

It is primary rule of Biblical exegesis that we must never build a teaching upon one word alone, or even on one verse alone. Often we find an idea suggested by a word, but if we are to accept the idea as definitely God's teaching we must not build merely upon a suggestion. We must look elsewhere in the Scripture for evidence that our interpretation is really what is intended. Here we do not need to look far for such evidence.

At first sight verse 16 is a very strange verse. We recognize, of course, that the verse divisions were not made by the original writers of the Bible. They are quite old and probably were determined long before the chapter divisions. We do not know who inserted them. They are extremely convenient for finding references, but one often wonders on what basis they were made. Frequently a sentence is divided into two verses. Occasionally, as in Psalm 19:4 we find a verse composed of the concluding sentence of one stanza, combined with the first phrase of a long sentence that begins a new stanza.

Some of these verse divisions are very strange, but one wonders whether there is a verse anywhere in the Scripture that is quite as strange as verse 16 of chapter 24. Here we have two separate complete sentences that appear to have little in common. The first expresses great joy, while the second grieves over a sad disappointment. Yet it is not as strange as it appears, for the two sentences really present one complete thought. In the providence of God there are combined in verse 16 two very different ideas, one of which carries on the principal idea of verse 15, while the other develops the new idea that was suggested by one word of that verse.

The first half of verse 16, as we have already noticed, repeats the principal thought of verse 15, that the praise of God is to be extended to the uttermost part of the earth. The last two-thirds of the verse, however, which forms a complete sentence, expresses a very different idea: "But I said, My leanness, my leanness,