

Spiritual
Dynamite
or
He Is Able

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or
HE IS ABLE

by
The Reverend W. Hogben

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Foreword by Archdeacon T. C. Hammond, M.A., Th.D.

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Printed by
Waller & Johnston, Keira Street, Wollongong
March 1956

Dedication

TO REV. R. C. M. LONG, B.A., Th.L.

who, under God,
guided me during the first few
difficult months
of my new life in *Him who is able.*

PREFACE

My first approach to the Greek New Testament was studying Paul's mighty *Epistle to the Ephesians*.

In *Ephesians* 1:19 the Greek student is introduced to four words which denote power in different aspects.

1, dunamis; 2, energeia; 3, kratos; 4, ischus.

1. This is from dunamai which = I am able.

2. This denotes power as "efficiency," energising power, generally used in the New Testament; see *Ephesians* 3:7; 4:16; *Colossians* 1:29; 2:12; *2 Thessalonians* 2:9.

3. This is power in "force," "mastery," power as shown in "action."

4. This is power as possessed in "strength," "faculty," or "ability." It is the opposite of weakness.

As an exercise in Greek for very love of Bible study, under God I collected the passages where "He is able" or like phrase occurred and treated each one. The result amply justified the labour of love.

Let us all remember "Him that is able." If any person trust Him who is able, then the ability will become actuality.

In Christ, the riches of God are yours according to the measure of faith and the operation of His Holy Spirit.

It is my prayer that this small production will be used of God as He would wish.

I desire all surplus finance which may accrue if this work is printed, to be used for and by Moore Theological College, where I, by God's grace, received my ministerial training.

W. HOGBEN.

Liverpool,
November, 1955.

FOREWORD

by

ARCHDEACON T. C. HAMMOND, M.A., Th.D.

The study of words was shown to be a fascinating pursuit by the late Archbishop Trench.

The study of words and phrases in the New Testament is full of spiritual significance.

In the series of brief sketches before us, Mr. Hogben has endeavoured to develop the fullness of thought and the riches of experience associated with the New Testament message, *He is Able*.

The brief outline under the heading "Contents" provides a key to enable the reader to follow consecutively this unfolding vision of the grace and power of Him *Who is able to keep us from falling*.

There is a simplicity and directness in Mr. Hogben's approach which should prove of great assistance to those who are beginning the high adventure of topical study. The language throughout is very simple and the essential lessons are enforced with a brevity and conciseness that leaves a distinct impression on the mind of the reader. Very wisely, Mr. Hogben eschews the temptation to wander into niceties of grammatical construction and keeps steadily before him the main purport of the passage under review.

We commend this booklet to the earnest attention of Bible students. We hope that not only will Mr. Hogben's laudable ambition to help Moore College be realized but that very many shall receive true spiritual profit by this simple ministry of the word.

THOMAS C. HAMMOND,

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HE IS ABLE

MATTHEW 3:9. "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

John the Baptist spoke these words to many of the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism. He called them a brood or generation of vipers. He asked them that as they came to his baptism, they should profess repentance by a change of heart and will; or show themselves to be worthy of the baptism unto repentance by acting as those who had truly forsaken sin.

"Do not presume to say that just because you have Abraham as your father you do not need to repent. You think that all children of Abraham are safe whatever betide? If you do you are wrong." If we read *Romans* 4 we find the mind of God through Paul on the matter. Also compare *Philippians* 3:4.

The Jewish boast of having Abraham as father seems to have been common. See *John* 8:33-39; and this belief alone or with the confession of the creed of Israel "the Lord our God is one Lord" (*Deuteronomy* 6:4) would be enough to ensure for every Jew an admission into Paradise. The "bosom" of Abraham was wide enough to receive all his children. Having Abraham as father was to the Jew all and more, than being a Roman with all the privileges of Roman Citizenship.

What was John the Baptist's answer to the Jews? His answer was — "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

When John said these words, he obviously pointed to the pebbles on the banks of the Jordan. When applied spiritually, they contain the germ or beginnings of all the teaching of our Lord, St. Paul and St. John as to the calling of the Gentiles and the universality of God's kingdom.

