

# HIS WORKMANSHIP

A CONSIDERATION  
OF EPHESIANS II : 8-10.

---

J. EUSTACE MILLS.

---

" For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."—EPHESIANS II : 8-10.

1933



# CONTENTS

---

## INTRODUCTION.

- I. THE EPHESIANS.
- II. "HIS GREAT LOVE WHEREWITH HE LOVED US."
- III. "FOR BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED"
- IV. "THROUGH FAITH:"
- V. "AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES: IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD:"
- VI. "NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANY MAN SHOULD BOAST."
- VII. "FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS"
- VIII. "UNTO GOOD WORKS,"
- IX. "WHICH GOD HATH BEFORE ORDAINED THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM."
- X. CONCLUSION



## INTRODUCTION

THE following pages are largely the result of conversations upon eternal things, held with various people. Conversations that have revealed a longing desire in many hearts to find some rest and assurance as to the future, some alleviation from the fear that comes in the contemplation of that inavertible end to this life, some deep peace which all that is esteemed fair and desirable in this world has failed to impart. The most careless and seemingly indifferent people have, in quiet moments, serious thoughts, these thoughts may not be expressed or even admitted to others, but that they exist and demand an answer is a fact few will deny.

Among the more speculative minds, the endeavour to answer these questions has been the source of many hypotheses, to the less original an answer is often sought in one of the many views or doctrines propounded to-day that best fits in with the individual conception of life. But whatever may be the differences of opinion, one thing is common to them all, they are merely "opinions." That every man has a right to his own opinion is one of the cherished articles of our modern freedom. That one man's opinion may be as good as another, and therefore no one has a right to force his views upon another, is also an accepted precept. Nevertheless it is apparent that these opinions, so diverse and conflicting, cannot all be right, and consequently the sincere seeker for truth is eventually weaned from his own opinions and those of others to come at last to what is the only source of truth—revelation.

The Holy Scriptures claim to be the Word of God. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 TIMOTHY III : 16). To demonstrate the fact of inspiration is outside the scope of this work, we ask that for the purpose of the following study the claim as to their inspiration may be accepted, or, if the reader will not concede to this, that he will at least recognise that the writer has endorsed the fact, and have patience to await what is the result of the implicit belief that the Scriptures are the Word of God.

In approaching the Scriptures an important point is to notice exactly what God has said, what God **means** is a secondary consideration. If what God **means** is not at the first sight clearly evident it is for us to seek His face that in His own perfect way He will cause us to understand the meaning. What must be guarded against is that we shall not imagine what God means. It will be our purpose therefore to abide by the very words of Scripture that our faith may not "stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 CORINTHIANS II : 5). If, in every matter, we have the foundation of "thus saith the Scriptures," then doubts that assert themselves can receive a speedy and effective answer that does not depend on the words of any man, but which can be checked repeatedly from what is written.

To simplify the enquiry we have taken as the basis for consideration one short passage, EPHESIANS II : 8-10. These three verses cover a wide field of truth, and being concise are more easily apprehended. The plan of the following is : In the first chapter to gather a little of the history of those to whom, in the first instance, the words were addressed ; in the second chapter to note the setting of the passage within the Epistle as a whole, and

then in the succeeding chapters to take the passage and consider it word by word, comparing it with other portions of Holy Writ, that we may discover precisely what God has said.

If God has given to man His Word, it is reasonable to expect that He can cause man to be able to understand it; and if the things that concern the future and our standing before God are items that, to us all, are so vital, then we might expect that these of all things would be plainly explained to the understanding of every one; the approach to the Scriptures with this expectation is to come and find the expectation abundantly satisfied. If it is that the following pages direct to those passages that deal with these themes specifically, then we trust that all into whose hands this little book may come will give its contents careful consideration.

The peace, the joy, the rest, the assurance that comes into the heart that believes God's testimony concerning His Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, can only be understood by those who have received it. The best that such can do is to join in the invitation of the Psalmist :

"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."—PSALM XXXIV: 8.



## I.

WHEN considering any portion of Scripture it is important to notice where it occurs, as this contributes very largely to the understanding of the subject. The passage that is to be before our notice comes in an epistle of Paul that is addressed to the Ephesian believers.

"Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:"—

EPHESIANS I : 1.

Paul was well known to these christians, for he had been largely instrumental in forming the little gathering in that city. His first visit is recorded in ACTS XVIII : 19-21 :

"And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; but bade them farewell, saying, 'I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return unto you, if God will.' And he sailed from Ephesus."

It was the divine order in preaching the gospel during the period covered by the Acts of the Apostles that the Jews should always be spoken to first. This order Paul observed, but this first visit was evidently brief, and did not permit a wider proclamation of the good news. In parting, Paul promised to revisit them in answer to their request. It was during that second visit that the word was preached to a wider circle of hearers.

On returning to Ephesus Paul found certain disciples (ACTS XIX : 1), but it was not a large company, for the number is given, "And all the men were about twelve" (v. 7). To these disciples Paul was enabled to impart some further light of truth. They had heard only of

the preaching of John the Baptist, who had come beforehand to prepare the way for the Lord. Paul was therefore able to speak to them of the One who had come according to John's words. "That they should believe on Him Which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus" (v. 4).

Paul spake to the Jews first as before :—

"And He went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months" (ACTS XIX: 8).

This was a long period, and gave plenty of time for a definite decision to be made by the Jews.

"But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (ACTS XIX: 9-10).

After this departure from the synagogue at Ephesus, it is not recorded that Paul ever entered one again, with the increasing rejection of the Gospel concerning the risen Messiah by the Jews that characterised that time, Paul had an ever-widening ministry to the Gentiles. Here we read that those who heard the word of the Lord Jesus were "both Jews and Greeks." This wider ministry was very fruitful.

"And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds . . . so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." (ACTS XIX: 18-20).

So great indeed was the growth of the word that it interfered with the economic activities of the city. Silver shrines for Diana had no longer an appeal to those who rejoiced in the freedom of sins forgiven, thus the custom of the silversmiths suffered, and

consequently trouble started, which resulted in the uproar (ACTS XIX : 23-41).

After this Paul departed from Ephesus, never to return, but when on his last journey to Jerusalem he sent for the disciples at Ephesus.

"And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church " (ACTS XX : 17).

Paul had a special purpose in calling these elders, he desired to bring to their remembrance all that he had taught them, and to establish them in the truth in view of the fact that he would not be with them any more.

"And when they were come to him, he said unto them, 'Ye know, that from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews : and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks . . . wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.'" (ACTS XX : 18-27).

A grand summary of a faithful ministry, to be able to call those who had known him so intimately, to testify that in word and in deed he had commended to them, all the truth that had been committed to him up to that time. "And now," Paul said, "I go bound in spirit unto Jerusalem, and . . . I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more " (verses 22-25). To know this fact must have meant much to Paul, who so gave himself to those whom he sought to win and to establish in the faith, yet the knowledge of the dangers that the future had in store for this little flock must have cost him even more.

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock . . . Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified " (ACTS XX : 29-32).

The establishment of believers did not depend on Paul's presence, it had a more secure basis, "the word of His grace," which indeed was all-sufficient to build them up and, as time proved, to keep them in the way of the truth. The good-bye of the Ephesian elders to Paul as he embarked upon that adventurous journey to Jerusalem seems one of the most touching incidents in the record of the activities of the apostles.

"And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship." (ACTS XX : 36-38).

To such an affectionate little company the news of Paul's journey must have been looked for with eagerness. A journey which ended not at Jerusalem, but in prison at Rome. (ACTS XXVIII : 30.)

To Paul, also, any communication as to their state would be welcomed with an earnestness that only an ardent heart like his could know. Thus it was that while a prisoner at Rome Paul heard good news of the Ephesians, news that called forth this Epistle to the Ephesians.

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers ;" (EPHESIANS I : 15-16).

Paul had not commended them to God and to the word of His grace in vain, that word had kept them through the years that had intervened since last they said farewell. Paul's imprisonment would naturally be a concern to the Ephesians and so he speaks of it : to Paul this bondage was not an accident or misfortune, he could look past the fact that he was held by the Romans and see God's hand in it all so that he was enabled to say :

" I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles "  
(EPHESIANS III : 1).

" I therefore the prisoner of the Lord " (EPHESIANS IV : 1).

Not only a prisoner of Jesus Christ, but also a prisoner for a special purpose " for you Gentiles." We saw how Paul had such fruit among the Gentiles at Ephesus, and how that to them he testified the whole counsel of God as revealed up to that time, now he introduces another fact : he was a prisoner for the Gentiles by reason of a truth that had been committed to him for them. " If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward, how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery " (EPHESIANS III : 2-3). Paul, therefore, in writing to the Ephesians, does not dwell on his imprisonment, but rather commits to them that truth for which he was " an ambassador in bonds " (EPHESIANS VI : 20).

