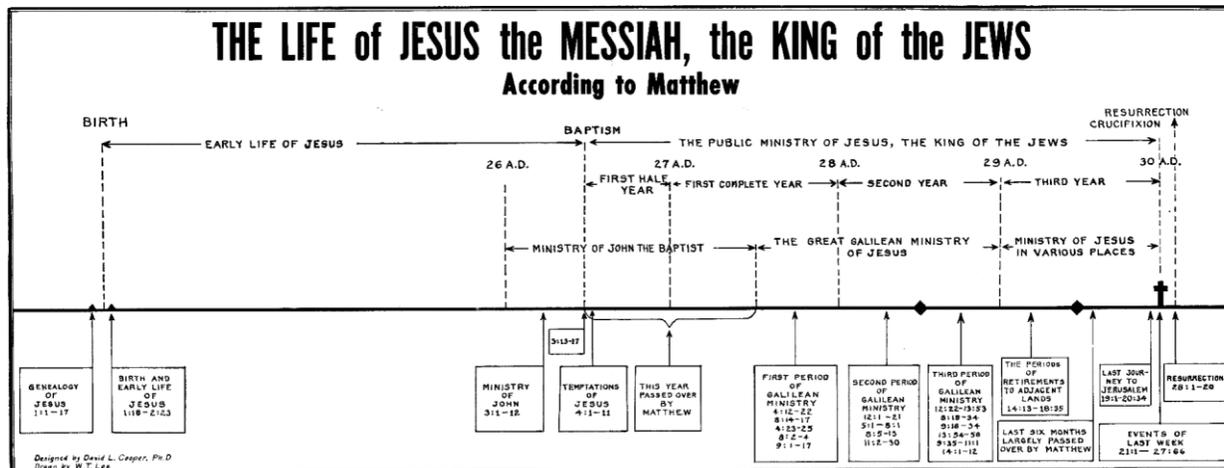


AN EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW  
 BY DAVID L. COOPER, Th.M., Ph.D., Litt.D.  
 Biblical Research Monthly  
 August 1944—December 1946

INDEX

INSTALLMENT ONE	CHART AND INTRODUCTON	<i>Page 3</i>
INSTALLMENT TWO	THE GENEALOGY AND INFANCY OF JESUS	<i>Page 7</i>
INSTALLMENT THREE	THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST	<i>Page 12</i>
INSTALLMENT FOUR	THE MANIFESTO OF THE KING OF THE JEWS	<i>Page 17</i>
INSTALLMENT FIVE	SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Chapter 5)	<i>Page 22</i>
INSTALLMENT SIX	SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Chapter 6)	<i>Page 27</i>
INSTALLMENT SEVEN	SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Chapter 7)	<i>Page 31</i>
INSTALLMENT EIGHT	THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD—PART I	<i>Page 36</i>
INSTALLMENT NINE	THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD—PART II	<i>Page 40</i>
INSTALLMENT TEN	THE RESTRICTED COMMISSION	<i>Page 44</i>
INSTALLMENT ELEVEN	JESUS' EULOGY OF JOHN, HIS UPBRAIDING CITIES OF PRIVILEGE, HIS PRAYER, AND INVITATION	<i>Page 49</i>
INSTALLMENT TWELVE	DETERMINED OPPOSITION AGAINST JESUS	<i>Page 52</i>
INSTALLMENT THIRTEEN	THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM	<i>Page 58</i>
INSTALLMENT FOURTEEN	HEROD'S GUILTY FEARS AND CHRIST'S FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND	<i>Page 66</i>
INSTALLMENT FIFTEEN	CEREMONIAL VS. REAL DEFILEMENT— JESUS FEEDS THE FOUR THOUSAND	<i>Page 72</i>
INSTALLMENT SIXTEEN	JESUS REBUKES THE PHARISEES; TESTS THE FAITH OF THE DISCIPLES WITH REFERENCE TO HIS MESSIAHSHIP; FORTTELLS HIS DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND HIS COMING AGAIN	<i>Page 78</i>