In effect John said to the Jewish children of Abraham; do not presume that because you are descendants from Abraham according to the flesh that you will be certain of a place in Paradise. You will not, because God is able to raise up children unto Abraham wherever men are.

As stones are found everywhere, so God is able to raise up children unto Abraham from all nations, colours, tongues and races. These of course would be men of faith in Christ, even as Abraham was. God's plan was as Paul says in *Ephesians* 2:15

“to make in Christ of two (Jew and Gentile) one new man (the Church), so making peace.” “And that He might reconcile both (Jew and Gentile) unto God in one body (Christ’s Body — the Church), by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.”

Christ in His crucified flesh (by His death on the Cross) broke down the middle wall of partition (the hostile feeling between Jew and Gentile).

Are you a child of faith? If you are, God shall bless you spiritually in accordance with your faith.

If you are not, God is able in Christ to make you a son of Abraham or a child of faith. Christ, whose work as Redeemer was finished on the Cross, where He died for the sins of the whole world, awaits your decision. Choose Him now if you have not already taken the step of faith. Remember always, God is able whenever and wherever we are not. Read *Mark* 9:23,24 and pray — “Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.”

JAMES 4:12. “There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?”

The Epistle of *James* is an exposition of practical Christianity.

The above words are intended to show the arrogant impertinence of those who were judging on a misinterpretation of the Law.

In verse 11 we have specific cases of the Law being maligned by making it out to be something it was not. It is when a person acts on a misinterpretation of the Law and denounces others that do not do likewise that he truly is not a doer of the Law, but a judge and a very bad one also.

Very similar words are found in *Romans* 14:4.

As a king is the fountain of honour, so the ultimate source of Law is God, and all judgment is really delegated by Him. To usurp such delegated functions is to provoke the offended sovereign—whether earthly or heavenly. As a great scholar has truly said “It is not our part to judge, seeing we cannot carry out our sentence.”

To save and to destroy or salvation and utter destruction seem to be placed in intentional contrast here. Our Lord’s words in *Matthew* 10:28 spring to mind here. Also the words of Abraham in *Genesis* 18:25 “— shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” help up in placing God in His rightful position as Omnipotent, Omniscient and Righteous. See also *Romans* 3:5,6.

As can be seen, the correct order of the latter part of the above verse is; but thou — who art thou that judgest a neighbour? The emphasis falls on the first Greek word *su* — thou, as in *Romans* 14:4.

ACTS 20:32. “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.”

These are among Paul’s parting words to the elders of the church at Ephesus. They are very interesting. Paul commends them to God first and then to the word of His grace. It is hardly possible to say that the “word” here is the same as or has reference to the “Word” of St. John’s Gospel.

Paul as a teacher had “committed” the truth he received unto the Ephesian elders, who in turn were entrusted to pass it on to others as in *2 Timothy* 2:2.

As in the fourth Gospel, *John* 1:14-17, so here and in the *Epistle to the Ephesians*, we find great stress laid on grace.

The thought here is closely akin to *James* 1:21, where we are asked to “receive with meekness the engrafted (implanted) word, which is able to save your souls.” Also in *Hebrews* 4:12 we are told that “the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Here “the word” is able to build up and to give an inheritance and therefore has a quasi-personal character. Something more than a spoken or written word is suggested. The same phrase “the word of his grace” occurs in *Acts* 14:3.

Whether the ability or power to build up and give an inheritance refers to God or to the word of His grace, it is not for me to conclude. Probably the simple method of regarding the whole phrase “to God and to the word of His grace” as one, is a good solution. That is God is able and His ability is shown in the word of His grace. He uses the word of His grace to accomplish the building up of His saints. In *Colossians* 3:16, the Bible says “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.”

The effect of God’s word of grace is to build up. It is interesting to find how this same thought occurs again and again in the Ephesian letter. *Ephesians* 2:30 “are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.”

The metaphor of building is common in *Ephesians*. It is found in 2:21; 4:12,16,19; as also in *1 Corinthians* 3:9,10,12,14; 14:3,5,12,26; *2 Corinthians* 5:1; 10:8; 12:19; 13:10. Much importance is given to being edified or built up in the faith of Christ by means of His word of grace.

