Lord will not condemn a man for something he actually cannot avoid, hence we must look for the meaning of this phrase. In Thayer's definition of the Greek (the words in italics), he says, "Not quieted, that cannot be quieted," and he explains it as follows: "Eyes not quieted with sin, i. e. which they commit with adulterous look." Hence it does not mean these men cannot cease looking at an adulteress (for they could), but they cannot satisfy themselves just by looking;

they will desire to obtain gratification. Doubtless that is why Jesus said "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5: 28). *Beguiling unstable souls.* These men looking round for an adulteress may not find one with such intentions, but if they are *unstable* (not firm in character), these evil men may entice them into sin. *Covetous practices.* In addition to being immoral they are grasping and try to take undue advantage of the free provisions that were intended as an expression of brotherly fellowship. *Cursed children.* The first word is an adjective and describes *children* which means a certain class of individuals. These people are under the curse of the Lord because He has pronounced condemnation upon all such characters who do not repent before death.

Verse 15. *Forsaken the right way* indicates these men had once been righteous, but had *gone astray* which means to step aside from the pathway of righteousness. *Bosor* is the same as Beor, the father of Balaam. Balaam pretended that all the wealth of Balak could not entice him to come to him, but he finally yielded and went in the direction of sin (Numbers 22-24).

Verse 16. This verse continues the case begun in the preceding one, and the record is included in the chapters in Numbers cited. The point is that the false prophet was rebuked even though no other was at hand through whom God could speak. Yet since He was able to give speech to the dumb brute to chastise the prophet, it is made sure that the Lord will be able to give wicked men their proper punishment when the time comes for the judgement of evildoers.

Verse 17. *Wells without water* are places that are supposed to furnish water but have gone dry. *Clouds carried with a tempest* are those without much moisture and hence are so light they are driven about with the wind. Both figures are used to illustrate men who make the pretense of service for the Lord but who are empty of real worth. *Mist of darkness is reserved.* Since these pretenders are like a mist without rainfall, they deserve to go into another form of mist or gloom, and that is eternal darkness which is being reserved for them.

Verse 18. The principal subject of this verse is the influence these evil men have over those who would de-

sire to be good if left alone. They accomplish their wicked designs by means of *great swelling words of vanity.* This means they use deceptive language that causes others to expect certain enjoyments. They make their contact with the victims at the point of *wantonness* (impure desires) and *lusts of the flesh*, that being the place in the nature of a human being where he is the most apt to be influenced. These wicked pretenders are so successful that they *allure* (draw aside) those who were *clean escaped* from a life of error. Some translations render this as if the victims were only in the process of being brought out of error, but the word for *clean* is defined by Thayer, "Truly, in reality, in point of fact." This definition agrees also with the reasoning in verses 20-22 below.

Verse 19. A man cannot truly impart something to another he does not have himself, especially when it concerns moral or spiritual principles. These evil workers held out the prospect of a life free from the restraints of law. Yet while emphasizing the good fortune of being "free men," they were themselves a group of slaves. Not to temporal or literal masters it is true, but to the harsh master of sin. Peter proves his assertion by the self-evident truth that if a man is overcome by any person or thing he is the slave of that thing; Paul teaches the same in Romans 6: 16.

Verse 20. The words *latter end* are from a Greek word that is defined "last state" in the lexicon. It does not mean that he has come to the end of his opportunity; that there is nothing he can do about it. The only point the apostle is making at this place in the man's life, is a comparison between his state at the two periods of his experience. They are the one where he escaped from error and the one after he went back to it; of the two the second is worse.

Verse 21. *For it had been better, etc.* It is sometimes argued from this verse that it would be wise not to become a Christian in the first place, then one can avoid what Peter says is the worse of two states. The apostle had no such idea in mind when he wrote this passage, and the theory does him an injustice. Besides, the one who makes such a proposition assumes that only two states are possible and everyone must take one or the other of them. Such is not true for it is not necessary to decide on either, namely,

either remain unconverted or go back into sin afterward. The thing he can do and should do is to know and enter *the way of righteousness*, then remain in it. The reason a backslider is in worse state than the alien sinner, is that his heart has been hardened by the experience and will be less favorable to the truth.

Verse 22. The proverb about the dog is in Proverbs 26: 11, but I have no information about the one concerning the sow. The two proverbs are stated only as an illustration of what men did, not that they had to do. If we apply the reasoning and my comments of the preceding verse to this one, it will say that the sick dog did not have to retain the objectionable matter in his stomach, nor did he have to return to it afterward. Likewise, it was proper to wash the sow after her mire and then for her to stay away from the place of filth. It is not so strange that dumb animals would act as here described, but men may be expected not to imitate them. If they do they will duplicate the saying in verse 12 where men are shown to act like the "brute beasts that were made to be taken and destroyed," and certainly no person would wish to place himself in that class.

### 2 Peter 3

Verse 1. In calling this his *second epistle* which he says he writes *unto you*, it shows that the persons he addresses in 1 Peter 1: 1 and 2 Peter 1: 1 are the same brethren though he designates them in different language. He is still calling attention to the motive in each epistle, namely, to stir up their memory. *Pure minds* denotes that their minds were sincerely interested in the truth.

Verse 2. The *holy prophets* refers to those of the Old Testament times and the *apostles* pertain to the New. The truthfulness of each is the same, because the former "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost or Spirit (chapter 1: 21), and the latter spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2: 4). The particular things in their sayings being considered were predictions of complainers that were to show up. Peter wishes his brethren not to be confused and hence he is reminding them about it.

Verse 3. *Knowing this first*. They had first-hand information because it came from inspired prophets and apostles. *Last days*. Some of the things to

which Peter refers were being said at the time he was writing, for in verse 5 he speaks in the present tense when he says "are ignorant." Therefore the last days is a general reference to the Christian Dispensation. *Scoffers* means men who mock or make light of things they do not like but cannot refute. Robinson says the word was "spoken of impostors, false prophets, deceivers." The motive of these objectors is revealed by the words *walking after their own lusts*. It is a common practice of men who do not wish to be disturbed in their sinful ways, to make light of any authorities that threaten their punishment. They would naturally take that attitude toward the second coming of Christ, because it was predicted that He would judge the world when he comes (Matthew 25: 31-46; Acts 17: 31).

Verse 4. *Promise* is from a word that is somewhat general and includes the idea of "announcement." It is that feature of the term that was worrying the scoffers, because it was announced that when Jesus comes he will condemn the wicked. *Where is the promise*. What has become of this promise that was predicted? *The fathers* comes from a word with so various a meaning that the connection will need be considered in each passage. One of the definitions of Thayer is, "The founder of a race or tribe, progenitor of a people, forefather." This is the sense Peter uses and hence it refers to the patriarchs in the beginning, because he mentions the flood as coming after these fathers *fell asleep*. The scoffers asserted that since that happened there have been no interruptions into the course of things that were arranged in the creation. Their point is to pooh-pooh such "pessimism" as that any change will ever take place.

Verse 5. *Willingly are ignorant* because it is recorded in the Scriptures, and these scoffers could have known about it had they wanted to know the truth. It was *by the word of God* that the "heavens and earth" were created (Genesis 1: 1), and by which also the *earth* and *water* were separated from each other (Genesis 1: 9, 10).

Verse 6. *World* is from *KOSMOS*, which means the inhabitants of the earth, and that is the world that perished in the flood. The account of the flood is in the book that the scoffers did not deny being true, but their interest in lustful practices had kept them from learning about it.

Verse 7. *Heavens and earth* are the same that are in verse 5 which were created *by the word of God*. After the people living on the earth were destroyed by the flood (except Noah and family), it left the heavens and earth still in existence and again was covered with inhabitants. The *same word* that created them is keeping them *in store*, being reserved against (until) the destruction by fire. That will be done on the same day that the ungodly men will be judged and sent into perdition. The earth will be permitted to remain until the day of judgment because man is to live on it that long.

Verse 8. Having made his exposure of the scoffers and their wilful ignorance, the apostle devotes the rest of the epistle to the good brethren. They have been advised against being misled by the false statements of the scoffers, yet they doubtless wished sincerely to have information concerning the seeming delay of the second coming of Christ. Peter will take up that matter and explain it for the sake of them and other readers of the epistle. *One day is with the Lord as a thousand years*. It should be noted the apostle does not say a day is as long as a thousand years with us for that would not be true. When the earth revolves once man has been given a day. It must make such a revolution 365 times to give him one year and that must be multiplied a thousand times to amount to the period of the italicized statement. But with the Lord no such measurements are necessary for He inhabits eternity (or time, which is the same), and as there is no limit or end to it, He can prolong the earth's existence through hundreds of such revolutions as easily as through one. To man it seems like a drawn-out delay and hence the apostle gives the explanation herein.

Verse 9. To be *slack* means to delay or be slow in doing something that has been promised or predicted. *As some men count slackness*. What would be regarded as tardiness by men does not apply to the Lord. That is, the seeming delay in bringing the earth to an end is not due to that cause as the scoffers implied. It is rather due to the *longsuffering* or patience that He is manifesting toward humanity. *Not willing that any should perish*. This statement is another proof that no chance of being saved will be given after the earth is destroyed. If men are delivered from their sins at all, it

must be before the end of the world or before their death. In contrast with *perish* the apostle sets the phrase *come to repentance*, which shows that all who do not repent will perish. Jesus taught the same truth in person as recorded in Luke 13: 3, 5. But the longsuffering of God is not endless; it was not in the days of Noah (Genesis 6: 3; 1 Peter 3: 20). When God in his infinite wisdom decides that His longsuffering has served its full purpose He will bring about the end.

Verse 10. The Lord is nowhere compared to *a thief*, but the time of His coming is where the likeness is. That is because a thief makes no announcement of his approach but comes in by surprise, usually selecting the time of night for the event. There are three *heavens* spoken of in the Bible, the third one being the dwelling place of God (2 Corinthians 12: 1-4), and of course that will never pass away. The other two are in the material universe, comprising the region of the atmosphere for the first and that of the planets for the second. These shall pass away *with a great noise*. The italicized words come from one Greek word which Strong defines, "Whizzingly, i. e., with a crash." The original for *elements* is defined by Thayer as follows: "The elements from which all things have come, the material causes of the universe." These materials will become liquefied by the intense heat that the Creator will send upon them. The *earth* is a part of the same material universe mentioned in the quoted definition, but it is given special mention because it is where man lives at the present, thus giving him serious warning of the fateful event.

Verse 11. *All these things*. The things of the material universe named in the preceding verse are all to be *dissolved* or melt. That will be the end of man's existence on the earth and hence the end of his opportunity to prepare for the judgment. Such is the reason for the exhortation to be *holy* (righteous) in *conversation* (conduct) by living according to *godliness*; live as God has directed us to live.

Verse 12. *Hasting* means "to desire earnestly" for the *coming of the day of God*. And this notwithstanding the day will bring the dissolving of this earth on which we have lived and enjoyed the blessings of God. But this seeming contradiction in our attitude will be explained in the next verse.

Verse 13. The promise referred to is in Matthew 5: 5 where the meek are promised to inherit the earth. The future state of the saved will be spiritual, hence the only way man can be given a foresight of it is by likening it to what he understands and enjoys while living in a material home. The present abode is on the earth with its two heavens, the atmosphere and starry region. Genesis 1: 14-16 says the planets were made to give light upon the earth, hence it is proper to mention those heavens in connection with the earth when referring to the home of mankind. But while the form of language is based upon man's present abode, in reality his eternal home will be spiritual and one wherein shall dwell righteousness.

Verse 14. With such a prospect as this it should be an incentive for us to live in view of it. To do so we should be diligent (thoughtfully active) and maintain ourselves in the peace that is according to the wisdom from above (James 3: 17). Since that wisdom is pure (unmixed) it will make those *without spot* who follow it.

Verse 15. *Longsuffering is salvation* is the same as mentioned in verse 9, hence Christians should not fret over the seeming delay of His coming. Peter says that Paul wrote to these people on the same matters as the present epistle. Peter wrote both of his epistles to the same brethren for he calls this one the second one he had written to them (verse 1). In the first epistle he mentions brethren in Galatia and Asia, and we know that Paul wrote to brethren in those same regions (Galatians and Ephesians). Peter says that Paul wrote *according to the wisdom given unto him*. This refers to his inspiration for he tells us himself that his preaching was "In demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2: 4).

Verse 16. Peter here makes a more general reference to the epistles of Paul, and says that in all of them he speaks of the same things that the present letter treats. This shows that Peter was familiar with the Pauline writings and that he had great respect for them. Since both apostles wrote about so many items that pertain to the kingdom of God, it would be unnecessary to try pointing out which Peter means by *these things*. All of the words *hard to be understood* are from the one Greek word *DUSNOETOS*, which Thayer defines with the same four words.

Robinson defines it, "difficult of perception." We should note it does not say that it is impossible to understand them, hence the expression does not contradict the general idea of the simplicity of the Gospel. Moreover, it merely says there are *some things* like this, which would not be surprising in documents that have to do with performances of both God and man and of both bad men and Satan. Besides, the only ones who had any serious trouble were those who were *unlearned* (uninformed) and *unstable* (unsettled in their convictions). But even these are not to be excused for they could do better, since they *wrest* (twist) the scriptures which means to force them out of their obvious meaning. And since they wilfully misuse the sacred writings Peter says it will be *unto their own destruction*.

Verse 17. The foregoing remarks are said for the warning of the better class of disciples to whom Peter is sending this epistle. They should beware and not be led astray by designing false teachers who are "walking after their own lusts." No person can be on both sides of a subject at the same time, hence in order to be steadfast in the faith one must turn away from such evil characters.

Verse 18. *Grow in grace* means to grow (or increase) in the favor of the Lord. Note that this exhortation is coupled with the *knowledge* of Him. Hence our favor with the Lord will increase as our knowledge of Him increases, which we may obtain only by becoming familiar with the Gospel. *To him be glory* means that all honor and dignity should be ascribed to the Lord, and that such respect will be due Him for ever. *Amen* is ascribed as an expression of emphasis; its uses and meaning are explained in the comments at Romans 16: 24 in first volume of the New Testament Commentary.

## 1 John 1

Verse 1. This verse is equivalent to the first verse of John's account of the Gospel. When the words *the beginning* are used as an abstract term, that is one without any qualifying context, they always have the same meaning. The popular notion is that they mean "the beginning of time." That is wrong because time (which merely means duration) had no beginning and of course will have no end. The means by which we measure time, such as the movements of the earth and other

planets, will come to an end, but that does not mean that time will end then. It would be like saying that if the clocks all stopped that time would stop also. Not so; the means we were using to measure it only have stopped. The term *the beginning* means the beginning of the material creation. The reader should see the comments on this subject at John 1: 1 in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary. In our present verse John comes to a later period and refers to the circumstance when the word took upon himself that form which could be seen and handled by fleshly man.

Verse 2. This verse gives some more details of the general truths that are stated in the preceding one. *The life* is the same as "Word of life" above which was with the Father before the inhabitants of the earth ever heard about it. It was manifested to the extent that it could be seen with human eyes as well as be "handled" as stated in the first verse. The manner in which this was done is expressed somewhat more directly by this same writer in John 1: 14 which says that "the Word was made flesh." Everyone will understand this refers to the fact of the life of Christ in a fleshly body on the earth. *Show unto you that eternal life.* Such a life is spiritual and thus cannot literally be shown, but John means that when a man sees Christ he is seeing eternal life in that He is the one who gives us the hope of eternal life.

Verse 3. John was especially concerned with the divinity of Christ, that although He dwelt among men in the flesh (in order that they might see and hear Him), yet he was (and is) the divine Son of God. *Have fellowship with us* denotes having a share in or being partakers with the apostles in the relationship between God and Christ and their faithful disciples.

Verse 4. *That your joy may be full.* The last word is where the emphasis of thought should be placed. Small or partial joy may be possible from many different sources, but the joy that can come from a faith in the only divine Son of God is *full* both in the sense of being complete in its extent, and perfect in its quality. It will leave nothing that can reasonably be desired further by a firm believer.

Verse 5. The message which *we* (the apostles and others through them) have heard of *him* (the Son of God). The subject of the message is *light*,

brought into the world by Christ which he received from his Father. God not only has light (spiritual truth) but He has nothing else; no darkness at all. Good men and angels have some light but it is limited, while with God it is light unmodified.

Verse 6. The Lord is all light and truth which is the opposite of darkness. For this reason no man can possibly be a partaker (have fellowship) with Him whose life is one of darkness which is a figurative name for that which is not the truth. Hence it is a logical conclusion that if a man claims to be on both sides of this proposition at the same time he is lying.

Verse 7. *Walk in the light.* No man lives who does not make some mistakes and commit sin incidentally. But this phrase means a man whose general life is one of godliness and whose motive principle is the light of the New Testament. This man can truly be said to be walking with the Lord because he is in the pathway that Jesus laid out for him. Being in the fellowship with God the source of all light, is like being constantly in the stream of the blood of His son. That blood is constantly flowing (figuratively) through the body or church of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the natural body of a man whose blood stream is healthy, if germs slip into the person that blood, being always present, will be like a disinfectant that will destroy the germ. Likewise the blood of Christ is ever present to cleanse away the mistakes and incidental sins that a true Christian does. Hence if a man is a worker in the Lord's vineyard and his life as a whole is one of obedience to the law of Christ, he does not need to worry about the mistakes he might make which he does not realize, for the blood of Christ will take care of it and wash them away. They will be cleansed by the "fountain opened to the house of David . . . for sin and for uncleanness" (Zechariah 13: 1). "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins; And sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains."

Verse 8. This verse does not contradict the preceding one or the comments made on it. To say we *have no sin* would be like saying we do not have any need for the blood of Christ. Hence even a faithful disciple should admit his weaknesses and understand his dependence upon the blood of Christ for his cleansing.



Verse 9. *Confess our sins.* This does not say that we are to confess that we have sins for that would be so general that it would be virtually no confession at all; the sins themselves is what we are to confess. Sometimes persons will come forward in a meeting saying they wish to make a confession, and when given the opportunity will say, "I have not been living as I should." That does not confess any sin as our verse requires. It may be replied that David made that sort of confession to the prophet because all he said was, "I have sinned." That is true but it was after his sin had been pointed out so that his statement was an acknowledgment of the specific sin. It was like the action of a jury that says, "We find the defendant guilty as charged" without naming any particular misdeed. If a disciple does not know of anything wrong he has done then he has none to confess. Should he have some faults of which he is not aware, verse 7 of this chapter will take care of them. If he has committed sins which only he and the Lord know about, then he needs only to make his confession to Him. *Faithful and just.* The first word means He will keep his promise to forgive the sins of the penitent, and it is *just* for Him to do so since the sacrifice of Christ makes it possible for God to be merciful and just at the same time (Romans 3: 26).

Verse 10. *Have not sinned* differs from *have no sin* in verse 8 because it goes back over the past of our lives. When the two are considered together they mean that there never has been a time since we were old enough to be responsible, that we were "as free from sin as the angels" as it is sometimes expressed; hence man has needed a Saviour all the years of his life. *Make him a liar.* If a person makes an assertion that contradicts what another has said, it is equivalent to calling him a liar even though no direct reference is made to him. God has said in his word that all men are sinners (Ecclesiastes 7: 20), therefore if a man says he has not sinned he contradicts the Lord and that is why John says such a man will *make him a liar.* *His word is not in us* because that word declares that all men have sinned.

## 1 John 2

Verse 1. *My little children* is a fatherly address to the disciples since John was an old man when he wrote this epistle. Furthermore, notwith-

standing his strong language when treating of definite sins, he is known in history to have been a man of tender sentiments, so much so that he won a like feeling from Jesus, for it is said that he was the disciple "whom Jesus loved" John 13: 23; 19: 26; 20: 2, 21: 7, 20, 24). Thus we have a number of endearing terms in the writings of this apostle. *That ye sin not; if any man sin.* These phrases do not conflict with each other although they may seem to. The disciples of Christ are expected to oppose sin and be constantly "striving against sin" (Hebrews 12: 4), and to help them in their struggles the apostles have written instructions on the right ways of life. But in spite of all this they are going to make mistakes. (See the comments on verses 6-8 in the preceding chapter.) Hence the second phrase *if any man sin* is inserted to explain why the provision has been made for an *advocate*. That is from PARAKLETOS, which Thayer defines as follows: "One who pleads another's cause with one, an intercessor."

Verse 2. *Propitiation* means something that appeases or satisfies one who is (justly) making strong demands. God is violated by the sins of mankind and His justice demands the eternal condemnation of the offenders. Man was unable to furnish what was rightly required to pay the debt, but Jesus was able and willing to do so. That is what he did when He shed his blood as was shown in chapter 1: 7. *Not for ours only but also,* etc. The pronoun stands for disciples who have already made use of the cleansing blood by obedience to the Gospel. But the blood is sufficient to cleanse the whole world if all will accept it on the same terms as the present disciples. (See the familiar passage in John 3: 16.)

Verse 3. *Know* is not used in view of some technical distinction between faith and knowledge. The thought is that *if we keep his commandments* (and we may *know* whether we have done so or not), then we may be sure or have the assurance that we have a saving knowledge of Him.

Verse 4. A knowledge of having kept the commandments is necessary to a knowledge of Him (see preceding verse). Therefore if a man asserts that he knows the Lord when he has not kept the commandments (and he may know whether he has or not), he is rightly classed with liars as the apostle here states.

Verse 5. *The love of God perfected* has virtually the same thought as Jesus expressed in John 14: 21. To be perfected means to be made complete, and that will be accomplished when a man proves his love for God by keeping the commandments. On the same principle a man cannot truly claim to love the Lord who does not obey His word, even though he may sing "O how I love Jesus" as vigorously as anyone. *Know that we are in him.* For comments on the word *know* see those at verse 3.

Verse 6. To abide in Christ is equivalent to walking with Him, for Christ is an active being and no person can continue with Him and not walk in the same way. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3: 3.)

Verse 7. The word *new* may mean with reference to its age or date. In that sense the divine law is not new because God has placed governing law before man ever since he has existed. On that basis it is *the old commandment* and they had heard it *from the beginning.*

Verse 8. The commandments of the Lord are *new* in the sense of being fresh and vigorous (not infirm as with old age). The newness or liveliness of the laws of the Lord is manifested in their being able to dispel the darkness of ignorance, and shed the light of knowledge in the Lord.

Verse 9. This is the same in thought as several preceding verses, namely, that true love is manifested by showing an obedient spirit toward the law of God, and that law requires a disciple to love his brother.

Verse 10. *Occasion of stumbling* denotes ~~being~~ the cause of another's stumbling or committing error. If a man loves his brother he will not put any stumbling block in his way (Romans 14: 13).

Verse 11. *Darkness is figurative* and means the absence of truth. The truth of God requires that the brethren love each other, hence if one brother hates another he is not walking according to the word of God but is *walking in darkness.*

Verse 12. In this and the two verses following the writer uses the different age groups in a natural family to compare the ones with different talents and experiences in the family of God. *Little children*, therefore, cannot mean those usually designated by the term, since they do not have sins to be forgiven. It is used in view of some of

them who were recent additions to the divine family by the spiritual birth.

Verse 13. As *fathers* in the natural family would be mature and ripe with the experience of age, so there are those in the church who have that qualification over other brethren. *Young men* are more mature than little children and have lived long enough to have demonstrated their strength in the contests of life. In the preceding verse the *little children* are given mention because of their purification from sins. Now they are named because of their knowledge of the Father from whom they have received the forgiveness of their sins.

Verse 14. This verse adds no special thoughts to the preceding two, except to indicate their importance by the repetition for emphasis.

Verse 15. *World* is from a word that means the inhabitants of the earth. Other passages require us to love our enemies and John 3: 16 says God loved the world. The apparent difficulty is explained by the words *things that are in the world.* We should understand that Christians are not to love the things that the people in the world possess and use for their lustful pleasures. Of course no man can love such things and love the Father also, for He has condemned them and commanded His children to "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2: 11).

Verse 16. The things named in this verse the apostle says are *all that is in the world.* That is not merely an arbitrary declaration made just because the apostle chose to sum it all up that way, but upon examination it will be seen that it is historically and logically true. In Genesis 3: 6 we read; "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food [lust of the flesh], and that it was pleasant to the eyes [lust of the eyes], and a tree to be desired to make one wise [pride of life]," etc. Next we shall consider Luke 4: 1-13. Satan suggested to Jesus a way to get food, which was an appeal to the lust of the flesh. (The obtaining of food was no sin if done by lawful means.) Satan showed Christ the kingdoms of the world which was an appeal to the lust of the eyes. Next he challenged Him to cast himself from the roof of the temple to show the greatness of His power, which was an attempt to get Jesus to yield on a point that would have shown the spirit of

pride. Luke says after these three items that "the devil had ended all the temptations," which agrees with John that the three classes of evil are *all that is in the world*.

Verse 17. *World* is still from the word that means the inhabitants of the earth, and the *lusts* are the practices of the same which confirms the comments on the preceding verse. Since this world and its practices are to pass away, it is great folly for a disciple to let his affections be attached thereto. But the doer of God's will *abideth for ever* and hence that is the proper subject to receive our sincere interests.

Verse 18. *Little children* is used in the sense that is explained at the first verse of the chapter. *Last time* could have a number of definitions on account of the second word, hence the thought must be gathered from the use that is made of it. The doctrine of Christ is not directly taught in the Old Testament while He is the central figure in the New. The verse speaks of *antichrists* (which means against Christ) so we understand John means we are living in the last Dispensation. Such is a logical conclusion because the basis of the whole system is belief in Christ (not Moses).

Verse 19. *Went out from us* signifies the antichrists were once associated with the true believers but apostatized from the faith. All this pertains to their outward movements only, for John says that *they were not of us*. Church workers are not mind readers, and if unconverted persons go through the motion of obedience to the Gospel there is no way to detect or avoid it. They obeyed the *form of doctrine* but not "from the heart" (Romans 6: 17). Such persons will wait until some pretext appears when they will show their true sentiments by turning against the church and making false accusations. It is true that John is writing directly about *antichrists* which means those who oppose Christ. The principle is the same, for whoever opposes the church of Christ is an enemy of Him. At heart they are disbelievers in Christ but show their spite against Him by turning against his church.

Verse 20. *Unction* is used figuratively from the ancient custom of pouring oil on the heads of those who were to act in the service of the Lord. In its spiritual sense it refers to the enlightening that the Lord bestowed on the apostles, enabling them to impart the necessary information to the members of the body

of Christ. *Ye know all things* means they know all that pertains to life and godliness (2 Peter 1: 3).

Verse 21. Not all inspired writing was done to give new information but also to supplement what had been given (2 Peter 1: 12, 13; 3: 1). Another consideration is that people who have already shown an interest in the truth are glad to have it repeated to them. *No lie is of the truth*. Anything that denies a truth is bound to be a lie, and John was particularly concerned about the truth of the divinity of Christ.

Verse 22. This verse is virtually the same as verse 18.

Verse 23. God and Christ are two distinct persons but are one in divinity, hence to reject the one is the same as rejecting the other. The last half of this verse is not found in some copies of the Greek text and for that reason some translations leave it out. However, it does not add anything that disagrees with the rest of the New Testament, hence no harm is done by retaining it at least to the extent of endorsing it.

Verse 24. *Heard from the beginning* refers to the truth given to the world through Him who is "from the beginning" (chapter 1: 1). If this truth remains in us we will be in fellowship with both the Father and the Son.

Verse 25. The reward for being in fellowship with God and his Son is not of a temporal nature; it is eternal life. That reward will be given to those who are faithful until death, since it will not come in this world but in the next which will be "when earthly things have ceased to be."

Verse 26. To *seduce* a person means to mislead him or cause him to stray from the truth. There were many deceivers in the world who were so expert in their false reasoning that the uninformed were easy victims. For this reason the apostle was writing the warning information to the disciples.

Verse 27. *Anointing* is from the same word as "unction" in verse 20. *Need not that any man should teach you*. This means that no uninspired man should be depended upon for teaching on the great story of Christ. They had the enlightening that had come to them from Christ through the inspired teachers. With such divine guidance they were able to *abide in him* who is Christ.

Verse 28. *Little children* is general and is the same endearing term that

John uses in the beginning of the chapter. With the advantage of the spiritual enlightenment the disciples are exhorted to *abide in him*. This means more than merely being in Christ at times but it should be always. No man knows when Jesus is coming hence it is important always to be in His favor. In that case the disciple will not be taken unawares and be made ashamed, but will be confidently looking for Him.

Verse 29. The Lord is righteous and hence can beget righteous offspring only. The exhortation is for the disciples to honor their family reputation by being righteous.

### 1 John 3

Verse 1. *Behold* is a term used as a call to attention, directing the minds of the readers to a matter the apostle regards as of special importance. It is the *manner* (sort, kind or quality) of love that the writer wishes to emphasize. God's love was so great that He was willing to demonstrate it by giving us the highest possible honor, namely, taking us into the divine family as children. It is like a very wealthy king who takes a poor man from the depths of poverty and humility, and makes him an heir to the royal estate, only the illustration but faintly compares the circumstance. Since the world knew not the Father it would not recognize those who have been redeemed from the regions of sin, and adopted into the family of the Heavenly King.

Verse 2. In beginning this verse with the word *beloved*, the apostle does so in the same sentiment that caused him to use the term *little children*; it is a term of endearment. *Now* signifies he is speaking of the condition in this life before *he shall appear*. Being a son of God is a spiritual relationship which does not make any change in our personal appearance. That is because we must retain our fleshly body while we live in this world. *What we shall be* pertains to what can be seen as the connection in the verse shows, and John is referring to what our appearance will be after the coming of Christ. He says what that will be *doth not yet appear*. Yet he does know (by inspiration) that when Jesus comes *we shall be like him*. But the apostle did know even as he was writing, what the appearance of Jesus was when he was on the earth, for he appeared as a man with a fleshly body. Hence He will be

changed and John was not instructed as to what the new form would be in appearance. Another thing of which he was certain was that *when he shall appear we shall be like him*. If that is the case then we shall be alike since "things equal to the same thing are equal to each other." Then if the saved ones are all alike there will be no distinction between them. This is fatal to the carnal notion that we will recognize our "loved ones" (family relations) in heaven. There will be no male nor female nor other personal distinctions and hence no recognition of one person as to whether he is my father or your brother or the husband of this or that woman: all bodily or personal distinctions are for this life only.

Verse 3. *Hath this hope* means the hope of seeing Jesus and being like him. With such an incentive it is expected that all who have become the sons of God will cleanse themselves of impurity in life and strive to be like his Son.

Verse 4. Since *committeth* is a key word in verse 9 I shall leave my comments on it until that verse is reached. *Sin is the transgression of the law*. It should be observed that John does not say transgression is the only thing that constitutes sin; it is the only phase of the subject being considered at this place.

Verse 5. *In him is no sin*. This is what is meant in John 14: 30 where Jesus says the prince of this world (Satan) cometh "and hath nothing in me." No sacrifice could have atoned for the sins of the world if attempted by a person who was himself tainted with sin.

Verse 6. *Abideth* signifies a continuous life in Christ and not a wavering from side to side. Such a person *sinneth* not which is akin to the word *committeth* as to its ending which will be explained at verse 9. A person cannot *abide in Christ* until he first comes into Him, then if he continues in that relation it can be said that he is abiding in Him. By the same token if a man *sinneth* it is proof that such a person has not yet made his acquaintance with Christ.

Verse 7. *Little children* is general and is used as explained at chapter 2: 1. They are again warned against being deceived which evidently refers to the antichrists who are mentioned in the preceding chapter. The first *he*

stands for the faithful follower of Christ and the second *he* means Christ himself. *Doeth* and *is righteous* are related and will receive some more light at verse 9.

Verse 8. *Committeth* and *sinneth* will be explained by the comments on the next verse. *Is of the devil* refers to the practice of sin which was introduced into the world by the devil. *From the beginning* means the beginning of mankind on the earth. Not that he had not sinned before that, for he had, by reason of which he was cast out of heaven (Luke 10: 18). But John is here concerned only with the devil's first attack upon man as the rest of the verse indicates. We know that the Son of God *was manifested* in the world to destroy the works of the devil, therefore the word *beginning* can apply only to the beginning of man on the earth.

Verse 9. The two key words in this verse are *commit* and *cannot*. Words, like people, "Are known by the company they keep," which is another way of saying that the meaning of words may be learned by their connection or by the use that is made of them. The first word is from *POIEO* and Thayer uses three pages of his lexicon with definitions and explanations, which indicates the wide scope of its meaning. Among his comments on the word are, "To follow some method in expressing by deeds the feelings and thoughts of the mind; carry on; describing a plan or course of action." Robinson gives as one explanation, "What one does repeatedly, continuedly, habitually." One of Webster's definitions is, "To pledge; to bind; as, to commit oneself to a certain course." The Englishman's Greek New Testament translates the word by "practice." All of these definitions and translations show the word has no reference to what a man does occasionally or incidentally, but it means what he makes a practice of. The term "practicing physician" does not mean a man who occasionally gives a dose of medicine to a friend. If a man "retires" from the occupation of a carpenter he may occasionally drive a nail or saw a board, yet we would not say he has gone into the occupation again. Likewise a man who becomes a child of God ceases to *commit* sin as a "practice," but that does not mean he will never do anything that is wrong. (See the comments at chapter 1: 7, 8.) We are certain an inspired man would not contradict himself, so John would

not use the word *commit* in this verse to mean an occasional sin, when he taught in chapter 1: 7 that even a man who "walks in the light" needs to be cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ.

*Cannot* is from *OU-DUNAMAI*, which means morally unable and not that it is physically impossible. We will consider some other passages where the same word is used. Matthew 5: 14 says "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." Yet all of us know that during the war many cities and other important places were actually hid by camouflage. In Mark 2: 19 Jesus says of certain persons that "they cannot fast"; does this mean they actually could not refrain from eating? Luke 11: 7 says the man who had retired but was asked to give a friend some bread replied, "I cannot rise and give thee." We know the man did not lack the physical ability of getting out of bed. And so the word in our verse does not mean that the child of God has come to the place where he is physically unable to do any wrong, but that he is morally restrained from it, just as a good man who is asked to join another in some crime would reply, "O no, I couldn't do anything like that." Besides, to say a man has reached a condition where it is impossible for him to do anything wrong, would be like taking from him the necessity of watching his step, and would also make it unnecessary for him to seek the services of the Intercessor. The principle on which all these things are said of the child of God is the truth that he is born (begotten) of God. He has been conceived and born of a parentage that is spiritual and hence that holy characteristic is constantly in his spiritual person to urge him in the right course of life.

Verse 10. *In this* refers to the practice of sin as explained in the preceding verse. *Doeth* is used in the same sense as the word *commit* (or *committeth*), meaning the continual or general manner of life. The children of the devil may occasionally perform some act that is good in itself but their life as a whole is devoted to the service of Satan.

Verse 11. *From the beginning* means from the start of man's existence on the earth. The message is the teaching that we should love each other.

Verse 12. This verse confirms the comments on the preceding one as to

when *the beginning* occurred. The case of Cain and Abel is the first one in the divine record that pertains to the subject of love. Cain would not have slain his brother had he loved him. John's explanation of the cause of the lack of love is that his own works were evil while those of his brother were righteous. It seems strange that such a circumstance would cause the hatred. The basic or remote cause actually was envy which gave him a feeling of spite.