INSTALLMENT SEVENTEEN	THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD; HIS HEALING OF THE EPILEPTIC BOY; HIS FORETELLING OF HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION; HIS PAYMENT OF THE TEMPLE TAX	Page 84
INSTALLMENT EIGHTEEN	THE TEACHING OF OUR LORD AS FOUND IN MATTHEW, CHAPTER 18	Page 90
INSTALLMENT NINETEEN	JESUS ON THE LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM	Page 95
INSTALLMENT TWENTY	THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS AS SET FORTH IN MATTHEW, CHAPTER 20	Page 99
INSTALLMENT TWENTY-ONE	AN EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW, CHAPTER 21	Page 104
INSTALLMENT TWENTY-TWO	AN EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW, CHAPTER 22	Page 109
INSTALLMENT TWENTY-THREE	AN EXPOSURE OF THE PHARISEES	Page 114
INSTALLMENT TWENTY-FOUR	THE OLIVET DISCOURSE	Page 120
INSTALLMENT TWENTY-FIVE	THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE ARREST OF JESUS	Page 126
INSTALLMENT TWENTY-SIX	THE ARREST AND TRIALS OF JESUS	Page 132
INSTALLMENT TWENTY-SEVEN	THE CRUCIFIXION	Page 137
INSTALLMENT TWENTY-EIGHT	THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS	Page 142



## INTRODUCTION (*Installment One*)

When one has studied the Old Testament carefully and reaches the end of the Book of Malachi, one realizes that the story contained therein is incomplete. Figuratively speaking, there are dangling ends of prophecy hanging down from all the utterances of the seers in Israel. Had the revelation closed with Malachi, earnest truth seekers would be disappointed; but as soon as one reads Matthew, one recognizes that it carries forward the “Story of Redemption” of the Old Testament. This conviction is strengthened in the mind of the reader as he continues to study the New Testament.

A casual reading of the four records of the gospel shows that these books simply give the life and teachings of our Lord during His personal ministry, which terminated with His tragic death. But He was not left in the tomb, for He arose again in fulfillment of Old Testament predictions, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel.

There are many similarities in these four records. This phenomenon is due to the fact that the writers were giving an account of the life, labors, and teaching of the same person—Jesus our Lord. There are at the same time many dissimilarities, which can be accounted for upon the basis of the individuality of the various writers and the objective which each had in view as he wrote his account. The first three records, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are very similar because they move largely in the same groove and cover the same incidents and periods of time. The Apostle John, however, gave us the ministry of the Lord Jesus in Jerusalem among the religious authorities. The three Synoptic writers devoted the major part of their attention to the great Galilean ministry, the period of retirements from the Holy Land, and the Perea ministry. All, however, are very full in dealing with the events of the last week and our Lord’s resurrection from the dead.

It is a well-known fact that Matthew wrote his account of the life of our Lord for the Jews, His brethren according to the flesh. He accordingly selected, guided by the Spirit of God, those narrations and teachings from the many things which Jesus did and taught, and which would aid him most effectually in presenting to his readers Jesus as the King of the Jews. On the other hand, Mark chose that material which aided him in picturing Jesus to the Roman people as the obedient servant of Jehovah. Luke, who wrote for the Greeks, collected those incidences which would present our Lord to his readers as the Ideal Man, our Kinsman-Redeemer, who came to give His life a ransom for many. The Apostle John was led to pursue a different course. He devoted, as stated above his entire book to the life, and the activities, of our Lord which took place largely at Jerusalem. His book is sermonic. He naturally selected those discussions which Jesus had with the Jerusalem authorities and in which the deity of our Lord shines forth most resplendently. The object of his writing was to convince unbelievers that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the Hebrew Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

With the general remarks just given, let us now turn especially to the GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW and note some facts in regard to it. Papias, one of the early Christian Fathers living during the first half of the second century declared that Matthew wrote the words of our Lord in the Hebrew language. Some believing scholars think that Papias was speaking of a book which contained discourses of our Lord alone and that Matthew was led by the Spirit later on to write the book in Greek which now is known as THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW. There is much discussion on these points. Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons, France (latter half of the second century), likewise attributed to Matthew the authorship of the Gospel which bears his name. There can be no doubt concerning the proposition that Matthew was led by the Spirit of God to write this record for His brethren according to the flesh.