God is able also to give you an inheritance. In *Ephesians* again we find the word inheritance and the thought here is found in *Ephesians* 1:18. In Christ only “the eyes of your understanding are enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His

calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

We read also in *Ephesians* 5:5 that "no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

ROMANS 4:21. "And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform."

Romans chapter 4 entirely, treats of Abraham and his Paul's genius is here very apparent as he has already in chapter 3 shown that there was no real superiority for the Jew over the Gentile. They had an advantage because they were entrusted with "the oracles of God." The boasting based on this supposed superiority also was excluded as Paul said "by the law of faith."

In chapter 4 Paul relentlessly pursues this theme by showing that Abraham the great progenitor of the Jews came under the category of being "justified by faith." All who act in an identical manner as Abraham are his spiritual descendants.

A luminous path is opened to us by verse 14 which says that "Abraham against hope believed in hope." Hope is always a well-grounded expectation of coming good. God had promised Abraham an heir and more. We read the promise of God in *Genesis* 17:1-9. To Abraham, then 99 years old, all the circumstances denied the possibility. Yet he hoped and took his stand on "the promise of God." It is the very genius of faith to expect what God promises. No word of God's shall fruitless fall. Compare *Isaiah* 55:11. To Abraham, *Psalms* 127:3 was proved in experience.

When Abraham left Haran he was 75 years old. He had only three communications from God in 25 years. The first at Bethel on entering Canaan, the second after separation from Lot, and the third after the battle with the Eastern kings. After this in *Genesis* 16 we read of Ishmael's birth to Hagar. Then for a period of thirteen or more years Abraham lived by faith, although no doubt feeling the pressure of things seen trying to push the unseen silently away. We read something of Abraham's thoughts in *Genesis* 17:18 when he said unto God "O that Ishmael might live before thee." Sarah had been till this time barren, yet God said, "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed" *Genesis* 17:19.

There is one imprudence which is to doubt His word.

From the brief look back at Abraham's life we can realize just how he was "fully assured that, what God had promised, He was able also to perform." As says *Genesis* 15:6 "Abram believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness."

In New Testament language Abraham was justified by faith. We read of the triumph of Abraham faith in *Hebrews* 11:8-19.

ROMANS 11:23. "And they also if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in for God is able to graft them in again."

The great subject with which Paul is dealing in this chapter is the destiny of Israel. Paul reflects that the fall was not applicable to all Israel (verses 4, 5), that God had a special purpose through the fall (verse 12), and that all Israel would be restored (verse 26).

The above verse occurs in a thought of Paul regarding engrafted branches and the original branches. "Because of Jewish unbelief some branches were broken off, and thou (Gentile) standest by faith." verse 20.

Our mind should go back to the last of the seven great utterances of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning Himself, beginning with the words "I am." In *John* 15:1 Jesus said "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." In the following verses we read of the taking away of unfruitful branches. The revelation in *Romans* is of the grace and power of God. He is able to graft in again even branches that have been broken off. He is able to secure that we abide in Him and remain believers and continue to bear fruit. All branches which are capable of fulfilling their functions in the Vine, He can and is able to graft in if they have been broken off. The immediate application of this verse is to Israel. Some natural branches (Israel) were not spared by God, so (as verse 21) "if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." The privileges which the Gentiles possess are derived, and not original. The condition of faith is attached to the substitution.

We, as Gentiles, are to realize that all things are possible to him that believeth. We can never say of any man, Jew or Gentile, that unbelief is final and belief an impossibility. The Jews, as soon as they give up their unbelief, will again be incorporated in the true people of God. Although the operation of grafting them in again may be difficult it is possible with God. Comparing *Romans* 14:4 we see it is impossible with man, but all things are possible with God.

In conclusion, let us realize that nothing less than the thought of God could keep Paul from despairing of the future of Israel.

ROMANS 14:4. "Who are thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."

In the section beginning *Romans* 14:1, the subject of the relations of "the strong" and "the weak" in the Church at Rome is before the Apostle's mind.

The first word in the Greek is *su* = Thou, and so is emphatic. Paul is addressing the weak person who is judging the servant (*oiketen*) of another (*alotrion*). Paul was alive to the possibility of a tyranny over the weak. It is an easy step from being scrupulous about one's own conduct to being Pharisaical regarding the conduct of others.