Verse 13. *Marvel not* means not to be surprised or wonder at it, because such an attitude is to be expected. Jesus taught the same thing as recorded in John 15: 18, 19, and it is also taught in 1 Peter 4: 12. The world will hate a faithful disciple of Christ on the same principle that Cain hated his brother. The righteous life is a constant rebuke to the unrighteous ways of the world and causes it to hate the righteous people.

Verse 14. The absence of love for the brethren is proof of one's being still out of the body of Christ. Those who actually enter the spiritual body will necessarily have a fellow feeling for the members. The act of entering the body is equivalent to passing from death unto life. John says *we know* in the sense that we have the direct evidence, namely, our mutual relation to each other in Christ. The last sentence of the verse is merely the reverse of the forepart. With this verse before us we may conclude that genuine evidence of brotherly love is not just the sentimental feeling, but it can be claimed only after a person has passed from death unto life. There will be more said on this subject when we come to chapter 5: 2.

Verse 15. Cain slew his brother because he hated him, so that the poison of murder was in his mind before he talked with him. Others may have the same kind of hatred in their heart but do not have the opportunity of carrying it out. The Lord can read such a mind and hence will regard that man as a murderer. *Ye know that no murderer*, etc. The Old Testament condemned a murderer and required that he be punished with death (Genesis 9: 6 and many other passages). John is repeating the same condemnation except that he applies it to murderous intent as well as the actual deed.

Verse 16. The words *of God* have been supplied by the translators. The passage means that the Lord gave direct evidence of His love in that he

laid down his life for us. This is a beautiful contrast with the man who hates his brother. Such a person not only does not make any sacrifice for another, but takes the other man's life from him. *We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*. This cannot necessarily mean that we can literally die for the sake of another, except where the other person's life is in danger and we might lose ours in protecting him. The passage refers to the interest or devotion we would manifest for our brethren even to the extent of making great and trying sacrifices. (See Romans 16: 4.)

Verse 17. In this verse the apostle gives a simple example (on the negative side) of what it means to be devoted to the interests of others. *Bowels* is used figuratively because people in old times thought that was the seat of the finer sentiments of the mind. John uses it to mean that when a man closes his sentiments of compassion against such an unfortunate creature as this, he cannot truly claim the love of God.

Verse 18. This verse means for our love to go farther than words; to be proven by our actions. It is a summing up of the preceding verse.

Verse 19. Nothing can give a disciple any stronger confidence than to know that he is proving his love by actions that benefit the brethren. He thereby manifests his relationship with the truth of the Lord which requires us to show practical love.

Verse 20. *Our heart* refers to our mind with its various attributes. Having been instructed to show our love by helpful works, if we do so we will feel assured in connection with the subject. If we fail to do our known duty we will have "a guilty conscience" and be self-condemned. If our own knowledge of neglect causes us to feel condemned, we may be sure that God will condemn us also because He knows our hearts.

Verse 21. This verse is virtually a repetition of the preceding one, except that it is considering a person who has carried out the teaching of practical love.

Verse 22. *Because we keep his commandments* is the condition on which we will receive what we ask. Keeping the commandments includes the obligation of consulting the scriptures to learn what would be right for us to



receive. It also includes our doing the things that please Him.

Verse 23. Believing on Christ and loving the brethren (with practical love) sums up the qualities of an obedient child of God. That is because belief in Christ means more than a mere profession. It includes a working faith that will carry out the teaching in James 2: 18, to show our faith by our works.

Verse 24. *Dwelleth in him, and he in him.* The matter of dwelling is a mutual affair between the Lord and his people. Since the subject is a spiritual one it is possible for "two persons to be at the same place at the same time"; it means they are dwelling with each other. *Spirit which he hath given us* enabled the apostles to speak with knowledge on the affairs of the kingdom.

### 1 John 4

Verse 1. The *spirits* means those men who profess to be speaking by inspiration, such as John mentions in the closing verse of the preceding chapter. The false teachers used that claim to obtain attention from the uninformed. The brethren are warned not to believe every man who makes such a claim, but first *try* them which means to test and examine them by the rule that is given in the next verse.

Verse 2. Nobody denied that a person lived on earth by the name of Jesus Christ, but some denied that He was divine in a body of flesh. That was equivalent to saying that He was not the divine Son of God. That would also mean that Christ had no authority or saving virtue. It was generally known that a person was predicted to come into the world to fulfill the law and the prophets, and to effect a plan of salvation on the merits of His blood. But it was denied by some that the person known as Jesus Christ was the expected one. Hence if a man acknowledged the divinity of Christ it was evidence that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Paul teaches this also in 1 Corinthians 12: 3 where he says, "No man can say Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" or Spirit.

Verse 3. This verse merely sets forth the opposite of the preceding one, and completes the rule by which the brethren may *try the spirits*, thus avoiding the misfortune of being misled by the antichrists and other false teachers.

Verse 4. The disciples had *overcome*

*them* (the antichrists) because they were the children of God. He will care for those who trust in Him, and that will insure them the victory over the enemy because God who is in them is greater than the "wise men" of the world who were trying to seduce them.

Verse 5. *They* (the antichrists) *are of the world*, which means they are interested in worldly practices. That is why they are opposing Christ because he condemns their evil ways. But the people of the world will hear their false teaching because it encourages their unrighteous life.

Verse 6. *We* has special reference to John and the other apostles because they had been inspired to write the truth. To *know God* means to have come into close fellowship with Him by obedience to the word that was given by the Spirit. All such persons would logically be inclined to hear the apostles. The conflict between truth and error still is the concern of the apostle. That conflict is determined by whether a man is of God or of the world.

Verse 7. The apostle again comes to the subject of love which seems to have been very near to him. He has a sound reason for such interest in that subject, namely, love and God are inseparable. For that reason if a man is born (begotten) of God he is sure to exhibit love also since it is the family trait of God's children.

Verse 8. On the basis of the affirmative as shown in the preceding verse, if a man does not have love as a predominant factor in his life, it is proof that he has not yet become acquainted with God.

Verse 9. This verse corresponds with John 3: 16.

Verse 10. The example of love was set by the Father and not by man. That is why we have the brief but comprehensive statement in verse 19.

Verse 11. If God was willing to love us first even when we were in sin, we ought to love each other since no one of us is any more worthy than another.

Verse 12. *No man hath seen God* literally, but we may exhibit evidences of spiritual knowledge of Him by having love for the brethren. If we do so it will cause God to *dwell in us* or in our midst spiritually. His love is *perfected* or made complete in us when we follow His example of loving the children of God.

Verse 13. This is the same in thought as chapter 3: 24; see the comments there.

Verse 14. John and the other apostles could testify, because they *had seen* the evidences that the Father has sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Verse 15. See the comments at verses 1-3.

Verse 16. *Known* and *believed*. There is no conflict between these words as might be concluded because of the difference technically between them. The things that were *known* were the evidences, and what they *believed* was based on those evidences, namely, that God had a great love for man. The latter part of the verse has been explained in a number of the preceding verses.

Verse 17. *Love made perfect* means it is complete, and God made it possible for man to have that perfect (or complete) love, to give them *boldness* in view of the judgment day. *As he is, so are we*. To be confident with reference to the judgment, we must be on good terms with God in this world. That can be accomplished only by manifesting that unselfish love that was first shown by the Lord for us.

Verse 18. The Bible does not contradict itself, and when it appears that it does there is always an explanation for it. We know we are commanded to fear God (1 Peter 2: 17), but our present verse says that perfect love will cast out fear. The explanation is very simple which depends on the meanings of the original Greek word *phobos*. Thayer gives us two definitions of the word as follows: "1. fear, dread, terror," and "2. reverence, respect." As we have seen frequently before, the particular meaning of any word must be determined by the connection in which it is used. The connection here shows John is using it in its bad sense which would made it read, "There is no dread or terror in love." If we love God and manifest it by loving our brother, we will not have any dread at the thought of meeting God in the judgment.

Verse 19. This is commented on at verse 10.

Verse 20. John has previously made this same charge, but he adds a logical reason for it here. It certainly is as easy to love a brother who is with us and whose fellowship we can enjoy, as it is to love God whom we cannot

see now and must love on the basis of faith.

Verse 21. On the basis of the reasoning in the preceding verse, John commands the disciples not to attempt loving God if they will not love the brethren also, for their profession of love will be rejected.

## 1 John 5

Verse 1. In the New Testament there is only one original word for either *born* or *begotten* which is *gennao*, hence the connection has to be depended upon in each case to determine which is the proper translation. Since the act of begetting is that of the father, it should be the proper translation in passages where the connection shows that he is the parent being spoken of. On that ground the word *born* in this verse should have been translated "begotten" just as it is in the others. The seed of reproduction is the word of God and it tells us that Jesus is the Christ. Whenever a man believes that truth, he is begotten of the Father. Therefore it says that everyone who loves him who begat (who is the Father) loveth him also who is begotten (and that is the child). All this is logical, for if we love a man we should love his children.

Verse 2. In chapter 3: 14 it is stated that we know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. But that passage does not deal with the question of how to know that we actually do love the brethren, while the present verse does tell us how, namely, that we love God *and keep his commandments*. And so a man's mere assertion that he loves the brethren is not to be accepted. He cannot truthfully make the claim unless he has obeyed the commandments, including repentance, baptism and the others which God has given in the New Testament.

Verse 3. Our love for God is proved only by keeping His commandments. *Grievous* means heavy or burdensome and it certainly should not seem burdensome to obey the commands of the One whom we love.

Verse 4. The *world* means the evil practices of mankind. (See the comments on chapter 2: 15.) If a man truly loves God of whom he was *begotten*, the love he has for his Father will induce him to overcome the evil practices of the world. That is because his love is directed by his faith that was produced by the word of God.

Verse 5. This is the same as the preceding verse except it states how and when one is *born* (begotten) of God. That is when he believes in Jesus as the Son of God as was stated in verse 1.

Verse 6. The pronouns *this* and *he* refer to Jesus as the Son of God. The verse deals with three items that testified to that claim. *He came* means his introduction to the world especially into the public ministry. The *water* refers to his baptism because it was then John the Baptist said he learned that Jesus was the one who was to come after him. The *Spirit* also is mentioned because he appeared in the form of a dove in connection with the voice of God that acknowledged the Son. The *blood* was in evidence when Jesus shed it on the cross, thus concluding the long blood line that began with Adam and ran down through the ages. (Read Luke chapter 3.)

Verse 7. Most translations omit this verse on the ground that it is not in the oldest Greek manuscripts. I will make remarks similar to what were said at chapter 2: 23. The passage does not add anything that is different from the other passages on the same subject, nor will anything be lost if it is left out. With these comments I shall proceed with the next verse.

Verse 8. This verse differs from verse 6 as to date only; each has to do with the threefold testimony for the divinity of Christ. However, verse 6 pertains to the time of His stay on the earth, while this one is continuous and applies to what has been going on since Christ left the earth. The testimony of the *Spirit* is that which is recorded in the New Testament and written by the inspired men. The *water* is in evidence every time a person is baptized, because there is no way to account for the continuation of this plain ordinance other than the fact that it originated in the time of Christ. The *blood* testifies every time the Lord's supper is observed in which is the fruit of the vine, for Paul says (1 Corinthians 11: 26), "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." *Three agree in one* means they all bear testimony to one fact, namely, Jesus is the divine Son of God.

Verse 9. *If we receive the witness of men* means that we do receive such witness. It is as if he said "since we receive such witness," etc. It is true that human testimony when confirmed

is an established rule of mankind in dealing with each other. The apostle is making the point that we should receive the testimony of God, for it is much greater than mere human testimony. That which God gives establishes the fact that Jesus is His Son.

Verse 10. *Hath the witness in himself*. Not that he produced it by his own mind, but it is testimony that can be received by the mind and hence can be retained there. (See Hebrews 5: 10.) *Made him a liar*. When a man rejects a statement made by another he thereby makes that man out a liar. Otherwise if the other person is not regarded as a liar, there would be no pretext for the first one to disbelieve him. All of this pertains to the declaration of God that Christ is his Son.

Verse 11. *Record* is from the same word as "evidence." John means that in giving to us the evidence of the Sonship of Christ, we are thereby given assurance that we may have eternal life through Him.

Verse 12. The foregoing important truths are summed up in the conclusion that to have life one must have the Son by sincere belief in Him as the source of that life.

Verse 13. *Written unto you that believe* again sets forth the idea that not all of the apostolic writings are given as new information. The purpose for repeating it is stated *that ye may know* or that they may have their faith for eternal life confirmed.

Verse 14. The proviso *according to his will* is important and shows that we are not at liberty to make just any kind of wild request and expect God to grant it.

Verse 15. This verse explains what it means to be heard for our prayers. When we *have the petitions* (granted) then we know that they were scriptural or God would not have granted them.

Verse 16. *Sin unto death*. Not that the man has reached the state of eternal death but is healed *unto* it; his conduct is in that direction. The condition described in Hebrews 6: 4-6 is a clear case of this kind of sin; let the reader see the comments at that place. Paul says it is impossible for another person to renew that kind of sinner to repentance. It would therefore be inconsistent to engage in a prayer service with a brother who has gone so far in deliberate sin that he could not be induced to repent by anyone else.

John says he would not ask anyone to pray for such a brother. The kind of sin that is *not unto death* would be like that mentioned in Galatians 6: 1 where the brethren are told to work for the restoration of the one overtaken. *He shall ask* sounds as if John means for the brother discovering sin in another to do the praying for him, when Peter told Simon to pray for himself. That it true but it is also true that brethren can pray together on behalf of the erring one. Then if he repents the Lord will grant him *life* (forgiveness) for his sins. (See James 5: 15, 16.) The pronouns may be a little confusing the way they are used. The first *he* means the man who sees his brother sin, and the second *he* means the Lord from whom all forgiveness must come. (See Ephesians 4: 32 as to the source of forgiveness.)

Verse 17. *All unrighteousness is sin.* (See the comments at chapter 3: 4.) John makes this statement that it might not seem he is underestimating the seriousness of any sin. He wishes only to show that not all sins are as fatal as others; that there is such a sin *not unto death*.

Verse 18. See the comments at verse 1 for the meaning of *born* and *begotten*. For the verse in general see the comments on chapter 3: 9.

Verse 19. *We* means those who have been begotten of God. *Whole world lieth in wickedness.* *World* means the inhabitants of the earth as it does in chapter 2: 15. The italicized words mean the same as "all that is in the world" in chapter 2: 16, which explains why the world is said to lie in wickedness.

Verse 20. The word *know* is frequently used by inspired writers to mean a strong assurance, not that it is intended to take the place of faith. It is true that the apostle John could use the word in its technical sense concerning Christ. That is because he was with Him in person during all of his personal ministry. He also knew that Christ had given him the (inspired) understanding which he promised, for just before leaving this world Jesus told his apostles he would send the Spirit upon them which would guide them into all truth (John 16: 13). The *true God* is said in contrast with the false ones that were worshiped by many people. He also is the source of eternal life in that He gave his only begotten Son into the world for that purpose.

Verse 21. *Little children* is explained at chapter 2: 1. Even the best of disciples need to be cautioned against evils that we would not ordinarily expect them to commit. John tells his readers to *keep themselves from idols* which is one of such warnings. Paul told the brethren in Corinth to "flee from idolatry" (1 Corinthians 10: 14).

## 2 John

Verse 1. John and Peter each called himself an elder. It is not merely an allusion to their age, because they both use an article before it which would make a noun out of the word. *Lady* is from the Greek word KURIA, which Thayer says means "Cyria," and then gives us the explanation, "A Christian woman to whom the second epistle of John is addressed." Robinson defines it, "Mistress, lady," and then adds an explanation much like that of Thayer. In the early days of the Gospel the church in some localities was contained in one family and had its regular assemblies in their house. This woman named Cyria and her children constituted the group to which John wrote this epistle. She is called *elect* which means a person chosen of the Lord through obedience to the Gospel. *Love in the truth* is said because John is using his favorite subject from a religious standpoint. *All they that have known the truth* indicates further that the apostle is speaking of "brotherly love."

Verse 2. *For the truth's sake* denotes that John loves this woman and her children because of their devotion to the truth. This truth *shall be with us for ever*, hence a love that is based on it will be permanent.

Verse 3. This is a form of friendly salutation which many of the writers of the New Testament used. Aside from the brotherly sentiments it expresses, the important principle is set forth that such blessings as grace, mercy and peace are to come from God and Christ if they are to be lasting.

Verse 4. *I found of thy children.* We do not have definite information as to how many of her children John had seen nor just where it was. The important thing is that in conversing with them he found them devoted to the truth for which he greatly rejoiced. This truth in which her children were walking had come by commandment from the Father, so that their lives were not moulded by their own sentiments.

Verse 5. *Lady* is the same as that used in the first verse. *Not . . . new commandment.* (See the comments at 1 John 2: 7, 8 as to why it was not a new commandment.) It pertains to the subject of love which is a precious one especially to John.

Verse 6. Love, like faith, is to be shown by works, hence this verse says that to walk after the commandments *is love*; to walk means to keep moving onward.

Verse 7. This verse corresponds with 1 John 4: 1.

Verse 8. *Look to yourselves* means for them to watch and not let the deceivers get in their evil work of leading souls astray. John had converted them to the Gospel and he did not want to have the disappointment of seeing them perverted by false teachers. That is what he means by *lose not those things which we have wrought.* He did not wish to lose the work he had accomplished in leading them to Christ. *Full reward.* No worker for Christ is to be rewarded with eternal life on the basis of his success in converting people nor on the faithfulness of his converts. But the reward consists in the joy (at the present time) of seeing them faithful. This is virtually the meaning of his statement in 3 John 4 regarding his "children."

Verse 9. This and the following verse is written in view of the warning expressed in verse 8. John is giving this group some instructions on how to detect false teachers. Of course the principles laid down are general in their application and should be observed by churches today. To *transgress* means to go beyond something, or go farther than it indicates. The particular thing that John means is expressed by the words *doctrine of Christ.* The word "to go beyond" offered above as a definition of *transgress* is confirmed by the words in this verse, namely, *abideth not in*; the man who does this *hath not God.* This is logical and consistent with other passages in the New Testament. God is to be found in His word only as far as salvation is concerned, hence if a man leaves the word it necessarily follows that he leaves God. The *doctrine of Christ* cannot be restricted to the teaching that He gives in person, for he is not on the earth now and was not when John was writing. In John 13: 20 Jesus says: "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him

that sent me." This shows that the *doctrine of Christ* includes the teaching of the apostles and all others who are inspired.

Verse 10. *This doctrine* refers to the *doctrine of Christ* in the preceding verse where it is explained. A man coming unto the disciples who does not remain true to that doctrine is to be rejected. *Not into your house.* The question is often asked whether this means our personal home or the church building. It means either where the services are being conducted. Of course in this particular instance it means the personal home because the church was contained in that place, but the same principle applies with reference to the regular church house. It should be understood this means not to receive him as a teacher. No man can be barred from coming into a church house as a spectator as long as he behaves himself, because it is a public place to which the laws of the land admit all people. And the same applies to the family home when it is used for church services. That is because all gatherings claiming to be by the church must be made public in order to be scriptural, regardless of where they are conducted. This verse requires the church to forbid all false teachers to speak to the assemblies, and if that instruction had always been observed the cause of Christ would have been preserved in many places.

Verse 11. This verse extends the remarks at the close of the preceding one. It shows that we have no right to encourage false teachers even to the degree of expressing our good wishes. If we do we are *partakers* (having fellowship) of his evil deeds and thus become his partner in heresy.

Verse 12. *Not write with paper and ink.* This does not mean that he was thinking of writing by some other method, but that he would not depend upon writing at all. There were so many needed instructions in his mind that he preferred to impart them personally. This is understandable as we know that personal conversations have many advantages.

Verse 13. *Elect* has the same meaning here as elsewhere, namely, a person chosen of the Lord through obedience to the truth (1 Peter 1: 2). I can find no dependable information as to the identity of this *sister*, but since John calls her *elect* we understand she was a faithful disciple and that she

had children also interested in the Lord. Friendly salutations were common in those times, and it was natural for these children who evidently were with John to join in friendly greetings to their mother's sister.

### 3 John

Verse 1. *The elder*. This term is explained at verse 1 of 2 John. There are several persons named Gaius in the New Testament. Thayer notes them in connection with certain passages, and at our verse he says the following: "An unknown Christian, to whom the third epistle of John is addressed." Robinson's Lexicon, Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary all favor the same identity. He was evidently John's convert, for in verse 4 he is included in "my children." *Whom I love in the truth* is the same thing he says of the "lady" in the preceding book. It means his love for them is because of their devotion to the truth.

Verse 2. This verse is similar to many passages where the grace of God is wished for the disciples. However, in this the writer is first expressing a wish for the physical health of his convert. He is interested in his spiritual welfare, of course, but he seems to know that Gaius is in satisfactory condition in that respect, which is indicated by the words *as thy soul prospereth*.

Verse 3. Some brethren had brought a report of the conduct of Gaius which was favorable. That is the basis of his remark about his soul prospering.

Verse 4. The *joy* over the faithfulness of his convert is the kind of "reward" that he means in 2 John 8. Being one of his converts John speaks of him as being among his children. (See explanation of this subject at 1 Timothy 1: 2.)

Verse 5. *Doest faithfully* denotes that whatever Gaius did he was in earnest about it; not halfhearted. He did his good deeds for others "heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Colossians 3: 23). To *brethren* and to *strangers* is in keeping with Galatians 6: 10. Paul there says for disciples to "do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith."

Verse 6. *Have borne witness* was done by the brethren mentioned in the preceding verse. They seem to have been traveling from place to place, or

some of them were, which gave them an opportunity for making the report to John referred to. Gaius assisted these travelers in some way for their journey. *After a godly sort* means it was in the name of God and because of their work for Him.

Verse 7. These traveling brethren were evidently engaged in spreading the Gospel, for the next verse speaks about being fellowhelpers to the truth. The Lord has "ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9: 14). Yet Paul refrained from such support in order that he might relieve the brethren of that pressure. The brethren of our verse did something similar, except they evidently made that concession to the people of the nations (Gentiles).

Verse 8. Because of the aforesaid sacrifice John insists that the disciples should voluntarily assist them. *Fellowhelpers to the truth*. A man may not be able to preach the Gospel, but if he supports the man who does so he becomes a partner with him in the work and will be blessed of the Lord for his contribution.

Verse 9. *I wrote unto the church* means the church of which Gaius was a member. This is indicated by some following statements in the book. John insists that he will come to the place to which he wrote the letter referred to, and at the same time trusts to see Gaius face to face. The fact that John wrote unto the church but that Diotrephes ignored the letter, indicates that the epistle was sent to this man as an elder of the congregation. That would be usual to send an official document to the officers, or at least in their care, as we read that Paul addressed his epistle to the church at Philippi to "the bishops and deacons" (Philippians 1: 1). The epistle had something to do with John's proposed visit to the church, since he declares or implies that he is going to make the journey notwithstanding the opposition of Diotrephes. This may raise a question in the mind of the reader whether it is right to visit a congregation against the authority of an elder. It is proper for an apostle to do so, for they were in the church before the elders. (See 1 Corinthians 12: 28 where "governments" stands for the eldership.) *Loveth to have the pre-eminence*. This thirst for power among the elders is what resulted in the great falling away and develop-



ment of the Church of Rome. Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 2: 7 that the mystery of this iniquity was already at work when he was writing, and he evidently was referring to such characters as Diotrophes. (See "General remarks at 2 Thessalonians 2: ")

Verse 10. John expects to come and when he does he will consider the deeds of Diotrophes, namely, his opposition to the apostle. *Prating* means to use false accusations against John in an effort to defend himself. *Malicious words* are the kind uttered with the intent of doing harm. *Not content therewith* is said because he not only opposed John, but opposed the brethren whom he sent to the church as messengers. He also forbade others who would have accepted the messengers, and if they showed friendship for the apostolic messengers, they were excluded from the church.

Verse 11. This whole verse is a kindly exhortation for Gaius to continue in the good life that he is now following which will demonstrate that he is of God.

Verse 12. This Demetrius is not found in any other place that I have seen. He was a disciple well spoken of by all who knew him. *Of all, and of the truth itself.* A man could have a good name without deserving it, but the report for Demetrius was a truthful one. John adds his testimony for the good name of this brother by saying *we also bear record.* It is probable that he was to be the bearer of this epistle.

Verse 13. This has the same meaning as 2 John 12.

Verse 14. The usual friendly salutation from *friends*, just another affectionate title from the mind of the loving John. *Greet the friends by name.* This denotes a personal recognition of the faithful messengers who are coming to see the congregation.

### Jude

Verse 1. The writer of this epistle calls himself *brother of James*, no doubt because of the prominence of James in the Jerusalem church, the man who wrote the epistle of that name. Neither of these men was one of the twelve apostles as is shown in remarks at James 1: 1. This epistle is addressed to *them that are sanctified* which means Christians. (See the comments at 1 Peter 1: 1.)

Verse 2. To be *multiplied* means the blessings are to be very abundant.

Verse 3. The definition "thoughtful activity" has been offered the readers for the word *diligence*. Jude says he used it in writing this epistle which indicates its importance, also the trustworthiness of him as an author. *Common salvation* means a plan of salvation that is offered to all people alike, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. *Earnestly contend.* Both words are from EPAGONIZOMAI, which Thayer defines with the single word "contend"; it means that Christians should "face the foe" wherever he is met. *The faith* means the New Testament in which the *common salvation* is revealed. *Once delivered to the saints.* This denotes that the plan was put into the hands of men (who are saints; Christians) and that once is as often as it had to be revealed.

Verse 4. *Crept in unawares* means they came in some underhanded manner to get advantage over the disciples. *Ordained* is from a Greek word that means they were predicted in old times, that they would do the things that would bring *this condemnation.* They misused the grace (favor) of God by making it seem to support their *lasciviousness* (filthy desires). It would be expected that such characters would deny Jesus Christ because he would condemn their wicked deeds.

Verse 5. The importance of reminders is again indicated, for these brethren had known of the history of the Israelites. The point is that it is not enough to start serving the Lord, but it must be continued or He will judge his people.

Verse 6. This has the same point as the preceding verse. These angels had a favorable *estate* at first, but left their *own habitation* (their proper domain). These are the angels that *sinned* in 2 Peter 2: 4, and they are kept in *everlasting chains under darkness* which means Hades; they will be judged at the last day.

Verse 7. *Even as* denotes that the people of Sodom and Gomorrha will also be punished at the last day. *Suffering the vengeance* refers to the future judgment day. The last word means a sentence unto punishment the same as 2 Thessalonians 1: 9. The destruction of those cities was for this world only and did not constitute the *eternal fire*, for that is to come at the day of judgment. But their destruction in Genesis was intended as an example

for the warning of others, and when that calamity came upon them they were given this sentence to be carried out at the last day. *Strange flesh* refers to their filthy immorality as described in Romans 1: 27.

Verse 8. *Filthy dreamers* means they had visions of depraved indulgencies which defiled the flesh. *Speak evil of dignities* is explained at 2 Peter 2: 10.

Verse 9. The reference to Michael is for a contrast on the same principle as 2 Peter 2: 11. *Devil disputed about the body of Moses*. All we know about this dispute is what is said here, but we learn from Deuteronomy 34: 6 that no man knew his burying place; that does not say the devil and the angels did not know. We are not told what was the point in their discussion; the important thing is the mildness of Michael in contrast with the false teachers.

Verse 10. This means they act more like beasts than men. (See 2 Peter 2: 12).

Verse 11. *Way of Cain* refers to his life of wicked selfishness, and they are compared to Balaam because of his willingness to be bribed. *Gainsaying* means contention for one's personal desires. Such a person is like Core (Korah in Numbers 16).

Verse 12. *Spots* is a figure of speech drawn from a hidden rock in the sea that wrecks the vessels. Jude says they will come to the feasts of charity (love feasts, 2 Peter 2: 13) for the purpose of *feeding themselves*. *Clouds without water* is explained at 2 Peter 2: 17. *Trees . . . twice dead* is another figure, indicating something utterly useless; the same is meant by being *plucked up by the roots*.

Verse 13. *Raging waves* is used because such things make great disturbances but accomplish nothing but threatening appearances. *Wandering stars* refers to the planets that seem to have no fixed position and these men are like that. *Blackness of darkness* refers to the "outer darkness" awaiting the wicked.

Verse 14. The Bible does not record this prophecy of Enoch, but Jude was an inspired man and knew what he was talking about. *Seventh from Adam* means he was in that numerical place in the genealogy of Christ. The *ten thousand saints* include those mentioned in Matthew 27: 52, 53. For complete comments on this subject see those at Romans 8: 29, 30 in the first

volume of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 15. This verse describes some of the work Jesus will do when he comes at the last day. *Convince* means to convict and punish these ungodly persons. All their *ungodly deeds* and *hard speeches* are considered as being *against Him*.

Verse 16. *Murmurers and complainers* are usually those who wish to walk *after their own lusts*. They speak *great swelling words* for their effect upon those whom they think they can deceive. Having men's *persons* (desirable appearances) in admiration. That is, they become "respector of persons" for their own personal advantage. The whole passage describes people extremely selfish.

Verse 17. Another reminder, but this time it is of things spoken before by the apostle. In referring to those who spoke before and mentioning *apostles* with them, it strengthens the conclusion that Jude was not one of them.

Verse 18. A *mocker* is one who makes fun of that which he cannot meet otherwise. The motive they have is their desire to *walk after their own ungodly lusts*.

Verse 19. *Separate themselves*. They put themselves in a different class from the faithful disciples by their wicked deeds. *Sensual* denotes being interested only in things that gratify the senses whether good or bad. *Having not the Spirit* because its teaching is against the kind of life they are following.

Verse 20. *Building up* means to edify themselves by the word which is the source of the *most holy faith* (Romans 10: 17). *Praying in the Holy Ghost* (or Spirit) means to pray according to its teachings in the scriptures.

Verse 21. All who *keep* the commandments will have the love of God, and such persons may expect the mercy of the Lord when he comes to judge the world.

Verse 22. People should be dealt with according to their ability, and also their opportunity for knowing right from wrong. (See Galatians 6: 1.)

Verse 23. *Save with fear* denotes a feeling of terror over the wilful doing of wrong by others. Those deserve no mercy especially and should be dealt with sternly in the hopes they may possibly be rescued, just as we would

snatch a person from drowning even if we had to grasp him by the hair of his head. *Hating even the garment* denotes that we should abhor anything that has been near fleshly sin. James 1: 27 says that pure religion consists in one's *keeping himself unspotted from the world*.

Verse 24. This and the next verse are a form of praise to the Lord that is most impressive. *Keep you from falling* will be done according to 2 Peter 1: 10. Christ will present us faultless if we serve him in this life (Luke 12: 8), and He will do this *with exceeding joy* to Him and us.

Verse 25. Transferring the praise to God directly Jude says He is *only wise*. That means that God is the First Cause of wisdom as He is of all things. *Glory* means grandeur and *majesty* means greatness. *Dominion* means domain and *power* means authority. Jude ascribes these dignities to God to last *now and ever*.

### Revelation I

General remarks. In approaching this book for the purpose of writing comments thereon, I am resolved not to resort to speculation or guesswork. True that should be one's purpose regarding every part of the Bible. But the various extremes to which so many would-be interpreters have gone make it especially important to observe this safety principle with this book. One extreme has the position that the book is a deep mystery that the Lord never intended to be understood. The fact that it is a part of the Sacred Volume and that He pronounces a blessing on those who *read* and *hear* and *keep* the things written therein (chapter 1: 3) shows the error of this position. An opposite extreme is that it is "just as simple and easy as any other part of the Bible." At first thought one might not realize the evil of the statement, but it will be manifest by the manner of reasoning that is resorted to, in order to carry out what is thought to be required by the law of consistency. In pursuing such a course it is claimed that the prophecies of the book are literal and attempts are made to find such facts in the history of the world. This theory ignores the statement in chapter 1: 1 which says the book was revealed by being "signified" or by signs and symbols, which rules out literalism in explaining the book as a whole.

We should avoid both extremes mentioned above and seek an explanation that will be consistent with the facts and other truths that are available to us. A sign or symbol must stand for something that is literally true or else its use can accomplish nothing. We should understand, therefore, that the ones in this book point forward to facts that were destined to occur literally in the then future years of the world. Since God knows the future as well as the present or past (Isaiah 46: 9, 10) it was possible for Him to look forward from the time of John and see the events that would occur in the world, including those of the religious and political domains of human activities. It would be unreasonable to suppose that He would direct a man to write a book with symbols which were not in harmony with the facts of history. The business of the student, therefore, is to read the symbols and then seek the explanation in the statements of authentic history. That is the task I have set for myself in writing a commentary on this book.

I shall here write a brief outline of the facts of history, to show the general program that has been and is now and will be carried out, in fulfillment of the predictions that John was told to write in the language of symbols. Many of the specific and detailed incidents of history will be reserved to be cited as the particular passages are reached in our studies. Among the sources of my information are the following: *Ancient Monarchies*, by George Rawlinson; *Mommsen's History of Rome*; *Josephus' History of the Jews*; *Myers' Ancient History*; *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon; *Mosheim's Ecclesiastes History*; *Jones' Church History*; *Eusebius' Church History*; and many others. Due to the wide field of historical material, it will not be expected that I can cite the actual text of the sources except in particular cases. The Roman Empire was at the height of its power in the time of Christ and the apostles, and continued so through several centuries. Religion was a state affair, being protected and regulated by the government under the direction of the emperor. That of Rome was the pagan or heathen and its worship was in devotion to idolatry. Other religions were tolerated as long as they did not become too conspicuous and did not show signs of interference with the state religion.

Among the religions tolerated was Christianity, started by Christ and propagated by the apostles. At first it was regarded as an insignificant movement and little attention was paid to it by the leaders in Rome. But as it grew in numbers and influence the Empire began to fear for its effect on the state and tried to counteract it by persecution. After a few centuries the church or leaders therein began to grow corrupt, and they sought to concentrate their power with a view to reaching a condition where one man would dominate the entire brotherhood. This ambition for power was held back by the power of Rome whose religion was the pagan or heathen. But a change took place in this Empire that removed the hindrance. In the beginning of the fourth century the emperor was Constantine the Great. He finally professed to be converted to the Christian religion and accordingly gave it the endorsement of the Empire. That resulted in the union of church and state so that the emperor over the government and the bishop over the church, both of whom resided in the city of Rome, were joined in a mutual interest and hence took away the rights or privileges of both the local leaders in the congregations, and those of kings and governors over smaller sections of the Empire. There is a lengthy note under "General remarks" at 2 Thessalonians 2 which the reader should see again.

After the union of church and state was formed there followed a period of twelve centuries known as the apostasy or Dark Ages. During that time the Bible was virtually taken from the common people and everyone both in religious and civil matters had to bow to the dictates issued at Rome by the joint power of the emperor and bishop (who finally took the title of pope). This condition continued until the time of Martin Luther and the other Reformers, who gave the Bible back to their respective countries in the language of their people, resulting in the dissolving of the union of church and state. The preceding paragraphs give a general picture of what actually occurred according to history, and of course the symbols of the book of Revelation should be interpreted in a way that agrees with the facts of history. Various details and specific instances will be related as occasion arises in our study of the book. Before taking up the chapters and verses on the plan

that has been followed throughout the Commentary, it should be noted that the symbolical part of the book of Revelation is included in chapters 4 through 20. The three in the beginning and the two at the close of the book will be considered very much like the rest of the New Testament.

