

How to Read the Bible:

Historic Interpretation

JOHN ALLEN HUDSON

"Immense crowds now flocked to his appointments to hear him. They were delighted with his noble plea for the Bible and the Bible alone. As *he taught men how to read it* (for at that time, let it astound none, men did not know) their appreciation of the Bible arose, their appreciation of human creeds sank, and their appreciation of human creeds once on the wane could never be stopped". Moses E. Lard, Lard's Quarterly, Vol. < III, page 267, with reference to A. Campbell.

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Printed in the United States of America

Printed and Bound By *THE*
MANNEY COMPANY
1041 Isbeil Road Fort Worth 14, Texas

Dedication

To My Grandchildren

Sandra Eileen

John Allen III

Claudia Ruth

Martha Anne

William Michael

Each worthy of the dedication of many volumes, but jointly that there may be no partiality

And

Whose hearts and minds, it is hoped, will be stimulated again and again by reading these pages, this volume is dedicated

BY THE AUTHOR

Other Works by the Same Author

The Man and the Moment; Or a Study in the Life of
Alexander Campbell

Peter Fenwick, novel Back To

Jerusalem, written and published in Great Britain

Great Pioneer Papers Studies

in the Covenants, a class book The

Church in Great Britain, a history

The Pioneers on Worship

Church Polity, distinctly "edited" by him

History of Apostasies, edited and amended

History of Reforms, edited and amended

INTRODUCTION

Every writer who proposes a new work on the reading of the Bible has some particular point of view in mind which guides him. If it is in the world of the scholarly, then literary criticism and evaluation will become apparent. That is true of such works as Introduction to the Old Testament by Professor Robert Pfeiffer, or Fosdick's Guide to the Understanding of the Bible.

The old masters of days gone by also had their points of view and their aims. This writer has been studying all these works in the Bibliography appended, but professes considerable originality while borrowing freely from the past. He has introduced material which he has nowhere seen so used, such as a discussion of the miracles of the Bible in reading it, or in the fundamental and the merely incidental elements of the history in dealing with certain things in Scripture; or again, in the deductions which one must necessarily make when he comes to interpreting the words of Christ and His apostles on the night of the betrayal. These are original approaches which this writer thinks help out and are an aid for the correct reading of the Bible.

Originally it had been the intention to go more into the development of the historic process in the interpretation of the Bible. But that idea has been modified somewhat to suit the book to a wider range of readers and a more practical application. More of the philosophical and original type-of thinking, has been employed, and less of the critical from the standpoint of the scholars. More of the common-sense approach; and the writer hopes with a wider interest aroused in consequence. At least that has come to be the objective. If one wants to explore Modernism,

or Neo-Orthodoxy, or Dialectical Theology, he may find a rather complete listing of the principal works in the Bibliography of this work. Certainly this writer has not drawn the line against the reading of any book dealing with the Bible, whether liberal or conservative, critical or not. He has simply not cluttered the pages of this work with the confusion of the theological dogmatism that relates itself to the Bible as a divine revelation.

CHAPTER 1

EMPLOYING OUR NATURAL FACULTIES IN A NATURAL WAY IN READING THE BIBLE

The Natural Sense Is the Universal Sense — Open to All Alike. Natural Faculties Do Not Allow Private Interpretations.

It cannot be doubted, I think, that all the schisms in the world, over the Scriptures, have been brought about by "private," that is, unauthorized and unreasonable interpretations. The Apostle Peter said that no Scripture is of private, that is, unrelated and arbitrary interpretation. (1 Pet. 1:21). That there is great evil in the world today, and many divisions, by irresponsible interpretations of Holy Writ to suit individual fancies, there can scarcely be any doubt. But the abuse of a principle by the irresponsible does not remove the right to exercise the principle itself. Our Catholic friends feel that the way to obviate the difficulty is for Holy Church to say what ought to be understood, and what ought not be understood; thus removing from the people the right of interpretation altogether, and taking the Bible out of their hands, except as interpreted by the missals, manuals, catechisms, and their authoritative encyclicals, etc. But this results in abstrusness to absurdity, and multiplies the difficulty. No one man could understand the whole of Catholic doctrines. It is not the way of simplicity. But the divine way is a simple way.

Moses Stuart, in the *Biblical Repository*, January, 1832, discussed this principle of the use of the natural faculties in interpreting the Scriptures in a lengthy article quoted in full by Alexander Campbell in the *Millennial Harbinger*, Volume III, pages 64-70; 106-111. It was said that Campbell regarded highly the writing of Moses Stuart. He usually agreed with that fine scholar. The heading of this article was:

Are the Principles of Interpretation to be Applied to the Scriptures As to Other Books?

Professor Stuart believed that the same rules apply. If not, he then reached the conclusion: "If these rules are well grounded, the results which flow from the application of them will be correct, provided they are skilfully and truly applied; but if the principles by which we interpret the Scriptures are destitute of any solid foundation, and are the subject of imagination, of conjecture, or of caprice, then of course the results which follow from the application of them, will be unworthy of our confidence.

"All this is too plain to need confirmation. This also, from the nature of the case, renders it a matter of great importance to know, whether the principles by which we interpret the sacred books are well grounded, and will abide the test of a thorough scrutiny.

"Nearly all the treatises on hermeneutics, which have been written since the days of Ernesti, have laid it down as a maxim which cannot be controverted, that the Bible is to be interpreted in the same manner, i.e., by the same principles, as all other books."

Against the objection of profaneness in the application of such methods of the sacred writings, Professor Stuart then had this to say:

". . . . Let us direct attention, in the first place, to the nature and source of what are now called principles or laws of interpretation. Whence did they originate? Are they the artificial production of high-wrought skill, of labored research, of high-wrought skill? Did they spring from the subtilities of the schools? Are they the product of exalted and dazzling genius, sparks of celestial fire, which none but a favored few could emit? No; nothing of all this. The principles of interpretation, as to their substantial and essential elements, are no invention of

man, no product of his efforts and learned skill; nay, they can scarcely be said with truth to have been discovered by him. They are coeval with our nature. They were known to the antediluvians. They were practiced upon in the garden of Eden, by the progenitors of our race. Ever since man was created, and endowed with the power of speech, and made a communicative social being, he has had occasion to practice upon the principles of interpretation, and has actually done so. From the first moment that one human being addressed another by the use of language, down to the present hour, the essential laws of interpretation became, and have continued to be, a practical matter. The person addressed has always been an interpreter, in every instance where he has heard and understood what was addressed to him."

The position is taken by some that the Bible is a dead letter, and one must have an enabling power of the Holy Spirit to understand it and give it life and meaning. As a matter of fact, very many think that the Word of God, as written, has not the power, unaided, to bring about a new life; one must have an operation of the Holy Spirit in addition to the word to be born again. Even the dialectical school of this late day takes the position that the Holy Spirit must additionally be employed in order to a man's conversion and salvation. It is the belief of Emil Brunner that man's nature is so corrupted that he cannot wish to understand the Scriptures without additional aid from God Almighty. (See the book, *Our Faith*.)

There are so many ways to nullify the Word of God, to force it from its natural setting, and to abate its divine power. Another way is to seek to give fanciful interpretations and double meanings to what the Bible says. Again Professor Stuart as quoted in *The Herald*, published in Virginia:

"What book on earth has a *double* sense, unless it is a

book of designed enigmas! And even this has but one real meaning. The heathen oracles, indeed, could say, *Aio te, Pyrrhe Romanos posse vincere*; but can such an equivoque be admissible into the oracles of God? If a literal and an occult sense can at one and the same time, and by the same words, be conveyed, who that is uninspired shall tell us what the occult sense is? By what laws of interpretation is it to be judged? By none that belong to human language; for other books than the Bible have not the double sense attached to them. For these and such like reasons, the scheme of attaching double sense to the Scripture is inadmissible. It sets afloat all the fundamental principles of interpretation by which we arrive at established conviction and certainty, and casts us upon the boundless ocean of imagination and conjecture without rudder or compass."¹

Professor Thomass Hartwell Home of Cambridge University, in his celebrated work, of four large volumes, makes this observation on interpreting the Scriptures. (From the strictly historical side let it be said that Alexander Campbell was a great admirer of both Professor Stuart and Prof. Home.)

"The vehicles or signs, by which men communicate their thoughts to each other, are termed words; the idea or notion, attached to any word, is its signification; and the ideas which are expressed by the several words connected together — that is, in entire sentences and prepositions, and which ideas are produced in the minds of others — are called the sense or proper meaning of words. Thus, if a person utter certain words, to which another individual attaches the same idea as the speaker, he is said to understand the latter, or to comprehend the sense of his words. If we transfer this to sacred subjects, we may define the sense of Scripture to be the conception of its meaning, which the Holy Spirit presents to the understanding of

1. Millennial Harbinger, Vol. 1, page 40.

man, by means of the words of Scripture, and by means of the ideas comprised in those words.

"Although in every language there are very many words which admit of several meanings, yet in common parlance there is only one true sense attached to any word; which sense is indicated by the connection and series of the discourse, by its subject matter, by the design of the speaker, or by some other adjuncts, unless any ambiguity be purposely intended. That the same usage obtains in the sacred writings there is no doubt whatever. In fact, the perspicuity of the Scriptures requires this unity and simplicity of sense, in order to render intelligible to man the design of their Great Author, which could never be comprehended if a multiplicity of senses were admitted. In all other writings, indeed, besides the Scriptures, before we sit down to study them, we expect to find one single determinate sense and meaning attached to the words; from which we may be satisfied that we have attained their true meaning, and understood what the authors intended to say. Further, in common life, no prudent and conscientious person, who either commits his sentiments to writing or utters any thing, intends that a diversity of meanings should be attached to what he writes or says: and consequently, neither his readers, nor those who hear him affix to it any other than the true and obvious sense. Now, if such be the practice in all fair and upright intercourse between man and man, is it for the moment to be supposed that God, who has graciously vouchsafed to employ the ministry of men in order to make known His will to mankind should have departed from this way of simplicity and truth? Few persons, we apprehend, will be found, in this enlightened age, sufficiently hardy to maintain the affirmative."⁴

4. Home, Thoman Hartwell, M. A., An introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, Vol. II, pages 492, 493.

John Locke, the English philosopher, commented upon this nature of Scripture: "How plain soever this abuse is, and what prejudice soever it does to the understanding of the sacred Scriptures, yet if a Bible was printed as it should be, and as the several parts of it were written, in continued discourses where the argument is continued, I doubt not but the several parties would complain of it as an innovation, and a dangerous change in the publishing of those holy books. And indeed those who for maintaining their opinions and the systems of the parties by sound of words, with a neglect of the true sense of Scripture, would have reason to make and foment the outcry. They would most of them be immediately disarmed of their great magazine of artillery wherewith they defend themselves, and fall upon others, if the Holy Scriptures were laid out before the eyes of Christians in its due connection and consistency: it would not then be so easy to snatch out a few words, as if they were separate from the rest, to serve a purpose, to which they do not at all belong, and with which they have nothing to do. But as the matter now stands, he that has a mind to it may, at a cheap rate, be a noble champion for the truth; for the doctrines of the sect that chance or interest has cast him into. He need but be furnished with verses of Sacred Scripture, containing words and expressions that are but flexible, (as well as general, obscure, and doubtful ones are) and his system, that has appropriated them to the orthodoxy of his church, makes them immediately strong and irrefragable arguments of opinion. This is the benefit of loose sentences, and Scripture cumbled into verses which quickly turn into independent aphorisms. But if the quotation in the verse produced were considered as a part of a continued coherent discourse, and so its sense were limited by the tenor of the context, most of these forward and warm disputants would be quite stripped of those, which they doubt not now to

call spiritual weapons; and they would have often nothing to say that would not show their weakness, and manifestly fly in their faces. I crave leave to set down a saying of the learned and judicious Mr. Selden: 'In interpreting the Scripture,' says he, 'many do as if a man should see one have ten pounds, which he reckoned by 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; meaning four was but four units and five five units, etc., and that he had in all but ten pounds. The other that sees him, takes not the figures together, as doth he, but picks here and there; and whereupon reports that he had five pounds in one bag, and six pounds in another bag, and nine pounds in another bag, etc., when as in truth, he had but ten pounds in all. So we pick out a text here and there, to make it serve our turn; whereas if we take it altogether, and consider what went before, and what followed after, we should find it meant no such thing.' I have heard sober Christians very much admire why ordinary illiterate people, who were professors, that showed a concern for religion, seemed much more conversant in St. Paul's epistles, than in the plainer, and as it seemed to them, much more intelligible parts of the New Testament. * * * * *

But the case was plain: these sober, inquisitive readers had a mind to see nothing in St. Paul's epistles but just what he meant: whereas others, of a quicker and gayer sight could see in them what they pleased. Nothing is more acceptable to fancy than pliant terms and expressions that are obstinate; in such it can find its account with delight, and with them be illuminated, orthodox, infallible pleasure, and its own way. But where the sense of the author goes visibly in its own train, and the words receiving a determined sense from their companions and adjacents, will not consent to give countenance and color to what is agreed to be right, and must be supported at any rate, there men of

established orthodoxy do not so well find their satisfaction."⁵

So germane is Locke to the thinking- of this day that one could hardly bring himself to think that he lived before the automotive age, and even the jet age. But then human nature has not changed, nor indeed have the methods and the mind of men in their escape from the true to fancy, and from truth into error.

This is a mischief which, however frequent and almost natural, reaches so far, that it would justly make all those who depend upon them, wholly diffident of commentators, and let them see how little help was to be expected from them, in relying on them for the true sense of sacred Scripture, did they not take care to help to cozen themselves, by choosing to use and pin their faith on such expositors as explain the sacred Scriptures in favor of those opinions that they have held beforehand orthodox, and bring to the sacred Scripture, not for trial, but confirmation.⁶ If one comes to the Scripture with preconceived notions, or with favors in mind to himself, or the slant of self-interest, he is not capable of seeing the truth. This thing is as old as human nature. Our Lord encountered it. He said to the religious leaders of His day, 'How can you believe which seek honor that cometh from one another and not the honor that cometh from God only?'

"The writings of the prophets and apostles contain all the divine and supernatural knowledge in the world. Now, unless these sacred writings can be certainly interpreted, the Christian religion can never be certainly understood. Every argument demonstrates the necessity of such a written document as the Bible, equally demonstrates the

5. Locke, John, *On the Reasonableness of Christianity*, John Hatchard and Son, Piccadilly, 1834, pages 251, 253.

6. Campbell, Alexander, *Christianity Restored*, McNay and Ewing, Bethany, Virginia, 1835. Page 15.

necessity of fixed and certain principles or rules of interpretation : for without the latter, the former is of no value to the world.

"All the differences in religious opinion and sentiment, amongst those who acknowledge the Bible are occasioned by false principles of interpretation, or by a misapplication of true principles. There is no law nor standard — literary, moral or religious — that can coerce human thought or action, by only promulgating and acknowledging it. If a law can effect anything, our actions must be conformed to it. Were all students of the Bible taught to apply the same rules of interpretation to its pages, there would be a greater uniformity in opinion and sentiment, than ever resulted from the adoption of any written creed."⁷

"God has spoken by men, to men, for men. The language of the Bible is, then, human language. It is therefore to be examined by all the same rules which are applicable to the language of any other book, and to be understood according to the true and proper meaning of the words, in their current application, at the time and in the places in which they were originally written or translated."⁸

"To adopt any other course, or to apply any other rules, would necessarily divest the sacred writings of every attribute that belongs to the idea of revelation. It must never be forgotten in pursuing the Bible, that in the structure of sentences, in figures of speech, in the arrangement and use of words, it differs not at all from all other writings, and must, therefore, be understood and interpreted as they are."⁹

“This cause (of misunderstanding) we have attributed to the insufficiency of our exegetical science.

7. Ibid, page 22,

8. Ibid, page 23.

9. Lamar, J. S., *The Organon of Scripture*, reproduced by Old Path.3 Book Club, 1952.

"But is our science alone at fault? May not the discrepancies in our interpretation be accounted for by reference to the peculiar character of the Bible itself, or the moral obliquity of those, who consult it? In reply, we submit, that when different interpretations exist, as they now do, respecting the practical details of Christianity, — its laws, ordinances, membership, officers, and order, together with the great Foundation upon which all profess to stand — they can only be accounted for upon one of the following " hypotheses:—

"Those who profess to draw their conclusions from the Bible are dishonest; or, The Bible itself is unintelligible; or It teaches the contradictions which are professedly drawn from it; or,

, "It is not interpreted according to the proper method."⁹

"Every one uses the Scripture materials, and honestly believes that he is building the veritable temple of God. And, by rejecting what he cannot use, as non-essentials, and supplying what the Scriptures do not furnish, under the warranty of expediency, every one succeeds in giving his edifice and air of perfection and finish, and in fitting into it a large number of the most excellent of the divine materials. These serve to support and beautify the structure, while they furnish to its friends the standing proofs that it indeed is the house of God. And in this, mark you, he has applied correct rules to the texts he has employed. He has been careful in this matter. True, he has not needed all the rules that one might suppose belonged to the subject - -and why? Because there—*was a method* above; that controlled him in the selection of them. Thus a second, a third, and a fourth — thus in fact a hundred different structures might be reared out of Scripture materials, and each one claim to be supported by the best-established principles of hermeneutics!

"What we need, therefore, is not rules of interpretation, nor yet more laborous study or profounder intelligence, but the discovery and establishment of the *true method* indicated by the nature of the *Scriptures themselves*."¹⁰

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I

What did Professor Stuart think of the likelihood of **the** double meaning of Scripture?

What was the position of Dr. Home?

What of John Locke?

Did Alexander Campbell differ from Professor Stuart, Professor Home, or John Locke, the philosopher?

What was the position of J. S. Lamar in *The Organon of Scripture*?

10. Ibid, pages 39, 40.

CHAPTER II

DETERMINING THE SENSE OF SCRIPTURE

The Natural Sense Is the Obvious Sense — Scripture Must Be Taken Naturally — Thoughts Must Be **Perused Contextually.**

There is such a thing in the world as the obvious. The sun shines. Night comes. Birds live on insects and worms. Hawks catch birds and devour them. Man himself is a predator upon animal life. Rivers run. Mountains and trees rise. The thrill of the wonders of the obvious may pass as one becomes surfeited by living, but the obvious does not thereby cease.

In the cycle of living one discovers these wonders; he learns of pain, suffering, death. As he discovers his finite and earthly nature, there comes an awakening of his intelligence to the fact that somehow he is a part of this wonder of things in the world of the obvious, but he becomes aware that he is more than all this. His soul cries out for enlightenment on his nature and destiny. In this condition an explanation is presented to him in the form of divine revelation. The need is obvious; the revelation itself is obviously presented to meet his need. Now, how is he going about getting understanding of that revelation? As he lives in the world of the obvious, he comes now to the application of the obvious. It is more startling than the rising sun; more majestic than the mountains; more ominous than the gathering storm; more wonderful to the soul aware than any earthly phenomenon. Yet therein lies his destiny, and approach it he must, but with great reverence. (Of course he approaches it through the help of others, his parents; the experience of -his fellows his teachers) The obvious or simple sense of the divine revelation he will immediately take, unless otherwise hindered. This obvious or simple sense will lead him unerringly into the deepening nature of this revelation, for after all, it eon-

cerns him tremendously. And he will find, in spite of all its complexity, that the Bible is a simple book, with one story to tell — the story of the creation, fall, and journey of mankind, and the plan for their return into an everlasting home. Since it is the design of the Bible, the obvious design, to furnish man guidance in moral order and purpose, based upon the will of God, following his redemption, to prepare him for eternal union with God and the angels, and since the Bible is obviously designed for the masses of mankind, the simple sense of it is the one furnished. It should therefore be the design of interpretation to render in our own language the same thoughts which the sacred writers originally set down, regardless of the fact they used a different tongue. It is evident that our version or text should in no wise differ in content and purpose from the original. We ought to affirm nothing more nor less than was in the first text. Our primary concern then is to seek to determine the sense of the text, and not to take a sense or meaning to it. "This is one of the most ancient laws of interpretation extant, and cannot sufficiently be kept in mind, lest we should 'teach for doctrines the commandments of man,' and impose our *narrow* and *limited* conceptions instead of the *broad* and *general* declarations of Scripture. For want of attending to this simple rule, how many forced and unnatural interpretations have been put upon the sacred writings! — interpretations alike contradictory to the *express* meaning of other passages of Scripture, as well as derogatory from every idea we are taught to conceive of the justice and mercy of the Most High. It will suffice to illustrate this remark by one single instance: In John 3:16,17 we read that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life: for God sent not his son to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.' The plain,

obvious, and literal sense of this passage, as well as of its whole context is, that the whole of mankind, including both Jews and Gentiles without any exception in favor of individuals, were in a ruined state, about to perish everlastingly, and utterly without the power of rescuing themselves from destruction; that God provided for their rescue and salvation by giving His Son to die for them; and that all who *believe* in Him, that is, who believe what God has spoken concerning Christ, His sacrifice, the end for which it was ordered, and the way in which it is to be applied in order to become effectual; that all who thus believe shall not only be exempted from eternal perdition, but shall also ultimately have everlasting life, in other words, be brought to eternal glory. Yet how are these good tidings of great joy to all the people narrowed and restricted by certain expositors, who adopt the hypothesis that Jesus Christ was given for the *elect alone*?

"How, indeed, could God be said to love those, to whom He denies the means of salvation, and whom he destines by an irrevocable decree to eternal misery? And what violence are such expositors compelled to do the passage in question in order to reconcile it their pre-conceived notions? They are obliged to interpret that comprehensive word, the *world* by a synechdoche of a part of the whole; and thus say, that it means the nobler portion of the world, namely, the *elect*, without calling to their aid those other parallel passages of Scripture, in which the above consolatory truth is explicitly affirmed in other words.

"A similar instance occurs in Matt. 18:11, where Jesus is said to have come to save that which was lost,' to apoloolos; which word, as its meaning is not restricted by the Holy Spirit, is not to be interpreted in a restricted sense, and consequently must be taken in its most obvious and universal sense."! The interpretation of Scripture must

1. Home, Thomas Hartwell, op. cit., pages 499, 500.

not be repugnant to natural reason. Reason must always sit enthroned. The same God who made man with natural and reasoning faculties also gave him a revelation that harmonizes with reason. The employment of his faculties upon divine revelation is expected by the Creator. And no interpretation is anywhere to be employed which does not leave room for reason and common sense. Take, for example, the doctrine of transubstantiation; the idea that when one blesses the loaf and the fruit of the vine they become the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ. Man's reason and natural faculties tell him that this is not so, in spite of the fact that the Saviour said, "This is my body; this is my blood." What then? It is a metonymy, a figurative way of saying that there is an intimate connection between His body and His blood in the Lord's Supper. Language of this type is frequently met with in the Bible. But to establish a false doctrine, unsupported by reason and common sense upon such restricted usage is to deny the obvious and common sense way of looking at things. Such a plan of interpretation cannot be true.

The rule of the obvious must be taken to interpret certain passages that would otherwise seem absurd. Take the language of the Saviour, "Let the dead bury their dead." (Matt. 8:22). This cannot possibly be applied to those who are naturally dead. Consequently, one must understand it figuratively. Leave those who are spiritually dead to perform the rights of burial for those who are physically dead. In Psalms 130:1 David is said to have cried unto the Lord out of the depths, by which we are to understand a metaphorical use of the term, so far as we know he was never in the depths of the ocean as Jonah was when he cried unto the Lord out of the depths, where he actually was. (Jonah 1:15,17; 2:2-5). We are to understand that David cried unto the Lord from the depths of his af-

flictions; and truly they had been abundant, and even cruel.

In Isaiah 1:25 the prophet foretells the purification of Israel through their trials as captive people in a foreign land among the Babylonians. He said, "I will purge away all thy dross and take away all thy tin." Obviously this cannot be taken literally, for Israel would be refined as one refines metals in the fire and crucible of the smelter. But the trials of Israel would, in a comparable sense, be similar to that, in that in their trials God would take something out of them which they ought not to have. Consider also Zech. 4:10. But as silver may denote the sincere and pious worshippers of Jehovah, so tin is an opposite figure for hypocrites; whose glaring profession might cause them to be taken for truly pious persons which is foretold in the passage received at first. The Bible abounds in such expressions. (Isaiah 13:10,13; Ezekiel 37:2; Joel 2:31,3:15.) Again, while the language is metaphorical, it is quite obvious what is meant to the thinking person. We cannot over-stress the obvious and the things of common sense.

Scripture must be taken contextually; that is in the light of its setting, for the meaning to appear obvious. While there is something of the historical in this, it is not fully intended so at this time, as that will be dealt with at some length later. What is meant by the context is the comparison of the preceding and the subsequent parts of a Scripture. If we analyze the words of an author and take them out of their setting we may entirely distort the meaning and make them say something else besides what the author intended. Since words have several meanings, and are to be taken in consequence in different senses, depending upon the setting and usage of them a very careful regard must be paid to the consideration of the preceding and the following parts to determine the signification, whether

the meaning is literal, symbolical or paragorical. When Micaiah prophesies (1 Kings 22:15), "Go and prosper, for the Lord shall deliver it into thy hand (speaking of Ramoth-Gilead)" we must figure from the context; that is, what followed reveals whether he spoke literally or in irony. That he spoke accommodatively and in a degree of jest and irony we know from what followed. And the king also knew as much, for he did not believe him on the speaking, but pressed for the truth. And then it was given to him. The prophet told him that where the dogs had licked Naboth's blood, they should lick his blood. He was to be shut up in prison until the king returned in peace, but the king did not return in peace. The context in this case has to be taken for the whole truth of the passage to appear. And then it becomes obvious.

Take again the case of Job's wife's statement to him to curse God and die. He had as yet not had sufficient trial for her to believe that his integrity had been sufficiently tested, because Job had not sinned with his lips. The whole of the context must be taken to get the fullness of the meaning.

While there has been some disagreement among commentators whether the whale or the crocodile was meant by the leviathan in Job 41st chapter, the whole of the context will show that he must have meant the crocodile for he mentions the hardness of the skin, the impenetrable scales, and the sharpness of the teeth. On the context Prof. Home said: "Sometimes a single passage will require, or several of the preceding and following chapters, or even the entire book, to be perused and that not once or twice, but several times. The advantage of this practice will be very great; because, as the same thing is frequently stated more briefly and obscurely in the former part of a book, which is more fully and clearly explained in the subsequent portion,

such a perusal will render everything plain to the meanest capacity."²

On the matter of the context John Locke said: "In prosecution of this thought, I concluded it necessary, for the understanding- of any one of St. Paul's epistles, to read . it all through at one sitting, and to observe, as well as I could, the draft and design of his writing it. If the first reading gave me some light, the second gave me more; and so I persisted on reading, constantly, the whole epistle over at once, till I came to have a good general view of the apostle's main purpose in writing the epistle, the chief branches of disobedience wherein he prosecuted it, the arguments he used, and the disposition of the whole.

"This, I confess, is not be obtained by one or two hasty readings; it must be repeated again and again, with close attention to the tenor of the discourse, and a perfect neglect of the divisions into chapters and verses."³

On the contextual arrangement in relation to subject matter and style, the same writer had this to say: "To these causes of obscurity, common to St. Paul with most of the other penmen of the several books of the New Testament, we may add those that are peculiarly his, and owing to his style and temper. He was, as it is visible, a man of quick thought and warm temper, mighty well yersed in the writings of the Old Testament, and full of the doctrine of the New. All this put together, suggested matter to him in abundance on those subjects which came his way; so that one may consider him, when he was writing, as beset with a crowd of thoughts, all striving for utterance. In this posture of mind it "was almost Impossible for him to keep that slow pace, and observe minutely that order and method of ranging all he said, from which results an easy and

2. Ibid, page 537.

3. Locke, op.cit., page 259.

obvious perspicuity. To this plenty and vehemence of his, may be imputed those many large parenthesis, which a careful reader may observe in his epistles. Upon this account also it is, that he often breaks off in the middle of an argument, to let in some brand new thought suggested by his own words, which having pursued and explained, as far as conducted to his present purpose, he reassumes again the thread of his discourse, and goes on with it, without taking any notice that he again to what he had been saying, though sometimes it be so far off, that it may well have slipped his mind, and requires a very attentive reader to observe, and so bring the disjoined members together, as to make up the connection, and see how the scattered parts of the discourse hang together in a coherent, well-agreeing sense, that makes it all of a piece."⁴

A case of contextual accord and harmony is found in the language of the Apostle Peter. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocracies and evil speaking, as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, as living stones you are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices by Jesus Christ. (Wherefore it is also contained in Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame). Unto you therefore, who believe he is precious!; but unto them that disbelieve, the stone which was disallowed of the builders, the same has become the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, whereunto they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should

4. Ibid, page 247, 248.

show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness unto his marvellous light." The evident purpose of 1 Pet. 2:8 is not to show that God had ordained them unto perdition, but that in spite of his proffered grace, they had rejected the Saviour, of their own accord, and instead of making the Saviour their Saviour he had become to them a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. Nevertheless, in spite of their hardness and impenitent heart, and their rejection of Christ, God had fulfilled his purpose anyway. The whole text, or the context, if you will, must be considered for the entire truth to be brought out. These texts from the Old Testament and the New, with the comments of some great scholars upon them in addition, show what is meant by taking a Scripture in the light of its setting, in its context, in order to evaluate it, and to arrive at its meaning. Then the meaning becomes obvious, to the most casual reader and thinker. As Locke observed, the meanest intellect forms a conclusion about them. If that is not possible, then such a person is not responsible, and God will take care of him on another basis than that of understanding and obeying the gospel.

Again, no explanation must be advanced but what corresponds with the text in its entirety. Let us remember that truth is everywhere consistent with itself and that the Bible, in spite of its varied character, tells but one story. No great Bible truth is to rest upon certain obscure passages alone. When the obscure part is elsewhere explained, then the obscurity disappears. An honest intellect, an intellect of integrity, will not seek to coerce truth out of personal prepossession, or wish, or predisposition; and it will not seek to found doctrines alone upon obscure passages. It will respect the great silences of God, and not with impiety seek to penetrate where God

has not shed abundant light. But we must remember that the minds of mystics will never respect the vast order of the unwritten. With them God will have to deal, as with the rulers who rejected the chief corner-stone. In each case there is a predisposition away from God into anthropocentrism. Man becomes too full of himself. And being thus full of himself, there is not room enough for the entrance of the divine.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II

Why must we think of the obvious in dealing with the divine or material?

What will force us sometimes to realize that a Scripture is not literal?

If a Scripture cannot be taken literally, how may we determine just how it ought to be taken?

What does it mean to take a text in its context? Why is this necessary?

What did John Locke think was necessary to the understanding of the Scriptures contextually?

CHAPTER III
**OBSTACLES TO THE INTERPRETATION
OF THE SCRIPTURE**

Theology.

Creedal Christianity.

Mysticism.

A Deep-Seated Dishonesty. Liberalism and Modernism —
subjecting things to man's
authority.

The Seeming Conflict between Revelation and Science.

Using the Bible to prove Doctrines. Desire to Please the
World. The Bible Made the Property of the Clergy.

Personal Leadership Ambition, the Spirit of Diotrophes.

The obstacles that we meet today have been almost altogether the result of different phases of thought and development in the history of our race. We cannot in fairness lay the fault at the feet of God or the nature of divine revelation itself, even though many think to do the latter, preferring to think that the Living Oracles are dark and uncertain — as dark and uncertain as heathen oracles, which certainly were very indistinct and open to the imaginations of the interpreters. The trouble is that man will not allow God to speak as he listens, but whose doctrinal subtleties must always obtrude themselves when it comes to the Bible. Take the case of Judaism in the day of Christ: The original stream had been lost in the meander-

ings through fifteen hundred years of Jewish history. The schools and synagogues had sprung up. The schools, such as the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes had arrayed all there was in the Jewish mind and state to themselves. One had to be in a school to have any standing at all. And then he had to think as his school thought. Each school placed a particular construction upon every vital point of the Old Testament, and every fundamental point. The classification was rather complete on God, on angels, on man and his nature, on eschatology, what soteriology there was, etc. Each had a well wrought system embracing all things; and especially the Pharisees had a complete liturgical system, applying from private life to public practice. And this system was a rigorous system, a demanding system, a system of bondage. It was unrelinquishing and unrelenting. And it was all-encompassing. Not the slightest detail could escape its notice and demands. They took tithes of mint and anise and cummin, the smallest of seed. They, as Jesus said, bound heavy burdens and grievous to be borne upon men's shoulders, but they would not move those burdens with one of their little fingers. And Jesus, who had a profound regard for the law, clearly set forth the distinction between the law and their traditional interpretations of it. Forced and oblique construction was the order of the day. Ultimately, unfortunately, Judaism had to perish before the vast evils could be overcome; and even then after it perished from the national scene, phases of it have obtruded themselves in one guise or another, and from one reason or another, upon the tenets of the Man of Galilee. No better illustration of this can be found than the one mentioned by Prof. Home in his monumental work:

"Origen and many of the fathers have adopted this mode of interpretation (the allegorical and mystical), which

was reduced into a regular method by the learned and pious professor John Cocceius, in the early part of the seventeenth century. We have already seen that many things related in the Old Testament are to be spiritually understood: but Cocceius represented the *entire* history of the Old Testament as a mirror, which held forth an accurate view of the transactions and events that were to happen to the church under the New Testament dispensation, to the end of the world. He further affirmed, that ' by far the greater part of the ancient prophecies foretold Christ's ministry and mediation, together with the rise, progress, and revolutions of the church, not only under the figure of persons and transactions, but in a literal manner, and by the sense of the words used in these predictions. And he laid it down as a fundamental rule of interpretation that the *words and phrases of Scripture are to be understood in EVERY SENSE of which they are susceptible* — in other words, *that they signify everything in effect which they can signify*. These opinions have not been without their advocates in this country; and if our limits permitted, we could adduce numerous instances of evident misinterpretation of the Scriptures which have been occasioned by the adoption of them: one or two, however, must suffice. Thus, the Ten Commandments, or Moral Law as they are usually termed, which the most pious and learned men in every age of the Christian church, have considered to be rules of precepts for regulating the manners and conduct of men, both towards God and towards one another, have been referred to Jesus Christ, under the mistaken idea that they may be read with a new interest by believers! In like manner of the first Psalm, which, it is generally admitted, describes the respective happiness and misery of the pious and wicked, according to the Cocean hypothesis, has been applied to the Saviour of the world, in whom alone all the characters of goodness are

made to centre, without any reference to its moral import! An ordinary reader would naturally suppose that Isaiah in 4:1 was predicting the calamities that should befall the impenitently wicked Jews, previously to the Babylonian captivity; which calamities he represents to be so great that seven women should take hold of one man, that is, use importunity to be married, and that upon the hard and unusual conditions of maintaining themselves. But this simple and literal meaning of the passage, agreeably to the rule that the words of the Scripture signify everything which they can signify, has been distorted beyond measure; and, because in the subsequent verses of the chapter makes a transition to evangelical times, the first verse has been made to mean the rapid conversion of mankind to the Christian faith; the seven women are the converted persons, and the one man is Jesus Christ! A simple regard to the context and subject matter of the prophecy would have shown that this verse properly belonged to the third chapter, and had no reference to Gospel times. On the absurdity of the exposition just noticed, it is needless to make any comment."¹

. Even though Judaism is dead according to ancient standards and the processes of history, the influences of its thinking still live in the world, and are repeated over and over in one form or another. Note the case of the confounding of the two systems, Judaism and Christianity, by the Mormons, the Seventh Day Adventists, the borrowing of the sacerdotal office and function, with some embellishment, of the Old Testament priesthood by the Roman Catholics. Men are simply not free to approach the sacred Scriptures without the theologies of the past. "If we come to the Scriptures with any preconceived opinions, and more desirous to put that sense upon the text which

1. Home, *op. cit.*, pages 502, 503.

coincides with our own sentiments rather than the truth, it then becomes the analogy of our faith rather than that of the whole system. This, Dr. Campbell remarks, was the very source of the blindness of the Jews in our Saviour's time: they searched the Scriptures very assiduously; but, in the dispositions they entertained, they would never believe what that sacred volume testified of Christ. The reason is obvious; their great rule of interpretation was- *the analogy of faith*, or, in other words, the system of 'the Pharisean Scribes, the doctrine then in vogue, and in the profound veneration of which they had been educated.