When was Matthew written? There is a diversity of opinion on this point. The best conservative scholarship places the date around 60 A.D.—some thirty years after the crucifixion of our Lord. There are different facts which lead them to select this date as the probable one. It is quite likely that Mark was written prior to Matthew and Luke. Just when Matthew wrote his Gospel is of little concern to us, since all the evidence points positively to the fact

that it was written by the man of God who was infallibly guided by the Spirit. Of course we delight to know all or as many facts as possible concerning the origin and date of the different books of the Bible in order that we might understand the messages more perfectly. That Matthew did write this book somewhere around 60 A.D. cannot be successfully disputed.

The author speaks of Matthew, the publican, in 9:9 and 10:3. In the parallel passages found in Mark and Luke the name, Levi, the publican, appears. From this data we see that he had two names. His real name was Matthew or Levi, but being a tax collector he became known as Matthew the publican, or Levi the publican. Tax gatherers in the days of Jesus were notorious, because of their unscrupulous, unprincipled dealings with the people. They took advantage, whenever possible, of anyone. They were therefore a despised group. While as a class the tax gatherers were an unprincipled set of men, some were true and honest—as was Matthew. Had he not been, the Lord would not have selected him to become one of the disciples to proclaim the message of salvation. In the list of the Apostles found in the Synoptic Gospels and in Acts, Matthew appears as either the seventh or eighth in the list.

There are certain outstanding peculiarities or characteristics of the Gospel of Matthew, only a few of which I shall have space to present.

A casual reading of the book shows that Matthew wrote in order that he might prove to his Jewish brethren that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the Messiah of whom the prophets spoke. All the material which he was led by the Spirit to record aided him in presenting Jesus as the King of the Jews and establishing the thesis that He was the Messiah of Old Testament prediction.

There are three outstanding sermons appearing in this record. First, there is the “Sermon on the Mount,” found in chapters 5-7. In this discourse Jesus set forth the principles for which He stood. This sermon has well been called, “The Manifesto of the King of the Jews.” When the people began to throng Jesus in unprecedented numbers, He delivered this masterpiece of oratory. The masses of men had vague ideas of the things for which He stood. They thought that He intended to establish a literal kingdom in Israel at that time. In order to disabuse their minds of this error, He set forth the principles for which He stood. When Governor Dewey delivered his speech of acceptance of the Republican presidential nomination, he stated in clear, forceful language the principles for which he and the party stood and which they intend, if he is elected, to enforce. The Lord Jesus, in this great Manifesto, set forth the principles for which He stands—both then, now, and forever.

The second outstanding sermon recorded by Matthew is found in chapter 23. This message was delivered the last day of our Lord’s public ministry. In it He excoriated the hypocritical, pharisaical leaders of Israel. There was no opportunity for anyone’s misunderstanding what the Lord said and meant.

The last outstanding sermon in the Book of Matthew is found in chapters 24 and 25 and is known as “The Olivet Discourse.” In this message our Lord dealt with the sign of His coming and the end of the age. In answering the questions put to Him relative to these matters, our Lord naturally discussed the rapture of the church, the Tribulation, the rewarding of His servants, and the judgment of the living nations when He returns in glory and power to mount the throne of David and to establish His kingdom throughout the world. (I wrote an extended discussion of these two chapters which appeared as my volume, *Future Events Revealed*, a book of 208 pages.) In these sermons our Lord gave His official attitude toward various and sundry problems and great questions.