Verse 1. The word *revelation* occurs 12 times in the King James Version. It is from *ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ* and Thayer defines it as follows: "An uncovering; 1. properly a laying bare, making naked." The revelation is said to be of or from Jesus Christ and God gave it unto him. It was to show things that were to come to pass or that were in the future. *Shortly* is a comparative term, for while some things predicted did take place in a short time literally, some of them were hundreds of years in the future. *Signified* is from *ΣΗΜΑΙΝΩ*, which Thayer defines, "To give a sign, to signify, indicate." (See the comments on "symbols" in General remarks at the beginning of the chapter.) The revelation was sent to John and the bearer of it was an angel of the Lord. The writer is one of the twelve apostles but he uses the term *servant* which indicates his attitude of modesty. In a later verse he refers to himself as a brother to his readers in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 2. *Who* is a pronoun that stands for *John* in the preceding verse and he is the writer of this book. *Bare record* means he is making a record of what he saw, which was according to the testimony of Jesus Christ. It is also the word of God because he gave Christ the authority to make the revelation known to John by an angel.

Verse 3. *Blessed* means happy and it is said of those who read the words of this *prophecy* or book. But the blessing is not on those who read it only, but they also must *hear* it which means to give heed to it. The writer does not stop there but adds the condition that they shall *keep* ("observe"—Thayer) them. These three significant terms certainly do not agree with the notion that the book of Revelation is one to be ignored by Bible students. *Time is at hand*. That is, the general program that was to extend down through the centuries was soon to begin.

Verse 4. Let the reader note the statements at the close of General Remarks, which show that the three chapters will be given before the symbolical part of the book begins. They will consist of letters or epistles sent

to a group of churches not far from where John was in exile. *The seven churches* does not mean there were no others in that territory for there were several. It means as if it said "write to the seven that will be named." The number seven was regarded as of special significance in old times, so that it came to be used as a symbol of completeness in many instances. Smith's Bible Dictionary says it was so regarded even among the Persians, Greeks, Indians and Romans. Doubtless the seven churches selected were representative of the general condition in the brotherhood at large, and hence the letters written to them may serve as important instruction for the congregations everywhere and at all times. *Asia* is a small province in what was known as Asia Minor until late years. It was one of the districts to which Peter addressed his first epistle (1 Peter 1: 1). The familiar salutation of grace and peace is given and it is from the same source. However, it is stated in different words, namely, from the One who *is, was and is to come*. This means that God always was and always will be. *Seven Spirits*. Paul says there is "one Spirit" (Ephesians 4: 4), so the term is figurative and used in the sense of completeness as symbolized by the number seven. This unit of seven Spirits is *before the throne* because the Spirit has always been an agency of God and Christ in carrying out the divine plans, and it would be appropriate for it to be always near at hand to receive orders.

Verse 5. *The faithful witness* does not imply there are no other witnesses who tell the truth since we know there are many. We therefore must take this to mean that Jesus was the bearer of testimony for God in a preeminent degree. *First begotten of the dead* to die no more (Romans 6: 9). *Prince of the kings of the earth*. All power in heaven and in earth was given to Christ (Matthew 28: 18) thus making Him a prince above all. Jesus showed his love for men by giving his blood for their cleansing.

Verse 6. Made us *kings and priests*. The word *kings* is from *BASILEUS* and I shall quote the definitions of a number of lexicons as follows: Greenfield, "A king, monarch, one possessing regal authority." Robinson, "A king." Thayer, "Leader of the people, prince, commander, lord of the land, king." Groves, "A king, monarch, sovereign, prince, chieftain." Donnegan, "A king."

Hickie, "A king." I have quoted thus extensively because there is a tendency upon the part of some to deny that Christians should be called kings since Christ only is king. Yet it is freely admitted that Christians are priests although Christ is our priest also. There should be no difficulty on this point, for Jesus is High Priest, while Christians are inferior priests under Him. Likewise they are inferior kings under Christ who is "King of kings and Lord of lords." Peter says Christians are a royal (kingly) priesthood (1 Peter 2: 9), and Paul told the Corinthians they had "reigned as kings" and furthermore he would that they "did reign" (1 Corinthians 4: 8). Since Christ accomplishes all His spiritual work through the church (Ephesians 3: 10, 12; 1 Timothy 3: 15), it is logical that if He is to be a king his servants are to cooperate in the work. That would make them secondary kings acting under their Chief. *Glory* means grandeur and *dominion* denotes scope or domain; John ascribes them to Christ to be everlasting.

Verse 7. *Behold* is a call to attention because something of great importance is about to be said. *He cometh with clouds*. The two men in white apparel (Acts 1: 9-11) announced the same thing, and Jesus also made the announcement before leaving the earth (Matthew 24: 30; 26: 64). *Every eye shall see him*. The fact that the writer next specifies the executioners of Christ as among those who *shall see him* proves that it will not be restricted to His faithful followers. That explodes the arrogant heresy taught by a group of materialists that Jesus came but that only they have seen Him, and that is because they are Jehovah's Witnesses. *All kindreds shall wail* because they will realize that Christ has come to judge the world. But John and all other faithful servants will not wail because they will "love His appearing" (2 Timothy 4: 8). That is why he exclaims *even so, Amen*; both terms mean virtually the same in effect.

Verse 8. The pronoun *I* refers to Christ because he is the one who is to come in the clouds. *Alpha and Omega* are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (the language in which the New Testament was written). It is a figure to indicate completeness, similar to saying a man knows his business "from A to Z." *Beginning and ending* denotes the same idea as the other figure, the particular words being

selected because Christ was present at all of the works of God from the beginning (John 1: 1-3; Ephesians 3: 9). *Is, was* and *is to come* has the same meaning as in verse 4. *The Almighty*. This phrase belongs primarily to God the Father, but since God is a name for the Deity or Godhead, and Christ is a member of that family, it is proper to ascribe the title to Him also. He is called "The everlasting Father" in Isaiah 9: 6, and it can be understood only because of His relation to the Deity.

Verse 9. John says he is *in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ*. It is impossible to be in something that does not exist, hence the kingdom of Christ was in existence in John's day; that disproves the heresy of premillennialists. *Patmos*. A number of reference works give a description of this place which agrees in substance. I shall quote from the Rand-McNally Bible Atlas as follows: "Patmos, to which the apostle John was banished. This lies 20 miles south of the island of Samos, 24 miles west of Asia Minor, and about 70 miles southwest of Ephesus. It is about 20 miles in circumference, and is rocky and barren. Its loneliness and seclusion made it a suitable place for the banishment of criminals; and to it the apostle John was banished by the emperor Domitian, near the close of the first Christian century." John says he was in this isle *for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ*. The word *for* is from *διὰ*, which the Englishman's Greek New Testament translates "because of." In other words, John was banished to this lonely spot as a punishment by the Roman emperor, because of his preaching the word of God.

Verse 10. *In the Spirit* means he was in a spiritual rapture in which he could hear and see things that could not ordinarily be heard and seen. *Lord's day*. The New testament religion has no holy days as did that of the Old. However, the Lord arose from the dead on the first day of the week (Mark 16: 9), the church was started on the first day of the week (Leviticus 23: 16; Acts 2), the disciples met on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20: 7), and the congregational collection of money was made on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16: 1, 2). These facts would give the first day of the week some distinction that is said of no other day. The conclusion is clear that the same

day is what is meant by the *Lord's day* in our verse. *As of a trumpet*. The comparison is made because that kind of instrument had a vibratory sound that was intense in quality and far-reaching in volume. John does not mean he thought he heard a trumpet, for verse 12 says he turned to "see the voice." But the voice was so impressive that John likened it to a trumpet. *Heard behind me* is significant. By coming up behind John he could hear the voice before seeing the tremendous display of spiritual imagery accompanying it.

Verse 11. Before turning round the voice delivered the names of the churches to which he said in verse 4 he was writing. The remarks were repeated that are at the beginning of verse 8. *What thou seest, write*. This did not mean only what his eyes would behold, but also what he would hear, for later he is told what to put in the letters to the seven churches.

Verse 12. *Turned to see the voice*. That is he turned to see the source from which the voice was coming, and when he did he saw something more than the speaker. Candlesticks (or lampstands) for the purpose of light were used in the tabernacle services (Exodus 25: 31-37), but in that case there was only one unit that had seven parts to it. In the present the candlesticks are separate pieces, the reason for which will be seen in the next chapter.

Verse 13. *Like unto the Son of man*. Much of the language addressed to John is worded as if Christ did the talking personally. That is not the case, for He has been on his throne in heaven since his ascension and will remain there until He comes to judge the world (Hebrews 10: 12, 13). All that is said as coming from and concerning Christ is done through the instrumentality of an angel. (See chapter 22: 8.) The long garments were worn by the priests, and the girdle of gold around the breast betokened a king. All this was very appropriate because Christ is both High Priest and King (Zechariah 6: 13), and this angel was representing Him.

Verse 14. When *white* is used as a symbol, it indicates purity and glory. *Flame of fire*. The first word indicates that the eyes are active and penetrating. *Fire* will consume dross and rid a situation of that which is objectionable.



Verse 15. The original for *brass* is defined by Thayer as follows: "Some metal, like gold if not more precious." *As if they burned in a furnace* is said to indicate the brightness of the appearance. When used figuratively *many waters* means great numbers of people. The significance of this and the preceding verse is to show the dignity and authority of Christ as represented by this person.

Verse 16. *Had in his right hand* denotes the ability to grasp and support the things named. It is similar to a familiar saying that "God holds all things in the hollow of His hand." We will learn in verse 20 what the seven stars represent. *Sharp twoedged sword* is the word of God (Hebrews 4: 12). The original for *countenance* means the appearance in general, but in this passage Thayer defines it, "Face, countenance." In comparing this person's face to the shining sun (a condition when the sun is not obscured by clouds), the purpose is to indicate the penetrating brilliance of the Lord's face.

Verse 17. The sight and sound of this wonderful being so overcame John that he was prostrated with fear. Not that he was rendered unconscious for then he could not have been benefited by encouraging words which were spoken to him. *Fear not* indicates that John was affected with a feeling that perhaps something was about to happen for which he was not prepared. Hence he was given this assurance that the one who was before him was He that was *the first and the last*. Verse 8 tells us that the phrase refers to the Lord who is being represented by this angel.

Verse 18. This verse gives further items of the dignity and power of the person speaking to John. *Liveth, and was dead* identifies him as Christ since the Father was never dead. *Alive for evermore* is further proof that it is Christ because that is declared of him (Romans 6: 9). The person who holds a group of *keys* has the power or authority to open and shut. The places where Christ can use these *keys* will next be named. *Hell* is from HADES, which is the abode of departed spirits. *Death* is from THANATOS, which is the state of the body after the spirit leaves it. The passage as a whole means the Lord has the power or control over the bodies and souls of men. That is why Jesus said what he did in Matthew 10: 28.

Verse 19. The subject matter of what John is to write is divided into three parts, namely, what he *has seen, are,* and *shall be*; past, present and future. However the past goes back only to the things he had seen since coming as an exile to Patmos.

Verse 20. A *mystery* is anything not revealed or understood, and it is here applied to some of the things which John *has seen* and which until now had not been explained to him. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the seven candlesticks represent the churches. Since the angel is telling John what are represented by the stars and candlesticks it is foolish for men to offer speculations on the subject. *Angels of the seven churches*. The word for *angel* in the New Testament is AGGELOS, which means primarily "a messenger." But it has several shades of application and each case must be considered separately. We should adhere to what the text says and then we will be on safe ground. The angels of these churches are spoken of in the singular number for each church. The churches were established ones and hence had elders who are always spoken of in the plural. Therefore all we know and all we need to know is that these angels were not elders but were persons who were responsible for getting the letters before the respective congregations. For that reason John was instructed to write the letters to these angels, and they in turn would see that the documents would be delivered to the churches in the proper way to make them responsible for the admonition and/or encouragement contained therein.

## Revelation 2

Verse 1. See the comments on last verse of the preceding chapter for explanation of *the angel*. This letter is written to the same church at Ephesus to which Paul wrote his epistle bearing that name. The beginning of this church is recorded in Acts 18: 19. Before John wrote his letter to it the congregation had been placed under elders (Acts 20: 17). The Authority for this letter identifies himself by repeating chapter 1: 13, but adding the significant fact that he *walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*. This signifies that Christ is present (in spirit) and knows what is going on in the churches of the brotherhood.

Verse 2. This and the following verse will name a number of things in the

conduct of the church that are favorable. By doing that the Lord sets a good example of giving due credit which would be well for disciples to follow in their treatment of others. *I know thy works.* The Greek for the first word has many shades of meaning but they are classified under virtually two groups only, namely, to know in the sense of being aware of, and to know in the sense of acknowledging or approving: the connection must determine which is used. In our verse the Lord means he approves of the works which are mentioned. *Labor and patience* means they were persistent in their labors. They were very good negatively in that they could *not bear them which are evil*. They were faithful in detecting and exposing false teachers. (See 1 John 4: 1.)

Verse 3. *Bornc and patience* are virtually the same as labor and patience in the preceding verse. The main idea is that they had followed such a course for a long time. They had likewise done these things for the Lord's *name's sake*, which denotes a proper motive technically for their *labors*. *Have not fainted* means they had been unfaltering in their religious activities.

Verse 4. *Nevertheless*. This single word conveys a very important truth, namely, while the Lord does not fail to see all the good a disciple does, yet that will not cause Him to accept the service unless it is correct as a whole. *Left thy first love*. This phrase may be illustrated by the warmth of feeling that exists in the first part of the relation of husband and wife. The word *love* is from AGAPE and its chief meaning is to have that regard for another that will cause one to be interested in his welfare and happiness. Such a love will prompt one even to "go out of his way" to do things to please the other. Likewise a Christian should have such a feeling for his brother and for Christ who is the bridegroom of the church. This going "out of his way" does not mean to go beyond the lawful regulations, for that would not be pleasing to a bridegroom regardless of its motive. But there are countless instances where a Christian can make a special exertion to show his love for the Lord. The church at Ephesus had fallen into the frame of mind where it performed its services from the legal standpoint only, and it had ceased to be a "labor of love" as Paul mentions in 1 Thessalonians 1: 3.

Verse 5. *From whence thou art fallen*. They had fallen from a condition of fervent love for Christ and his cause to one of legal or technical formality. *Repent*. They have not been charged with doing anything wrong; everything they did was right as far as the acts themselves were concerned. It was what they were *not* doing that made up the Lord's objection to them; they were right affirmatively but wrong negatively. Yet they were told to repent, which shows a disciple may be condemned for what he is not doing. (See Hebrews 2: 3.) *Do the first works* means those extra acts of love they did in the beginning of their service to Christ, not that they must repeat the first principles of the Gospel. *I will come quickly*. He was already walking round midst all the churches, but this means He will come specifically to this particular church to judge it. *Will remove thy candlestick*. Now we can see the reason for the remarks at chapter 1: 12 about the seven candlesticks being separate items. That makes it possible to remove one without disturbing the others. Another important thought is signified in this circumstance, namely, the churches of Christ are independent units as to their government and have no official connection with each other. It should be noted further that notwithstanding the complaints the Lord had against the church, He did not threaten to remove its candlestick (which would be His way of rejecting this church) unless it failed to repent. In connection with this case it is well to consider Matthew 11: 20 where Jesus upbraids some wicked cities "because they repented not." In Luke 13: 3, 5 He declares certain ones will perish "except they repent." In 2 Peter 3: 9 the wicked need not perish if they will "come to repentance." This group of kindred passages gives us an insight into the principle on which God deals with mankind. A church (or individual) does not forfeit its standing with God at the mere point of doing wrong (else we all would be falling daily), but it is when it does wrong and refuses to repent of it.

Verse 6. *Nicolaitans*. There is little definiteness in the treatment of this subject by the histories and lexicons and other works of reference. Thayer merely comments that they were "the followers of Nicolaus," a heretic in the time of the apostles. Robinson makes similar remarks about the subject. We

note that both the deeds and the doctrine of this sect are condemned. It had something to do with a life of fleshly indulgencies. The church at Ephesus rejected this sect which was one other point in its favor stated in the letter written by John.

Verse 7. *He that hath an ear* does not imply that some people are without ears literally, but this is a solemn call upon all to give profound attention to what is being said to the churches. *What the Spirit saith* is the same as what the Lord says for He uses the Spirit to direct John in writing the letters. *To the churches*. There is no indication that the seven letters were to be circulated generally among the seven churches. Instead in each separate instance the instruction is to write a certain letter to a particular church. Therefore the phrase *to the churches* signifies that what the Spirit says to any certain church that may be named among the seven, the Lord intends to be for the instruction of the churches of Christ everywhere. This "call to attention" is made in connection with each of the seven letters and will not be commented upon after this one. But the promises that are made are different each time, hence that part of the letters will be commented upon as we come to them. *Tree of life . . . paradise of God*. The phrasing about the tree is based on the one that was in the garden of Eden. Man lost that tree by sinning, but it may be regained in a spiritual form by proper conduct, namely, by *overcoming* his sins while in this life. *Paradise* comes from a word that may mean any place of bliss or happiness. That is why it is used in reference to the abode of the righteous after death (Luke 23: 43), and to the place where God dwells and will be the abode of the righteous after the judgment. Paul calls it both by "paradise" and "third heaven" in 2 Corinthians 12: 2, 4. John had a vision of the tree of life as he describes it in chapter 22: 2. The reader may see a fuller description of the original word for *paradise* at Nehemiah 2: 8 in Volume 2 of Bible Commentary.

Verse 8. See the comments on last verse of the preceding chapter for an explanation of *the angel*. Smyrna is one of the places that received a letter John was told to write. The description of the One who was dictating the letter is the same as in chapter 1: 18; the same who was walking in the midst of the churches. This is one of the

two that received no rebuke from the Lord in the letters to the seven churches.

Verse 9. *I know thy works*. See comments at verse 2 for the general definition of this phrase which is used at the beginning of each of the seven letters; in this place it means the Lord approves of their conduct. *Tribulation* refers to the oppression being put upon this church by the enemy. A part of this resulted in the loss of their possessions which brought upon them a condition of poverty. *But thou art rich*. They were poor as far as this world's goods was concerned but were "rich in faith" (James 2: 5). *Say they are Jews, and are not*. They belonged to the Jewish race but were not true to their religious profession; such people frequently joined with the heathen in persecuting the Christians. *Synagoguc of Satan* means they really were serving the interests of Satan and hence were to be classed with his agents. Such insincere Jews would assemble in their synagogues for their pretended services to God, but due to their hypocrisy the Lord considered it a synagogue of Satan.

Verse 10. Imprisonment as a persecution was to be one feature of their tribulation which will be credited to the devil. *Ten days* is a figurative reference to a series of persecutions that were heaped upon the church under the opposition from the Roman government. This was to become a trial of their faith, and the Lord consoles them with the assurance that they need *fear none of those things*. *Faithful unto death*. Even death cannot defraud a true disciple of his reward. *Crown of life*. A crown is a decoration for being victor over a foe and such a token is worthy those who remain true to the Lord in the presence of death. Their body may die in His service but it will not deprive them of eternal life. (See Luke 12: 4.)

Verse 11. *He that overcometh* means the one who is "faithful unto death." The *second death* means the lake of fire (chapter 20: 14) which cannot hurt the faithful.

Verse 12. The author identifies himself in this place by His possession of the *sharp sword with two edges*. This refers to the word of God which is described in Hebrews 4: 12. The Lord says he *hath* this sword or that He originated it and has a perfect knowledge of the proper use of it. *And to*

*the angel* is explained at chapter 1: 20.

Verse 13. *I know thy works.* (See comments at verse 2.) *Know* is used in the sense of approval with regard to the *works* in this verse. *Where Satan's seat is.* Pergamos was in one of the worst centers of idolatry, making the temptation all the greater. This church as a whole withstood the influence of heathendom, holding fast to the name of Christ as the true person to worship. *Not denied my faith* denotes that they maintained the basis of that faith or system of religion which was the Gospel. Not much is said elsewhere about this Antipas further than what is said here. He is referred to as a "martyr" even as it is in our passage. However, the reason for so classifying him is an error, namely, because it is said that he *was slain* for his faith. He was a martyr before being slain because death is not what makes a man a martyr; it only proves that he was a martyr. That term is from the same Greek word as "witness" and it means the same. It is the word for "witness" in Hebrews 12: 1 where we know Paul is speaking about the faithful servants of God enumerated in the preceding chapter. We also know that some of those "witnesses" (martyrs) did not die, for they "wandered in deserts and in mountains." Hence a martyr is one who is true to the testimony of the Lord come what may, whether it be death or loss of goods or banishment like the case of John. Accordingly in the case of Antipas; he went to his death because he had been a true and *faithful martyr* for Christ.

Verse 14. *Thou hast there* means the church was holding within its fellowship these characters. *Hold the doctrine* denotes that they believe and retain and endorse it. The *doctrine of Balaam* is briefly stated in direct connection with this passage. It pertains to the advice that Balaam gave Balac after the four speeches that he (Balaam) made under the control of the Lord. The historical account of it is quoted from Josephus in connection with Numbers 25: 1-5 in Volume 1 of Bible Commentary. The persons in the church at Pergamos were endorsing the same practices which were a mixture of idolatry and immorality.

Verse 15. See the comments at verse 6 on the Nicolaitanes.

Verse 16. *Repent.* (See comments at verse 5 on this subject.) *Fight against them* means a spiritual war since the

weapon is the *sword of my mouth*. It means these guilty members will be exposed and condemned by this sword which is the word of God.

Verse 17. *He that hath an ear* is commented upon at verse 7. *Him that overcometh* signifies one who is faithful to the Lord until death. *Eat of the hidden manna*. This is a figure of speech formed from the circumstance recorded in Exodus 16: 32-34; it is referred to by Paul in Hebrews 9: 4. This manna was in the ark in the Most Holy Place where none were permitted to enter and partake. It is used here to represent the exclusive spiritual blessings that the Lord will bestow only on His faithful servants. *A white stone* alludes to some practices of old in which a favored contestant was given this kind of stone as a badge of distinction, on much the same principle as a soldier's decorations. This *new name* also signifies the special relation between a faithful servant and his Lord. *No man knoweth* in the sense that no man can realize or appreciate what it means to be thus blessed of the Lord.

Verse 18. See comments at chapter 1: 20 for the explanation of *the angel*. In this letter the author states his personal name before giving a description of himself and it is the Son of God. Comparing His eyes and feet to *fire* and *brass* is explained at chapter 1: 14, 15.

Verse 19. *I know thy works* is commented upon at verse 2. After naming the works He immediately uses the word *notwithstanding*, which shows that the *works* to which He refers are the things named in our present verse. Since they are all good we understand the word *know* is used in the sense of approval. *Charity* means an interest in the welfare of others, and *service* means the doing of something to assist in that welfare. *Faith* is produced by the word of God (Romans 10: 17) and with the assurance that the divine word is leading them aright, it would cultivate *patience* or endurance in their activities. In the beginning of the verse the word *works* is used as a general reference to their manner of life. It now is used to bring out the fact that they performed good deeds for the welfare of others. *Last to be more than the first*. This is as it should be, for Christians are expected not only to produce the fruits of righteousness but to increase therein (2 Corinthians 9: 10).

Verse 20. Having given the church credit for the good things it was doing the Lord next makes his complaints. *Thou sufferest*. When a church retains a bad character in its fellowship, it becomes a partaker of the evil deeds of that person and will be condemned by the Lord. (See verses 14, 15.) The church at Thyatira was doing so concerning a false prophetess named *Jezebel*. Thayer defines this word, "A second Jezebel," then gives us the following historical statement. "The symbolic name of a woman who pretended to be a prophetess, and who, addicted to antinomianism [the doctrine of faith alone], claimed for Christians the liberty of eating things sacrificed to idols." This statement of Thayer's agrees with the language of the verse.

Verse 21. *Gave her space* (of time) *to repent* indicates the longsuffering of God toward evildoers. *Repent of her fornication*. Doubtless those whose religion was so materialistic as to worship dumb idols also indulged themselves in fleshly fornication. However, it is evident from many passages that idolatry was classed as spiritual fornication in Bible times; one such passage is Jeremiah 3: 9.

Verse 22. This verse indicates that spiritual adultery (idolatry) is what is meant through most of these verses. The Lord here threatens to punish this wicked woman by casting her and her customers into a bed together. That would not be any punishment for a woman who was a literal adulteress. But the form of language is used that indicates something unpleasant was to be inflicted, for it refers to the bed as a place of tribulation. Of course in a case of literal adultery the Lord would regard an impure woman and her patrons as being guilty together. Likewise if a woman entices the professed servants of God to commit idolatry, the whole group would be held as partners in the guilt. (See Matthew 15: 14.)

Verse 23. *Kill her children with death*. This may sound strange to us if we try to be technical, for if a person is killed at all it would mean death. It is what is known as a Hebraism which means an expression peculiar to the speech of the Hebrews and used by others for the purpose of emphasis. The idea is to make the hearer realize the certainty that death is to be inflicted. It is similar to "thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2: 17), or not to "die the common death of all men" (Numbers 16: 29). *All the churches*

*shall know*. Whatever was going to be done was to be of such a public character as to make it an example. *Searcheth the reins and hearts*. The Lord is able to penetrate the innermost thoughts and expose the evil to the shame of the guilty. *Will give unto every one of you according to your works*. Those who are personally responsible for the conditions will be called to account.

Verse 24. *Unto you I say . . . as many as have not this doctrine*. In every condition of evil there are some who have not endorsed the evils of others, and they are not held responsible for that which they could not prevent. *Not known the depths of Satan*. Not been mixed up in these evil things of Satan who is prompting Jezebel and her partners. *As they speak* refers to the false teaching of this wicked woman and those being influenced by her. *Put upon you none other burden*. The Lord will not condemn them for what they cannot prevent, but He will "burden" them with the duty of abstaining from the evil practices that he has been condemning.

Verse 25. *Hold fast*, or maintain their disconnection with these evil things. *Till I come* is equivalent to saying "until death."

Verse 26. Figurative language must be based on some literal fact or possible fact. Christians are not to exercise any temporal rule over the world on the basis of their religious profession, but they are to be joint rulers with Christ as to spiritual conduct that will please the Lord. (See the comments at chapter 1: 6.) This partnership with Christ is on condition that the disciple is faithful *unto the end*, which means until death if such should be imposed upon him.

Verse 27. An iron rule does not always mean one of harshness, but that metal should also be thought of as being unyielding and strong and enduring under a strain. All the phrases of this verse should be understood in this figurative sense.

Verse 28. *Morning star*. Jesus calls himself the "morning star" in chapter 22: 16. The significance of this phrase is due to its brightness as it precedes the sun in rising, thus announcing that a new day is dawning. (See 2 Peter 1: 19.) The present verse means that the faithful disciple will be given the spiritual brightness of Christ.

Verse 29. *He that hath an ear*. (See verse 7.)

## Revelation 3

Verse 1. The Lord identifies himself as the one who has the seven *spirits of God*. Robinson says the following about this numeral: "The number *seven* was often put by the Jews for an indefinite round number. Likewise as a sacred number, of good omen, as also among the Egyptians, Arabians, Persians, etc." (See the comments at chapter 1: 4.) *I know thy works* is used in the sense of disapproval for it is directly followed by something that is bad. This church was alive as far as its profession and reputation were concerned, but in reality as the Lord saw it the church was dead.

Verse 2. The aforesaid charge of being dead is relative for dead people cannot do anything. Yet these people are exhorted to do something about that which is *ready to die*, which shows that some prospect of life was in sight. *Not found thy works perfect*. The church as a whole had some good qualities but it was not as good as it could and should be considering its opportunities.

Verse 3. *Remember . . . received and heard*. God holds men responsible according to the information and other advantages they have received (Luke 12: 47, 48). The church at Sardis had been given Gospel instruction and ought to have known better than think that a mere profession is sufficient. That is why it is warned to *hold fast* which means to preserve the talents that were given to it and also to develop them (Matthew 25: 16). *Repent*. This is another instance where disciples are exhorted to repent of a negative wrong. These people were guilty of not rising above a mere profession or reputation. They must bestir themselves and prove their right to such a name by more spiritual activity. Furthermore if a person does not make the progress or growth he should, he is sure to go the other way and become tainted with the evil things around him and thus *defile his garments* as most of these disciples had done. *Come on thee as a thief*. The Lord does not compare himself to a thief, only the hour of His coming is likened to one; for that reason it is important to be watchful.

Verse 4. *Hast a few names* means there were a few persons in Sardis who had not become defiled. We have already seen that God does not hold anyone responsible for what he cannot

prevent (chapter 2: 24); so it was with these *few names* in Sardis. *Walk with me in white*. White is an emblem of purity and is always so used in the Bible when taken figuratively (Psalms 51: 7; Isaiah 1: 18; Revelation 19: 8). This promise looks beyond the day of judgment to the eternal association with Jesus in the home of the soul. However, it does not wait until then for its fulfillment in every sense. It also includes the fellowship with Christ that a faithful disciple may claim and enjoy in this life. "When we walk with the Lord in the light of His word; What a glory He sheds on our way!" (See 1 John 1: 7.) *They are worthy*. We sometimes hear brethren criticize a familiar phrase "save us if worthy," and they will object that "none of us can ever be worthy." Jesus says we can, but he does not say that it is through the merits of our deeds. The worthiness consists in our relationship with the Lord as shown in the passage cited in 1 John above.

Verse 5. *He that overcometh* is the same as being faithful until death. *Clothed in white raiment* is explained at the preceding verse. *Not blot out his name out of the book of life*. It is a universal practice for institutions that consist of individual membership to keep a record of its names in a book. The fact is a basis for the figurative idea of a *book of life* in which the Lord keeps a list of his people (Malachi 3: 16; Luke 10: 20; Hebrews 12: 23; Revelation 20: 15). The point is that all whose names are there may be considered as those who are in good standing with the Lord. But their names are not put there with "indelible ink" but they may and will be *blotted out* if they are not faithful. *Will confess his name* is the same promise that Jesus made while on earth (Matthew 10: 32).

Verse 6. *He that hath an ear* is commented upon at chapter 2: 7.

Verse 7. The church in Philadelphia was another that did not receive any rebuke in the letters (the one at Smyrna being the other). The most of this verse is used in describing the One who is authorizing this letter. *Holy and true* may be said of all true servants of God but it is true of Christ in a complete sense. *Key of David* refers to the authority that was predicted for Christ because he was to come into the world as the most noted descendant of that great ancestor. (See comments at chapter 1: for meaning



of *key*.) That explanation will show why the opening and shutting are mentioned as pertaining to Christ and not to any mere man.

Verse 8. *I know thy works* is said in the sense of approval since everything said about this church is good. The *open door* is figurative and means the door of opportunity to advance the Gospel as it is expressed at 1 Corinthians 16: 9; 2 Corinthians 2: 12; Colossians 4: 3. *No man can shut it*. Man can hinder and persecute the disciples but he cannot actually prevent them from carrying out the Gospel life in the world. *Hast a little strength*. They are commended for being faithful even though their strength is not great, a condition which they cannot help. *Kept my word* means they had been true to the commandments in the word of God. *Not denied my name* means they were not ashamed to confess the name of Christ as explained at verse 5.

Verse 9. *Synagogue of Satan* is commented upon at chapter 2: 9; *say they are Jews and are not* is explained at the same place. *Worship*. This term comes from about 12 different Greek words and has a variety of meanings. A complete extract from the lexicon on the subject may be seen at Matthew 2: 2 in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary. At our present passage the word refers to an act of courtesy or admiring respect, as if to congratulate another over some favor that has been granted him. That favor is expressed by the words *to know that I have loved thee*.

Verse 10. *Word of my patience* denotes that they had endured according to His word. As a reward for their patience the Lord will *keep them* or preserve them when the *hour of temptation* (or trial) comes. Such a promise is so far-reaching, that it could refer to the specific siege of persecution that the pagan government was about to wage against the church, or to tribulations from the world in general.

Verse 11. *Behold* is an expression to arouse attentive interest. *I come quickly* would apply to the personal coming of Christ to judge the world, or to the close of their life at which time all opportunity for service will cease. In either case the important thing is to *hold that fast which thou hast* which means to maintain their present life of faithfulness. *That no man take thy crown*. Not that one man can literally get possession of a

crown that belongs to another. But if a disciple suffers the enemy to mislead him it will cause him to lose his crown.

Verse 12. *Him that overcometh* is equivalent to being faithful until death. *Make a pillar* is a figure of speech signifying a fixed or permanent place in the favor of God, and *go no more out* emphasizes the same thought. *Write upon him . . . name of the city*. Another figure meaning the faithful servant will be recognized as a citizen of the celestial city. (See Philippians 3: 20.) *My new name* means a name that will signify a victorious life for Christ. (See comments at chapter 2: 17.)

Verse 13. *He that hath an ear* is explained at chapter 2: 7.

Verse 14. See the comments at chapter 1:20 for significance of *Angel*. The *Amen* is given special meaning here by the words *the faithful and true witness*. This is logical since the word *amen* means "so be it" or is an endorsement of some stated or implied fact. A true witness would not endorse any declaration that was not correct. *The beginning of the creation of God*. This is equivalent to the statement in Colossians 1: 15 that Christ is "the firstborn of every creature." The reader will do well to see the comments at that place also on a number of verses following it. The "beginning of the creation" coincides with John 1: 1-3 where Christ is said to have been "in the beginning," then explains it with the declaration that "all things were made by Him."

Verse 15. *I know thy works*. Again this is used in the sense of disapproval for it is followed immediately with something that is bad. *I would thou wert cold or hot*. The figure is based upon the idea of food and its agreeableness to the taste. Some articles are supposed to be eaten hot and others cold. If either kind becomes neutral on the subject of temperature it will be objectionable. Also there are some articles of food that are suitable in either condition, but it is not desired that they be between the two states. On that basis as an illustration the Lord desires his disciples not to be neutral.

Verse 16. No parable or illustration should be strained in the application. This one does not teach that God would be pleased at all with one who is cold in his religious practices—that point is not being considered in the

least in this illustration. The only idea is with the comparative preference for something cold over a lukewarm article. When we make the application the reason for this preference is evident. If a professed disciple is cold it will be clearly recognized by the world, and he will not have much influence in keeping others from the service of Christ through his example. On the other hand, a lukewarm disciple may be a tolerably good man so that others may admire him. Yet he is not urgent in advising them to be busy in the Master's service and consequently his influence will be detrimental to the cause of Christ and for that reason he will be rejected. Retaining the same subject matter for his figure, the Lord threatens to treat this church as a man would a piece of food that he took into his mouth and found it had become lukewarm; he will *spew* (spit) it out of his mouth.