"This is that veil by which the understandings of the Jews were darkened, even in reading the law, and of which St. Paul observed that it remained unremoved in his day; and we cannot but remark that it remains unremoved in our own time. There is scarcely a denomination of Christians, whether Greek, Romish, or Protestant churches, but has some particular system or digest of tenets, by them termed the *analogy of faith*, which they individually hold in the greatest reverence; and all those doctrines terminated in some assumed position, so that its partisans may not contradict themselves. When persons of this description, it has been well remarked, meet with passages in Scripture which they cannot readily explain, consistently with their hypothesis, they strive to solve the difficulty by an analogy of faith which they have themselves invented. But allowing all their assumptions to be founded in truth, it is by no means consonant with the principles of sound divinity, to interpret the Scriptures by the hypothesis of the church; because the sacred records are the *only proper media* of ascertaining theological truth."²

All men are influenced to a degree by what others think or have thought. The streams of human thought are as

2. Franck's Guide to the Scripture, p. 99, quoted by Home, page 558.

traceable as some of the currents in human society. And this is true in a large measure of theology. Ample evidence has been furnished of the lack of emancipation from the thoughts of Old Testament history already. It is likewise true that the early fathers in church history have transmitted many of the thoughts of this day in the streams of Christian thought. One needs but take such a work as McGiffert History of Christian Doctrine to see how and wherein this is true. The Reformation leaders, such as Calvin, relied heavily upon St. Augustine and others for their fundamental beliefs. Galvanism is but an elaboration of earlier doctrines, developed under different conditions, and passed on to other generations. In fact, even the dialectical theologians, such as Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, have been more profoundly influenced by the theologians than by the apostles themselves. They indeed appear to be well versed in the Scriptures, but altogether in a sense of bias and reinterpretation in the light of the dialectical process and against a background of theology. The task of the exposure of this relationship the writer of this work has set for himself in a separate work for a later date. Barth is no more free to go all the way back to the apostles of the Lord and Saviour than Martin Luther was in his day. And he was not free at all. The new school believes in the general corruption of human nature and man's inability on the word of God alone to find God. His estate is too corrupt; not perhaps in the terminology of the old schools, but in a usage that suits the purpose of the modern school of thought they think a little better. So man is corrupt and can only come alive toward God in a crisis, by a superior power, in addition to the written word, enabling him. The employment of his natural capacities upon the word of God cannot accomplish the eternal purpose. Brunner is thus as bound by tradition as is any earlier school of theological thinking. Men are freer from their own per-

verse natures than they are from the theologies which, cocoon-like, envelope them.

Credal Christianity

After reproducing the Apostles' Creed, The Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed, all proposed as a basis of unity, Alexander Campbell observed: "Had the Lord thought a miniature of the Bible, an image of the whole revelation, a proper basis for church union and communion, Paul was the man, or Peter, or James, or John, or all of them together, to give us the sum of the matter, and command all men to regard it as covenant or constitution of Christ's church in general, and of each congregation in particular — and then we would have an authoritative creed, a divine rule of faith, by which to receive and reject all mankind."³

It was held in the Restoration Movement that the only basis for Christian union was the Bible and the Bible only. "Item. We *will*, that our power of making laws for the government of the church, and executing them by delegated authority, forever cease; and that the people may have free course of the Bible, and adopt the *laws of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*."⁴

"Item. We *will*, that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books (creeds), which stand in competition with it, many cast them into the fire if they choose; for it is better to enter into life having one book, than having many to be cast into hell."⁵

"That in order to do this (to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment) nothing ought

3. Campbell-Rice Debate, Old Paths Book Club edition, page 764.

4. Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery, from Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union, Old Paths Book Club edition, page 20.

5. Ibid, page 21.

to be inculcated upon Christians- as articles of faith; nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is expressly enjoined upon them in the word of God. Nor ought anything to be admitted, as of divine obligation, in their Church constitution and managements, but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles upon the New Testament Church; either in express terms or by approved precedent."⁶

"Creeds, then, are necessarily heretical, not only on this account; but in the *second place* — they strain at the gnats and swallow the camels; nay, worse, they rack off the pure wine of the church and retain the lees. It is a striking demonstration of man's slowness to learn, that a fact so palpable as this, that creeds have always been roots of bitterness, apples of discord, and either causes or occasions of driving out the good and retaining the bad, should have, since the days of the council of Nice, been passing before the eyes of the whole church militant, and yet unobserved and unappreciated by the great majority of professors; at least not so practically observed as to have induced them to take away these stumbling blocks out of the way of the people."⁷

We have been told within recent times that there are those who have an unwritten creed. Perhaps so, when certain set opinions, outside the realm of faith, are adhered to by some. And such a creedal idea can be just as binding as a written creed. But on the other hand, it would not be possible to have a knowledge of the faith, Bible-wide and Bible-wise, without having convictions. Such would not need to be a creed at all. The martyrs died because they believed something definite about Christ, sal-

⁶ Ibid, Historical Documents, Declaration and Address, pages 108, 109.

⁷ Campbell-Rice Debate, op. cit., page 765.

vation and the future life, and no creed had as yet been drawn or formed or stated. But conviction was there — on every vital doctrine of the Bible.

Mysticism

Mysticism has been in the world in one form or another even from Old Testament days. When man discovers he has a soul, and there are spiritual values, he is very apt to go looking for spiritual or mystical meanings in things. "And when this mystical sense is properly employed, upon Scripture basis, either from the text itself or from some passage that deals with the subject of reference to such a passage, one is justified in seeking such hidden or deeper meanings. One cannot be strictly a literalist, for then he would be only a materialist. Man is endowed with vision, and the sense of hunting for the secrets of nature, the discovery of the beautiful, the hidden springs of being. The correct employment then of this faculty, which is God-given, if directed according to intelligence, and purpose other than personal and selfish, must meet with divine approval; but a misdirection of it into the places where angels fear to tread makes one exceedingly impious while he may pretend the greatest piety. And some of the most pious, in pretension, have been impious, and have flagrantly abused a wonderful gift. Let man create, if he can, a beautiful poem, a lovely novel, a great painting; but let him not, in a mystical sense, undertake to create a great religion. In that realm he only succeeds in betraying the divine pattern while he seeks to create something which he thinks the world ought to have.

It may even be that he is moved by the abuses of the old system to spiritualize his conceptions of religion. Take the mystics of the late Middle Ages. They were disgusted at the ceremonial system of the times, and sought to do away with the ceremony by spiritualizing religion to overcome

the evil. There was something to say for them. But the later mystics, like Emmanuel Swedenborg, Joanna Southcote, and Mrs. Eddy, or even the founders of the Unity school, have no such justification. They have been meddlers in holy things. No Bible truth can mean what it says. It must be interpreted then, in one school or another; for they only have the right to tell the world what the Bible *ought* to mean or say. The school of thought is entirely too broad and diverse for a discussion of the individual points here. Suffice it to say, the exclusions practiced by them disallow all others. They are cults in the strictest sense of the term. The Word of God is meaningless in their hands until they channel it to suit their particular fancies. They take away the Word of God while pretending to give it. They steal the Word, and give the husks of their own theology in the self-same act.

A Deep-Seated Dishonesty

Men cannot be made honest by legislation. It must come from the heart. A person who schemes all the time to beat the law, and to strain the limits of the law, will always find a place where he can lean over it, or extend himself beyond its requirements. The trouble is that he is basically dishonest. What may have caused this is a matter for the psychologist, but the stubborn fact is there. Also, if one is dishonest with the Word of God, and prefers something else, or wishes to abate its requirements, he will find a way to avoid its correct and obvious interpretation. It simply does not mean what it says. Ergo, it means something else, if it means anything at all. The Scripture calls this blindness. It is of course self-blindness. It is always deeper than the retina of the eye, or even than the optic nerve; it is seated in the brain, or the Bible heart. How did one get this way? Jesus spoke of it. "With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says: 'You

shall indeed hear, but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive. For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears heavy and their eyes they have closed, lest they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn for me to heal them'." Matt. 13:14, 15, R.S.V. Again he said, in striking contrast, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." Here, in contrast, is the honest heart. The honest heart, unencumbered, will always yearn after and receive truth. Being honest, it will not allow itself to be covered. And the dishonest heart, for whatever reason, will not receive the truth. The Bible says that, but it does not mean what it says. It means something else, if it means anything. There is no law or interpretation that can win against a dishonest heart. What made it that way? Any one of a number of causes. Tradition, maybe. Preconceived opinions. Dreamy notions. A genuine lack of self-interest, in the real sense of that term. One who hides a fuzzy idea of irresponsibility and misinterpretation. Only the judgment will awaken some souls.

Liberalism and Modernism

Anthropocentrism, ego-centrism, maybe, leads some to think they know more about what God said, because they are scholars, than what the text itself says. The word of God is inspired in some sense, but it is mostly edited by some redactor from earlier documents. Even though the documentary hypothesis is not documented, nor indeed can be; and one scholar says that documentation lies outside the pale of historical research (Pfeiffer), still the liberals insist on editing the text. The Bible cannot therefore be interpreted as the final Word of God.

Modernism at best is simply a method, rather than a set of tenets; and its tenets constitute an eclectic religious

philosophy which came in full flower in American religious life in the first part of the current century; but its beginnings lie in Germany in the works of Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Wellhausen and Bauer, and Troeltsch. Schleiermacher interpreted religious experience as the criterion. He considered the feeling of absolute dependence upon God as the essence of religion. Hence, he transferred the thought from God to man. His theology centered in man, hence, the anthropocentrism of modernism. All dogmatical terminology and all religious practices must be submitted to their (thinking. Naturally, they developed a school of interpretation to suit their thinking. The Bible in the hand of a modernist means what he thinks it ought to mean — no more. It is fallable, and must be submitted to his judgment. This is especially true of the school of German Higher Criticism, which played an important part in the development of modernism. It rejected the doctrine of divine inspiration and the inerrancy of the Scriptures, and held that the Bible, as a mere human document, had to be submitted to literary criticism the same as any other literature. This theory held that we must recapture the exact situation of each portion of Scripture; fix its purpose; and then determine its relevancy for our day and generation. Modern man must interpret the life of Jesus against the background of his present-day problems.

We have been looking at the theological field. Other forces that played a part in this development were in the field of philosophy, embracing empiricism, rationalism, the evolutionary hypothesis; the social outlook, embracing economic man, and man in his social aspects. Modernism made a specialty of this world religion, the social gospel, taking one world at a time, and if there is another, we shall find that in time. It can scarcely be wondered at that this type of thinking produced a plan of interpretation to suit itself, a climate favorable to itself. The modernist has

nothing in common with the literalist; and neither one can have anything in common with the mystic. They do not start from the same point, they do not operate by the same rules, and they do not look for the same objectives.

The Seeming Conflict Between Religion and Science

The two great books with which we have to deal are the book of nature, dealing with the phenomena of the material universe, and divine revelation, dealing with man's spiritual nature and his relationship to things supernatural or even supra-natural. The tremendous advances of modern science, as man's efforts at unravelling some of the wonders of nature take place all about us today, simply appalls some, and engenders doubt, leaving no place for anything but the scientific; whereas, in reality, this wonderment concerning the spiritual ought to increase. Science should increase man's respect for the infinite — not deter him into unbelief. Solomon once observed that the fool had set his eyes in the end of the earth. He is always a foolish man who can see things afar off, but cannot see things at hand. The same distorted vision has come to the man who stands in awe before the facts of modern science, and cannot see the things at hand — the facts of man's sin, his need for forgiveness, his need for something more than life in the flesh. All the destructive criticism is not in the Bible. Undoubtedly there is more to come. On the other hand, not all the cooperative evidence is in confirming the truthfulness of the Bible — there is more to come, no doubt, from the spade of the archaeologist. Look at what has been unearthed in our time. The Dead Sea Scrolls, the Dead Sea Scriptures, The Babylonian cuneiform writings, etc. Not all the scientific discoveries have been made. And some theories of science will leave, in the minds of some, little room for the Scriptures. But let us remember that the final word is not in on science or the

Bible. When the final word has been said we may be reasonably certain that all conflict will be resolved and perfect harmony will appear. Why then cannot we hold in suspension, in abeyance, any final judgment, on isolated scientific discoveries, as to the age of the world, or any other branch of learning, until the final word is in. The Bible is not a text book on geology. It nowhere tells how old the world is, nor how old the family of man. We build many conjectures on our suppositions; we build too many conclusions on the inconclusive struggles of science to gain more light. Let us deny no scientific truth because of inhibitions, or because of assumptions, founded upon mere fancy, of what we *think the Bible ought to say*. But does not say after all. And for such inhibitions we want to deny that the Bible is inspired. Let us stick to our categories of religion for the field of religion; of science for the scientific mind. We shall likely find that there is no conflict. And then we can fairly interpret the Bible, without prejudice, or fancy. Otherwise, we may be so dismayed that we cannot be fair at all with what the Bible says, or what it does not say.

Using the Bible to Prove Doctrines

While the Bible is not a set of proof texts, it is used by very many as though it is designed primarily for that very purpose — to sustain some doctrine which they already hold. And many read the Bible, not to find out what it says, but to discover, if they can, some proofs for what they already have in mind. And such a mind is predisposed to see immediately great and startling light in the line of desire. If, for example, one already has made up his mind that man is wholly mortal, as Pastor Russell believed, every passage which seems to lean in that direction is seized on with great avidity and put sharply, even sagaciously, to that use. A path is made through the entire

Bible gathering all the passages which seem to emphasize this meaning (at least to such a mind) and arrayed in grand style to this end. And other texts that say something else again, with other leanings, are wholly ignored. Every sect in Christendom does this very thing. The Bible is thus used as a set of proof texts to support peculiar doctrines. A complete balance of all parts, spiritual and material, would obviate this difficulty, and leave the Bible a balanced and honest book. In sectarian hands and eyes it is seriously misapplied. It is made of private misinterpretation, in spite of the fact that the Apostle Peter said that no Scripture is of any private interpretation. From this standpoint the Bible is the worst abused book in the world — bruised in the house of its professional friends. The assaults used to be made against the Bible by its enemies. It is now assaulted by its supposed friends; traduced by them; practiced upon by guilt by them; cozened and cajoled into saying what they want it to say.

Desire to Please the World

The Apostle Paul once believed that if he sought to please men he should not be the servant of Christ. Jesus said that one cannot serve two masters at one and the same time. One cannot think of the world chiefly and of first consequence and be open and free to see what God says to men in his word. He must have a primary allegiance to God in his heart to see what God wants and says. Every great prophet, every great leader for God, from righteous Abel down to Christ has seen the need of a primary concern with the divine in order to be pleasing to God. Popular preachers and popular leaders today are loved of the world for they conform in their thinking to the world; they are the product of their time; they simply reflect the current trends and accepted standards in religion that have been formed by many little riverlets of

thought into a confluent stream .of mass psychology in religion. The world loves its own. And there are those who would not dare antagonize this stream of thought for a moment, for it would be suicide to their careers and their popularity. After all, they think with the masses; they mirror the sentiment of the masses. But that does not mean that such a popular leader is necessarily a man of deep convictions on the Word of God. For example, a man on a national radio chain broadcast, and who has been for some years, was asked why he did not preach baptism as Christ and the apostles did, and his reply was that the subject is controversial. To be popular he must meet the popular demand. Can a man like that be fair with the Word of God in his interpretation and presentation of it so long as he has his ear attuned to the world? Christ one time said, "How can you believe which seek honor which cometh from one another and not from God only?" If one cannot believe who has his ear attuned to the world, how can he interpret the Word of God to others? He will inevitably interpret what is in his own heart. As the Prophet Jeremiah said, such will speak a vision out of his own heart and not out of the mouth of the Lord. There are many prophets and deceivers gone out into the world. They are religious charlatans, but the evil they do is not mitigated on that account. It may not take a great mind, but it does take an honest heart to see the Word of God. Without understanding to symbolize the experience of the Apostle Paul, scales need to fall from some eyes in their conversion to the Word of God. Let God be true but every man a liar. And every man is a liar when God is not allowed to be true to himself and consistent to the truth throughout the entire Bible. Truth is always consistent with itself. - It is better to be humble, honest and right than great, dishonest and wrong. It is better to dwell in the place of the lowly than in the tents of the mighty, hav-

ing sold out the soul for gain. Popularity is never quite worth the price which the devil would want us to pay in courting the favor of men. 'Tis hard on some men to be placed where such a test must be met. 'Tis tragic to be placed in a world with a choice between heaven and hell. ,

The Bible Made the Property of the Clergy

It is perhaps beyond controversy that "Mother Church," the Holy Roman Catholic Church, feels it alone is in position to give to mankind the Word of God. Not only is the world to be saved through the dispensing of the Word of God through the clergy of that institution, they believe, but they also have the councils and decrees that also should regulate mankind. When therefore the pope speaks *ex cathedra*, as the head of a council, his word is infallible. Tradition is also to be observed; it is unwritten law, *lex non scripta*; law without being Scripture. This doctrine makes the Bible the property of the clergy. They are to dispense and interpret it. They feel to use the statement of Peter, "No prophecy is of any private interpretation" against the leaders of sects. Perhaps they are right. But a sect does not consist in its size; but in the simple fact that it is a sect, espouses certain doctrines, pontificates on certain dogmas, announces certain demands. From this standpoint the Roman Catholic Church itself is a sect, older and larger than some, but still a sect. The Bible is never to be interpreted in conformity with some practice, or to support some doctrine. Every sect does it; and they are all equally guilty. Anything except the *right and obvious points contained in the text* is a private interpretation. A divine ban has been published against such usage. There is no communion of any consequence but that its clergy array to themselves the right to interpret the Word of God. While there is common harmony among the paedobaptists that infants should be baptized or sprinkled; and

the practice is based upon the pre-supposition that all are born in sin, still, there are individual idiosyncrasies of modern practice peculiar to each sect. The Methodists operate on the basis of the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Discipline; the Presbyterians on the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, or revisions thereof; the Episcopalians on the Book of Common Prayer; and others on their manuals or creeds. But in each instance the clergy of any denomination presume that they are the right interpreters of the Word of God through their creed. And if one seriously dissents, he is cast out. Thus the clergy have taken possession of the Word of God; they are making and have made the Bible the property of the churches.

Personal Leadership Ambitions, the Spirit of Diotrophes

When one arises (as is always happening) with a fine mind and great ambition, he begins the interpretation of the Bible in such a way as to involve and support self-interest. He builds about his leadership a sect or group. Maybe it is a parasitic group, sucking the life blood from a parent organization, but the spirit of Diotrophes is there. He will extenuate arguments from certain premises which may and may not support his contention. He will elaborate his points according to his ability. He will argue his case until he gets a following. Witness what has happened in the past, with every faction that has grown up. And in the most cases if the strong personality and the personal ambition could be removed from the scene, and the bare skeleton be left stripped down, there would not be much left — certainly not enough to make any one desire it. This has happened since the days of Moses when Kore disputed his way. It happened in the days of the beloved John. And it will not cease until the end of time. It is something embedded in human nature — certain natures. If men would employ their ambitions in politics, in poetry,

in law, in medicine, it would not be so bad a blight on religion. But, as the Apostle Paul observed, there must indeed be heresies that they which are approved may be manifest. This is another way of saying that the true judgment of time will bring to naught a poor puerile human ambition; and it will equally approve the true and humble spirit. There are more lambs in the world than there are lions; more sheep than ravening wolves. But there are ravening wolves!

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III

What is the chief obstacle to the correct interpretation of the scriptures?

How does tradition interfere with the freedom of man's thought?

Should one fully employ his natural abilities in science? In religion? What limits are there in religion?

How would you define creedal Christianity, or churchianity as opposed to apostolic Christianity?

Why are some minds mystical? How should one have his mysticism regulated?

How does one get to be dishonest religiously? Can one be perfectly honest in moral matters and dishonest in spiritual beliefs?

Is there conflict between science and a Bible religion?

Would it be wise for one to hold in abeyance his judgment in reported facts of science until all the facts are in?

How do men use the Bible to prove doctrine?

How has the clergy sought to take over the usage of the Scriptures?

CHAPTER IV

SILENCE IS GREATER—LIMITING INTERPRETATION

While in Birmingham, England, in August of 1947, we fell to reading some essays by Thomas Carlyle. In one of these essays he had quite a bit to say about Shakespeare, and remarked his moral balance in his writing. Not that Shakespeare was a particularly moral person. Yet when one thinks of all of his works, with his sense of proportion, even when employing his lively imagination in such fantasies as a *Mid-Summer Night's Dream*, and then comes to think of the over-all effect of the Poet, he is bound to come to the conclusion that Shakespeare did have a marvelous balance. His moral viewpoint of life was not disproportionate, one would not get the idea of dissoluteness or wantonness even in dealing with a Falstaff; or a scoundrel's encouragement even in *Iago*, but only a faithful delineation of character; and the Poet is never involved except as a reporter. Shakespeare did not over-say certain things, with moral implications, nor undersay certain things, with more implications, nor understate other certain things, leading one to the conclusion that he had a moral indifference toward the issues of life. In commenting on this matter, and thinking of the great gift of expression of the Poet, Carlyle remarked, "Speech is great; but silence is greater." By this he meant of course that Shakespeare refrained from saying that which would have been disproportionate. He knew, or sensed, what not to say, as well as what to say. This thought greatly impressed Carlyle. Now this is said with the intention of making application of the thought in another way — in the realm of the spiritual.

The silence of the Word of God has come under¹ review

at various times, and by different thinkers, in the long history of Christianity. It was never expressed extensively until the time of the Restoration Movement. However, Zwingli, at Zurich, Switzerland, did give it considerable thought in the beginning of the Reformation. He and Martin Luther were contemporary. They agreed on some points. They both felt that there was a true need of reform. And they both worked at it. Zwingli saw that the way to reform meant a return to the Word of God. He and Martin Luther disagreed on the application of the Word of God. Both accepted it as the standard of authority, but their method of interpretation was different. Luther thought that all the practices that did not contradict the teaching of the Bible could be retained in the practice of the church. He felt that it would be all right to retain images and crucifixes, and various other things, which were never mentioned in the Bible, because he did not think that, even wanting Bible authority, they contradicted the Scriptures. Zwingli, on the other hand, felt that every thing ought to be abandoned which did not have Scripture authorization. He wanted to get rid of all the extra unscriptural practices that had sprung up since the days of the apostles. Hence, his reform was a truer one than that of Martin Luther. He seems to have been a little more moderate in his nature, a little clearer in his grasp, and a bit more willing to follow the consequences of his views than Martin Luther, but he was set on a smaller stage, and did not radiate the same influence as did the German monk.

' Not till the time of the Campbells, in the first part of the nineteenth century, did there come a great emphasis on this particular point — the silence of the Bible. Yet there cannot be any doubt that the teaching of the apostles was that nothing except what they expressly enjoined could be taken as a matter of religious practice. Hence, Paul said

that if man or angel undertook to preach any other gospel than that which he had preached, to let him be anathema. He said that some sought to pervert the gospel of Christ in his day. And John said that if any one went onward, and tarried not in the doctrine of Christ, he had not God. He confined his religious life to the revealed will of God, condemned anyone who exceeded Holy Writ. It is strange that with such apostolic warning extra-scriptural practices should ever have sprung up to any considerable extent. Nevertheless, they certainly did. The Bible was taken, yes, but other things were taken and mixed with the Bible. This was human tradition. Even the Savior said of the leaders of his day, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." And still people mixed their thoughts with the Word of God and gave them to the people. Now there are those who actually claim and teach that human tradition ought to be accepted, in spite of the pointed teaching of God against the prophets who did such a thing in the Old Testament, in spite of the sayings of our Lord and Savior, and in spite of the warning of the apostles! But we still must contend for the silence of God, and urge that others will accept the silence which he has left as a great abyss to bar the febrile, infecund and unprofitable imagination of man. With Carlyle we can say that "Silence is greater." God's revelation is entirely adequate to all of man's needs. The silence of God reveals and comes from his moral balance. God has not said what ought not to be said; he has said only what he wants said. His silence, reaching off into the infinite, may not be entered by man with impunity. It must be respected.

The early great leaders in the Restoration Movement understood and appreciated this point. When Thomas Campbell said, "Where the Bible speaks we will speak; and where the Bible is silent, we will be silent," he under-

stood this point well. He meant just that. He would not advise his supporters to take anything unless he could produce for it a thus saith the Lord. He said that what the Bible taught could be ascertained by a direct statement or by an approved precedent. If a thing were not taught in one of these ways, then it was not taught at all, and was in the realm of God's silence. On this point, Dr. Richardson, in his *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, said: "No remote inferences, no fanciful interpretations, no religious theories of any kind, were to be allowed to alter or pervert its obvious meaning. Having God's word in their possession, they must speak it faithfully. There should be no contention, henceforth, in regard to the opinion of men, however wise or learned. Whether private opinions might be entertained upon matters not clearly revealed must be retained in silence, and no effort must be made to impose them upon others. Thus the silence of the Bible was to be respected equally with revelations, which were by divine authority declared to be able to 'make the man of God perfect and thoroughly furnished unto every good work.' Anything more, then, must be an encumbrance. Anything less than 'the whole counsel of God' would be a dangerous deficiency. Simply, reverently, confidingly, they would speak of Bible things in Bible words, adding nothing thereto and omitting nothing given by inspiration. They had thus a clear and well-defined basis of action, and the hearts of all who were truly interested re-echoed the resolve: 'Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.'" To my thinking, while there have been misinterpretations of what has actually been said by the Lord, and he has been mistreated by professed friends in this way, by far the greater harm has come by the invasion of the realm of silence of the Almighty. God's silence has not been respected. The veriest tyro in Scripture knowledge has gone

down into his imagination and come up with something which is an invasion of the silence of the Lord. He has presumed to tell us, out of the silence of the Almighty, what God ought to have said, and what men ought to have. He knows more than God did about it.

There is a new adage these days to the effect that where God has spoken we are to speak, but that where God is silent we are at liberty. Now that is strange doctrine, for it does not mean liberty but license to do as one may think fit.

God revealed his wisdom as much by his silence as he did by his revelation. Thomas Carlyle could see that in regard to the language of Shakespeare. He saw that the silence of that author was an eloquent testimonial to his selective wisdom and his moral balance. By the observance of the rule of silence, the greatness of Shakespeare's mind was revealed. If all authors could leave off what they ought not to say, they too would be noted for their selective ability. It is in what most men say which ought not to be said that they reveal weaknesses of character. What should forever be left in the realm of silence they try to utter, and so reveal that lack of balance and judgment that only the very wise can have.

There are times for silence, certainly; times when to speak is sacrilege. Often the greatest moments are ones of silence. They want no words; they want only respect and understanding. Only the feel is valuable when others are dumb with momentous feelings of the occasion. There are occasions when only silence can show wisdom. Silence is greater. It elevates an understanding soul into the realms of infinity. Volubly spoken feelings in great moments stay on a low, insensate plane, and never rise to the heights of sympathy and understanding.

Religious feelings which tread into the silence' of God with volubility are misguided. Him they cannot respect

and His greatness they cannot know. They are on a low, insensate plain.

This great thought sets in motion a train of others, but here I leave it at this time.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV

Do you believe the character of God is revealed in his silences—what the Bible does not say?

Should one be reverent in the realm of silence in the divine message? But should this preclude an earnest searching as far as one may go? Do unrevealed things belong to God? Where is the Scripture?

What liberty does one possess in the realm of silence?

If all men have equal liberties in the realm of silence, would there be unity, if all were equally restrained in that realm?

Is the revelation of God adequate? Can the realm of the human and the divine merge satisfactorily except only when the human is subject to the divine?

What great aphorism was used by the Restoration pioneers to express this thought?

CHAPTER V

THE FAITH AND THE BELIEVER — CORRECT BASIS FOR INTERPRETING THE SCRIPTURE

There is a very fine passage, it seems to this scribe, in the new commentary by Bishop Moule on the Second Epistle to Timothy. It reads: "Timothy in a world of religious flux, and in order to the good of that world is to 'stay in the things which he had learnt, and of which he had been sure.' The phrase is vivid and suggestive. He is not merely to 'hold' them as opinions. Only too often the 'holding views' means a very poor thing indeed, a mental and spiritual state in which nothing better than a thread of sentiment, or a languid conservation of what has become habitual, attaches the man to the belief. He 'holds,' but is not 'held'; nothing in his opinions grasps him with a living force. The imagery here is of a very different sort. The man is to 'stay in' his beliefs, or rather 'in the things believed.' He is to find his home here, and to be always at home. He is to move and breathe among the things which make up the sphere of his faith. The truths which are his creed concerning God, Christ, sin, salvation, repentance, faith, and 'that blessed hope' are to be always around him, his inner circle, his immediate atmosphere, nearer than anything else. Then they too shall be in him; the faith and the believer shall be fused, as it were, into one reality."

One cannot properly put much emphasis on mere mortal man. In fact, to put emphasis on the man-side of the scheme of redemption, is to err grossly. Man owes his all to the faith which he embraces. Of course the Gospel is exactly adapted to man, and fits his constitution and his need like a well fitting glove, but the design is of God, and is in order to man's good. Man is the recipient; God is the

giver. So never should too much emphasis be placed upon man.

When one becomes emboldened to make his influence felt, in a human sense, though he is great and powerful, the emphasis has been shifted from the permanent God to impermanent man.

Man is the proper vessel for the carrying of the Gospel to others. Paul said that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels." (II Cor. 4:7). In this sense man is indispensable to the plan of God. God uses human agency. However, when one becomes over-conscious of that agency, and begins to feel that he is practically indispensable, and that without him and his stalwart defense, the truth would perish from the earth, he has become definitely Pharisaical. Take the case of the Pharisees in John's day. They felt that they were indispensable to God's plan because they were the seed of Abraham. Then it was that John told them that God was able from the stones to raise up seed to Abraham. God has a way beyond the need for any particular man. When man manages to keep this in mind, and to stay humble as a vessel, then God can use him abundantly. Take the case of Paul. He was the ablest of the able, but quite humble. He put himself and the great orator Apollus on the same basis of ministers only by whom the Corinthians had believed. Nothing more than that.

By men have been able defenses of the Gospel; and also by men have come all the errors that are in the world. So man should not be too proud.

Now if one can take the teaching of Paul to Timothy, and fuse his faith in the Christ with his living experience, he has that happy union with the Divine that gives him real power.

The Gospel is designed for the agency of man. It is in harmony with the nature of man to be not alone the responsibility of the Gospel, but to be also its dispenser.

Man-to-man is God's order. "According as God hath given to every man his minister," said Paul. (I Cor. 3:5).

Man, like Paul, today must be set for the defense of the Gospel, if he is a preacher of the Word. And that means that he must do it out of bounden duty and in entire loyalty. "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel," said Paul. Necessity was laid upon him. But that necessity precluded any feeling of indispensability on Paul's part. He simply had to do it, because of the divine compelling to which he yielded. He was always conscious of the divine side.

Strong men with great ego have a way of mixing their motives. They love the Gospel, yes; but their own interests are mixed with the proclamation of it. The cross is shoved forward, but one thinks all the time of the preacher. Some years ago an able preacher said to this writer that there are two kinds of preachers in this respect. One comes and preaches; he leaves behind the impression, what a great man he is to be preaching for that little church. Another preaches, and he leaves the impression of how great and glorious is the Church, and what a great Redeemer that man preaches. I imagine that that was the way one felt about Paul and his work. He thought so little of advancing his own interests that later he had to defend his apostleship to the people whom he had converted, or among whom he had preached! They said that in bodily presence he was weak and his speech was contemptible. He did not deny that such an impression could be gained from his work. But his emphasis was upon the Gospel of God's redeeming love. He placed it where it would live. If he had rested it upon his frailty it would have soon perished.

This writer believes in preaching the Gospel, and that it is placed in earthen vessels, but the emphasis should not be upon man.

We have literally been forced to adopt a doctrinal attitude in our preaching because on every hand sectarianism has been seeking to destroy the validity of many of the claims of the Gospel. And this eternal awareness of the danger of corruption has given a bit of spiritual ophtalmia to some today. The defense side of the Gospel, which is a part of the plan of course, is to them the supreme thing. But let this writer say in all fairness and all candor, while believing in the defense of the Gospel as much as any man, that such is not true. No doctrinal corruption can for a moment be tolerated, but we need today the emphasis that we find in the New Testament. That is upon the thing believed as it is fused into life. The believer and the thing believed become one in an indissoluble union. This is not to be a mere intellectual grasp, but a thing that grasps the life. This divine fusion enables a man to proclaim the Word as never he could otherwise. It enables him to crucify himself, as Paul said that he did. His own ego matters not. He has it under control. He never makes a travesty of the cause anywhere, preaching division and hate unless he can have his way. He will stand to the bitter end, but in loving endurance, rather than in a tirade against any detractor. It takes the emphasis off man and places it on the Gospel of the Son of God. The Gospel then becomes man's defense. Yes, man must be set for the defense of the Gospel. We believe that. However, the emphasis needs to be placed again where it was in apostolic times.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER V

How can there be a fusion of faith with the personality of the believer?

What is meant by the expression: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels?"

Is it possible for the proclaimer to mix his own interests with the Gospel proclaimed?

How can he test himself against the evil of self-induced interests ?

Must one be careful in his defense of the Gospel to subordinate himself?

What should be the compelling urgency of preaching the Gospel?

Should one seek today to place the emphasis where it was in apostolic times, recognizing his circumstances as opposed to the circumstances of the apostolic age?

CHAPTER VI
HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Statement of Peter Ainslee.
Alexander Campbell's Acknowledgement to Dr. Jones.
The School of Empiricism and Naturalism in Philosophy.
Reflections on Coccieus.
-Reflections on Hugo Grotius.
—Attempts at Complete Mental Emancipation — Not
Wholly Successful.
What Constitutes an Apostolic Example.

Behind every phenomenon there is a stimulus, behind every event there is a cause, behind every deed there is a fountain or spring of action to produce it. Things do not come singly. Behind the development of the idea of the historic interpretation of Scripture there was a long, and sometimes oblique history, but eventually the pattern began to emerge and take shape. Not without faults, perhaps, not in perfection; for it was implemented by men who are frail and human. The seeking to grasp the divine mind, through the written word, however, was a noble struggle. The casting off of the shackles of the past was painful and slow.

"All movements have their antecedents, as naturally as back of the flower blossoms are seeds. Ideas like all living things grow. They have their antecedents and their blossoms in full bloom. Pythagoras was the forerunner of Copernicus, while the maturity of the Copernican idea belongs to Kepler, Gallileo and Newton. Cimabue and Giotto were the pioneers in art and made possible the

achievements of Raphael, Michelangelo who **put their** impressions of religion and history on canvas and in marble. So of Palladio. He was the forerunner of all modern architecture. Before Luther, Zwingli and Calvin were Wycliffe, Huss and Savonarola. The antecedents of the Campbells were not only the reformers of the sixteenth century and their successors, but especially Calixtus, Grotius, Coccejus, Baxter, Locke and all those who yearned for the union of the house of God. For more than a century in Europe, as well as a less period in America, indications directly foreshadowed the movement of the Disciples of Christ. The symptoms were felt by the far visioned on both continents and the culmination into a distinct movement was as natural as a flower bursting its calix."¹

Peter Anslee had literary imagination, nor does it appear that he meant to be taken literally on all points in this quotation, nor to argue that each person mentioned in his outline on interpretation was to be taken in full without qualification on every name mentioned. Already in this work a weakness of Coccieus has been pointed out by Home. But he did make a contribution to the final end.

"Another influence equally as great as an antecedent force in the rise of the Disciples, and upon Alexander Campbell in particular, was the philosophy of John Locke, of England, whose desire was to end sectarian strife by finding a philosophical basis for union and, for several generations, his thought was the prevailing philosophy of the English-speaking world, although not applied specifically to religious conditions as had been done by the Disciples. He affirmed that all knowledge comes from without and is dependent upon our senses and the operation of the mind, which we call reflection. Of belief he af-

1. Ainslee, Peter, Yale Lectures, pages 55, 56, Disciples Historical Library edition.

firmed that it was the acceptance of testimony of others. In matters of God, the evidence is revelation and the assent of faith, which is set over against reason in exercise upon objects of natural sense, but faith must not contradict reason, and so he affirmed the complete reasonableness of , revelation. . . .

"With the Lockean theory of knowledge, Campbell and his collaborators declared both unscriptural and unwarrantable the eighteenth century conception of conversion, with the idea of physical or special interpositions of God's Holy Spirit in the way of visions, dreams, voices, and immediate impulses, issuing in swoonings, faintings, jerkings, shoutings and trances. Instead of urging sinners to pray for the Holy Spirit's action upon them they boldly presented to men—not theology, but the facts concerning Jesus Christ, that they might believe on him, for faith was based on testimony; as Paul says, 'Faith cometh by hearing.' So the intellectual and moral order is first the spoken word, second, hearing, third, believing, fourth feeling and fifth doing.*

While so far a quotation has been made from Dr. Home on the weakness of the system of Cocceius, let us have another reflection of Peter Ainslee on the same man. Ainslee felt that Cocceius did make a contribution to the modern historical interpretation. Here is his statement: "Johannes Cocceius, the pious and learned professor of the University of Leyden, was making the first attempt at systematic, Biblical theology and laying down new rules for the interpretation of the Scriptures, by which he became 'the father of modern exegists.' The restlessness of the age bespoke a desire for new systems of thought. Over against the Roman Catholic proposition of saving all, irrespective of their condition, who at the time of their death

2. Ibid, 80, 81.

are in the membership of that Church, Calvin set his dogma of predestination which declared that the divine decrees are eternal and unchangeable and that a part of the human family, without any merit of their own, are chosen to eternal life, and the other part, as just punishment for their sins, are left to eternal damnation.