We can well imagine the joy of the Ephesian believers on the receipt of this epistle. To hear from Paul who had meant, under God's hand, so much to them, to hear of his imprisonment, and then to hear, above all things, of the truth that had been revealed to him for them concerning the present headship and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all that God had made that headship

and glory to mean to them. If we can just let our minds visualise the eagerness of those who first read this letter, it will make us want to share the same eagerness in reading it too.

Having gathered a little of the historical background that is the setting of the Ephesian epistle, we can come to it with a greater measure of expectation and appreciate more fully its special message.

## II

**"His great love wherewith He loved us" (EPHESIANS II : 4).**  
BEFORE considering EPHESIANS II : 8-10, it is well that we notice the context, the setting of the passage, what particular circumstance gave rise to its expression.

After the salutation, which occupies the first two verses of the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul occupies twelve verses with great truths concerning the Will of the Father (verses 3-5), which is accomplished by the Work of the Son (verses 6-12), and which is sealed by the Witness of the Spirit (verses 13-14). So great, however, was this revelation that Paul, before stating any more, resorts to prayer on behalf of the believers, that God might give unto them "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" (verses 15-23), for nothing less than that was sufficient for these things. Then having concluded this prayer he is led, before enlarging upon the things that had been revealed to him, to look back and cause the believers to consider what they were before the message of grace came to them, and then to point out the wonders of what God had done.

**"In time past . . . but God. . . In time past . . . but now in Christ."**

These four time divisions punctuate the second chapter of Ephesians. The first "time past" concerns their state as sinners.

**"And you who were dead in trespasses and sins ; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience : among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling**

the desires of the flesh and of the mind ; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. **But God**, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) " (EPHESIANS II : 1-5).

The state of being a sinner under the dominion of the prince of the power of the air is changed by the " **But God** " into a union with Christ which makes us alive, or quickened, with Him. The second " **time past** " concerns their distance as Gentiles.

" Wherefore remember, that ye being in **time past** Gentiles in the flesh . . . that at **that time** ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world : **but now** in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ " (EPHESIANS II : 11-13).

To have " **no hope** " and to be " **without God in the world**," is as desperate a condition as can be imagined, what then can be said of a " **But now**," which sees the far-off alien made nigh to God by the blood of Christ ?

It is between these two passages, EPHESIANS II : verses 1-7 and 11-13, that the passage we are to consider occurs, verses 8-10. It concerns how it is that the great change marked by these two " **Buts** " has been accomplished in the case of those who believe.

The sole motive for the " **But God** " that has wrought such a change upon a scene so hopeless is found in the precious fact that God loved us.

" **But God**, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us " (verse 4).

That " **God is love** " is a great revelation, and to a heart that knows its need the consciousness of the love of God brings a feeling of quietening assurance, nevertheless care is necessary lest we imagine things concerning

the love of God that are not the subject of revelation. God has other attributes besides love which affect His dealings with men.

" I will publish the name of the Lord, ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect ; for all His ways are judgment, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He " (DEUTERONOMY XXXII : 3-4).

" Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts " (ISAIAH VI : 3).

" Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity " (HABAKKUK I : 13).

Though God is love yet if He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, can the plea have any foundation of truth which says, " I simply trust that because God is love He will care for me in this life and at the last receive me " ? None, if the love of God is regarded as a vague, undefined principle that simply glosses over iniquity ; but Yes, a sure foundation, if the love of God is seen to be manifested in the person of the Lord Jesus through whom the Holy God can receive the sinner.

The fact that " God is love " is stated twice in the first epistle of John, chapter four.

" God is love. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins " (1 JOHN IV : 8-10).

The fact that God is love is therefore manifested in the provision of His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. To speak of God being love without mentioning the One through Whom that love is manifest is without the authority of Scripture, and is therefore without foundation. The real knowledge and belief that God is love comes with the confession of the fact that Jesus

is the Son of God, as can be seen from the second occurrence of "God is love" in this chapter.

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us, God is love;" (1 JOHN IV : 15-16).

The New Testament does not speak of the love of God apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, all the blessings that the love of God can bestow upon man can only be received through Him.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (JOHN III : 16).

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (ROMANS V : 8).

"The love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (ROMANS VIII : 39).

The injunction to christian love is upon the same basis, otherwise christian love would differ nothing from a brotherhood which, while good in its place, has no lasting quality. The love of a christian should be a testimony to the love of God.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 JOHN IV : 10-11).

"... walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (EPHESIANS V : 2).

Returning to our passage in Ephesians we can appreciate more fully the great love of God through Christ, that has caused the things about to be considered to have been made possible.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us" (EPHESIANS II : 4).

## III

"For by grace are ye saved . . ." (EPHESIANS II : 8).

THESE opening words of the passage we desire to consider are an expansion of the parenthesis inserted in verse five. The great love wherewith God loved us had made possible such blessing in the Lord Jesus Christ, that Paul was led to say in an aside, "By grace ye are saved," lest any should feel a sense of personal confidence or worthiness. Then, having reached the wondrous fact that "in the ages to come" God will "shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (verse 7), Paul returns again to the subject suggested in the parenthesis, "For by grace are ye saved . . ." (verse 8).

The word "grace," **charis**, is first met with in the New Testament in LUKE I : 30, where it is rendered "found favour."

"And the angel said unto her, 'Fear not, Mary : for thou hast found favour with God.'"

While Mary was pure to have been given the high favour of being the mother of the Lord from heaven, yet no woman could be **worthy** of that privilege. In her own words Mary confessed her personal need of a Saviour.

"And Mary said, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour'" (LUKE I : 46-47).

The grace, or high favour, bestowed upon Mary was that she should receive a privilege that none could deserve. Grace is favour to the undeserving.

A good illustration of the meaning of grace is seen in LUKE VI : 32-34.

"For if ye love them which love you, what **thank** have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what **thank** have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what **thank** have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again."

The old-fashioned word "thank" is in the above three occurrences a translation of **charis**, grace. Love to the unloving; good to the undeserving; gifts to the destitute who cannot repay; that is grace. That is the principle whereby we are saved.

Peter speaks of "The God of all grace," but this attribute of grace, like God's attribute of love, cannot be fully known apart from the Lord Jesus.

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus" (1 PETER V : 10).

There was grace during the Old Testament times, but it could not be manifested fully until the Lord had come. The prophets foresaw this grace when they spake beforehand of the coming of Christ.

"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 PETER I : 10-11).

Thus it is that John testifies that:—

"Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (JOHN I : 17).

In that one act of sending His Son into the world we see the grace of God manifest. It was love to the unlovely; kindness to the undeserving; that caused Him

to spare not His only Son, but to offer Him up for us all. It was also grace on the part of the Lord Himself that caused Him to come and accomplish the Father's will.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 CORINTHIANS VIII : 9).

Grace cannot be regarded as a broad principle under which God is working. Nor is the gift of His love and grace in the person of the Lord simply a thing of beauty to be admired, and the spirit of it copied. That has no power to help the helpless, the grace of God is something practical, it does something, it "bringeth salvation."

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (TITUS II : 11).

The grace of God is known by His provision of salvation. "By grace are ye saved." Apart from that provision all that could be known of God would be that He was Holy and unapproachable. No one attribute of God can negative another: that "God is love," or that He is "the God of all grace" does not alter the fact that He is at the same time "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." It is here that the need of salvation becomes evident.

"To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (ROMANS III : 26).

To be still righteous and just, and yet to justify the unrighteous is the precious result of His salvation. His holiness unimpaired and the redeemed sinner standing "holy and without blame before Him in love" (EPHESIANS I : 4), the final evidence of the completeness of that salvation.

The need of salvation is too often lost sight of, through occupation with the human side rather than the Godward aspect. It is not a case of one being a sinner above another and therefore being in greater need of salvation. Some men have many fine qualities of uprightness of character, love, and self-sacrifice; the labours of such for their fellow-men have made the world a better place to live in. These things are not to be despised, nevertheless, it is an unwise practice to measure ourselves by human standards.

"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 CORINTHIANS X : 12).

Although these words were spoken in a different connection, yet the spirit of them is applicable to our subject. The standard by which we must compare ourselves is the divine one.

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (ROMANS III : 23).

This is a state none will deny, and as it is impossible to be accepted of God while coming short of His divine righteousness, then we need salvation. Before the high standard of "the glory of God," the seeming qualities of goodness in man appear increasingly impotent. Paul, a self-confident Pharisee of the Pharisees, who could claim to be "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (PHILIPPIANS III : 6), later came to see himself to be among the chief of sinners when considering the grace of our Lord that was exceeding abundant towards us. (1 TIMOTHY I : 12-16.)