Verse 17. The outstanding thought in this verse is to show how much a church can be self-deceived as to its real condition. Doubtless it possessed all of the things named of a temporal nature. One of the evil effects of earthly riches is to mislead their owners into a feeling of independence or self-sufficiency. That is why Jesus speaks of "the deceitfulness of riches" in Matthew 13: 22. The condition of this church was the opposite to that of Smyrna which was poor in this world's goods but was rich in faith. Our present case is one of complete deception, for the church had concluded that it had *need of nothing*. We often hear the remark that some man "is independently rich," which is just the state of mind the church at Laodicea was cherishing. The Lord admits that those people did not know (or realize) what their actual condition was from a spiritual standpoint. *Wretched* is defined by Thayer, "Enduring trials and troubles." They had a good many conflicts because of their lack of spiritual worth, but their confidence in their wealth gave them a false sense of triumph over them all. *Viscible* virtually refers to the same condition as being wretched and their deception covered their situation also. *Poor* in faith while rich in the perishable things of this world. *Blind* means their eyes of faith had become entirely afflicted with a spiritual cataract developed from their corroding wealth, and hence they could not see that they were naked.

Verse 18. *Gold tried in the fire* is a figurative name for faith (1 Peter 1: 7.) *White raiment* consists of the righteousness of the Lord's people (chapter 19: 8), and the people could have such raiment to wear if they would follow a life of righteous conduct. *Anoint thine eyes*. In 2 Peter 1: 9 the man who lacked the qualities named in that chapter is said to be "blind," and on that basis the church at Laodicea needed to use the anointment of those virtues to remove the cataract from their eyes.

Verse 19. *Love* in this place is from the word that signifies the warmest sentiments of affection. It makes a strong and unusual situation to say that such treatment of loved ones is the very proof of that love. Yet that is a principle that is true whether a human or divine Parent is being considered. (See Hebrew 12: 6, 9.) *Be zealous therefore*. Since these stern rebukes are evidence of the Lord's love for them, it should induce them to repent with zeal which means to be active about it. The fundamental meaning of repentance is a change from one condition to another for the better. These people were relying on their temporal wealth for gratification and were poor in faith. They now should take on a sincere interest in the spiritual things of Christ and begin serving him by righteous living.

Verse 20. The specific subject matter for the various churches seems to have been completed. This verse represents the general attitude of the Lord toward all human beings. The door is that of the heart into which Jesus will enter if given a welcome. He will not force an entrance into a man's life, for the only kind of service that will be pleasing to Him is a willing service. Hence the human heart must respond to the call of the Lord. *Sup with him and he with me*. In old times it was one of the surest indications of hospitality for a man to eat with another. It also was a token of recognition and endorsement. (See Mark 2: 16; 1 Corinthians 5: 11.) This mutual supping between Christ and his host is a figure of speech to indicate the great intimacy that He offers to share with a human being if permitted to do so.

Verse 21. *Him that overcometh* means one who is faithful under all trials and difficulties. *Sit with me in my throne* is another figurative expression, meaning that such a person

will be regarded as having right to that fellowship with Christ in the kingdom, that is stated in 1 Corinthians 4: 8 and 1 Peter 2: 9.

Verse 22. *He that hath an ear* is commented upon at chapter 2: 7.

#### Revelation 4

Verse 1. With this chapter we start into the symbolic part of this book. I urge the reader to turn back to the "General remarks" at the introduction of chapter 1, and carefully read through the paragraphs, especially for the purpose of being prepared to appreciate what will be said relative to the symbolic and literal features of the book. Bear in mind that literally John is on the isle of Patmos and will be there all through the book. When the language seems to take him to some other place it is only figuratively so. When he speaks about going somewhere or of seeing something that we know is not actually out there on that isle, we must understand that he had a vision of such things and is only writing a description of what he sees. *Door opened in heaven* signifies that John was to be admitted into the confidences of the Lord and be told things not known by other men. A voice like a trumpet indicates that it was strong and filled with the characteristic of authority. *Things which must be hereafter* has direct reference to events in the future. However, we should not forget the overall scope of his vision as stated in chapter 1: 19. That passage says he was to write of things pertaining to the past, present and future. That explains why he here tells us of conditions then existing, which will be involved in many of the future events of the book.

Verse 2. *In the spirit* means the vision was opening up before him. The first thing he saw was a throne in heaven and the throne was not vacant; *one sat on the throne*. That indicated that heaven had an occupant who had authority to give rule over the earth as well as over other persons in heaven.

Verse 3. These precious stones are used to indicate the worth and also the brilliance of the one on the throne. The *rainbow* refers to the arched halo that is generally pictured over the head of one occupying a place of authority. *Like unto an emerald*. This is another precious stone that is used to signify the glory about the head of the person occupying the throne.

Verse 4. God has had two organic systems of religion in the world, the Mosaic and the Christian. The former was arranged under twelve tribes (with their heads) and the latter is administered under twelve apostles (Matthew 19: 28). The four and twenty elders represent the two systems of religion. *Clothed in white raiment* signifies a life of righteousness, because all men who live righteously before God, whether they were in the days of the Mosaic system or in those of the Christian, will be permitted to surround the throne in heaven as victors over the world. These elders are in the vision to represent all the saved under the two systems.

Verse 5. *Lightnings and thunders and voices* symbolize authority issuing from the throne and it is coming from some being whose voice is as penetrating as lightning and as impressive as a roll of thunder. *Seven lamps* denote complete illumination and the *seven Spirits of God* are explained at chapter 1: 4.

Verse 6. A *sea* is deep and *crystal glass* is clear and pure, symbolizing the beauty of the scene around the throne. *Four beasts* is an unfortunate translation, for we always think of a "beast" as an animal of the lower world, and hence not a fitting symbol of something enjoying the dignity of these in this verse; the proper rendering of the original word is, "living creatures." *Full of eyes before and behind* symbolizes the ability to look in a universal direction.

Verse 7. In comparing one living creature with another it is intended only to consider one or two points of similarity, because there might be some characteristics common to all of them. A *lion* is bold and strong; a *calf* represents meekness; a *man* signifies more intelligence than other creatures; an *eagle* denotes exaltation and fleetness. The identity of these creatures and the reason why there were just four of them will be shown in the next chapter.

Verse 8. *Had each of them six wings*. Had it said that they had four wings even, it would have aroused our inquiry since a flying creature normally uses only two wings. We must conclude, therefore, that these wings were not all for the purpose of flying. A similar figure is given in Isaiah 6: 2 where the creatures that stood near the throne had each six wings. We may obtain some sugges-

tions for our verse by reading the use Isaiah said these creatures made of their six wings. Each one used two of his wings to *cover his face* (indicating humility in the presence of God); with two of them he *cover his feet* (indicating modesty before the throne); with two *he did fly* (denoting a readiness to go on any errand desired by the Lord). *Full of eyes within* denotes that they could make an intelligent application of the things they could see outwardly or around them. *Rest not* means they did not pause day or night in ascribing praise to the Lord. *Was and is and is to come* is commented upon at chapter 1: 4.

Verse 9. These beasts (living creatures) not only ascribed glory and honor to the Lord, but also gave *thanks* to Him who sat on the throne continuously. That for which they were thankful will be understood when we study the next chapter.

Verse 10. The *four and twenty elders* are explained at verse 4. *Cast their crowns* is not a movement as if discarding the crowns for all the circumstances are against anything that unfavorable. It was a gesture of respect, recognizing the Lord as the one to whom they owed all the honor that was being enjoyed in possessing crowns.

Verse 11. *Thou art worthy* is not an overture of flattery, for they immediately give their reasons for the expression of praise, namely, He was the Creator of all things.

### Revelation 5

Verse 1. *Him that sat on the throne* was God, for he is said to be the creator of all things, in the last verse of the preceding chapter. What was called a *book* in old times is the same as we call a roll; something like a long strip of paper and rolled up from one end. Let us remember we are in a book of signs or symbols. This *book* or roll is a symbol of the future events, and being sealed signifies that the future is unrevealed to all unless the seals can be broken so that the writing can be read. There were seven seals which is the complete number again, signifying that the future is hidden from the world. If the seals can be broken and the writing read, each one will reveal a part of the events that are to come in the future.

Verse 2. *Strong angel proclaiming*. He was asking a question *with a loud*

*voice* which signifies a general call in order to give all a chance. The call was to the task of opening the book which means to make predictions of the coming events.

Verse 3. *Heaven* (where God dwells), *earth* (the abode of living human beings), *under the earth* (the abode of departed spirits). These three regions take in all intelligent creatures in the universe. Note that no man in any place was able to respond, which signifies that the future is a sealed book as far as uninspired beings are concerned, whether they be in heaven or on earth.

Verse 4. Since the loud request had been made by a strong angel the importance of the subject was evident, which explains why John wept when *no one* (the word for man is not in the original) was able to respond. *Read the book, neither to look thereon* signifies that unless the seals can be broken, no uninspired person can even see the writing much less read (understand and interpret) it.

Verse 5. *One of the elders* means one of the four and twenty who represent the two great systems of religion. He was able to console John and bid him refrain from weeping, because there was one available who would be able to open the book. *Lion of the tribe of Juda* (Judah). In Genesis 49: 9, 10 this lion is predicted and Hebrews 7: 14 tells us that Christ came from the tribe of Juda. *Root of David* means that Christ was the very important descendant of David the son of Jesse (Isaiah 11: 1, 10). This conversation represents the leaders of the two organized systems of religion as understanding that the great plans in which they were only agents in the service of God, were made good through the merits of this Lion.

Verse 6. *In the midst*, etc. Thayer gives us the rendering as follows: "And I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and the elders." He then offers his explanation as follows: "In the vacant space between the throne and the living creatures (on one side) and elders (on the other side), accordingly nearest the throne." *As it had been slain*. A lamb may be slain and then come back to life still bearing the marks of its death wounds. Thus Jesus was permitted to retain the wound marks until He had completed the great work with His apostles. (See John 20: 20.)

*Horns* in symbolic language means authority, and *seven* of them means complete authority. (See Matthew 28: 18.) *Seven eyes* signifies a perfect vision which would be necessary in order to see into the future. *Seven Spirits* is explained at chapter 1: 4.

Verse 7. *He* (this Lion and Lamb) came to the throne to get the book. *Him that sat upon the throne* means God, and in giving the book to the Lamb signifies that God gave his Son the ability to reveal the future events. This fact is stated literally in the first verse of the book of Revelation.

Verse 8. When God gave to his Son the right to open the book it caused rejoicing of all concerned in the great plans. The verse symbolizes this by telling of the actions of the *four beasts* (living creatures) and the *four and twenty elders*. They all fell down before the Lamb which is the usual practice of manifesting homage and recognition to a superior. *Harps* in symbolic language signify instruments of praise, and the next verse will tell us that these instruments were the human voice because they were used by which to sing. *Odors* in literal performances refers to incense offered to God in the services to Him (Exodus 30: 7, 8), but John interprets it as *prayers of saints*. This denotes that under whatever system of God's religions a man has lived, he is regarded as a *saint* (righteous person) and has the privilege of praying to God. This explains why it was said to Cornelius, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10: 4), he having lived under the Patriarchal Dispensation, the unorganized system of religion. And it also accounts for the fact that Saul of Tarsus spent the time praying in Acts 9: 11. It is true the system under which he was brought up was done away but he had not realized it as yet.

Verse 9. It is important to note that the pronoun *they* means the *four beasts* (living creatures) and the *four and twenty elders* of the preceding verse. Also that the connection shows the word *saints* (righteous persons) applies to those who have lived under the systems designated by these *four* and *four and twenty*. After their performance of homage to Christ these creatures state their reasons for it, that He was worthy to be the one to open the book. In stating their reasons they will give their identity to which reference was made in the comments

at chapter 4: 7. They say, *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*. We know that human beings only are the subjects of salvation, therefore these living creatures represent the redeemed human beings of the earth. The reason there are just four of the creatures in the one group is the fact that the surface of the earth has just four directions, and hence the saved would all come within the scope of those four areas. The four and twenty could join in the identifying declaration on the principle that both of the organized systems of religion were conducted in a way that was looking toward the universal salvation of mankind. *Sang a new song*. It was new in that they could not sing the praises of Christ as the actual Redeemer until he had qualified by being *slain* and giving His blood.

Verse 10. See the comments on chapter 1: 6 for the explanation of this verse.

Verse 11. The several phrases in the end of this verse are represented by only two Greek words in the original which The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders "thousands of thousands." Whichever translation we adopt, we should understand it to be a figurative statement to indicate a very great number of the heavenly host. They were joining in the praises of the four creatures and the four and twenty elders.

Verse 12. The praises of these angels were along the same line as those that were given by the creatures in verse 9 and for the same reason. The favors named in the verse do not refer to any specific blessings. As a group they signify that the Lamb of God is entitled to every blessing that God can bestow, and that they will rejoice in the great honors thus given to Him.

Verse 13. *Heaven, earth and under the earth* is explained at verse 3. *In the sea and all that are in them*. This cannot mean the men who had lived on the waters for they are included in the creatures *on the earth*. It means the living creatures of that domain which constitutes three fourths of the surface of the earth. Of course those dumb things cannot intelligently praise the Lord, but their very existence and service to humanity under the supervision of Him is a form of praise and an evidence of the existence and wisdom and power of the Al-

mighty. (See Psalms 148: 1-10.) *Him that sitteth upon the throne* is God the Father and *the Lamb* is God the Son.

Verse 14. The four creatures and the four and twenty elders had already expressed their admiration (verses 8, 9), and when all these other beings uttered their praises it caused the creatures and elders to voice their pleasure by an *amen* of approval.

### Revelation 6

Verse 1. The Lamb began to open the book (or roll), and when the first seal was broken John heard a voice like thunder. That indicated a powerful voice was sounding that would demand attention. Accordingly one of the four creatures called to John to come and see.

Verse 2. Horses were used in war and it could mean either spiritual or carnal war depending upon the connection in which it is used. The rider on the horse had both a *crown* and a *bow*, which signified that he was a person of authority and that he would engage in war. The rider represents Christ who was fighting for the truth through the instrumentality of His disciples. The white horse agrees with the phrase *conquering and to conquer*, for the Gospel won many battles over the foe in the first years of the church.

Verse 3. At the breaking of each of the first four seals the event was announced by one of the four beasts (or creatures). *Come and see* means to call the attention of John to what was about to be revealed.

Verse 4. The next horse was red which denotes bloodshed. Accordingly the rider was given power to take peace from the earth. This was fulfilled by the persecutions the Roman Empire began to wage against the Christians when their teaching began to show up with greater success.

Verse 5. The third seal was broken and the announcement was made for John to come and see. This time he saw a black horse which symbolized a condition of famine or shortage of food. The same subject was further indicated by the *pair of balances* that the rider held in his hand. It denoted that the necessities of life would be measured out to the people.

Verse 6. *Wheat and barley* are necessities of life, and the great price that is indicated by the figures shows that it was to be a time of scarcity, which is generally the case after a siege of

warfare. *Oil and wine* are not necessary as articles of food, but are helpful as agencies of relief in times of distress. In the midst of the hardships the Lord predicted some relief would be afforded through these articles.

Verse 7. No description is given of the voice of the beasts (living creatures) after the first one. But in each case (up to the fourth) the call to attention is made to John that he would be sure to see what was about to be revealed.

Verse 8. When the fourth seal was broken John saw a pale horse which indicates death. That calamity would come first as a result of the terrible famine which the war had brought about, and it was made worse by the persecutions that were fostered by the Pagan Roman Empire. *Death and hell* are named in the order they would observe in their occurrence. The word *hell* is from *Hades* which is the abode of departed spirits. It was logical therefore to name them in the order as stated. *Power . . . over the fourth part of the earth*. God never did suffer the enemy to exterminate completely the victims attacked. The general purpose of the enemy was *to kill*. The means by which it might be accomplished were various, such as with the *sword and hunger*. With either of these the death would be a direct result of the means used. *With death* might seem a meaningless phrase unless it is understood that it refers to some indirect means such as a pestilence. Another means of causing the death of the Lord's people was to expose them to vicious beasts as was done in the arenas of Rome.

Verse 9. This verse brings to the fifth seal but nothing is said by either of the four creatures. Evidently by this time John's interest had been so centered on the drama being enacted before him that it was not necessary to call his attention. He was shown an altar because this is a book of symbols that are used to denote some literal facts. The present symbol is drawn from the temple of the Jews in which the altar was the center of their worship. At the bottom of the altar the blood of the sacrifices was poured, the bodies having been laid on the altar to be burned. (See Leviticus 4: 7.) From this imagery it was fitting to represent the Christians as victims that had been sacrificed to the cruelty of their persecutors, and also to picture their souls as being poured out at the



foot of the altar. It is interesting to note that the bodies only had been put on the altar which left the souls still alive and able to speak intelligently. (See Matthew 10: 28.) The word *for* is used twice which is from the Greek word ΔΙΑ. The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders this word "because of." The point is that these Christians had been killed "because of" their defense of the word of God. It is the same word that is used in chapter 1: 9 where John was banished to the isle of Patmos "for" (because of) the word of God. Hence both John and these Christians who had been slain were martyrs, because the word means one who is faithful to the word of God regardless of threatened consequences.

Verse 10. The witnesses whose souls John saw (he was able to see a soul because he himself was "in the Spirit"—chapter 1: 10) were calling for vengeance to be put on the ones who had caused their mistreatment.

Verse 11. Before replying to their cry with the explanation of the situation, they were given present consolation in the form of *white robes*. That indicated their standing of favor with God for chapter 3: 4 shows white as a symbol of worthiness in His sight. It was then told them that they would be avenged after a while, namely, when some of their brethren should be killed. *As they were* means they would be killed "for" (because of) the word of God. This was fulfilled as reported in chapter 20: 4 which will be commented upon when we come to that passage.

Verse 12. Following the opening of the fifth seal John saw some of the results of persecution, and it had been brought against Christians by Pagan (heathen) Rome. But there came a change in the general conditions. The emperor Constantine professed to be converted to Christianity, and it caused him to make many reverses in the activities of men in high places. The statements through the rest of this chapter are worded as if John saw the works of creation undergo radical changes. Such is to be expected in a book written with symbols. Hence the earthquake and darkening of the heavenly lights are tokens of the disturbances in the government.

Verse 13. *Stars of heaven* refer to men in high places who lost much of their power by the changes that Constantine was making. *Untimely figs* means fruit that is not ripe, yet it was

shaken loose by the revolution going on in the government.

Verse 14. The *heaven* refers to the region that covers the earth, used here as a symbol of the great domain in which important men ruled with selfish interests. The disappearance of this reign of selfishness is likened to a *scroll* that is rolled up and laid away. *Mountains* and *isles* in symbolic language means seats of government, and these began to be altered by the revolutionary work of Constantine.

Verse 15. The various great persons named in this verse are the men in high position who had been holding uninterrupted sway over their people. As they began to see the fading of their domination it filled them with terror. Such an attitude is symbolized by an attempt to find hiding places in dens and among the rocks.

Verse 16. In their state of fear they would prefer being put out of the conflict, even if the mountains would tumble down upon them. *Hide us . . . from the face of the Lamb*. These men who had held sway for so long were made to realize that the change was brought about by the influence of the religion their emperor had espoused.

Verse 17. *Great day of his wrath* does not refer to the last great day of judgment, for the book is not that far along in the world drama. It is the day in which these overbearing men in high places in the pagan government of Rome, came to realize the effects that the religion of Christ was bringing as a punishment upon them.

### Revelation 7

Verse 1. After the altar scene in chapter 6: 9-11, the vision opens the sixth seal to give a view of the consternation that came upon the men in high places, because of their mistreatment of Christians and because they were faced with the reverses that the emperor had forced upon them. The present chapter extends the consideration that God had for the "martyrs," at the same time He was bringing the siege of consternation upon the persecutors of His people. The *four angels* are so numbered because of the *four corners* or four points of the earth's compass. *Holding the four winds* symbolizes the blowing of the wrath of God over the realm of the persecutors, and these angels were holding this wind ready to be released whenever they were so ordered.

Verse 2. As the four angels were "standing at attention" ready to turn the winds loose upon *the earth* (referring to the domains of the Roman Empire), another angel was seen coming with a special message to the four. *From the east* is figurative and means it was from the throne of God, because he is the source of all spiritual light, even as the sun which brings material light to the world, first appears in the east. *Hurt the earth* is referring back to the conditions of consternation and destruction described in the closing verses of chapter 6.

Verse 3. They were told to hold back the winds until the faithful ones had been accounted for. A seal is a stamp of ownership and is placed on the proper persons to indicate the approval of the authority behind it. (See the comments at 1 Corinthians 9: 2.) This seal was to be placed in the forehead which indicates they would be visible to the public. Whatever was the exact fulfilling of this symbol, there was something that would tell the world of God's approval of them. Hence when the wicked men of power were undergoing their terrors, they could realize how much they had failed in their wicked designs. Right while they were trembling in the terrors of their crumbling dominions, they could see the victims of their cruelty with the marks of approval from their God.

Verse 4. The number of those who were sealed is given in exact and equal figures, which makes us know that it is all another expression of figurative speech and that the meaning is that great numbers of true Christians had won the stamp of approval from the Lord. *Tribes of the children of Israel*. It is known that after the conversion of Cornelius in the first four years of the Gospel, the Gentiles furnished many converts to Christ. Hence there were many of those who were persecuted as well as of the Jews. The reference to the twelve tribes is therefore accommodative, similar to the instance in James 1: 1.

Verses 5-8. Having explained the significance of the tribal classification, and since the same thing is said of each tribe, I am combining these verses into one paragraph to conserve time and space.

Verse 9. This verse verifies the comments at verse 4, for here we have the same kind of persons referred to in other numerical terms. They also are said to be from *all nations*, etc., which

would prevent us from restricting the "twelve tribes" to the Jews. *White robes* signified a life of righteousness and *palms* are medals betokening their victory over "great tribulation" (verse 14).

Verse 10. *Salvation to our God* means to ascribe salvation to Him, and *unto the Lamb* is combined in the praise because God perfects all plans through the Son.

Verse 11. The angels stood round about the throne and in the presence of the elders and the four living creatures as a mark of respect. But when they performed their homage of worship it was before the throne unto God.

Verse 12. *Saying, Amen*. Thayer says that at the beginning of a discourse the word means, "Surely, of a truth, truly." Thus the angels were announcing that they were about to utter something that would surely be the truth, namely, that all the good qualities mentioned in the verse should truly be ascribed to God. The declaration was made emphatic still more by closing it with *Amen*.

Verse 13. The elder put his statement in the form of a question to gain the attention of John. The ones *arrayed in white robes* were those in chapter 6:11 and those of the twelve tribes in this chapter.

Verse 14. John understood that such was the purpose of the question, for he replied *thou knowest*. The elder then gave the answer which confirms the idea that they were the persecuted servants of God already referred to. *Came out of great tribulation* denotes their triumph over their persecutors. Not that they escaped death, for John had seen their souls outside of their bodies. But if a servant of God is faithful even in the midst of persecution then death cannot rob him of victory. *Washed their robes* is a figurative reference to their being cleaned by the blood of Christ.

Verse 15. All of the statements in this verse are figurative, for the purified saints had lost their lives for testifying on behalf of the word of God. But they were being held in honored remembrance and were destined to be always "welcome callers" in the intimacies of the Father.

Verse 16. Shall not *hunger* nor *thirst* because those are wants that pertain to this life, and they have become citizens of a region where physical wants are unknown. The light and

heat of the sun are things of the past for the same reasons.

Verse 17. *Lamb shall feed them* with delicacies that are unknown to men living in the flesh. *Living fountains of waters* are among the blissful objects to be enjoyed by those who overcome by faith in the Lamb. *Wipe away all tears* by preventing anything that could cause tears.

### Revelation 8

Verse 1. The seventh and last seal was opened but nothing took place for half an hour. In the march of events it frequently happens that a lull will come between different campaigns. That is described here as being a silence of half an hour. We recall that when the four angels in chapter 7: 1-3 were prepared to continue the action of God's judgments against the persecutors of His people, they were told to hold the winds back until the sealing of the faithful had been completed. This half hour silence represents the lull in the judgments while the sealing was being done.

Verse 2. The events of the seventh seal will include several verses, for there are seven angels involved in the events and all that transpires in connection with them is what was revealed when the seventh seal was broken. The angels were given each a trumpet but they will not all be used in the same series. Four of them will sound one after the other, then will come a halt after which the remaining three will sound. (See verse 13.) Doubtless the first four angels correspond with the four that were holding the four winds that were to bring consternation upon the persecutors of God's people, which is the reason why the seven angels are divided into separate groups, four and three.

Verse 3. Incense is a symbol of prayer, and while the judgments of God against the persecutors were preparing, the faithful servants of God were engaged in their devotions to Him. That is why the incense and prayer are combined in this verse.

Verse 4. The odor of incense was pleasing to God in the days when such services were required (Exodus 30: 7-9; Leviticus 16: 12, 13). and likewise the prayers of faithful servants in the Christian Dispensation are acceptable (1 Peter 3: 12).

Verse 5. *Filled it with fire off the altar*. In the Mosaic system the priest

obtained the fire from the brazen altar with which to burn the incense. The angel followed the same pattern in the symbolical performance, except that after having used some fire for the burning of incense before the golden altar, he got some more fire which he put in the censer (a portable fumigator) and cast it into the earth. This aroused voices like the sound of thunders which were the complaints of the foes of truth at the prospect of God's judgment about to come upon them. So mighty and widespread were these murmurings that John likened them to an earthquake.

Verse 6. The half hour silence is about to end and the four winds are about to be released; the first four angels with trumpets are about to sound.

Verse 7. It should be remembered through verse 12 that the plagues symbolized represent the reverses that came upon the Roman Empire which finally resulted in the downfall of the government. The items mentioned are figurative or symbolic, but they are worded as if literal calamities were being imposed. That is because in a book where certain facts of an immaterial character are predicted in symbols, the events have to be reported as if they were happening literally. Thus we have a hail and electrical storm that causes bloodshed and scorching of much of the vegetation.

Verse 8. The judgments of God against the Empire continue as the second angel sounds his trumpet. *Great mountain burning* signifies the downfall of some unit of the government. *Cast into the sea* symbolizes the people (represented by the sea) as feeling the effects of this political downfall. *Sea became blood* signifies that much bloodshed was suffered among the people caused by the internal disturbances.

Verse 9. All of this is figurative because the literal sea and its vessels of traffic were unharmed by the political confusion. But it gives a picture of what did occur, and in stating an exact percentage as dying we will understand that a great portion suffered but the government was not exterminated.

Verse 10. No change in the general drama takes place, but some special incident is predicted to affect the people unfavorably. A *star* in symbolical language denotes some leader, and he is here likened to a meteor that falls

to the earth, selecting as its landing place the rivers and fountains of water. That is attacking a vital portion of a country because of the necessity of water.

Verse 11. The name of this star was *Wormwood*. That is from the Greek word *APSINTHOS*, which Thayer defines, "wormwood, absinthe." Webster's definition of the word is as follows: "A green alcoholic liquor containing oils of wormwood and anise, and other aromatics. Its continued use causes nervous derangement." It is no wonder, then, that *many men died of the waters*.

Verse 12. *Third part* is commented upon at verse 9. This angel gave a sound that resulted in throwing all the luminaries out of order, pitching the country into a state of semi-darkness. It was another shake-up among the leaders of the empire.

Verse 13. The things which happened to the country, when the four winds were turned loose or when the angels sounded, seemed bad enough if that was to be the end of the troubles. But it was not, for there came another angel flying through *the midst of heaven*, which denotes that he came into the region of the political heavens of the Roman Empire. He pronounced a triple woe on the people to come when the remaining three angels sound their trumpets. Let us bear in mind that we are still reading of things that were revealed when the seventh seal was broken.

### Revelation 9

Verse 1. It is fair to my readers to state that a number of commentators connect this chapter with Mohammed. In reasoning upon the subject some of them will mention certain things that could not have been true of any persons but the soldiers of Mohammed. But in their reasoning I note that the chief basis of their argument is the idea that the literal characteristics of locusts and horses and soldiers, etc., will not agree with any interpretation except to apply the predictions to Mohammed. But we are in a book of symbols where it does not count for a conclusion to rely on the literal nature of things. On the principle of "giving others the benefit of the doubt," I am sure there were many facts and truths about Mohammedanism that correspond with the language of the several verses. Yet that could truly be said of some other noted impostors who

have come into the world to poison the minds of men. The scope of history is so wide that one might find incidents to correspond with various characters he would select for the comparison. Against all of the above considerations I am keeping in mind that the Lord was concerned principally with the experiences of His people in connection with the Roman Empire, and the great apostasy that was formed by the corruption of His system with its union of church and state. In view of the aforesaid remarks I shall devote my comments to the items that were and are being fulfilled by the doings of the institution of Rome. *Star fall from heaven* is rendered "out of heaven fallen" by The Englishman's Greek New Testament. It denotes that John saw a star (symbol for a leader among men) that was in fallen condition, not that he saw it fall. That would be true of the head of Rome; he had fallen from the spiritual purity that exists in heavenly things. *Bottomless pit* is from *ABUSSOS*, which is explained at Luke 8: 31 in the first volume of New Testament Commentary.

Verse 2. We have learned that the bottomless pit is the abode of demons (usually translated "devils" in the King James Version). These demons were suffered to come into the world at one time and afflict mankind. After that period was gone it was easy to refer to such a performance as a symbol of other activities in the politico-religious world, namely, the institution in which the church and state were united. Since this great apostate organization served the interests of Satan so much, it was appropriate to represent the Roman bishop as having a joint interest with him in opposing the true servants of God. Paul verifies this conclusion in 2 Thessalonians 2: 9 where he says: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." Literally we would think of smoke coming out of a place where there is a flame of fire (Luke 16: 24), but it is used symbolically which will be developed as the chapter proceeds.

Verse 3. We still have symbols but they are more definite. The smoke proves to have been a "smoke screen" that enclosed a swarm of locusts. That explained why the sun was darkened by the "smoke" in the preceding verse. It has been known many times that this insect comes in such great numbers as to have the effect of a cloud

that obscures the sun. In selecting a symbol the Lord would call attention to some literal fact that would truly represent some other fact or truth that is not literal. This swarm of locusts was the clergy of Rome acting on behalf of the apostate church, otherwise called Babylon the Great. As the swarm of locusts obscured the sun so the clergy of Rome would prevent the people from having the full benefit of the "Sun of Righteousness" (Malachi 4: 2). *Scorpions* is described by Thayer as follows: "The name of a little animal, somewhat resembling a lobster, which in warm regions [such as Hades, E.M.Z.] lurks especially in stone walls; it has a poisonous sting in its tail."

Verse 4. Here we have another instance where the Lord uses a literal object to symbolize a fact that is not literal, except that He uses the symbol contrary to its usual behavior. This is not the only instance where a performance in nature is used "contrary" to its usual manner. (See Romans 11: 24.) The natural thing is for the locusts to eat the very things this verse says they did not hurt. They were to hurt men only and not all of them even. Their destructive work was to be against the *men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads*. Such men were true servants of God and no kind of oppression could actually hurt them. But on the principle that "evil sometimes works its own rebuke," the Lord suffers the workers of iniquity to be scourged by their own leaders. It is a historical fact that the dupes of Rome often suffer many hardships at the hands of the clergy. The writer of this paragraph knew a family in which a small son was compelled to earn money, half of which was taken from him by the clergy though his widowed mother was much in need of it.

Verse 5. *Not kill them*. The clergy needed to retain their dupes that they might further exploit them for their own selfish interests. *Five months* is a definite period of time if taken literally, but in actual history we do not find such processes as have been described being so exact in their beginning and ending. The figure refers to some particular period in the history of the apostate church when the oppression by the clergy was active to an extraordinary degree.

Verse 6. *Seek death and shall not find it*. There are some things worse

than death (Jeremiah 8: 3). I once heard a lecture by a woman who had escaped from the clutches of Rome. In that lecture the speaker related the experiences of a woman who was being tortured as a result of self-inflicted wounds induced by the heresies of Rome. This victim moaned and sighed as if death at once would have been a relief.

Verse 7. It was fitting that these locusts were in the form resembling war horses, for the apostate institution has not hesitated at using carnal warfare for its defense whenever it was thought necessary. *Crown of gold* indicates both authority and wealth, and the clergy of Rome have ever been equipped with both, in order to carry out the schemes of the headquarters of the corrupt organization. *Faces of men* is an important identification also, because while the use of war horses is necessary in the program of Rome, it also requires the scheming trickery of human intelligence.

Verse 8. *Hair of women . . . teeth of lions*; this is a very interesting combination. In 1 Corinthians 11: 15 it is shown that women are expected to have long hair (that being the only distinction between the hair of women and that of men as far as the appearance is concerned.) Women are supposed to be milder and less harmful in their natural disposition. Hence when these creatures first appear they are regarded as women and thus would not be suspected as being such as needed to be avoided. But they had teeth like those of lions which indicates that they were in reality a dangerous group of creatures. That is a true picture of the clergy of Rome, including all from the pope down to the humblest priest.

Verse 9. A *breastplate* is a piece for the protection of the vital parts of the body. The apostate church stood behind its clergy and gave them all the protection necessary. *Sound of their wings*. The locusts have wings literally and since the symbolism is still drawn from those insects it is appropriate to mention that part of their anatomy. Yet we know it is not to be taken literally, for the rest of the verse represents them sounding like war chariots drawn by horses going into battle.

Verse 10. This is the same as verses 3 and 4.

Verse 11. See the remarks at verse 1 for the meaning of *bottomless pit*.

The angel of this place would mean some outstanding character who was in partnership with the influences of that domain. The capitalized words of this verse are used by John as proper nouns, but in Bible times most names of persons had special meaning. That of the ones in this verse means "destroyer," and it is certainly an appropriate name in view of the destructive work and tendencies of the leaders of Rome. This *king* or *angel* would be either the pope or some special member of the clergy who had unusual success in controlling the others. It is noteworthy that John connects this evil arrangement with the *bottomless pit* which is the abode of fallen angels called demons.

Verse 12. *Two woes more* is a reference to the statement of the angel in chapter 8: 13, who announced that three woes more were to be pronounced against the inhabitants of the earth. One of them has been announced and two more are waiting to be sounded.

Verse 13. The golden altar was in the first room of the tabernacle and placed by the veil that separated the second room. Just through the veil was the ark where God met with the high priest to speak to him. Hence the voice John heard was coming from the presence of God.

Verse 14. The voice was giving instructions to the sixth angel. The river Euphrates is a significant subject in connection with God's people. The ancient city of Babylon was situated on its banks, which was the capital of the first of the four world empires. The word "babylon" came to mean confusion and was finally applied to the great institution of the apostate church, concerning which we are now reading in our studies. It was fitting, therefore, that these four angels should be represented being located in this river. The particular events which they were to announce are not named, but the train of happenings is not interrupted. It means that the disciplinary treatment which the dupes of Rome were suffered to have come upon them was continuing. It will be well now to read the comments at 2 Thessalonians 2: 11, 12. There it will be seen that God sent certain judgments upon the citizens of the apostate institution, using their own people and practices as the instrument by which judgments were to be sent. That is what is going on in our

chapter, and the four angels are merely some of the specific agencies within the corrupt institution for this epoch in the punishments.

Verse 15. The *hour, day, month* and *year* are exact periods of time when literally considered, but they are to be understood in the same light as "five months" in verse 5 which the reader should see. Likewise he should see the comments at chapter 8: 9 for the meaning of *third part*.

Verse 16. The number of the army is another exact figure if taken literally, but the meaning is that a great army was serving the interests of the evil institution. *And I heard the number of them*. The conjunction *and* is not in all copies and it is unnecessary, for the sentence means that John was not sizing up the army personally but the number was announced to him.