"Many movements arose seeking to mitigate this harsh doctrine, the negative counterpart of which was not even satisfactory to Calvin, but he affirmed that it was logically true. The most formidable revolt was led by James Arminius, professor in the University of Leyden, who advocated universal grace and freedom of will, but Arminianism was after all a modified predestination, for it declared that God has decreed to save those who, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, believe Jesus Christ, thereby leaving the sinner to importune the Spirit for action, but it showed clearly that there was a man-ward side in the progress of salvation and the doctrine spread rapidly, producing great effect in the history of modern ethics.

"Cocceius broke the orthodox custom of his time in reading dogma into texts and interpreting Scripture by tradition, allegory, and symbolism and, getting his ideas from the Bible and the political conditions that surrounded him he proposed the historical method of Bible study, enquiring into the circumstances and the time of the writing of each book, and that the meaning of a word would be ascertained from the ordinary sense in connection with the text; and, further, that God's dealing with man has been a development, marked by dispensations, and that salvation is a covenant between God and man, in which God and man cooperate; God being the Sovereign, it is His part to present terms and it is man's part to accept on his own free will Scriptural interpretation. All this seems very simple to us now, but in the seventeenth century it was nothing less than revolutionary, for it upset all the systems of

dogmatic theology and meant that proof texts could not be gotten at random from any part of the Bible to enforce Christian doctrine.

"At first it was kindly received due to the friendliness it showed in attempting to interpret some of the Calvinistic doctrines, rather than opposing them and too, largely to the irenic nature of the adherents, who were recognized as peace loving men, devoutly seeking to harmonize the various schools of theology and thereby find a basis of union. Hyperius, Olevian, Elgin and others were pioneers in the suggestion and following Coccejus, Burman, Witsius, to whom appears to be largely due its spread. When, however, it became fully understood, it caused a storm. Seism in the Reformed Church was averted only by the compromise not to make it a school of theological thought and Coccejus' works, remaining in Latin, became known only to those of liberal education."³

Alexander Campbell's Acknowledgements to Dr. Jones

In the year 1835 Alexander Campbell wrote Dr. William Jones in London, who started the *British Millennial Harbinger and Voluntary Church Advocate*, patterning his thoughts somewhat after the thinking of Campbell, were, in some respects, quite explicit on the ones who had made a contribution, theologically, to his thinking. But of course he did not acknowledge all, for he did not mention some others who did undoubtedly influence his thoughts. He acknowledged his indebtedness to Archibald MacLean, John Walker, Robert Ferrier, James Smith, John Glass, the Edinburgh school, even to Wesley and Whitfield. He said: "I paid the same attention to the Whitfield and Wesleyan school, which began its operations about the same time: and indeed, to all the debates and controversies from the days of Luther, Calvin, Knox, Owen, Glass, Sandeman,

3. Ibid, pages 81, 82.

Bellamy, etc., etc., etc., down to the year of grace 1810; at which time I began to distrust everything, *and take the Bible alone*. I had *talked* about the Bible alone for some few years, but all the while used it as a text book; but at this time I began to *take* and *use* the Bible alone as the only infallible source of true light. And most unhesitatingly can I say, that all my previous reading and study of theology greatly disqualified me from understanding the Book, although I had no doubt derived an immense revenue of ideas, critical and theological, from the labors of all the reformers. But none of them ever gave me a hint, and, from the best of my recollections, there is not to be found in all these reformers a hint upon the true and rational reading of the Book of God. I think I may hazard the assertion, and certainly, from all my recollections, I do assert, that the information found in my prefaces to the historical epistolary books of the New Testament, and my hints to readers on the proper method of pursuing the oracles, are not to be met with in all the writings of the school of 1728, nor in the Wesleyan school from 1721 to 1775.

"This egotistic narrative is due to my Scotch and English brethren."⁴

When Alexander Campbell was forced to study the question of baptism to decide the case of his first born child, he did begin at that time to take the Word of God as his guide. But he had able coadjutors in such persons as Walter Scott, his own beloved father, Thomas Campbell; and he was endowed by nature with a great independence of character and thought which eminently qualified him for this pioneering into the guidance of the Word of God alone. And yet he was not infallible. He did, in the course of a few years, pick up, through association, and especially with the Baptists, certain association ideas, wielding the

4. Campbell, Alexander, in a letter to Dr. William Jones, *Millennial Harbinger*, 1885, page 305, Old Paths Book Club edition.

churches in a body for certain cooperative ends. There was no divine precedent for this, but it largely came from association. It started him into the setting up of a group of thirteen churches in a cooperative effort in his section. And later he believed that a larger order of things could be formed, and so he was the first president for fifteen years of the American Missionary Society. Later, that society gathered momentum, and split the movement which he so ably led in his life time. (See this writer's book, *The Church in Great Britain*, for an elaboration of this point). But Campbell did make a real attempt to follow the Bible alone, separate and apart from any creed. This was the noblest emancipation of spirit since the days of the Apostles, if we exempt Barton Warren Stone and some others who felt the same way. We shall grant the influence of Coccejus, Hugo Grotius, Locke, et al. Campbell admitted that many influenced him, but he was unable to say to what degree this one or that, this movement or that specifically influenced him. He was undoubtedly very honest, and also a great intellect. The main point is that he did seek to throw the influence of theology away and to betake himself to the Scriptures alone. He was not infallible; he tried nobly, and in a large measure he succeeded.

The Schools of Empiricism and Naturalism in Philosophy

In the philosophical field Empiricism is that school of thought that believes man may, from all the elements about him, in the natural employment of his faculties upon them determine his course and, to some extent, his destiny. It discounts the idea of innate ideas, as some of the philosophers undertook to prove that man has no innate ideas, but only capacities that have infinite possibilities. There was a time when empiricism ran riot over much of the world, both in Europe and America. Natural religion and natural philosophical thinking abounded; and there

was developed the deism of that time. Against such systems there grew up the Christian evidence movement to counteract this kind of thinking. The Christian Evidence Movement by Orvil Philbeck, Ph.D., published by the Old Paths Book Club reflects completely, but briefly, the development of this movement, and what, to some extent, gave rise to it. While admitting the complete adequacy of the natural senses to channel knowledge to him from the outside world, it did not believe that man can be guided by nature alone; he needs divine revelation to direct him. The great fight of that age, the Age of Reason, as Thomas Paine termed it, was to curb the ebullience of the naturalistic school, empiricism and naturalism, and to counterbalance its claims by an address to revelation as well as to reason. Alexander Campbell's Letters to a Deist in the Christian Baptist will reflect how he came to grips with this issue. As was quite natural, an extreme was reached in the development of naturalism when it came to the denial of divine revelation, and left man alone, to find his course by empiricism toward his final destiny. But all this, as well as the historic interpretation of the Scriptures by Coccejus and the philosophy of Locke on the reasonableness of revelation, lay behind an approach of the Scriptures and a correct interpretation of them.

Reflections On Hugo Grotius

Following the idea of cause and effect, in an approach to the proper interpretation of the Scriptures, in the Restoration Movement, not only the foregoing elements and persons influenced the minds of the leaders, but yet other elements and persons left far-reaching effects also. While Campbell acknowledged in his case he could not trace all the elements, we may deduce from the premises and from the application of certain principles in their writings of the pioneers, together with historic references, the draft

upon their thinking of such a person as Hugo Grotius also. Campbell had a six volume set of Grotius' *Truth of the Christian Religion* in his personal library, according to "A Short Title List of Alexander Campbell's Library in Bethany College," compiled by Charles Penrose. In his , six, volume work Grotius affirmed that God governs the universe and the affairs of the lower world. This is proved by the preservation of empires, by the continuity of history, and by miracles. (Of course now the modern dialectical school of religion denies the continuity of history and the miraculous altogether. Take the works of Bruner, Barth and Niebuhr as proof).

Hugo Grotius offered this sub-title and statement:

"Whence Every One Ought to Learn the Knowledge of the Christian Religion.

"In this agreement and disagreement amongst Christians, prudent men will judge it most safe to take the knowledge of the Christian religion from the fountain, which is not in the least suspected, and whose streams all confess to be pure and undefiled. And this fountain is not the creed, or the confession of faith of any particular church, but only the books of the New Testament, which all acknowledge to be genuine. I confess some Christians do sometimes say that those books cannot be understood but by the doctrine of their church; but others again deny it; and (to mention but this one thing) that opinion is very suspicious which depends only on the testimony of those that affirm it; and they such, whose chief interest is that it should seem true. Others say, that there is need of the extraordinary assistance of the Holy Spirit, not only to the belief of the Scriptures, (which may without any great difficulty be allowed) but also to understand the meaning of the words contained in it; which I do not see how it can

4. Grotius, Hugo, *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, Cambridge, J. Hall and Co., 1770.

be proved; but we will grant this also, provided they will acknowledge all men, who read the books of the New Testament with a religious mind, intent upon the truth are offered this Spirit by the goodness of God; there is no need for contending for anything more than this. . . ."⁵

"Whoever therefore believes that the revelation of the will of God made by Christ is faithfully related in the books of the New Testament, such an one must of necessity embrace all things which he there meets with, according as he understands them, as matters of faith, practice and hope; for whoever believes in Christ, ought to receive, with a religious mind, everything which he thinks comes from Him; he cannot defend himself with any excuse, whereby to admit some and reject others of those things which he acknowledges comes from Christ."⁶

Having now presented what Grotius had to say on the entire adequacy of Scripture for the purpose of faith and practice and hope, we shall bring a quotation on his idea of the difference between

The Law of Nature and Divine Positive Revelation

"Before we pass on to the consideration of human laws (and he was a great jurist and writer upon juridical laws—Hudson), it may not be improper to state and explain the difference between the law of nature, and the positive law of God. This difference will be best understood, if we consider what it is, which make any intelligible distinction between moral and positive duties, in which the law of Moses, for instance, forbids murder, and when it forbids the Israelites to eat the flesh of animals as it determines it to be unclean, what it is, which makes one of them moral and the other a positive precept? This point is not at all cleared by saying, that one of these is the precept of the

5. Ibid, page 208.

6. Ibid, page 209.

law of nature, and the other is not so: For this instead of bringing us forward in removing the difficulty, only carries us back to the place we set forth from. We cannot say, that moral and positive duties are distinguished from each other, by the different authority, which establishes them, because the same God, who binds us to the observance of the law of nature, binds us likewise to the observance of His own positive laws. Neither can we say that they are distinguished from one another by the different function upon which they are established: because happiness to those, who obey them, is the common function of duties of both sorts. This is plainly the case both in the Gospel and in the law of Moses; where moral and positive duties are enjoined under like penalties . . . "*

". . . The law of nature, as has already been shown, enjoins all those actions which are morally good, and forbids all those which are morally bad. By this means the former become duties, and the latter crimes. . . . But when any actions, which are indifferent in themselves, are commanded or forbidden by any express revelation of God's will; those doctrines likewise, which God has commanded, become duties, and those actions which he forbids, become crimes: however, as the actions themselves, or in their own nature, affect the common good of mankind neither one way or the other, as they have nothing in them morally good or morally bad, this sort of duties is called positive duties."

"Thomas Aquinas, the angelic doctor of Catholicism, had announced the distinction between moral and positive law, but it remained for Hugo Grotius to bring it to perfect clearness, in which he showed that the moral precepts are inherent in the human mind and that positive precepts

7. Rutherford, T., D. D., F. R. S., *Difference Between Law of Nature, and Divine Positive Laws*, Vol. 1, page 31, with reference to Grotius' work.

arise out of new conditions and authorities, from which Campbell urged with force absolute obedience to the commands of Christ as the sovereign authority of Christendom."⁸

Attempts At Complete Emancipation

It is most difficult, if not altogether impossible, for one to pass through this world and not be affected by the thought processes of his fellows. The only completely independent person mentally, completely uninhibited, was Jesus; and yet even He must be interpreted against the background of His time and station and His particular era of the world's history. His reaction to tradition can only be appreciated as we know something of the traditions of the most tradition-ridden people, perhaps, of all time; His orientation to the right is best understood by His immediate acceptance of the good in the despised Samaritans; His regard for law can only be known as He, though impoverished, paid taxes to the government of the Romans with the coin taken from the fish's mouth by Simon Peter. He was affected but unaffected; He responded, but did not become involved. He retained his philosophical calm and remained detached from the world's life, but not from its wants and pains. He was in the world but not of the world. He is truly the Man whom nobody knows.

One of the noblest efforts again of all times for complete mental emancipation came in the persons of the leaders of the Restoration Movement. And one misses much who does not ardently attend to the rich labors and the great writings of the pioneers; but one must remember that they were just men. While they did not move singly, without antecedents, across the pages of history, they could not be, in the nature of the case, as completely uninhibited as was Jesus. We should emulate the heroism which the dis-

8. Ainslee, Peter, op., cit., Divinity School Lectures.

played, in their search of and return to the Holy Scriptures, apart, as nearly as was possible, from theological dogma; but we should go no farther with them than a thus saith the Lord on any subject. The Word of God alone is the guide. Others before them said the same things, and in some measure followed their beliefs; others again were obtained by the theological schools that they tried to see the New Testament Church through denominational dogmas.' That was impossible, and it still is.

What Constitutes An Apostolic Example?

- There are many things in history, even the history of the New Testament Church, enacted in the lives and experiences of the apostles, which in no sense constitute an example for us today. Take the happenings of Pentecost, in the year 33 A. D., when the Church was established. From that day a great fact emerges — and that fact was the New Testament Church. It was a glorious day, long foretold by the prophets, Isaiah, Joel, and others, by various prophecies and annotations of events which would accompany "that great and notable day of the Lord." One can pour over the many prophecies centering upon that day; one can search out many and wonderful details, and find enough to be amazed in the divine focus upon that occasion. He need not even speculate, for there is too much that can be ascertained with reasonable certainty. It was the turning point of all history, but the beginning of the Church, the Kingdom of Heaven, the remission of sins, the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, the establishment of the universal priesthood of Christ after the order of Melchizidec. It was even the focal point of Grecian culture, in the universal language; of Roman law and order, in the wide empire; the introduction of the monotheism of the Jews to all mankind. But there were many things, apart from these glorious acts which emerged

to the view of mankind on that day, and some permanent requirements announced for obedience in the Gospel age — many things which took place but once in human history, in the lives of the apostles, such as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, of John the Baptist and of Jesus Christ himself, which were specific in nature and purpose, and not to be repeated again in the whole panorama of human history— They were incidental to a more fundamental purpose, the purpose of the opening of the way of holiness for all mankind. There was nothing in the way of an apostolic example except the example itself, and all that it set forth — nothing for the rest of the world to seek to duplicate as an apostolic example at all. It could not happen again. Converging prophecies had been fulfilled, the way of everlasting righteousness was brought in. But the terms offered for the salvation of mankind, in spite of the peculiar circumstances of the occasion that inhered in history and prophecy — those terms became permanent in the order of heaven for the remission of sins. They were fundamentals. The incidental features, the events by which the permanent order was introduced, transpire no more for ever ; they are not apostolic examples. They were the apostles in action in the light of prophecy in practical fulfillment to introduce the terms of salvation for all mankind; namely, faith, repentance and baptism in the name of Christ (upon His authority) for the remission of sins.

There is the apostolic example. People who make so much today of Pentecost, seeking the same gifts that the apostles had, do not at all inform themselves, if indeed they are capable, of the difference between incidentals and fundamentals— between the facts of prophecy and history converging in the apostles whom the Lord had chosen for that express purpose, and themselves in whom no such facts and prophecy could converge. Pursuing further the

matter of apostolic examples, we see many incidentals in the lives of the early Church which cannot be duplicated. Take again the great council on circumcision. That settled something which has not come up again. It also established something else; that one is not to eat things strangled, nor blood, to keep himself from idols and from fornication. There came from the council which was but once some everlasting principles which are apt in this twentieth century for us. It is not an example for us to meet to determine some point of doctrine of polity, for that was all established by the *inspired apostles* while they lived. A council today could settle nothing; it could only meddle and concern itself pompously about something where it had no authority. The delegates would have to have plenary power, such as the apostles had. The Holy Spirit guided them into *all truth* — not just a part of it. (See John 14, 15, 16th chapters. Especially first part of 16th chapter). What is an apostolic example? That which was permanently enjoined upon the Church for all time, such as the terms of entrance into the Church — faith, repentance, baptism; the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, as practiced by the Church in the lives and labors of the apostles. All the other features were incidental to the more fundamental purpose — the establishment of a divine order, positive in character, not necessarily moral, in the ordinances of the Church. Of course good morals were everywhere enjoined by all the divine writers who at all wrote or spoke on them. The Bible is not a difficult book, if men would but take it sensibly. One must not read into it his opinions and wishes. He must take it as it is. The apostolic order was set up, and it remains. Men have deduced entirely too much from the premises because they have not sought to understand the premises. The Church was not given in embryo; but in its entire-

ty. Any acts today that exceed altogether the word which they established are human acts alone. We must stay within the divine pattern. Incidentals must be left as incidentals; and one must not build complete systems of theology from them. Fundamentals are very adaptable — purposely so, so as to leave man free, but not free to institute a system of his own. The curse of high heaven is against man or angel who would change that word to make it read another way to suit his fancy.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI

How was the thought of the historic interpretation of the Scriptures developed? What part did Cocceius have in this?

What weakness did the Cocceius theory embrace? Can you quote Prof. Home on the subject?

Was the theory of Cocceius thought to be a compromise at first among the learned?

Who preceded Campbell in the development of historic interpretation? Name some Scotch preachers, some Irish.

What independence did Campbell feel that he possessed? Why? What did he say about this?

Did the Restoration leaders make the Bible only their guide?

What particular thing in the life of Campbell caused him to study his whole position anew?

What influence did Stone exert in this realm of thought? See *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery*. (Old Paths Book Club)

What is an apostolic example? Did the apostles by a plenary power, feel sure of their message?

CHAPTER VII

THE NATURE OF DIVINE REVELATION

The Development of a Plan

The Mystery in Ages Past

Here a Little and There a Little

Prophetical Utterances Clothed in Imagery — Mt. Zion,
Mountain of the House of the Lord, etc.

The Imagery of the Old Testament used to Bespeak the
New—Sabbath, New Moons, etc. Tabernacle of David
which is fallen down, etc.)

The Golden Threat of Purpose

Even the New Testament Pictures a Far-off Grand De-
nouement, the Consummation of the Ages

The Bible purports to be a divine revelation through mundane agency, through the instrumentality of human beings. While at times supernatural elements and beings were employed they were never employed exclusively. Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Christ was given the Spirit without measure. The apostles were endued with power from on high. Naked Spirit never did come into contact with naked soul for the soul's exclusive and personal benefit. When there was an endowment with the Holy Spirit, or even a visit of an angel, it was always with a purpose to benefit others through such a human agency. Man became the instrument; other men became the epistle, written not with ink, but with the Holy Spirit, to be known and read of all men. (2 Cor. 3:2,3).

At one and the same time there is a beautiful simplicity about the Word of God, designed for all men, and a complex development of deepest infinity, coming from the Infinite Intelligence — the Intelligence which created the universe. One may justly and correctly expect mysteries here, spoken with complete artlessness and without the least intention to embarrass the intelligence of the creature. While there is a developing and unfolding purpose, there is always the assumption of the capacity, in spite of theologians, of the creature to comprehend the message. The story is so simple that a child can understand it; yet so profound in its implications that the most learned or erudite may pour over it forever. Why? It is infinite, coming from the mind of an Infinite God. Yet how simple the pattern of anything which God has made in nature, and how simple the pattern in revelation! The pattern of every leaf is set; the pattern of every river that flows on any continent into any sea; the pattern of the everlasting hills, whose heights gather the rain and the snow, and down which cascades the floods that water the earth; the pattern of every cloud that floats, into *sirus nimbus*, etc. A pattern of purpose pervades the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. It is simply for man to come to know the laws and peculiarities of the pattern for it to make sense. Men develop the sciences that deal with every branch of material knowledge, down to the splitting of the atom. It all responds to law. And if and when man becomes infinite, like God, all nature will harmonize into one pattern. The Bible, as the book of God, coming from the same source, will not only harmonize completely with itself throughout, but with the book of nature also. The same author is author of both. Man is not deterred by the complex nature of the material universe from a careful study of all its parts; he should also, with the same mind, and in the same spirit, undertake the true study of the Word of God — not in meddlesomeness

to his hurt, but carefully, fully aware that there are infinite possibilities here for weal or woe. And God Himself has said as much about His word. He has given no such warning about nature, but man continues to examine, with the high stake of his life, the elements about him. , "The eyes of the fool are in the ends of the earth." "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." One should approach the wonderful, beautiful world with increasing amazement', and he should approach the Word of God with equal reverence. Beginning where he is, with the knowledge he has, not straining to comprehend some far off mystery, he may, nay indeed, he will find, the secrets of the Most High will begin to become comprehensible to him as he slowly and reverently progresses, for the ground whereupon he stands is holy ground.

The Development of a Plan

The great difference in men is usually in the tenacity of purpose which drives them on. The undertaking of a great work makes necessary the setting of a great purpose, the seeking of a plan. Of course one could fritter away great energy on a lowly purpose, poorly planned and ill conceived. This would be foolish. Behind the plan there must be full consciousness of the resources required; the time element; the patience; the infinite labor. Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire or MaCauley's History of England show great planning, long-term purpose; and each showed complete utilization of resources both native in capacity and patient research at one and the same time. Purpose. Plan.

Now when the Infinite God set out to reveal Himself, the purpose and plan covered the recognizable and known span of human history from the remote beginning in Eden, by recapitulation through Moses, down to and covering the lives of the apostles, some sixteen hundred years after

the time of Moses. That purpose or plan began as a mere germ of thought ensconced in the brain of man by divine implantation, that there would be a recovery of man's lost estate in a golden age of the future — the long-drawn and far-distant future. Meantime, there would be no interruption of his earth problems in pain and suffering, and even of death itself. The plan, as suggested by Coccejus, gave forth just a little lustre, just a little light in the star light age of the world. This was true of the whole of the Patriarchal Age from Adam to Moses. Not much divine guidance was vouchsafed to man. No temples were built, not any fanes of worship, just theophanies, as Noah's sacrifice after the flood, as Abraham's altar under the oak tree at Mamre, as Jacob's Bethel, where he pillowed his head on a stone and saw a ladder to the skies, with angels ascending and descending. No songs, no liturgy, no ceremonial, no days of worship, no particular assemblies except now and then some family affair. Maybe not even that. But somehow man, in this little light, did not lose the idea of a purpose, of some sort of a dark and distant future.

There appeared next on the horizon the mellow rays of the moon, with its soft radiance, and glow to gladden the path of mankind. This was the Mosaic Dispensation, set forth at Mt. Sinai. The Ten Commandments were given as the heart of a great theocratic system. Civil, sanitary, priestly and ceremonial features were also written in the book of the law. Man's treatment of his brother, the stranger that dwelt among the people, and even the redistribution of the land according to the patrimony of the tribes was arranged for the Golden Jubilee, even before there was a complete settlement in Palestine. Precaution was taken for everything. The cities of refuge were set up; the priestly tribe was provided for in the tithe and in cities

which they were given. In this moonlight age of the world, complete regulations for all their needs were established. There was set up a system of daily oblations or offerings of animal sacrifices for the sins of the people. But this vast and complete system, when it was applied, broke down. The people would not have it; they would not carry it out. "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34). "You have broken the everlasting covenant." (Isaiah 25:4). "IN that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." (Heb. 8:13).

After some fifteen hundred years of increasing failure, God sent his only begotten Son into the world. The Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his beams. The sunlight age of the world began. The effulgence of divine purpose in Christ flooded the world. "In Him was life, and life was the light of men."

The golden thread of purpose, often obscured in the passing shadows of different ages of history, submerged beneath the waves of crime and idolatry and backsliding, began to be visible as the thread upon which all history

was strung. God's purpose showed itself as God's Eternal Purpose. All the thousands of years of Old Testament history, covering two great ages of religion, fell into pattern. Every writer of history and prophecy, colored in his thinking by his time and circumstances, seeing only what little by the divine Spirit he was allowed to see, whether farmer, shepherd or reformer, a declaimer of morals, or lamenting the failures of others like Jeremiah the weeping prophet make the contributions which, to change the figure, became in the hand of the Divine Builder, a beautiful mosaic with Christ the Good Shepherd the center. Purpose ! Plan! The indefatigability of an infinite God to bring it to pass. Such is the Bible.

The Mystery In Ages Past

The mystery in other ages was not made known. But now that same mystery is made known. Yes, the Bible is a mysterious book, but not in the way some misuse the word mystery in the Bible. "For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Jesus Christ on behalf of you Gentiles — assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to the holy apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit; that is, how the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." (Eph. 3 :1-6). It had been a mystery in ages past, but now the Apostle Paul said it was made plain by revelation of the Holy Spirit.

In his day it was no longer a mystery. It had been brought to light in the Gospel. God's purpose 'became known. Not indeed that all mystery of divine will is for-

ever cleared away. There remains the mystery of the resurrection. While promised, its nature cannot be grasped by man in his present state. "Behold I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," says the Apostle^ "With controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached among men, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. 3:16). This was and is the mystery of the incarnation of Christ in human form. But while we cannot penetrate the mystery, we do accept it by faith, with all its vast implications for us, all its infinite possibilities. It is not that the Word is a mysterious Word, but it contains elements bordering on the infinite and mysterious, which we do not fully grasp in our finite and limited state. But we do receive by faith what we cannot comprehend. Does any one deny the mysteries of nature because he does not know all about nature? Certainly not. Does he therefore go about saying that he can understand none of the things of nature? Certainly not. The Apostle Peter also spoke of the mystery of ages past which even angels desired to explore. Here are his words: "The prophets who prophesied of the grace which was to be yours searched and enquired about this salvation; they enquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the suffering of Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, things into which the angels long to look." (1 Pet. 1:10-12, R.S.V.)

Here a Little and There a Little

The Bible is not like a dictionary, or an encyclopedia,

with strictly classified information in subjects; not like a grammar which deals with the parts of speech. It is entirely different in the very nature of its message to man. It is strictly inter-related in all its parts, and makes but one complete book, but the subject matter is broken up. Just a brief statement that is scarcely more than a hint on a subject is given here or there. Maybe a century will intervene before a divine writer will broach that subject again. Meantime, many other related subjects will be named in the period in between, in case there is a message of inspiration in the span of time. Or it may be many centuries in between. Take, for example, the subject of the coming Messiah named throughout the Old Testament. "The testimony of Christ is the spirit of prophecy," says John the Beloved. We are told that the sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloah come, in Genesis 49:9,10. This clearly alludes to the lineage of Christ. It should be from the tribe of Judah. But centuries pass. David arises of that line, and the kingdom becomes great. It then begins to decline. Isaiah, in less favorable circumstances, sees that the Lord God will give unto him the throne of his father David, he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. (Isaiah 9:6,7). Again centuries later Jesus came preaching that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The Bible, in this way, is the strangest book ever written. It took an everlasting eye of prescience, of foreknowledge, of eternal purpose, to knit thoughts so far removed, in time and circumstances, the various utterances on a subject given under so diverse conditions, into one systematic whole on the coming kingdom and King as we have them throughout the Scriptures. If man had been writing the book, he would have sought to classify the material and to exhaust the subject in one simple digest, but not so the Lord. And we are given the reason for this.

"Nay, but by man of strange lips and with an alien tongue the Lord will speak to this people, to whom He has said, 'This is rest; give rest to the weary; and this is repose ;' yet they would not hear. Therefore the Word of the Lord will be to them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little; that they may go and fall backward, and be broken and snarled and taken." (Isaiah 27:11-13). In other words, while God gave them line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, he so gave it in spite of its plethora, its abundance, they could twist it to suit their own fancy, and misunderstand it; be broken and snared and taken; and that by the very Word by which they felt so secure and certain. Why had God given His Word this way? Because of the perversity of their hearts, their unwillingness to have what He said in its obvious sense and connection. And as it is today, many people select the texts they want to prove a certain thing. But they too shall be broken and snared and taken. False teachers are constantly arising with new interpretations of Scripture to suit their fanciful notions. One can hear of such things almost daily over the radio, or read it from the press. God has purposely so arranged that a man can deceive himself with Scripture sanction. It is very dangerous to read Scriptures with a dishonest heart. "Therefore God sends upon them strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, so that all may be condemned who do not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. 2:11,12, R.S.V.) Much deception is in the world and God permits it because of the evil of men's hearts. But he never did turn a righteous person from the kingdom of God. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself," said Jesus. It is simply the strange nature of the Word of God. But it is based upon an equally

strange nature of the human heart. God will not legislate or coerce a man against his will into the kingdom of heaven and into a love of the truth. There is stretched across the facade of the Union Station in Washington, D. C, the statement: "He who would bring back the wealth of the Indies must take the wealth of the Indies with him." Just so the truth of the gospel. If one would have the truth, he must take an honest heart with him to the Word of God. That man cannot be led astray by all the false teachers in the world. An intuitive appreciation of the truth is man's greatest asset, greater than all wealth and all honor.

Prophetical Utterances Clothed In Imagery

Throughout the Old Testament, which foreshadows the New, God used the imagery with which the people were familiar to convey spiritual truths. Zion was the center of their national life, for there the kings lived, after David conquered it. It was called the city of David. But that in turn became a symbol. "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it; and many people shall go and shall say, come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord's house, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways and we shall walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isaiah 2:2-4). What did this mean? The imagery was of Zion and Jerusalem. And that was to be the starting place of the new order. But it meant more than the headquarters of a literal kingdom of the Jews; it meant the mountain of the Lord's house, his government; it meant the issuing forth of the Word of the Lord from that central place to all nations. Many should go and say to come — all" nations should flow into it; a world-wide order would be estab-

lished. We see this fulfilled in the time of the apostles and beginning with the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. This was a prophecy, under the imagery of Old Testament thoughts and picturization of Jewish thought, of the coming conquests of Christianity and the Messiah's kingdom. Or take again the prophecies of the new order as a nation born in one day, of Isaiah 66th chapter. The whole of the peaceful era in which swords should be beaten into plow shares and spears into pruning hooks; the lion and the lamb should lie down together, when a nation should be born in one day, and before Zion travailed she brought forth, before her pain came she was delivered of a man child — the whole of this glorious prophecy, reaches a climax in the sustained expansiveness of the prophet in the last two chapters, the 65th and 66th. It is all of a perfect pattern with all the thinking of Isaiah, but the frenzied literalist and futurist can see nothing but a glorious age yet to come, a millennium on the earth. Such a person must ignore such a great fact as the rise of Christianity and its spread over the earth as the new order which the Lord taught to get his vast conjecture, composed wholly of imagination.

Of course the literalist also misses the beautiful symbolism of Isaiah and the other prophets as well. It is a part of the strange nature of the Word of God, which the deliberately dishonest can interpret to suit his dreams and wishes. But the true Bible student must intuitively see the right.

The Imagery of the Old Testament Used to Bespeak the New — New Moons, Feast of Booths, Etc.

In the Old Testament out of the constant frustrations and defeats, out of the sins of the people in offering incense on the mountains and eating swine's flesh in the gardens the Lord though the prophets rebelled. He even

prophesied the destruction of His people, and the making of the plain of Sharon a place for flocks. He talked of bringing in the people on dromedaries from Tarshish, Put, Lud, Tubal and Javan, of cleaving Zion in twain and making a plain south of Jerusalem; of conditioning all nations keeping the feasts of booths, which was for the Jews as a memorial of the time when they had no homes when they came out of Egypt; of the observance of the new moons, and the sabbaths. These of course were peculiar to the Jews. But in the imagery of the prophets these are *transferred* to a new and universal order, to be shared by all nations. Of course the line of the cleavage of Zion was the marking off of the two ages, the Jewish and the Christian, according to Matthew Henry's Commentary, coincided in by Keil and Delitsch. The gathering of all nations had specific reference to the gospel age, and the world wide religion of Jesus. But the imagery was distinctly Jewish, against a Jewish background and history. Not until we reach the New Testament and begin the exploration of the universal nature of the religion of Christ can we begin to appreciate the imagery and the messages which the imagery transferred. The very many references of the apostles to the Old Testament make obvious to the real Bible student what was meant. "The glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream (Isaiah)" is pictured by the growth of Christianity from Jerusalem to spread over the earth. Take the interpretation of the apostles in the great council at Jerusalem. "And all the assembly kept silence; and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they finished speaking, James replied 'Brethren listen to me. Symeon hath related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And with this the words of the prophets agree as it is written, After this I will return, and will rebuild the dwell-

ing of David, which has fallen; and will rebuild its ruins, and will set it up, that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who made these things known from of old.'" (Acts 15:12-18). The rebuilding of the tabernacle of David is said to be done in the work of Christ and the apostles in the setting forth of Christianity. Thus the symbolism, the imagery is interpreted by the apostles to mean just what the prophets said under the head of a revived Judaism. Only it was not a revived Judaism after all. It was the building of a new system under Christ while the Old Testament imagery was employed as the vehicle of expression. The true Bible student will have no trouble here. The speculator will have ample room for the play of fancy — and condemnation. When one reads a prophecy he must read it in the connection and with the imagery of the prophet who is speaking, and against the historic age or background from which he worked.

The Golden Thread of Purpose

It still remains true in every age that man never is but always to be blessed. In this mundane state there is always something else to be desired. One may reach a climax in life here and there, but always when he rises to one mountain peak of attainment, there will rise on the distant horizon yet other objectives for him to wish to attain. It is like the ringing of a bell in the story of the two youths. They followed forever that ringing of the bells, in morasses, in vales, on mountains, but the tinkling was always beyond the reach. There were of course mountain peaks in human history in the Old Testament. One such was the transfer to and the conquering of the land of Palestine by the descendants of Abraham; another was in the rise and glory of the kingdom of David in the building and opulence of the time of Solomon. Yet there were abysmal

depths of depravity and adversity into which the people were often plunged, as a result of their sins against the Lord. The Lord chastised them. Oftentimes in their sorrow and afflictions God hid His face from them, and there seemed no purpose to life. Or again so great was their national prosperity and happiness, that they did not seem to need an ulterior purpose. But there was always such a need. In this mortal state, then as now, there is a need beyond this earth. God was always conscious of the need of that for mankind. And his purpose in all history becomes evident in the light of man's nature and need. The golden thread of purpose is man's spiritual side, his need for immortality; for he came from God. The divine is in him. And Christ is the very heart of that purpose. He is the Alpha and the Omega — the beginning and the end, God blessed forever. He is as natural to mankind as man is natural to himself. As the fountain to slake the thirst; as bread to the famished, so is Christ to man. He aptly used the very figures himself. Christ identified himself with the soul of mankind. He said that it would not profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul. God's purpose was in Christ before the world began. That purpose outran the ages, threaded the ages, pervaded all history, antedated and was to be subsequent to, all history, that Christ may be all in all. The purpose of Christ was in Jewish history — Jewish history was entirely subordinate to the purpose. But that could hardly be understood by the prophetic speculators! 'Twould make a great difference in the liberty which they so wantonly take with the prophets.

Even the New Testament Pictures a Far-off Grand
Denouement, the Consumption of the Ages

Dispensationalism will never attain for mankind its objectives, for nothing that is mortal can satisfy an immortal

soul. And of course this is the peculiar weakness of dispensationalism — the doctrine that the world is moving from one dispensation to another, in an ever increasing crescendo, toward a grand climax, a perfect age upon the earth. Of course all mankind would like to see an age in which sickness and all suffering and all sinning would cease; that there would be universal justice; no innocent should suffer, no orphan exist, but these are all fleshly concepts after all, and are offered in contrast to our present misfortunes. This is too limited an objective for the divine eye. God views nothing less than eternal life as the grand thing to be expected, the event, the denouement toward which all nature is moving, when Christ returns for the judgment. Eternal life is the aim. "Do you not know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. For he will render to every man according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury- There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and *else* the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek." (Romans 2:4-11). The grand denouement, then is eternal life, in immortality and honor. But there will have to be a translation, an immortalization from this mundane state for the enjoyment of that eternal life. The Apostle Paul speaks of our being swallowed up with life — our putting on of immortality that we shall not be found naked in spirit before the Lord. (2 Cor. 5th chapter). He discusses at considerable length the transformation of our earthly selves in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. In

fact, that is the great resurrection chapter. We do not know what our immortal selves will be like, but God will give us bodies that please Him. For all practical purposes we shall be identifiable; so like ourselves here that we shall be recognizable, known; and we shall also know. A wholly impersonal immortality, or eternal life, with the feature of immortality (the term eternal life being more comprehensive, more fully expressive) would not satisfy our needs. God has certainly promised more. That eternal life is conditioned upon our obedience; upon our adding the Christian graces. "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who has called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature. For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and your virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these things are yours and abound, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be' the more zealous to confirm your call and election, for if you do this you will never fall; so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:3-11). Undoubtedly eternal life, the eternal kingdom was in the vision of the apostles, with the immortalization of our earthly bodies, beyond the resurrection, and beyond the judgment. John the Beloved pictures this in the Revelation, chapters 21

and 22, where he closes the Book of God for all time until we do share in the final triumph of the Lord Almighty in the triumph, the grand denouement toward which all ages have moved since the, primeval fall and dislocation of mankind. Then God's face will give us the light. There will not be any moon, or stars, nor sun. We shall no longer be confined to those fitful periods in our bodies controlled by the turning of the earth upon its axis and known as day and night. Eternal life will equate not only eternal duration but also eternal ability to go on without interruption as we know that interruption here. As all ages of the past pointed to the coming of Christianity, so all the Christian age points to the final triumph of Christianity in eternal life. Ah, the oceans and the dells I have known here, my poetic soul will miss them; but in an expanding panorama my sense of beauty shall be enhanced a thousand fold. I am in love with the old earth, which has been my home, but I shall be more in love with the tree of life and the river of the water of life over there. That will be a scene to beckon me.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VII

Does the Bible develop or unfold a plan? How would you go about describing this thought? What of ages or dispensations of religion in the Bible? How many dispensations are there in the Bible, as concerns matters of religion?