Scripture does not blame us for being sinners. David wrote, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in

sin did my mother conceive me " (PSALM LI : 5). No one can be held responsible as to whom his parents were ; if we inherit a fallen nature then that is no fault of ours.

" Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned " (ROMANS V : 12).

What the scripture does is to shew the fact that we are sinners, that they may cause us to appreciate our need of salvation. Man then is not responsible for being a sinner, but is responsible for his attitude towards God's provision for his salvation.

" This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners " (1 TIMOTHY I : 15).

This salvation is provided on the principle of grace, " For by grace are ye saved. . . ." There is a word used in the Greek of forgiveness of sins that is a derivative of the word grace, **charis**, namely **charizomai**. An understanding of its meaning can be gathered from its usage in the parable of the debtors.

" There was a certain creditor which had two debtors : the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both " (LUKE VII : 41-42).

" Frankly forgave " is here a translation of **charizomai**. If we realise the bankrupt condition of human nature, then we shall appreciate in some measure the exceeding graciousness of God in using this word, of the forgiveness of our sins. The following are examples of its use :—

" And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you " (EPHESIANS IV : 32, cp. COLOSSIANS III : 13).

" And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses " (COLOSSIANS II : 13).

This last reference is similar to the context of our passage in Ephesians, the two-fold alienation of being "dead in sins" and "uncircumcision of your flesh," corresponding with EPHESIANS II : 1-7 and 11-22 respectively. Salvation not only implies deliverance from sin and its consequences, but also deliverance from the reign of the one who had the power over sinners. EPHESIANS II : 2.

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son : in Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (COLOSSIANS I : 13-14).

Not only has grace dethroned sin for those who believe, but grace has come to reign in its place.

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (ROMANS V : 21).

Grace then is the principle upon which God is dealing with man, we are living in "the dispensation of the grace of God" (EPHESIANS III : 2). The word "dispensation" is a translation of "*oikonomia*," which is a combination of "*oikos*"—an house, and "*nemo*"—to dispense, hence to deal out as would a housekeeper. God's administration, economy, or dispensation is to-day one of grace, unmerited favour.

"For by grace are ye saved . . ." (EPHESIANS II : 8).

## IV

" . . . through faith . . . " (EPHESIANS II : 8).

GRACE is the principle of salvation, grace is the ground of our standing before God, but this grace is to be received and entered into through faith. " For by grace are ye saved **through faith.**"

Faith is the first essential step in our approach to God, we must first " believe that He is " before we can seek Him.

" But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him " (HEBREWS XI : 6).

Belief in the fact that there is a God is very general, as is stated in the first chapter of Romans, the existence of God is known through the things that He has made. It is only a mind well tutored in the school of so-called science that can become credulous enough to believe that nature, so replete with marvels, simply evolved from inorganic matter as the result of forces unguided by a master hand. To the simple soul possessed with his five senses and a precious morsel of common sense, there are no insurmountable difficulties to be overcome before he can believe that creation is the work of the Creator.

The faith then that is necessary in our approach to God is that which believes that God is. This belief is not necessarily the seal that the religion of all who have it is pure, it is the first step in the knowledge of God, but it is a degree of knowledge shared by demons.

" Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and tremble " (JAMES II : 19).

While faith in the fact that God is, is necessary, that we might seek Him, yet we must have faith in something else before we can find Him. How then can this faith come to us? What else is given us to believe?

"So then faith cometh by **hearing**, and **hearing** by the word of God" (ROMANS X : 17).

Until something is told us we cannot believe, until God had spoken we could have no faith. Faith is often spoken of as though it could subsist without any relation to facts, a vague nebulous something that folks claim to "have" without being able to define. Faith must be in something in order to exist, as faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, then faith must be in that of which the word of God speaks. The Lord addressing those that were rejecting Him said :—

"And the Father Himself, which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape. And ye have not His word abiding in you : for Whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not. Search the scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life " (JOHN V : 37-40).

The word of God then testifies of the Lord Jesus ; what does it testify of Him?

"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater : for this is the witness of God which He **hath testified of His Son**. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself : he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar ; because he believeth not the **record that God gave of His Son**. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son " (1 JOHN V : 9-11).

The one of whom God speaks is His Son, the one of whom the entire Scripture speaks is His Son. The faith that comes from hearing the word of God must be in His Son, and this faith brings salvation.

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus " (2 TIMOTHY III : 15).

The Scriptural definition of faith is therefore belief in God's testimony concerning His Son. Hearing and faith are thus very connected, we read of the " word of faith " (ROMANS X : 8), " the hearing of faith " (GALATIANS III : 2). Hearing must be first before true faith and trust can come.

" who first trusted in Christ. In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation : in Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise " (EPHESIANS I : 12-13).

Care is necessary that we should keep within the Scriptural limits of the usage of faith. Some may say they have " faith in God," by which they imply a trust in His providence ; that He will care for them in this life simply on the assertion that He is love and gracious ; and yet when it comes to the Person of the Lord Jesus they deny that He is the Son of God or that there is any efficacy in His substitutionary death. While this conception of faith may appear simple and beautiful, yet, if it is held apart from faith in the Lord as Saviour, then it is without the foundation of Scripture. Faith in the Lord Jesus brings with it the assurance of God's care, but no such assurance is given without it.

" He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things ? " (ROMANS VIII : 32).

As God's love and grace cannot be known apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, so faith towards God can only be accepted when it is faith in His Son. Contact between God and man is possible only in the One Mediator.

"For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, The Man Christ Jesus ; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time " (1 TIMOTHY II : 5-6).

"Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved " (ACTS IV : 12).

God's holiness forbids any other meeting place; man's need forbids any other way to God. True faith can only be in the One set forth by God.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus : Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood " (ROMANS III : 23-25).

One man is specially singled out in the epistle to the Romans, chapter four, to be an example of the way in which we can be justified by faith.

"For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness " (ROMANS IV . 3).

The word translated "counted" is rendered "reckoned" in verse 4 and "imputed" in verse 6 and "accounted" in GALATIANS III : 6, all in the same connection. Righteousness that is not innate, but which God reckons to our account when we believe on His Son. The noun faith **pistis**, and the verb believe **pisteuo**, are both constructed from the same root. This connection between belief and faith is seen in the fifth verse.

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness " (ROMANS IV . 5).

And the connection of faith with the word of God is seen in verses 20 to 22.

" he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief ; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."

Belief in the word of God, that is " faith." We account that what God has said is true, and then God accounts to us that righteousness of which He has spoken. The experience of Abraham is given for our admonition.

" Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead " (ROMANS IV : 23-24).

There were no chapter divisions in the original Scriptures, they have been introduced for the convenience of reading and reference. To get the sense of the Scriptures it is essential that they should be read without regard to these artificial interpolations. Romans four is summed up in the opening verses of Romans five. The example of Abraham having been applied to us we read :—

" Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God " (ROMANS V : 1-2).

When once we have been " justified by faith," then we stand in the realm of grace by faith. Faith is belief in God's word, but those who have that belief are said to be " in the faith," as though faith is a state ; thus we find such expressions as " the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus " (GALATIANS III : 26), " the household of faith " (GALATIANS VI : 10), " your faith groweth exceedingly " (2 THESSALONIANS I : 3), " your faith is increased " (2 CORINTHIANS X : 15), " stedfastness of

your faith—stablished in the faith " (COLOSSIANS II : 5-7), " by faith ye stand " (2 CORINTHIANS I : 24), " for ye walk by faith " (2 CORINTHIANS V : 7). All of which shew that after that initial faith that brings salvation, we are to live believing all that God reveals to us through His word. To " live by faith " has degenerated through use into implying that the person trusts for his livelihood to the charity of others, while he devotes his time to some good work. A life of faith, however, is not limited to such a practice, but extends to every department of our walk with God.

" By grace are ye saved **through faith** " ; faith, then, is the principle by which the individual may appropriate to himself God's provided salvation. But why should it be by faith ?

" Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace " (ROMANS IV : 16).

It is by faith that grace might be the consistent principle of God's dealings with us. On what other grounds could salvation be received but by believing God? We have no power to purchase it, nor works that can deserve it, nor any fittingness that can fit us for God's holiness. God's grace then provided salvation, and our faith accepts it. Salvation is not forced upon men, but it is to be received voluntarily, that some reject it is a sad fact, nevertheless it is God's desire that all men should be saved.

" Who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth " (1 TIMOTHY II : 4, R.V.).

Faith then is our side of salvation, simply to believe God's testimony concerning the work of His Son.

" By grace are ye saved through faith " (EPHESIANS II : 8).

## V

**"...and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God ..."**

(EPHESIANS II : 8).