Matthew brings together within the compass of two chapters, 8 and 9, the various outstanding miracles wrought by our Lord as the credentials proving His messianic claims. There are other shorter discourses and speeches which He made and which are just as important as any of His other pronouncements. For instance, in Matthew, chapter 13, appear the parables of the kingdom which outline the various periods into which the Christian Dispensation naturally falls. In other words, Matthew, chapter 13, is church history pre-written.

Matthew uses the expression, "kingdom of heaven," almost universally. There are, however, four notable exceptions. These are found in verses 12:28, 19:24, 21:31, and 21:43. In the parallel passages recorded by Mark and Luke appears the term, "kingdom of God." The most probable explanation of this difference is that Matthew, led by the Spirit, selected that expression current among the Jews and acceptable to them in referring to the reign of God upon earth. Since Mark and Luke used "kingdom of God" where Matthew has "kingdom of heaven," we see that in our Lord's teaching during His personal ministry these expressions have the same connotation generally. Let us therefore be careful and not build a theory upon Matthew's use of this term. There are many other peculiarities to be found in this record of the gospel but they will be noted in the exposition.

A simple outline of the Book of Matthew will aid in our study of its contents. The following will be of value to us:

- I. Birth and Infancy Narrative (1:1-2:23).
- II. The Ministry of John the Baptist (3:1-12).
- III. The Beginning of the Public Ministry of Christ (3:13-4:11).
- IV. The Galilean Ministry (4:12-13:58).
- V. The Period of Retirements from the Holy Land (14:1-18:35).
- VI. The Perea Ministry (19:1-20:34).
- VII. Events of the Last Week (21:1-28:10).
- VIII. The Post-Resurrection Activity of our Lord (28:11-20).

An examination of the contents of the Book of Matthew shows conclusively that it was written to Jews who were well-acquainted with the message of the Old Testament. From the apostolic days to the present time all biblical scholars have been agreed on this point. A careful study of Matthew shows that the Jews to whom the message was written believed the following doctrines: (1) That the Old Testament, containing the thirty-nine books as it does today, was the Word of the living God. The great bulk of the nation accepted the Old Testament as an inspired revelation. Of course there were some, like the Sadducees, who were the materialists of that time and who denied all spiritual phenomena. (2) That the God-head consisted of a Trinity because Moses and the prophets held to that view, Moses declared to Israel, "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a Unity" (Deut. 6:4). This declaration is an affirmation regarding the plurality of Divine Personalities constituting the Godhead and also the unity of these Divine Personalities. Matthew assumed on the part of his Jewish readers a knowledge of and a belief in this fundamental Old Testament teaching. (3) That the Messiah would be born of a virgin. Matthew likewise assumed their acceptance of that doctrine and the proper interpretation of Isaiah 7:14, which foretold the virgin birth of Messiah. He did not argue the case but simply presented the facts relative to the virgin birth of Christ and did so in such a way that we know his readers believed it. They of course understood the divine-human nature of King Messiah from the Old Testament. This is seen from the official attitude voiced by Caiaphas when Christ was on trial. To Jesus the High Priest said, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou are the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt. 26:63). The Jews believed that the Messiah was to appear at that period of Jewish history. Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, in his book entitled *Messianic Speculations in Israel*, has proved beyond a peradventure that the Jews of the second quarter of the first century were expecting Messiah to appear at that time. Matthew assumed their acceptance of that position because he did not argue or present any proof to show them that the time for Messiah to appear had come.

Thus on these great fundamentals the Jews of the first century were scriptural. If this is so, one may ask, why then did they reject Jesus as their Messiah? The answer to this question is to be found in two directions: In the first place they did not understand the Old Testament teaching concerning the redemptive career of King Messiah which consists of His first coming, His rejection by the Jews, His ascension to the right hand of the throne of God after His resurrection from the dead, His session there on the Father's throne during the present dispensation, and His final return at the end of this age to set up His earthly reign in Jerusalem. There are those passages in the Old Testament which give His entire redemptive career as thus outlined. The Jews were groaning under the yoke of

foreign domination and wanted a political Messiah who would deliver them from Roman tyranny. Hence they ignored those predictions which give the complete messianic career.