Why are there Bible mysteries? In what sense did Paul use the thought of the mystery of the Gospel? Has that mystery now been clarified?

Why is the Bible given bit by bit—here a little and there a little? What of the imagery of the prophets?

What of the imagery of the Old Testament as a pattern of the New?

What is the thread of purpose throughout the Bible?

Have we reached a consummation in the New Testament? Or is this just a stage too as we progress toward another event?

CHAPTER VIII

FINDING THE SENSE OF SCRIPTURE

The Literal

The Typical

The Allegorical

The Spiritual

General Rules for Investigating the Sense of Scripture

How far the thought of intuition can be carried is a moot question with some thinkers; some saying that there are no innate ideas, nothing basic to man as a created intelligence. Empiricism says that he must get all that he gets through the natural senses from the outside world. But man does have a something upon which ideas can rest when they have once been transferred to the mind through the physical sense. Moses E. Lard believed that A. Campbell had an intuitive sense of complete fairness and honesty of soul to appreciate divine revelation when it came to him through the written word. That intuitive sense allowed the truth to take a seat in his mind unsullied by theology. In considerable measure that may be so. That was why Lard thought that Campbell could never give a satisfactory analysis of how the knowledge came to him for his bold and independent attempt to restore apostolic Christianity. In other words, one might call it native honesty. Any one, it matters not who he is, nor indeed about his education, must have this native honesty, or intuitive sense of the divine, to take the Scriptures with any degree of profit. God has endowed all of us, if able to read and write, and with com-

mon sense empowered us to appreciate the divine message. After all, the book we call the Bible is for all mankind. It is not just for the favored few. The favored few may be as greatly handicapped as they are favored when they come to the Bible, for they have the mass of their previous theological training to overcome to come at the Word of God at all. The theologies of the world, which means the doctrines and interpretations of men, are indeed a fearful handicap to very many of the learned. Hardly any learned man is completely independent. His learning has made him mad, or betrayed him into certain channels of thought. Jesus was the only completely uninhibited and free man in this respect. Not a cloud of the thinking of man intervened between Him and God. Now any one who is completely honest and endowed with common sense, can read and understand the Bible. When the apostle said that no Scripture is of any private interpretation he meant just that — that all men stand on a plain of equality before God. We shall at once admit that there are things that yield only to persistent study and meditation, such as some of the more oblique passages in prophecy, but the fundamental story of the Bible is for all mankind. And we should also remember this: To whom the Lord has given much, of him much is required; if the Lord has given little, He requires less. However since salvation is an individual thing, and every one is saved or lost according to his recognizance and efforts, by the grace of the Lord, there can be no excuse pleaded that one did not know how to learn the way of God. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," said Christ the Lord. Teachers are needed, yes of course. And learners must be made, or disciples must be gained. We are to disciple the nations, or make learners of all who will do His will. But honest men and women will hear; and dishonest men

and women will not. Honest readers of the Word, in this day, can learn the truth; and dishonest readers will learn something else besides the truth, even though they will use the truth for the basis to teach themselves their error, and to teach it to others as well. Such is the strange nature of that truth, and such the strange nature of the human heart. The Gospel therefore is the savor of life unto life, and of death unto death—depending on how one takes it and what use he makes of it. But the basic sense of the Scripture, when preached or read, can be received by the average individual. And it will be by the honest human heart. God does not coerce the dishonest into honesty. He respects the right of the individual to be wrong even, for man is not a mere automaton, or machine. His affections and will must be gained by divine appeal, or God will never claim him. He will not force him. This is the only explanation of the present world condition. It is divided, yes, because men divide it and God allows it in the freedom of the creature. But he has given an adequate guide to the honest heart.

The Literal Sense of Scripture

Words are the vehicles or signs of ideas that men use to convey their thoughts to one another. When one understands the word used to another, as a vehicle of ideas, he is said to get the signification or the sense of what the other man thought or said. And when it comes to divine revelation, the same is true. Words become the medium to communicate ideas. It follows that every man's understanding will be like the idea conveyed. If the idea is small, the words will correspond. If the idea is great, the words will still be the signs of the ideas conveyed. If the speech or words are purely human, and pertain to the earth, the thought will be of the same character. Divine ideas will be conveyed in words likewise. The nature of the medium is not changed

only the character of the message. A divine message will still come in words, addressed to the human understanding. A Bible message will produce a chain of thought that is of a Biblical character. A pure Bible speech will produce pure Bible idea; a speech of Ashdod, part of the Philistines, and a part of the Jews, will produce an impure set of Bible ideas. The only thing to do, therefore, is to keep a pure Bible speech. We must speak of Bible things in Bible ways and in Bible terms. And the result will become obvious. In the first place, the common literal ideas will be conveyed when we speak of simple and literal things, such as the family of Abraham, his heirs, etc. When we speak of the ancient world and the flood, there will be no cause to understand it except in the common literal sense—the sense of a vast deluge that covered the earth with water and drowned all the inhabitants except one man's family. There is so much in the Bible that must be taken, if believed at all, in the strict literal sense. And no one has any difficulty here. There may be difficulty with faith, but not with the plain story. The first and literal sense, unless the text somewhere forbids, is always to be taken. If there is something in the text that makes a literal understanding of it unlikely or impossible, then another sense, or figurative meaning is to be attached. The text itself in speech or thought. You may not even know very much about figures of speech, as the rhetorician would know, but you will know whether the passage can be taken literally.

The literal sense has also been **called the historical sense**. Let us take the example of the writing in the **Old Testament** which speaks of the isles or islands of the sea, meaning the Mediterranean basin, North Africa, Asia, Asia Minor, etc. 'In that day the Lord will extend His hand yet a second time to recover the remnant **which is left of His** people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathos, from Ethiopia, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from

the coastlands of the sea. He will raise up **an** ensign **for** the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, **and** gather the dispersed of Israel from the four corners of the earth." (Isaiah 11:11,12). The phrase to possess or inherit the land, which is of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament, simply meant literally and historically to possess it without disturbance: And there was a transferred sense of this usage in the expression to follow Christ, simply meaning to follow Christ as the apostles did, progressing with Him through his ministry to imbibe His teachings and to be imbued with His doctrine. This was literally and historically true. But more of the historical interpretation later.

The Typical Sense of Scripture

When the typical sense is used, it is not merely the transference of language to another meaning, but the transference of the entire situation, historical and literal at first and in its original setting, to a new application altogether, and covering a different subject matter altogether also. Much of the Jewish institution in this way is transferred in its application to the New Institution, or the Church. The Hebrew letter makes an expansive use of this typical sense; indeed, its great significance is in attesting this very thing. In the third chapter Moses is made a type of Christ. In the fourth chapter the journey through the wilderness is made a type of journey of the Christian to heaven. In the fifth chapter the Aaronic priesthood is made a type of the priesthood of Christ. In the sixth chapter the hope of the Christian is tied to the anchor which runs beyond the veil, the separation of the holy place from the most holy place. In the seventh chapter the parallelism continues, with certain, contrasts, showing the weakness of the Old Testament order in comparison with the New. In the eighth chapter the two covenants are contrasted, and the typical sense

continues to illustrate to advantage the New, In the ninth chapter, the two sacrificial systems are paralleled, and the deeper meaning of the New brought out, in the transference of the whole picture, by means of the type, to the deeper significance of the New. This typical or spiritual application becomes apparent to even a casual student of the word. A knowledge of it becomes necessary to the Bible student for it to make sense to him. But again, it is apparent, even to the most casual student; and is not a difficulty.

Sometimes there is a simple typology, as in the case of Adam being a type of Christ, mentioned in the 5th chapter of Romans. There may be a slightly more extended type as of Adam and Eve as the first pair, husband and wife as type of Christ and the church, Ephesians 5th chapter. Or there may be a fuller development of typology in which a whole economy or religion may be made to be a type of another system, as Judaism is a type, in many respects, of Christianity, already mentioned in the Hebrew letter. We cannot go as far as Coccejus to state or to believe that all the Old Testament was a type of the New Testament, but fundamentally the two systems were type and antitype. The first order, including the tabernacle, was a type of heavenly things. (Heb. 8:1,2)

The Allegorical

An allegory is a historical development of an Old Testament story with certain spiritual overtones. We should not be permitted the privilege of making allegory ourselves from some record of the past, but we are within our rights when we follow a divine interpretation of such a story as an allegory. An allegory is a thing of running comparison of different points in a story for spiritual effects. The Apostle Paul makes use of the story of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, with their sons for the purpose of pointing out some

spiritual applications. He says it is an allegory. We have the complete history reviewed by Paul at those points at which it fits to bring out the spiritual qualities of the New Testament. Sarah was Abraham's wife, and was free and equal in wedlock with him. The child of their union, Isaac, was born free. While his birth was long delayed, it was attended by a numerous posterity as a fulfillment — as numerous as the sands of the sea. Hagar's child, on the other hand, was born to a woman who was not free, for she was Sarah's servant; and Ishmael, her son, was not free born, at least on her side. In the allegory these two women become the two covenants — the one from Mt. Sinai, which gendered to bondage; the other from above, the Jerusalem which is above, which is free, and is the mother of us all. It is the age of Christianity, springing from the New Covenant. We, Christians, are represented by Isaac, for we are free by a freeing system in Christ; the Jews are represented by Ishmael, and are in bondage to the law. This allegory, once clearly understood, in its historic background and spiritual application, will make us to understand the great difference between the two systems—the Old Testament and the New. And we should never again confuse them in our minds, or have any trouble keeping them straight. This allegory has a powerful meaning. To get it entirely one ought to go back to Genesis and read the whole story of Abraham and Sarah, Hagar and Ishmael; and then, in the light of that historic knowledge, turn and read the story of the allegory in Galatians 4th chapter. It will prove richly rewarding. Any one taking the time to do this will have also his appreciation so enhanced that he will gladly undertake other studies or excursions into the word of God.

Spiritual Meaning of Scripture

While **there is very much** that is strictly literal in the

Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testaments, spiritual imports are also found here and there throughout the Bible. The literalists sometime undertake to find the complete literal fulfillment of every symbol in prophecy. One of the most notable commentators of this kind was Uriah Smith on Daniel and the Revelation (Adventist). Even the stars that fell, and the great darkneses he found literal fulfillment of in exact dates and places in history. Of course some Biblical commentators depreciate the spiritual and run toward the literal. On the other hand, some go to extremes on the spiritual. We have already mentioned Coccejus who sought to spiritualize the whole of the Bible. Then there are others, the mystics, who have taken even greater liberties with the Scripture, and have interpreted away completely their original meaning. The cults have also done this same thing. They have not explained Scripture ; they have exploded it. They have not merely enlarged the meaning of Scripture; they have bankrupted it.

The whole object of Scripture is to bring to man what eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard. While natural and literal terms may be used, undoubtedly spiritual imports are intended. When we speak of justice and judgment, somehow our minds run to broader things than courts of law and judgments in this world. We have a tendency to think of spiritual things. All our thinking is shadowed and shaded by such concepts as the eternal nature of morals, and moral issues. This is not confined to the theologian, but is shared by the poet, the painter, the sculpturer, etc. Why? Because man has certain spiritual qualities of which he is conscious, and which the world everywhere mirrors to him — in the light and shadows, in the colors of the purple mountains, in the loveliness of a sunset, in the dunes of the desert with palms and cacti. Man cannot escape from himself, try as he will. And that means he must have spiritual overtones. So the Scriptures have for him spiritual signifi-

cance also. It is the very heart and purpose of Scripture to convey the deeper meaning for which his soul is forever on the search. That was true in the Old Testament, in the ritual of the priestly service. In Exodus 28:38, Moses says that the diadem or plate of gold, worn upon certain solemn occasions of state upon the high priest's head signifies that he bore in a vicarious and typical manner the sin of the holy things, and made an atonement for the imperfections of the Hebrew people in their offerings and sacrifices. In the Old Testament as well as the New (Leviticus 26:41; Deut. 10:16 30:6; Jeremiah 4:10, etc.) circumcision is mentioned not only as a thing of the flesh but also as a thing of the heart. And so Paul used it.

The rewards and punishments of human society, bringing the greatest satisfaction or the greatest grief, are almost always made to take on a deeper significance because of our referral of them to eternal things. We cannot seem to escape it, for we have spiritual qualities. General Rules for Determining the Sense of Scripture 1st. The most simple sense, the obvious sense, is the genuine meaning in almost all instances. If for any reason two lines of thought seem to be emerging from a passage, we should study carefully the whole context of the passage to see if indeed one of these thoughts seems to predominate. Perhaps the other thought is but secondary, — and incidental, picked up and pointed out by the divine writer, while the main thought is the one thing offered in the passage. And in that case, it becomes the real meaning of the passage. In the Apostle Paul's writing, as elsewhere pointed out thoughts seem to crowd his mind for the chance to be expressed or noted; but he resumes his main line of argument and goes on with it. The main thought is therefore the sense of the Scripture. A careful attention to the text, with native and unbiased honesty, will lead unerringly to the truth of any passage.

2nd. A simple and safe rule, nay, an indispensable rule, is never to read into a passage, from our own thinking, what it does not say. We must be free to let it say what it meant; and just as free not to make it mean more than it does say. We should take the sense of the Scripture, rather than to take a sense to it.

"This is one of the most ancient laws of interpretation extant, and cannot be sufficiently kept in mind, lest we should 'teach for doctrines the commandments of men' and impose our *narrow* and *limited* conceptions instead of the broad and general declarations of Scripture. For want of attending to this simple rule, how many forced and unnatural interpretations have been put upon the sacred writings — interpretations alike contradictory to the express meaning of other passages of Scripture, as well as derogatory from every idea we are taught to conceive of the justice and mercy of the Most High. It will suffice to illustrate this remark by one single passage: In John 3:16,17 we read that 'God, so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life: for God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might believe.' The plain, obvious and literal sense of this passage, as well as the whole context is that the whole of mankind (not the chosen few and elect only), including both Jews and Gentiles without exception to perish everlastingly, and utterly without the power of rescuing themselves from destruction; that God provided for their salvation by giving His Son to die for them; and that all who *believe* in Him, that is, who believe what God has spoken concerning Christ, His sacrifice, the end for which He suffered, and the way in which it is to be applied in order to become effectual; *that all who thus believe* shall not only be exempted from eternal perdition, but shall ulti-

mately have *eternal life*, in other words, be brought to eternal glory."¹

3rd. Unless there is something in a passage that is repugnant to reason and common sense, it is to be taken in its most obvious sense. It is simply repugnant to reason to believe, if indeed that were possible, in the doctrine of transubstantiation; that is, that when the thanks are offered for the bread and the fruit of the vine that they become the actual body and blood of Christ. Man's natural sense rebels. The bread still tastes like bread; the fruit of the vine still tastes like the fruit of the vine, fermented or unfermented, as the case may be. Yes, even if Christ did say, this is my body; this is my blood. God is the author of our senses as well as the author of the system of faith. They do not conflict. Our natural senses tell us what is one and what is the other. We are not asked to deny our reason and common sense to interpret a theological dogma. The dogma is wrong; our common sense and our sense of Scripture remain true.

4th. The plain and obvious literal meaning of a Scripture must not be abandoned unless something in the text makes it absolutely necessary. Fanciful interpretations are too much the interpretation of the day, when ill-advised scripturians, rashly take some conjectural meaning while ignoring entirely what the text would say. Such persons are convinced in advance that the text does not mean what it says, but means something else. It is like the case of the traveling man from Louisiana who asked N. B. Hardeman in Dallas once whether Christ meant water when He said water; that one must be born of water and the spirit. Brother Hardeman said, "No, He meant buttermilk. Since He did not mean what He said, but meant something else, and since He said water, He must have meant buttermilk!"

1. Home, op., cit., pages 499,500.

That, of course, was answering a fool according to his folly.

It would be extreme absurdity to say that the Holy Spirit contradicts Himself. If therefore anything is said anywhere that seems to be opposed to some other thought in Scripture, there must be an attempt to harmonize the thoughts. We may even doubt that Christ meant literally to pluck out the eye or cut off the hand, for that would be repugnant to common sense. He must therefore have meant to exercise complete censorship over the organs of the body, to the extent of denying them their natural functions, if they should hinder us in keeping the will of God. Or take again a statement, "My father is greater than I." This of course must refer to His humanity; not to His deity. He told the disciples that His father had sent Him. As the sender is greater than the one sent, He must have had reference to His coming in human flesh to be the Messiah. It requires very little reason and sophistry to reconcile these two thoughts. There can be no contradiction. Again He said, "I and the Father are one." And again He states that "the Father is greater than I." There is no conflict here. It depends upon the angle of view. Such is also true of any other Scripture that may seem to oppose one another. Rightly interpreted, there is harmony, and no conflict. This is true of the material side of man, mentioned in many Scriptures (Eccl. 9:6,-7) ; and also of the spiritual side of man, also mentioned in many passages. (Second Corinthians 5th chapter, for example) . The in harmony is not in the Scriptures, but in the mind of the pre-disposed student to cast one side away and keep only the other.

The Holy Spirit is the best interpreter of His own words when some thought seems to be obscure. Take the passage where Jesus said that the people were dull of hearing and their eyes they had closed. Unassisted by Jesus or the Holy Spirit this passage would be oblique and enigmatical; but

later He explained it, and how they had stopped their ears and closed their eyes. He said the devil had done it, but He gave also the means employed. So Scripture explains Scripture ; and the oblique, is made plain by other statements.

Where a natural interpretation is manifestly impossible, because physically impossible of fulfillment, we are forced to take another sense. Take the passage about the dead burying their dead. Physically a dead man cannot move to bury another dead man. We then are forced to some other explanation, and it comes to us that Jesus was talking about another kind of death; the spiritually dead were to bury the physically dead in this passage. (Matt. 8:22) We also get from the context that a spiritually alive man is under such an exigency to follow Him that he need not overly concern himself with the physically dead, even though such a person should be his father. What a conclusion leaps at us from this teaching! Is it irreverence ? No. It is the urgency of hearing and following the Word that will lead to everlasting life.

Interpreting Scripture by Scripture can easily be overdone, with the impression that all obscure passages are cleared up by parallel passages. There are actually not two passages that are strictly identical except in the history of the Old Testament, and then it is intended. Otherwise each passage is its own best interpretation. But more of that anon.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VIII

What is the sense of Scripture? How does one go about to find the sense of Scripture?

What is the literal sense of a passage of Scripture? How does one determine that a passage must be literal?

How does one determine that a passage must not be taken

literally? If a thing is repugnant to the natural sense, what must be true of the passage?

How may one discover that a passage has a typical meaning? Is there any indication? If there is no indication, is one justified in getting a typical sense from a passage on his own?

What is an allegory? What is the difference between an allegory and a fable? Do you know of any fables in the Bible?

How does one discover spiritual overtones in the Bible? Does the Bible lead naturally to spiritual thoughts or overtones?

What are some general rules for interpreting the Bible?

In what sense is native or intuitive honesty necessary for the understanding of the Bible?

CHAPTER IX

METHODS OF READING THE BIBLE

Paradoxically a General View is Necessary.

The Random Reader.

The Occasional Reader.

The Fanatical Reader.

The Biased Reader.

The Historical Method.

The Study of the Bible Book by Book.

Study of the Bible in Groups of Books.

Topical Study.

There Must Be a General View

The Apostle Paul said to Timothy: "Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." This of course was directed to a young preacher, but it could be well directed at all who desire to know divine truth. And study of this kind, vigorous, painstaking and laborious study, is to be found oftentimes where the least expected. In other words, the road to Bible learning is not closed. Any one who can show himself approved unto God a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. The divine revelation is open to all men. It depends upon the thirst of the soul; and the willingness to learn must also be there. Formal education is not strictly necessary. Application to the Word of life is. How many such fine students have you met here and there through life?

This writer has met many. And it is always a joy to meet them.

As the great McGarvey once said, "A study of the whole Bible is absolutely necessary to the attainment of general Scripture knowledge. It lies at the very beginning of a course of Scripture study, and it lays the only broad foundation for all subsequent study of Scripture topics. It is by this means alone that the gradual progress of revelation, and the consequent gradual elevation of mankind can be understood; and it may be doubted whether any one important event, or the composition of any one book of the Bible can be properly understood until it is viewed, as this method of study alone enables us to view it in the light of the events and writings which precede it, and of those which follow it."¹

The artist who would paint a beautiful landscape or seascape must see it as a whole, and get a general perspective before he can proceed to study the individual parts and incorporate them in his picture. He proceeds from the general to the particular. The over-all view, paradoxically, in forms the eye so that he can begin to work. Just so the Bible student. Until he looks at the Bible as a whole, as McGarvey observed, he cannot come to study successfully the individual parts. This naturally presupposes a mass of reading and thinking before one reaches the stage of particular study. From the earliest days one does absorb, in the average Christian atmosphere, some knowledge of the divine; but he does not really become an apt Bible student until afterwards. It may be that he even does not have this background, and later in life has to learn it all. Well, that too can be done, for Christianity is a religion that can be and is learned. In his eagerness to learn one must not forget the fact that every new advance broadens his perspec-

1. McGarvey, in Missouri Christian Lectures, 1883, Old Paths Book Club edition, page 86.

tive—helps him to get this panoramic view. In this way we can say with the poet

I doubt not one unceasing purpose runs And the
thought of man is widened with the process of the suns.

It matters not how complex a scene of nature presents to the eye, nor how divergent the individual parts, there is still nothing incongruous in nature. There is a harmony. Not only so, but there is always in the individual parts a very great simplicity. It is the attention to details later, after the inspiration of the moment bursts on the soul, that makes a great artist or a mediocre one. It is likewise the patient attention to the details after the general view is first seen, that makes the difference in Bible students. So with every branch of learning. The broad foundation is laid first.

The Random Reader

The random reader is the sort who goes to the Bible with a good impulse, but without purpose or plan. He simply picks up the Bible and reads, or reads some book that pertains to and is in some measure in explanation of the Bible, and casually reads. He leaves off just as casually. Then when he does read again, no purpose has been fixed. He may stumble across some thought that for a moment intrigues him, but with his haphazard approach to the most wonderful book in the world he can never get much from it. And then out of his sense of frustration he may think it is over his head, so to speak, it is not meant for him, and so he gets nowhere with Bible reading. He feels to start with that there are not distinctions in parts of the sacred writings; he finds no particular needs set up within himself; and he seeks no particular portions of Scripture that would help him. He is quite indistinct about it all. He perhaps

thinks that the Bible is the Bible and he can find his duty plain and simple on every page. Naturally, **he cannot**. There are some portions that are genealogy; other portions that are history; and yet other portions that are prophetic in character and need special application and study to make sense to him. The random reader is perhaps better than no reader at all, but nothing much can be done in this way. One must develop a purpose. He must have a general view of the Scripture. Then his interest will grow.

The Occasional Reader

No one of us is as consistent with life's purposes as he ought to be. So many things beckon us as we travel down the road of life. Even our fancies and tastes change. Old friends drift apart. New interests are made; new friends are found. Life can not only be interesting; it can also be frustrating and confusing. We can pursue one purpose for a while and then grow tired, and seek to accomplish something else. Some are worse than others in this respect. They never form objectives that seem reasonable. Sometimes one will persist in an unprofitable venture, wholly out of touch with reality. The difference between genius and frustration is sometimes very slight, however, and what we think is mere obstinacy in unreality may turn out to be the work of genius. It depends entirely on who is behind the effort. It depends again on the final nature of the thing, as to whether it can be accomplished. It depends again on whether by indirection that particular thing can finally be turned to human account. But the occasional person seldom accomplishes anything much. And this is also true of a Bible reader. We should develop an over-riding purpose in life; and that purpose should be to know the worth of the soul in the light of time and of eternity. And of course the most likely place to know of that is* in the inner searching which comes in connection with the out-

ward study of the Word of God. This is so vital that it should not be left to occasion just when one can find time and conditions favorable to the intention. One must take time for some things. It takes time for those little personal attentions that mean cleanliness of person. It also takes time for the preparations of the mind and person socially to meet favorably one's fellows. We have made great efforts at banqueting and social dining because of this contact with our fellows. This all takes time. We also must learn, and often by mistakes which mar our friendships, those nice little bearings, those little gestures of friendship that enhance our intercourse as human being. But one should never get too busy to live. He should never get too busy to care properly for his person. He has to organize himself to the utilitarian side of life. It of course does come to choices. One cannot do everything he would wish. He cannot be everywhere he would like. He cannot be everything he would like to be. He learns early in life that some self-denial must be practiced. It is always for his good. The man who is only occasionally nice to his friends will not long have friends. The one who is only occasionally particular with his person can not expect to be properly regarded as a desirable person to know. The one who just occasionally regards his manners and social habits can not expect to be invited to gatherings of the genteel. It is the one who is always nice to his friends; who is always careful of his person; who is always genteel in his social bearings who gets somewhere in life. And the same is true of Bible reading. It is not the occasional reader who does any good *ion* himself. He must be more serious than that about the Word of God. Slovenness will appear in any realm as the result of attitudes and bearings.

The Fanatical Reader

Just the opposite of the occasional reader is the too avid

reader, the fanatical reader, who reads too eagerly, like he was scared of going to perdition if he did not read. An overbalance of the religious ego is a bad, not a good sign. One sees it here and there. The person is consumed with some deep-seated desire, some forced inspiration, some pent-up emotion. If such person does not break **out** in ulcers, he may erupt in mental ways that are unpredictable. There is some sickness of the mind, perhaps, somewhere, something gnawing on his vitals. Such a person needs peace all right, but he is not going about getting it in a normal way. He is seeking to make religion bear the burden of something else underneath. It may be a deep-seated anxiety, a neurosis, a psychosis, "a mind diseased." Well, after some fashion, the whole human family is sick. Some view life as a sang froid affair; others as a dark tragedy. Balance is the thing. God meant us to be balanced, in spite of our worries and frustrations. There is given us at one and the same time, if imbued with the Christian hope, the peace that passes all understanding and the divine urge that leaves us never satisfied in this veil of tears. We are driven toward some far-off goal. We seek for a country whose builder and maker is God. Both these things are placed in us. Woe betide the man who loses the view of one of these and sees only the other. He is not then "in a straight betwixt the two." In the one case he has lost his brakes; in the other he has lost his motor. We are certainly on a journey. The guide to that journey is the reading of the guide-book, the Bible. Not fanatically, but calmly, as dispassionately as may be under the occasions of life itself. Not with sudden fury. Not with wild fanaticism.

The fanatical reader is always in danger also of seeing things out of proportion. His distorted fancy will make mountains out of molehills. He will seize on points and over-emphasize them, or even altogether misapply them. He becomes so afraid of the bugaboo of sin, as he views it,

maybe in a distorted view, that it colors all his thinking — makes him fanatical whenever he sees the words. He becomes so afraid of his own sordid past that he magnifies his salvation into a., supernatural realm where he cannot possibly live with himself over a period of years in sanity. He enjoys super-salvation, and is altogether removed from sin (so he tries to think) ; meantime there is a yen toward the world which he completely and fanatically denies. He simply is not a realist at all. The man's religion itself is a malady. This kind of a man can never read the Bible except in fanaticism.

The Biased Reader

We become biased from one cause or another, in rebellion oftentimes against one thing or another. A child reared without genuine motherly affection will likely develop a sense of frustration; or he may even develop a mother complex toward some motherly person whom he meets to take the place of the one he so sorely missed, but never admitted to himself. This is of course primarily a case for the psychologist. And he comes to grips with it. But minds become warped and biased. And they take this particular mental twist to the Scriptures to read and study them. It may be just transmitted opinions, as fetishes, which have been passed on to them as eternal truths. But they have been dinned into their ears until they are accepted. The mind is not left free. No, it is not inborn sin, as Emil Brunner believed, that kept men from seeing the truth of the Scriptures. It was something less ancient than the sin of Adam, but very influential in shaping their thought processes where the Bible is concerned.

One who has a set idea that in his own good time God will operate on his heart by the Holy Spirit and speak peace to his soul direct from the skies can hardly read the Bible without bias to see what it so plainly says for a sinner to do

in order to be saved. One can read right over passages like the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46,47, and then the application of these terms in faith, repentance and baptism in Acts 2:26-38 as announced to the people on Pentecost in Jerusalem, and never see what such things can mean to him. His bias takes away from him the Word of God and the fullness of its meaning. The biased reader will read in the New Testament of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and still think it is quite all right for him to be a member of some denominational church. His bias has set his thinking already. The Word of God does not really get through to him like it should.

One should really get his bias and partiality out of his mind when it comes to the Bible, He can afford to be biased on other things, like politics, or economic theories, or cultural notions, but he cannot afford to be biased when it comes to his eternal salvation. God is not biased. His Word is not biased. It is up to us to read it correctly and to take it without prejudice.

The Historical Method

It must be borne in mind that the Bible had definite historical settings — that it was placed in history, and grew out of history. Each section and part likewise had its own historical origin and setting. Each book of the Bible must be explained against its particular background and purpose, its author, its contents, the persons for whom intended, and the purpose of the writing. There will be special attention given to this division later on in this work, but we shall sketch it now. The historical method brings practical reality to the study of the Bible in its various parts. Each division of the Bible has its own historical setting, was engemed in history, but each book was also set in "history. This method requires us to read and understand any one

book, apart from the others, even of the same group. When this is accomplished and the framework of the book, showing the plan upon which it was constructed, is distinctly set forth, we are prepared for the more minute study of its parts. While reading it for this framework we usually become acquainted with its historical bearings, such as the time and the circumstance of its authorship, and the influences at work upon the mind of the author. The historical method of Psalms covers a long period, from the time of Moses until the time of the Babylonian captivity. Thus this book overlaps the books of Samuels, Kings, and many of the prophets. We group together again, the Kings, Chronicles, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc. The latter lived in the time of the close of the Judaic kings. Daniel lived after the exile in Babylon.

We can the better understand any book by undertaking to know the framework of the work. *The Bible As History* is a good book to read in view of the historical side. It took a journalist and not a theologian, not even an archaeologist or geologist to write that book.

The Study of the Bible Book by Book

It is false to say that Scripture always interprets Scripture. Sometimes that may be true; and again it may be quite untrue, for each several book was inspired, and had a purpose. It may have been that the purpose overlapped in different books, and the principles can be universally applied, but each book is a separate entity, and is independent in itself. If the thought dovetailed, it was because truth is always harmonious — not because the two books are the same. One notes that the thought on the church as the body of Christ pervades the Corinthian letter and the Ephesian letter; and this thought must be homogeneous and everywhere harmonious, for the figure is an apt and correct one. One may even gain some enlighten-

ment on one passage by comparison with another; but beyond that he would not be justified in going. The direction of each is different. Both were addressed to churches in Greek cities. Both had much in common. Each argued for the unity of the body of Christ and against seism. One must interpret the Ephesian letter in its own right; and the Corinthian letter in its own right. So with every book of the Bible. There is some subject matter in the Corinthian letter not contained in the Ephesian letter. There is some subject matter in every book of the Bible, no matter what the similarity with other passages may be, that makes it to differ from all other books. No book is there as a redundancy or superfluity. It takes every book in its entirety to complete the divine record. But after the general view it is necessary to study the Bible book by book, each in its separateness and uniqueness. In the broad diversity of the Bible one discovers a marvelous unity, a complete cohesion of every part to the organic whole. The personalities of the writers even stand out, and the historical peculiarities are oftentimes very bold; but the symmetry is all that one could desire. The book is the wonderment of the ages.

The Study of the Bible in Groups of Books

We have the devotional books, the Psalms, Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Proverbs. These books are Hebrew poetry. They are expressive of the very soul of the devotion of the Hebrews. And they remain patterns of thought and meditation after centuries of time. There is something everlasting about them. They are contained in Hebrew measurements of poetry in Smith's Old Testament and the Revised Standard Version. It is quite true that they also reflect the vengefulness of the Hebrew mind here and there toward their enemies. The Lord allowed that much of the natural human side to protrude in these books and meditations. But they also transcend here

and there the mere human passions so common to race and blood and a narrow nationalism. The Jews under divine inspiration rose above themselves after all. That can be seen in such magnificent passages as the pure paean of praise of the 148th Psalm. The poem is deathless in its grasp of the attribute of praise for the Almighty Creator, whom all creation praises, from the animate to the inanimate, from man to beast, from frost to the waves of the sea.

Another group of books that must be thought of as a group will be the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. They contain history, promises, the travels of the patriarchs, the sojourn in the wilderness, the establishment of the system of law at Mt. Sinai. Yet they are an essential unity, each having its part in the whole. Another grouping will be the books of Samuel, Chronicles and Kings. Here the history of the kingdom from its rise and through all its struggles, its division, its fall in separate units as the kingdom of Israel, the ten tribes, and the kingdom of Judah are told. Of course there should also be taken into study at this same time the prophesies of Jeremiah. Especially the brazenness of the last kings of Judah in burning the law, shutting up of Jeremiah in prison, etc. The historic pattern fits together here.

Another group will be the minor prophets. They are grouped in this way largely because their messages were more local and particular in scope than those of the major prophets. They had more local color, or were colored more by local events and circumstances. But many times they had also Messianic promises to make, and notably Zechariah. But they are usually grouped by common consent as the minor prophets.

In the New Testament we have the grouping of the Gospels, even though John's Gospel was written later than the Synoptic Gospels; and its character was also different. Its scope was different; its approach to Christ is different. It

belongs to about the era of the Apocalypse and the Epistles of John the Beloved.

Acts is a natural outgrowth and immediately subsequent to the Synoptic Gospels. It covers the history of the Apostolic church. We may also place a number of the letters as contemporary with the Acts of the Apostles, because the record is of the same period of time; notably the Galatian letter with the decisions of the council of Jerusalem on the subject of circumcision. (Acts 15.)

Topical Study

A study of the Bible by topics is also very helpful, when once the student has made himself fairly familiar with the general text. But the student needs to keep in mind the difference in the Old and New Testament passages when he comes to topical studies, or miss sometimes the import of a passage. By means of a good concordance one can correlate the passages bearing on any topic. He can even find abundant additional help these days in topical Bibles, such as Hitchcock's Topical Bible. In this work all the passages on a given subject are extracted and set in due order in their entirety in a classified way for the student to have all that is said on the subject. Of course the student should not confuse matters. He should keep the proper division of the word in mind, but even so this a great help. The work has largely been done for him already. Then there are numerous other works of a related character, dealing with different subjects, like David Brown's *Second Coming*. In this work he has gleaned the entire Bible for all that it says, and has classified it under different headings for the student. He has put his conclusions under nine different propositions so that a student may see what he feels the Scriptures teach on the subject. This is topical study of the first magnitude. It is seriously recommended for the careful and patient student as a guide, or at least, as a refer-

ence, that he may consider it. Topical study is so essential because of the very nature of the divine Word — here a little and there a little. It is not given in an encyclopedic form, all together and classified in one place. One topic may run all the way through the Bible, with just a little here and a little there. One needs to gather it up. But he ought to be very careful to keep each part in its place. Then it will make a beautiful mosaic — a true picture.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IX

Sow would you say we go about getting a general view of anything? Why is a general view first necessary?

What is the failure of random reading?

Can any substantial progress be made in the knowledge of the Bible by one who only occasionally reads the Bible? Is that better than no such study?

How would you say that one comes to have fanatical views of the Scriptures? Can it come from personal tragedy, or a sense of frustration, or a sense of over-anxiety?

What causes one to have a biased view of the Scriptures? Prejudice, up-bringing?

What is the historical method of interpreting the Scriptures? Why does it naturally suggest itself?

Should one try to comprehend the whole scope of a book of the Bible in order to get the historical method ?

What is the advantage of the study of the Bible in groups of books? Does one find some natural groupings? Where, and of what books?

CHAPTEK X

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN THE BIBLE

The Scope of Figures Discussed.
General Observations. Kinds of
Tropes. Classes of Metaphors.

Figurative language arose because men's imaginations outran their simple language when it was merely literal. Their imaginations began to conjure up images which they otherwise could not express. All classes of mankind have had recourse to figures of speech, where there was any imagination at all. Hence, figurative language, which in many instances is its richness, arose from its poverty. This ornamentation of speech or language is carried right into the Bible. Any Bible student must become aware of that right away when he begins to read the Bible. But it does not mean that he will have to know all the rules that are applied to figures to understand that they are figures. He may satisfactorily surmise the nature of the figures, or their import, without any rhetorical background, or any special study in the meaning of words (philology). His native sense will force him to realize that here is some kind of a figurative expression. The idea needs to be removed that only the scholars have access to the Bible because of the nature of its language. Regardless of the fact that the Bible contains all kinds of figures of speech, it nevertheless is a simple book — even in the figures.