"AND that not of yourselves." What is not of ourselves ?  
"For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God." As it stands the "that" which is not of ourselves could be read as referring to "faith." This might suggest a line of argument that would say, "So then unless God gives me faith I cannot believe," which amounts to the abandonment of all individual responsibility. If faith is not our personal free will belief in God's revelation, but a gift to some that is denied to others, then the gospel of the grace of God is not a message of liberty to all men, but only to a favoured few ; a doctrine not of faith but of fatalism. This argument, however, can only arise through the limitations of a translation, the original gives no such suggestion. Greek is a language that is declined, so that the demonstrative pronoun "that" must agree in gender with its antecedent. "Faith" is a feminine word, but "that" is in the neuter. "Grace" is also feminine. The "that which is not of yourselves : it is the gift of God" cannot therefore refer either to the "grace" that supplies or the "faith" that applies salvation. "That" must be taken to refer to the whole scheme. "The salvation that is by grace through faith," that plan and provision of salvation is not of ourselves, but is God's gift. It remains then that "faith" is our responsibility, we have the liberty to receive or reject God's gift.

Redemption is not of ourselves, it is too costly, the price that must be paid is not within our power to give

either for ourselves or for others ; corruption cannot procure incorruption, neither can temporal things purchase eternal things.

" They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.) that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption " (PSALM XLIX : 6-9).

When we come to the New Testament we learn why redemption is precious, and by how much its price exceeded the value of silver and gold.

" Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious Blood of Christ " (1 PETER I : 18-19).

Man's only hope must come from without himself, and by God's grace it has come as " the gift of God." A gift is the opposite to wages, we cannot buy the gift of God, but what we have bought the gift of God can remove from us :

" For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord " (ROMANS VI : 23).

The gift of God is eternal life, salvation is the deliverance from sin and its consequences, but it goes further, it brings to us the gift of life. In Romans, chapter five, this gift of life is seen to be that which was brought to us through One Man, the Lord from heaven, in contrast to the heritage of sin and death received through one man, Adam.

" For if by one man's offence death reigned by one ; much more they which receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ " (ROMANS V : 17).

As the consideration of " love," " grace," and " faith " all directed our attention to the Lord Jesus

Christ, so also does the consideration of "the gift of God." Many people are very occupied with God's gifts, sun, rain, food, clothing, health, etc., as though these things were our only needs, but when once our real need is realised, then there is only One Gift sufficient to supply it—the Lord Jesus Christ. As sinners we should perish save for the life that is brought to us as the gift of God.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (JOHN III : 16).

For life we are dependent on God, "in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (ACTS XVII : 28), but this natural life is mortal for it pertains to a fallen creation. Immortality is inherent in One only :—

"Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . who only hath immortality"  
(1 TIMOTHY VI : 14-16).

It is only through the gospel, that has come to us as a result of His appearing, that immortality could ever have been known.

"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 TIMOTHY I : 10).

Immortality, or the gift of life, can only be given us through the Lord Jesus, apart from Him there would be no resurrection, much less eternal life.

"I am the resurrection and the life" (JOHN XI : 25).

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 CORINTHIANS XV : 21-22).

It is the purpose of the Gospel of John to shew that by believing God's testimony concerning His Son we receive life through His Name. The whole Gospel

would have to be read to appreciate this, we give here only the statement of the fact :—

“ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through His Name ” (JOHN XX : 31).

Hope as to the future life is only secure in Christ, other than in Him there can be no immortality, but in Him our life is secure never again to be involved in sin and death.

“ your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory ” (COLOSSIANS III : 3-4).

If we consider our state it is no difficulty to understand why this “ grace-by-faith salvation,” that brings life and immortality to us through the Lord Jesus Christ, should be said to be “ not of yourselves : it is the gift of God.” The thought of a gift, something for nothing, is resented by some as making things too cheap and easy. While it is on our part a thing that costs us nothing, yet it cost Him everything, and while it is easy to believe God, yet to provide that work on which we are asked to believe to Him was not easy. Instead then of viewing the “ gift of God ” in the value of the nothing we have to pay, we should think of it from the standpoint of :—

“ The Son of God, Who loved me, and gave **Himself** for me ” (GALATIANS II : 20).

The discomfoting fact to many is that they have nothing to give, but when this is realised how comforting to know that it stands written :—

“For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God ” (EPHESIANS II : 8).

## VI

" . . . not of works lest any man should boast . . ."  
(EPHESIANS II : 9).

THE law given at Sinai may be taken to sum up what was necessary for salvation to be "of works." It was a standard of righteousness set by God, so that no mistake could be made as to what works were required. Though a law was given, yet no law could be given that would bring life.

" for if there had been a law given which could have given life, . verily righteousness should have been by the law"  
(GALATIANS III : 21).

To those who resent the fact that works have no place in procuring righteousness, this scripture gives the assurance that if a code of good works could have given life, then righteousness would have been upon those terms. The impossibility of this but leads us to Christ. The law was imposed upon the people of Israel to prepare them for the coming of Christ; promises were given before the law, revealing what God intended Israel to be; but in order to show them that they could not fulfil His purposes in their own strength, the law was added to make manifest their weakness.

" For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise : but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to Whom the promise was made "(GALATIANS III : 18-19).

The law did the work of a Schoolmaster, whose duty it was to take charge of the children on their way to school, to lead them to the place of learning. The law

showed their need, and then led them to Christ, where their need was met.

" Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith " (GALATIANS III : 24).

" Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin " (ROMANS III : 20).

In these two passages it is stated that by the deeds of the law no flesh was justified, it only gave the knowledge of sin ; therefore it but led to Christ that we might be justified by faith. This is also clearly stated in GALATIANS II : 16 :—

" Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Works are opposed to faith :—

" And the law is not of faith : but, The man that doeth them shall live in them " (GALATIANS III : 12).

Works are opposed to grace :—

" And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work " (ROMANS XI : 6).

The " grace-by-faith salvation " is therefore clearly " not of works." If salvation is not of ourselves it is also not to be obtained of ourselves by works of law-keeping, penance, or whatever may be accomplished by the flesh.

The example of Israel under the law having been used to show how that works have been given a trial, it might well be asked, " Seeing that Christ has come, and that justification can now be procured through faith in His

finished work, how is it that Israel still remain without the blessings promised them ? ”

“ But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore ?

“ Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone ; as it is written, “ Behold I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence : and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed ” (ROMANS IX : 31-33).

Israel have not obtained their promises, because they continued to seek them by works and not by faith ; they were offended at, and stumbled at, the Lord Jesus Christ. What was true of Israel at the time this scripture was written is true of many individuals of all nations to-day. Although justification is only by faith, yet many still seek it by their own works, being offended at the thought of the Lord Jesus Christ being the only foundation upon which man can meet with God.

The purposes of God are not confined to Israel, there are other callings and hopes revealed in the Scriptures, but what is common to them all is that they do not depend on the work of man for their accomplishment. Our salvation **and** our calling are alike “ not according to our works ” ; if they were, then there would have been some ground for boasting, but as it is, all are dependent upon His purpose and grace.

“ Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, **not according to our works**, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began ” (2 TIMOTHY I : 9).

“ But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, **not by works of righteousness** which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us ” (TITUS III : 4-5).

These two passages are parallel to the passage we are considering in EPHESIANS. It should be noted in all the references that have been quoted that works have no place in procuring salvation ; that good works have a place in God's plan it will be our purpose to see later ; but for the present it is necessary to keep that subject separate for the sake of clearness. We are saved by faith, not of works. Salvation is the gift of God, not the reward of works.

**"Not of works, lest any man should boast."** Supposing that salvation could have been upon the ground of works, then there might have been the opportunity for some to boast in themselves, and all glory and honour would not be rendered absolutely to God Himself. The goal of all the divine purposes is "that God may be all in all" (1 CORINTHIANS XV : 28), and that precludes the possibility of a dissenting voice that would boast in ought but Him. As it is salvation could not be by works, and thus no man can boast.

**"For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory ; but not before God. For what saith the scripture ? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness "**(ROMANS IV : 2-5).

Abraham had no cause whereof he could glory in that which he received as a gift through faith ! The thought of boasting in the possession of that which cost us nothing is untenable.

**"Where is boasting then ? It is excluded. By what law ? of works ? Nay : but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law "**(ROMANS III : 27-28).

Paul, who wrote these words, reviews his own position in PHILIPPIANS, chapter three. He had done good works that could be compared with those of any one else, things that were counted as gain by those who judged righteousness by external appearances, he possessed in a large measure. These reputable things he, however, counted of no value when he compared them with the "righteousness of God by faith."

"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: . . . touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ . . . and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (PHILIPPIANS III : 4-9).

Boasting in obtaining righteousness is therefore not possible, but boasting is not denied to the believer; in fact, he is the only person who has a right to boast, or that really **ought** to boast.

"My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together" (PSALM XXXIV : 2-3).