The One concerned with conduct is his own Lord. It is his Lord's interest which is involved and to Him (not to you) he must answer — as he stands or falls.

Yes, he shall be made to stand. He shall be preserved in the integrity of his Christian character. The Lord or Master is mighty to keep him upright.

Here Paul is not contemplating the strong man falling and being set up again by Christ. Although Paul is conscious of the perils which Christian liberty brings in its train, as much as a timid Christian could be, he is confident that Christian liberty, through the grace and power of Christ, will prove a triumphant moral success.

If at any time Christ's servants are able to sustain his judgment, it is only because His grace has enabled them so to act as not to be condemned by it.

ROMANS 16:25. "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began."

The opening of this verse is identical in Greek to the opening of *Ephesians 3:20*. The words "is of power" = *dunameno* in Greek or "is able" in English. The next word is important.

We read in the opening chapter of *Romans* verse 11 — "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." Paul affirms *Romans 14:4* that it is only God who is able to effect this result.

The establishing means the confirming and strengthening in all the elements of a Christian character. This is effected by the means of grace which the gospel that Paul preached indicated and enjoins to use. See *2 Timothy 2:8* and *Romans 2:16*.

The gospel was Paul's because: (1) No man taught it to him. *Galatians 1:11,12*; and (2) Its characteristic feature, judged by Romans was his sense of the absolute freeness of salvation (justification by faith, apart from works of law), and of its absolute universality (for every one that believeth, Jew first, then Gentile.).

All means of grace centre in Christ, and it is only in accordance with the due proclamation of Him that the Christian can hope to become established.

The revelation of the mystery was the preaching by Paul of Jesus Christ. The mystery (see *Romans 9:25*) was the Divine plan of redemption. The Gospel as Paul understood it was a mystery (mystery), because it could never have been known except through Divine Revelation. The particular mystery of the conversion of the Gentiles, which is emphasized in *Ephesians 3:3-9*; *Colossians 1:26*; is included, but the reference in *Romans* is not to be limited to this.

This mystery of Christianity was kept in silence or concealment from eternity past up to the time when preached by Paul.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:8. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

This is the verse which brings to mind one great book which John Bunyan wrote while in Bedford Jail, called "Grace Abounding."

From verses 6-11 we learn that liberal giving is blessed of God. The thought is expressed in the well-known words, "What I gave I kept; what I kept I lost." However, while the words primarily refer to money, their application is studiously general.

There is a play on the word "all" in Greek, *pasan*, *panti*, *pasan*, *pan*, expressing the idea of "all" or "every."

The word *autarkreian* represents the Stoic thought of the self-sufficient man. To the Stoic this was the crown of the perfect life. To Paul it was the moral quality of the "new self" in Christ, which came with self-consecration and faith. This new self in Christ is independent of external circumstances.

There are three clauses in this verse.

1. God is able to make all grace abound toward you;
2. that ye, always having all-sufficiency in all things;
3. may abound to every good work:

Firstly, we note that God is able to make, not God will make. Our part is always to receive, as God always gives. He Who is fullness cannot but give. God is the Fountain of Life. The Giver will bestow Himself to you on the condition of faith. Grace is a kind of shorthand for the whole sum of unmerited blessings which come to man through Jesus Christ. Grace is God's love in action.

Secondly, we note the object of God in bestowing all grace. It is that every Christian may have all sufficiency in all things. We have heard "Enough is as good as a feast," yet God desires to give so we may always have sufficiency in all things. His commandment is given to us, but He makes the back to bear the burden. *Matthew 11:28-30* is the Christian's delight to experience.

Thirdly, we note our duty to accomplish good works by the grace of God. Character and conduct is what God desires to find in us. The avalanche of God's grace is toward us for the purpose of enabling our lives in Christ to be filled and radiant with "good works." We find St. Paul's testimony of grace in *1 Corinthians* 15:10.

EPHESIANS 3:20. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

This is one of St. Paul's great ascriptions of praise to God. Paul has been thinking and writing of the great things which His grace has already wrought in these Gentiles, and the great things of the future which the same grace destines for them and would have them attain to.

It could read "able to do beyond all things, superabundantly beyond what we ask or think."