Figures are prompted either by the imagination or the passions. And there are of course figures of words and figures of thought. Figures of words are usually called

tropes, and consist in the alteration of a word or sentence from the original meaning to a new usage. Here is one: "The Rock of Israel spoke to me." (2 Sam. 23:3) The trope in this case lies in the word rock, which is changed from its original sense, because we think of rock as something strong and durable in nature. Just that thought is transferred to the mind by the use of the figure. Again Jesus said to Herod, "Go tell that fox." The word fox is transferred to a human being with the implication that goes with the nature of the animal. One does not have to know language, or the rules of it, to get this thought. So figurative language is no barrier to understanding the Scripture; but figures richly embellish the thought.

The Scope of Figures

The scope of figures is always something more than can be relayed to the mind in the literal; it has spiritual imports; it reaches out through the imagination in imagery which the natural and literal may suggest for the purpose of embellishing the spiritual appreciation. There is something of creativity in every man. And there is a corresponding response to the creativeness of other minds. This sense advances with the advance of the mind itself. Of course there are those who let their imaginations run riot. They take undue liberty with reality. Swedenborg did this in his book, *Heaven or Hell*. He was not satisfied with what the Bible had to say. Others have been like him in some other particulars. Such imagination is distorted, childish, vain; unrelated to reality. It is not to be tolerated. This is not the scope of figures of speech at all. It is an undue license. In the scope of the figurative one must remain faithful to the word itself, and interpret it in the light of the language employed. One does not interpret Shakespeare with wild abandon. He tries to get the imagery of the poet in the situations employed and in the characterization selected to

set forth his thoughts. And Shakespeare did not employ a large vocabulary. He put words to new usages as to him seemed fit. His scope was the scope of his vivid imagination.

The Bible is a book of beautiful imagery. It came out of the East. Figures were everywhere employed. The Bible came out of what the writer of the book, *The Bible as History*, called the Golden Crescent. There was great diversity of nature from snow-capped Mt. Herman, the rich delta of the Nile, the rugged Judean hills, the fertile Euphrates Valley, and even the dun plains of Syria. In the main the climate was hospitable, the scenery varied and the imaginations aroused. The imagery was therefore great. Again, of course, there was always a struggle, on the part of mankind, to glimpse the spiritual imports of their lives; and the figurative to convey the spiritual was always necessary, for the spiritual is something more than the natural, as man is something more than an animal.

Standing in the shadow of the Temple Jesus said, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again." His hearers thought He meant the temple of Herod the Great. They said that it took forty-two years to build that temple, and how could He raise it up in three days? He spoke of the temple of His body.

The scope of figures then is the scope of the imagination of the mind itself. And in the case of the divine revelation, the imagery of the writers, presented the message more fully through the figures which they employed. The figurative is no handicap, even to the unlearned. Take the case of the language of Christ above as He applied it to His body. It does not take a professor to understand that. The statement with the explanation lies right at hand.

General Observations

: There are certain common sense factors which must be

observed in interpreting the Scriptures. One does not call a thing a figure just because it suits his fancy. It must be inherent in the text itself. One does not make a thing figurative to suit his own interpretation. For example, in the figure of the beginning of the life in the kingdom as new birth, Jesus describes the elements in John 3:5. He said it is of water and the spirit". He made no explanation of that. It was a figure, an analogy. He was contrasting the divine- order with the fleshly order. Now this writer had a man to say to him that the water was literal, as when one bursts out of his original encasement at his physical birth. Absurd! Even sacreligious Monumental ignorance! The man was trying to literalize a thing which Jesus did Himself not explain. Later on the inspired apostle did explain the order as faith, repentance, and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. (Acts. 2:26-38) It was the new birth, as Peter later said. (1 Pet. 1:21) One is not allowed to take liberty with the Scriptures, in figures or otherwise. There are certain common sense things that must be observed in the interpretation of Scripture, to determine whether a thing is literal or not.

1. The literal must be retained in essential details in the historical books, even more than in the poetical. In the historical one relates simple data, things in order, things that have occurred. And since facts are stubborn things, when facts are to be transmitted, as in the case of a military campaign, in the book of Joshua, for example, one must not take liberties. The text of fact is there. There may be something of the type of campaign but unless it is suggested elsewhere in Scripture, one does not have a right to conclude it from the book itself. He must stick to the facts.

2. The literal is given up only when it becomes necessary for consistency. Take this passage: "I have made thee a defended city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land." (Jeremiah 1:18) God would support

Jeremiah. Any one with an ounce of understanding knows that the passage could not be literal. But at the same time, whether he knows the nature of figurative language or not, he will get the idea.

3. When human characteristics are given to animals, and when animals, as subject matter, differs from the predicate, a passage cannot be taken literally. "Hear this word, O ye kine of Bashan, that are on the mountains of Samaria; that oppress the poor, that crush the needy; that say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink." (Amos 4:1) These mountains of Samaria were famous for their luxuriant herds and while there was wealth the poor of the land were neglected.

4. When the text or the meaning of the passage is contrary to common sense the literal must be given up.

Example: "Awake, why sleepest thou?" (Psalms 44:23)
The

allusion must have been to moral torpor, not to physical sleep, for we are told that the Lord who keeps Israel does not slumber, nor does He sleep. The Bible speaks of the filth of the daughters of Zion. This evidently did not mean physical uncleanness, but moral laxity. Isaiah speaks (1:5,6) of the Jewish nation as a man mortally wounded without medicine or the means of cure.

5. In interpreting figurative language one must be careful not to get too much out of the points of similitude, for there is something of similitude in every figure of speech. It requires care to get only what the figure is mean to convey. One cannot *press* a figure too far. Common sense and fairness are demanded here. Solomon, for example, said that the legs of the lame are unequal; so is a parable in the mouth of a fool.

6. The sense of a figurative passage will be known, if the resemblance becomes readily apparent to the reader. Hence, when David said something about walking in the way of the ungodly, the meaning dawns at once. One may not be

able to express it very well, but the thought has registered. One does not think of literal walking, with the muscular coordination necessary, directed by the motor nerve from the brain; he thinks rather of the condition of the one walking, how he is trammled by certain influences.

When the context gives the sense of the metaphor common sense will direct us." "Unto the upright there arisen light in the darkness" (Psalms 112:4). The Psalmist is simply expressing his faith that God will sustain the righteous in the time of the darkness of his life and will cause the sun of righteousness to shine upon him in spite of the pall and gloom that may envelope him in his earthly trials. What a sublime faith in God! In the New Testament light and darkness are frequently used to convey the idea of enlightenment or ignorance. "In Him was light, and the light was the life of men."

8. Sometimes the sense of a metaphor is known because the writer himself makes it known. Thus in the Book of Esther we are told that the Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor. The terms are themselves explained as joy and honor as the things of light and gladness. Hosea complains that the lasciviousness of the Jews had driven them astray; and then he adds the explanation that they burned incense upon the mountains and sacrificed in the hills.

9. The sense of the figurative may be ascertained by consulting parallel passages. A case in point would be where the prophets speak of Israel as a drunken person, forced to drink the dregs of the cup and then to fall down dead drunk. Compare Isaiah 51:17-23. Jerusalem is set forth as a drunken woman in this passage. It was the wickedness of the people.

Kinds of Tropes

It is not the purpose of the author of this book to try to be technical; but the very reverse. There are many learned

works to be consulted, but the interest here is to popularize the subject and make it intelligible to the average reader. This book is not designed for a special class, but for general and profitable enjoyable reading and study. However, we could not do less than barely to mention the different kind of tropes one meets with in the Bible.

"When we say one thing and mean another like it, it is a *metaphor*. A metaphor continued and often repeated, becomes an *allegory*. When we say one thing and mean another mutually depending, it is a *metonymy*. When we say one thing and mean another almost the same, it is a *synecdoche*. When we say one thing and mean an opposite or contrary, it is an *irony*. When a metaphor is carried to a great degree of boldness, it is an *hyperbole*; and when **at** first sound it seems a little harsh or shocking, and may be imagined to carry some impropriety in it, it is called a *catachresis*."

Metaphor

A metaphor may be beautiful, when taken from nature. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His beams." "Awake and sin not thou that dwellest in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs." Or a metaphor may be bold. "Thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground." "His wife looked back and became a pillar of salt." "The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, is made fat with fatness." "Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces thine enemies." "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and His ears are open unto their prayers." Both rude and bold: "With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together." "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured; coals were kindled by it." "Thou sentest forth thy wrath

and consumed them as stubble." Those who feel to criticise the Hebrews for their boldness in metaphors need to remember that in describing the Deity they did not mean to be sacrilegious, but their very boldness in the use of metaphors relieved some of the strong attributes of God.

The Allegory

According to our definition given above, and borrowed from A. Campbell's *Christianity Restored* (page 46) an allegory is a continued use of the metaphor in a succession of points for the sake of illustration. The story of Abraham and Sarah, Hagar and Ishmael, and of Isaac, from the Genesis account, is repeated in this way for point after point by the Apostle Paul in Galatians the 4th chapter for one of the greatest lessons in Scripture. It is in fact the outstanding use of the allegory in Scripture; and of the New Testament. It will amply repay you for a careful reading of it at any time. Another briefer allegory is recited to the Corinthian Church on the thought of leaven; that it needed to be purged out, lest it corrupt the whole church. Then there is another on the church as God's building in the 3rd chapter of First Corinthians. Different kinds of wood and their usage is discussed; the whole is swept by fire. There are several points of comparison; but the allegory is not so extensive as that in Galatians.

Metonymy

"A metonymy is a trope, by which we substitute one name for another appellation, as the cause for the effect, the effect for the cause; the subject for the adjunct, and the adjunct for the subject." Illustration: "Moses is read every sabbath day in the synagogue." Here the author is put for his writing. "The letter kills but the Spirit gives life." Here the letter is put for the law written on tables of stone; and the Spirit for the Gospel of the New Testa-

ment age. "The words that I speak unto you they are Spirit and they are life." The cause and effect are reversed here. But we know what was meant instantly, whether we know the particular figure or trope or not.

"Quench not the Spirit." "Be not shaken in mind, neither by Spirit or letter as from us, as that the day of the Lord is at hand." The Holy Spirit is put for his effects or operations here.

Sometimes the cause and the instrument are put for the thing effected by them, as "By the mouth of two or three witnesses."

Again, the effect for the cause. "I am the resurrection and the life." Here the effect gives a name for the cause.

By the adjunct is meant some property of the subject is put for the subject itself. Thus the heart is put for the understanding mind, thought, affections. "She said in her heart," etc. "The Lord has not given you a heart to perceive." Again, for memory. "Lay up His words in thy heart" — "Commune with thy heart." For the will and affections. "With all thy heart seek the Lord." For conscience. "David's heart smote him." The reins are also put for thoughts. "The righteous God trieth the reins and heart."

The adjunct put for the subject. "Circumcision nor uncircumcision" is put for Jew or Gentile.

The sign is often put, by the metonymy of the adjunct, for the thing signified. War is denoted by bows, spears, chariots, swords.

The putting of the badge of office for the office is common and beautiful. The mitre is for the priesthood; the sword for the military; the gown for the literary profession; the crown for royalty.

One thing is put for another. "This is my blood."

The Synecdoche

The synecdoche is that trope where one thing is put in

part for a whole, or a part for the whole. "The world wondered after the beast" — "A mover of sedition among **all** the nation of the Jews throughout the whole world." "An everlasting priesthood"; that is, while the Jewish state continued. The plural is sometimes put for the singular, as Jesus said, "We speak that we do know."

The part is put for the whole, as, "The evening and the morning were the first day." A general name is put for a particular one, as, "Preach the gospel to every creature," meaning all mankind.

Many may even denote all. "Many that sleep in the dust shall awake."

Irony

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs; cast not your pearls before swine." Elijah to the prophets of Baal: "Cry aloud for he is God; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey; or, peradventure, he sleeps, and must be awaked" (1 Kings 17:27) "No doubt but you are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." (Job 12:2) "Go, and cry to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation." (Eccl. 11:9) "Now you are full; now you are rich. You have reigned as kings without us." (1 Cor. 4:18)

Under this heading we may also place sarcasm. "Hail, king of the Jews." "Let Christ, the king of Israel, descend from the cross, that we may see and believe."

Hyperbole

This trope animates nature with the attributes of mankind, and gives inanimate nature the feelings and passions of men. "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands." (Isaiah 55:12) "His breath kindleth coals and a flame goeth forth out of his mouth. His eyes

are like the eyelids of the morning." (41:18) "I make my bed to swim — rivers of tears run down my eyes." (Psalms 119:136)

Catachresis

This trope shows the transference of some quality of an original object to a new usage. "I turned to see the voice that spake unto me." "And thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape." "Let thy right hand forget her cunning." "That thy days may be long in the land." A candle-holder was formerly made of wood, but a brass or silver candlestick is a catachresis. Brass looking glasses is of the same class. (Exodus 28:8) This is about as brief a run down as we can make of the principle tropes. The interested student may pursue his studies elsewhere, in complete works of hermeneutics.

Classes of Metaphors

The whole range of nature has been used to try to picture the divine to mankind. God, His nature and acts are pictured in all the elements that men know in order to convey what he means or can mean to mankind. "For our God is a consuming fire." Smoke and darkness and tempest accompanied His descent to Mt. Sinai. Nature was **moved in**, sympathy with the crucifixion of Christ. The human form has been exhausted to convey the actions of God to the world. His ears hear; His eyes see; His nose smells **out** their provocations when God contemplates the actions **of** men and women. This usage of human attributes is called anthropopathy. But we are not to get the wrong idea. These are human adaptations merely. The divine cannot be literalized in these mere physical attributes.

Metaphors are taken from everything in the world, whether substances or qualities, natural or artificial in an attempt to convey the idea of the divine to the mind of man.

1. To illustrate animate things by animate. "I am the shepherd of the sheep." "In that day there shall be one shepherd and one sheepfold, or flock." But of course the inferior is put for the superior. However, there is a characteristic of the shepherd which is primarily in mind here; and that pictures Christ's interest in the flock, as the shepherd has an interest in his flock. There comes across *to* us in this metaphor a certain quality or interest which we need to understand about the divine care for human-kind. That only is meant in this particular figure.

2. To illustrate inanimate or strictly material things by animate, or things which possess human qualities. "For this we know, the whole creation (animate and inanimate alike) groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now." Thus the woes of evil and suffering pass right on down to all creation; and all creation must suffer in pain until the end of the ages, when there will be an interruption of this sad system of things, brought on by man's sins. This figure of universal affliction of nature because of evil is brought out further in the 6th chapter of Hebrews where thorns and thistles are related to man's ills; and the universal burning at the end is pictured as being in sympathy with eternal judgment.

3. To illustrate animate things by inanimate, as when Christ said that He was the door of the sheepfold. Or again He said that He was the Way, the Truth and the Life. So prominent did this thought become that the apostle to the Gentiles spoke of finding any of this Way. It is spoken of as the new and living Way. (Hebrews 10th chapter).

4. To illustrate inanimate things by inanimate. Thus religion is called a good foundation, laid up for the future; or the vessels of a house are mentioned as good and honorable or for ill usage —, vessels of gold and silver, or wood and earth. (1 Tim. 6:19; 2 Tim. 2:20) In such passage while inanimate things are used the idea is to convey **paral-**

Iels of qualities and services of- a human kind, while the human kind is only inferentially conveyed.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER X

Is it natural for mankind to seek to convey different qualities of thought and life by means of figures of speech?

Does one have to be learned, and to know the rules of figures of speech in order to get what the Bible says in figures?

How wide is the scope of figures in the Bible? As wide as any other book?

How diverse are figures of speech in the Bible?

What is the difference between a parable and an allegory? What of a hyperbole?

What characteristics are conveyed in the figures of speech in the Bible?

What was the chief vehicle of expression used by our Lord in his teaching?

CHAPTER XI

BIBLE INFERENCES OR CORRECT BIBLE DEDUCTIONS

The Bible Is a Book of Precepts.

The Bible Is a Book of Examples.

The Bible Is a Book of Prophetical Conclusions — Promises
and Threats.

The Bible Is a Book of Scripture Premises. The Bible
Is a Book of Deductions and Conclusions.

The Bible furnishes man completely as a guide. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." (2 Tim. 8:16) It would be unthinkable that God would propose a guide-book, and leave out some of the required and necessary details. He did not. Yet there were times when God did not spell out every detail, as in negation He did not tell us what not to do, but He told us what to do. The positive dispels the negative. God did not say thou shalt not do this and thou shalt not do that. It would have required a volume many times as large as our present Bible for Him to have said we should leave off this and we should leave off that. He did not tell us to leave off incense in the New Testament, while He had it in the Old. Just the fact that the apostles by inspiration did not institute it as a practice in the Church automatically leaves it off in the New Testament. For it to be included, it would have to be somewhere mentioned, and it is not a single time. It therefore was left

off. Nowhere did God mention in the lives and actions of the apostles, by actual incidence, the sprinkling of babies as baptism. He left it off. He did not have to expressly prohibit it, for he expressly commanded a baptism of believers, and infants can not be believers. (Mark 16:15,16) The guide-book is complete, but it does not tell a man what not to do; it tells him, rather, what to do. That is ample. While this should be mentioned in passing, it is not the main point of this chapter.

The Bible Is a Book of Precepts

While the Bible has much to say of a geographical nature, much of an historical nature, much of a national kind, it yet abounds in precepts that are moral or positive in character. (The moral and the positive have already been pointed out in the comments of Grotius). It is a book of precept upon precept, precept upon precept. That means statement upon statement is made in the nature of precepts or laws and commandments to direct aright the way of man. One must bear in mind of course whether the precept is national, with moral principles underlying; whether it is historical in scope, affecting a particular period in history and a particular people. The Ten Commandments Law was of this kind — national and historical. It was given to the Jews — "us, even us who are all of us here alive this day." It was not given to the fathers. It had its inception in time and place, and historical circumstance. That circumstance was the bringing of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. Therefore, the Lord gave them the sabbath day. (Exodus 19 and 20; Deuteronomy 4 and five) The first four commandments were positive, dealing with man toward God; the latter six moral, dealing with man in his relationships with his fellowman. Yet they were all precepts. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" would be a commandment, or precept fraught with the gravest consequences, for to

forsake God and to take up heathenism would lead them into the immorality of the heathen. They would follow these heathen gods into the twilight. So with every precept of the law; and all others that had any bearing upon the theocratic system of the Hebrews.

Even the prophets uttered precepts — things that had moral consequences. The Psalmist David and other Hebrew poets did likewise. Solomon uttered great precepts. Not a one of them but that would produce wholesome results. The Bible is a book of precepts, speaking with authority in the realm of human behaviour.

There are even certain limitations to be placed upon moral precepts. Take, for example, the commandment, "Be ye angry and sin not." We must understand this to be without a proper cause or just provocation. We are not to avenge ourselves; privately we are not to seek justice at our own hands. Public vengeance will have to suffice, for God has provided the minister of the civil arm for that very purpose. The Lord is righteously indignant with some things and men, even though his judgment for a long time lingers. The precept referred to above, while it has moral leanings, denotes also that self-control that makes for personal exemplification of the divine life in a Christian. One is to show himself a pattern for good works. The principle of the precept will be good for any one to follow; it is imperative for the Christian.

The Bible Is a Book of Examples

"For Christ did not please Himself; but, as it is written, 'The reproaches of those who reproach thee fell on me.' For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope." (Romans 15:3,4) "I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea,

and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same supernatural food and all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless with most of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

"Now these things are warnings for us, not to desire evil as they did. Do not be idolators as some of them were; as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to dance.' We must not indulge in immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put the Lord to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents; nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they are written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages are come. Therefore let any one who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10:1-13) "A man who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:29) God did not spare the angels that sinned; but shut them upon in gloom until the day of judgment; and he used Noah as an example of righteousness. (2 Pet. 2:4-10). God used Cain, Balaam and Korah as examples of rebellion and disaster, as teachers for us to follow not into unrighteousness. (Jude. 11,12) We may say that all the Bible history gives us a picture of the reward of the righteous and the afflictions of the wicked. So all Bible history means a lot to the Christian. In the eleventh chapter of the Hebrew letter the writer introduces us to the hall of fame of the great of the ages past. "And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon,

Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets — who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with sword; they were about in the skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated — of whom the world was not worthy — wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

"And these all, though well attested by faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect." (Heb. 11:32-40, R. S. V.)

Of course God also teaches by type and antitype, but we shall reserve that until we come to the division of the historic interpretation of the Scriptures.

The Bible Is a Book of Prophetic Conclusions

There are two classes of prophecies — one class that we can see already historically fulfilled, such as those of Daniel on the four universal empires from his day; and those yet* in the process of being fulfilled, or yet to be fulfilled. Admittedly, in the latter case there are very grave difficulties, and the wary approaches the subject with great caution. On the other hand, there is a class of mind that habitually runs to prophecy, understanding very little of the nature of prophecy itself. This class of would-be interpreters can think of nothing else. Their weird interpretations, differing one from another, and oftentimes contradictory one to another, fill the air by way of radio, etc. These

prophets of doom see in each new historic development the whole purpose of the ages taking shape — all history converging to an end. And oftentimes, every prophecy is taken entirely out of its setting to produce the effect. A safe rule is to take the individual prophecy, view it in its historic setting, against the background of the prophet himself, in view of his purpose and end, and usually the prophecy does not become too difficult to understand. Let us take the dire prophecies of Deuteronomy the 28th chapter against Israel as a nation if they turned to other gods and away from the God of Jacob. The forces of nature would be turned against them; the land would not produce; mildew and blasts and drouths would consume the land. The Lord would turn their land to powder and dust. It was so for centuries. They were scattered over the world; they were made a hiss and a byword among all nations, as in many cases they are even now. They would, because of the famine in the siege, eat their own flesh. Josephus says this was done. What a curse, indeed.

There were numerous short-range prophecies in the Old Testament which were fulfilled. Take, for instance, the altar of Jereboam; it was used as a place for the sacrifice of men's bones. Or take the case of the prophecy upon the last king of Judah that he should go to Babylon but should not see it. His eyes were put out before he went. There were many other prophecies that were fulfilled within a span of some centuries of their utterance. Most notable were those of Daniel uttered upon the fate of the Great Image, with its head of gold, its shoulders of silver, its belly of brass, and its legs of iron and its feet of iron mingled with clay. All except those who have an ulterior doctrinal purpose, to set up the establishment of the kingdom at yet some future date, accept this prophecy as being fulfilled in Babyloniaian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian kingdom and the Roman empire. In fact the outline and the interpreta-

tion both in prophecy and history is too definite to admit of any tampering except on the part of the extremists, who have an axe to grind. Also the seventy weeks of Daniel reach a fulfillment in the Messiah and His coming. There is some difficulty among commentators on establishing the beginning date from the different decrees of the restoration of Jerusalem, the temple, etc., but the general conclusion is agreeable among the leading commentators.

Again, there are many prophecies centering in the Messiah which have also been fulfilled. There are quotations of different passages of the Old Testament messages in application to the Messiah, such as in Acts 8th chapter, in reference to Isaiah 53rd chapter to admit of anything else, in spite of the liberal scholars. Then again there are quotations from other Old Testament prophets in the case of the lives and actions of the apostles (as Joel 2:28 in Acts 2nd chapter) which admit of no other conclusions. A large number of prophecies are clear and clearly fulfilled. The speculator should have no trouble here.

There are other prophecies in the New Testament that have also been fulfilled. Take the case of the great apostasy outlined by the apostles, notably the Apostle Paul in Thessalonians; and then turn and read history in the light of such prophecies and one is amazed at what has happened. Standing here in the second half of the Twentieth century, if we should look over the Dark Ages, during a thousand years when the word of God was taken from the people, we should about conclude that Christianity was a complete failure. But looking at the prophecy and its fulfillment, our faith is not destroyed, but strengthened. So both in the Old Testament and in the New there are many prophecies fulfilled, and we can see them. But there are yet other prophecies that remain unclear.

One simply cannot read the Bible in its entirety and leave out the element of prophecy. And there is no stronger

evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures than can be found in the historic fulfillment of the Scriptures, after centuries have gone by from the time of their utterance.

Promises and Threat of Prophecies

It can be safely said that throughout the Bible, in the Old Testament and in the New, God has pronounced His blessings upon the man who follows His will and curses the man who refuses His will. When the people of Israel crossed over the River Jordan God had them assembled in Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizem as mountains of blessings and cursing. One reads this record in Deuteronomy the 27th and the 28th chapters. One was called the mount of blessings and the other the mount of cursing. And of course the Lord's blessings and cursings were conditional — depending on how the people themselves reacted to the will of God. "And if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord." Then followed the blessings. Afterwards there also followed the cursings if they were disobedient — a long list of them reaching into the dim future. The burden of all the prophets of the Old Testament was to the effect that God would bless or curse them as they received or rejected His way. And when we pass over to the New Testament the same sort of thing holds true, even though the promises become spiritual rather than physical. Some of those promises have already been noted in the Roman letter and quoted with reference to eternal blessings. Such is the character of the prophets of both the Old and New Testaments; and such the character of God in all generations. He knows how to reserve the unjust until the day of judgment to be punished.

The Bible Is a Book of Scripture Promises

A promise is usually an axiomatic truth, needing no proof. The mere statement of it amounts to an acceptance ; it is a postulate. In the realm of moral values the Bible throughout is filled with things of this kind. When it spares a thing that is axiomatic there is usually approbation in every unprejudiced heart. And of course the Bible is quite unique in this regard. It asserts precepts without the danger of successful contradiction. They amount to proverbs, which are concrete statements of acknowledged truth, or truth which the author presumes will readily be admitted as such. Take the statement, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." What if there are exceptions here and there ? The rule is still true. What of other conditions and other elements which may come in life? The rule, while there may be exceptions, is still true. Good training should prevail to the advantage of the child. This must be admitted. And so the moral, the proverb, or the precept. Again, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." This is so universally true that it is stated as a plain matter of fact. All mankind, if at all rational, must admit that righteousness is an asset to a people; wickedness, perversion of justice, unfairness in the courts and in private life must be decried by all right thinking people. The statement, not admitting of fundamental exceptions, is set forth as a postulate. The Bible is filled with this kind of statements throughout. It is a book of precepts. The statement, "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles" while put by Christ in the form of a question is directed toward life in making the tree good and the fruit good, or the tree corrupt and the fruit corrupt, as He said. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Barring the minor exceptions which may come even in the life of a good man, one is known by his deeds and conduct as surely as a tree

is known by its fruit. This is a truism. It would have to be admitted to be true in the Bible or out. But it so happens that the Bible in this regard is positively unique. What other book or human record deals so authoritatively with moral values as does the Bible? It is in harmony with its claims to be divine, to come from God. This moral imperiousness finds its ready acceptance in the moral constitution of man; he is made for it; it appeals to him because designed for him. This is why it is an inerradicable book, an indestructible book.

The Bible Is a Book of Deductions and Conclusions

While the Bible is a book of precepts and moral values succinctly stated, at the same time it but barely projects some truths which it does not propose to round out to the utmost to satisfy whims and fancies of the mystical. Man is left to the exercise of some common sense in the conclusions which will come to him. And he dare not, on pain of the anathemas of heaven, go beyond that which is written. A contradiction? No, if man will properly confine himself to the deductions from Scripture premises set forth.

There are many false deductions from Scripture. They are conclusions which are not warranted from the text itself, but are only in the imaginations of the interpreters. Here is a rather simple rule upon that subject: In oral discourse, only those persons addressed, unless the speaker specifically otherwise provides, can properly be included in any promises that he may make. Take as an illustration the whole of the discourse of Jesus to his disciples on the night of the betrayal, after the institution of the Lord's Supper, and before his arrest. He made many promises to the disciples on that night, with the exception of Judas, who was not of the company, but had gone out to betray Him. The discourse is recorded in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of John's Gospel. Very many of the state-

ments made there concerned the apostles themselves, and related to the exercise of the office of the apostleship by divine aid after the Lord should be taken from them. They were promised the Holy Spirit as a comforter. Why? Because they would need such comfort when Christ should be removed from them. The shepherd should be smitten and the sheep would be scattered'. They, after three and a half years, would be left suddenly without their leader; and the whole of their work should seem to lie in ruin about them, with no objective in sight. They would need comfort in an extreme sense. And so He gave them the promise of the Holy Spirit as a comforter. It is true, inferentially, that every Christian, in whose heart the Holy Spirit abides, will receive comfort from him, but not in the extreme sense, because there was not the extreme need as in the case of the apostles. We are not warranted in deducing the conclusions of such a comforting as the apostles had. Again, the apostles were promised the Holy Spirit to bring to their remembrance all things Christ had said unto them. No one who has not, as in the case of the apostles, heard the very words of Christ, can expect the remembrance-producing effect of the Holy Spirit which the apostles had promised to them. And yet again, Christ promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth. Why? They were to set forth by the aid of the Holy Spirit the divine pattern for the church and the Gospel plan of salvation for all mankind for all ages to come. The Spirit would guide them into all truth. And of course he did. They left nothing unsaid that ought to be said. We have it all. Nothing at all has been added since the apostles taught. They gave us by the Holy Spirit all truth. That promise was made to them, by the speaker. But does not this beautiful discourse then have any promises for the Christian today? Yes. He sees, first of all, how Christianity was born; he sees behind scenes the sacred influence at work;

and behind the scene he sees all the spiritual connections that enliven his interest in every way. The apostles labored for us. The setting in operation of their office by divine aid inspires us. And as we see behind the scenes, other glories come to us. "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there you may be also." Yes, He was going away, but He would come again and receive them unto Himself. There were many mansions. They would live in mansions in the next order. He did not say it would be in the next world and beyond the death of the cross, but He *inferred* it, and later they *knew* it. And not only that, but all Christian gain the same thought and hope because He made it to them. But there are other certain things which He specifically promised to them out of their own particular circumstances that concerned them and them alone; and that applied to them and to them alone. *We must rightly divide the word of truth!* Or we shall end in fateful errors that common sense and a little attention to the text will obviate completely. Let us see the apostles in their particular setting and need. Let us correctly evaluate the text in the light of their particular need. This is properly called the historical interpretation of the Scriptures.

On the inferential basis, let us look at some conclusions that are brought to us by considering the whole nature of a book, for example, John's Gospel, on the subject of life and death. John spoke in a peculiar sense, a sort of an ellipsis oftentimes, stating one side only for emphasis. For instance, "He that believeth on me believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me." When we supply what the full text must mean we should read, "He that believeth on me believeth not on me (only), but on him that sent me (also)." In other words, Jesus, in the words of John, was saying that faith in God meant faith in Him; and faith in His words meant faith in God who sent Him. One could not separate

the two. Now John used in the same way the doctrine of life — he but partially stated it, not meaning to leave off the other, but to emphasize what he did have to say. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my sayings he shall never see death." (John 8:51) And then the broad statement, "Truly many other signs did Jesus in the midst of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written that you might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name." (John 20:30,31) It is obvious from other sections of the book of the Gospel of John (Lazarus was raised from the dead, and Jesus promises many mansions in the life to come) that Jesus and John knew the prevalence of death, which they did not mean to deny, but the promise of life was so much greater that the emphasis was placed there. "He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and me that liveth and believeth on me shall never die"; that is, he shall survive the grave in spirit, and live forever. That was the teaching of Jesus and the wording of John. The prediction is inescapable. He who reads the text ignoring the side which Jesus refused to emphasize will end up at the grave just the same, and will nurse a delusion while he lives. Jesus was not thus un-factual, but his emphasis was elsewhere.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XI

Do you believe that God left out any essential details for man's redemption?

Does the positive automatically deny the negative in divine revelation?

If the apostles did not institute a practice or set an example is it therefore to be left off? In what realm would you say that this applies?

Is our guide-book, the Bible, complete? (**2 Tim. 3:16-17.**)

Is the Bible a book of precepts? (Isaiah 28:9-13.)

Did "the law" (the Ten Commandments) have its inception in time and place and circumstances? Whom did it affect?

How does the Bible speak by examples? (1 Cor. 10:7-13; Rom. 15:4.)

Are principles of history able to rise above an age or era? Are those principles, barring local circumstances, applicable to other ages? What is the danger, if any, of interpreting those principles in our day?

Is an individual prophecy to be interpreted in the light of its own setting?

Can we be reasonably certain about the fulfillment of some of the prophecies in the Old and New Testaments?

Can we leave out the element of prophesy and have the Bible complete?

Were God's blessings upon Israel conditional?

Has God held forth promises and threats in all of Bible history? What of the future of mankind in regard to rewards and punishments? How far does God go in rewarding man wholly on his merits? How would you fit grace into this thinking?

CHAPTER XII

HOW TO CONSTRUE THE MIRACULOUS IN READING THE BIBLE

The Nature of Miracles. Miracles
Throughout the Bible. Miracles
Under Moses. Miracles of Christ.
Miracles of the Apostles.
Miracles in the Apostolic Age.

One who reads the Bible must confront the subject of the miraculous. It is a part of the Bible in all ages. One simply cannot ignore the subject and read the Bible intelligently and understandingly. How he approaches the subject depends on a lot of factors, less factual according to Holy Writ, than on the conditions of his own thinking; and sometimes that is influenced by his wishes or even the state of his health. It may be largely influenced by his previous teaching or his assumptions. In most cases predilections are formed from outside sources or influences. One comes to have certain ideas about the miraculous separate and apart from what the Bible might teach. But it must be admitted that the miraculous is in the Bible throughout. And what could be more consistent with divine revelation than that the Supreme Being should make some manifestation of himself in one way or another through natural law and in a way that is understandable in human terms: that is, in material manifestation? One might almost say that it becomes a necessary part of the divine communication called the Bible that it should be supported by miracles. At

least, every new thing, or era or new epoch or new age should be introduced by the element of the supernatural for its acceptance.

The Nature of Miracles

What, then, is a miracle? Hobbes said that a miracle is impossible because it is contrary to human experience. He certainly over-stated himself. He did not have all human experience. Maybe some one had a different experience somewhere else and in a different age. A miracle does not necessarily contradict natural law. It may supplement it or abridge it, or supersede it. One cannot say that a miracle contradicts natural law, and is for that reason unreasonable. There was an abridgement when Christ turned water into wine. Certain processes were not required to operate in this case, such as the fermentation from the juice into wine. The liquid element was there; and that was essential. Liquid was used. The pots were first filled at Christ's command. The supernatural was also there, of course. It took the interposition of divine power to accomplish the desired result. And the result of that was that the miracle became known; the supernatural acts of Christ as a supernatural person with supernatural attainments became a matter of fact in human history. A testimonial of the divine was furnished. It simply became essential to believe in a supernatural person if He were to be accepted as the Son of God. The world could do no less, and still admit His Sonship. The miraculous became an essential ingredient of His life and ministry. His claims and miracles were entirely compatible. But one can admit all this, and all that it implies, and still not read the Bible as supporting in every age and in every person alike the same miraculous element. The fact is that the Bible is a matter of history, rooted in history, and with historic contents. The miracul-

ous is a part of that history, well authenticated and substantiated by competent witnesses.

One may say that it is the nature or purpose of miracles to substantiate the message which such miracles support. They are not primary within themselves, but are to support the messenger in his claims. And in the case of the miracles of the Bible there was never any hokum, never any shade of doubt as to their reality. They were not in the twilight between truth and error, capable of being interpreted one way or the other. They were always clear-cut and definite. Not so modern pretenders and their miracles, attended by excitement and mass hysteria.

Miracles Throughout the Bible

The Bible starts off with the miracle of creation; the bringing of order out of chaos, the beginning of vegetable life; the beginning by creation miraculously of the life of fishes of the sea, of animal life; and finally of the life of man. It is not stated that the creation was a miracle, but it was of the first magnitude. Natural law was inherent in everything to produce after its kind also and this is a continuing miracle. God placed every seed within the species to produce after its kind, and set in operation the law of procreation, which has been operating ever since. Men may now and then talk about spontaneous generation, but it has not yet been proved. The miracle of reproduction, while not called a miracle, goes on from generation to generation, and the lily continues "to spring from the dark and mould." It matters not which was first, the hen or the egg, it took a miracle to set the cycle in motion. Man must presuppose that life is already eternally recurrent, or believe in the miracle of the beginning some time in the distant past. Life eternally recurrent but eternally mortal would require some explanation; and a miracle of creation is as simple as the former would be. The Bible account of how life came to our

world must be true. And the miraculous is implicit in it. So the Bible begins with a miracle. It is not too far removed from the original plan when universal corruption sets in, and the flood is sent. That too, while maybe more or less local, was a miracle. After the flood the Tower of Babel was started, and the speech was confounded. The race was scattered; language barriers sprang up. It did happen, somehow. It is a fact.