Unlike boasting in man which is always done at the expense of someone else, or to their hurt, the boast that is in God can be shared by all who have experienced His love and grace; then too, it is catching, for others will take up the praise that it may redound to the glory of God.

So far as salvation is concerned works have no place, and we have no cause of boasting save in the Lord.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast . . ." (EPHESIANS II : 8-9).

## VII

**"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus . . ."** (EPHESIANS II : 10).

THE word translated "workmanship" is **poiema**. It is from this word that we derive our "poem," a composition or masterpiece.

**Poiema** occurs but once elsewhere in the New Testament :—

**"For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse"** (ROMANS I : 20).

Here it refers to the things made in this present creation, which manifest the fact that God is. These things give no excuse to those who do not like to retain God in their knowledge, for what may be known of God apart from revelation is clearly shown in them. The world at large up to the time of the coming of Christ, did not regard the testimony of creation, but rather corrupted it, so that of them it is said :—

**"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen"** (ROMANS I : 25).

The reference in EPHESIANS refers to another creation. **"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus."** The things that are made in this case being the believers who are "created in Christ Jesus."

**"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature"** (2 CORINTHIANS V : 17).

The word "creature" here is the same as "creation" in ROMANS I : 20, "The creation of the world." Those

who by faith make their own the finished work of salvation are viewed by God as being "in Christ," and such are a "new creation."

There is a principle of God's working illustrated in JEREMIAH XVIII, that is important in considering this truth concerning a "new creation."

"Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear My words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter, so he made it again another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make it" (JEREMIAH XVIII : 2-4).

The potter did not mend the vessel that was marred but, "he made it again." He did not produce a repaired vessel, but in its place "another vessel." This is a principle seen in God's dealings with a marred and imperfect creation. He does not mend but makes it again ; He does not repair but makes another, as it seems good to Him, that it may take the place of that which has become imperfect.

In its widest application this principle is to work in respect to the heavens and the earth. God created the heavens and the earth, and, like all His works, they were perfect. Sin entered and marred that fair creation involving both earth and heaven (JOB XV : 15). What is God's revealed will concerning this heaven and earth ? Is He to so fill this earth with good, that at length there shall be a golden age when all shall be restored as before sin was brought to Adam ? Is the Gospel to finally convert the world, and bring in a faultless kingdom of Christ ? Is this earth yet to know the perfect state when righteousness shall dwell where sin is now ? Let the Scriptures answer for themselves :—

**" But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men . . . the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness "** (2 PETER III : 7-13).

No, God has not spoken of a restored earth, but has revealed that His ultimate purpose in the heavens and earth is that they shall be re-made. "A new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," is to replace "the heavens and earth which are now." Like the potter, He will not repair this marred vessel, but "make another." John, in the "Revelation of Jesus Christ," was shown this new heaven and earth :—

**" And I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea. . . . And He that sat upon the throne said, ' Behold, I make all things new.' And He said unto me ' Write : for these words are true and faithful,"** (REVELATION XXI : 1, 5).

God's principle with a faulty creation is enshrouded in that word, "Behold, I make all things new." As applying to the present heaven and earth this must await a future day, but as applying to the believer it is even now a present reality.

**" Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new "** (2 CORINTHIANS V : 17).

This principle of not repairing a faulty thing, but of making a new one in its place, is further illustrated in the parable of MATTHEW IX : 16 :—

**" No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse."**

The word "rent" is "**schisma**;" which is rendered "**schism**" in 1 CORINTHIANS XII : 25. "That which is put in to fill it up," is a translation of one word, "**pleroma**." This is the first occurrence of "**pleroma**" in the New Testament, elsewhere it is usually rendered "fullness." A rent, a schism has occurred in God's creation, this is not to be "patched up," but an entirely new thing is to constitute the fullness. Any attempt to patch up the breach caused by sin will merely aggravate the trouble and make the breach worse; the only remedy is God's remedy, a new thing, and this new thing is found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness (**pleroma**) dwell" (COLOSSIANS I : 19).

The origin of the schism is only told us in veiled language. Of a created being it is written :—

"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee . . . thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee" (EZEKIEL XXVIII : 15-16).

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer . . . thou hast said in thine heart . . . I will be like the Most High, yet thou shalt be brought down to sheol" (ISAIAH XIV : 12-15).

How the schism was brought to man is told in GENESIS, chapter three, where one already fallen suggested to man that he should disobey God's word by alluring him with a similar inducement as caused his own fall. "Ye shall be as Gods" (verse 5). God's principle is to be applied to this vast rent; His revealed purpose is to populate with His new creation every sphere in which this rent has touched. We read of those who, "according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness"

(2 PETER III : 13). Thus not only will there be "new heavens and a new earth," but also those who shall dwell therein. Of that sphere revealed in EPHESIANS I : 3, "the heavenly places," it is also made known that there is to be a company placed there.

"gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His Body, the fullness (*pleroma*) of Him that filleth (*pleroo*) all in all" (EPHESIANS I : 22-23).

When God's purpose is complete there will be new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, in place of the present fallen creation ; there will be a perfect fullness in place of the present rent. This will not be like a mended vessel, or a patched garment, but it will be new and perfect.

The working of this principle seen in creation as a whole, not only prepares us for considering the principle as applied to the individual, but it also makes evident the imperative need for such a principle. If some are to be "Blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places," and others can "look for new heavens and a new earth," then it is necessary that they shall not merely be made better, but rather made anew. Anything less than a new creation would not do ; nothing of this old creation of which we are part will there find a place, everything will be in Christ never again to fall.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." This may appear a difficult subject, and if we attempted to solve it by our own thoughts it would be difficult ; but if we let the Scriptures explain themselves, all becomes clear. Not only is the need of such a new creation revealed, but also the reason that such a new creation has been made possible. By grace we are saved through faith, all that is necessary for salvation is

that we have faith in the provided Saviour, or in other words, that we believe God's testimony concerning His Son ; nothing more is asked of us to make us holy and without blame before God's sight, nothing else could be asked of us because we have nothing to give, salvation is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. To be saved we do not have to understand, or give a reason, how it is that we are saved. All that is necessary is that, having heard the way of salvation, we believe it. There are no difficulties to be overcome, all is plain and simple that none should lose their way through little opportunities of understanding God's truth. While the appropriation of salvation is simple, yet it does not follow that salvation itself is a simple matter. To be saved we may not need to give a reason for salvation, but salvation is not unreasonable. No difficulties remain in the way of those who come to God by faith, but having come, God would have us understand how it is that He has removed the difficulties and made the way to Himself free from all obstacles. He would have us able to give a reason for the hope that is in us. Thus, while it is **not necessary** to know more than the precious fact, "For by grace are ye saved through faith," to be saved; yet it is **necessary** to get to know, after we are saved, that "we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus." To get to know the purposes of God should be the aim of all who have that faith which made salvation theirs, "Add to your faith . . . knowledge " (2 PETER 1 : 5).

"created in Christ Jesus." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation." The use of **in** denotes **identification with** Christ. What it means to be "**in** Christ " is better understood when it is seen to be used in contrast to being "**in** Adam."

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 CORINTHIANS XV : 22).

We are in Adam as being part of the creation of which he was the first. Adam fell, and consequently all who are of him partake of a fallen nature. To be identified with Adam is to participate in all the consequences of his disobedience, the proof of this is that all who are in Adam die. The antithesis to the offence of Adam is the obedience of Christ.

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ" (ROMANS V : 17).

The work of Jesus Christ made possible the gift of God which, as we saw in chapter V, is "eternal life." To participate in that gift is to have life in Christ. Thus, instead of simply having that life received through Adam which is mortal, we receive life in Christ which, because it is linked with Him, is immortal. "Christ our life" (COLOSSIANS III : 4). Our old Adam nature is not made better, but a new life is given us in Christ.

There is no difficulty in appreciating how it is that we are "in Adam," that is obvious, but how is it that we can be spoken of as being "in Christ?" How has the transition from "in Adam" to "in Christ" been effected? We noted that "in Christ" implied identification with Christ. This identification can be clearly understood by a consideration of the Greek preposition **sun**—"with" or "together with." This preposition governs one case only, the dative, which case implies union, association, or connection with. In the formation of compound words "**sun**" is also used and denotes association. The usage of "**sun**," separately as a

preposition, and combined as a prefix in a compound word, is illustrated in the following parallel passages :—

MATTHEW XXVI : 35. **sun soi apothanein.**

With thee to die.

MARK XIV : 31. **sunapothanein soi.**

To die with thee.

In both cases the sense is the same. In the following references we have not distinguished between the use of “**sun**,” separately, or combined as part of the word. We mention this for the help of those who seek to verify the references themselves, such might otherwise experience some difficulty in being unable to find all the references listed under “**sun**” in a Lexicon.