Verse 17. Some commentators see an invasion of heathen armies into the domain of the Roman Empire. No doubt things of that nature took place at certain times through the centuries. However, the fundamental background of the vision being shown to John has not been changed, hence I believe all these descriptive phrases are symbolical of the fierceness of the judgments which the dupes of Rome brought upon themselves. For that reason I shall not attempt any further comments on the descriptions.

Verse 18. See the comments at chapter 8: 9 for the significance of *third part*.

Verse 19. These creatures were invested with powers at the two extremities of their bodies, which indicates how complete was the agency that God suffered to come upon the citizens of the corrupt organization.

Verse 20. The worship of devils and other forms of idolatry that are mentioned refers to the worship of dead "saints" that was practiced by the members of the apostate church. They also introduced images into their churches and they would fall down before them (even as they do in our day) which constituted the idol worship condemned here. *Repented not*. Notwithstanding all the hardships that had been brought upon the leaders and many of their followers by their corrupt practices, the others (*rest of the men*) did not "learn their lesson" so as to be induced to repent.

Verse 21. These are literal crimes which doubtless many of them com-



mitted, for it is well established that the apostate church deals in all of such means to further the interests of the corrupt institution.

### Revelation 10

Verse 1. The drama of the book of Revelation is proceeding down through the centuries, until we are about to arrive at the revolution known in history as the Reformation. But the full development of that mighty movement will be preceded by some items preparatory to it. Now is another time when the reader should again read carefully the "General remarks" at the beginning of this book. But the oppression from the power that was created through the union of church and state has exhausted the patience of the Almighty and he will soon inaugurate the work that is destined to dissolve the unrighteous monster and return to the people their right to act upon their own responsibility. The preliminary events necessary for the main performance are due to begin soon, which will be indicated by some of the symbols of this chapter. The angel in this verse came down from heaven and the description shows he was coming on behalf of the Lord to impart some predictions about to be carried out. *Clothed with a cloud* agrees with the fact that he was from the courts of heaven, because the clouds are frequently used in connection with heavenly events (chapter 1: 7; 14: 14; Matthew 24:30; Acts 1: 9; 1 Thessalonians 4: 17). *Rainbow upon his head* signifies the dignity and grandeur of his mission. His face like the sun denotes great light which was especially appropriate since his mission was to announce the shedding of Gospel light on those who had been deprived of it because of the Dark Ages. *Pillars of fire*. Thayer explains this to mean. "Flames rising like columns." It denotes a penetrating brilliance that belongs only to heavenly beings.

Verse 2. The angel had a *little book* which indicated that the events about to be predicted would not take long and hence would not require a large book to record them. The book was *open* which signified that the things about to happen were to be made known; that their account was not a sealed book as the one in chapter 2. It denoted further that the Bible which had been closed to the people by Rome would soon be opened again so that all might read. The *sea* and

*earth* comprise the entire surface of the globe and the symbol means that all the world would be affected by what was soon to occur and which would be announced presently.

Verse 3. The angel's voice was like that of a lion in that it was strong and itself heard far and near. We know from the context that the angel's cry was the announcement that the Bible was again to be given to the people. Of course that would be unwelcome news to the heads of the apostate church and it was natural for them to protest. That called for *seven thunders* from the "seven-hilled" city of Rome.

Verse 4. Not realizing the deception there was in the protests, John was about to write down what the thunderous voices said. (We remember he was told in chapter 1: 19 to write the things that should be thereafter.) But the Lord understood the motive of the seven voices coming from the headquarters of the "man of sin," and He caused a voice to instruct John not to record them but to seal them up.

Verse 5. In lifting up his hand the angel mentioned before (in verse 2) was preparing to make an oath. (There is no inconsistency in this, for he was an angel of God and man only is forbidden to make oaths.)

Verse 6. *Should be time no longer*. Much misuse has been of this passage. It is not uncommon to hear a preacher making an earnest plea to his audience to obey the Gospel while the time is here. That soon the angel of God would place one foot on land and the other on the sea and declare that "time shall be no longer." They thus make the phrase mean that the last day of the earth has come and hence it will be "the end of time." In the first place the events concerning which the angel uttered the phrase were several centuries prior to the second coming of Christ. In the second place the Bible does not teach there will ever be an end of time, for the word means the same as the word "eternity," and both words simply mean "duration" which is something that had no beginning and will never have an end. The word in our passage does not mean "time" as being the opposite of "eternity," but it has the same meaning the word would have if a moderator announced to the speaker that his time was up. The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders the word "delay." The passage means that the events

being predicted—the events getting ready for the Reformation—were about due to start and that there would be no longer delay in the matter.

Verse 7. *The mystery of God* refers to the work of the Reformation that was to restore the Bible to the people. The seventh angel has not yet sounded, but he soon will because the preceding verse says there was not to be any further delay. By the time this seventh angel gets his message sounded the complete work of the Reformation will be done, that is, the prediction will be completed. Of course an inspired prophet speaks of things in the present tense even though he is speaking of events long in the future. John was seeing this vision in the first century and the Reformation came in the sixteenth, but an inspired angel can speak of such an event as having taken place. Such is the meaning of this verse when it says that *when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished*. (See chapter 11: 15.)

Verse 8. This *little book* is the one mentioned in verse 2 which contains predictions of things about to begin. John was the human agency of God for delivering the message to the world, and hence it was appropriate for him to receive the book at the bidding of the angel. We note two angels are involved in this episode, the one that held the book and the other one that sounded the instructions to John.

Verse 9. In obedience to the instructions of the angel John went and requested the other angel to give him the little book. As the angel delivered it to him he told him to *eat it up*. This was a symbol and indicated that John was to be inspired to report to the people. A similar instance of such a symbolic inspiration of a prophet is in Ezekiel 3: 1-3. The book produced two opposite effects upon the prophet although he had only one body to absorb it. There was nothing inconsistent in John's personal attitude toward the word of God, but the world would not take the same stand in view of the unpleasant things it contains in its teachings. Therefore John was required to have a bodily experience that represented both his and the people's reaction to the word. See the note about "prophets acting" at 1 Kings 20: 35 in Volume 2 of Bible Commentary.

Verse 10. John took the book and ate it with the results that he was told what would happen within his body.

Verse 11. We are sure that the effects of eating the book included the reactions of the world, for this verse refers to the subject in direct connection with his eating it. The instruction explains why he was to eat the book, and why it had the mentioned effects, namely, that he was to *prophesy* again before many peoples, etc. Incidentally, this last statement shows that the one in verse 6 that there should *be time no longer*, does not mean that the end of the world had come.

### Revelation 11

Verse 1. The reed given unto John was a measuring rule and is a symbol of the word of God. This is clear from the fact that the angel gave it to John who was one of the apostles. We know the word of God is the divine standard for it is required in 1 Peter 4: 11 that, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." At the time predicted by this chapter the apostasy ("falling away") was an established fact. The Bible was virtually taken from the people and the religious lives of men and women were judged by the decrees of Rome instead of by the word of God. This verse is a symbol of the true standard of the measurement as the apostles were given the authority to execute (Matthew 19: 28). The *temple of God* means the church (1 Corinthians 3: 16, 17). The altar was the center of worship in the Mosaic system, and it is referred to here as a symbol of the worship under that of Christ. *Them that worship therein* means Christians, whose personal lives must be measured (regulated) by the word of God and not by the decrees of Rome.

Verse 2. The *court* in the old temple was the part that was open to the people generally. It is referred to in our passage as a symbol of the treatment that was imposed upon the institution of God by its enemies. Under the Mosaic system the temple was under the jurisdiction of the Jews, and that is why those on the outside were called Gentiles. But in the fulfillment of the symbol the word refers to the enemies of the true church, namely, the leaders in the church of Rome. It must be borne in mind that all through this part of the book of Revelation, when reference is made either to Rome, or Babylon, or church and state, the same

institution is always meant (if no exception is stated). That is because it was by the union of church and state that such a complete control was obtained over all the lives of the people. That is what is meant by the prediction that they were to *tread under foot* these arrangements of God. It is important to note that they did not tread under foot the temple nor the altar. That is because all through the Dark Ages there was a true church in existence in spite of the corruptions of Rome, although it was obscured more or less from the full public view. *Forty and two months*. This is the first time this unit of time has appeared in this book, but it will reappear many times under various figures. It refers to the period of the apostasy or Dark Ages as it is familiarly termed by the teachers in the brotherhood. In literal terms it means 1260 years and the various forms in which it is stated will all sum up to that figure by observing the rule in prophetic language that the month has 30 days. The exact number of years that requires the 60 is reached by the dates on which the full rule of Rome began and ended. Some of the details of that subject are not available to me at present, but we may be sure that the figure is correct from the fact that each of the various forms in which it is stated brings out the same 1260. And as to the correctness of the calculation we have historical verification of the round number in the words of Edward Gibbon, author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. He was an infidel and would have no motive for verifying the word of God, but he was an authentic historian whose ability and accuracy were unquestioned and I shall quote from him as follows: "In the long period of twelve hundred years, which elapsed between the reign of Constantine and the reformation of Luther, the worship of saints and relics corrupted the pure and perfect simplicity of the Christian model; and some symptoms of degeneracy may be observed even in the first generation which adopted and cherished this pernicious innovation."—Volume 2, Chapter 28, Page 615. The *forty and two months* of our verse gives us the 1260 by multiplying forty-two by thirty.

Verse 3. The word *power* is not in the Greek and is not necessary for the thought, which is that God would see that His two witnesses could speak. The two witnesses are the Old and New

Testaments, the documents that Rome took away from the people. To *prophecy* is from *PROPHETEYO* and Thayer's general definition is, "Speak forth by divine inspiration." Hence it includes the making of predictions and any form of speech that will impart information that is in harmony with the will of God. The word in our passage means that the Old and New Testaments would continue to exist and offer their information through the period designated. In symbolic language a day stands for a year (Ezekiel 4: 6), hence the number of days named with words corresponds with the 1260 years. *Clothed in sackcloth* symbolizes a condition of mourning, and it is used in this verse to refer to the mistreatment the word of God would receive all through the Dark Ages.

Verse 4. Olive oil was the chief source of artificial light in Bible times (Exodus 27: 20; Leviticus 24: 2). Olive oil requires olive trees and hence since the word of God is the only source of spiritual light directly available to man, it is symbolized by olive trees. The phraseology in the last part of the verse is drawn from Zechariah 4: 11-14.

Verse 5. *If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth, etc.* Both sentences of this verse mean the same. We know that no one was ever literally injured by the Bible, hence we must understand this to be a symbol. Its meaning is that God is jealous for his word and will inflict vengeance upon all who oppose it. In times of "special providence" He caused various judgments to come upon men who mistreated the divine word. Otherwise the time will come when eternal punishment will be inflicted upon all who have not given the word of God the respect it deserves.

Verse 6. This verse is to be understood in the light of the preceding one. God is so jealous of his word that if He deems it called for he will inflict such judgments as these upon those who mistreat His word.

Verse 7. *Finished their testimony* does not mean they quit testifying for they will not do that while the world stands. It means when their testimony has been made complete—when the New Testament is all written. When John was writing it had not all been composed yet, for the book he was writing was to be a part of that Volume. About the time the whole Bible was composed and confirmed, which was after all the apostles had passed from life, was the time that

Rome became alarmed at the influence of the Bible. Also that was near the time that the union of church and state arrived at its great height, in which it obtained such power as to control all the people under its dominions. We understand the *beast* to be Satan operating through the power of Rome. Shall *kill them* is figurative because the Bible never was actually killed, but as far as its opportunity for control over the lives of men was concerned the Book was slain. Let the reader remember that it is the two witnesses of verse 3 that the present verse is dealing with.

Verse 8. *Dead bodies* must be understood in the light of the comments on the preceding verse. We know the literal truth is that Rome was the institution that mistreated the Bible and took it away from the people. For that reason the symbols in this verse must be interpreted accordingly. The city is the domain of the apostate church, and the reference to Sodom and Egypt is made because of the wickedness that was in those places and their enmity against the Lord. The Lord's crucifixion also is laid to the same kind of elements that plotted the attack upon the Bible.

Verse 9. The Bible continued to be a prohibited book all through the Dark Ages or the 1260 years. That is the period represented here by *three days and a half*. The term is obtained by reducing three and a half years to days (1260), then remembering that a day in symbolic language stands for a year. *Not suffer . . . put in graves*. A refusal to give burial to a body that has been slain would indicate much disrespect for the body. The figure is used to denote the low esteem the church of Rome had for the word of God.

Verse 10. The teaching of the Bible stands in the way of the evil desires of men who wish to profit by a misuse of the religion of Christ which they profess to follow. It torments them as the verse states it, and therefore it would be a cause for rejoicing among such people to have it put out of the way. *Two prophets* are other terms for the Old and New Testament. It was a custom to exchange gifts upon occasions of special rejoicing which was a form of mutual congratulations. (See Nehemiah 8:12 and Esther 9:22.)

Verse 11. *After three days and a half* means after the Dark Ages of 1260 (verse 9). *Spirit of life* is figurative

on the same principle as being dead in verse 7. The apostate church took the Bible away from the people and "slew" it. Luther and his co-workers gave it back to the people which put "life" back into it.

Verse 12. This is another symbolical passage for in fact the Bible was already in heaven. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalms 119:89). The passage gives a symbolical performance that was to notify the enemies of the word of God that the forces of Heaven were recognizing it and were ready to welcome its renewed power on the earth. We know that such is the purpose of the verse for the closing statement is *and their enemies beheld them*.

Verse 13. *Earthquakes* in symbolic language stand for revolutions in governments and the powers that be. When the work of the reformers got underway it caused many disturbances among the rulers of the world, who had been holding undisputed sway over the people through the past centuries. The numerical units that are mentioned—*tenth part* and *seven thousand*—are too exact to be taken literally. The meaning is that a great part of the former tyrannies was overthrown. *Remnant . . . gave glory to God*. When the work of the reformers became an established fact, it convinced some of the leaders that they had been in the wrong and were thus led to acknowledge their mistake. *Were affrighted* means they were compelled to feel a greater respect for God and his Book than they had before.

Verse 14. *Second woe is past*. The first was the scourge of the Dark Ages, the second was the dissolving of the union of church and state which was connected with the giving of the Bible back to the people. The third woe (not to God's people but to the enemies) is the resumption of power by the several kings and rulers, who had been deprived of their royal rights by the dominating power in Rome, that forced all people to be subject to its dictates.

Verse 15. Kingdoms of the world are not asked to become part of the kingdom of Christ. That would be virtually another union of church and state. What happened was a change in the attitude of the earthly kingdoms. Before the Reformation the kings on those thrones could not reign as Christ would have wished them to and as they personally would have been inclined.

They had to take their instructions from Rome and rule their subjects as that head dictated. After the delusion was lifted by the insight into the scriptures that was afforded them through the work of the reformers, they learned that they could permit their subjects to regulate their own religious life as they believed Christ wished them to. It is in that sense that the kingdoms *of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord*. Such a revolution was a woe to the "man of sin" in Rome for it meant the end of his arrogant rule. It is the third woe already predicted and now announced by the sounding of the seventh angel. *He shall reign for ever and ever*. Christ never ceased to be a king from the time He ascended to his Father's right hand (1 Peter 3: 22), and will continue to be king until the time of His second coming (1 Corinthians 15: 24, 25). But He was not recognized as king by these earthly rulers while they were under the control of Rome.

Verse 16. These are the four and twenty elders of chapter 4: 4. They rejoiced to see the triumph of Him who was and is the saving virtue of both of the organized systems of religion given into the world by the Lord.

Verse 17. *Taken to thee thy great power* refers to the triumph of righteousness over evil when the word God was given back to the people of the various kingdoms.

Verse 18. *Nations were angry*. That is that part of them that still wished to profit by the deception of the people. *Thy wrath is come* means that God's vengeance had come upon the apostate church for abusing His word. *The time of the dead* also hath come, meaning the dead whose souls John saw under the altar (chapter 6: 9). They cried for vengeance or judgment and were told that "their time" would come. Now that time has come and God has *judged* the apostate church by separating her from the advantages of temporal power. At the same time He *gave reward* to his faithful servants by having His word placed again in their hands. *Destroy them which destroy the earth* refers to the same evil men described before who planned to destroy (corrupt in the margin) the earth.

Verse 19. This verse is a symbol that is very significant. The Bible had been denied the people for 1260 years but is now restored to them. That is like letting the servants of God "in" on a

great intimacy with the Lord. The original law was laid up by the ark in the Most Holy Place (Exodus 25: 16; Deuteronomy 10: 2). The people were never permitted to see into that place where the book of God was deposited. Likewise the people under Rome were shut off from seeing the Book through the years of the apostasy. But the work of the Reformation broke through that and forced open the privacy and gave them another view of the law. As an illustration of such a privilege John was given a view into the place where the ark was which he calls the *ark of his testament* or holy law. The *lightnings* and other things named refer to the commotions that were caused by the Reformation.

## Revelation 12

Verse 1. As an aid in identifying this *woman* we will learn that she is the one who lived through the 1260 years of the apostasy (verse 6). That was not true in any sense of Mary the mother of Jesus. Besides, Mary was a literal woman and we are studying in a book of symbols. We should also remember that the apostate church as opposed to the Lord's institution is the outstanding subject of this book, and of course that of necessity is the church of Christ. *Clothed with the sun* symbolizes the light of divine truth with which the church has been entrusted (Ephesians 3: 10; 1 Timothy 3: 15). As the moon is a lesser light than the sun, so there are those in the church who are light bearers *under* the jurisdiction of the church. *Crown of twelve stars* evidently refers to the apostles. A crown indicates a position of rulership or judgeship. Accordingly we read of Jesus saying to his apostles, "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19: 28).

Verse 2. This verse describes the mother, but the literal facts are symbols of something that is not literal.

Verse 3. When a birth is expected in a family the members thereof are generally hovering near, impatiently waiting for the happy event. But in the case of this woman there is a being waiting near who is not friendly toward the event. This being is called *a great red dragon*. He is called Satan in other places and that is because he works through agencies that belong to this world. The dragon of our verse, then, is Rome. Some commentators designate that it means Pagan Rome

but I do not believe it is to be restricted to that. However, since both Pagan and Papal Rome had their headquarters in the city of Rome, it will not make any difference as far as this verse is concerned, which angle of the subject we take. The description of the dragon in this verse agrees with the government of Rome with the leading European kingdoms that were connected with it and formed a part of the institution as a whole. The seven heads are so numbered because the city of Rome literally has seven hills on which it is situated. But those seven hills are not important except as symbols of something else not literal or at least not material. They represent the sevenfold power of that mighty institution in opposing the works of God. The ten horns are the same that Daniel saw (Daniel 7: 7), and they correspond to the ten toes of the giant image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Verse 4. *Third part of the stars* means the men in positions of importance. The reason why only a portion of them was drawn is the same as other similar passages, namely, God has never suffered the enemy to annihilate completely that which he attacks. This dragon is standing by expecting to destroy the child as soon as it is born.

Verse 5. When the child was born it was a *man child*. In preceding chapters we have seen that the outstanding feature of Rome, as well as of other despotic governments, is the hatred of people who wish to have a voice in their own government. As long as the people can be kept in ignorance of their personal rights, they will meekly submit and be ruled over. But the Bible in its clear method of showing people their personal responsibility in determining their manner of conduct, has taught them the truth about it and led them to notify Rome to keep hands off. But the Bible is not a self-propagating document, hence the church was the Lord's instrument for bringing that great truth into the world. In symbolizing that revolutionary event the Lord gave the vision to John of a woman nearing the time of delivery of a child so near in fact that the pains of the event had started. The child may conveniently and truly be called "self-determination" in the light of what has been just shown on the subject of personal responsibility and the right to discharge it without the interference of a dictatorial monarchy. The

church as Christ and the apostles set it up, taught men not to call any man "father" upon earth (Matthew 23: 9). It taught that all men were to consult the word of God for their guidance (James 1: 25). That the Lord's servants are to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4: 11), and that means that every man will be able to read and "interpret" the word for himself and not have to take dictation from some supreme authority independent of his own responsibility. When men learned these truths they rebelled at the idea of world monarchies. That is the reason Daniel predicted that the stone cut out of the mountain—the kingdom set up by the God of heaven—was to put an end to world power. (Daniel 2: 44.) It is no wonder, then, that the dragon wanted to kill this man child. *Rule with a rod of iron*. This may sound severe but iron is not necessarily harsh or cruel, it means it is strong and durable. *Child was caught up* is another symbol. If a babe was born that was at once surrounded with dangerous conditions so that the mother would have to flee to some place for safety, some kind hearted friends would take care of the infant. Accordingly, when the church was driven into the wilderness, her child "self-determination," was watched over by the kind Father in heaven to see that it would live through all those years of the apostasy.

Verse 6. This *wilderness* was the period of the Dark Ages where the length of it is given in words and which is the same 1260 that the other computations give. All through that period the true church was alive but was in comparative obscurity because of the oppressive domination of the institution of Rome with its union of church and state. But her child—the spirit of self-determination—was alive and tenderly watched over by an infinite Guardian, and was destined some day to "make his mark in the world" upon the return of his mother from the wilderness.

Verse 7. *War in heaven*. We must keep in mind that everything being described is symbolic and shown to John right there on that isle of Patmos. But also we should not forget that inspired symbols stand for actual facts and truths. This war was not the first conflict that the forces of heaven had had with Satan for Jesus said he saw him fall from heaven (Luke 10: 18). And Paul tells us what was the cause of the first conflict, namely, his



pride (1 Timothy 3: 6). Ever since that event he has been the bitter enemy of heaven and all that pertains thereto, never losing an opportunity of getting in his evil work. Now when he sees this expectant mother in heaven (verse 1) he is determined to start a war over it. Just why or how the devil could be present in the vicinity of the angels is not told us in detail, but we know from Job 1: 6 and 2: 1 that he has been suffered in the past to be present at gatherings of the angels before God. But the time Jesus saw him fall as cited in Luke was not on the occasion of this war, for the angels who won in the war ascribed the victory to the blood of the Lamb, and when Jesus said he saw Satan fall from heaven was before He had shed his blood. Hence this war was just another attempt of Satan to get in his wicked work and head off the plan of the Lord to give to the world a religion free from the entanglements of worldly despotism, and the selfish ambition of wicked men. It was fitting that Michael should be the angel to lead the forces of heaven against Satan, for he is called "one of the chief princes" in Daniel 10: 13, and chapter 12: 1 of that same book says that he is the prince that "standeth for the children of thy people."

Verse 8. Satan was defeated and *neither was their place found any more in heaven*. This means that the enemy not only was vanquished but driven from the field.

Verse 9. Satan was cast out *and his angels were cast out with him*. This agrees with 2 Peter 2: 4 and Jude 6, and also explains why Jesus speaks of the devil's angels in Matthew 25: 41. Satan is called *that old serpent* because he used that beast as his agent in Genesis 3: 1-4. *Deceiveth the whole world* does not mean that every person in the world is deceived for there are exceptions. The thought is that all deception that is in the world is to be attributed to him.

Verse 10. It was perfectly logical that the righteous persons should rejoice over the defeat of Satan. *Now is come* is their way of saying that the *kingdom of our God* was given another victory through the *power of his Christ*. *Accuser of our brethren*. The specific accusation is not stated, but since it was a daily performance we may conclude that it refers to the general opposition that Satan has always

waged against the Lord and his faithful servants.

Verse 11. The pronoun *they* stands for "our brethren" in the preceding verse, who are said to have overcome Satan in the *war* that was fought in heaven. Verse 7 says that Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. There is no conflict in the statements which show that the forces of heaven are always ready to join in any battle with the forces of evil. This recalls the statement of Paul in Hebrews 1: 14 that the angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." *Overcame him by the blood of the Lamb*. The blood had brought them the hope of salvation and that hope gave them the courage to fight Satan. *By the word of their testimony*. They persisted in their defence of the testimony of Jesus and that helped to put Satan to flight. James 4: 7 says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." *Loved not their lives unto death*. Their faith in the righteousness of their Master's cause was so strong that even the threat or presence of death could not dampen their zeal. (See Matthew 10: 28.) An army of such soldiers can rout the fiercest attacks of Satan.

Verse 12. These happy victors are bidding all the domain of intelligent creatures to rejoice over the situation. However, while the devil has lost this battle, he has not been put out of existence but will use every opportunity that appears for opposing the friends of truth. For this reason the inhabitants of *earth and sea* are given warning of what to expect. There are literally no creatures in the sea in which Satan is interested. The phrase is a figure of speech that means all creatures everywhere will be the victims of Satan's hatred. *Hath but a short time*. Whatever Satan accomplishes against the spiritual interests of mankind must be done while the world stands. After that he and his angels will be cast into the lake of eternal fire from which they will never escape even temporarily.

Verse 13. *Was cast unto the earth*. The attempts of Satan against the forces of heaven were completely overthrown. That left only the territory of the earth for future operations, and as a persistent general he began at once to carry out his wicked strategy. His objective was to persecute the woman (the church) who had given

birth to the man child, namely, the principle of "self-determination."

Verse 14. This is a repetition of verse 6 with the additional information about the *two wings* that were given her. They are symbols and refers to the Old and New Testament, for it is the word of God that sustains the church in all the trying scenes of this world. It is by this word the woman (the church) was to be *nourished* (given spiritual food) while she is in the wilderness. The length of her exile in the wilderness is the same actual period that has been stated elsewhere, only it is indicated with different figurative terms. The word "time" in figurative language means "year;" this is indicated in Daniel 4: 16; 7: 25; 12: 7. Our verse calls for *time* (one), *times* (two) and *half a time*. It sums up three and a half times or years. Multiply 360 by three and a half and you have 1260, the period of the Dark Ages.

Verse 15. Sometimes when specific temptations do not make the desired "dent" in the character of a Christian, he may be finally overcome by an avalanche of afflictions. The devil (in the form of a serpent) tried this last method on the church. It was symbolized by having the devil cast a flood of water out of his mouth, hoping to engulf the woman in it there being no way to escape due to its volume. The Roman Empire used both methods in opposing the Lord's people. Sometimes an outstanding instance would be used such as burning a man at the stake or nailing some disciple to a cross. Then again the government would let loose a wholesale sweep of persecutions.

Verse 16. In the case of a flood there would appear to be no possible way of escape. But an unexpected opening in the earth let the water down and the woman was thereby saved. Likewise it happens that when matters seem to be at a crisis, and when "no earthly help is nigh," something will occur to defeat the enemy and rescue the would-be victim.

Verse 17. If the devil fails to make a wholesale destruction of the church, he will work on as many of the individual members as he can contact. This is the only explanation I can see that will harmonize the parts of this verse which might seem to be in difficulty. The woman (the church) is made up of individual disciples, and to attack one is to attack the other. Yet there is a distinction between the

church as a whole and the individual members thereof. Paul said "ye are the body of Christ, and member in particular" (1 Corinthians 12: 27).

### Revelation 13

Verse 1. It is very important that the reader take the time to read carefully the "general remarks" at the beginning of this book. He should note especially the information concerning the changes that took place in the Roman Empire due to its different state religions. A brief mention of them is all the space that can be used here, namely, Pagan Rome means the empire while its religion was the pagan or heathen. Papal Rome means when the state religion was the Papal or that under the pope. There is another item that should be stated in order to avoid confusion. The events that are described in the book of Revelation are not all given in the strict order of their occurrence. For instance, the present chapter opens with a vision of Pagan Rome which we know was before the days of Constantine. That means also that it was before the beginning of the Dark Ages of 1260 years. Yet we have already had a vision of that period even down to and including the Reformation of Luther, which is shown in chapter 11. This style of composition will be noticed in various places in this book. The vision will perhaps take the reader down the years through some important happenings, then go back many centuries and start all over again but with different symbols.

The *sea* is a symbol of humanity because all governments are products of human formation. The *beast* that John saw in this verse is Pagan Rome. The *seven heads* are explained at chapter 12: 3, referring to the literal or geographical fact that the city of Rome is situated upon seven hills. There is little or no importance attached to that except as a means of identification as to what city may be meant in the writings of some prophet or historian. If any political significance has been attached to the seven hills it would not affect the general plan of the book of Revelation. I believe that the Lord was concerned only with the outstanding subject of His church in its relation to both Pagan and Papal Rome, hence I have restricted my general considerations to that line. *Ten horns*. The Roman Empire was the fourth and last of the "four world

empires" as they are familiarly termed. Its head was in the city of Rome and the emperor was the ultimate ruler of the entire government. However, the various nations were subdivided into smaller kingdoms with their own local administration under a king, whose authority was only one in name for he was subject to the head in the city of Rome. The ten horns symbolize the outstanding ones in the domain of the Empire. The names that I have are England, Germany, Italy, France, Holland, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, Portugal and Spain. *Name of blasphemy.* All of these kings were under the control and influence of Pagan Rome which was in opposition to the authority of the Lord, hence their language would be that of blasphemy (evil speaking) against Him.

Verse 2. There are some distinctive characteristics between a leopard, bear and lion, but they all have in common that of fierce destructiveness. Such a symbolism would be appropriate to represent the attitude of Pagan Rome against Christianity. *The dragon* (Satan, chapter 12: 9) *gave him his power* means the devil used his influence in favor of the beast of Rome. Satan has always been interested in supporting any institution that is an enemy of God.

Verse 3. There is much uncertainty among the commentators that I have consulted concerning the interpretation of this verse. The question is raised whether it means one of the ten horns, or that some part of the city was weakened, or that some one of the prominent emperors is meant. With such a state of variation among the able historians and commentators, I will offer only what I am sure will at least not conflict with the facts of history. In some way the government of Rome received a stroke that threatened to be fatal, until something was done that closed the breach and the threatened disaster was avoided. It must have been rather unusual for all the world wondered at the recovery from the wound.

Verse 4. *They* means the people of the world who worshipped the dragon (Satan) who gave his power to the *beast* (Pagan Rome). *Worship* is from a Greek word that means to do homage, not that any formal services were rendered. *They worshipped* the beast (Pagan Rome) which explains why they worshipped the dragon. They

were admirers of the beast and naturally would feel kindly toward any being that would give him some support. With all this background in favor of the beast, they asked in the spirit of challenge who was able to make war with him.

Verse 5. *There was given unto him.* When something is given there must be a giver either directly or indirectly. The preceding verse tells of the people of the world worshipping the beast, and hence it is reasonable to conclude that this power or permission to speak blasphemies was his by common consent. These are the same kind of blasphemous words that are mentioned in verse 1. *Continue forty and two months.* We recognize this to be the same period that is elsewhere mentioned and that it is the Dark Ages. An apparent difficulty may present itself here. It is well known that the Dark Ages of 1260 years was the result of the union of church and state, at which time the apostate church was come to power. But our present verse is still under the time of Pagan Rome, and hence the period of the forty two months should not be started yet. It is one of the cases where God charges the fruits of a thing to that thing itself. Pagan Rome started the work of persecuting the Christians, and when the apostate church came into power it formed another beast (the Papal) which "retired from active service" the other beast. But the new beast just followed after the pattern set by the first one—"exerciseth all the power of the first beast" (verse 12). John was enabled to look ahead and see this conduct of the second beast, and hence laid the blame of the forty and two months at the door of the first beast, considering him as morally responsible for it, even though the apostasy did not actually get under way until the first beast was "taken out of the way" (2 Thessalonians 2: 7).

Verse 6. To blaspheme means to speak evil against that which is disliked. The leaders in Pagan Rome did not like the name of God nor the services of His *tabernacle* (the church), because He taught men they should not worship idols. Therefore they spoke against the divine institution that was on the earth, and against the beings in heaven who were servants of God.

Verse 7. *Was given unto him* has virtually the same meaning as a like phrase in verse 5. Also the Lord suf-

ferred these things to go on for the time being. *Overcome them*; this was true in two senses. He overpowered the faithful disciples with his ability to persecute them, even putting some of them to death. And he overcame some of them morally, such as were not steadfast in the faith. He also exercised a controlling influence over the lives of men in *all kindreds, and tongues, and nations*, because the Roman Empire was in power in all the so-called civilized world.

Verse 8. *All . . . shall worship him except those whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb.* In this passage the effect is named before the cause. These names were written in the book because they refused to worship the beast. It is another way of saying that the faithful servants of God refused to worship the Beast. *Slain from the foundation of the world.* The last word is from a Greek term that means the inhabitants of the earth, especially when they became a fixed order of intelligent beings composing a social world. Before that state of affairs came into existence, God saw the necessity for a plan of human redemption. Accordingly He devised one that was to be made effective through the sacrifice of his Son.

Verse 9. This language is a solemn call upon all to give profound attention. The things having been said and that are still to be said are of great importance to all mankind.

Verse 10. *He that leadeth . . . shall go*, etc. The verse is a statement of principle that is true in whatever domain of human activity it is considered. It is the rule of moral law and it is also true on the basis of cause and effect. It is the rule that Paul has in mind where he says, "Whatever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6: 7). *Here is the patience and faith of the saints.* This means that when all these commotions are taking place under the wicked powers of the world, the saints (Christians) will have an opportunity of proving their faith and patience by remaining steadfast and true to the Lord.

Verse 11. The word *earth* like *sea* in verse 1 is used figuratively, referring to the people of the world because all governments on earth must be composed of human beings. *Another beast* is Papal Rome or the apostate church in connection with the state. A few

words of explanation of the term "pope" which means "universal father" according to the members of the apostate church. They regard the pope as their father or papa. When the letter *l* is added we have *papal*, making it an adjective meaning "of the pope." After Constantine adopted the religion professed by the bishop of the church (who later assumed the title of pope), the whole institution was thereafter known as Papal Rome. The beast of this verse had two horns which refers to the two parts of the empire, namely, church and state. *Spake as a dragon.* The apostate institution made the profession of Christianity but its decrees and communications to the people were prompted by the dragon (Satan). This is what Paul predicts in 2 Thessalonians 2: 9 where he describes the pope as follows: "Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders."

Verse 12. *Exerciseth all the power of the first beast* is commented upon in the remarks at verse 5. *Causeth . . . to worship the first beast.* Papal Rome was composed of church and state, and the two parts of that institution supported each other. The pope instructed his subjects that they must obey the orders of the state in all matters of conduct, even including their religious activities. *Whose deadly wound was healed.* (See the comments at verse 3.) The pope had a grateful remembrance of that episode in the affairs of state. Had the wound not been healed and the state had gone down, he would not then have the powerful support of the government to back him up in his wicked control over the lives of his people. So it is not strange that he directed them to *worship* that beast. That could not mean any formal ceremonies, the beast was not in existence in reality any way. It means for them to pay homage to the memory of the beast.

Verse 13. This verse is a statement of the false claims of the church of Rome, not that it actually performed the wonders mentioned. (See next verse.)

Verse 14. *And deceiveth them* is the key to the preceding verse. Paul has the same subject in mind in 2 Thessalonians 2: 9 where he calls it "signs and lying wonders." Bible students know that since the days of the apostles, no man has been able to perform any supernatural acts. The word *mi-*

*racle* means generally anything wonderful or out of the ordinary. *He . . . do . . . in the sight of the beast* means the pope performed the deceptive tricks with the leaders of state looking on and approving. *Make* means to "form or fashion," and *image* means an imitation or repetition. The pope required his people to imitate the characteristics of the first beast in his opposition to the worship of the true God. We should not lose sight of the dependence the pope felt he had upon the support of the secular power. That is why the church of Rome would have church and state united today if it could.