The Hebrew nation was formed as outlined in Genesis. A nation was nourished in the bosom of another nation. And then it was expelled. It was not coalesced or merged, or absorbed: it was expelled. And ten miracles were used by the great leader of this nation to bring them out to the base of Mt. Sinai. There this leader, Moses, received an extraordinary code of law called the Ten Commandments. He set in motion a system which for moral excellence has not been surpassed even unto this day. But it did have the weaknesses described in the New Testament, as being those that centered in the flesh, to which the law made appeals, where it was seated, which was its base of operation. The New Testament is superior because it appeals to the heart and emotion, to the sense of honor. But the Old Testament order was founded upon miracles. With a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm God brought them forth and secured them to Himself by miracles. One cannot read the Old Testament and exclude miracles from the account. True, he does not claim the miraculous because Moses had miraculous power. That would be absurd. Many of the prophets had miraculous power after the time of Moses. Elijah called down fire from heaven and consumed men. Elijah caused iron to float. On the behalf of Daniel the angel stopped the mouths of the lions.

Miracles Under Christ

In the New Testament Christ performed miracles, even

to the raising of the dead. He gave miraculous power to the apostles also. Christianity was born in the midst of miracles to support its claims, as Judaism was born in the midst of miracles to support its claims. When John the Baptist was languishing in prison he began to wonder whether he had really introduced the Christ. He sent messengers, out of his discouragement, to verify the point, although he did say that he had that assurance when he baptized Jesus. (John 1:31,35) Jesus sent back the word, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense in me." (Matt. 11:4-6) There was no categorical and direct answer to still his troubled heart; only the deeds of Christ, the miraculous deeds were to be told him; and that would satisfy his anxiety. And what deeds they were! Some were stupendous; others just plain, but far-reaching in their consequences—the poor have the gospel preached into them. And the latter to the mind of Christ was as great evidence of his divinity and mission as raising of the dead! It was the concern of the heart of the Messiah for the poor! Not to fleece them for gain, as religious racketeers today do, but to preach the gospel to them. Christianity was founded upon the miracles of Christ; not the least of which was the preaching of the gospel to the poor. They had long been neglected in the schemes of man; but not in the thoughts of God and in the ministry and mission of Christ.

We need not here to review the whole story of the glorious power of Jesus manifested in the supernatural. He was to be believed for His words, and He was to be believed for His works. He said to believe for the very works' sake. That is, the works He did were to proclaim his Messiahship, as He sent back word to John. They were to convince any one

of an honest mind among all his auditors wherever he went. His miracles were the support of His claims. Now manifestly while Christ possessed such power, without limit, He could not make the healing the primary point of concern in his ministry. It was always subordinate to His main purpose — His purpose to die for the sins of the world, to be raised for our justification. The flesh is heir to many ills. All flesh is weak, and all flesh must die. The healing ministry of Christ was more for the soul than for the body as the soul or spirit is more important than the body. The body, according to Christian doctrine, is but the tabernacle where the spirit or soul dwells. There is no use, in a frenzy of concern for the body, to overlook this point. It would make a mockery of the ministry of Christ; it would, and in some instances it does, do untold harm to a just interpretation of the religion of Christ. One must deal with the miraculous in the ministry of Christ in order correctly to read the Bible.

The founding of Christianity was coextensive with the miraculous in the person of Christ; and later in the persons of the apostles. But that does not mean the perpetuation of the miraculous in all ages, any more than the perpetuation of the miraculous in the case of Judaism. Each system was set in an historic epoch, attended by miracles in its inception. Nothing more can properly be said of either.

Miracles Under the Apostles

The Lord Jesus Christ gave the apostles divine power over physical ailments, and over embodied demons, and over disturbed minds. He did this under the first and limited commission which He gave them (Matt. 10th chapter) to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "Freely ye have received; freely give." And they exercised this power frequently. There came a time when they met a condition that was too much for them. Their faith was too

weak. They did not have faith as a grain of mustard seed. They could have removed mountains and uprooted trees with this power if they had understood it and have believed sufficiently in it. "This kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer," he said to them about a particularly stubborn case of a demon-possessed person.

When Christ came to close-His earthly ministry with the apostles He gave them another promise of extraordinary power. "And these signs shall follow them that believe; they shall cast out devils; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly poison they shall be healed; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." The antecedents of the pronouns in this passage (Mark 16:15-21), the "they and them" will be found to go back to the believing among the apostles. They were the ones given the promise of the miraculous power. Please study the text carefully. And remember that a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person and number and gender. Anyway, the apostles were promised extraordinary power, which they possessed after the Lord's departure from among them. This the record unfolds. And certain of these powers they could not and did not delegate. We find a case of this sort in Acts 8th chapter, among the Samaritans after their conversion by Phillip, and a visit to them by the apostles Peter and John. They went to Samaria to lay hands on the new converts, that through the laying on of the apostles' hands, they might receive gifts of the Holy Spirit. Such a power was not transmissable to Phillip, or exercised by Phillip. It was held only by the apostles, the record plainly shows. While some others did possess extraordinary powers, the apostles were supreme in this sense. The Apostle Paul said to the Corinthians that he possessed more gifts (of the Holy Spirit) than they all — than all of them put together. But they did not change his attitude toward the gospel. And even he did not heal every one who

came to him. Trophimus he left at Miletus sick. Why, if he possessed such power? Answer, God did not allow a spectacular use of that power apart from a specific purpose, and that purpose was to convince the unbeliever. Apparently there were no unbelievers present when Trophimus was left sick. The power was not used selfishly, as charlatans claim to use it today.

The power of speaking in tongues and the power of healing the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple skyrocketed the fame of the apostles in the preaching of the gospel. Christianity was not only launched by the miracle of the resurrection, but by the miracles of the apostles in Jerusalem with Pentecost and immediately afterward. Christianity began with miracles. One must accept that fact to accept Christianity at all. But why miracles to launch Christianity? Because miracles backed up the message of the gospel. "And the disciples went everywhere preaching the word; and the Lord worked with them, confirming the word with signs following." (Mark 16:30) The confirmation of the message was the miraculous which attended them. All the apostles had it, not excepting the Apostle to the Gentiles, the Apostle Paul. It was considered an essential. Any apostle today without the power to raise the dead or to heal the sick completely, would be a mere fraud — the wrong use of the very word itself as one sent attended by divine power.

The Lord did not intend for the power of miracles to continue with the same vogue after the time of the apostles, and after the founding of Christianity. In the first place, the apostles had extraordinary powers which could not, and needed not to be, transmitted. That has already been noted. In the second place, the miraculous was to confirm the gospel message. When that message was fully presented and fully confirmed the very purpose of miracles ceased; and they automatically came to an end. "Love never ends, as

for prophecy it will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away." (1 Cor. 13:-4, 5). In *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the infidel historian Gibbon, in commenting on the state of Christianity in the Roman Empire, said that the office of prophet became baneful and it was removed from among the people. Paul said that it would be made to end. The historian said that it did end. This was also true of the other- spiritual gifts.

\ The Hebrew writer speaks of the employment of miracles in the establishment of Christianity in this way: "It (the gospel) was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard Him (the apostles), while God bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His own will." (Hebrews 2:3,4) Notice how the writer puts all this in the past tense. It was spoken, God attested it, God bore witness. The gospel was preached, first by the Lord, then by those who heard Him. God gave power to set it up and attest it, to establish it. It had been done in the time of the Hebrew Epistle.

Miracles in the Apostolic Age

There was a degree of confusion over miracles in the early infant church, owing to immaturity. Some sought to exploit this power to their advantage. Simon Magus wanted to buy the power the Apostles Peter and John had, according to the eighth chapter of Acts. He had mercenary ends in view. He was severely rebuked. The Corinthian Church also had some misunderstandings of this power, and no doubt some would have used it to their own ends if they could have. Today one is fatuously told that he cannot use this power because one does not believe. In the days of the apostles the Apostle Paul said that signs were to those who believe not. Thus the dim claims of perverts are denied

by the Apostle. Signs were performed before the unbelieving to make believers of them; and spiritual gifts were also given to the early church to edification, in the absence of the completed apostolic record. When that record was complete, spiritual gifts were no longer needed, and they ceased, as the Apostle Paul said they would.

One simply must confront the record of miracles in the Bible. How he reads about them, in the historic conception, is very essential to a correct understanding of the Bible.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XII

Must one accept the miraculous if he accepts the Bible as inspired ?

Have miracles been recorded as being true in all the great ages of religion — the Patriarchal, the Jewish and the Christian?

How would you define a miracle? It is contrary to natural law?

Is the recurrence in nature of biological reproduction less startling than a miracle after all?

Are the facts of human history, consonant with natural events, such as the many languages spoken in the world today, as suggested in the story of the tower of Babel, not best explained by the Bible account? Is there a better explanation, on the creation of the thirteen major families of languages of mankind, than that story?

What were the great miracles under Moses? Can you name them?

Do we not have the greatest concentration of miracles recorded in the life of Christ — both in nature and content? Does this not harmonize with His claims, and the prophecies concentrated in Him?

Is the preaching of the Gospel to the poor as great a work as working miracles? How did Christ classify it?

Can you properly separate a historic account of a miracle from the age it helped to launch?

Over what did Christ give the apostles power? Did the apostles meet conditions which by miracle they could not control? Why?

To whom did Jesus make the promise of miraculous power in the Great Commission? (Mark 16:15-20.) To all believers indiscriminately, or to the apostles?

Could the apostles delegate miraculous power? (Acts 8th chapter.)

Why did Paul leave Trophimus at Miletus sick? What was the limitation of his power to heal?

What about apostles today who have no miraculous power?

Why the use of the past tense in the 2nd chapter of Hebrews in regard to miracles?

Were signs to believers or to non-believers? (1 Cor. 14th chapter.)

CHAPTER XIII

PRACTICAL READING OF THE BIBLE

To Increase Our Knowledge. To Profit Our Hearts. To Elevate Our Thoughts.
To Balance the Spiritual Over Against the Material. To Heighten Our Appreciation of God and His Providence. To Meet Doctrinal Shibboleths, Yes, But Even More Than That.

There is much in the Bible which is merely informative, and has to do with the origin of the race, the introduction of sin and the development of the scheme of redemption through the ages of the past. All of this does have a bearing ultimately on our thinking. It does not, however, have to do immediately with codes of conduct for us. Yet the Bible, barring such exceptions, is an infinitely practical book. The practice of its precepts makes for a fuller and more enjoyable life. And while Jesus contemplated with inevitable certainty the suffering of the cross well in advance of His time to die, He still could say, "Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy!" His joy in God was superior to all the evils which men could do unto Him. Reading the Bible aright will bring joy, for one will come to know God and Christ in reading the record which God gave of His Son. It is interesting to note also the great faith our Lord had in the generosity of the human heart, while He called certain ones hypocrites, and knew them to be hypocrites. He even called them a generation of vipers. But he still be-

lied in the goodness of the race as exemplified in the common man. He said, "Give and it shall be given unto you—good measure, pressed down, shaken together, heaped up and running over shall men give into your bosom." Oh the joy of believing in the common man! Emerson said one time that he always met a man with a new appreciation of onne who was made in the image of God. It is practical to believe in one's fellowman, for Jesus was right about it. Of course there are exceptions. But it is practical and happiness-giving to believe that. And reading the Bible brings that knowledge.

To Increase Our Knowledge

' It is practical again because it teaches one to practice the art of living and to bring his knowledge and his experience together. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." We through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope. It becomes evident that as our knowledge of God increases we can know more how to function in harmony with His will; and that will make for happiness. And this practical side is not reserved for one class alone, but is for all men who will read and profit by their reading. And all men of a sound mind may.

One should read to increase his knowledge. There is not a thing in the world that can take the place of knowledge. Of John the Baptist it was said: "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to the people in the forgiveness of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, when the day shall dawn upon

us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet in the way of perfect peace." (Luke 1:76-79) "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." Not anything at all can take the place of knowledge.

Before King Agrippa when the Apostle Paul made his great defense he said that he had the mission given to him by Christ to go to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive the remission of their sins and an inheritance among the sanctified at last as a result. It all depended on the knowledge of the gospel which he was to impart. He was to open the eyes of their understanding. (Col. 1:18) The Gospel of Christ, as the great climax of the ages, has the power to accomplish this. It is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. That is no doubt why Jesus wanted it preached to every creature in all the world. But it is also comforting to know that one may now read it also in the privacy of his own home, in addition to hearing the exposition of it by some capable man. The reading of the Bible increases knowledge.

To Profit Our Hearts

Where one's knowledge goes ultimately his affections must penetrate for a permanent interest to develop. His heart is the seat of power. Knowledge apart from the interest of the heart can never transform a life. A sustained interest comes from a heart-interest. In the Bible sense the heart embraces the affections and emotions of a man as well as his reasoning power. Certain persons were said to reason in their hearts. Again Solomon said that the heart knows his own bitterness. He meant not only knowledge; emotions were involved as well. In this case, remorseful emotions. Jesus said that out of the heart proceed evil

thoughts — murders, adulteries, fornication, uncleanness. And again he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." We are to purify our hearts because the days are evil. In other words, we are not to succumb to the evils of the world. We are to keep our hearts with all diligence, for out of them are the issues of life. A quickened brain apart from increased heart-interest is a curse to a person. His power for knavery or wickedness is increased, if the governor of his heart is removed. One reads the Bible for the purpose of reassuring his heart, of consoling his heart, of profiting his heart.

To Elevate His Thoughts

One cannot live in the realm where the great and the good of the ages past have lived and not have his thoughts elevated. It is true that in the Bible he has an impartial survey of the lives of men and women; their faults exposed the same as their virtues; but this factual and honest portrayal of their lives invites his respect for the faithfulness of the record, causes him to know the seat and cause of their frailties ; and even their faults point out the way he should *not* go. There is nothing destructive to character-building in the divine account; for God has seen to that. What a marvelous book! Why, we even love Simon Peter the more as we see the pressures building up in him, his momentary deflection or deviation; his reversal of himself, when the motivation can not be one of profit. He invites our sympathy and understanding. We love him for his being a man. We sense our kindredness with him. It is, in fact, inescapable. From there on we follow him with renewed interest and affection. Yes, we see him again quail before a difficult circumstance which built up in the succession of events of an historic sort when he was among the Gentiles at Antioch in Syria. He was a man of emotions. He could be found in the valley; but what glorious heights he could

reach when the occasion was right. We cannot conceive of Pentecost without him; nor the opening of the way to the Gentiles. He was there through a fortuitous combination of circumstances divinely directed! Or take again the sublime and heroic Apostle Paul. What privations and evils he suffered! How manfully he conducted himself under all circumstances. He never quailed; he never doubted, so far as the record is concerned; he never abated his sublime efforts or his great confidence in the ultimate triumph of the Gospel of Christ. How our thoughts are elevated as we go with him on all his journeys; on his final voyage to Rome, the capital of the world. Here is a man's man. Here is a hero of the heroes. Our thoughts are elevated by all that he says and all he does. There is a fine consistency in him throughout. We hear him cry, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me." He is at once bumble and daring; brave and retiring; self-effacing and strongly contentious. He knew himself. He said that of our weakness he was made strong. His strength did come in weakness; his boldness was under control when it might have gotten out of hand and made him truculent or a braggart. He commended himself to every man who had judgment. One has his thoughts elevated as he travels with Paul the Apostle. He sees new vistas of divine purpose in the panorama of an unfolding life. He catches something of that spirit also. "Follow me as I follow Christ," he hears Paul say.

To Balance the Spiritual Over Against the Material

Jesus knew that the material world always seeks to encroach upon the spiritual order. He recognized the fact that man has his bodily needs. He needs food, clothing, and shelter. However, the shelter part did not seem to bother our Lord. He lived very close to nature in the Galilean hills, and spent whole nights among them in prayer and

meditation. His was a rather hospitable climate, close to the sea. Christ was in this sense a child of nature. No one could have been more adaptable to its every mood and whim. He knew it altogether. He even controlled it altogether, calming the wind, etc. But He was quite aware that mankind has a way of advancing the material to a position of prominence in its thinking. He early met the test in the temptation in the wilderness when He was offered the suggestion that He turn the stones into bread; when He was offered all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them if He would surrender His ideals for the spiritual. That He would not do. He showed plainly what He thought about the physical side when He talked in the Sermon on the Mount. "Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon the earth," he said. Here moth and rust will corrupt and thieves will break through and steal. It is not safe; it will corrode and waste, or thieves will steal it. But there is a wealth which one can lay up in the next world that will never lose its value. Thieves cannot steal it; rust cannot corrode it; moths cannot gnaw it. It is not a perishable wealth. What is it? He did not define it, but it is spiritual and is therefore eternal in nature. And one can lay it up. He can store it. How? Evidently by what he does here in terms of thoughts and human service — by meditation and sublime idealism. As he withdraws his thoughts from the material he transfers them to the spiritual. And they take on eternal shapes in the order to come. He did not define it, of course, but he did say it. And he believed it. He lived a life in complete harmony with that evaluation. He simply was not of this world. He told the apostles that they could not heighten their stature by thought; they could not prolong life by a span. God had made ample provision for that. He had shown it in the color of the grass, in the growing of the lily, in provision for the birds. The material for the material God had made ample provision to meet on all

orders. Man was to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. All his natural needs would be provided. And yet Jesus did not mean man to be wholly indifferent to the need for work. He taught man to pray for his daily bread — and He taught him to work for it. He himself was a son of toil. He was not averse to that. But it could not in the very nature of the case be made primary in man's thinking. It would certainly lead him astray if he did become concerned about it.

In balancing the spiritual against the material, the soul was placed in the ascendancy; and nothing could ever weigh enough to bring that down. If it should ever become unbalanced and the material should assume the ascendancy in the balance, man would lose his soul forever. What a thought was this! And Jesus dared to believe it. He dared to teach it; he dared to live it also! Again, what a life!

The strange thing about it all was that the milk of human kindness was not lost in this set of values. The same teacher could teach the lesson about the Good Samaritan, or give the parable of the Judgment Scene where every man will be judged by what he does for his neighbor.

To Heighten Our Appreciation of God and His Providence

Of course there are as many interpretations of God as there are basic concepts in theology. If one is a liberal or modernist, he thinks that the idea of God has been developed over the centuries. If he is a conservative he thinks that the attempts of the liberal thus to interpret God are arbitrary separations of thoughts of different Scriptures here and there; that all told, the results of all the Scriptures do not show so much a developing idea of God so much as they show different slants of view by this writer or that, in connection with the mountains, or the heavens, or agriculture, etc., rather than a God at one time of the mountains, at another of the heavens, at still another, of agri-

cultural bounty, etc. At no one time and in no one place throughout the Old Testament did all that could be said about God come to be couched in one text or one phraseology. And yet again, undoubtedly, different ones did have different understandings of God, according to their own preparation of heart and mind, the limits of their own experience with Deity, et cetera. At the same time the moral grandeur of some of the prophets of the Old Testament, which would to some extent reflect their understanding of God, can not be excelled in any age. This was notably true of Isaiah.

One might even go further and take the statement of Karl Barth that God has not left His track at all in history, or religion; that His track which is thus so far removed, cannot interpret Him at all to the world. He is, as Neibuhr has said, "the deus absconditus," the vanishing or disappearing God. But these points, from the liberal to the dialectical theologian, are more in the minds of the theologians than in the pages of Holy Writ. The Bible itself does deal fundamentally with the thought and question of God. The Bible is the book of God — not merely about theology. And whatever the interpretations of the God of the Bible may be by the theologians, or the moral grandeur of Him from the major prophets of the Old Testament, it must be admitted that the one and only source book in determining the nature and attributes of God, His relationships to the world of nature and of mankind, must be found in the Bible itself. And while we often see the terror of the Lord in the Old Testament, we must come to the Christ for a completely favorable interpretation of God as a God of infinite care for all his creatures. One might conjecture it from the amplitude of nature in its prodigality in supplying the needs of man, but there was a need for the Christ to draw the curtain aside and show us God. That He did in the Sermon on the Mount. Christ saw God in all nature, and the

operation of all natural laws for the good of man. The Apostle Paul saw God as directing the governments of the world for the good of man. (Romans 13) We may safely say then that the reading of the Bible brings a heightened appreciation of God to the individual man and reader; and that the providence of God stands out as a fundamental doctrine on the pages of the Bible. God is always represented as reacting favorably to the good deeds of the righteous, as in the figure of the green bay tree, to the scattering by the wind of the chaff, which is the way of the wicked. Not only does the Bible picture God in this light, but man's heart is inclined to agree with this interpretation of God set forth in the Scriptures, both in the Old Testament and in the New.

To Meet the Doctrines of Party Shibboleths

One should never place his religion on a purely negative basis, to set it against something else. Yet he needs to be so conversant with the teaching of the Bible on every subject that he can immediately recall to his mind the passages that may bear upon the subject that one may bring to him, to determine whether the doctrine is true or false. "There are many false prophets gone out into the world." And the Bible is called upon to support almost every false doctrine that one can think about. It must, perforce, do yoeman service to every evil cause; it must buttress every false tenet of religion. In the Old Testament a certain test word was given to determine whether a man was a true Hebrew or a pretender. The test word was "Shibboleth." The pretender could not fashion to say it. He would say something else instead, like sibboleth. There are party words in use today that are given specific uses by their devotees. In the mouths of such partisans they mean something different. Every sect has its own specific shibboleths. It may be that the words or phrases do have a Scriptural connotation, but

as used now, they denote something different and special. One needs to know his Bible well enough to know whether the text or Scripture is used correctly. He is not to believe every wind of doctrine. He must try the spirits whether they be of God; and the way to try them is by the word of God itself. Every man must in some measure be able to do this for himself. "If any man come to you and bring not this doctrine, ask him not in and bid him not God's speed; for he that biddest him God's speed is partaker with him of his evil." One simply must be prepared to receive or reject the false teachers. They are always peddling their religion now from door to door all over the world. And the one and only source is the Bible itself. Even in apostolic times the Apostle Paul said of the leaders of the people (elders) that they must by sound words be able to exhort and to convince the gainsayer. Every man must save his own soul by the way he receives truth and rejects error. Error is as much to be rejected as the truth is to be received. And one must read his Bible to be able to do this.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIII

Is the Bible set in terms of practicality? Is the belief in the common man practical? How did Jesus express the idea?

What did the prophet say about John the Baptist's imparting knowledge ?

How was Paul to open the eyes of the blind? What did he mean by this thought?

Would you say that there must be a relationship between Bible knowledge and heart-power for one to be profited by Bible study?

How is the heart profited ?

What is the Bible heart?

Where did Jesus say that evil originates? Also where does good originate?

What effect will it have on one to read the thoughts about the great and the noble in Bible history?

Does the Bible account of human weaknesses, as in the case of Simon Peter, cause one to deteriorate?

What was Paul's great strength born of?

Was Jesus "a child of nature"? How did

Jesus define eternal values?

How can one store up imperishable wealth today? Is not this the very opposite of the views of such a fictitious character as Silas Marner?

How did Jesus place the soul in ascendancy? What is His language on the subject?

Does the excellency of the character of God show in the prophets of the Old Testament in spite of their messages being in the main directed toward the short-comings of man, or nations?

Will the reading of the Bible heighten our appreciation of the order of divine providence?

Did the Apostle Paul believe that God holds the governments of the world in review and calls them to account?

Are distinct nomenclatures of speech and religious clichés one of the chief barriers to unity of religion?

Is each one equipped, in the divine view, to receive truth or error?

CHAPTER XIV

DOUBLE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

The Double Fulfillment of Prophecy.

'the More Immediate Fulfillment of Prophecy Grows Out of a National Need.

- A. The Highway of Holiness.
- B. The Trees Clapping Their Hands.
- C. The Great Revival on Jerusalem.
- D. Prophecies Centering on the Tabernacle.
- E. Prophecies Centering on Revived Worship.
- F. Prophecies Centering on a Reborn Nation.
- G. Prophecies Centering on the Temple.

The Spiritual Fulfillment, the Second Meaning, Based on the First, Has a Point of Similarity, But Different Features Also.

There has been some discussion heretofore (Chapter 11) in the briefest form (a mere allusion), there now seems to be a need for a more particular discussion of the double meaning of many of the prophecies of the Old Testament. This does not mean the double sense, for no double sense is-intended, but there is a double meaning or significance to quite a number of prophecies in the Old Testament. It is not in a mystical sense that the prophet thinks, but perhaps in terms which he himself did not comprehend, as a part of the hidden mystery in the ages past from which he projects a meaning not in some respects like the one which he sees. It is like seeing a double rainbow in the skies in a

shower of rain, one above the other. This scribe remembers well one like that, with a hint of a triple rainbow above the two, over the Firth of Fourth in Scotland some years ago. The double was a spiritual phenomenon which the prophets did not interpret, but it was left to a later day and to other interpreters to glimpse the meaning of the second rainbow, so to speak. In each case, if such was intended by the Almighty, it has since been so interpreted by one of His servants.

**The More Immediate Fulfillment Grows Out of
a National Need**

No prophecy at all was projected without a historic background to give it urgency and meaning at the time. Isaiah, for instance, lived in perilous times; he lived in decadent times. The fortunes of the people of Israel were low, and out of their moral decline they were to become lower still. He prophesied the destruction of their kings and the return of judges when there was more justice. He foresaw the destruction of the kingdom of Judah as well as the ruin of the already vanquished kingdom of Israel. And he foresaw and foretold the taking of the Jews captive to Babylon. But he saw also out of the calamity of his people, the return, after the captivity, of his people into Canaan from the East. And out of this prophecy, immediate in service to the people in their national need, he saw another journey, a celestial journey with joy and everlasting happiness upon their heads. Who can for a moment think that Isaiah meant only the physical return of his people in the beautiful 35th chapter? Isaiah saw the constant burning wastes of Edom in Transjordan in chapter 34. That is still literally fulfilled. Read it carefully in the light of its present condition. And then read the beautiful 35th chapter. It is not long. Let's reproduce it here from the Revised Standard text:

A. The Highway of Holiness

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, The desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands, ,
and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who are of a fearful heart, :|
"Be strong, fear not!
Behold your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing with joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, . and the thirsty grounds springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, and the grass shall become reeds and rushes

· A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not pass over it,
and fools shall not err therein.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come upon it;
they shall not be found there.
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing,
with everlasting joy upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

This return to Zion when all nature was made auspicious was pictured as the first return, the actual physical return, from the Babylonia captivity. It grew out of the national picture and the national need. But there is projected from this another journey, the second rainbow, so to speak, when the journey would be made to the Spiritual Zion. This is a case of that double meaning of prophecy — not the double sense of Scripture.

Following right along in kind, but in different verbiage in imagery, the Lord again shows us the second rainbow from the first in Isaiah 55th chapter. Let us also have it in its entirety, because it pictures the thought so beautifully:

B. The Trees Clapping Their Hands

Ho, every one who thirsts, come to the waters;
and he who has no money, come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
Why spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Hearken diligently to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in fatness.
Incline your ear and come to me;
hear that your soul may live;
and I will make you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.
Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.
Behold, you shall call nations that you know not,
and nations that knew you not shall run to you,
because of the Lord your God,
and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.
Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, and call upon
him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and
the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the
Lord, that he may have mercy upon him,

and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, - so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; 'it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I propose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

For you shall go out in joy,
and be led forth **in peace**;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall break forth in singing,
and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall be to he Lord for a memorial,
for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off.

This great return, after repentance, would come to Israel. All nature would rejoice on their behalf. The desert should rejoice and blossom as the rose. The trees should clap their hands in delight. Unwanted growths would die out, and only the beautiful would come instead. This of course was the return after the Babylonia captivity, as in the case in the 35th chapter. But the double meaning, or double significance is given in this case as the second rainbow. In this case David (Jesus) should be their king; all nations would be welcome in this restoration. It would be a spiritual restoration under Christ. All nations began to be invited by the apostles after Pentecost. It was to have a New Testament fulfillment. And of course it did. Isaiah was simply full of such double prophesies. He based always the

first fulfillment on natural and national Israel as a fulfillment out of their plight; but he projected spiritual fulfillment of many of his prophecies.

C. The Great Revival of the Jerusalem Center

Isaiah saw the decadence of Jerusalem. That, as a great patriot, bothered him. He wished to see its glory maintained. Jerusalem as the great capital of David was much in his thoughts. He projected those thoughts frequently in his prophecies, always showing a restoration of Jerusalem (with Zion) to its former glory. As the prophet saw Jerusalem in desolation, with her commerce gone and her wealth dissipated, he saw the great capital again a center of commerce, wealth and activity — and glory. He was seeing the first rainbow. But God was projecting at the same time through him the second. Take the 60th chapter. "It shall be called the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel." The 62nd chapter: "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest." The 65th chapter: "For behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and will be glad in her." The 66th chapter: "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her — behold I will extend prosperity to her like a river, and the wealth of nations like an overflowing stream." "As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem." "And they shall bring your brethren from all nations as an offering to the Lord, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem." Isaiah saw the dispersions, and the return. But the second rainbow, whether he realized it or not, was held aloft. And that reached the Jerusalem of the apostolic era. The dispensationalist and the future kingdomists try to project these thoughts yet further into the future, but portions of this section of Isaiah are quoted in the New Testa-

ment as fulfilled, notably the first part of the 65th chapter.

The great Jerusalem center of revival is envisaged by Isaiah all the way through. We have such in the 2nd chapter. That of course, referring to the new law and the new order, and all nations flowing to it, began with Pentecost, in the year 33rd A. D.

Other prophets were also concerned with Jerusalem and Zion in this double sense of prophecy; especially Zechariah 'In the 14th chapter.

\ A correct reading of Scripture must embrace this feature of prophecy, or the reader is lost or confused. The confusion is not in the records. It must be in shadowy interpretations and mystical and un-factual conclusions.

D. Prophecies Centering on the Tabernacle

The Tabernacle of the Old Testament was in the time of the major prophets, a thing of the past. They lived in the time of the temple, being itself moulded on the pattern of the tabernacle. But the tabernacle continued to occupy their thoughts for a number of reasons, and not one of the least was the glory of God in the Shekinah of Glory as he hovered over the tabernacle in the Wilderness. In other words, it was a rich symbol of their spiritual inheritance. Ionian exiles, saw, in a figurative sense, the tabernacle neglected, and the divine worship forgot. This grieved them. They wished for restoration — not of the actual tabernacle of David, or even of Moses in the Wilderness. They managed to associate the tabernacle in their minds with their great king. There should therefore be a complete restoration both of the worship and the glory of Israel. The prophetic imagery, as the first rainbow, was projected from their own national helplessness and need. Amos exactly expressed it. And that was quoted in the apostolic council. The apostles saw the second rainbow; the prophets the

first. The apostles quoted the prophecy as a fulfillment of the second rainbow promise, and applied it to the Christian age. Study carefully the 15th chapter of Acts.

E. Prophecies Centering on a Revived Worship

Again the symbolism of certain things in the life of national Israel betokened devotion and worship; and the neglect of them betokened a loss of spiritual interest. Much had fallen into decay among the Israelites in the time of the prophets. They prophesied a revival of Jewish days, seasons and occasions. Take the New moons, the sabbaths and the feast days. They were being neglected. The prophets foretold a revival. From new moon to new moon, from sabbath to sabbath Isaiah prophesied a revival of spiritual emphasis. But this was joined with the second rainbow, not in a literal sense as of Jewish days and seasons, but as a time of revived spiritual interest this thought was projected in connection with the revival of Jerusalem. (Last chapter of Isaiah). In Zechariah there is a prophecy of the revival of the feast of booths, and the annual trek up to Jerusalem for that purpose. This signified something to Zechariah, who saw the discontinuance of the first feast of booths. It meant more in the double meaning of prophecy — not literally, but symbolically it meant a revival of spiritual interest.

F. Prophecies Centering on a Reborn Nation

Isaiah again was the prophet to whom for grandeur, both moral and prophetic, we owe the most in this field. He saw a new order, which he called a new heaven and a new earth. He saw also a nation born in one day. Before Zion travailed she brought forth, before her pain came she was delivered of a man child. The nation born in one day was the New Testament order — the new nation who formerly were not a people, but now were the people of God. Out of a de-

stroyed nation, reduced to slavery, and sold into foreign hands, he saw a new nation rise in grandeur; but while he perhaps visioned a nation of men and women, God had him to picture a nation, of spiritual life and power. That came with the new birth of the Christ and the Christian religion. Isaiah perhaps built in prophecy better than he knew. He was among the prophets who searched what or what manner of time the Spirit which was in him did signify when it testified beforehand the suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow. He projected the second rainbow; and today we see it in retrospect, in the light of both prophecy and history.

G. Prophecies Centering on the Temple

The Babylonians destroyed the great temple of Solomon. They razed it to the ground. It was in ruins for years. And it was in this time that prophecies were uttered concerning its rebuilding. Zerubbabel was given the sad duty, with whatever means he could get together, to rebuild the temple. During this time prophecies were made on rebuilding the temple which had fallen down or been destroyed. Notably in Zechariah 6th chapter. The first element of that promise seemed to center in Joshua, the son of Jehosidaz the priest. But the prophecy centered in the second instance in the man whose name was the branch, and concerned **not** only the priestly office but also the kingly office, for the two offices were shared, and peacefully and in amity in the same person, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was both priest king and priest. So while the temple as first rebuilt did have a reference in the mind of the prophet, but obliquely, and further off, the Lord and His temple was meant by the prophet at the same time. This is another case of the double significance of the prophecy.

**Point of Similarity; Points of Dissimilarity Also
in Such Prophecies**

One cannot make Scripture walk on all fours. A prophecy with a double significance has its meeting points in the first and the second points of fulfillment, but there are other points that cannot be pressed. The points of similarity will appear to the thinking student, but he will be careful not to seek to press more into the prophecy than the Lord evidently intends, both in the original passage, and in the application, where it is so done by a divine writer, or in divine explanation. A good case in point is the prophecy of Amos concerning the tabernacle of David, and the fulfillment of it as quoted by the apostles in Acts 15th chapter. Now no faithful Bible student will have any trouble with that, for we have enough of an explanation. So, in principle, with all other prophecies with a double significance. What cannot be determined by common sense and the use of comparable texts bearing on the subject will be left strictly in the realm of the silence of the Almighty.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIV

Is the beautiful prophecy of Israel's return (from the Babylonian captivity) in Isaiah 35th chapter, wherein all is made glorious in nature for them, concerned with anything more than this? Does it have any allusions to the Christian age? Does this prophecy contain such a double significance?

Does not prophecy, especially in the Old Testament, base itself on some national need, or take significance from such a historic background?

Did the prophets of the Old Testament, notably Isaiah and Zechariah, project spiritual fulfillment based upon natural and national needs of their own people?

Who was the second David of the Prophet Isaiah?

Was Jerusalem made the center of the hopes of all mankind in the thinking and prophecy of Isaiah? (Isaiah 2:1-4; 65th and 66th chapters.)

What is meant by the expression, "All nations shall flow from it"?

Must such prophetic utterances include the double meaning for one to arrive at correct conclusions? What added light is shed by the use of such symbolism?

Is there a danger in over-interpreting, or misdirecting such usage?

In the type of the tabernacle, what allusions do we have to the new order?

How did the apostle reason about the subject of the tabernacle? (Acts 15th chapter.)

What is meant by the new moons, feast days, etc., in prophecy? Just restoration or a new order?

Do such references center on New Testament worship also?

In talking of a new nation, born in one day, what did Isaiah mean?

In the prophecy on the temple (Zechariah 6:7(8), did the prophet mean more than the restoration of physical Israel? How do you go about proving that he did?

Was not the Man whose name is the Branch, to be both priest and king in connection with this new temple and its services?

How far is one justified in pressing the double significance of prophecy?

Must one leave in the silence of infinity what God has not by some means projected in prophecy?

CHAPTER XV

THE CONTEXT IN INTERPRETING THE SCRIPTURE

Contexts in the Bible are Seldom, if ever Parallel.
Subject Matter of a Context. Determining the
Boundaries of a Text. Use of the Parenthesis.

Regardless of the language of a text, that is, the translation, whether the King James, The American Standard, the Revised Version, or some modern speech translation we should and do remember that the translators or the translation in no sense manufacture the thought but only undertake to convey it. And no translation would undertake to convey any thought alien to the text itself. Any reader who at all understands the subject matter of any translation must get the sense of Scripture even in the translation. A language is a living thing, and is always changing, new translations help in this sense to keep us abreast of the meaning of words in our language with each age. But in any text the whole text must be considered for the meaning of the divine writer. We call this whole text bearing upon a certain feature or thought the context. Sometimes the context may be very brief, as the subject matter may itself be brief, embracing only a few sentences. Again, it may be long, embracing a number of chapters, or it may embrace several paragraphs. The only way therefore for us to understand any Scripture is to consider it in its entirety — in its context. This means that we shall be very careful to see what precedes in the line of thought how it. is con-

nected, and from that we can properly note the conclusions. The context of a passage may embrace the whole letter, if the letter is short and has only one main element or subject matter. To illustrate: The little book of Philemon, which has only one chapter, was written by the Apostle Paul from Rome and sent to Philemon when he sent back to ^Philemon his converted slave, Onesimus, whom Paul converted while he was in the Roman prison. It seems that the Apostle Paul knew this slave in the house of Philemon before he ran away. When he looked up the Apostle Paul in Rome, Paul brought about his conversion to the Gospel, and then sent him back to his master, not only as a slave, but also as a converted brother. One can see how judiciously the Apostle handled the whole subject, and how he restored him to the favor of his master, without endorsing slavery as an institution; but setting up a relationship through the Gospel that was hostile to the thought of slavery itself. Taking the thought as a whole is what is meant by the context. Now if every complete thought in the Scripture anywhere is taken in this way, it will become readily apparent that the Bible is not a difficult book. It was written with intelligence to intelligent men.