In the above quotations Peter expressed his willingness to die with the Lord. In MATTHEW XXVII : 38, we read “Then were there two thieves crucified with (**sun**) Him.” There is no difficulty to appreciate what this means, Peter was ready to die with the Lord, and the two thieves were crucified with the Lord, association with, or identification with, the Lord in His death being understood. Similar expressions as the above are employed to reveal the **believers’** identification with Christ in His crucifixion and death. Here is the end of the old creation, and the commencement of the new.

“But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him” (ROMANS VI : 8). R.V.

“I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me” (GALATIANS II : 20). R.V.

Death and crucifixion are both in the past tense, as is more clearly shown by the rendering in the Revised Version. Paul was not anticipating his own martyrdom, or the probability of the sufferings of any of the believers,

he was looking back upon a past and accomplished fact. "We died with Christ." "I have been crucified with Christ." In actual experience, neither Paul nor those whom he addressed had died with Christ, but as a doctrinal fact God reckoned that all believers died with Christ. When Christ died God identified all who believe on the Lord in His death but not in His death only but also His burial, resurrection, quickening, life, ascension, and exaltation. The following are other occurrences of **sun** which identify the believer with Christ. We quote these from the Revised Version.

#### **DIED.**

"If ye died with Christ" (COLOSSIANS II : 20).

"If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him" (2 TIMOTHY II : 11).

#### **BURIED.**

"We were buried therefore with Him" (ROMANS VI : 4).

"Having been buried with Him" (COLOSSIANS II : 12).

#### **QUICKENED.**

"Even when we were dead through our trespasses, hath quickened us together with Christ" (EPHESIANS II : 5).

"And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did He quicken together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses" (COLOSSIANS II : 13).

#### **RAISED.**

"And raised us up with Him" (EPHESIANS II : 6).

"Ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (COLOSSIANS II : 12).

"If then ye were raised together with Christ" (COLOSSIANS III : 1).

#### **SEATED.**

"And made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus" (EPHESIANS II : 6).

The past tense should be noted in all the above passages. God reckoned us to have died, been buried, quickened, and to be raised together with Christ, even though we were not then born. Moreover, it is even now written at a time when we are very obviously not in the heavenlies. "and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." It is God who has identified us with Christ, and because that work is so secure, every part of it can be referred to as already accomplished.

Some who may not have previously given these passages of Scripture serious consideration, will probably feel disposed to regard them as hard sayings. But what should this do? Should it drive away from the truth if at first it might appear difficult to comprehend? Some of the things spoken by the Lord offended His hearers because they did not at once understand them.

"Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? . . . From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him" (JOHN VI: 60, 66).

But what was the attitude of those who had given heed? —

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (JOHN VI: 67-69).

Instead of laying aside the Word of Life because some truth therein may at first seem difficult, we ought rather to be driven to our knees before the throne of grace, to ask for that understanding of the Scriptures God is so ready to impart to all who seek in sincerity and truth.

Then, like the disciples of old, we shall not only believe God's testimony, but will also be **sure** of those things He has revealed to us.

Such as have been reckoned by God to have been quickened, or made alive, with Christ are said to be "in Christ." Being alive through that life which is in Christ, they become part of that new creation of which He is the Head. Seeing this is so, how should it affect the lives of those who believe it? What is the believer's part in the outworking of this wondrous union with Christ? We find the answer in ROMANS VI : 10-11 :—

"For in that He died, He died unto sin once : but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The word "reckon" here is the same as "counted," "accounted," or "impute," which were considered in chapter IV. God has reckoned that we died with Christ and are now alive in Him, so we on our part are also to reckon ourselves to be alive in Him. The evidences of this should be manifested by a walk that is the result of newness of life.

"We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (ROMANS VI : 4). R.V.

We do not have to buffet our flesh, but to reckon that not only are its sins forgiven, but also that it died with Christ.

If we pander to the lusts of the flesh, the flesh will grow strong. If we feed that new nature with its new desires upon the word of life, then that will grow strong and the flesh weak. God's way is positive, not negative.

If we "Walk in the spirit," the promise is "Ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh" (GALATIANS V: 16). To be always endeavouring to suppress the flesh is to be occupied on a task that leads to despair. We should rather reckon that God has seen to the flesh, and occupy ourselves with those things that belong to the spirit.

No other way of dealing with the flesh, or with our old Adam nature, is of any avail. If we seek to crucify it ourselves we cannot, only the work of Christ has done that. If we attempt to reform it, we cannot make that reformation complete enough to satisfy God's holiness. It is not reformation but regeneration that is God's work. The flesh with all its advantages has no place in the new creation. There was once a great advantage that could be received by the flesh, and that was circumcision.

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way . . ." (ROMANS III: 1-2).

But the advantage that was in the flesh was dependent on the flesh.

"For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision" (ROMANS II: 25).

As none of the circumcision could keep the law, that advantage that was in the flesh became of no advantage. The very sign itself depicted the repudiation, and independability of the flesh. There is only one remedy for the failure of the flesh that is in Adam, and that is the new creation that is in Christ.

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (creation R.V. margin) (GALATIANS VI: 15).

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus " This is the position of those who have believed the salvation that is given us by grace. The Lord Jesus Christ is the first and the pre-eminent One in this new creation, and when all shall have been made new then never again will a rent or a blemish find a place.

"And He is the Head of the body the church : Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead ; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell " (COLOSSIANS 1 : 18-19).

We have devoted more space to this subject of the new creation in Christ Jesus, than to others that are introduced by the passage we are considering. This subject is so important as it is at the basis of all God's purposes : to see that our only hope is in the new creation in Christ will prevent us trying to patch up human nature either in ourselves or in others, and will enable us with more understanding to look to, and point to, Christ through Whom alone man can be made fit for God's presence.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus . . . " (EPHESIANS 2 : 8-10).

## VIII

**" . . . unto good works, . . . " (EPHESIANS 11 : 10).**

WORKS are ruled out as a means of acceptance or standing before God, or as an entrance into life. It was not possible that they could avail anything either in providing or procuring salvation. Man's only hope is in the gift of God to be received on the ground of unmerited grace. But while salvation is definitely **" not of works,"** it is nevertheless **" unto good works."** It is after salvation that good works find a place.

**" Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. . . This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works "** (TITUS III : 5-8).

This passage states the case with great plainness. He saved us by His mercy, and not by any works of righteousness which we have done, but those who have believed unto salvation are to be continually exhorted to maintain good works. Truth cannot be over emphasized, but if one phase of truth is emphasized at the expense of another, confusion is sure to arise. While it is necessary to make it clear that so far as salvation is concerned it is of grace, works have no place; yet it is also a thing to be constantly affirmed that those who have believed should be careful to maintain good works. **" Not of works—unto good works "** is the proper balance of truth.

Because so many seek to go about to establish their own righteousness, it is imperative that these two sides of truth should be kept distinct. Grace and works must never be confused :—

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works ; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace : otherwise work is no more work " (ROMANS XI : 6).

" By grace are ye saved," and therefore it is no more of works. The good works we are permitted to do after we are saved do not make salvation any more sure. Our standing " in Christ " is perfect, and cannot be improved by any works of ours.

ROMANS IV and JAMES II present two aspects of faith. The former dealing with faith without works, the latter with faith accompanied by works. Both quote the same Old Testament passage to demonstrate that righteousness is imputed, and not earned.

" For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness " (ROMANS IV : 3, 22).

" And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness " (JAMES II : 23)

While the same statement concerning Abraham is cited, two different conclusions are drawn. We quote the verses immediately following both passages :—

" Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works " (ROMANS IV : 4-6).

" Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only " (JAMES II : 24).

This is not a conflicting principle, but two aspects of the same truth. James does not say that a man is not justified by faith, but that he is not justified by faith only. Faith is not of works, faith is not a work, but

unless faith is shown in some form of work, what evidence is there that faith exists?

"What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? Can that faith save Him?"  
(JAMES II : 14). R.V.

Is it possible to have faith, and yet not to show it by works? Or if it is possible, what is the profit of such a faith? Two examples are given. What is the profit of saying to one destitute of clothes and food, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled," if the needful things are not given? Or, what is the use of believing that there is one God, if the demons do as much and tremble? If anything is said or believed it should be acted upon, otherwise it is of no consequence. James does not belittle faith, but proves the need of works to show that faith exists.

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (II : 17).

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (II : 20).

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (II : 26).

The incidents in Abraham's life that are taken to illustrate the teaching of ROMANS IV and JAMES II are in keeping with their respective purposes. In ROMANS it is the faith of Abraham which he had, being yet uncircumcised (verses 9-11), at which time it was written of him that "He believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness" (GENESIS XV : 6). That early faith is used to illustrate the initial faith in the Lord Jesus that brings salvation. In JAMES it is the faith that Abraham exercised many years later, when he offered Isaac when tried by the Lord (verse 21). This is used to illustrate the perfecting of faith.

" Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect ? " (JAMES II : 22).

The faith that brings salvation is only initial, the life that follows is one in which faith is exercised, that it may be perfected. Some of the results of faith are brought together in HEBREWS XI, where Abraham's faith is again mentioned. These Old Testament worthies did things and endured things because they had faith, and thereby received a good report. It is clear then that we are saved through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus, but, that having such faith, it should be manifest by works. Works are the only test that can be applied to those who make a profession of truth.

" They profess that they know God ; but in works they deny Him " (TITUS I : 16).

It is only reasonable that the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Saviour, should call from our hearts a gratitude that is expressed in a life of good works in His Name.

" I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service " (ROMANS XII : 1).

" For ye were bought with a price ; glorify God therefore in your body " (1 CORINTHIANS VI : 20). R.V.

No other incentive to good works should be needed than the remembrance of what the price was whereby we have been bought. The ransom that has freed us from being slaves to sin is such that we should know no higher favour than to be permitted to render willing service to our great Redeemer. Though such works are only reasonable, yet God has been pleased to add a recompense for faithful service. Good works after salvation are not only proper, but profitable (TITUS III : 8).

" For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire : and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire " (1 CORINTHIANS III : 11-15).

The foundation is not in question here, that has been laid, and all who are upon it are secure. It is what any man builds upon that foundation that is to be put to the test. Whatever is built thereon does not alter the security of the standing of the believer, if all his work should be burned yet " he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." The test of works is for reward. If any man's work shall abide, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss. Good works do not improve salvation, but they may add something to salvation.

" Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory " (2 TIMOTHY II : 10).

Paul's endurance could not contribute anything to the salvation that the believers had in Christ Jesus, but it did contribute to their obtaining eternal glory. This is shown by the next verses (2 TIMOTHY II : 10-12, R.V.) :—

**Salvation.** " For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him."

**Reward.** " If we endure we shall also reign with Him."

**Loss.** " If we shall deny Him, He also will deny us."

That we, in God's sight, died with Christ and therefore shall live with Him, is a doctrinal fact. That we may endure, and therefore reign with Him, is something

subsequent. Life in Christ does not necessarily include reigning with Him, that is dependent upon faithfulness. Thus not only are we able to serve Him, but He has graciously promised a reward for acceptable service.

Wherever a passage is found that would seem to suggest any insecurity as to the believers' position, an examination of the context will show that it is dealing not with standing, but with state, not with salvation, but with reward. An example of this is HEBREWS VI :—

" But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that **accompany** salvation, though we thus speak " (VI. 9).

So far we have only considered how that good works are possible after salvation, but how is it that they are possible? The words "unto good works" are only part of a sentence, to get the full meaning it is necessary to examine the whole. "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Good works are possible because we have been "created in Christ Jesus." It is not because we have been saved God can now accept the works of our old Adam nature. No, works to be accepted must spring from that new source, that life which we have in Christ Jesus.

In our last chapter we saw that while salvation itself was the result of simple faith in the Lord Jesus, yet it was important after having believed to seek to understand how it is that we are "in Christ." Here in this chapter we have to consider how important it is to know something of what it means to be "created in Christ Jesus" in order that we may exercise ourselves "unto good works" that are the result of that new creation. To be "in Christ" is not only necessary for life, but also for fruit bearing. We must live with Him if we are to reign with Him.

The One who knows the hearts of men knows also the questions they will ask. With the gracious provision of a salvation to be received by faith, it could hardly be imagined that any would suggest that because sins may be forgiven then we may continue to sin with impunity. Yet we have heard such a thought expressed, and the One who knew it would be mooted, answered it beforehand. In ROMANS VI two such questions are dealt with. The first relates to **life**, the second with **service or fruit**.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. . . . Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him" (ROMANS VI: 1-14).

Our union with Christ is the answer to this question. How shall we who died to sin live any longer therein? We who are alive with Christ **should** walk in newness of **life**. Life is known to exist by movement, but before we had life, how could we walk in newness of life? We must be "created in Christ Jesus" before we can live "unto good works."

"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? . . . Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. . . . But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (ROMANS VI: 15-22).

Because we died and rose with Christ, the bondage of sin has been broken. "Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Until we had life in Christ we were not free from sin. We must be "created in Christ Jesus" before we can have the liberty to exercise ourselves "unto good works." This "new creation" in Christ Jesus gives both life and the liberty to do good works ; it is the only source of works that are good according to God's standard.

The one fact of being created in Christ Jesus shows the incongruity of continuing to practice sin wilfully, and the congruity of the endeavour to manifest the new life in good works.

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds ; and have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (COLOSSIANS III : 9-10).

The exhortations to good works addressed to believers in the New Testament are not impracticable. God does not ask His children to do the impossible ; those who have been created in Christ Jesus have the power to "become servants of God," that they may bare "fruit unto holiness." That some do not manifest such fruit is only too true, but the fault is in themselves, they could if they ever sought that renewal of strength from the One in whom they have been created. That we may live "unto good works," if we have been "created in Christ Jesus," is a precious possibility.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works . . ." (EPHESIANS II : 8-10).

## IX

**" . . . which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them " (EPHESIANS II : 10).**

ONE translation renders this " Good works, for which God prepared us, that we might walk in them." The necessity of such a preparation before an attempt is made to do good works, has become evident in considering the new creation. That God has prepared us for a walk that is according to His will does not absolve us from the responsibility of preparing ourselves for His service.

**" If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work " (2 TIMOTHY II : 21).**

That we are already " made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light " (COLOSSIANS I : 12), is the precious result of the redemption which we have in Christ Jesus. We cannot make ourselves any more meet, or fit, for that inheritance, but pending the time when the inheritance is entered we are left, as it were, under probation. The preparation of ourselves unto every good work is illustrated by a homely example.

**" But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour (lack of honour) " (2 TIMOTHY II : 20).**

All these vessels are in the same house, all are in the service of the same master, the difference is in the degree of honour. Some may never leave the kitchen, while others, of gold and silver, grace the master's presence, and are meet for his special use. Their honour is not necessarily to be judged by their apparent usefulness, the vessels of earth may be in constant use, the honour

is rather in their fitness for the highest service. The allegory is then applied :—

“ If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work ” (2 TIMOTHY II : 21).

This preparation for the best service involves a purging which is to be done personally, the things to be avoided are found in the immediate context, immoral things do not figure prominently but something of a more subtle danger, teachers and teaching that are contrary to the truth, misusers and the misuse of God's word, those who themselves have erred from the truth and have led others astray. These are the things to be shunned, the antidote for the danger is given.

“ Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth ” (2 TIMOTHY II : 15).

In the same epistle to Timothy the Word of Truth is further associated with the preparation of the believer unto all good works.

“ 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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works ” (2 TIMOTHY III : 16-17).

The preparation of the believer himself unto good works is therefore found in occupation with the entire Scriptures, and the endeavour to carry out the injunction to “ rightly divide ” them. Then in the negative aspect, the avoidance, not only of the paths of unrighteousness but of the subtle wickedness, the misinterpretation of the Word of Truth.

If it is God's will for the believer to do “ good works,” what are the works that are good in His sight ? When

the Lord Jesus was upon earth some asked Him this question.

"Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (JOHN VI : 28-29).

Belief upon the Lord Jesus does not finish with the initial belief that brings salvation, it only begins there, henceforth the belief and understanding of Him is the highest purpose of life.

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God ; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God" (1 JOHN V : 13).

The knowledge of God and of the Lord Jesus is the purpose of life eternal, it will be the occupation of heaven.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent" (JOHN XVII: 3).

If such will be the employment of the future, how wondrous it is that it is begun in this present life. The apostle Paul, with all his various activities; his missionary endeavours; his care for the churches; his revelations; his stand for the truth against all opposers; did not esteem these as the greatest aim of his life. Paul is singled out to be God's pattern man (1 CORINTHIANS XI : 1); what then is the example that he has left for us to copy? what was to him the goal of all his pathway?

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, . . . that I may know Him" (PHILIPPIANS III : 8-10).

To know the Lord Jesus Christ is therefore the chief of good works, and for this purpose the Scriptures are given, and to this end they should be "rightly divided."

Unless the present exaltation of the Lord Jesus in the heavenly places at God's right hand is acknowledged, it is not possible to enter into that truth that God is desiring to make known to His saints at this time (COLOSSIANS 1 : 25-27).

The good works that are to be seen of others should be the practical outcome of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him " (COLOSSIANS 11 : 6).

Exhortations like the following are given :—

" walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us " (EPHESIANS 5 : 2).

" Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church " (EPHESIANS 5 : 25).

" Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus " (PHILIPPIANS 2 : 5).