Verse 15. The *image* of the beast is something that is a figure or is like it. The predominating characteristic of Pagan Rome with regard to her treatment of Christianity, was her persecution of the disciples and even to the extent of slaying the true worshipers of God. Therefore any person or group of persons that imitated that character would have the support of Papal Rome, and in that sense would receive *life* therefrom. The closing words of this verse verify the above statement by saying that those who would not worship (pay homage to and show respect) *should be killed*.

Verse 16. *Mark* is from CHARAGMA, which Thayer defines, "a stamp, an imprinted mark," then explains it to mean, "of the mark stamped on the forehead or the right hand as a badge of the follower of Antichrist." Of course the branding which John saw was symbolical of something that would not be seen with natural eyes. The invisible fact concerning those who imitated the beast was their guilt. God could see it and the detectives of the pope had some way of recognizing it.

Verse 17. The pope restricted the privileges and rights of all who would not submit to his dictation. If a man gave evidence of having the mark (the stain of guilt), and who *had* (knew and endorsed) the *number of his name* was given permission to proceed with his own interests.

Verse 18. *The number of the beast* and *the number of a man* are declared to be the same. Also according to the preceding verse these phrases are both equivalent to the *number of his name*. John tells us the number of his name which is 666, but he does not tell us what the name is. Remember the beast now being cited is the first one or

Pagan Rome. Well, the government is not what has this number, for John says it is the number of a man. So we need to find a man who was outstanding at the head of Pagan Rome the letters of whose name will give us the number (numerical values being indicated with letters in those times). In the Greek it is CHXS and Thayer gives us the following comments on the term. "A mystical number the meaning of which is clear when it is written in Hebrew letters . . . i. e., Nero Caesar." The question might arise why this particular one of the Caesars or Roman Emperors was selected for the symbol. The reason is that he was one of the most notorious and infamous of the emperors. He was the one who had Paul slain and his inhuman treatment of Christians set the pattern after which other rulers followed in their opposition to the true church.

#### Revelation 14

Verse 1. The preceding chapter took us back to the first century of the Christian Era and dealt with the years of Pagan Rome, then came on to the time of Papal Rome and predicted the Dark Ages of 1260 years. The present chapter will continue down through that period and through the days of the Reformation, finally reaching the last great day of judgment and the separation of the saved from the unsaved. The Lamb is Christ and Zion is the true church which has been persecuted all through the Dark Ages. In the course of that period there were multitudes of faithful Christians who would not receive the mark of the beast, but instead they had the name of the Father written in their foreheads.

Verse 2. *Voice of many waters* symbolizes that great numbers had resisted the temptations of Rome, and *thunder* is a symbol denoting that the sound of triumph is strong and of great volume. *Voice of harpers* means the organs of song in the bodies of the redeemed, for the next verse says they were singing with the harps.

Verse 3. *A new song*. The saints of God always have the same story to tell and the same song to sing, and that is about redemption through the blood of the Lamb. But that story has a new significance whenever the faithful have another victory over the forces of evil through faith in Christ Jesus, and in that sense it becomes a *new song*. At the present time they had gained a victory over the apostate institution

and hence they had great reason to rejoice and sing. The four *beasts* (living creatures) and the four and twenty elders are among the grateful listeners to the song. The hundred and forty and four thousand are the same ones we read about in chapter 7. *No man could learn that song.* Men of the world can sing any kind of song that is written as far as the literal execution of it is concerned, but they cannot realize what it means to express themselves in song as can those who have been redeemed from sin in the blood of the Lamb, and then again experienced the joy of winning out in a battle against the hosts of wickedness as these had. The corrupt institution of Rome had tried to overcome them by its abominable allurements but had failed.

Verse 4. In figurative language heathenism, paganism or idolatry, likewise any other form of unlawful worship is used to symbolize adultery and other forms of immorality. The persons of this verse were disciples who had remained true to the service of Christ though often tempted to commit spiritual adultery with paganism and other practices of Rome. *Follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth* covers much more than is often realized. It means to follow Him through sorrow as well as joy; through evil report as well as good, and through the valley of death if the enemy drives that affliction upon the servant of the Lord. Incidentally this verse gives us some information on the subject of virgins. The common idea is that only women can be virgins but these are called such because they had not been defiled with women, and men only could be defiled in that way. True the writer is considering spiritual adultery, but the language would not have been used were it not understood that either sex may be a virgin. *Firstfruits* is figurative in the sense of quality, and the word is based on the requirements of the Mosaic law. The Jews were commanded to give the first of all their flocks and herds and the products of the field unto the Lord. The word finally came to mean the best service that one could render to Him. The disciples of this verse had performed such excellent devotions that the word *firstfruits* is used denoting something especially dear to the Lord.

Verse 5. *Guile* means deceit and these faithful disciples had no desire nor occasion to try deceiving anyone.

That evil trait was one of the prominent ones of the "man of sin." *Fault* means blemish or spot in one's conduct or manner of life. Hence this verse represents persons who are correct in both word and deed. That would indicate that their hearts were right also because "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12: 34), and from the heart come "murders, adulteries," etc. (Matthew 15: 19). These saints were free from all these products of an evil heart so we may conclude they were pure in heart. That explains why they were allowed to be *before the throne of God*, for Matthew 5: 8 says the pure in heart shall see God. These brave soldiers of the cross had been strengthened in their fight of faith by the very trials that were intended to destroy them.

Verse 6. *Everlasting gospel* is what had been kept from the people during the Dark Ages. As long as Rome could hold her subjects in ignorance of the Bible she was able to continue the dictatorial rule over them. Even the kings and other rulers over the various nations and countries were held back because they were not permitted to make their own application of the scriptures either for the lives of their subjects or for themselves. They were told that the scriptures were "not of any private interpretation" (making a perverted use of 2 Peter 1: 20), and that they must leave that to the church. Not only were they forbidden to interpret what they might have been able to read, but the Bible was kept in the Latin language so that they could not even read it. But Martin Luther and his associates gave the Book to the people in their native tongue so they could read for themselves. Concerning this great work I shall make a quotation from Edward Gibbon the English historian: "By their hands the lofty fabric of superstition, from the abuse of indulgencies to the intercession of the Virgin, has been levelled with the ground. Myriads of both sexes of the monastic profession [that of the secluded monks] were restored to the liberty and labors of social life. A hierarchy of saints and angels, of imperfect and subordinate deities, were stripped of their temporal powers, and reduced to the enjoyment of celestial happiness; their images and relics were banished from the church; and the credulity [blind readiness to believe] of the people was no longer nourished with the daily repetition of



miracles and visions." — Volume 4, Page 608.

Verse 7. The angel is announcing the glorious work of giving the word of God back to the people, and bidding them rejoice over it and give Him glory for it. *Hour of his judgment* means the time is come when the great apostate institution is to be judged by having her power broken through the work of the reformers. *Worship him that made heaven and earth*, instead of the superstitious objects held before them by Rome.

Verse 8. A result of the *everlasting gospel* which the preceding angel announced is then stated by *another angel*, namely, *Babylon is fallen*. The reader is reminded that the term *Babylon* in this part of the great drama means the institution that was formed by the union of church and state. It is here called *that great city* because its head was the city of Rome where both the emperor and pope resided. *Wine of the wrath of her fornication* is a figurative phrase combining the false teaching and idolatrous practices of Rome. As long as the people were kept in ignorance of the Bible, they could be *made to drink* of this wine. The announcement that *Babylon is fallen* means that the union of church and state was dissolved as a result of the information brought to the people through the Bible, translated in their native language so they could read it for themselves, and form conclusions independent of Rome.

Verse 9. A third angel appeared to give a warning for all who might still persist in following after the evil pattern set by Rome. He mentions the three phases of the subject that were treated at chapter 13: 14-17. Concerning the *image* I shall make another quotation from Edward Gibbon which follows that which is quoted at verse 6. "The imitation of Paganism was supplied [replaced] by a pure and spiritual worship of prayer and thanksgiving, the most worthy of man, the least unworthy of the Deity."

Verse 10. The false worshippers are told that if they persist in drinking of this wine of the wrath of Rome, they will be punished by having to drink of another supply of wine; that will be the *wine of the wrath of God*. Wine has been used figuratively for centuries to symbolize wrath and anger and other intense conditions of the intellect. (See Psalms 60: 3; Proverbs 4: 17; Jeremiah 25: 15; 51: 7.) *Without*

*mixture* means it will not be diluted nor weakened, but they shall get the full effect of the wrath of God upon those who have been devoted to Rome. *Shall be tormented with fire and brimstone* refers to the lake of fire into which the wicked will be cast at the day of judgment. *In the presence . . . of the Lamb*. This denotes that the sentence of this punishment will be pronounced in the presence of Christ and his angels. (See Matthew 25: 31-46; 2 Thessalonians 1: 7-9.) The sentence will be pronounced then but it will be served according to the next verse.

Verse 11. *Smoke of their torment* refers to that which will arise from the fire in the lake into which the wicked will have been cast. *Ascendeth up for ever and ever*. If the smoke is to ascend for ever it follows that the torment will continue for ever. It will come from the lake of fire which has been created for the purpose of tormenting the unsaved. The particular unsaved persons named in this place are those who have guilty relations with the beast, the image or the mark (chapter 13: 14, 15). But all the unsaved will be in this place for Matthew 25: 41 says they will be told: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." *No rest day nor night* is another way of saying that the punishment of the unsaved will be endless. Terrible thought!!

Verse 12. This has the same meaning as chapter 13: 10.

Verse 13. *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord*. That can be said of every person who is faithful until death, but it is said here especially with reference to those who have died under persecution. It is peculiarly appropriate to make the statement in view of the thousands who had been slain by Pagan and Papal Rome through the past centuries. Also after the Reformation had stirred up the anger of the "die-hards" of Babylon many others were put to death in their struggles. *From henceforth*. Some commentators say this means from the judgment day and thereafter. It is true that all righteous people will be blessed (happy) after that day, but I do not believe the Spirit was applying the blessing to that date in this verse. There will be saints living when Christ comes who will never die, yet they will be happy for ever. But our verse is about those who *die in the Lord*, and they

are especially mentioned for the reason described in the first part of this paragraph. And since these who died in the Lord had the experience some time before the end of the world, the passage gives us the grand information that when a righteous person dies he is happy from that moment onward. This all agrees with Paul's remarks in Philippians 1: 21-23. *Their works do follow them.* The Greek for *follow* means both to accompany a person and to come along afterwards. Both senses of the word apply to a faithful servant of God. The good deeds he performs will still linger behind to be an influence for others. ("By it he being dead yet speaketh," Hebrews 11: 4.) Also the record of faithfulness will be with him in principle to recommend him before God.

Verse 14. The rest of the chapter is a vision of the day of judgment. Clouds are often used as symbols of glory and power especially white clouds. The person sitting on the cloud is *like* the Son of man because he is but a symbol. Yet we must think of Christ, who is being symbolized by the vision. *Golden crown* signifies a king and we are told in 1 Corinthians 15: 25 that He is to reign until the end. *Sharp sickle* is an instrument for gathering the fruits of a harvest. Jesus is king in his own right, but he is generally represented as accomplishing the work of His kingdom in cooperation with the angels. Especially is this true of the work to be performed at his second coming. (See Matthew 25: 31; 1 Thessalonians 4: 16; 2 Thessalonians 1: 7.)

Verse 15. *Another* angel is said because angels have been named previously in this chapter, and because those heavenly beings are so often employed to act as attendants upon the Lord or sometimes upon other angels as will be done yet in this chapter. There are to be two kinds of crops gathered on the day of judgment as generally happens after any growing season. One kind is the good and the other is the bad, and they are always separated one from the other and different dispositions made of them. In the present case the good is represented in the ordinary phraseology of a good harvest which implies sheaves of grain. The bad is represented by grapes which we have just seen above symbolize the wrath of God upon the wicked. The attending angel signalled to Him who was on the cloud to use his sickle to gather the ripe harvest.

Verse 16. The One on the white cloud did as requested and gathered the grain. The reader will understand this represents the good among mankind.

Verse 17. The other sickle was in the hands of an angel instead of Him who was on the cloud. This also agrees with the language of Christ in Matthew 13: 39 where he says "the angels are the reapers." Notice these angels are said to come *out of the temple.* That is because it is in heaven from where the authority of God is issued.

Verse 18. The next attending angel came out from the *altar.* That article was also at the temple and it was the piece that was used for burning certain victims. The symbol is very appropriate since this sickle is to be used for gathering the grapes; grapes for the wrath of God. This angel gave the signal to the one holding the second sickle to use it for gathering in the clusters. The reason assigned by him for the order was *her grapes are fully ripe.* God is never premature in his operations. He explained to Abraham in Genesis 15: 16 that the reason for waiting until the fourth generation for attacking the land of promise was that "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." In 2 Peter 3: 15 it says that the longsuffering of God in delaying the destruction of the earth "is salvation." Whenever God in his infinite wisdom sees that the time is *fully ripe* for the harvest He will send forth the reapers and bring an end to the earth and its contents.

Verse 19. As a literal fact a winepress is a large vat in which grapes are placed for extraction of the juice. In Bible times mechanical means had not been invented for pressure, and the result was accomplished by man power. A lattice-like platform was laid on top of the grapes and a number of men walked round and round over it until the juice was forced out, being received below through a trough running from the vat to a receiving vessel. The symbolic feature is in the fact that the desired result was accomplished by a treading under foot. The operation is used to symbolize the act of the Lord in trampling under his feet the wicked people of the earth. The flowing of the wine signifies the flowing of the wrath of God against men's unrighteousness.

Verse 20. The symbol continues with the same significance but with some added specifications. Being done *with-*

*out the city* denotes that the punishment of the wicked will be outside the holy city in the eternal world. In computing the amount of blood (of the grape) that came out we must not forget that the whole performance is symbolic, and the volume is given in order to furnish us some idea of the terrible fate of those whose unrighteous lives have brought upon them the wrath of God. To be conservative I suppose *unto the horse bridles* would be about four feet. The amount was enough to flood the ground for a distance of a thousand and six hundred furlongs or two hundred miles. Nothing is said about any kind of retainer on the sides, hence to be wide enough to flow freely that far and that deep (if only in the center) would require a considerable width. It all should give us a profound impression of the fate of those who die out of Christ.

### Revelation 15

Verse 1. The preceding chapter describes the vision before John that came down to the day of judgment and to the final assignment of all mankind to their eternal destinations. The present chapter goes back some distance (as the book has done before), and will again take up the judgments of God that were poured out upon the apostate church for her worship of idols and her persecution of the faithful servants of God. *Seven* angels are seen as a symbol of the completeness of God's system for executing his wrath upon the wicked of the earth.

Verse 2. Clear glass and fire are symbols of opposite facts and yet are appropriately used. The verse tells of several persons who had won a victory of a spiritual nature over the forces of Rome. The fire symbolizes their conflicts in which they were victorious, and the clear glass signifies their calmness of mind after the victory. The beast, the image and the mark were all involved in the conflict. The faithful servants resisted the direct attacks of Rome, also avoided imitating her in their lives, and as a consequence had escaped receiving the mark of guilt. *Over the number of his name.* The man whose number is stated in the text is Nero Caesar. Getting the victory over the number of his name is an indirect way of saying their victory was over Nero. That is significant since he was the emperor who was chief among the heads of Rome that tried to force the Christians to sin.

Verse 3. The song of Moses and of the Lamb was especially appropriate. It is to be associated with the four and twenty elders who have been mentioned a number of times. Twelve of them represent the Mosaic system and twelve stand for that under Christ. The song John heard these happy persons singing was about the lawgivers of those great institutions. But while the subject matter of the song was concerning them as the lawgivers, they ascribed the credit to works of God because they are marvelous, and to Christ as a King who is true and just in his ways.

Verse 4. The occasion for this great rejoicing is the prospect of judgments that are soon to be inflicted upon the powers of Rome whose hold upon the people has just been broken by the effects of the Reformation. That is why they exclaim about the worthiness of the Lord to be glorified. *All nations shall come and worship before thee.* Their worship will consist in doing homage to God as the true object of praise, for the light of truth that the Bible shed on them since it was given back to them. Through that channel of information they have been informed that God's judgments are just.

Verse 5. This verse has the same significance as chapter 11: 19.

Verse 6. Much of what is said and is to happen in many of the chapters to come has been considered before. It will pertain to God's judgments against the corruptions of Rome and for her mistreatment of the faithful servants of Christ. Seven angels were clothed in white linen which means purity and the golden girdles signify the splendor of the place.

Verse 7. It is important to keep constantly in mind that we are studying in a book of symbols or signs. Many of the things John saw in the vision have reference to the severe denunciations that were made in the days of the Reformation. Those statements were sounded into the ears of kings and other leaders of the apostate church. A *vial* is used in the symbolic picture because it is a vessel out of which something can be poured, and the judgments of God are said to be *poured* out. That would indicate a large and continuous stream of His judgments. One of the *beasts* (living creatures) gave the vials to the angels; that was appropriate. The beasts were the saved in the Lord who had been the victims of the rage of the beast of Rome. They

had won a victory through faith, and it was fitting that they should have the honor of handing the vials to the angels.

Verse 8. *Temple was filled with smoke.* This was not the smoke of incense as is sometimes mentioned, for that occurs only when righteous servants are performing worship, and that is not what is going on now. It is the smoke of God's wrath against the corruptions of the beast. Those guilty of the corruptions are under judgment and God is about to execute wrath upon them. It is too late for them to expect mercy from God, hence no one will be permitted to enter the temple to plead for it.

### Revelation 16

Verse 1. The great voice was out of the temple. That means it was from God, for we have learned in the preceding chapter that no man was able to be in the temple at this time. The seven angels have been given the vials of divine wrath, now the voice bids them empty their contents in the places deserving such treatment.

Verse 2. *Noisome and grievous* indicates something extremely objectionable and damaging. It should be remarked that the judgments against the wicked leaders in the corrupt institution were suffered immediately. They felt it through the humiliation of seeing their places of evil rulership brought down through the effects of the Reformation. But this was destined to be only a foretaste of the final judgment that will be pronounced upon them at the last day. The *mark* and *image* of the beast have been explained at chapter 13: 14.

Verse 3. *Blood of a dead man.* When a man dies his blood dies with him and becomes poisonous. That which would come in contact with it would be killed. The blood of Christ was dead when it was poured out, hence it will kill the sins of the world if brought into contact with them. (See 1 John 1: 7.)

Verse 4. The mention of the earth and other parts of the creation are to represent them as symbols, denoting the completeness of God's judgments against evil men. That is why rivers and water fountains are named in this verse.

Verse 5. *Angel of the waters* is the one in the preceding verse. These angels form a unit (seven) and hence

any principle held by one goes for all of them. The angel commended the action of the Lord for the righteous judgments inflicted upon the servants of the beast. *Art, and wast and shalt be* is the same as saying that God had no beginning and will have no end. Such a Being cannot do wrong hence his judgments against His enemies are bound to be just.

Verse 6. The first part of this verse is literal, for the agencies of both Pagan and Papal Rome caused many righteous servants of God to shed their blood. *Given them blood to drink* is figurative and refers to the legal executions imposed on the wicked.

Verse 7. This angel repeated the same commendation of God's judgments that was expressed by the one in verses 5 and 6.

Verse 8. The sun is a part of the creation which was commented upon at verse 4. It is specified in the present group of symbols because of the particular item it contributes to the welfare of humanity when it is used normally. It is the source of light and heat without which man could not live. But it is now used as a symbol of torment of fire by increasing the volume of the rays upon men. In Malachi 2: 2 the Lord was making threats against some of His ancient people for their wickedness in which he says "I will curse your blessing." The thought is similar to the one of our verse. The sun is normally a blessing to the people of the earth, but it is used as a symbol of cursing.

Verse 9. The intense heat caused men to blaspheme the name of God because of their suffering; that was because they recognized Him as being the cause of the affliction. But the very motive that caused them to blaspheme Him, should have had the effect of making them repent, for they must have known that a Being who can bring such tremendous revolutions in the universe is worthy to be feared and served.

Verse 10. *The seat of the beast* means his throne or headquarters. The *darkness* is figurative and refers to some confusion or disarrangement of the affairs of the government. To gnaw the tongues for pain would be a natural or literal performance, but it is another one of the many symbols used in this book, and represents the intense disappointment and humiliation of the leaders in Rome when they

see their structure of oppressive power tumbling about them.

Verse 11. This is similar to verse 9 and shows the effect that pride can have upon men. *Repented not* can be accounted for only by thinking of their stubbornness which is a form or manifestation of pride.

Verse 12. The great river Euphrates has played an important part in God's dealing with his people in their relation with the nations. The city of Babylon was situated upon its banks. When the time came for the overthrow of the first of the "four world empires" (the Babylonian), it was accomplished by diverting the stream from its regular channel. When that was done the water was lowered (was *dried up*) so that the soldiers of Cyrus (*kings of the east*) could march into the city and slay the man on the throne. All of this describes a literal event in history, but it is used to form the phraseology for the overthrow of another Babylon ("Mystery Babylon the Great"), which had been brought into existence by the union of church and state.

Verse 13. Frogs are slimy, loathsome creatures and are used to represent three very loathsome powers and individuals. They are the *dragon* (Satan, chapter 12: 9), the *beast* (Rome) and the *false prophet*. The last phrase is singular in grammatical form but does not refer to any particular one of the false prophets. It means the group of evil workers who used their deceptive tactics to mislead the people all over the domain or the dominions of Rome.

Verse 14. *Devils* means the demons by which the apostate church imposed upon the victims of their treachery. *Working miracles* is explained at chapter 13: 14, and it is the same that Paul predicts in 2 Thessalonians 2: 9 as follows: "Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." *Gather them to the battle* means the battle will continue until the great day.

Verse 15. This verse is in the nature of a parenthesis because it speaks of the coming of Christ, at which time all things on the earth will end. But the preceding verse mentions a battle that is to continue until that event, and the verse following our present one will go back to the beginning of that battle as to its coverage of time.

Verse 16. *Armageddon* is the Greek word of the original text spelled with

English letters. The literal meaning of the word as defined in Thayer's lexicon is "destruction." It is the action referred to by "battle" in verse 14 which means war in general, not merely a single fight. This will be commented upon at length at chapter 20.

Verse 17. The *seventh angel* was the last of the group that was to pour the vials out upon the earth. The voice came out of the temple which signifies that it was a voice of authority. The voice made the brief announcement that *it is done*, meaning that the revolution signified by the "seven last plagues" was accomplished. The great revolution thus symbolized was the Reformation of Luther and his fellow workers that resulted in breaking up the union of church and state.

Verse 18. *Thunder, lightnings and earthquake* in symbolic language refers to great commotions in the public affairs. Such a mighty movement as the dissolving of church and state was enough to bring forth these demonstrations about the temple, for it meant so much to the interests of the cause of God who occupies the temple.

Verse 19. The *great city* means the institution composed of the union of church and state, as it is used here and some other places, not merely church or state singly. It is in that sense that the name Babylon is used in this verse, because the literal city of Babylon had been destroyed centuries before (Isaiah 13: 19-22), and the apostate church of Rome as a religious institution is not to be destroyed until Jesus comes again (2 Thessalonians 2: 8). But Babylon as the union of church and state was dissolved by the Reformation never to be restored. *Divided into three parts*. This partial destruction has been indicated a number of times and has been explained to mean that God does not completely extinguish every institution He condemns. *Came in remembrance before God* means he remembered the evils that city had done to His people. *Give unto her the cup*, etc., is the same figurative sense of wine that has been commented upon in chapter 14: 19, 20.

Verse 20. *Island* in symbolic language means inhabited spots and *mountains* denotes units of government. John saw these *flee away* in the vision which was symbolical, and the meaning is on the same subject that has been under consideration through many of the passages, namely, the downfall of the political power of Rome.

Verse 21. Weight of *talents* varied according to the different standards and they were at least fifty pounds on an average. To drop a hail stone of that weight as a symbol of God's wrath would give some impression of the greatness of that wrath. *Blasphemed God* means they spoke very evil words against Him, because of their disappointment and humiliation over the loss of their political power.

### Revelation 17

Verse 1. This chapter (like some others) goes back to the time just before the Reformation, and will make symbolic predictions of that revolution. It should be stated that while the institution of church and state (which has not yet been dissolved as to the start of this chapter), is regarded as Babylon the Great and an enemy of God, the church part of the combination will seem to receive the more attention from the Lord in his condemnations. That is because it deals with the affairs of the soul which are more important than those of the secular government. Yet because the apostate church was supported by the political power of Rome and her Empire, much of the language in the symbols will be based upon the geographical and political features of that city. *Show unto thee the judgment* or give John a prediction of God's judgments in a vision. The *great whore* is said of the apostate church because false religions of all kinds are likened to immorality in figurative language. *Sitteth upon many waters*. Waters in symbolic language means people upon whom the corrupt institution pressed down with her desolating weight of intolerance and persecution.

Verse 2. The *kings of the earth* means the rulers over the various divisions of the political empire, such as the ones named at chapter 13: 1. In their devotion to the spiritual harlot they were guilty of fornication. The *inhabitants of the earth* refers to the subjects under these kings who submitted to their adulterous ruling. *Wine of her fornication*. In literal practice we find "wine and women" often associated, hence they are so considered in the symbolic vision that John saw.

Verse 3. *Carried me away in the spirit* is significant, and reminds us again of the truth that John never did leave the isle of Patmos literally while in the vision of this book. It was a part of the symbolical vision to be

taken away into the wilderness and see the things that shall be described. The *woman* is the apostate church of Rome symbolized by the city of Rome because the church rested on the government of that city for support. The literal reason for using a beast in the symbol that was scarlet, was the fact that scarlet was one of the royal colors of the Empire. *Seven heads and ten horns* is explained at chapter 13: 1, and it will appear in this chapter with a slight variation in the application.

Verse 4. Since the state color of the beast (Rome) was scarlet and purple, it was appropriate that the rider of the beast should be robed to match. It is literally true that the clergy of the church of Rome wear these colors in their church ceremonies. It is also appropriate that such colors be used in the symbols of that church, in view of the faithful people of God who had their blood taken from them in the persecution at the hands of that wicked institution. Being decked with precious stones and pearls also was appropriate because the church of Rome possesses and uses great wealth in her ceremonies. The symbolic cup represents the corrupt practices that the church of Rome forced upon her subjects. It is symbolized in the form of a person filling a cup with vile and abominable materials then forcing some helpless person to drink it.

Verse 5. The name that John saw written on the forehead of this woman was put there by the Lord to designate to the apostate her true character, not that she had taken to herself such an inscription. In truth the leaders of the church of Rome of today deny that this applies to their "holy mother church." *Mystery* is a part of her characteristics; Thayer's definition of the word at this place is, "The mystic or hidden sense." The apostate church has always thrived most when she could keep her people in ignorance of what was going on. *Babylon the great*. There are many ways in which anything can be great both good and bad. Babylon was great in a bad sense and that is because she was the most extensive and powerful influence for evil that Satan ever devised. *Mother of harlots*. A bad woman can be the mother of pure daughters and they would not need to participate in the wickedness of their mother; but this woman's daughters also are harlots. Of course as we have previously learned, harlotry in figurative lan-



guage means any false religion or unscriptural organization. The conclusion is that the religious denominations in the world are the harlot daughters of Rome, because they obtained the principal tenets that make up their creeds from the doctrines put out by that apostate church. *Abominations of the earth* is a general summing up of the evil doctrines and practices of the church of Rome throughout the world.

Verse 6. *Saints* and *martyrs* refer to the same people although the words have a different (but not conflicting) meaning. *Saint* means a holy or righteous person which applies to all Christians. *Martyr* means witness and all Christians are martyrs because they are faithful to the testimony of the Gospel regardless of what may be the result. The fact that both *saints* and *martyrs* had shed their blood in defence of the testimony of Jesus, shows the latter word is not applied to some on the simple ground that they died for Christ. *Saw the woman drunken*. To be drunk literally requires that a person be under the influence of alcohol. The term has come to be used figuratively, as when it is said that a man is "drunk with a craze for money; or for pleasure." Rome had shed so much blood of righteous people she is said to be drunk with the desire to slay the Christians. *Wondered with great admiration*. The last word usually has the sense of approval, but it is not restricted to that meaning. The phrase means the vision John saw was so unusual and vast that he could only gaze at it.

Verse 7. *Wherefore didst thou marvel?* This question indicates that the amazed expression on the face of John was mixed with that of being puzzled over the whole phenomenon. The angel promises to explain to him all about the mystery involving the *woman*, the *beast* and the *seven heads* and *ten horns* that the beast had. The passage deviates from the usual manner of the book. When the symbols are described we are generally left to figure out (by the help of history) what the interpretation is. This time the angel will tell to what institutions and persons the symbols refer. Not that he will specify the personal items of application, but he will describe it so that a student of the Bible and history should have no uncertainty about it.

Verse 8, *Was and is not* refers to

Pagan Rome which ceased to be such an institution (on the surface) after the time of Constantine. *Ascend out of the bottomless pit*. The last two words mean that part of the intermediate state where evil men and angels are kept until the judgment day. It is the place where the wicked rich man went as recorded in Luke 16: 23 where the word is "hell" but comes from a different Greek term. Since the members of Pagan Rome were wicked it was necessary to show them as ascending from this pit. But we should take notice that the vision leaps across all the intervening years for the moment to predict the final destiny of those members of the beast that had been in the bottomless pit. After the intermediate state is no longer needed, these wicked persons will ascend out of that pit and *go into perdition*, which means they will be cast into the lake of fire. Having shown a brief picture of the fate of this beast, the vision at once resumes the events and appearances that are to take place before the final day of *perdition*. The vision is so unusual that the uninformed shall *wonder* at it. That is the same word used in verse 6 which was seen to mean that one is puzzled with amazement, and it would have that meaning especially with the uninformed. By that word I mean the ones described by John as those *whose names are not written in the book of life*. Chapter 13: 8 shows this italicized statement means those who are not faithful servants of Christ. Their names (of the faithful) are said to have been written in the book *from the foundation of the world* or before the human family had become an orderly group of human beings. The beast that *was* and *is not* and *yet is* was that which caused the astonishment spoken of above. The beast *was* Pagan Rome outwardly until the time of Constantine, who caused the union of church and state to take place. That put an end to Pagan Rome as far as outward profession was concerned, and it is in that sense that John says the beast *is not*. But in reality Papal Rome retained so much of the doctrines and wicked practices of the original empire, that it could truly be said of Papal Rome that it was Pagan Rome in disguise or in another form. It is in that sense that John says the institution *yet is*, which caused the uninformed of the world to be amazed and puzzled. But the righteous did not have to be in such a state of mind be-

cause they had always been respectful hearers of what inspired men had said. For instance, if they had only read and considered what Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2, they would have expected such revolutions to take place as these affairs of Rome.

Verse 9. The *seven mountains* have no special significance except as an item of geography and history by which to identify the city of Rome. *On which the woman sitteth* means that the apostate church rested upon the government of Rome for support.

Verse 10. In some previous verses and in verse 12 below the text plainly says the ten horns represent ten kings or kingdoms that were inferior units of the Roman Empire. Hence the *seven kings* of this verse must have another meaning, and I believe they refer to important men who were leaders in the affairs of state right in the capital city. It is merely a coincidence that the Lord had seven of those prominent men in mind which is also the number of the geographical hills or "mountains" that comprised the city of Rome. It is clearly shown in Roman history that leading men in the Empire often vied with each other for power and the vision shows such a conflict.

Verse 11. The beast that *was* has been already shown to be Pagan Rome. The apostle says this beast is the eighth; not merely one more beast that would count up to eight, but it was the *eighth* and *of the seven*. This denotes that it was in the same line, or bore some fact in common with the others. And the phrase *goeth into perdition* strengthens that conclusion, for we learned in verse 8 that it was Pagan Rome that was to go into perdition. (Not that Papal Rome will escape perdition, but that is not under consideration at present.) The vision means that Pagan Rome as a whole must take her place in the count with all those individual "kings" or chief men in the corrupt institution, and all go down as a unit into the lake of perdition.

Verse 12. These *ten kings* (or small kingdoms) are named at chapter 13: 1. It says they had received no kingdom *as yet*. The meaning is they were not in rightful control of their kingdoms although they were acting as kings. But the phrase also indicates that they will finally be kings in their own right after Papal Rome has been put down even as Pagan Rome was, then each

nation will have its own chosen form of government. But for the time being they may only act *as kings*. *One hour with the beast* is a figure of speech meaning that the time for continued oppression of Rome was to be comparatively short. The reader should bear in mind that the vision goes from the days of Pagan Rome in verse 11 to those of Papal Rome in the present verse. On that basis the beast now is Papal Rome in conjunction with the state.

Verse 13. *These* means the ten kings of the preceding verse and until they have had their eyes opened by receiving the Bible back again, they will not know any better than to give their power and strength unto the beast (church and state).

Verse 14. *These* again means the ten kings just mentioned. While they were still under the control of Papal Rome and blinded by the false doctrines of that corrupt beast, they were opposed to the Lamb of God and made (religious) war with Him. *The Lamb shall overcome them*. This will be accomplished by the Reformation, for that movement will give the Bible back to the people in their native tongue. When that is done the Lamb shall *overcome them* which means He will subdue their opposition to the word of God and to the true church that is regulated by that word. *Lord of lords* puts Christ above all other rulers, and *King of kings* means He is greater than the ten kings who fought against Him. Christ does not conduct the conflict directly but does it by His great army. The army is composed of those who are *called* (by the Gospel), and they are *chosen* because they have qualified themselves by being *faithful*.

Verse 15. The angel now begins to give John the interpretation of the vision as was mentioned at verse 7. The first verse says the corrupt woman sits upon many waters, and this verse explains it to mean peoples and nations, etc. That is because the Roman Empire was one of the "four world empires" which contained all the so-called civilized people of the earth.

Verse 16. The ten horns are the kings or kingdoms which are named in the comments at chapter 13: 1. *Shall hate the whore* is literal, for when the kings and people of the smaller units of the Empire come to realize how deeply they have been deceived by her they can have no other

feeling toward her. The rest of the verse is a symbolical vision of the resistance that will be put up by these ten kings and their people when they "get their eyes open."

Verse 17. *God hath put in their hearts.* God never directly causes any person to do wrong who wants to do right. But when a man or group of men shows a persistence toward wrong, then He gives them up to carry out their own ways until they have learned their lesson. (See the comments at 2 Thessalonians 2: 11.) It had been predicted (in such passages as that just cited) that such conduct would be practiced by these kings, hence in doing so they were carrying out the divine prediction. But they will be suffered to operate in that way only until the words of God shall be fulfilled. This means until the time for them to be enlightend by the work of the Reformation.

Verse 18. Since the Reformation has not occurred yet, at the point of the great drama applying to this verse, the *woman* and *great city* refers to Babylon as the union of church and state.

### Revelation 18

Verse 1. The angel had great *power* which is from EXOUSIA, the leading meaning of which is "authority." The possession of that qualification is explained by the fact that he *came down from heaven* which is the seat of all authority. It is understandable also why his glory would light up the earth, for everything that pertains to that celestial region is glorious.