Contexts in the Bible are Seldom, if Ever Parallel

There are two chapters in the Old Testament that are almost identical throughout. And there are many thoughts that parallel one another in the history of the Old Testament, especially in the Chronicles and Kings; but even then every text is to be interpreted in its own setting. Too many run to what they think is a parallel passage to read in conjunction with a passage. This is not necessary. There is not so much darkness to the text as some would seem to think or to convey. Stay with the text — view the context as a whole, and you cannot, unless there is some point that is oblique and unclear which is not explained in the passage

itself go astray; then the resort to another text will not greatly help; that is, unless the other text *is* parallel, and it may not be. In other words, similarity is not necessarily a parallelism. And maybe the extra text introduced needs to be treated also contextually to get the meaning. You may be superimposing another meaning upon the passage you are seeking to clarify. There are many tributary and confluent streams that flow into the stream of divine revelation.

The difficulty is not with the Bible. It is too often treated unfairly. The wording is taken so out of context that almost the very opposite of what the divine writer stated is conveyed by the liberal misuse. Every error taught today rests upon this kind of a shuffling of sense from the original contextual sense to another one which is alien to the Bible.

Regardless of the context of any passage, and the context of all the passages of the Bible, truth is one harmonious whole; it is not divided. The Bible, fairly interpreted, will teach the same thing to everybody.

Mention has been made of the treatment of slavery as a social ill which was true of the world in Paul's day. The case of Onesimus has been given. Elsewhere Paul had to deal with this social ill, and he did not contradict in principle what he said to Philemon. He gave Timothy the same kind of advice for the treatment of slaves and masters. But you cannot take the case of Onesimus to explain the subject of slavery elsewhere except that there was a consistency of treatment on the subject throughout. You cannot explain one text by the other. The attitude of the Apostle Paul toward slavery is the same in each instance; the texts are not parallel. And it was this attitude toward slavery which made slavery untenable from the Christian standpoint in the long run, without its being directly assaulted as an institution.

Or again, let us take the metaphor of the Church as the body of Christ (mentioned elsewhere in this work) in the Corinthian letter and in Ephesians. The same metaphor is used. The approach from the Ephesian viewpoint is of the body as the bride of Christ, and Christ is the saviour of the body, the church. The approach from the Corinthian point of View is that of the function of the various members of the body as an entity, as an organism; and the harmony that must exist throughout. You can explain the church by the use of the metaphor in each instance, for the church is a fact, a reality; but you cannot explain one passage by the other, for they approach the subject from a different standpoint. The fact of the church as an institution, the body of Christ, can be interpreted correctly by both passages ; but one passage, beyond the mere use of the metaphor, cannot be used to interpret another. Each is complete in its own setting. It would be a violation of the sacred character of the church as the body of Christ to **try**-to contract it within the limits of one figure, or metaphor to suit the other passage. Thoughts may parallel at some point, but they do not parallel throughout. If so, there would be but one such passage used — not several. Every passage must be taken in the light of its *own* context.

Subject Matter of a Context

It may be that the subject matter of a context may change from time to time or from point to point, as the writer progresses with his theme: This kind of thing is notably true in a longer book, like the book of Romans. One can go through that book and safely make a synopsis of the contents, really ignoring, except as points of reference, the chapters and verses. He will in this way note most carefully when the subject shifts to something else. And it may yet be that the main sense, or general theme will continue, so that there is no radical break anywhere. The main theme

of the book seems to be the universal corruption of the race, regardless of nation or blood, over the long history of the past, as all men departed from the true God whom they could have known. This brought about universal condemnation, even while admitting the advantages of the Jews in their reception of the law of Moses. When the whole world was brought under sin from the first man Adam, God sent the second Adam, Christ, for salvation. Incident to the giving of the law and its nature, the Apostle did not see release from sin through the law, but a deeper debt to sin, for by the law was the knowledge of sin. But he did see release through the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; he saw also that the choice of God in the Jews was not for their own salvation, for he had power over the same lump to make vessels, as seemed best to him to make them. He felt that the seeming advantage of the Jews had resulted in the alienation of the Jews in their hearts from God and the grafting in of the wild olive-branches through their faith of the Gentiles; and as a result of all this discussion he was filled with majesty and greatness of the love of God for all mankind through the Gospel. And then the last section deals with the practical aspects of the Christian life in giving their bodies as living sacrifices to the Lord; to the practicable advantages of the providence of God in providing government for the protection of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked — and last of all to the questions of eating of meats and the observance of days. While the book is profound in its whole scope, it lends itself to simple historic and literary criticism. While in this epistle we see the subject matter change, or vary from time to time, yet the main theme is cohesive and close-knit. One manifestly cannot interpret this book by other books, for it stands alone. It may be that some of the subject matter is touched elsewhere in the New Testament, but only incidentally, and in relationship to other subjects and points of

view. Hence, Romans must be interpreted against its own background. It must be considered contextually. Then there is no difficulty that cannot be met.

Determining the Boundaries of a Context

It is simple to determine the boundaries of any context. What one has to do is to read the whole passage with care and attention, to see that he has the beginning of the thought firmly established in mind; then proceed with the reading carefully and slowly to be sure that he has covered the whole thought; and then with that as a basis to begin his analysis. If he is true to the divine meaning, he must come up with the right thought. And others who work in the same way, in the light of the context, must agree. The Bible does not teach two ways on the same verses of Scripture. If men differ, one must be wrong somewhere.

The Use of the Parenthesis

There ought to be no confusion in regard to the frequent use of the parenthesis to be found in many places in the New Testament, notably in the writing of the Apostle Paul. His thoughts frequently crowded to the fore for utterance, and in this way other matter came out, which we know as a parenthesis. But after every such additional intrusion of extra thoughts, the Apostle resumed his subject and went straight ahead with it. He enriched our thoughts by his use of the parenthesis and in his broadening of the subject matter. It will be no barrier to our understanding of what he said otherwise if we remember that it is an interjection of another thought without the intention of losing the subject in hand. And sometimes after long digressions of this kind he resumes without apparently taking note of his departure from or return to the subject matter.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XV

What obligations do translators have to the original text of the Scriptures!

Excepting the fact that portions of the Bible, as in the historic books of the Old Testament (Chronicles and Kings) and the Gospels in the New, are texts parallel?

While Scripture is to explain Scripture, where opposite, can we carry this too far?

What is meant by considering context in exposition of Scripture?

What may a context embrace?

How will contextual study make simple and obvious the exegesis of Scripture?

Will this also be true of the common man as **well** as of the scholar?

Is it necessary to parallel texts to understand Scripture?

Can one safely assume that a thing is parallel because it is somewhat similar?

Will contextual interpretation lead to confusion?

What can you say of the "attitude" of a divine writer toward a subject? How does this flow into a harmony of thought?

While thoughts may parallel, do passages parallel?

Do cohesion and consistency come from a combined text?

Can we interpret one book by another in Scripture?

How may the boundaries of a context be determined ?

Should a parenthetical thought in Scripture cause difficulty? Why is a parenthesis interjected at all by a divine writer, and especially by the Apostle Paul?

CHAPTER XVI
HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

Order.
Title.
Author
To Whom Written.
Why Written.
Scope or Design.
Analysis of Each Book.
Political, Social and Religious Background.
Philosophical Sects and Learning of the Jews.
Other Nations and Conditions Mentioned in the Scriptures.

While it has been said by some to have originated with Coccejus, undoubtedly this method, named or unnamed, is as old as portions of Scripture themselves. It is simply the common-sense approach to determine a number of things about any book. Every Shakespearian scholar has had to employ a similar method to interpret correctly the plays of Shakespeare; every historian has had to employ this method to see what a writer of a history meant. It seems strange to us that any one could have had to discover this method to arrive at a sense of what a book of the Bible meant. Of course we have to remember that for centuries the Bible had been taken from the common people and confined to a dead language. That too was a process of his-

tory. It had been the vernacular of the people; but they went off and left that language in the branching out of their respective languages; and so the Bible became a forgotten book during the Dark Ages. Then there came the Renaissance. Learning was revived; the ancient languages were studied again and yielded up their store. Out of this the Bible itself became the most famous subject of study of all the ancient works.

It is true the theologians had dismembered the Bible to suit their needs. Just those portions were used that they had immediate need for. But eventually the whole of the Bible came in again for anxious study. Luther studied a Bible chained to the pulpit at Erfurt in Germany. It is also true that the theologians, and even those of the Reformation, studied the Bible with great bias. They were not free in their minds from the doctrines of the past. St. Augustine, St. Cyprian, Origen and others influenced their thinking on many subjects. They made great discoveries in the ancient texts, but they intertwined with those texts many of the dogmas of the past, instead of sitting down calmly and releasing their minds from all traditions of the past in their endeavor to find out what alone the divine writers taught. Martin Luther and John Calvin both took the doctrine of original sin as a true doctrine, and passed it on to whole communions. Also, they passed on the related doctrine of infant baptism as a remedy for inborn sin, since they assumed that was a true doctrine.

Order

The order of the books of the Bible, as we now have them is so well established that their lot is fixed in the popular mind. Sometimes one meets with a new arrangement of the books of the Bible. There is the thought on the part of some that the chronology could have been better followed by another arrangement. And there is considerable over-

lapping in historic sequences in the Bible at different places. This of course cannot be denied. But the student must keep certain historic data in mind when he studies the Bible book by book. He knows about the time element in history of the book of Daniel, that Daniel lived in the time of the Babylonian captivity. He knows when Jeremiah lived, at the close of the kingdom of Judah before the Babylonian captivity began.

Sometimes a grouping is more on the nature of the contents than on the chronology of the book. This is likely true of the Gospel of John. But it properly belongs, because of the nature of its contents, with the other Gospels, even though in character it approaches the Christ from another viewpoint altogether than what the Synoptic Gospels do.

The order to the Bible student unfolds itself rather naturally, in spite of any seeming discrepancies of chronology or the time element.

Some students have made a specialty of the study of the prophets; others of the devotional books of the Old Testament, the Psalms, Job, etc.; others of the Law of Moses; yet others of the kings and the time of the historical parts of the Hebrew nation. The well informed Bible student, while he may specialize at one time or another, is glad to become conversant with the different categories here mentioned. And of course the same is true of the New Testament divisions. Some love this portion of divine writing more than they do others. Temperamentally certain portions appeal to them. But in most instances the order is well fixed in mind. It ought to be. One ought to memorize in order the books of the Bible, and then after that he should seek to become aware of their content.

Title

When an author writes a book he tries to select a title that will give some thought to the contents — that will in

some measure reflect the contents. A title can give a lot of concern; it may be happy or unhappy in this respect. Sometimes in this modern day a title is selected primarily with a view to the sales of the book. The titles of the books of the Bible are now so well established that one thinks in a peculiar way of them. They have come to have special significance in the minds of millions the world around. In the case of divine authorship each title seems to derive specially from the nature of the contents. Take the book of Genesis. That means the book of the beginnings. And it is truly an appropriate title, for it is a book of the beginning of the world, of life, of history, of the patriarchy and other things of a momentous character. Exodus tells the story of the exodus of the people of Israel from the Egyptian bondage. It tells many other things incidental to that departure of course; the afflictions of the Egyptians through the plagues, the crossing of the Red Sea; the journey to the base of Mt. Sinai where they received the law of the Ten Commandments. Leviticus tells the story of the tribe of Levi and the priesthood, together with its functions, etc.

Author

The authorship of any book is important, because from that we have a good starting point. We need of course to determine something of the character of the author. And in most instances God has respected to the utmost the character of the individual man, allowing play for his personality, manner and even his style. At the same time the record through him is no less inspired. Thus God uses human personality in all that He does.

Sometimes the matter of an authorship of a book is arrived at by some mentions which he makes of himself. Let us take the writing of the Second Epistle of Peter. He says that he was present at the transfiguration of Jesus (2 Pet. 1:18). He says also that this was his second epistle to the

believing Jews (3:1) ; and that Paul was his beloved brother (23:15). All these circumstances add up to giving us the Apostle Peter as the writer. We have also the coincidence of style in the epistles of John which cause us to accept him as the author. Just nobody —nobody in the New Testament writes like that except the Apostle John. So we ascribe to him First, Second' and Third John, as well as the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation. We of course can also determine definite other authors in different ways. Many of them declare themselves, as in the case of the Apostle Paul. There is an exception in the book of Hebrews. The authorship is not definite, but many believe it to have been the Apostle Paul for many reasons.

Sometimes the time when a book was written throws additional light upon it. Professor Home thought that the reference to Paul's solemn warning that his epistle be read to all the brethren stemmed from the fact that Paul was familiar with the fact that it was still the custom to read from the Old Testament in the assemblies of the Christians. So Paul said that he abjured them that his epistle be read to all the brethren (1 Thess. 5:27). Professor Home thinks this may intimate that the First Epistle to the Thessalonians may thus be implied to be the first that demand was formulated by the Apostle, and was based upon his understanding that the prophets of the Old Testament were still read at this time in the Christian assemblies. While Grotius thought that this epistle was written about 38 A.D., Professor Home thinks it was written at about 52 A.D. It could not therefore have reference to Caligula as the Man of Sin, and Simon Magus as the Wicked One. It is the general belief now that this reference is to the great apostasy which took place in the Middle Ages. The dating of the epistle then could not have had any vital bearing except that, as Paul observed, the mystery of iniquity had already begun to work. How he interpreted that, and in what char-

acters and experiences we do not know. It may have been in reference to the tide of apostasy that he saw faintly beginning then. Suffice it to say that the Apostle stood on the threshold of great and startling events, of which he, by the eye of prophecy, was even then aware.

We are warranted again in seeking to determine the place from which a letter issued because of circumstances in the life of the writer and associates. We may then take the case in point of the Apostle Paul where he desired the brethren to pray for him to be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, for according to the record in Acts he was about to be dragged before the proconsul following an insurrection stirred up by the Jews (Acts 18:13) ; and if this conjecture is correct it fixes the place of the authorship as Corinth and not Athens. Also, we may note that Timothy, Silvanus and Silus joined him in the first letter, and were still with him in the second. (First Thess. 3:6, 2:1; Acts 18:1-5). It would also appear that Paul could appeal to the matter of his own personal labors at Corinth more than at some other places. Note carefully the record in the above passages, and in addition in related passages in First and Second Thess. and in Acts of Apostles. This would seem to throw some additional light on the time of the authorship of these letters.

We can better understand a text also by looking at its background. Let us take the discourse recorded in John's Gospel, the sixth chapter, when many refused to go along with him. This was teaching done in an open place where many of his mighty works had been done; yet they refused to believe. Take for comparison the 11th chapter of Matthew where he upbraided them, and told them that if the works done here had been in Tyre and Sidon they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. He also threw up the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to them as places without equal opportunity to hear the right message

which Capernaum had heard. And there was where he lived. Or take again the separating of the wheat from the chaff mentioned in the Psalms. That was done in a peculiar way. A high flat plain, where the winds could easily pass along, separating the chaff from the wheat was used as a threshing floor.

One needs to understand something of the nature of the Arabian desert to comprehend fully the nature of the Children of Israel. If he studies such a book as *The Bible as History*, or takes a good and thorough map, determining the Arabah, the Negeb, and other regions named in Exodus and Numbers and Deuteronomy, he will more easily comprehend the text. These circumstances need to be considered as one studies the Bible. Place can have a lot to do in elucidating a text.

To Whom Written

Primarily some one is in mind when a book is written. It may be an individual, it may be a group, or it may be a nation. It may even be designed for an unnamed posterity. As to much of the Old Testament, we are told that it was written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. It was first addressed to the nation of the Jews, but God designed it for all men at a later date. It was confined to the knowledge of the Jews, with few exceptions until the third century B.C. It was then translated, together with the apocryphal books, as a part of Jewish lore, and given to the world in the language of the Greeks by a certain Ptolemy, descended by the reign of Alexander the Great. It was then called the 70, or the Septuagint. Now the record of the Old Testament belongs to all the world, for it was planned to lay the groundwork for the universal system of Christianity, which was to be a world-wide system.

The whole of the Pentateuch was designed for the Jews,

or the Hebrews, if you will. It concerned them and their origin as a nation; their laws; their ceremonial system; their priesthood, etc. We learn from it, yes, because it has designs through type and antitype for our day. The better we understand it the better we understand the spiritual implications of the New Testament, of which it was the type.

Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. The difficulty of his recording his own demise does not destroy him as author. How that was written we do not know, whether by prophecy, or by some supplementary hand. But the account is a true one, and is exceedingly memorable because of the greatness of that life and its influence upon the entire world of mankind after his day. He is immortal. He deserves to be.

To whom was any book written? That will have a bearing upon our understanding of it. Matthew was written in Hebrew or Aramaic to the Hebrews. John was written by John the beloved of our Lord, to set forth the signs and miracles of Jesus. Luke was written by Luke to Theophilus, as was the book of Acts. We get this information from the authors themselves, and in their bearing upon the questions "which they discuss.

Why Written

There is a purpose to any book. It may be that the purpose is multiple, or it may be essentially single. We have noted the case of Philemon as such a single case. The case of Acts of the Apostles is historic — broadly historic. Many things are embraced in the unfolding of the lives of the apostles of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ after He left the work which He had begun in their hands. They wait in Jerusalem as He had bidden them; the Holy Spirit comes to guide them in the new way; they make many converts; there develops a community of goods; troubles come, administrative problems are solved; persecutions arise; the

church spreads among the Samaritans; among the Gentiles. Then the Apostle Paul is converted, and he begins his ministry. The scene shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch in Syria; Paul's great missionary labors are unfolded by the historian. But through it all we see the purpose of Christ being carried out and the era of the gospel firmly established. Acts of the Apostles is to the early church an indispensable book. Other books interweave themselves into the story it tells, such as Galatians, for example, with some of the things it recounts which dovetail with the record that Luke makes. Even some of the epistles of Paul must harmonize with the accounts that Luke gives us of the life and labors of Paul. But they do harmonize perfectly. We have arising out of the experience and need the work of deacons, or servants of the church; the office of elders as another body of men with administrative responsibilities over the infant churches; and we have described elsewhere in the epistles the functions and qualifications of these men. We know for example that a class of such men were left in charge of the affairs of the Church at Ephesus when Paul quitted that city (Acts 20th chapter). When we consider why any book is written, or was written, we can usually discover that from the contents of the book itself. The task is not difficult. We have only to read carefully to discover the point or points of the writer. The matter will lie near at hand.

Scope of Design

Something on this order has already been noted. In fact, the two points are very close to one another. The design of the Gospel of Luke is to acquaint Theophilus with all that Jesus did in life. It is put rather plainly and simply in these words: "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered to us by those who

from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed." (Luke 1:14, R.S.V.). And here is the plain reason of the Gospel of Luke; and this is the scope and design of the writer. We do not know more about the man to whom the letter or the Gospel was addressed, but we are nor left in the dark as to the design or scope. The scope or design of every book in the Bible is not thus plainly stated at the beginning but such design or scope will become apparent upon a careful reading and study of the book.

Analysis of Each Book

The little book of Galatians can be used to convey the idea of what is meant by an analysis, if that be not already clearly in mind from the different things that have already been said, and from a running account of a book or two dealing with other aspects of this subject on how to read the Bible. This letter of Galatians was written by the Apostle Paul and addressed to the churches of a province — the province of Galatia. After introducing himself as the writer of the letter, he proceeds to word a prayer for them from God through the Lord Jesus Christ. This was about his usual approach in such a communication. He professed himself astonished that they were so quickly turning from the gospel which he had preached to another gospel, which he said was not another, but that some were troubling them. Of course these were the Judaizing teachers who were trying to fit the gospel upon a Jewish pattern. And then the Apostle said that any one who would preach another gospel should be accursed. He said that he was not seeking the favor of men in what he preached, for if he should please himself he should not be the servant of Christ.

Then he protested that he did not receive his gospel from men, nor from the will of men but from God. He insisted that God, from the time of his birth, had his purpose set in him to make him a preacher of the word. He felt the sense and urgency of this call. His mission, he says, was to go to the Gentiles. And then he tells of his conversion and his stay for three years in Arabia, and then his return to Damascus where he began to preach, without going to the apostles in Jerusalem to consult with them. He felt so sure of his inspiration that he did not need to call upon the other apostles for verification. After a ministry of fourteen years he said that he was sent up by revelation to Jerusalem to consult with the other apostles about the question of circumcision. And he relates how careful was his approach to the other apostles on the question of circumcision unless he should hurt the cause he had labored so diligently to establish. And he tells about certain hypocrisies practiced against him by some, forcing him to consider circumcision, but he said that Titus, who was a Greek, was not circumcised because of this pressure. He tells us how he met the hypocrisy and machinations of the Judaizing teachers; and then he tells us of his open conflict with Peter on the subject, calling the Apostle's hand as dissembling before the Jews. He insisted that he was crucified with Christ, but he lived through faith in him. In the third chapter he developed the promise made to Abraham, and showed how we are the children of Abraham through faith; that Christ is the true seed of Abraham and the believers are the children of Abraham, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free. In the fourth chapter he talks about the bondage of the law and insists that we are delivered from bondage by Christ. And then follows the great allegory of Abraham with his wife Sarah, and Hagar and Ishmael. The allegory is extremely apposite because of the character of the letter and of the nature of the argument against the

Judaizers. In the fifth chapter he continues to hammer at the inefficacy of the covenant of circumcision. It was centered in the flesh. He joined the keeping of the law with the covenant of circumcision. And then he argued that if one were justified by works (of the law) he was fallen from grace. Afterward he described the two orders in the law of the flesh and the law of the spirit — calling one the works of the flesh and the other the fruits of the spirit. He argued the need for the restoring of one who was taken in a fault in the sixth chapter, and then dealt with sowing and reaping. He said that his glory was in the cross of Christ. This analysis, while not absolute, is fairly complete, and one can see from it what is meant about analyzing a book; that is, getting in mind its contents. It is a simple matter then to understand a book. This goes to the heart of the matter, especially after one considers the author, the circumstance, etc.

Political, Social and Religious Background

It is quite necessary also to understand something of the things of the day in which a book was written, the social pattern, etc. We are to understand, as already indicated elsewhere, that slavery was a great social evil throughout the Roman empire at the time of the beginning of Christianity. It depends on where we are in the world's history when we consider a book from the standpoint of its political history. In Joseph's time the mighty Pharaohs ruled in Egypt. And Joseph is pictured against that background. In the time of Abraham, when he journeyed into Egypt he was afraid for his life because of the great beauty of Sarah. Again, Isaac was afraid for his life on account of Rebekah when he failed to tell Abimelec the truth about his wife. Conditions did not favor it. He did not feel that he was above the danger of assault over her. Jeremiah had much to fear from the decadent kings of Judah in his day, and

hence he was thrown into an old well. Daniel was a very wise man, but often in danger from the Babylonian rulers on one point or another. He was cast into the den of lions. One simply must consider the political situation of an age in explaining a book of Scripture.

And again one needs to explain a social pattern, perhaps, to get the truth of a passage. Lepers in the day of Christ were allowed to wander about openly as unholy and unclean. Hence, the imploring of Jesus to heal them when ten of them came in one company. There would not be the same freedom of movement of the unclean now as was true then. And again the great poverty of the beggar Lazarus in contrast with the rich man in Luke 16th chapter. That was more or less common in the day of Christ. Great wealth and great poverty side by side. Not so in our land, where there is a great middle class. Also, we can only explain the things that took place in the ministry of Christ by some knowledge of the different religious groups in His day. The Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes, as well as the scribes. We need to realize that these parties were post-exilic in their origin. They were not known in Moses' day or David's day. The addresses of Christ to them and about them can explain his day, but cannot be applied to another era in Bible history.

On the political background, we need to remember that in the time of Christ, the Roman legions trod the roads of Palestine, and taxes were paid to them. Hence, the parents of Christ went to Bethlehem for taxation. Jesus paid taxes with the coin taken from the fish's mouth. Perhaps we rather automatically understand these things, but it pays to keep them in mind when we read different books of the Bible. The Bible was written against political, social and religious backgrounds.

Philosophical Sects and Learning Among the Jews

The principal sects in the days of Christ had acquired considerable prominence. They had also set up standards for themselves in dress and conduct, thus making their philosophical approaches become familiar patterns to the casual observer. The Pharisees even dressed the part, making broad their phylacteries or borders of their garments so that they could have more Scripture quotations upon them. They evidently wore great flaring robes in this case, as has very much been the custom in the East in many ages. They had become stuffy and even hypocritical in their attitudes toward life, for Jesus said they had. At first He meant to remind them, and others, of what they represented, or for what they stood in the quotations in their dress, they had come to substitute the appearance for the fact, and so the hypocrisy had developed. They came to accept their philosophical outlook on life as the only true thing, while they had forgotten the very thing that the law which they wrote upon their garments and which they so studiously and meticulously preached really taught after all. Strangely enough, they forgot the law while carrying about bits of it written upon their garments. Jesus saw them as they had come to be — a sect who wished to impress with long prayers, with sanctimonious faces, and to pray to be seen of men. Their religion had become a thing of cant and routine without any heart to it at all. They were very exact in the minutest details of tithing of the smallest of seeds, but the great intention of the law they did not even see — justice, mercy and truth. What a travesty their religion had become while it apparently was a thing of profound concern to themselves! Is it too much to observe that there are those today who are as self-opinionated and self-satisfied as were the Pharisees, of that day?

The Pharisees had set up schools and were propagating their philosophy and thinking through their schools. They had their choice of professors. Paul went to one of them in Jerusalem by the name of Gamaliel.

The rival schools of the Sadducees were also to be found everywhere, and especially centering in Jerusalem. They were the materialists of that day. Man was all mortal. There are no angels or spirits. The resurrection is not a sure thing. Paul took advantage of these two principal schools of thought when he was on trial by saying that he was called in question for the hope of the resurrection of the dead. This set the assembly at one another's throats. Attention was taken from him and centered in the fight among themselves. The assembly was thrown into an uproar.

The Essenes constituted the third sect. And even they were divided into ascetics and the puritans. There was a set of some four thousand established in a monastery near the Dead Sea. Their records have recently come down to us.

Yet another class were the scribes, the copy workers and the lawyers. They were particularly directed to the law as a document. The lawyers themselves, according to the record in Matthew (22nd chapter) might be Pharisees or Sadducees. The scribes, in contradistinction, were the copyists, concerning themselves with the document. We can well imagine that the great lawyers were the leaders of "the great parties.

Jesus had to face this distorted and corrupt situation when he came to grips with the religious situation. He had also to face the political situation of a subject people and the peculiar social condition of a class kind of society. He knew the magnitude of the undertaking, as a teacher up against this vast accumulation. Yet he set about the attack, knowing it would result in his personal defeat;

but only in that way could he bring about those transforming elements that would ameliorate the condition. The old condition was hopeless.

Other Nations and Conditions Mentioned in the Scriptures

Palestine was at the cross-roads of the world, then, as now. Jesus was hemmed in by the pressures of other peoples. Yet He chose during His personal ministry to confront the problem of His own people, except incidentally. He also instructed the apostles to the same end. They were not to go into the way of the Gentiles, or the Samaritans — only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Jesus had contact Himself incidentally with the Syro-Phoenician woman and also with the Samaritans. He also had appeal made to him by a centurion on behalf of his servant. And the Greeks sought to reach Him. Ultimately His message and wishes were to reach every nation. He was international in His thinking — world-wide in His sympathies. But one understands Him in this peculiar setting, social political, national, philosophical, et cetera. Both He and His religion must be understood against His background.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XVI

Have scholars in literature and history had to employ the method of historic interpretation (the sense of and the setting in history) to interpret correctly the works of the historians and the playwrights, etc., to get the full meaning and significance of a text?

Is not the dismembering of portions of the Bible the greatest difficulty in the way of a true and correct interpretation?

What of doctrinal bias as a handicap?

Is there a sense of order in the arrangements of the books of the Bible? Does it appear to your mind as systematic?

What relationship does chronology, or the time element have to the understanding of the books of the Bible?

Is not an indexing in mind of the general arrangement of the Scriptures even more valuable than a thumb index? Does it strike you that the titles of the various books *hi* the Bible are happily named ?

As an author of a divine portion of Holy Writ how would you say, and in what particular, did God leave each writer free, while controlling the message?

Are we uncertain as to the authorship of some of **the** portions of the Bible?

What method can be employed, if the author is **not** named, to try to arrive at the knowledge of the authorship?

What influence could the time element when a book was written have upon its correct interpretation ?

What part could the circumstances in the lives of the writer and his associates have in determining the sense of Scripture, or its correct historic interpretation?

What does "background" have to do in ascertaining the meaning of Scripture?

Is the authorship of a book important to its understanding?

What can you say of the purpose of the books of the Bible? Are they all the same? What does this have to do with understanding the Bible?

Can we discover from the contents of a book why it was written?

Is it easy to comprehend the contents of a book of the Bible if one reads it carefully?

Are social and political history so enmeshed in Bible history that one must consider them to understand the Bible?

Do social conditions determine the correct interpretation of Scripture?

Did political background mirror the meaning of portions of the Bible?

What of the classes among the Jews in Jesus' day as factors in understanding the Bible?

Must one consider a text as it deals with the scribes, Pharisees, etc., to understand its full significance.

How is one to understand Jesus best? In the light of the history of His people and His day?

CHAPTER XVII

THREE GREAT AGES OF RELIGION

The Patriarchal
The Jewish The
Christian

, Following the fall of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the garden of Eden there was instituted a dim system of religion, called the Patriarchal Religion, because it was a system administered by the head of a family. We do not know much about it because not much is revealed. Whether Adam offered any sacrifice at all after his banishment is not clear from the record. How sad must have been his lot! But after his first sons were born they were called upon to offer a sacrifice. Abel offered of the flock; and Cain of the fruit of the ground. We know the sad story that followed that sacrifice. Cain's sacrifice was rejected, because it was not offered in faith, and presumably of opinion instead. He became jealous enough of his brother to slay him. We are not told about other sacrifices before the time of the flood among their descendents; but we are told of the sacrifice of Noah after the flood. And then we are told of the sacrifice of Abraham under the oak tree in Mamre. No temples, no fanes; but just an altar raised somewhere on a plain, under a tree, and an animal offered. No ritual is given, no liturgy. Just an occasional sacrifice for many, many generations. No priesthood. The individual man, the head of a family, became the temporary priest, if priest he might be called. No day of worship appointed,

no time set apart for its recurrence. This went on for better than two thousands years of the world's history from Adam to Moses.

God did break the monotony from time to time with something special in the way of a message to some chosen individual. Enoch walked with God and was transfigured that he should not see death. Noah had a message concerning the deluge and was warned to build an ark. Abraham was called and directed to Palestine from his native Ur of the Chaldees. God spoke the great promise to him concerning his seed; that it should greatly multiply; and from his seed should one come through whom all mankind should be blessed. We have the rise in history here of the great nation of the Hebrew people. Their history is sketched for us in the book of Genesis. It is recapitulated by Stephen and others, but the original account is sketched for us in the first book of the Bible. The original source material is found there. This man Abraham, the father of his nation, and the father faithful stands out as one of the greatest of all times. Faith stood the test with him when he was called upon to offer his son Isaac upon the altar as a sacrifice. It was the trial of his faith. And we are told that he received him from the dead in a figure. In other words, so great was his faith that he believed if he did sacrifice him at God's command, God would be able to raise him from the dead.

In the absence of law in the time of the Patriarchal Age death continued to reign. "Nevertheless death reigned over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression from Adam even unto Moses." Condemnation came to the people who lived in that age in the absence of the law, which ordinarily measures sins and assesses the penalty. Transgression was there, and death came as a result of the sinfulness of the people in the absence of the announced penalty of the law. But after the law was given

through Moses at Mt. Sinai the penalty was named for such transgression. And death continued to reign. It also continued to reign outside of the operation of the law of Moses upon the Gentiles who had not the law also. It became the inherent order for a sinful humanity.

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The Jewish Age

The law of Moses was added to the promise given to Abraham four hundred and thirty years after the promise was made. And that law was added because of transgression, as a measurement of sin, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made; that is, the Christ. (Galatians third chapter.)

Coccejus called the time of the patriarchs the star-light age of the world; and the Jewish Age he called the moon-light age of the world. In the time of the patriarchs not much light fell across the path of mankind to guide their ways; and that light was very dim — just the light of a star. But it was light, and it became a thing of hope. Then progress was made under Moses when God gave the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai. God spoke from the summit of the mountain. When his voice rolled out over the country below terror swept the hearts of the people. They besought Moses that God should not speak to them any more in person lest they should die. The mountain was filled with blackness and darkness and tempest. Moses said that he did exceeding fear and quake. (Read Hebrews 12 chapter.) One of the great points in human history was reached at that time. The world has not been able to forget that time and what happened there. The consequences will go on until the end of the world. While the law was to the descendants of Abraham, the implications of that system have broadened the scope and thought of all mankind ever since wherever the knowledge of that system has gone. "And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, Hear,

O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I speak in your hearing this day, and ye shall learn them and be careful to do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive this day. The Lord spake with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of fire, while I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord." "Then the Lord spake to you out of the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; there was only the voice. And he declared unto you his covenant which he commanded you to perform, that is, the ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." (Deut. 5:1-5; 4:12,13; R. S. V.) God did not give the ten commandments to the fathers, but to those who were assembled at the Mt. Sinai. He gave that covenant, the ten commandments, to Israel. These passages say as much. He did not give it to others, but to them and their descendents. All the rest of mankind were on the outside of this system. But the Apostle Paul said that one could do by nature the things contained in the law, and he offered the suggestion that he would be judged by the moral order in the light of his conduct. The thing about it was that the ten commandments set forth the moral order which all men are morally bound in the nature of the case to observe. The first four of the ten commandments are positive in nature; the latter six moral, for they have to do with conduct toward one's fellow man. The first four rested upon the authority of God alone. And the sabbath had a peculiar meaning to the Jews because it was founded for them upon their liberation from the Egyptians. "You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand, an outstretched hand; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day." (Deut.

4:15.) It was a memorial day for their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. None others could keep it except the Jews. And of course that still is true, if it were yet a day to be observed. The Fourth of July means something to Americans. It does not mean anything to other nations, and other nations do not observe it. Just so it should be with the sabbath day.

The Jewish age also ushered in many other things. Among them it set up a special priesthood for the nation. The tribe of Levi was chosen. A liturgy was established; a sacrificial system was inaugurated; the annual atonement was started; the daily obligations were set on their rounds; the tabernacle was ordered made where the service centered. Thousands of sheep and oxen were slain; rivers of blood ran. The stench of burning flesh, tempered somewhat with incense, laden the air. In the annual atonement God was delighted and showed his presence in the shekinah of glory as his presence covered that rich place of worship.

This great system proved inadequate to hold the affections and interest of the people. They became apostates from this order before it could be well started. And they continued to make a travesty of it right along until it fell entirely into disuse, and was discontinued. Even the very nature of that law was forgotten, and lost in the temple which Solomon erected with such pains and at such expense, and with such pride. By the prophet Jeremiah God told of its failure, and promised another order that would be put in the heart of the people. "Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, *my* covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel and with the house of

Judah after those days, says the Lord; I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord/ for all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:21-44.) The old system was written on the outside; this would be written on the heart. The old system did not forgive sins; this system would.

The Christian Age

The age in which we live was the glorious age of expectancy and prophecy and hope. It was to be the sunlight age of the world, when the Sun of Righteousness should arise with healing in His beams. Christ is the light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. The fullness of the divine purpose was revealed in Christ.

"When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem those who were under the law." (Galatians 4th chapter.) All other ages simply pointed to His coming. He was the child of promise of all the patriarchs; the object of the foreshadowing of the whole age of the law in the things which were done with reference to His coming; they take on meaning only in the light of his own glorious work in the world. The prophets who spoke of His time and work and age searched the Spirit which was in them when it promised, His coming. It was revealed to them that they were conveying a message that had meaning only as it envisioned him as the object of their search and thought. More they could not know. They were not allowed without us, in this age, to be made perfect; they had to serve unto the shadow of heavenly things; but the body is of Christ. The Christian age, or the age of the Christian dispensation of time

saw a sacrificial system for the first time in the whole history of the world that could take away sins. Never before were sins forgiven, for it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin. The priesthood of Christ became a universal priesthood for all mankind; the kingship of Jesus extended over all men who should be born again, born from above; the mediatorship of Jesus left not a single member of Adam's race beyond its reach. Speaking of this glorious era Daniel saw in the night visions and behold one like the Son of Man came to the Ancient of Days; and they brought him near before him, and there was given him glory, dominion and a kingdom, that all nations, peoples and kingdoms should serve him; his kingdom to be an everlasting kingdom: he was to reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there should be no end. (Daniel 7:13,14; Luke 1:29,-31.) This great age began in the time of the fourth universal empire of Daniel's vision, the time of the Roman Caesars. (Daniel 2:44; Matt 2:1-4.) Christ was born then. Of course, as He Himself said to Pontus Pilate His kingdom was not of this world; if it were His servants would fight that He should not be delivered by the Romans to the Jews; but now His kingdom was not from hence, that is, of the earth, like other kingdoms that men had known. It was over the spirits and souls of the twice born subjects of the heavenly order. This is distinctly the glory of the divine order; this its fellowship; this its character.