To know God's will is obviously the first essential in the carrying out of His will. Many, through not heeding God's word, are like Cain who laboured to cultivate fruits for which God had not asked, and which He could not regard. Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice through faith, he came God's way, he did God's will, and his sacrifice was received. To expend energy upon a work which is not according to God's revelation is worse than useless, it may be even harmful, for in all probability it will be a work contrary to God's will. Doctrine must be first, practice should follow, the two ought never to be apart, though their order should never be reversed. The epistle to the EPHESIANS is a good example of this, the first three chapters are occupied with doctrine; the last three chapters are concerned with resultant practice. Between the two stands the exhortation.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (EPHESIANS IV : 1).

"Good works, which God hath before ordained." We are not, therefore, left in doubt as to what these works should be, God has set them out in the Scriptures. He has prepared a guide for us to follow.

"Good works . . . that we should walk in them." It is not that we should simply do good works, but that we should "walk in them." In the earlier verses of EPHESIANS II we read of those things "wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world" (verse 2), the pathway of truth is to be the opposite to the old pathway of sin. The new is according to that which "God hath before ordained," the old is "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." One is light, the other, darkness.

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord : walk as children of light" (EPHESIANS V : 8).

"Walk" is used to sum up all the activities of the pathway, or life course. "good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Can this be taken to mean that God has prepared the individual life course of all who have been created in Christ Jesus? Paul had a definite course that he desired to finish.

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (ACTS XX : 24).

This course determined for Paul did not mean that, do what he liked, all his activities were peremptorily arranged; this would have absolved him from all

responsibility, and the desire expressed, "so that I might finish my course," would be without meaning. A course had been planned for Paul and his earnest desire was to keep in it, and to complete it with joy. When writing his last epistle he was enabled to say :—

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 TIMOTHY IV: 7-8).

If it is that we also have an ordained pathway, then the example of Paul becomes a pattern for those who would likewise finish their course. The illustrations Paul was caused to draw from the athlete, the race, the rules, the possibility of being disapproved, and the honour of receiving the prize, are all in keeping with the thought of life as a course to be run.

"Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (PSALM XVII: 5).

Having been "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," we truly have something to live for. The end of the pathway is Christ. If we consider the example of others, it should be in the light of their end.

"whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. (manner of life) Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (HEBREWS XIII: 7-8).

If the example of others is stimulating, what shall be said of the supreme example :—

"let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (HEBREWS XII: 1-3).

The Lord's example to us here is one of endurance. We are not asked to copy His life for salvation or the achievement of any virtue, but having been "created in Christ Jesus," it is graciously given unto us "in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (PHILIPPIANS 1 : 29).

It is with the thought of endurance to the end that the example of the Lord is given, that we have Paul also as a divinely appointed example is a cause for thankfulness, for he was a man as we are, and he finished his course. If Paul was strengthened to do this, then it is possible for us to be enabled to likewise finish our course.

## X

## CONCLUSION.

**HIS WORKMANSHIP**: this title was chosen to designate this little volume as it, in two words, sums up the way in which God will carry out His purposes. The salvation, which is by grace through faith, is not of ourselves, it is God's gift; He provided it in the work of His Son. We ourselves, when "created in Christ Jesus," are "His workmanship." The entire plan of salvation is God's work; the final new heavens and new earth will be His work; all God's purposes will eventually be accomplished as the result of His working that glory and honour shall be rendered to Him alone.

The consideration of these three verses in **EPHESIANS II**, has shown how that to God Himself belongs the honour of the standing He has made possible for us to have before Him. It has shown the futility of good works to either give to us a standing before Him, or to improve the standing that He has given us before Him in Christ. It has shown, moreover, that what good works we are able to do are only the outcome of our being "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." This passage contains two occurrences of the conjunction **hina**, "in order that," or "to the end that"; the result indicated by the former being negative and the latter positive.

**Negative.** "For by grace are ye saved . . . not of works lest (**hina**) any man should boast."

**Positive.** "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that (**hina**) we should walk in them."

The negative aspect of God's dealings with mankind forbids that any should ever boast in man. The positive is that all who are in Christ should live unto His glory. The purposes of God should be viewed from His standpoint, we have been redeemed not in the first place for our own enjoyment, but for His glory.

"to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (EPHESIANS 1-6).

It might be wondered why such a revelation, so full and satisfying, as is contained in EPHESIANS II : 8-10, should have been condensed into three short verses. We believe the reason is two-fold. First, in chapter I, we devoted considerable space to the study of the history that lies behind this Ephesian epistle. We saw that when Paul bade the Ephesian believers his final farewell, he said :—

"I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (ACTS XX : 27).

At the time this was spoken Paul had just written, or was just about to write, the epistle to the Romans, for that epistle was written towards the end of Paul's last missionary journey, prior to his being taken prisoner by the Romans. It is in the first eight chapters of ROMANS that all the subjects touched upon in EPHESIANS II : 8-10, are fully dealt with. As Paul had already included all these subjects in his testimony to the Ephesians of "all the counsel of God," it would not have been necessary to enlarge upon them when writing this later epistle to them. What Paul had written he must also have spoken, so that the teaching of ROMANS would have been known to those to whom EPHESIANS is addressed.

The second reason for the brevity of EPHESIANS II : 8-10, is related to the first. When Paul left the Ephesians he said :—

" I have not shunned to declare unto you **all the counsel of God** " (ACTS XX : 27).

This complete testimony must be understood in the light of the revelation that had been committed to Paul **up to that time**. After Paul left the Ephesians he went to Jerusalem, where he was apprehended by the Romans and taken as a prisoner to Rome. On his arrival at Rome, he testified to the Jews concerning " Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets " (ACTS XXVIII). It was the same testimony to the Jews that he had proclaimed to their nation during all his travels as recorded in the Acts, but the Jews at Rome, like the Jews elsewhere, rejected that testimony, so that Paul was caused to quote for the last time the words from ISAIAH VI, relating to Israel's blindness. And concluded by saying :—

" Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it " (ACTS XXVIII : 28).

After this interview Paul abode in prison in Rome, and while there he wrote several epistles, in which he claims to have received further truths concerning the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ. **EPHESIANS** is one of these epistles. Paul had declared unto the Ephesians the whole counsel of God as he had received it **up** to the time of ACTS XX ; he now writes to them this epistle to make known to them that which had been revealed to him, since he was with them.

" For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward : how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery " (EPHESIANS III : 1-3).

In writing to them concerning this mystery, or secret revealed, Paul did not enlarge upon what they already

had heard, but summarised it in the verses we have been considering, EPHESIANS II : 8-10. These verses are the foundation upon which the things made known in Ephesians are established; this therefore is a second reason for their conciseness. Two important lessons can be gathered from this. First, to gain a fuller understanding of our salvation and standing before God it is necessary to read Paul's earlier epistle to the Romans. Second, to enter into all the purposes of God as revealed for us to-day, it is necessary to study Paul's epistles written from prison, EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS and 2 TIMOTHY.

We are confident that none can have entered in any measure into the fulness of the words of our passage, EPHESIANS II : 8-10, without being full of wonder at the gracious work of God. When we consider, on the one hand, our impotent condition as men, and on the other, the perfectness of our standing through faith, we being "His workmanship created in Christ Jesus," our hearts go out in praise and thanksgiving to Him who "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." Yet when we remember that all that we have considered in EPHESIANS II : 8-10, is the foundation and not the fulness of the things revealed in this epistle, surely we should pray for ourselves the prayers of this epistle, that our eyes may be enlightened to these further truths. All that we have considered in EPHESIANS II : 8-10, as to our being "His workmanship," is the result of our identification with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection and life; the truths revealed in EPHESIANS as a whole are an advance upon this, for these deal with our identification with Christ in his ascension and present exaltation at God's right hand in the heavenly places.

"and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (EPHESIANS II : 6).

It is with these blessings in the heavenly places that EPHESIANS is concerned.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (EPHESIANS I : 3).

May this little book be the means of causing many to give consideration to the things contained in this Ephesian epistle. First, as to the standing God has given us in Christ, which brings to our hearts such peace and assurance when we realise that we are "His workmanship," and then, secondly, as to the blessings in heavenly places that God has given us in Christ, which should bring from our hearts that doxology, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us . . ." (EPHESIANS I : 3).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (EPHESIANS II : 8-10.)

... BY THE SAME AUTHOR ...

New Testament Ministries	..	..	..	3/6
All Truth	..	..	..	3/6
His Workmanship	..	..	..	2/6
The New Covenant	..	..	..	4d.
The Unity	..	..	..	4d.
Three Spheres of Blessing	..	12 copies	1/-	
Acts xxviii: 28. Before and After		12 copies	1/-	

*Obtainable Post Free of :*

J. EUSTACE MILLS,  
 "Charis," RIDGEWAY ROAD,  
 TORQUAY, ENGLAND.

---

PRINTED BY PETTY & SONS, LTD., LEEDS AND LONDON