Verse 2. The preceding chapter pictures conditions just prior to the revolution of the Reformation. The present chapter will extend the vision on through that period, showing the effects it will have among the nations of the world, and will predict the permanent end of the union of church and state. We should keep clearly in mind the truth that we are studying a book of symbols, and therefore we will not try to make a literal application of the symbols. However, even political and religious advantages may sometimes bring material gains to men of selfish character, hence we should not be surprised to see indications of that in some instances. The angel cried with a *strong voice*, which signified that his announcement was of interest to many. *Babylon* here means the institution formed by the union

of church and state. That body had been in control since the time of Constantine, but now it is destined to be dissolved by the work of the Reformation. *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*; the repetition is for emphasis. The *fall* refers to the dissolving of church and state through the influence of the Bible that had been given to the people by Luther and his fellow workers. *Is become the habitation*, etc. This is symbolic and the language is formed from what literally happened to the ancient city of Babylon after it was destroyed by its conqueror. The description of that destruction from which our verse gets its symbols may be seen in Isaiah 13: 19-22 and Jeremiah 50: 35-40.

Verse 3. *Wine of the wrath of her fornication.* This combines several symbolical thoughts. Wine suggests drunkenness and that is used figuratively sometimes to mean being beside oneself through the influence of false doctrine, which certainly was an outstanding characteristic of Rome. It also stands for the wrath of God upon evildoers, and fornication refers to intimacy with unlawful organizations. Kings and merchants all reaped personal advantages from their subjects and customers, because they were duped into thinking they should submit to the wishes of their superiors.

Verse 4. *Come out of her my people.* Even after the work of the reformers was well under way, and the institution of Babylon as a body had fallen, there were still some individuals connected with the church part of the former institution who were honest and at heart were desirous of serving God. They are the ones who are called *my people* because the Lord considered them true to the testimony of Christ as far as they had been permitted to learn it. Now if they will heed the call to *come out* and line up with the workers of the Reformation they will be received by Him. If they refuse to heed this call they will have to *receive of her plagues*.

Verse 5. *Sins have reached unto heaven* means the corruptions of Rome were an offense to heaven, and also had become notoriously public so that God *remembered* (took unfavorable notice of) her iniquities.

Verse 6. The pronoun *you* refers to "my people" in the preceding verse. Human beings cannot bring judgment upon a universal body of corruption by mere human strength. But if they

will *come out* and then use their influence to expose the harlot (which many people did as shown in various histories of the Reformation), they will bring about a chastisement of her that is figuratively described as making her drink a double measure of her own wine.

Verse 7. The leaders in Rome or Babylon had been living a selfish life at the expense of their helpless dupes. Now that they have been undeceived by the workers in the Reformation, they are urged to make their condemnation all the more severe upon her. A *queen* would be in good circumstances in that she would have one on whom to depend for support and would have no sorrow or anxiety.

Verse 8. *One day* cannot be restricted to a period of 24 hours, but the things predicted of her will come on the same day or by the same cause. That will be the effects of opening the eyes of the nations that have been oppressed by her. The *mourning* will be literal and it will be over the loss of her former power. *Utterly burned with fire* denotes that the fire of God's jealousy will bring utter (complete) destruction to the combination of church and state—not to each separately, but the combination will be dissolved for ever.

Verse 9. *Kings of the earth* had been protected in their defrauding of the uninformed people. *Committed fornication*. Rome has been called a harlot hence those who have been intimate with her are guilty of fornication. It is natural for them to lament seeing her burning (under the fiery judgments of God.)

Verse 10. The symbols are changed from a woman to a city. But it means the same thing for the mother of harlots had her seat where she carried on her adulterous practices in the city of Babylon. Of course to see her "red light district" going up in smoke means the end of her trade. *One hour* is used here to mean the same period as *one day* in verse 8.

Verse 11. *The merchants* were the prominent leaders in Rome who had been reaping much gain (both political and material) by imposing their false doctrines on them. There will now be no demand for such "wares" for the customers will have learned that they had been defrauded.

Verse 12, 13. All of the articles named in this paragraph are literal

products, and doubtless the leaders in the corrupt institution dealt in such property for their own selfish enjoyment, but the literal articles are used as symbols of the selfish enjoyments they had by being able to extract the services of the dupes under them.

Verse 14. This virtually continues the same prediction that is made in the preceding verses, but I will call attention to the words about these gains that *thou shalt find them no more at all*. That means the advantages once enjoyed by Babylon (church and state) were never again to be enjoyed by her as before because she will never exist again to enjoy them.

Verse 15. This is virtually the same lament that is described in verse 9, 10, because of their loss of unlawful privileges at the expense of the people. *For the fear of her torment* denotes that the sight of such a burning will give them a feeling of horror. Lest the reader gets lost in all this array of figurative judgments, I shall again state that it is a symbolical picture of the political and religious revolution that came upon the old wicked institution of Rome, after the work of the Reformation broke up the great conspiracy.

Verse 16. The items mentioned are used symbolically, but there is some special appropriateness in the materials named. The formalities of the old Pagan Roman ceremonies were copied by the clergy of Papal Rome. Linen was used for the official robes in the services, and purple and scarlet were the royal colors. The garments were decked literally with gold and precious stones. The city is said to have all these decorations because the scarlet woman was located in the city for her corrupt practices.

Verse 17. *One hour* calls for the same comments that are offered at verse 10. The chapter as a whole is a vision in symbolic form, yet the institution of Babylon or Rome was so widespread, that it was logical to include many of the activities of the members of it. Hence the people interested in the traffic of the sea are brought into the picture, among those whose selfish practices were to be cut off by the downfall of the city.

Verse 18. *What city is like* means a general statement of her greatness as of the past, for now she is very low and worthless since she is being destroyed by fire.

Verse 19. There is not much change in the significance of the symbols of

this verse. Casting dust on their heads was an ancient custom to give expression to feelings of mourning and dismay (Joshua 7: 6; Job 2: 12; Lamentation 2: 10). *One hour* is the same figurative phrase that is in verse 10. *Made desolate* means that Babylon the Great as the union of church and state was to be deserted and cease to be.

Verse 20. The speaker is still the *voice from heaven* (verse 4) which is bidding the apostles and prophets to rejoice over the downfall of Babylon (union of church and state). It was especially appropriate to congratulate these great servants of God, because they had been foremost in defending the lawful church of the Lord against the encroachments of the apostate church. Now that the conspiracy formed by the union of church and state was thrust down, they had great and just reason to rejoice.

Verse 21. *Mighty angel* is said to indicate the size or weight of the stone that was to be handled. The stone was *like* great millstones which were heavy, and their weight was such that if they were thrown into the water they would most assuredly sink; nor would such an object float back up to the surface. That is doubtless why Jesus used it in his comparison of the irreparable fate of certain sinners (Matthew 18: 6). After this mighty angel had cast the stone into the sea he made his explanation of the symbol; it represented the casting down of Babylon. We know it does not mean literal Babylon for that city had not been in existence for centuries (Isaiah 13: 19-22). We know also it does not apply to the religious part of the corrupt institution (though it also was known as Babylon), for that apostate church is not to be destroyed until Jesus comes (2 Thessalonians 2: 8). Hence this can apply only to the Babylon that was composed of church and state. When the stone that represented it was cast into the sea, the angel said that it *shall be found no more at all*. From the foregoing evidences we are given the divine assurance that there will never be another world-wide union of church and state.

Verse 22, 23. The enterprises and activities of human interest that are mentioned in these verses have all been considered in this chapter and understood to have a symbolical meaning. In this paragraph they may be used in both symbolical and literal senses. In either sense the announce-

ment is made that they will never be done again. However, this is not true until we apply it in the light of a proviso that is stated as follows. The phrase *in thee* is used five times in these two verses, and that is the key to the subject. There is not an interest mentioned that will not continue to be practiced as long as the world stands. But they will not be done "in thee" (Babylon as the union of church and state), for that institution will have gone down never to rise again.

Verse 24. This short verse is merely a summing up of the crimes that have been committed by Babylon, on account of which she was doomed to complete overthrow.

### Revelation 19

Verse 1. For several verses the vision will show the heavenly hosts rejoicing together over the victory that has been won over Babylon by the work of the Reformation. *Alleluia* means "praise ye the Lord," and the exclamation is made in view of His great works. *Salvation* is to be ascribed to the Lord because no other has the power to save, and for that reason we should give all *honor* to Him and acknowledge that all power belongs to Him.

Verse 2. The *great voice* is still speaking and acknowledging the righteousness of God's judgments. Those acknowledgements are general and now they will become specific. *Judged the great whore* refers to the overthrow of Babylon which was accomplished by the Reformation. *Hath avenged the blood of his servants*. This fulfilled the promise made to the souls under the altar (chapter 6: 11).

Verse 3. *Her smoke arose up for ever and ever*. "Where there is smoke there is fire." If the smoke ascends for ever the fire will be of the same continuance. Of course this is first applied figuratively to Babylon, meaning her downfall is to be permanent. It is next applied to the individuals who were leaders and supporters of the corrupt beast, who are destined to go into perdition where the fire is endless.

Verse 4. The four beasts (living creatures) felt happy over the victory of Christ because it was through His blood that they had been redeemed from sin. And the four and twenty elders had the same motive for praising God, because they represented the

two organized systems of salvation that had produced the four living creatures.

Verse 5. The voice thus far in these verses seems to have come from the people in general who respect the Lord. Now the voice comes *out of the throne* as if to acknowledge the congratulations just offered to God, and endorsing the idea that all servants of whatever degree or rank should praise Him.

Verse 6. So many people of the civilized world had suffered under the oppression of Rome through the Dark Ages, that it explains why the *voice of a great multitude* was heard praising God. *Voice of many waters* is the same except it is in symbolic form, waters in figurative language being used to represent human voices in action. *Omnipotent* means almighty; God can do anything that is right. The difficulty of conquering the giant influence of the beast in Rome was regarded so great, that it brought to their attention the might of God and called forth these words of praise, and caused the declaration that *He reigneth*.

Verse 7. *Marriage of the Lamb is come*. The subject of marriage is spoken of in the Bible from two different angles, and unless this is understood we may think there are some contradictions. For instance, Christians are said to be married to Christ at the present time (Romans 7: 4), and now our verse says the marriage is about to take place. In old times an engagement was regarded in the light of marriage as far as the moral obligation is concerned. That is why Genesis 19: 14 speaks of the men who had "married his [Lot's] daughters" when they were engaged to them. And in Matthew 1: 18 it says that Mary was espoused to Joseph, while the next verse calls him her husband. So Christians are actually only espoused (engaged) to Christ now. That is why Paul says "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11: 2). But the actual marriage is what is meant in our verse. *His wife hath made herself ready*. This remark is based on the common practice that causes a woman to prepare her garments for the important occasion.

Verse 8. This verse names the kind of raiment that is to be worn by the bride, namely, clean and white linen.

Since that is figurative the apostle explains that it means *righteousness*, so the making of herself ready mentioned in the preceding verse, means she has followed a righteous life in preparation for her marriage.

Verse 9. This will be one marriage and accompanying "refreshments" at which there will be no human guests but the bride. Hence the blessing pronounced on those who are called to the supper, means in reality the people should become a part of the espoused bride by becoming Christians. Before going further in the comments it will be well to make some explanatory remarks as to the "hour of the ceremony." Verse 7 says the marriage *is come*, when we know we will find that the work of the Reformation is to be gone over again by the vision. There will be no difficulty if the reader recalls that the book has more than once departed from the chronological order of events to take up some other period of the Christian Dispensation. Hence these preceding verses brought us down to the last day and announced the final marriage of Christ to his bride (the church). The vision will now take up some principles of a general character, then bring us again to the work just preceding the Reformation.

Verse 10. The pronouns *his* and *him* refer to the angel who was sent to show the vision to John (chapter 1: 1). It was natural for John to have this inclination toward worship of the angel, for the great vision shown made the apostle have a feeling of inferiority. There are some conditions when even a man may receive some form of worship from others (Luke 14: 10), but under the present circumstances it would have been improper. The reader may see a complete explanation of the word worship at Matthew 2: 2 in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary. *I am thy fellowservant* reminds us of Hebrews 1: 14. *Of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus*. This is equivalent to describing the ones for whom the angels are sent forth to minister. To *have* the testimony does not merely mean to have access to it (everyone has that), but it is those who hold themselves faithfully to it. *The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*. This means that the subject of Jesus as the Saviour of mankind is the main thought running through all the prophetic writings.

Verse 11. *White horse* symbolizes a war animal that is to engage in a war



for purity. The rider was Christ who is described as *Faithful and True*. That is because the war in which He is about to engage (the Reformation) is a righteous one.

Verse 12. Eyes of fire would signify that which is bright and penetrating. *Many crowns*. Actually no king wears more than one crown as far as the article as a unit is concerned, but in some way the ornamentations on it showed that Christ had won over all others. *Name no man knew* does not indicate some dark or mysterious secret, for verse 16 gives a great description of His name as written on his clothing. But no mere man can appreciate the name of Christ until he becomes His disciple.

Verse 13. *Vesture dipped in blood* is because Christ shed his blood for the sake of mankind. *The Word of God* is the name which all men can read and hence is not a secret, but they cannot realize what it means unless they appropriate that name to themselves by wholehearted obedience to its commandments. (See the name at John 1: 1.)

Verse 14. This is a symbolic picture of the war that is about to be fought against the beast that has been defying Heaven's authority for 1260 years.

Verse 15. The *sharp sword* is the *sword of the Spirit* (Ephesians 6: 17; Hebrews 4: 12). *Smite the nations* with this Word by the work of the Reformation. *Rule with a rod of iron*. Iron is both firm and severe, and it will be used in the latter sense against the wicked nations who have been supporting Babylon. *Treadeth the winepress* is explained at chapter 14: 10.

Verse 16. *King of kings and Lord of lords*. *King* indicates supreme authority and *lord* means one who governs the conduct of others. Jesus was given these two titles because He had overcome all who opposed him. Having the title attached to his *vesture* (clothing) was on the principle of decorations given men who have distinguished themselves in the service of their country.

Verse 17. When a man makes a great "killing" he often invites his friends to come and share the feast with him. The effects of the Reformation are symbolized in this and the following verse. It is especially appropriate to base the imagery on the fowls of the heaven, for they are generally thought to prefer feeding on the flesh

of animals that have been slain and left on the field. (See Matthew 24: 28.) The present case is one where the beasts were not killed and dressed as would be done ordinarily. They were to be killed to get them out of the way, and the birds might as well get the benefit of it since that is the kind of food they prefer. *Standing in the sun* was the appropriate place for the angel to stand where he could make his invitation to the creatures that live above the earth.

Verse 18. Of course this is symbolical of the defeat and destruction that is about to be imposed upon Babylon (church and state). Yet it is appropriate to use the symbols named because the conflict is actually to be with *kings* and their *captains* and *mighty men*, and these made use of *horses* in their warfare.

Verse 19. *Beast* is Babylon and the *kings* are the inferior rulers under her. All mustered their forces to resist the attack of Christ through the Reformation.

Verse 20. The *lake of fire* for the present is the destruction of Babylon, but in the day of judgment it will be the lake of fire that is unquenchable. The *false prophet* and *miracles* are explained at various passages preceding this.

Verse 21. The *remnant* means the stragglers who were left as "die-hards" after the beast of Babylon as a unit had been given a death blow by the Reformation.

## Revelation 20

General remarks. We have come to the climax of the book of Revelation as far as the symbolic predictions are concerned. The last two chapters have figurative language of the same kind that is frequently used all through the Bible, but they pertain to conditions that are to exist after the world comes to its end. The events still in the future (as of the place where this chapter belongs in the great drama of the book) will be predicted symbolically in this chapter, which starts at the time of the great Reformation. Before taking up the chapter verse by verse, I will offer a general note that will deal with the chapter in a more condensed form. Some of the verses will be enlarged upon as occasion suggests, but I urge that my readers make themselves familiar with this note as references may be made to it at certain places.

On Revelation 20: One of the keys to the understanding of this noted chapter is the fact that Satan was to be bound away from the *nations* and not from any individual. There never was a time when it was predicted that he was to be chained away from any individual: it was from *nations*. He always has had and still has access to individuals and the only thing that will keep him away from such is his individual faith in the Scriptures. By reason of the union of church and state the nations had been led to think they could not legislate nor decide on religious questions as they might have seen fit, but must take their cue from Rome. But when the Reformation broke and gave the Bible to various peoples in their own language so that they could read for themselves they saw, to their surprise, that they had been deceived all these years—that they did not need to depend on Rome. Since this truth became known to various kings, and the people under them, they turned their back against Rome, which resulted in the break-up of the union of church and state, and thus the deception that caused the *nations* to think they must ask Rome all about it was banished. Thus the devil by the chain of truth in the Reformation, was chained away from the *nations*, and the Reformation period was allowed to go on. This situation explains the statement in the forepart of the fourth verse that tells us of the “thrones and they sat upon them, their judgment was given unto them,” meaning that now they have learned of their own right to do their own judging instead of asking Rome about it. This was made possible by the facts just stated. Now about this time when Rome saw what it was about to amount to, she began to oppress the reformers and made life so bitter for some of them that it required the same fortitude and courage in facing Rome that had been required in the beginning of the Christian religion to face the oppression of Pagan Rome. These martyrs were equal to the occasion. They defied death and everything like it, and so nearly did they reenact the very spirit of the martyrs. As we sometimes say, that a certain individual though dead yet now speaks, meaning that someone has risen reproducing the same spirit and fortitude as the other person. So these reformers and co-workers in their courage and defiance of death, showed the spirit that the martyrs had shown and in this way

we could say that the martyrs were living again. Not that any individual who had really been dead had come to life. But they who loved the truth so much were willing to die rather than go back to Rome. In this way they were reenacting the spirit of the first martyrs and so could be said to be “living” again. And since through faith and courage those who are true to the Book have been said by Paul and others to be reigning with Christ, this explains why these people are said to be reigning with Christ. The arbitrary statement of a thousand years is one instance in the Bible where a definite amount is stated when the writer refers to an indefinite one. In this case the thousand years is just an expression referring to the bright period of the Reformation when those who loved the truth had been of Christ and reigned with him during that time.

This brings us to understand the statement in verses 5 and 6 about the first resurrection as follows: “Now this is the first resurrection.” The pronoun “this” instead of having an antecedent is a prospective pronoun and means the same as if the writer had said “I am going to tell you something of the first resurrection.” The man that has part in the first resurrection will not be hurt of the second death, which we understand from other scripture is the lake of fire. This is taught especially in the language expressed by Christ in his conversation with Martha (John 11: 25, 26). The expression “first resurrection” does not have any numerical significance, but is used to indicate its importance. It is the first resurrection in importance and not in numerical order since there will be but one resurrection numerically. If Christ is *the* resurrection, that would make it the first; and we note that the passage does not say “blessed and holy is he that” is in the first resurrection, but he that “hath part in” the first resurrection. And since Christ is the first resurrection, it follows that having part in the first resurrection means to have part in Christ, and hence this noted passage means simply the same that John 11: 25, 26 meant, the same as Christ meant when he said to the sister “I am the resurrection and the life” and also stated that those who continue in that faith in Him would never die. So the expression “shall never die” to Martha is equivalent to the expression “not hurt of the second death” here. And hence this passage

has no reference whatever to some visionary theory about reigning on this earth.

The expression in the forepart of verse 5, "rest of the dead" is explained to mean those people who did not have enough confidence in the truth to have died for it, as the martyrs had. Of course during this bright period of the Reformation their characteristics would not be in evidence so that is why it says they will not live again until the thousand years are finished, which means until the best part of the Reformation and its effects have run their course. And since the chaining of the devil meant to undeceive the *nations*, by the same token turning the devil loose again means he will again operate in a national and public manner. Not necessarily through the same nations of course, but it means that he will not be satisfied with his individual influence over men and women, but will wish to poison the public streams of thought and in so doing will raise a great conflict between the friends of truth and the friends of error. The "little season" referred to in this chapter is elsewhere called the battle of Armageddon. That battle is now going on and has been ever since the Reformation period began to lose its good effects. If one were to doubt what the devil is doing in a public wholesale manner, we cite the fact that in the state of New York a few years ago, the state chartered an institution whose avowed purpose was to advance atheism in all the schools and colleges in the United States, and thus such a charter authorized by the state is similar to the idea of the devil working through the nations. Almost every state in the Union is supporting and authorizing the teaching of evolution in the name of education which is another means of the devil to operate publicly; and all other like influences such as the support and endorsement of several nations and states and lawmakers authorizing things that have always heretofore been regarded as not even moral, much less according to the Bible, all go to the conclusion that the devil is now, as he was before the Reformation, working through public wholesale channels by influencing legislatures and kings and lawmakers in the direction of infidelity, thus producing the great battle of Armageddon. Trusting the reader has carefully read the foregoing note and will be able to make proper reference to it when it is suggested, I shall take up

this chapter by verses as has been done with others.

Verse 1. *Bottomless pit* is from ABUSSOS which means the place in Hades where angels are cast when they sin and where wicked men go when they die.

Verse 2. In this verse the four words *serpent, dragon, Devil and Satan* are applied to the same being, so that we need have no doubt as to the one who is meant. *Thousand years* is a figurative expression that is not bound by the calendar. In symbolic language the Bible does not restrict itself to exact mathematical values of the numbers mentioned. Sometimes the period will be longer and at others it will be shorter. I shall cite one or two examples by way of illustration on the matter of this use of figurative time. In Daniel 9: 24 a prediction is made of seventy weeks and we know it actually means 490 years. In chapter 6: 11 of our book the phrase *little season* really was to be until the Reformation which was several centuries in the future. The angel bound Satan with the chain mentioned in the preceding verse, and the chain was the Bible that was to be given back to the people in their own language. That chain bound him from the *nations*, which means the heads of the nations were able to see their rights by the information of the Book and realized that the devil had been deceiving them. When that occurred they resisted him and that chained him from them.

Verse 3. *Cast him into the bottomless pit* is symbolical of the restrictions that were placed upon Satan as to his influence over *nations*, for he has been there personally all the time. The restrictions were caused by the chain of the Bible that had been placed in the possession of the national leaders. (See again the note at beginning of this chapter.) These restrictions were to continue as long as the leaders of nations and other heads of the channels of thought continued their active defense of the Book. Knowing that human weakness would assert itself causing a letting down of the activities for the truth, the Lord saw the advantage it would give Satan and that he would again come out in his fight against the Bible. Hence it is stated that after the thousand years were expired—after the restrictions of the Bible had weakened due to the loss of activities of the professed friends of truth—Satan would be *loosed a little season. This little*

*season* is the same as the "battle" of verse 8 which will be discussed at that place.

Verse 4. *And I saw thrones . . . given unto them.* This is the same vision that is described at chapter 17: 12 and the reader should see the comments at that passage. The pronoun *they* means the kings who had occupied their thrones in form only, but who really had not been free to use their own judgment in their ruling. *Sat upon them* denotes that they were occupying their thrones in fact and not merely in name. *Judgment was given unto them* signifies they were allowed to render their own judgment in matters pertaining to their kingdoms. *Saw the souls . . . a thousand years.* Before reading further at this place, let the reader reexamine very carefully the first paragraph of the note referred to previously. That is especially necessary to get the significance of the thousand years of reign with Christ. The souls John saw were of those who were beheaded by Papal Rome because they refused to submit to her false demands. Their death recalls a like experience recorded in chapter 6: 9 of those who had been slain by Pagan Rome. These whom John saw in our present verse resisted the *beast* (Babylon), his *image* (those who imitated the beast) and the *mark* (those who brought upon themselves the guilt of doing the things originally incited by Nero.)

Verse 5. *Rest of the dead* is symbolical or figurative and refers to people who did not "have enough life" or interest to be active in defense of the truth. *Until the thousand years were finished.* When that bright period of the Reformation (here called the thousand years) was over and the former defenders of truth began to lag, then the enemies of the Bible "came to life" and became active in opposition to the word of God, acting under the influence of Satan who was now *loosed* in that the Bible was not binding him as it did. Such a movement stimulated the former "dead" ones to action and then was begun the conflict between the friends of truth and its enemies, a conflict that has continued to our day. *This is the first resurrection.* The pronoun does not refer directly to what has been said but to what is yet to be said, and it refers to the subject as a whole. John 11: 25, 26 should be considered in connection with the *first resurrection*, also read the note to which reference was made.

Verse 6. The *first resurrection* is that mentioned in the preceding verse of which John said he was going to speak. He is doing so now and telling us of the blessing that will be for those who have part in this *first resurrection*. In John 11: 25 Jesus says "I am the resurrection and the life." Jesus was the first one to be resurrected never to die again (Acts 13: 34). To have part in the *first resurrection* means to have part in Christ. And to get the spiritual benefits of the resurrection of Christ as the bodily benefits, it is necessary to be faithful after coming into Him. That is what is meant in John 11: 26 by "liveth and believeth in me." That person "shall never die" according to Christ's statement to Martha, which means the same as *on such the second death hath no power* in our present verse. This *second death* is the punishment in the lake of fire and brimstone according to chapter 21: 8 of our present book. *Shall reign with him a thousand years.* This period is the same that is explained at verse 2. Of course the word *reign* is not literal because Christ is the sole King on the throne. Thayer's explanation of the word as it is used here is as follows: "Paul transfers the word to denote the supreme moral dignity, liberty, blessedness, which will be enjoyed by Christ's redeemed ones." The principle expressed will apply to the faithful in Christ of all ages. However, the present application is made to those who had been faithful to Christ under the persecutions of Babylon. This spirit of devotion in the presence of death was a reenactment of the spirit of the first martyrs (chapter 6: 9-11), and they lived (were in evidence) all through this bright period of the Reformation. It is in that sense only that they were to be resurrected and reign with Christ through the thousand years. There was no prediction of any literal resurrection of some while others were to remain in their graves. There will be but one bodily resurrection (and it is still future), and at that same hour all human beings, both good and bad, will be brought to life (Daniel 12: 2; John 5: 28, 29). It is plainly taught in other passages that when Jesus comes again it will mark the end of the kingdom and all things on the earth. (1 Corinthians 15: 24, 25; 2 Peter 3: 10). All statements of a resurrection that is to occur before the second coming of Christ are figurative only.

Verse 7. This is a repetition of verse 3.

Verse 8. The *nations* here are the same as in verse 3 as to the meaning of the word. But the identical groups of men who had been deceived by Satan before the Reformation would not be available to him in the same manner, for they still have the Bible in their own languages, and will always know better than to surrender their rights as nations with their kings again. But having found by experience the great advantage of working through the various headquarters, so as to effect a broad-scale opposition to the truth, he determined to direct his efforts along that line. Of course his objective is the destruction of the Bible or the faith of the people in it. That is why this great and long conflict is called Armageddon in chapter 16: 16, for one of the terms in Thayer's definition of the word is "destruction." Satan's strategy in this war was to use any means he could command that would destroy men's faith in the Book. *Gog* and *Magog* were ancient peoples and countries that were numerous, savage and at enmity with civilization. The words are used symbolically here to indicate the kind of forces and means that Satan would use in his war against the Bible. In the note referred to at the beginning of this chapter, it is shown that a phase of Satan's public attacks upon the Bible is in the form of evolution, seeing that it is taught in the public schools, also be chartered and endorsed by states and educational headquarters. The same objective is now being attempted in the form of communism. In proportion as a man believes in this doctrine he will not believe in the Bible and Satan knows it. That is why he is pressing its tenets upon the people through every channel possible. It accounts for the number of communists among the school teachers of our free school system. Also for the presence of communists and their sympathizers in the three branches of our government; the legislative, executive and judicial. I am sometimes asked if I believe the present conflict with Russia and her satellites was predicted. My answer is yes as the whole picture is considered. Communism is just the present objective in the war, the conflict being either for or against it. In that sense it was predicted for it is a continuation of the *battle* (war) of Armageddon, which was begun after Satan was loosed and is destined to continue until

Christ comes. As in most other wars, there are spies and sympathizers who pretend to be on the right side, but whose heart is in favor of the enemy. Such traitors either deny being communists or even refuse to say whether they are or not. We know that when a man refuses to answer questions on this subject when propounded by a proper person, that person is a communist at heart and should be regarded as one of Satan's soldiers in the war of Armageddon.

Verse 9. The pronoun *they* stands for the hostile forces of Satan symbolically mustered from the regions of Gog and Magog. This is the army of Satan that is described in the preceding paragraph. They will fight under his directions with the object of destroying men's faith in the Bible. The apostate church of Rome taught that the religious conduct of men should be regulated according to the pope and his college of cardinals. The teaching of Christ is that men's lives should be regulated by the Bible (1 Peter 4: 11; 1 John 1: 7), that the sole institution for making that Book known is the church (Ephesians 3: 10, 21; 1 Timothy 3: 15). Hence the army of Satan was to compass the *camp of the saints*. This means the church when considered as a group of individuals, and *the beloved city* means the church if spiritual Jerusalem is used as a symbol. So here is where the issue is joined in this great battle of Armageddon. The church of Christ is on one side, and everything else is on the other in all controversies that involve moral and religious interests, and where belief in or opposition to the Bible is at stake. The first two thirds of this brief verse covers the entire period of the war of Armageddon, beginning when Satan was loosed and extending to the coming of Christ. The last sentence of the verse marks the end of the war. Not that it tells of the date (no passage does), but it names the event that will bring the conflict to a close, namely, the consuming fire out of heaven. We are told in 2 Thessalonians 2: 8 that the pope will be destroyed at the coming of Christ. It is very fitting that the war of Armageddon should be destroyed at the same time, since the pope and Satan have been allies arrayed against the forces of Christ for centuries. And with this verse the prophetic symbols of the book of Revelation bring us to the judgment day for the final showing. At various places in our study we have

been brought to that event, then taken back to some earlier period and started all over again. But the rest of the chapter will describe the events on the day of judgment and not go back.

Verse 10. *Devil that deceived them* refers to the vast hordes who comprised the army of Satan. This verse says nothing about the fate of the deceived ones; that will be shown later. This is the lake of fire and brimstone that is mentioned in chapter 21: 8. Tormented *day and night* is figurative as to the parts of the time for there will be no recurrence of day and night literally. The expression is used to give emphasis to the literal part of the sentence, namely, *for ever and ever*. In other words there will be no "breathing spell" or even brief intermission for the sake of relief; it will be continuous and endless.

Verse 11. *Great white throne* signifies purity and justice. *From whose face . . . fled away . . . no place for them*. This agrees with the next chapter that will tell us of the new heaven and earth.

Verse 12. *Small and great*. In God's eyes there are no "big I and little you," so the phrase is used only to denote that all human beings will be brought before the judgment. This conclusion also agrees with the literal statements of scripture in other passages (2 Corinthians 5: 10). *Books* occurs twice in this verse and it is stated that the judgment will be rendered according to the *works* that are written in the books. Hence the *books* means God's books of remembrance. (See Psalms 56: 8; Malachi 3: 16.) God does not literally need the mechanical use of books, but the words are used symbolically to impress us with the truth that none of the things we do will escape His knowledge. The *other* book is described as the *book of life*. It is referred to in the last verse as containing the names of the faithful servants of the Lord. This same thought is expressed in chapter 21: 27; Luke 10: 20; Philippians 4: 3. Upon the basis of this information we may conclude that the *books* were the records of men's actions, and the *book of life* contained a list of those whose conduct had caused their names to be written in this book, and whose continued good deeds had prevented their names from being *blotted out* (chapter 3: 5).

Verse 13. The preceding verse makes a general statement of the persons to be summoned before the judgment.

"Small and great" would virtually include all human beings that ever lived. The present verse gives particulars, doubtless to impress us with the completeness of the resurrection of all persons regardless of where their bodies and spirits had been, even including the sea with its millions of ravenous creatures to feed upon the bodies of the dead. *Death* refers to the dead bodies and *hell* (from HADES), is the place where the spirits had been. Both will be reunited and brought before the judgment.

Verse 14. *Death* (of the body) and *hell* (HADES), will not be needed any longer, hence they will be consigned to the lake of fire. Not all men, of course, but the ones who will be designated in the next verse.

Verse 15. This explains who is meant in the preceding verse to be cast into the lake of fire. In order to avoid such a doom it behooves us all to get our names written in the book of life, then live so that they will not be blotted out.

## Revelation 21

General remarks. When this and the next chapter are being considered, it is usually asked if the statements are literal or figurative. And as a rule no distinction is made between the righteous and the wicked when asking the question. Evidently a distinction should be made since the conditions of the persons themselves will not be the same. At any rate we do not have the specific information concerning that of the wicked that we do of the righteous. Therefore I believe it will be well to offer some remarks on this matter before taking up the verses. It is known that the Bible uses both literal and figurative language all through the volume, which is true of most compositions of literature. It is also true that a statement might be made of some truth or fact that could be correctly applied in either way, depending on how the statement is worded. For instance it might be declared of a certain thing that it is dead. But that might be said of its personal being and mean that it is dead because the life has actually gone out of it. Or it might be declared to be dead because the whole being is separated from something else, the word "death" meaning a separation. But if the statement is made from the former standpoint the meaning would be literal, and if from the other the figurative sense should be understood.



It will be necessary, therefore, to consider the context in specific passages in determining which form of language is used.

There is no direct information nor promise for the wicked to have a spiritual or glorious body after the resurrection. Any positive affirmation that may be made on this matter must be done in the absence of any declaration in the Bible. As far as the promises or information are concerned, the wicked will go into the next world with the same kind of bodies they had when they left this world. That is not so concerning those who die in Christ, for there are many passages that promise them a body that will be changed from a fleshly to a spiritual character. Hence it is an unavoidable conclusion that the future circumstances of the righteous must be the kind that can be experienced and enjoyed by a person who is wholly spiritual. Then a logical question may be asked as to why the Lord would use language that is apparently literal if it must be understood figuratively. It is in order to bring the divine thoughts to within the human understanding. Isaiah 55: 9 says of God: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." If the thoughts of God are that much higher than those of man, had He clothed his thoughts in language correspondingly high, then man never could have comprehended them. For that reason the heavenly thoughts are expressed in human terms. Accordingly Paul says, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh" (Romans 6: 19).

Man would have no other way of appreciating a description of the future after this life except by such a form of speech. Even the inspired apostle John did not know what we will be in the next life (1 John 3: 2). Hence in giving man a description of the eternal state of the righteous, it is often contrasted with things we dislike and compared with what we enjoy. And even such illustrations may be relative only, for a thing may be desirable from one standpoint and undesirable from another. To cite a single instance we are told that "there shall be no night there." That is said from the standpoint that we prefer the daylight to darkness. And yet from another we might think favorably of the night because it brings us

the cooling atmosphere and the time of rest. And so all of these thoughts should be observed when considering the two chapters now before us. I will offer another suggestion before starting into the comments on the verses. God never exaggerates the truth, and in giving us a description of the future condition of mankind, He has not made it look any stronger than it actually will be. If the description of the fate of the lost is figurative only, then what will be the literal state? Likewise, if the home of the soul as described in these chapters is pictured in figurative language only, then how wonderful the real situation will be! In the words of the song: "We speak of the realms of the blest, that country so bright and so fair; and oft are its glories confessed, but what must it be to be there! We speak of its pathways of gold, of its walls decked with jewels so rare; of its wonders and pleasures untold, but what must it be to be there!" And thus on the basis of the foregoing paragraphs, I shall try to explain the various descriptions given in these closing chapters of the great Book.