The main subject of the whole paragraph is God and the vast compass of His power.

In this ascription we have two descriptions of God, the second of which explains and develops the thought of the first.

Firstly then, God is described in respect of the absoluteness of His power, as "able to do beyond all things," "able to do more than all," or as One to whose efficiency there is no limit.

Secondly, with more particular reference to the case of Paul and his fellow-believers, God is able to do above measure beyond anything with which our asking or even our thinking is conversant; superabundantly beyond the utmost requests we can make in prayer, nay beyond all that can suggest itself to our minds in their highest ventures.

The words "exceedingly abundantly" translate the Greek word *huperkperissou*. This word occurs again in *1 Thessalonians* 3:10; 5:13. Many compounds with *huper* are characteristic of Paul, being used more by him than any other New Testament writer, but not limited to him. They are in keeping with Paul's intensely pious feelings which at times struggle for adequate expression.

"According to the power that worketh in us." This "power" is doubtless the inward operation of the Holy Spirit. The power that we know to be operative in ourselves is a witness to God's ability to do superabundantly beyond what we ask or think.

The efficient power of which we have experience in ourselves represents the measure and mode of the limitless capacity that is in God.

By the one we can conceive of the other and trust it.

God is able to do what could not otherwise be done according to the inward working of His Holy Spirit.

Paul, knowing this, exhorts all to be "filled with the Spirit."

PHILIPPIANS 3:21. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

This is the last verse of *Philippians*, Chapter 3, in which Paul recounts part of his life's history. He has, in verses 17-19, just given a warning against the earthly, sensuous mind.

The point Paul makes here is the contrast between the corrupt, sensual life of the flesh and the spirituality and hope of future perfection which become citizens of heaven.

The key for Christian living is to be mindful of the heritage and final home of Christians, which is heaven. Paul, in *Colossians* 3:2, says "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Perhaps the Revised Version may help us to a better understanding of the meaning of this verse. It reads, "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His Glory," etc.

This takes place at the resurrection when Christ "shall fashion anew" or "change" the bodies of His saints. The need for this change or re-fashioning is given by St. Paul in *1 Corinthians* 15:53, "For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortality must put on immortality."

The word "fashion" indicates a change in what is outward and shifting, that is our bodies. The word rendering "vile" body is archaic. In *Philippians* 2:8 we read "He humbled Himself." The body we possess is a body of humiliation, not a vile body. (Note. In 1611 "vile" did not of necessity imply that which was morally evil. The word meant "mean" or "lowly.")

To fully understand this great verse we must realize that the verbs rendered in the Authorized Version, "change" and "fashion," are in the Revised Version, "fashion" and "conform."

The first refers to the outward form as seen by the human eye; the second to the essential inward and permanent characteristic. To change a garden say into a city is to change the "form," but to change a garden of roses into a garden of lilies is to change the "fashion" or outward appearance.

At the resurrection, Christ fashions the bodies of humiliation of His saints that they may be conformed to the body of His glory.

In *1 John* 3:2,3, we read "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

At present Christ is glorified and possesses a glorified human body. We do not know how His body now differs from His body

before resurrection, but in this verse we know we shall have through His fashioning a body like His now. The full order or sequence is given by Paul in *1 Corinthians* 15:35-53.

All this fashioning of our bodies or humiliation is "according to the energy of His being able" to do the same. The word *dunasthai* is the English dress of the Greek word rendered "He is able." Compare the English dynamite. The other word *energeian* is the English dress of the Greek word rendered "working." Compare the English energy. *Dunasthai* expresses natural ability or faculty. *Energeia* is power in exercise. Calvin remarks, "Paul notes not only the power of God as it resides in Him, but the power as it puts itself into act."

The word *hupotaxai* has more force than subdue. See *1 Corinthians* 15:25-28 and *Romans* 8:19,20. All things are to be marshalled under Christ in the new heaven and the new earth in which shall dwell righteousness. The work of God in Christ is therefore not only to transform, but to subject, and that not only the body, but all things.

MATTHEW 10:28. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

This verse occurs in the instruction by Jesus to His twelve disciples before they were sent forth "as sheep in the midst of wolves." Probably a convenient section to analyse is verses 26-31 where three times "fear not" is spoken, each occasion being enforced by a reason.