In the second place they did not understand that the Messiah would suffer and die. Since they believed that He was divine, they were of the firm conviction that He would abide forever: "The multitude therefore answered him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" (John 12:34). When Jesus was crucified, the Jews rejected Him as a nation. To them the fact that He could be killed was proof against His messiahship.

Matthew wrote for his brethren who held these fundamental tenets of the faith in order to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah. He presented the facts concerning our Lord's crucifixion, affirming that it was in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. The Book of Matthew was written therefore for Jews who held the scriptural ideas mentioned above, which are found in the Old Testament. It was sufficient for any honest, conscientious Jew who had the correct Old Testament teaching. The Jews today, figuratively speaking, have traveled nineteen hundred miles from the position occupied by their ancestors of the first century, for whom Matthew was written. It therefore does not have the weight and power with the modern Jew that it did with his ancestors of the first century. Since the Jew today does not hold the doctrines mentioned above, which were assumed by Matthew, he must first be given the Old Testament teaching on these points before he is ready for the New Testament message. When, however, the Old Testament truth relative to the Messiah has been given to the modern Jew, he is in a position to receive THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW and, after having studied it, to receive the rest of the New Testament.

## THE GENEALOGY AND INFANCY OF JESUS (*Installment Two*)

In the first installment of this series we looked at some general facts in regard to THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW. We shall from now on look at the text more particularly and endeavor to get the outstanding lessons of the book.

The genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ is given in Matthew 1:1-17. Matthew began the ancestral line of our Lord with Abraham and traced His forebears through the centuries. When one compares the genealogy in Matthew with that found in II Chronicles and in other portions of the Word, one comes to the conclusion that the apostle has given us an abridged list instead of giving us the full number of those making up the theocratic line. These omissions are doubtless due to the fact that he wanted to list fourteen generations between Abraham and David; fourteen from David to the Babylonian Captivity; and fourteen from the Captivity to the Lord Jesus. This artificial arrangement, which was perfectly permissible, was to aid the memory.

Those who are omitted from this genealogy are the lesser of the sons of David and of Abraham.

In the line of descent of our Lord are Rahab and Ruth. These Gentiles were incorporated into the theocratic line doubtless because of their faith and trust in God.

It will be noted that Matthew gives the regal genealogy of Jesus. His reason for this no doubt was that he was presenting Jesus of Nazareth as the King of the Jews. But someone calls attention to the fact that the Lord through Jeremiah blocked the way against a descendant of Jeconiah's occupying the throne of David. Hear him: "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of Jehovah. 30 Thus saith Jehovah, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no more shall a man of his seed prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling in Judah" (Jer. 22:29,30).

Notwithstanding this clear prediction which states that no descendant of Jeconiah should sit upon the throne of David, Jeconiah is included in the genealogy of our Lord as is seen in Matthew 1:12. Since Jesus, according to numerous prophecies, is to mount the literal throne of David and reign in Jerusalem throughout the great Millennial Era, and since the Davidic line was blocked at Jeconiah, we may be certain that the genealogy appearing in Matthew is not our Lord's real ancestral line, but is His regal genealogy. As is well known to all biblical students, the line of descent was always reckoned through the father and never through the mother. This fact justified Matthew's use of the genealogy of Joseph who literally descended from Abraham through Jeconiah. Since Joseph became the husband of Mary, but never knew her as his wife until after the Lord Jesus was born, Joseph, the literal heir to the throne of David, became the foster-father of Jesus. This fact gave Him the *legal* right to the throne of Israel. Matthew is very particular in wording his statement relative to Joseph, Mary, and Jesus. Hear him: "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ [Messiah]" (Matt. 1:15).