Verse 1. *New heaven and a new earth.* The heavens means the atmospheric region surrounding the earth and is a part of the same unit in creation. The home of the redeemed is called by the phrase "heaven and earth" because that is the present kind of home man lives in. If we were birds instead of men the vision would have showed John a "new nest." This new heaven and earth is what Jesus means in Matthew 5: 5 where He says, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." It is the one Peter is looking for when he says, "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3: 13). *No more sea.* This is an instance of a kind referred to in the general remarks, where the application must be made upon the basis of the context. In some respects we can think of the sea in a favorable light, with its wondrous treasures and submarine plants, and the innumerable varieties of food to gratify our appetites. But we know the vision is to show something desirable on the basis of contrast, and that makes us think of the ceaseless unrest and destructive billows that engulf men and ships.

Verse 2. *Holy city new Jerusalem* means the church that is to be united

at the last day in the final marriage of Christ as the bridegroom. (See the comments at chapter 19: 7.) Paul speaks of the church as the "heavenly Jerusalem" in Hebrews 12: 22, and he also speaks of it as the city that is above and is free and "the mother of us all" (Galatians 4: 26). *Prepared* refers to the condition a bride brings to herself in view of her approaching marriage.

Verse 3. *Tabernacle* is used figuratively to represent the place where a person resides. It is used here as a symbol of the close association that will exist between God and his people in the eternal age. He will not merely honor the saved of men by making a call upon them but will come and *dwell* with them. That does not mean that God will descend from his lofty condition so that man would think of having a guest that is his equal in rank. He will still be God and the redeemed of men will still compose a people, but notwithstanding this great difference He will be a gracious Friend to give the honor of divine "company" to the creatures made in His image.

Verse 4. *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.* Upon hearing this read once a little girl was caused to exclaim, "God must have a large handkerchief." I report this because she was making the same erroneous interpretation of the passages that many older people make. That is because they forget that they are reading in a book that was written on the basis of symbols. The significance of the statement is that the tears will be wiped away by removing or preventing anything that could cause tears; the next words of the verse agree with this explanation. *There shall be no more death.* The Saviour of men went down into the depths of death and came out again, bringing with Him the eternal victory over it, thus removing the possibility for the "grim monster" ever again to overcome those who are accounted worthy of the "better resurrection" with either physical or spiritual death. This will prevent *sorrow, crying and pain*, which explains how God will wipe away all tears. *Former things are passed away* will be true at that period beyond the resurrection of the righteous.

Verse 5. *He that sat upon the throne* is the same as was shown in chapter 20: 11. He is the one who created all things that exist, but all the items that were made in the first creation

pertaining to the material universe will be replaced with a new order of things that will be eternal, and adapted to the needs and enjoyment of the glorified part of humanity. The pronoun *he* means the angel who has been John's companion and exhibitor all through the vision of this book. Having taken a view of these wonderful objects the angel tells John to write the description in his book, and assures him that all that he has seen and heard is *true and faithful*, which means the vision and the words are a faithful report of the truth.

Verse 6. *It is done* is the same thing that was said as reported at chapter 16: 17. The expression signifies that everything planned by the Lord and predicted for the period up to the point at hand has been accomplished. *Alpha and Omega* are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet and the phrase is used symbolically, signifying that Jesus has been connected with all things done by his Father throughout. The same truth is meant by the following phrase, *the beginning and the end. I will give*, etc. Having completed everything necessary for the redemption and glorification of man, He is prepared to offer the benefit of the plan to humanity. It will be *freely* means not only that it is not something that can be purchased with silver and gold, but also that it will be supplied in abundance. Another condition that should be noticed is the offer is made to those who are *athirst*. The Lord's favors have always been offered on such a condition. Jesus said (Matthew 5: 6), "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." He also specified in the great invitation to "come unto me" that He meant those who were "heavy laden." There is nothing selfish or arbitrary about this, for only those who sincerely desire the water of life would relish its taste if they even attempted to drink it.

Verse 7. *He that overcometh* is another of the principles that distinguish the favor of God from what is generally offered by man. It is not to the strongest and successful ones, for then there would be many worthy people who would lose out, for few if any can be successful when that word is used in its ordinary sense. But the reward is to those who *overcome*, and 1 John 5: 4 states that faith is the means by which we may overcome. That brings the blessings of God within reach of

all men since all can have faith whether they are those of one or five talents. *Inherit all things* logically has to mean the things to which reference has just been made concerning the new creation. *Be his God . . . be my son* is the same close association that is mentioned and commented upon at verse 3.

Verse 8. *Fearful* is from DEILOS, which Thayer defines, "timid, fearful," and he then explains it to denote "Christians who through cowardice give way under persecutions and apostatize [deny their Lord]. This definition or explanation is justified by the next word in the text, namely, the *unbelieving*. *Abominable* is from BDELUSSO, and Thayer's definition is "to render foul, to cause to be abhorred." It is a word that would have a general meaning, hence the apostle follows up with a number of specifications. *Whoremongers* are men who do not merely commit adultery on some specific occasion (which of itself would be wrong), but who are regular patrons of women whose business is to receive men either for lust or money. *Sorcerers* is from PHARMAKENS, and Thayer's lexicon defines it, "one who prepares or uses magical remedies; a sorcerer." It could well be classed with the "dope" trade of our day. *Idolaters* is defined, "A worshipper of false gods." That is its literal meaning and makes it apply to any conduct where a man shows a preference for something over the true God. Hence Paul declares in Ephesians 5: 5 that a covetous man is an idolater. *All liars* is rendered "liars of all kinds" by Moffatt. That rendering is evidently correct for it would be unnecessary to state that every liar is meant in the sense of not allowing some of them to escape; that would be taken for granted. But it means to include not only those who in the direct sense make positive statements that are false, but also everyone who says or does anything for the purpose of making a false impression. When Ananias and his wife deposited some money before Peter there is no evidence that they actually said anything about it until Peter forced them to speak. But yet he accused them of lying because they intended to make a false impression upon the apostle. Therefore we should understand that all deliberate attempts to deceive another will be regarded as lies. It can be done even by stating a part of the truth in such a way as to make a false impression. Paul

doubtless was thinking of this when he declared he was not "handling the word of God deceitfully" (2 Corinthians 4: 2). *Have their part*. They will not receive any part of the good things that have just been promised to the faithful. Their fate will be to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the place designated by the Greek word GEHENNA. *Which is the second death*. It is called this because all mankind are bound to die physically (Hebrews 9: 27) on account of the sin of Adam. But the wicked will die (be separated) from God for ever and have to remain in this lake of fire away from God.

Verse 9. The original angel who came to John at the beginning of the vision has not left the isle, but occasionally there will be an extra conversation permitted for some one or more of the other persons introduced from time to time. For instance, one of the elders (chapter 5: 5), the beasts or living creatures (chapter 6: 1, 3, 5, 7), the voice from heaven (chapter 10: 8), one of the seven angels (chapter 17: 1) and the one in our verse. John heard many other voices from time to time, but the ones to which reference is made talked to him. This angel of our verse invited John to see a vision of the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Verse 10. *He carried me away* was not literal because John never actually left the isle any time through the scenes of this book. The sense in which it was done is signified by the words *in the spirit*. These extra visions injected into the over-all picture of this book, may be illustrated by certain special items called "insets" that are often seen within the scope of some large picture. They serve as explanations of some outstanding feature. In this special vision John saw a mountain from the top of which he could get a good view of what the angel wished him to see. The angel told John he would show him the bride, the Lamb's wife, and when he looked he saw a city instead. That is because the bride is the church (Ephesians 5: 25-33), and also the church is likened to a city (Hebrews 12: 22, 23). Having transferred the imagery from a woman to a city, the following passages will be a description of a beautiful city. It is called *holy Jerusalem* because that title is attached to the church "which is the mother of us all" (Galatians 4: 26). *Descending out of heaven from God*.

That was very appropriate because while the church is composed of men and women on the earth, the design and origin of it were from the dwelling place of God.

Verse 11. *Having the glory of God* is understandable because anything that comes from heaven would be adorned with the glory of God. The glory of the city was so great that John likens it to the rays of a precious stone. There is something most significant about using precious stones as symbols in describing the splendors of the celestial city. We have all beheld diamonds and other precious jewels and admired their glittering brilliance. However, we have observed also that the greatest degree of their beauty is caused by the light that is reflected upon them from some outside source. So with these precious stones that bedeck the city of God; they obtain their glow from the light that radiates from the throne of God. The one named in this verse is only referred to for a comparison, but the actual use of the stones themselves will be described in a later place in this chapter. The jasper that is used to compare the brilliant light is described as being *clear as crystal*. That is a description of a diamond which is among the most attractive of stones.

Verse 12. The dimensions of the wall will be noticed at verses 16 and 17, but here they are briefly stated to be *great and high*. In old times the most important cities were surrounded with walls, hence it is a desirable asset to say this city was walled. It is significant that it was great and high. That would indicate good protection from the enemies, since the wall was too high to be scaled and too great or strong to be penetrated or beaten down. Among the numerical symbols that have been very prominent in this book are four and its multiples, twelve and four and twenty. Four was the number of the living creatures that represented the redeemed from the four corners of the earth. Twelve was used if the organized systems that God has had are being considered from one dispensation alone, either the Mosaic or the Christian. That is because there were twelve tribes in the one and twelve apostles in the other. Hence it is appropriate that John should see the twelve gates to this city representing the twelve tribes of Israel. The twelve apostles will be pointed out later, but it was in order to show the

twelve tribes first because the Mosaic system was first given.

Verse 13. The tabernacle of the Mosaic system had much beauty in its formation, and also in the garments of the priestly service. That was not as an encouragement to vanity or doing something for mere show. But God is the designer and maker of all things, and those that are seen in the universe that are beautiful are not so by accident. Among the items that contribute to the beauty of any structure is the symmetry of its arrangement. A city that is foursquare should not have a varying number of gates in its walls. There are twelve gates to this city and the equal distribution of them in sets of three is very appropriate. It might have seemed sufficiently clear to say that the gates were equally divided amidst the four sides of the city. However, this is supposed to be a somewhat poetical or picturesque description of a very superb spot, and it is fitting to go into these details.

Verse 14. This completes the full representations corresponding to the four and twenty elders. The twelve gates stand for the tribes of Israel, and here are the twelve original apostles of Christ. There is nothing said about angels in connection with the twelve apostles as there was with the twelve gates. That is doubtless because gates call for guards at the entrance of an important city, while a foundation is a more fixed part of a structure and does not call for supervision. In literal architecture there would be actually only one foundation to a building. Yet it might be built of several stones as was this one, and each stone is spoken of as a foundation. In literal language it would be one foundation but composed of a number of stones. In truth that is the way Paul speaks of the church in Ephesians 2: 20 where he says Christians are built upon the foundation (singular) of the apostles and prophets. It is common to see important names engraved on stones composing a building. It generally is of persons who have made valuable contributions to the structure. From that standpoint it is significant to have the names of the apostles on these stones.

Verse 15. *He that talked with me* means the angel who had been sent to give John the vision. This angel had the measuring reed and he did

the measuring. A *reed* in nature is produced on the banks or near the edge of bodies of water and the stems are used for various purposes. The one the angel had was an artificial one and was made of bright and precious metal. Such an instrument was proper for the important matter of measuring divine things. We are not told the capacity of this measuring rule as we might do in the case of a literal measuring stick, such as a yardstick or foot measure. We have only the computation after the angel did the measuring.

Verse 16. The city was a cube, the length and breadth and height being equal. The measurement was twelve thousand furlongs, which is fifteen hundred miles. For an approximate estimate to help us visualize the size of that city, let us think that if a man were to start at the Gulf of Mexico and travel to the Great Lakes, he would have made the journey along one side only of the city. It is true that the eternal city will not be restricted to miles as we measure distances, but the figures are intended to give us some impression of the abundant provision that God has made for the saved of all ages.

Verse 17. In the preceding verse the angel measured the *city* which gave the length of it. In this verse he *measured the wall* which necessarily means the thickness of it. The measurement was a hundred and forty and four cubits, another multiple of one of our prominent numbers, twelve. *Measure of a man, that is, of the angel.* This unusual language only means that the angel used the same action in measuring the wall that a man would use in such a situation. The usual length of a cubit is eighteen inches, hence this wall was two hundred and sixteen feet thick. Such would be a proper thickness to be proportionate to such a height.

Verse 18. The body of the wall was of jasper, which we are told in verse 11 is a substance that is "clear as crystal" thus describing a diamond. Let us try to see with our mind's eye a diamond that is fifteen hundred miles in diameter and we will have a mental picture of one side of this city. *City was pure gold* means the street of it according to verse 21. Gold is a metal (not a stone), hence the likeness to *clear glass* is explained in verse 21 as of *transparent glass*. Literal gold is one of the most condensed

of metals and hence would naturally be the opposite of transparent. So we should understand that the metal was so pure and the texture so fine that it would take on a very high polish. It was so much that way that in looking upon it one would really seem to see a substance that his eyes were penetrating (as if they were performing the action of an X-ray), when in reality he was beholding something with an incomprehensibly high gloss.

Verse 19. The foundation stones of the wall were garnished (decorated) with *all manner* of precious stones, which means with stones of various descriptions. The first was *jasper* which we have previously learned is like a diamond. *Sapphires* are of several varieties and no special one is named, but the general description in the English dictionaries shows them to be brilliant gems inclined to be transparent. A *chalcedony* is a stone with a blue tint and a glossy surface. *Emerald* is a stone with rich coloring of green and very much prized as a precious stone.

Verse 20. A *sardonyx* is described by Thayer as follows: "A precious stone marked by the red color of the carnelian (sard) and the white of the onyx." A *sardius* is a flesh-colored stone. Thayer says a *chrysolite* is "a precious stone of a golden color," and he says a *beryl* is "a precious stone of a pale green color." A *topaz* is a stone of a greenish-yellow color as given by Thayer. *Chrysoprasus*. Thayer defines this as follows: "A precious stone in color like a leek, of a translucent [transparent] golden-green." A *jacinth* is also the name of a flower (commonly called a hyacinth). The color of it and the stone by the same name is dark-blue, almost black. Thayer says an *amethyst* is a precious stone of a violet and purple color.

Verse 21. *Every several gate was of one pearl.* There is nothing said nor intimated that the gates resembled pearls or were merely as beautiful as pearls. No, the first phrase is, *the twelve gates were twelve pearls.* And we should take for granted that the Lord would not use any but genuine pearl, but He would also use the best of it for the construction of a city to be the eternal home of the redeemed, where they are to share the glory with Him and all the celestial beings that He has created. I will quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary some information about pearls: "The finest

specimens of the pearl are yielded by the pearl oyster . . . the oysters grow in clusters on rock in deep water, and the pearl is found inside the shell, and is the result of a diseased secretion caused by the introduction of foreign bodies, etc., between the mantle and the shell . . . The size of a good Oriental pearl varies from that of a pea to about three times that . . . Pearls have been valued as high as \$200,000 apiece." Now let us do some calculating and try to form some idea of the beauty and value of just the gates to the celestial city. Everything thus far has been in the proportions that would be required for beauty, hence these gates would be of the width and height that would not be out of proportion. In a wall fifteen hundred miles high and two hundred and sixteen feet thick, any opening of ordinary dimensions would look like a tunnel more than an entrance to a city of residence. We are not given the actual dimensions of the gates, but in order to bring them near enough for us to do some kind of calculating, we know they would not have been less than a hundred feet wide and two hundred feet high. If a pearl three times the size of a pea is worth two hundred thousand dollars, then one pearl as large as I have suggested (and doubtless these gates were larger) would be worth many times more than all the wealth of the world, and besides this, there were twelve of these costly gems. I would be willing to give a year or more of the severest kind of service just to see one of those gates.

Verse 22. *I saw no temple.* John was thinking of the temple that was in the literal city of Jerusalem, and was contrasting that situation with what he saw in the vision. Even that temple which was built for the service to God was not good enough nor big enough to contain Him (1 Kings 8: 27; Acts 7: 47-50), much less would He need a temple to confine him when He is already occupying the whole city.

Verse 23. The sun, moon and stars were necessary to give light upon the earth, but that planet will have passed away. The light that would be adapted to glorified residents of the eternal city would need to be more brilliant than a multitude of suns such as we now see. But the city will not be without light for the glory of God and the Son will lighten it. Think of a Being so bright and glorious that its rays would reach from wall to wall in a city 1,500 miles

wide. No wonder Moses was not permitted to come within the rays of that glory.

Verse 24. *Nations and kings* of the earth will not come into the city literally, for those relationships are of a temporal nature. This verse is based on the practice in ancient times that required a captive city to pay tribute to a city that had overcome it. Doubtless there will be men who had been kings, and others who were citizens of the nations ruled by these kings, who will have become servants of God and who will be among the many thousands who will throng that city.

Verse 25. *The gates shall not be shut at all by day* (or day by day). This also is based upon the practice of ancient cities closing their gates at the approach of night (Joshua 2: 5). John says there will not be any need for such a performance, for *there shall be no night there*. It is his way of emphasizing the absence of night, for there will be no enemy who could enter the city any way.

Verse 26. This is the same as verse 24.

Verse 27. The evils named have been fully described previously, but I will cite the remarks at verse 8 about liars. Those whose names are in *the book of life* is explained at chapter 20: 15.

## Revelation 22

Verse 1. The pronoun *he* refers to the angel who has been with John all through the vision of this book. There is nothing more pleasing to the eye than a flowing body of water. It signifies something that is constant and moving with majestic procedure. But many rivers are attractive from these standpoints only, while within them may be vicious creatures that would devour helpless victims that came within reach. Also there may be much that is vile and foul, carrying with them the waste materials of the cities. But the river John saw had nothing of that kind because it had not been in contact with any place containing filth. Instead, its source is the throne of God and the Lamb where there can be nothing vile. For this reason the river is pure and also clear as crystal because there are no materials to becloud the stream. It is called *water of life* because it is always moving (never stagnant) and because of the quality and purity described in the foregoing comments.



Verse 2. *In the midst of the street of it* means the street of the city, and the river of life flowed down the center of the street. This description will give us no difficulty if we will think of the "divided highways" that grace our country in many places. Let us think of a river flowing from an inexhaustible fountain and proceeding on through a beautiful city. On each bank is a row of fruit trees that serve a double purpose, namely, furnish ornamentation for the crystal stream, and a source of food for those who are walking upon the section of the "divided highway" that one may be using. To clarify the description we think of it in this manner. First is a section of the street, next a row of trees, next the river, next another row of trees and then the other section of the street. *Tree of life.* This tree is promised to all who overcome the contests of life (chapter 2: 7). The phraseology is based on the tree of life that was in the garden of Eden. It will be well for us again to remember we are still in a book of symbols, where the Lord is giving us a picture of Heaven in as strong terms as our human mind can grasp. The tree is spoken of in the singular number because there was but one in the garden. But the varieties are not limited to one, because this tree is pictured in connection with spiritual things. Here we have another instance of the numeral that has been so prominent throughout this book. That is twelve which is a multiple of four (the four creatures), and the number each of the two organized systems of salvation that God has given the world. The special significance of the twelve here is to show the fruit-bearing season is continuous and perennial, but a different kind of fruit will be produced each month, so that no occasion will exist for longing after a change; there will be one coming each month. Many kinds of fruit trees not only produce fruit, but also their leaves have medicinal value in them. Thus we are told that the leaves of this tree have healing qualities. Not that any citizens will become sick, but it is on the same principle of wiping away all tears (chapter 21: 4). The leaves of this tree will heal the people by keeping them in such a condition that sickness will be impossible.

Verse 3. *No more curse* is an allusion to the curse pronounced upon the ground because of the sin of Adam (Genesis 3: 17). Instead of a curse

there will be endless blessings because not only will the tree of life be in the city (as it was in the garden), but God and the Lamb will themselves be there. Also all creatures who would tempt the righteous will have been consigned to their eternal place in the lake of fire. *Servants shall serve him.* It is sometimes asked if the saved are to be entirely free in that city, since it is spoken of as the place of rest for God's people. The word *serve* does not necessarily mean labor or toil. The word is from *LATREUO* and at this place Thayer's definition (the words in italics) is as follows: "To render religious service or homage, to worship." It certainly will be only unspeakable pleasure to engage in such employment as worshipping God in his immediate presence, when faithful disciples have taken real happiness from their worship of Him while in the world. In the words of one of the old songs of the church, it will be a service in a time and place "Where congregations ne'er break up, and rest days have no end."

Verse 4. *Shall see his face* is mentioned to indicate the great intimacy that will exist between God and the creatures that have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Persons spending some time in a city where many others are present, may be seen with pennants attached to their clothing for the purpose of identification. In this celestial city the name will be on the person, on the most conspicuous part of it, the forehead. How different this is from the condition of the members of the apostate church; they had the mark of the beast in their forehead (chapter 14: 9).

Verse 5. *Shall be no night there.* (See the comments at chapter 21: 25.) *Need no candle neither light of the sun.* This is one of the most significant symbols used in this series, because it includes the two extremes on the subject. A candle is an artificial light and the weakest that man has devised. The sun is God's own direct work and is the strongest light in all the natural creation. In saying that neither will be needed in the celestial city, John is giving us the greatest possible picture of the strength of the light that will radiate from the throne of God; although he was to be the lawgiver, Moses was a natural man. And 1 Timothy 6: 16 says God is "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." *They shall reign for ever and ever.*

The word *reign* may raise a question in connection with the truth that even Jesus is said to reign only until death has been conquered (1 Corinthians 15: 25, 26). The explanation lies in the definitions of the original word. The Greek original is *BASILEUO*, which means "to reign," but in our passage Thayer explains it to mean "to denote the supreme moral dignity, liberty, blessedness, which will be enjoyed by Christ's redeemed ones." Hence the word does not necessarily mean to rule as a king. It is a figurative term and denotes a situation where a certain condition prevails. It is like saying that "all difficulties were removed and peace again reigned." We have the blessed assurance from the apostle that the condition of such a reign will continue *for ever and ever*.

Verse 6. *He said* means the angel said it to John. *Faithful and true*. These words are virtually the same in their fundamental meaning, and either could properly be used in place of the other for general purposes. Technically they mean the words or sayings just delivered by the angel are worthy of being relied on because they are true. *Of the holy prophets* is referred to as an evidence that His sayings are worthy of being relied on, for the predictions that God enabled the prophets to make were fulfilled in the proper time. For that reason there should be no doubt concerning the predictions that He has authorized his servants to make in the present book. *Sent his angel*. This refers to the angel who has been with John from the beginning of his vision on the isle. *Must shortly be done*. The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders this phrase, "must come to pass soon." The word in question is a relative term, for even a number of centuries would be short when compared with the endlessness of what will come after the judgment day. However, since this period in the vision of John is at the near approach of the last day (as to the events predicted), the end is literally close at hand.

Verse 7. *Quickly* is from the same word as "shortly" in the preceding verse. *Blessed* means happy, denoting a condition entirely satisfactory. *Keepeth* is from *TEREO* and in the King James Version it is translated hold fast 1 time, keep 57, observe 4, preserve 2, reserve 8, watch 2. It is a word with many shades of meaning which must be determined in each place according to the connection. If it is used in rela-

tion to things a man is required to do, then it means he must understand and do them. If used only of things stated as truths, whether they are predictions or otherwise, then the word means we are to believe them and keep them in respectful remembrance. The present verse applies the word to the prophecy of this book, hence it has the meaning just described. However, it would imply some activities on the part of man, for among the things predicted is the judgment day on which men will be judged according to their deeds. Hence if a man believes and respects that prediction, he will not forget it but will fashion his life in such a way as to be adjudged worthy of everlasting life. This explains why the angel said those were *blessed* or happy who *keepeth the sayings*.

Verse 8. *These things* refer to the vision of the celestial city and what the angel said about it. In chapter 19: 10 John attempted to worship the angel but was prevented. Hence the *things* of our verse would have to apply to what had come before him since that time. The word *worship* is one of the terms in the Greek New Testament that have many shades of meaning, because it is from a dozen original words with about that many different definitions. Hence not every form or kind of worship would be condemned. The word as used in our verse and the following one, also in chapter 19: 10, means to prostrate oneself before another as a recognition of superiority in rank. Such an attitude is due only to God and his Son. Angels are not superior to men as to their personal merit nor even in authority. In the great sphere of service to God the angels are only some of His servants. That is the reason that the angel assigned for his instructions to John in this place and also in chapter 19: 10 refused to be worshipped. And it is the same reason why Peter refused the worship from Cornelius in Acts 10: 25, 26 saying, "Stand up; I myself also am a man." This does not condemn the acts of homage that are paid to kings or other dignitaries as was the custom in old time and is yet in some countries. Those performances pertain to matters of social or legal standing, while the word under consideration in our passages has to do with authority in religion. For a complete analysis of this word according to the lexicon and concordance, see the comments at Matthew 2: 2 in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 9. Many comments that would be suggested on this verse were made on the preceding one. There were two phases of devotion to God in which John and the angel were in the same class, namely, *fellow servant* and *prophet*. The first will apply to all of the Lord's disciples while the second pertains to their work in predicting future events. But neither of these services entitles a man to receive worship from another, so the angel told John to *worship God*.

Verse 10. *Seal* is from SPHRAGIZO, which Thayer defines at the passage, "keep in silence, keep secret." In the beginning of our study of this book, we were told that the future experiences of the church in its relations with the governments were unrevealed. That was indicated by a book (containing visions of the future) that was sealed, and it required the inspiration of Christ to reveal it. At some time before the Christian Dispensation (we know not how long) God composed the subject matter that makes up the book of Revelation, but since the events were not to be fulfilled "for many days" as Daniel was told (Daniel 12: 1-4), He sealed them up in the book we are studying. When the time came to begin making them known He enabled the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" to break the seals. But at the point reached by us in the vision there is nothing depending on future developments—the *time is at hand*—hence there is no reason for sealing it up.

Verse 11. The preceding verse must be remembered in connection with this one in order to get the full meaning of the passage—it is very vital. We are arrived at the judgment day (in the vision) when the final and eternal lot of all intelligent creatures will be announced for good. After this there will never be any change either for better or worse with anyone. The *unjust* and *filthy* will always be so, and the *righteous* and *holy* likewise will remain so. That is why there will never be any sin committed in Heaven by angel or man after the judgment. Neither will there be any chance for reformation on the part of the creatures in the lake of fire.

Verse 12. *I come quickly* is explained at verse 7. *My reward is with me*. When Jesus comes again it will not be for the purpose of setting up another reign on the earth, for all of His reign will then come to a close (1 Corinthians 15: 24-26). The lot of both

just and unjust will have been decided at that time, and Christ will be coming to bestow the reward according to that decision. It is in that sense that the reward will be *with Him*—not coming merely to announce what it is going to be. He will at that time recompense either "tribulation" or "rest" upon mankind (2 Thessalonians 1: 6, 7), which is the meaning of the present passage. The basis on which the rewards will be distributed is *according as his work shall be*.

Verse 13. This is virtually the same as chapter 1: 8; see those comments.

Verse 14. *Blessed* is from MAKABIOS, and in the King James Version it has been rendered "blessed" 43 times and "happy" 6 times. The reason for their blessedness or happiness is their *right* to the tree of life. The word *right* is from the word EXOUSIA, which also means power or authority. It is a very serious passage in view of the notions of many people as to the lot of the unsaved. As an outburst of sentiment or emotion it is said, "How could God refuse to admit any person to the eternal happiness when He has it within his power to grant it." But the last part of the statement is not true, for God cannot do that which is not right. (Titus 1: 2; 2 Timothy 2: 13.) If those who do the commandments are the ones who have the *right* to the tree of life, then it would not be right for others to have access to it. And if they would not have a right to it, it would be wrong for them to have it. And since God cannot do wrong it follows that He cannot admit any person to the city who has not done the commandments. It is clear that having right to the tree of life requires the right for entrance into the city, for we learned at verse 2 that the tree is growing inside the city.

Verse 15. *Without* means on the outside of the eternal city. The preceding verse reveals who will be permitted to enter the city and this one tells some of the kind that will not enter. *Dogs*. It would be foolish to think this is used with reference to the dumb brute, for it would not be more true of the dog than of all others of the animal kingdom. 2 Peter 2: 12 informs us that the beasts are destined to be destroyed; there will be no "hereafter" for them. The word is from KUON and Thayer says that some authorities define it to mean "sodomites." The word corresponding to it in the Old Testament is *keleb* which Strong defines, "A

dog; hence (by euphemism) [substitution of a milder word as being less offensive to the ear] a male prostitute." In Deuteronomy 23: 18 the word is used in that sense where it is associated with an immoral woman in designating "tainted money." The "hire of a whore" means money an immoral woman receives from her male patrons. While on that subject it was appropriate to name another immoral person and that is a man who practices unnatural immorality for money, and that is what is meant by "the price of a dog." It seems very fitting to call a Sodomite a dog, for that animal is the only creature of the brute creation that is inclined to gratify his lust on one of his own sex. And we have the same appropriateness of the two kinds of immoral characters that the Old Testament passage showed, namely, the *dogs* and very soon the *whoremongers*. The dogs are men who have immoral relations with other men, and whoremongers are men who patronize women who are immoral as an occupation.

Thayer says a *sorcerer* is "one who prepares or uses magical remedies." It is similar to those who are engaged in the "dope" business today. The scriptures tell us that medicine does good (Proverbs 17: 22), but any kind of drugs or narcotics that produce unnatural feelings of gaiety, or the opposite one of abandonment to lasciviousness, will damage the body and that will bring the curse of God upon the guilty. (1 Corinthians 6: 18-20.) The first sin committed by man against man was murder (Genesis 4: 8). That crime is so great that God finally gave the decree of capital punishment against all who commit it (Genesis 9: 6). But literal murder is not the only kind that can be committed. 1 John 3: 15 says a man who hates his brother is a murderer, and of course all such persons will be on the outside of the holy city. *Idolaters* are those who worship anything or any person besides the true God. It may be images made with hands or the works of creation such as the planets or animals, etc. Also Paul says that covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3: 5), hence there will be no covetous persons in Heaven. Chapter 21: 8 shows that liars of all kinds will be cast into the lake of fire. Our verse expresses the same thought as to its comprehensiveness by taking in all who love the liars.

Verse 16. This book starts out by telling us that it is the revelation of

Jesus Christ (not of "Saint John the Divine" as the heading title erroneously states), and this verse reveals Him introducing himself directly. However, He does not overlook the services of the angel, but faithfully backs up his work by saying that He sent him. *To testify* means to transmit the testimony to the churches. That is, to bear testimony to the things that have been showed him throughout the vision of this book. *Root and offspring of David*. This means that Jesus was in the direct line of genealogy that came down from Abraham through David. That great man was not the only prominent Hebrew in the line, but there was a distinction in his case. David had two sons by the same woman, Bathsheba, and those sons were Solomon and Nathan (1 Chronicles 3: 5). At this place the blood line divides and on Solomon's side it comes down to Joseph the husband of Mary. On Nathan's side it comes down to Mary the mother of Jesus. (See Matthew 1 and Luke 3.) There is another fact that makes David of special importance. He was the first king of the Israelites from the tribe of Judah, and it had been predicted (Genesis 49: 10) that the tribe of Judah was to give law to God's people in latter times. The Mosaic law was of the tribe of Levi (Exodus 2: 1-10). David was the first king of the tribe of Judah to sit upon the throne of God's ancient people. That kingdom was destined to be set aside and replaced by another. But God assured David that his throne would not always be vacant. There was to be one of his descendants who would reign on the throne, only by that time it would be spiritual and not one with temporal government as its purpose. Such a king was worthy of coming to John with an authoritative commission such as this vision. *Bright and morning star* is what He says of himself in chapter 2: 28. The significance of this phrase is due to its brightness as it precedes the sun in rising, thus announcing that a new day is beginning. (See 2 Peter 1: 19.) And truly did the rising of Jesus come as a star to announce that a new day was about to come, the day of the Christian Dispensation.

Verse 17. The subject running through this verse is along the line of invitations. It has been stated more than once that as to the relative place of the items in the over-all vision of this book, the time of the judgment has been reached. From that stand-

point there would be no reason to give anyone an invitation to come for salvation—that opportunity has passed. Yet in reality, aside from the symbolized feature of the book, the basic purpose of the book of Revelation is to give the world a final document from Heaven as an incentive for preparing to meet the day of all days, the second coming of Christ and the judgment of the world. Otherwise there would be no point in inviting men to come and drink of the water of life. Nor would there be any call for the warning sounded in the two verses following this. Hence we shall consider the important phrases of this combined invitation. The bride is the (espoused) church (2 Corinthians 11: 2) and the Spirit is in the church (Ephesians 2: 22). The church of Christ has a standing invitation to people of the world, wishing them to accept the salvation offered so freely. In truth, it is the only organization that has any right to make such an offer (Ephesians 3: 21 and 1 Timothy 3: 15). But others as individuals have the right to repeat the invitation, hence the verse says for those who hear to repeat the call. That makes it the duty of every individual to be active in the salvation of souls. *Let him that is athirst come.* This is in line with the statement of Jesus in Matthew 5: 6 that they who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. That is logical, for unless a man is thirsty he will not be interested in the opportunity to drink. *Whosoever will* signifies the same as the preceding comment, that unless a man is willing it would do him no good to go through the formality of obeying the Gospel. Let it be observed also that the blessing is to those who *come*. Man must come to the fountain for it will not be moved towards him for his convenience. The *water of life* is the same that Jesus made known to the woman of Samaria (John 4: 10-14). This water is the word of God and it will be in man “a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” It is offered freely which means abundantly and without the price such as silver and gold.

Verse 18. It is asked if the phrase *this book* refers to the book of Revelation or to the whole Bible. Its direct application is to this book for it is the one that John was engaged to write. But the principle applies to the entire

word of God, for 1 Peter 4: 11 commands “any man” who speaks to do so as the oracles of God. That would not be done were he to make any change in the Sacred Text, either by adding to it or by taking from it. To *add unto these things* would not be done only by literally writing some uninspired words to the document; no person is apt to do that. But when a man assumes the privilege of practicing things not authorized in the book, he thereby adds to it in principle. The *plagues* were symbolized and were repeated in various forms. The idea is that such a man will be plagued as severely as those described.

Verse 19. There is nothing put in the book of God that is not necessary, therefore it is sinful to take any of it out. That would be done by rejecting any of its requirement. (See Hebrews 2: 2.) *Take away his part.* No man actually has possession of any part of the things in the holy city, but God has prepared a part for each person who will prepare himself for it by faithfulness to the word.

Verse 20. *He which testifieth these things* means Christ according to the statement in chapter 1: 1. *I come quickly* is also stated in verses 7 and 12 and explained in connection with those passages. The word *surely* is added at this place for the sake of emphasis. The attitude of John to that announcement is that which every faithful disciple will have. In 2 Timothy 4: 8 the apostle Paul is speaking of the crown to be given him at the coming of Christ. He says it will be for him but not for him only; it will *be unto all them also that love his appearing*. If a man is living a righteous life he will not dread to think either of death or the judgment.

Verse 21. The grace of the Lord is the favor that is bestowed upon all who are living in faithful service to Him. All can be faithful regardless of human weaknesses, hence no reason exists why anyone should be rejected when He comes. John lovingly thinks of his brethren to whom he is to commit this book and wishes for the favor of Christ to be with them. When *Amen* is used at the close of a sentence or composition, it means “so be it, may it be fulfilled.” John has no regrets about anything he has been told to write, and hence closes the great book with the sincere endorsement.