The verse above occurs with the last of the three reasons for fearlessness. It touches a tender chord while disclosing a gracious thought of God as Father. Let us take both verses 28 and 29 together and allow them to work on our minds. They will produce fear or awe making us brave and filial trust to increase our bravery.

We learn of the universal care and knowledge of God. In theological language God is immanent in nature. The immanent God is "our Father" and because of sonship in Him we are "of more value than many sparrows."

God our Father can destroy body and soul, therefore we need fear Him.

God our Father determines whether you shall "fall to the ground" or soar above dangers, therefore we need fear none but Him.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, saying (*2 Corinthians* 5:11) "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;" and he also wrote to the Ephesians and in Chapter 5, verse 21,

exhorting them to "Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God." The author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* in Chapter 10, verse 31, wrote, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." In verses 28-31 we have the new antidote to fear of men drawn from a greater fear and from the paternal providence of God.

It is interesting that our Lord uses shall we say the popular dichotomy or twofold division of human nature. In this case the word "soul" would include the living, thinking, and willing aspect or part of man, and would be equivalent to the "soul and Spirit" of *1 Thessalonians* 5:23. The body, soul and spirit is the more scientific trichotomy or threefold division of man. Essentially, man's nature is twofold. Probably what a great scholar has said regarding soul and spirit may help here. The "spirit" is man's being considered as God's gift. The "soul" is "spirit" considered as the individual's possession in life and experience. Simpler still we may each say — I occupy a body, I possess a soul, I am a spirit.

The Greek words to *soma* = the body. This is all that persecutors as such, can injure or destroy. The more the material or physical part of us is assailed the safer the spiritual or "real" self. The soul and spirit together constitute the immaterial part of man called the "inner man." Paul wrote in *2 Corinthians* 4:16 "— though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." The exhortation of Paul in *Ephesians* 4:11 and of *James* 4:7 are for the renewing of our "inner man." In *James* 4:12 we have almost identical language to the verse here treated.

In conclusion, let us realize that God is in no case willing to destroy, but that He is able to inflict that destruction where all offers of mercy and all calls to righteousness have been rejected,

2 TIMOTHY 1:12. "For which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

What a verse Paul here writes to his "son in the faith." It is full of encouragement in respect to all trials and labours undergone by him for Christ.

Paul the herald, and apostle and teacher of the Gentiles, had many sufferings—prison, chains, solitude, hate of many—which befell him in his labours for Christ. Timothy knew well what Paul was undergoing. Paul touches on these to bring as it were a spotlight on his invincible confidence in God. There was One whom he believed, able, and willing to save him for yet higher and grander things.

Despite all persecutions to which I have been subject I am not ashamed: I am not disappointed of my hope. How could Paul, who wrote *2 Corinthians* 5:1-4, be anything but buoyant, always in spirit. The saying of Jesus (*Luke* 9:26. "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.") was probably in Paul's mind. In verse 8, Paul says in effect, "Do not begin to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." Personal appeals are a feature of *2 Timothy*.

After living in communion with Jesus and the Father, Paul could write in "full assurance of faith" the words "I know whom I have trusted, yes and will trust."

For the word persuaded read *Romans* 8:38,39. The words *pepisteuka* and *pepeismai* are both perfects. The force of perfects is that of their action being brought to its appropriate conclusion at the time of speaking in such a way that its results still remain in action. Greek perfects are not plentiful in the New Testament. They describe the present result of a past action.

The question as to what was "the deposit" or what Paul had committed to God has brought different answers from scholars of all ages. Looking at what has been written, we find Paul a forsaken prisoner looking for death, bidding his younger comrade never to let his heart sink or his spirit grow faint when oncoming dangers threaten to crush him. In spite of all that has befallen me, because I am a Christian, and know Whom I have believed, I am persuaded that God is able to keep "my deposit." He has sovereign power to keep my soul which will not see death. Quite probably the words of Psalm 31:5; "Into thy hand I commit my spirit:" were on his mind as he wrote. Paul knew our Lord Jesus used the same words (*Luke* 23:46) and he had written on the subject before (*1 Thessalonians* 5:23). Paul was obeying the exhortation of Peter when he wrote (*1 Peter* 4:19), "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

Paul's eternal soul or real "self" was his trust or deposit of faith that God was guarding or keeping.