In Luke 3:23-38 appears another genealogy of the Lord Jesus. An examination of this passage of scripture shows that Luke began with Jesus and traced His ancestral line back to Adam. He introduced his record with the following words: "And Jesus himself, when he began *to teach*, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the *son of Heli*" (3:23). By his inserting the words, "as was supposed," Luke asserted most positively that, contrary to the general idea, Jesus was not the son of Joseph. Doubtless Luke was led to make this insertion in his genealogical table in order to re-emphasize his account of the miraculous conception and virgin birth of Jesus as is recounted in chapter 1 of his Gospel. An examination of Luke's genealogy of Jesus indicates that he traced the line through Nathan the son of David instead of through Solomon the son of David, as Matthew did. As has just been noted, Joseph descended from Abraham through David, Solomon, and Jeconiah, as shown by Matthew; but Jesus, according to Luke, descended from Adam through Abraham, David, and Nathan. These facts show that, whereas Matthew gave the *legal, regal* genealogy of Jesus through David and Solomon, Luke traced our Lord's

descent from Adam through Nathan, a different line entirely. Since Luke has given us a very full account of the miraculous conception and virgin birth of the Lord Jesus in chapters 1 and 2, and since he has traced His genealogy in chapter 3 through David and Nathan back to Adam, only one conclusion is possible; that is, that the genealogy appearing in Luke is the *natural* descent of Jesus through Mary whose father was Eli. Thus Luke gives Mary's genealogy, of whom Jesus was born, as has been stated, by miraculous conception and virgin birth.

A most interesting and enlightening account of the birth of Jesus Christ is found in Matthew 1:18-25 which each one should read carefully. The facts recorded in this passage are simply these: Mary, the mother of Jesus, was betrothed to Joseph. But before they were married she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. At this development Joseph was shocked but, being a righteous man and not willing to make a public example out of her, he decided to put her away privately. As he was contemplating this move, an angel of the Lord came to him and explained the whole matter, showing him that Mary was true and that her condition was the result of the operation of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of prophecy. He therefore was told that Mary should bring forth a son and that he, Joseph, was to call the child's name JESUS, for, said the angel, "it is he that shall save his people from their sins" (vs. 21). Then the angel quoted the prophecy uttered to the house of David by the Lord through the prophet in Isaiah 7:14 regarding the virgin birth of Messiah. Matthew affirmed that Isaiah in this prediction was foretelling the birth of King Messiah who would be born of a virgin and who would be called Immanuel, "God with us." The word in the original Hebrew translated "virgin" means literally an unmarried woman. This word occurs seven times in the Hebrew Bible, including Isaiah 7:14. In all other cases the facts of the context show that it meant an unmarried woman. When we examine this context, we see that Isaiah was speaking of a miracle which the Lord offered to show, not to Ahaz after he had in a hypocritical manner refused to have his faith strengthened but to the house of David, David's descendants in the future. This miracle which he proposed to point out was the virgin birth of the Messiah. From the context we see therefore that Isaiah 7:14 refers to the miraculous conception and the virgin birth of the Messiah.

But when one reads verses 15, 16, and 17 of Isaiah, chapter 7, one sees that the prophet was speaking about a child who would be born in the immediate future of Isaiah's day. Because of this fact many students have concluded that the child of miraculous birth mentioned in 7:14 was the same one mentioned in verses 15-17. This is not the necessary conclusion at all. This method of uttering prophecies is common to all the prophets. The principle involved is that which is known as the "law of double reference." According to this principle the prophets would speak of something in the immediate future and then suddenly blend their prediction with another referring to events which were to come to pass in the distant future, far removed from the first event and vice versa. In other words, the description of the first event would blend quickly into the more remote one. This method of prophesying, as already stated, was a common practice among the biblical writers. Since we know that this principle obtains throughout the prophetic word, and since we are to take everything at its "primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the context indicate clearly otherwise," we are driven to the conclusion that the birth of the Messiah described in Isaiah 7:14 is blended with a prediction of the birth of another child who was born soon after the prophecy was spoken. There are therefore two children mentioned in verses 14-17: the one described in verse 14, Messiah the Son of God; and the one mentioned in 15-17, the child born by natural generation in the immediate future from Isaiah's time.

Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14 as being fulfilled in the virgin birth of Christ. I am of the profound conviction that Isaiah had no one in mind except the Messiah in this prediction. The Christian religion is based upon Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The unanimous testimony is that he was God who entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth in fulfillment of the predictions of the Old Testament. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1:1-14). If Jesus Christ was not miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, then He was not the God-man. If He was not the God-man, His death could not atone for the sins of humanity. In such a case as that we who have believed in

the Lord Jesus Christ and have put our hopes in Him are still in our sins and have no hope of eternal life. But praise God these suppositions are false! He was the Word in the beginning with God and was God and was equal to God the Father. He entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth and took upon Himself the form of man, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. God therefore raised Him from the dead and highly exalted Him to make Him a Prince and a Saviour to grant salvation to all who come and accept Him by faith.

Joseph's fears were allayed and he took Mary as his wife but did not know her as such until after Jesus was born.

In Matthew 2:1-12 we have an account of the visit of the Wise-men from the East at the time of the birth of Jesus, who came in order that they might pay homage to Him. When they arrived in Jerusalem they went to the royal palace and related to Herod the fact that they had seen a star in the east which they had interpreted as the one indicating the fact that the Messiah, the King of Israel, had been born. To every Bible believer this story is true. These men actually did see a star which appeared miraculously in the heavens. They interpreted it as signifying the birth of the King of Israel. Why they came to this conclusion no one can say. It is quite likely, however, that, when it did appear, they conversed with certain Jews still in Persia who probably pointed to the prediction found in Numbers 24:16-24, especially verse 17, which foretold the rising of a star out of Jacob. The context in this connection shows that the star is used in the figurative sense to indicate the Messiah of Israel. Since He is there called "a star," it was perfectly harmonious for God to cause a star to appear miraculously before their vision in order that they might investigate and learn concerning the birth of the Christ-child. If this supposition is correct, one can see the graciousness of the Lord throughout the entire transaction. God has vouched that He will bring the truth to everyone who hungers and thirsts for it. He always takes the individual where he is. These Magi were in the habit of looking at the stars. So God performed a miracle within the realm of their thinking which ultimately led those honest truth seekers to Him who was represented by the star.

When Herod heard from the Magi of the appearance of the star, he, together with all Jerusalem, became alarmed. At the same time there can be no doubt concerning Herod's jealousy of Him who was to become King of Israel. Herod therefore called in the scribes and inquired of them as to where the Messiah should be born. Their reply was that He was to be born in Bethlehem of Judah. To prove that proposition they quoted from Micah 5:2, which foretold that this future Shepherd of Israel, who would govern the nation, would be born there, even He "whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." This prophecy showed the place where the Saviour of men would be born.

Let us note that this prophecy was interpreted *literally*. God said what He meant and meant exactly what He said. We are never to place a figurative or metaphorical meaning upon any passage unless the facts of the context show most clearly that such is the case.

When Herod learned of the birthplace of the Messiah, he instructed the Magi that they should go to Bethlehem, find where the child was, and report to him in order that he might go and worship Him. Upon their departure, however, they were warned by the Lord not to return to Herod but to go to their country by another way. They were obedient to the divine instructions.

The Lord then sent His angel who warned Joseph to take Mary and the Child Jesus, to flee into Egypt, and to remain there until he received specific instructions to return to the land of Israel. Joseph was obedient.