There cannot be a blending of the promise and the hope in the sense of fusion into one pattern, because the promise preceded the fulfillment. The promissory element was succeeded by the reality. When Christ came all was summed up in Him. And there cannot be a merging of the system of the law into the system of grace. They were different in kind and could not be merged. The one had to be removed that the other might come. As the Apostle Paul

said about the law, using the figure of marriage, the first husband had to die before there could be a marriage of the widow to another man. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ that you should be married to another man, even to him who is raised from the dead." In other words, the Jewish nation died to the law of Moses that they might be married to Christ; and the thing that made this possible was the death of the law when Christ nailed it to the cross. (Romans 7:1-4; Col. 2:14.)

The Christian age has the Lord's Supper instead of the passover of the Jews. It has the sacrifice of Christ instead of the annual atonement of animals. It has the fellowship of the kingdom of heaven which embraces all mankind when they obey the gospel instead of the fellowship of one nation. It has the priesthood of Christ instead of the priesthood of Aaron and his sons. It has the priesthood of all believers instead of the priesthood of Levi. It is the best of all the ages on this mundane sphere. The final age is that to come, when life will be swallowed up in immortality; when there will fall away all that is purely fleshly and the redeemed shall stand forth in eternal glory in the presence of God and all that is holy.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XVII

What was the Patriarchal Age?

How much religion was there during this time?

How long did this age last?

What great events took place in this age?

Who were the principal characters?

Was there a religious priestly office?

Was there a system of sacrifices?

How much divine light was there in this age?

What age succeeded the Patriarchal Age?

Whom did it concern, and why?

What laws did it embrace? '

Where did it begin?

When did the Levitical priesthood begin? *q* What was the sacrificial system in this Jewish Age?

With whom was the law covenant made?

What was the weakness of the Jewish Age ? Where did it center?

Did God propose another order, and why?

Can the law age and the system of grace be blended ? Why not?

With whom is the New Covenant made? Is it conditional?

What is the nature of the priesthood under the New Covenant?

What ordinances or order of worship do we have?

Is the Christian system preparatory for yet another age? What will that age be?

CHAPTER XVIII
TYPE AND ANTITYPE

Points in Analogy —
Tabernacle.
Priesthood.
Sacrifices.
Atonement.

"A type, in its primary and literal meaning, simply denotes a rough draught, or less accurate model, from which a more perfect image is made; but, in the sacred or theological sense of the term, a type may be defined to be a symbol of something future and distant, or an example prepared and evidently designed by God to prefigure that future thing. What is prefigured is thus called the antitype."¹

The first feature of a type is to illustrate the thing typified. Type and antitype, as with all methods of teaching by symbolism, must be carefully limited to the features intended. One is not permitted, in the interest of common sense and the teaching of Scripture, to get something out of this kind of teaching not intended by the divine writers of speakers. There will be conveyed in the type some obvious conclusions which are to be applied to the antitype. Hence, the sacrifices of the Jews pointed to the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world. The symbolism of the cherubim over the Ark of the Covenant in the inner depart-

1. Home, Op. cit., page 649 quoting from Outram de Sacrificie, by Allen.

ment of the tabernacle, while they were stationary, pictured to the mind the idea of swiftness of movement of angels who will wait upon God and do His bidding. No doubt these cherubim were things of beauty, but they were intended for more than beauty. The mind immediately conjures up a certain quality of divine messengers who do God's bidding. God dwelt in the presence of these angels, as it were, in the shekinah of glory in connection with the annual atonement.

In the second place a type is designed of God, in advance, to pre-figure something which He had in mind when the type itself was created, being, again, a thought in replica, on a miniature scale, of the thing that later would come in a fuller glory. God was teaching in such symbolism a lesson that was to take on a deeper significance in the course of time. He was building in blocks so that the childish age of the world might later be made to realize, from the kindergarten stage, just what he was about. "The shadow was of the good thing to come, but the body was of Christ." There are of course some points of similarity in type and antitype. But it is not mere symbolism or similarity. There are definite points intended.

It is easy to get the wrong points out of a similarity. One may take the Scripture, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass." One does not understand in this case that the weakness of man is comparable to the tenderness of grass, or that the flower of grass is a type of human glory. But there is a comparable sense about the matter, and the mind immediately reaches for the thought and does not ordinarily get fowled up in the other thoughts. The Lord Almighty can correctly assume something in the transmission of knowledge to us.

It may be observed in the third place that a type is based usually upon some action, some human accomplishment, not a mere fiction or fantasy. While the mind of the curious

and the meddlesome might seek other points than those intended, yet the right thinking person will readily see the point or points intended and will not multiply difficulties. Thus Egypt becomes a type of bondage of the devil in sin; the crossing of the Red Sea becomes a type of baptism; the journey through the wilderness the life in the world before the reaching of our destination; the crossing of Jordan as the crossing of the river of death; Canaan as the type of the promised land in the eternal world; Moses as the type of Christ.

Legal Type — In this sense the entire plan of the Old and New Testaments are used in comparison of Moses and his system with Christ and His system of grace through the gospel age.

"Thus, the entire constitution, and offerings of the Levitical priesthood, typically prefigure Christ the High Priest (Hebrews V, VII, VIII) : and apparently the ceremonies observed on the great day of atonement. (Leviticus 16 with Hebrews IX throughout X: 1-22.) So, the passover, and the paschal lamb typified the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Exodus 12:3; John 19:36; 1 Cor. 5:7: so, the feast of pentecost, which commemorated the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19 and 20), prefigured the effusion of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, who were thus enabled to promulgate the Gospel throughout the then known world (Acts 2:1-11.) And it has been conjectured that the feast of tabernacles typifies the final restoration of the Jews. In like manner, the privileges were types of those enjoyed by all true Christians; for their relation to God as His people, signified by the name Israelite (Rom. 9:4), prefigured the more honorable relation, in which believers, the true Israel, stand to God. — Their adoption as the sons of God, and the privileges they were entitled to by that adoption, were types of believers being made partakers of the divine nature by renewing of the Holy Ghost, and their

title to the inheritance of heaven. — The residence of the glory, first in the tabernacle and then in the temple, was a figure of the residence of God by His Spirit in the Christian Church, his temple on earth, and of his eternal residence in that church brought to perfection in Heaven. — The covenant with Abraham was the new or Gospel covenant, the blessings of which were typified by the temporal blessings promised to him and to his natural seed: and the covenant at Mt. Sinai, whereby the Israelites, as the worshippers of the true God, were Separated from the idolatrous nations, was an emblem of the final separation of the righteous from the wicked. — In the giving of the law, and the formation of the Israelites into a nation or community, was represented, the formation of the city of the living God, and the general assembly of the church of the first-born. — Lastly, the heavenly country, the habitation of the righteous, was typified by Canaan, a country given to the Israelites by God's promises."²

Prophetical Types. In this kind of case God required the prophets to act out certain things which would typify things that would happen to His people. Take the case of Isaiah who was required to go naked and barefoot to prefigure the fatal destruction of the Egyptians and the Ethiopians. (Isaiah 20.) Or take the case of hiding of the girdle in the rocks on the banks of the Euphrates by Jeremiah, until the garment was rotten, to denote the destruction that would befall the nation of the Jews. The abstaining from marriage, mourning and fasting, to indicate the calamities which would befall the wicked nation of the Jewish people because of their sins. (Jeremiah 13 and 14.) Or the breaking of the potter's vessel to show how God would break the nation of the Jews. (Jeremiah 18th chapter.) Oftentimes a prophet was required to act out certain fea-

2. MacKnight, James, Apostolic Epistles, (Romans 9:4).

tures of his prophecy. Hence, the idea of prophetic types. *Historical Types.* Historical types have been divided into innate type and inferred types. By the former is meant those great characters of history who represent, in a natural or innate sense, the Lord Jesus Christ. In this case we may take Adam, Abel, Noah, Melchisedec, Isaac, the ram sacrificed by Abraham, Joseph, the pillar of fire, etc. By the latter or inferred types we may picture those set up for that purpose as an illustration. Take the cities of the Plain of Siddim, Sodom and Gomorrah. They were used inferentially by the Lord on the doctrine of repentance.

Points of Analogy

We are told that Moses was a type of Christ. Moses said, "The Lord God will raise you up a prophet from among your brethren as He raised me up. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came afterwards, also proclaimed these days. You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God gave to your fathers, saying to Abraham, and in your posterity shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Acts 3:22-25.) "Therefore, holy brethren, who share in the heavenly call, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession. He was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in God's house. Yet Jesus had been counted more worthy of as much more glory than Moses as a builder of a house has more honor than the house." (Heb. 3:1-3.) Here, then, the New Testament writers set up Moses as the type of Christ. As Moses led and directed his generation, and was a prophet; so Jesus led and instructed His people, as one worthy of more honor than Moses, as Christ was greater than Moses, Each was a prophet, who had to be heard in his generation. One with the Law of Moses; the other with the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

The priesthood of Moses becomes the type of the priesthood of Christ. "For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor to himself, but he is called lof God, just as Aaron was.

"So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by Him who said to Him, 'Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee'; as He says also in another place, 'Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec'" (Heb. 5:2-6.)

The blood of animals became the type of the blood of Christ. We are told that it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. (Heb. 10:4.) And these sacrifices were offered year by year continually — rolling the sins forward, but never forgiving them. But once in the end of the world Christ appeared to put away sins by the sacrifice of Himself. We are given a full length treatment of this contrast of the offerings of the two systems in the ninth chapter of Hebrews. The first system was sanctified by blood — the blood of animals. The New Testament system employed the blood of the Son of God as the perfect offering for sins, and God once and for all forgave sins in that offering. As the high priest took the blood of the annual atonement into the most holy place, Christ took His own blood into heaven itself to atone for us.

The first Tabernacle was but a shadow of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. Man, on direction, pitched the first one in the wilderness. God had it set up as a type because it was molded after the true divine order. And God, to keep that figure true in the type, required Moses to make all things according to the pattern

which God showed him. It was built according to specifications to meet a more wonderful system in type. Read carefully the eighth chapter of Hebrews.

Manifestly, the first system, with the first tabernacle, was temporary, and passing in nature, but it was given as a shadow of good things to come, which in contrast would be eternal in nature. This itself, together with the covenant which supported it, meant that it was waxing old, and was ready to vanish away. It had to be a passing thing, for it was to picture in type a different and lasting thing.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XVIII

How would you define the term "type" in conjunction with "antitype"?

Why did God set up such a system that would embrace type and antitype? What of the unity of purpose in this order of things? What of the time element as an evidence of divine purpose?

What of the symbolism of the angels over the Ark of the Covenant?

What can you say of advancing glory revealed in type and shadow?

How far is one allowed to go in the realm of type and antitype ?

Is a type based upon human action and human history?

How would you define legal type? What is meant by that thought?

What can you say of prophetic types? How did a prophet act out his projected prophecy?

What is an historical type?

What are some points of analogy between the system of Moses and the system of Christ?

What book in the New Testament especially brings forth the lesson of type and antitype?

Why was the type destined to pass away?

CHAPTER XIX
**TYPE AND ANTITYPE — IN CONTRAST OR
OPPOSITION**

Points in Contrast or Opposition. Earthly Tabernacle
— Therefore Impermanent. Priesthood Weak and
Sinful. Sacrifices Not Able to Remove Sins.
Atonement Once and Forever — Complete. . The
Veil Upon Their Hearts.

The Mountain that Might Be Touched — the
Heavenly Jerusalem.

As in all cases of earthly symbolism, whether parable, allegory, simile, or even of type and antitype, the vehicle used has its manifest weaknesses, because it can be only an attempt to convey the spiritual. The spiritual must always loom with a lustre that shines all about the figure, as the sun must yield some light even in an eclipse, to light up the heavens, so that it is not totally dark. But the wonder of it all is that the figure can be used to point in the general direction of the supernatural. Man is always more a spirit than an animal, if he is aware of himself and the universe about him; if he is aware of the beauty and the awe which is everywhere about him. And how poor man would be, if as pictured in the case of the man with the hoe, by Markham, all interest is drained off of him through unremitting toil, causing an ensuing blindness of the divine everywhere about him! Man is more what he is in imagi-

nations and sentiments than he is flesh and bones. And the great of the earth have always been, in some measure, moved by this spiritual side of life, this magnetic power, this dynamism because of communion with the infinite, and a consciousness that it pervades them and all about them. Emerson called it the Oversoul. Anyway, a type cannot possibly convey all the elements it might suggest. And in contrast with the type we have certain weaknesses or limitations which the mind immediately recognizes and which the divine writers have pointed out as

Points in Contrast or Opposition

In this case the weaknesses are pointed out in the original vehicle or the type as set over against the antitype. Manifestly, the flawless character of the earthly illustration or type cannot be avowed or even assumed; its failures and inadequacies are too apparent. But then we are so much richer for the type after all. We can have no glimpse into the unknown except in connection with the known. God has dealt so wisely with us, leading the race of man in experience and example to know of His marvelous ways. The Apostle Paul is struck with this disparity in the type and the antitype in the weakness of the fleshy order in contrast with the spiritual order.

The Letter Kills — the Spirit Gives Life

In Second Corinthians the 3rd chapter, he brings out this difference, not indeed to disparage the law of Moses, but to show the greater benefits accruing from the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. He says that the letter kills. Naturally, one wonders how. And the answer is given. The law, he argued in his letter throughout when he mentioned the subject at all (as in Romans 7th chapter), was seated in the flesh. It placed restrictions upon the operations of

the flesh, sought to control the flesh by saying that one should not do a certain thing, like coveting, or committing adultery. The prohibition proved to be tantalizing and aroused the sinfulness of the flesh instead of controlling it. Hence, as he said, sin took occasion by the commandment, and by it slew him. He found that system to be a system of death instead of a system which brought life. So he said that the letter killed; that is, the law of Moses killed. On the other hand, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, as he said, made him free from the law of sin and of death. (Rom. 8:1-4.) The law of Moses was a type all right, but what a difference in the objectives and ends and the processes to obtain those ends! Hence, the type, while the best that could be afforded, could not measure up to the fullness of the achievements of the new order when it did come.

An Infirm Priesthood — A Perfect Priesthood

The very point of weakness of the first priesthood caused it to give way for a better order. We are told by the Hebrew writer that if a proper and perfect priesthood had been given under the law of Moses, there could not have been sought a place for the second one to come. One does not remove an order that cannot be improved upon. There was a weakness in the first priesthood which had to be admitted; nay, there were two weaknesses that were insurmountable; 1st, a priesthood after a carnal commandment; 2nd, a priesthood itself that had infirmities. Because of this weakness of the priesthood of the Old Testament, that is, the one of personal weakness, the priest had first to offer for himself and then for the errors of the people.

The Apostle assures us that the High Priest of our profession has no such weakness. He is a perfect High Priest in things pertaining to God. Yet a third point is mentioned by the writer that we must also consider, and that is that

there were many priests under the law, because they were always being removed by death. But the word of the oath which is since the law, made the Son an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. He has a continuing priesthood, and can never be replaced.

The Blood of Animals — the Blood of Christ

, It is a strange order to human kind that God has required the suffering vicariously, that is, of the sinless for the wicked, for there to be any escape at all. Otherwise every man would have to suffer for his own sins. And that of course would mean universal and final condemnation. The provision therefore which God made was to allow the innocent and unoffending lamb to suffer for sinful man. He allowed animal sacrifices as a substitute to stave off the penalty which should have been assessed against man. For thousands of years this kind of a system was in vogue. Deep indeed is the nature of sin; profound its consequences. It can never come into the presence of a sinless God. And again for thousands of years there was no forgiveness of sins—only the penalty was postponed, man being forever on probation, with no suspension, but the sins always to be recalled some day. Meantimes, mountains of animal flesh were burned; rivers of animal blood flowed, principally from the temple area in Jerusalem. For generations that went on, from morning until night; from evening until morning. The smoke spiraled up from the morning and the evenings oblations toward the blue of the sky by day or the starry studded dome of heaven by night.

The Apostle assures us that the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin. There was remembrance of sins (they were called up for review, and again pushed forward by the annual atonement) made every year. They could not be out-lived! they could not be escaped. They would have to be met some day. But then God had a plan

for sinful man. He would give- the perfect sacrifice, his only begotten Son, to die for the sins of the world. Christ became the perfect sacrifice. And all the animal sacrifices through the two great dispensations of time, the Patriarchal Age and the Jewish Age, would therefore be used as types of his offering. But even so, the types could never be adequate to picture the final reality. There was a disparity too profound not noticed but implied by the divine writers.

Atonement Once and Forever

Moral guilt, even the least, can condemn a man forever. It does not take the great sins, such as murder, to commit a person to eternal ruin. And all the rivers of blood that ever flowed from animal sacrifices could not remove one of the least sins. The only thing in God's eternal purpose that could remove sin was the blood of Christ. There was, therefore, to be a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. That fountain was opened when the side of the Son of God was pierced by the Roman sword. For the very first time in the long annals of the race God could see of the suffering of His soul, and be satisfied. Christ became the satisfaction, the propitiation for sin. God at last could say of mankind, of any penitent man, who would accept His proffered terms of grace in the Gospel, that all was forgiven, that Christ had paid the price. "Once in the end of the world He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

A Veil Upon Their Hearts

The Apostle Paul was struck with the idea that as Moses came down from the Mt. Sinai he had to put a veil over his face because of the reflected glory of his countenance as he came from the presence of God. The people of Israel could not look upon his face because of this brightness. And

he did place a veil over his face to shield them from the brightness. Now the Apostle uses this to point out something else. He said that when they read the law of Moses, they had a veil on their hearts, and they were not free to see what God would have them to see, and especially as regards the system of grace which the law typified. And so he transferred this thought to their reading of the law. They could not see the truth of the Gospel because they still had the veil on their hearts. Sad, sad indeed! This was a point of disparity named by him. (Read carefully the third chapter of Second Corinthians.)

The Mount That Might Be Touched—the Heaven Jerusalem

In the experiences of the Jews they came upon the edge, or up to the Mt. Sinai. But God sought to protect them by refusing them permission to come upon that mountain. He had it fenced off. Man or beast which should touch it should be stoned or thrust through with a dart. That was the order. The mountain rocked beneath the presence of Jehovah, as his voice rolled out over the subjacent regions. It was a terrible sight as blackness and darkness and tempest enveloped it. So great was the sight that Moses said he did exceeding fear and quake. But that mountain, in spite of the prohibition, could be touched. However, the point of disparity is that our law issues from the heavenly Jerusalem in this age, the Christian age of the world. We cannot touch this mountain, for it is not physical. It is spiritual and of another order. The concourse here was of human beings surrounding the Mt. Sinai. The concourse there will be an innumerable company of angels, the spirits of just men made perfect. (Read carefully the twelfth chapter of Hebrews.)

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIX

Why cannot a type completely convey the spiritual implications of the antitype?

Is there a flawlessness in the type? Why not?

Was the Apostle Paul especially impressed with the weakness of the type in contrast with the antitype?

What did the Apostle think the chief weakness of the type? Why? Where was it centered?

Why was the priesthood of the first covenant infirm? Why did it have to sacrifice first for itself? What is the disparity there with the second system?

What of the longevity of the priesthood of the two systems?

Why could not the blood of animals remove the guilt of sins? Are there not obtruding from that system of animals and their blood some transcendent needs met only in the perfect sacrifice? Did they not inevitably lead to that sacrifice?

How can moral guilt be removed in blood? Can we understand this matter?

What of the disparity of the veil over the hearts?

What of the contrasting of the two mountains as further evidence of disparity, and therefore of weakness of the first or typical system over the antitype?

CHAPTER XX

OTHER TYPES SET FORTH IN SCRIPTURE

Jonah.

Noah and the Flood.

Melchisedek. *

Isaac and His Sacrifice as a Type of the
Resurrection of Christ.

The Serpent in the Wilderness.

Under historic types mention was made of natural or innate types and inferred or referred types. We shall now give some little attention to the latter, as this work could not be complete and leave this section untreated. We ourselves should not be warranted in setting forth such types, but we are in position to make use of those historic types that have been labeled such by inspiration.

Jonah

Our Lord Himself said that an evil and wicked generation seeks after a sign, but no sign should be given them except the sign of the prophet Jonas, for as he was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so the Son of man should be three days in the heart of the earth. He spoke of the repenting of the men and women of Ninevah at the preaching of Jonah, that is, into the benefits of the preaching of Jonah. And He concerned Himself with the reference only to the time Jonah was in the whale's belly as symbol, or type, of His entombment in the earth. No other sign should be given. Not great and undoubted signs, such

as they could want. They were an evil and wicked generation to want such a sign. Otherwise the forces of circumstances framed into history would show forth His mission and destiny. God would not humor them beyond that. Yes, He *could* have, but the results would not have been different in any case. If blind to their own prophets who projected the things which would happen to the Messiah, they would be blind anyway.

Noah and the Flood

It is simply peculiar how learned men even can miss the very points which are themselves intended to be conveyed in types, such as Noah and the flood. All kinds of misuse have been made of this instance given by the Apostle Peter, he said that as Noah and his family, eight persons, were saved from the flood, or through the flood, and transported to a new order afterwards, so baptism is the antitype. Now we are never warranted in reading into a passage more than the Scripture itself has said. We may be able in our own minds to parallel many points, but such would be an arbitrary classification; a distinctly human achievement. We had better therefore leave the type in its proper setting and get only what is distinctly said in the text. We can parallel the idea of preaching before the call to a new order; the acceptance of the condition, if any; of the sure destruction without heeding the call, and many other points. And there have been many other points proposed from time to time. The ark has been pictured as the type of a church. But the Bible nowhere says that it is. If it is, the family of Noah left it immediately after the flood; and so Christians should leave the church immediately after baptism, if the church is the antitype. The Apostle Peter said that baptism is the antitype (antitupon) of the flood. It is not, he said, a physical cleansing, but it is an, answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ

from the dead; Hence, it takes on a spiritual character, and leads to the moral sense and appreciation of man. It has to do with a spiritual cleansing, though itself is a physical act, passive on the part of the subject, (1st Peter 3rd chapter.)

Melchisedek

The history of this individual is known somewhat, but there are elements of the life and labors of this great and good- man who was both king of Salem and priest of the most high God at one and the same time that are not known. He met Abraham on his return from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed Abraham, and the Hebrew writer says that the less was blessed of the greater, thus making, at least in some respects, Melchisedek greater than Abraham. Melchisedek was said to be a priest without beginning of days or end of life. Certainly his office as priest was unique, and it did not have successors or even predecessors. But it seems to have been a true priesthood, to the most high God; and to have been accepted of God. Tithes were paid by Abraham through Melchisedek. This peculiar man, who was both king and priest, was selected by the divine writers to set forth the idea of the priesthood of Christ by way of a type. The point being established, and authenticated in history, the precedent was set up for the priesthood of Christ. He did not have to descend from a line of priests. It too was unique and quite apart, but none the less effective. (Read especially the Hebrew letter, chapters 5 and 7.)

Isaac and His Sacrifice as a Type of the Resurrection
"By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son, of whom it was said, 'Through Isaac shall your descendants be named.' He considered that God was able to raise men even from the dead; hence, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back again." (Hebrews 11:17-

19.) This again is a referred type. It is striking because of the enormous faith that Abraham had that God would fulfill His promise in Isaac even if he should sacrifice him. He believed that God could, and would, bring him back to life again. Hence, Isaac's offering typified the offering of Christ, whom God did bring back from the dead. (The reader should go back and read carefully the Genesis account of the offering of Isaac.)

The Serpent in the Wilderness

Christ Himself set forth this as a type of Him. He called to mind what happened in the wilderness when the fiery serpents were sent among the people because of their murmuring against Moses and against God; They were bitten and many of them died. The Apostle Paul also makes reference to this when he says that they were destroyed by serpents. (1 Cor. 10:10.) The cure God chose for this particular evil could be one of faith, and produced because of faith in the power of God. When the brazen serpent, lifeless in itself, was erected upon a pole, the people who were bitten of the fiery serpents looked, and they were healed. This took faith. The remedy could not be with man. It was with God on His own plan. So with the crucifixion of Christ. He was raised upon the cross. And the one who accepts His crucifixion by faith can be healed of the terrible malady of sin. But faith must be there to do what the Lord said. (John 3:14,15.)

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XX

Are we allowed to draw the idea of types from Bible history ourselves without any mention as such by divine writers? Why not?

Why would God not give other great signs than He had given in history, as in the case of Jonah?

Is it arbitrary, and therefore unwarranted, for us to make points in historic, or referred types, not given in Scripture?

While a thing might be true in itself, from other Scripture foundations, can we properly elongate such points in historic or referred types? Why not?

Are we justified in taking other things and personages as^p types unless they are referred types by the divine writers?

Why was the sacrifice of Isaac a type of Christ, and in what respect?

What is the point of analogy of the serpent in the wilderness?

Can you bring to mind other referred types in Bible history?

CHAPTER XXI
**INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY
THROUGH HISTORY**

The Prophecies of the Prophet, Christ.
The Organic Connection of the Visions of the Prophets.
The Vision of An Universal Kingdom.
Messianic Conclusions of the Prophets.
The Fulfillment of Prophecy.
Prophecy Is Not Predicted History.
The Eternal Future of the Kingdom.

Not only did God prefigure, by type, the New Testament in the Old, but equally and at the same time and in the same connection, he made prophetic utterances on the Messiah. John correctly said that the testimony of Christ is the spirit of prophecy. In other words, the very essence and spirit of the whole of prophetic predictions and primary concerns were not merely the local circumstances both of Israel and its destiny as a nation and the inter-related historic experiences of other nations coeval with them, and somehow interwoven into their destiny, but of the messianic office and kingdom of the coming Christ and His great era. Every thing, all events, served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things. These historic circumstances were hand-maiden to the coming glorious Bride of Christ — the Church. While each particular prophet was set in history, and so far as he knew, was chiefly concerned with his message and his time, actually there was moving

in his vision and concerns at the same time, albeit unconsciously, the events of the messianic kingdom. This was particularly true of the projection of Moses on the coming Great Prophet (Deut. 19:18,19), of the prophecies of Micah (2:1-4), Isaiah (2:1-4; chapters 28,56,66), and ' Zechariah (13th and 14th chapter). This was why the testimony of Christ was the spirit of prophecy, and this is what caused the prophets themselves with great concern to search their own spirits to try to determine what they did prophesy. (Second Peter 1:1-9.) As the Apostle Peter preached: "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise told of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seeds shall all the kingdoms of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God having raised his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every man from his iniquities." (Acts 3:24-26.) History is thus not merely the historic sequence of the kingdom of Israel, or national Israel under any circumstance in clear outline in connection with other nations, but at the same time as the panorama unfolds in prophetic projections, God's glorious purpose in history is super-imposed upon historic sequence and interwoven with ancient nations and kingdoms to set forth the great and universal Messianic Kingdom! How great the divine wisdom! How marvelous the Book of God! One must read it with such thoughts in mind to comprehend its great depths. But at all times the simple outline of history, of any age and people, is utterly simple and is based upon the hard facts of history. One may take Babylon, Medo-Persia or any other kingdom or nation, such as Egypt, and the facts in prophecy and history can be verified from any reputable historic source. Thus has God moved in history.

The Prophecies of the Prophet, Christ

If it be established (as it can be) that prophets such as Daniel and Isaiah antedated in history the historic outlines which they set forth for the future of kingdoms (notably in Daniel), then the eye of prescience was beholding the panorama of human events as the undulating plains and mountains building up to a magnificent plateau in the kingdom of Christ. And the prophetic concern certainly establishes the Bible as a divine book; and the Messahship of Jesus Christ becomes a divine demonstration. Even His deeds and life are consonant with this view of Him in prophecy and history. He can only be explained in His embodiment in this light. Not only so, but his effect upon all subsequent generations must also harmonize with His total purpose in prophecy and history. He is thus the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega. He is also the embodiment of the common woes, suffering and pathos of the souls of all men, the embosomed passion of the flesh of all men, the articulation of the immortal dream of all men, the Universal Man, the epitome of the race. Not only as the Son of Man, He is also centralized duty for all men to see. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," He said. And it true now, by faith, as it has been true of the historic past when He lived in the flesh. In Him we see God. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in flesh, justified in spirit, seen of angels, preached unto men, received up into heaven."

The prophecies going before on Christ are very numerous. God did give Him as the leader unto the people, as a commander unto the people, as the Good Shepherd, as the king and priest. Oh the wonder of Him in the flesh! The wonder of Him in prophecy and history! The apex of all time before, and whose life shines in innocence forever in retrospection, He must remain the focal point of prophecy

in His final return to complete the triumph over death and to bring immortality to men. No wonder John the Beloved could say, "Every eye shall behold Him, and they also that pierced Him, and nations shall wail because of Him."

The Organic Connection of the Visions of the Prophets

While each prophet retained his personality and style, and even his peculiar imagery, in setting forth the messianic office, the suffering of Christ, His rejection, His sacrifice and triumph, yet there is an organic consistency to the whole of their messages, rounding out the Messiah. So very many prophecies are concentrated upon Him, and of so diverse a character, that it seems impossible to define Him. And only when He did come in the flesh and began the fulfillment can we begin to understand and to correlate their predictions. And even then, when fulfillments were pointed out by inspired writers, He is limned in history only imperfectly to our view, because He was infinite and we are finite. And His impact upon history grows with each passing century. As the Old Testament, despite the different centuries in which they wrote, the outward circumstance of their lives in their own or foreign lands, comes to constitute one organic book through divine supervision in the processes of history, so the Christ, from the pages of the prophets, emerges as centralized being in human flesh as-the Son of Man, the Nazarene.

The Tenor of the Prophets

The consensus of the prophetic utterances, indeed the tenor of all the Old Testament prophets was always messianic in character. If they did become involved in local circumstances of history, as they did in different eras and with different nations, there remains a constant awareness through all their messages of their concern with a future universal purpose in the kingdom of God. It cannot be

escaped. One somehow reads the prophets with this consciousness of ulterior thoughts and aims always in mind. He reads the prophets with appreciation for the message of their era, and with a profounder appreciation of divine purpose moving through them.

The Vision of An Universal Kingdom

There is an ever-brooding awareness in all the prophets that the spirit of Christ motivated them, that God moved them with the thought of the coming Christ. And while they were often the most material of men, somehow their thoughts took up a spiritual character, in spite of their concern with local conditions, as mean and sordid as they sometimes were. In fact, there was an enhancement of the spiritual concept because of the poverty of their circumstances and the meanness of the conditions that confronted them. Take the beauty of the land in Isaiah's vision when the desert rejoices and blossoms as a rose and all the trees clap their hands in joy. These visions come in the midst of drouth and sadness. The spiritual character of the universal kingdom thus emerges in the imagery of the prophet while he seemingly gives a physical interpretation of the hopes of Israel.

The suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow also take on a spiritual character. They cannot be literally fulfilled in a literal order. His suffering was very real, of course, but it prognosticated a triumphant order of a spiritual kind. The hopes of all Israel, through the prophets, for a superior order, thus rose upon the prophetic utterances.

While the prophets could not understand their own messages, as they gave the messianic outline, bit by bit, and of different kinds, it remained for the sequences of history to develop that idea in the person of Christ and through the apostles whom He chose to carry on His work. While the

apostles could be the most material of men, as respected their prejudices and traditions, they nevertheless were lifted by divine power to apprehend somewhat the outlines of the glorious kingdom which they served. It is this spiritual character of the kingdom that must impress any close student of the Word. But the materialist who brings his prejudices to the subject of Scripture must continue to see a nonfillment of the prophets even now, and must look for such things to take place in the future. He does not understand the very nature of the prophets, and he fails to catch the glorious vision of the apostles of Christ as they moved to martyrdom and immortality in history.

Messianic Conclusions of the Prophets

One is made to wonder when he reads the story about the Great Image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel's interpretation about the concreteness of the different parts of the image, and the succession of empires in the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian and the Grecian peoples, about the lack of conclusions in the Roman empire. Its final fate is not exactly pictured in Daniel's vision, but rather he transfers his thoughts immediately from that vast empire, great and terrible, to the messianic kingdom. He said that in the days of these kings (of the last empire) that the God of heaven should set up a kingdom that should never be destroyed, but that it would break in pieces and destroy all previous orders of things and should stand forever. He saw this messianic kingdom as a little stone cut out of the mountain without hands (it could not be seen forming and taking shape) which took its course to roll into the plain and against the image to destroy it; and in turn it began such a phenomenal growth, such a burgeoning power as to fill the whole earth, again, presumably, without hands, or apparently physically taking shape. That was because

it was spiritual in nature. So in some measure of all the prophets who projected ideas of the kingdom of heaven.

The Fulfillment of Prophecy

The fulfillment of prophecy must not always, but may generally correspond, with literal fulfillment. So that the outline is kept, the details, while corresponding, do not require literality, for sometimes that would indeed be impossible, as in a projected revival of the Davidic era. That was past forever. Prophecy then can only be understood from the standpoint of its fulfillment. The apostles and the New Testaments writers were the best interpreters of the prophets. Any one who does not so understand does not understand the prophets or the apostles! Take the case of the explanation in the third chapter of Acts of the Apostles by the Apostle Peter or Stephen's explanation of the prophets in Acts 7th chapter, or the messianic order expounded up the eventualities of the prophecies of the Old Testament in Acts the fifteenth chapter of the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David, as examples. This spiritual interpretation of the prophets denies the literal while retaining the original outline.

Prophecy Is Not Predicted History

While the messages of the prophets had always a current meaning for those to whom their messages were set forth in symbolism the destiny for them and their kingdoms, it was not merely history pre-determined and unalterable. There was an enlargement of the prophetic vision in succeeding generations in other circumstances. Predicted history only would be fatalism, or Calvinism. God allowed mankind, even unconsciously, to fill in many of the details - by their own volition. Prescience does not necessarily mean foreordination. Prescience, or foreknowledge, allows freedom of the individual and even of nations. Else the betrayers of Christ and His murders lose their guilt,

and the Divine becomes responsible! In Christ and His crucifixion the leaders of the Jews *set* their own hearts to do God's will! They were free, except in their stiffness of heart they chose to reject God and His Christ. They disclaimed the kingship of Jesus to Pilate. They rejected, voluntarily, the Messiah. "Crucify him, crucify him!" they shouted. Thus the confluent streams of cultures, history in nation, the chauvinism of the Jews, the patois of the Greek tongue, the tread of the Roman soldiers converge in history in the city of Jerusalem to fulfill a divine purpose. The details are filled in by mankind, the whole world becomes guilty not only in sin but also in the crucifixion of our Lord. The races and cultures meet to dispatch Him into the eternal beyond. But that did not end it! From that emerges the glorious kingdom.

The Eternal Future of the Kingdom

The kingdom of heaven has phases. The Prophet Micah said that the first dominion, or section of the kingdom should come to Jerusalem. And it did. Beginning with the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, in the year 33 of this era it began, and people began to be born into it. Born of water and the Spirit, as Jesus said. But there remains vast stretches of that kingdom which will escape our view until we go into the eternal phase of the kingdom. The Apostle Peter calls it the "everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Per. 1 il—14). That will be everlasting salvation, immortality, eternal life — not in the flesh, but in transformed and immortalized bodies. The prophets in some measure envisioned this order, in spite of themselves, and the apostles, as prophets of the future, concentrated upon it. All men sigh for it, consciously or unconsciously, for we are of divine origin and are concerned with a divine order, the kingdom of heaven, the everlasting kingdom.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXI

How was the testimony of Christ the spirit of prophecy?

If set for local messages, did the prophets after all glimpse the messianic order? How? Where, in some of them?

Were the prophets troubled about their own visions, and did they try to understand them?

Were the prophets of the Old Testaments concerned with the coming order of things?

How is the Bible established as a divine book through the prophets?

Do the diverse prophecies concerning Christ before hand clarify His personality, or clearly define His functions?

What connection did Daniel the prophet see between the Great Image and the Kingdom of Christ?

Could the prophecies centering in Christ come to be organized prior to his actual appearance?

Is there an organic unity embraced in the prophets in their prophecies of Christ?

What can you say of the diverse characteristics named by the prophets as they came to be interpreted in Christ?

Is there a consensus among the prophets concerning the character and ministry of Christ?

Was there an awareness on the part of the prophets that they had a concern beyond the passing historic events with which they dealt?

In spite of themselves and their narrow nationalism, did

the prophets prophecy about a universal spiritual kingdom?

What can you say of the messianic conclusions of the prophets?

, Do certain prophecies require literal fulfillment?

What would force one to say that prophecy could not be taken literally?

How should prophecy be understood?

What relationship does prophecy have to history?

How can God leave the history process free and still foresee a thing?

Does the kingdom of God have an eternal future? In what state will it be found?

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