With a serenity of faith, Paul had placed his deposit of faith, because of his experience of faith, into the Father's safe-keeping until he reached "that day" which is the goal of faith.

It was "that day" when judgment by an omniscient and all-righteous God would take place and awards given "according to what we have done" here. "The deeds done in the body" would receive appraisal or otherwise by a Divine Judge.

HEBREWS 2:18. "For in that he hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

In this short verse we have the process by which Christ's becoming man has answered the purpose of making Him a merciful and faithful High Priest.

The first words of the text, *en ho*, are rendered by some "whereas" but by others "wherein." "Whereas" gives better sense, yet "wherein" has ampler warrant.

It is contested also whether the words mean that Christ suffered by being tempted, or that He was tempted by His sufferings. The Authorized Version, Revised Version and some scholars favour the former.

If we look at verse 17, we see "the brethren and the people" are in verse 18 "them that are tempted." Through the temptations arose those sins of the people for which Christ makes propitiation.

In His having been tempted lies His special ability to help the tempted, by His sympathy, by His knowledge of the help that is needed and by the position of High Priest which He has gained through suffering.

JUDE 24. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

This concluding doxology of Jude reminds us of *Romans* 16:25 and *Ephesians* 3:20. They all commence alike — to *de dun-ameno*.

In this short epistle, Jude has bidden us keep ourselves in the love of God. He has warned us against all impiety and impurity.

However, he warns us not to think that we are able to carry out these exhortations in our own strength. We must have power from above. That it may be so he offers up his prayer to Him who alone is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us before the throne of His glory, pure and spotless in exceeding joy.

The word rendering "falling" is nowhere else used in the New Testament. It is *aptaistos* and is formed by adding "a" as a prefix to the verb "ptaio." Before falling, a person usually stumbles and this verb literally means "stumbling." Here, then, is the possibility of a firm standing in the slippery present. The same figurative sense is found in *James* 2:10; 3:2; and *2 Peter* 1:10.

He is able also to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. The verb rendering "faultless" is *amomos* and has a beautiful meaning. Originally it applied

to the requirement that the sacrificial offerings shall be "without blemish." Then it is more than once applied to our Lord Himself, expressing His Perfect Immaculate sinlessness. Here it is applied to the future condition of those who have been kept without stumbling. It is God bringing to pass *Philippians* 3:21. We read in *Matthew* 25:31-33 "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory — He shall set the sheep on His right hand —." This is the vision of our hope. Compare *Ephesians* 5:27; *1 Thessalonians* 3:13; and in relation to Christ's sacrifice see *Hebrews* 9:14.

The Greek word *katenopion* is found with amomous in *Ephesians* 1:4, where the Christian grace par excellence is set forward in the last words "in love."

The last Greek word of *Jude* 24, *agalliasei*, apparently denotes a proud exultant joy. This will be our joy of being set before Him in such a manner. A different form of the same word is found in *Luke* 1:47 where Mary's spirit rejoices in God her Saviour, and also in *Luke* 10:21 where, on the return of the seventy sent out by Him, Jesus became exultant in Spiritual joy.

In this verse there are three possibilities held out to all who will receive them.

1. We have a solitary, all-sufficient stay for our weakness.
2. We are able to stand firm even on the slippery present.
3. We have the possible final perfecting in the future.

HEBREWS 7:25. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

This verse tells of a very wonderful and enduring comfort to all in Christ.

The opening word "wherefore" instructs us to hearken to the previous verse or two. We read that our Lord hath an unchangeable priesthood, which is His in virtue of His abiding forever. This unique priesthood is contrasted with the Levitical priesthood. Death prevented any Levitical priest continuing his priesthood.

The Gospel requires a priest who is not subject to death and so our Lord Jesus Christ alone fulfills the requirements.

Therefore, because of the above reasons, Christ is able to save them to the uttermost. Full in reach and quantity is His saving power.

The same phrase occurs in *Luke* 13:11 where it is rendered "in no wise" meaning "she was not able to lift herself up; not her head, her body or any part at all." This suggests the meaning here that Christ is able to save to the last degree. Nothing further is needed for the salvation He gives.

Who are the recipients of His full saving grace? Them that come to God by Him. Better; them that approach through Him to God. In *Hebrews* 10:19-22, full expression is given to the thought here briefly indicated. Christ leads and represents His people, and is the medium of their approach to God. The "new and living way" to God is Jesus Christ Himself.

As our High Priest Christ intercedes for us. Under the Jewish dispensation, the High Priest alone could enter into the Holy of Holies (not without blood), there to appear before the Mercy-seat on behalf of his people, so Jesus our Great High Priest, alone can enter, by virtue of His blood, into the presence of God, as Intercessor for His people. Because of the prophecy (*Psalms* 110:4) fulfilled in Christ, he is always and with perfect efficacy able to intercede for His people.

The word "intercession," Greek *entugchanein*, is interesting. It occurs elsewhere at *Romans* 8:27, 34 in this sense. At each of these places it is followed by *huper* — on behalf of — and takes the meaning to intercede. It is not the word itself but the preposition following, that gives the idea of intercession to the word.

Christ's risen life is His intercessory life. He continues to spend Himself in the cause of His interest in humans. He secures that the fullness of Divine resources shall be available for men. *1 Corinthians* 3:21, "For all things are yours." This intercession is based on the atoning sacrifice of Himself once offered on Calvary which is also to men the guarantee that His intercession is real, and comprehensive of all their needs.

Notes.—A priest is one who offers a sacrifice as the Jewish priests did. No Christian minister is ever a priest in this sense. The word *hiereus* means a sacrificing priest and is never in the Bible applied to a Christian minister as such. In the Church of England Prayer Book the word "Priest" is nothing but a contraction of "Presbyter" or "Elder", and is not intended to convey the idea that a Christian minister as such has a sacrificial office.

An intercessor is one who pleads for another on the ground of mercy.

As Christ was Priest in Himself, so are Christians in union with Him though in a different way. *1 Peter* 2:5 and *Revelations* 5:10. The Christian's sacrifice is found in *Romans* 12:1.

HEBREWS 5:7. "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."

In this chapter, verses 2 and 4 give two essential conditions to be fulfilled for the office of High Priest. These two conditions are applied to Christ in verses 5 and 6 and verses 7 and 8.

Verses 7 and 8 correspond to the general thought of verses 1 and 2 so far as it is applicable to "Him who knew no sin."

The writer also shows how much there was in the call to the priesthood repugnant to flesh and blood; how it was through painful obedience, not by an arrogant ambition He became priest.

The main statement is, He learned obedience and became perfect as Saviour.

"Christ in the days of His flesh"—compare Chapter 2:14. This was the period when He was like His brethren in capacity for temptation and suffering.

The offering of Jesus was such as became His innocent suffering. Some think that as every ordinary high priest prepared himself for offering for the people, so Christ was prepared for the strictly priestly work by the feeling of His own weakness.

The prayers and supplications of Jesus Christ were offered "with strong crying and tears." This expresses more forcibly the intensity of the prayers and so the keenness of the suffering. One scholar says "There are three kinds of prayers, each loftier than the preceding: prayer, crying, tears. Prayer is silent, crying with a loud voice, and tears overcome all things."

Some say the scene depicted is the Garden of Gethsemane, others say it is the scene on Calvary: Might it not be meant to include both, as there is no mention of tears in Gethsemane.

The prayers were directed "to Him that was able to save Him from death." "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." "Father, save me from this hour." One scholar believes that Christ is praying not that death may be averted, but that He may be saved "out of it" when it comes.

When I read that Christ prayed "to Him that was able to save Him from death," it suggests to me that His prayer was not formally answered. God had power to answer it, and did; but not in the form it was given. Another scholar believes that both ideas are covered. That Christ prayed for deliverance from death, but was only answered or His prayer granted when He was saved "out of death."

The passion of Christ's prayer to escape death was intensified by the fact that He knew God could deliver Him by more than legions of angels or otherwise. His absolute faith in His Father's almighty power and infinite resource was the very soul of His trial.

Christ was heard and His prayer was received on account of His godly reverence. It was reverent submission to God's will which caution or prudence dictated. His reverence was opposed to rashness and cowardice alike.

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