Matthew tells us that in the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt and their remaining there until they were called back into the land of Israel was the fulfillment of the prophecy found in Hosea 11:1, which declared, "Out of Egypt did I call my son." When one studies this quotation in the light of the original context, one sees that this passage primarily refers to Israel's departure out of the land of Egypt under the leadership of Moses. Notwithstanding that historical setting, Matthew said that the Lord's return from Egypt was in fulfillment of this prediction. How can this

be? We must take all the facts into consideration. That the passage originally referred to Israel's departure from Egypt cannot be doubted. As just stated, the circumstances demand this interpretation. Israel was called God's first-born (Ex. 4:22). Jesus is likewise called God's first-born (Ps. 89:27). In view of this language it is easy to see the transition from the thought of Israel's being God's first-born to our Lord's being His first-born and of speaking of His coming out of Egypt in terms of Israel's original departure from the land of servitude. In view of these facts we learn that this prophecy, Hosea 11:1, falls into that class of predictions known as "the literal plus the typical significance." In the case of Israel's leaving Egypt those events were literal. In the case of our Lord's residence in Egypt and His coming out of it, the facts are also literal. Yet Israel's history, especially this part of it, was typical of our Lord's. So we see that there is a type of prophecy which is literal, plus a typical meaning.

In the Paragraph consisting of Matthew 2:16-18 is the record of Herod's slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem. When he saw that the Magi had departed without returning to report to him the whereabouts of the Christ-child, Herod became enraged and ordered the slaughter of all the babes of Bethlehem under two years of age—according to the time which he had exactly learned from the Wise-men. Matthew, in commenting upon this heinous, cruel incident, declared that a prophecy uttered by Jeremiah had been fulfilled. He then quoted Jeremiah 31:15 which we find recorded in Matthew 2:18:

"A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Weeping and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
And she would not be comforted, because they are not."

An examination of this original text from which this quotation is taken shows that it was spoken with reference to the mothers in Israel whose sons were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar at the time of the Babylonian Exile. Notwithstanding that fact, Matthew quotes this language and applies it to the distress which came upon the mothers of the infants of Bethlehem. There is no relationship of the typical and antitypical here as was the case with the preceding prophecy, which we have just studied. There is no other conceivable connection between the two, except that in both instances there was great sorrow, sadness, and distress which came upon the Jewish mothers of these two separate and distinct times. The distress was literal in both cases. About that position there can be no question. Since we cannot trace any connection between the original prophecy and the episode of the slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem, we can come to but one conclusion, which is that Matthew applies the words of Jeremiah to a similar case of distress of the Jewish mothers. Thus we come to the conclusion that this prophecy falls into that class which may properly be designated as "the literal plus an application." But let us remember that this is a literal prophecy which is applied to an analogous case.

In the last paragraph of Matthew, chapter 2, verses 19-23, we have a record of Joseph's bringing Jesus and Mary back to the land of Israel after the death of Herod the Great, who had sought to slay Him. Upon reaching the land of Israel, Joseph learned that Archelaus, one of sons of Herod, was ruling in Jerusalem in his stead. He therefore went directly to Nazareth of Galilee and there settled. Matthew tells us that he went to Nazareth, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene." An examination of the Old Testament shows that there is no such prophecy as this one to be found. As we look at verse 23, however, we notice that Matthew said that God spoke "through the prophets." This was a message that was delivered by more than one prophet, but, as thus stated, there is no prophecy within the compass of the Old Testament to this effect—stating that He should be called a Nazarene.

What is the solution of this difficult problem? From John 1:46 we learn that Nathanael asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" From other sources we know that the people of Nazareth, in the days of our Lord, were looked down upon with disdain, disgust and hatred. The name "Nazarene" therefore stood for one who was despised. As we look through the prophecies of the Old Testament we see that the Messiah was to be despised,

hated, and rejected by men. In view of this fact we see how Matthew could gather up all the prophecies which foretold that the Messiah would be despised and sum them up in the one statement, "that he should be called a Nazarene." A Nazarene is an inhabitant of Nazareth. The predictions which foretold that He would be despised were literal and are to be interpreted thus. Nazareth was a literal city and the people of that community were literally despised and hated. So then we see that the original prediction and the fulfillment were literal in every particular.

Since there is no specific prophecy in the Old Testament to this effect, since these words sum up and give us the gist of these prophecies, and since they are all literal, we arrive at the conclusion that this prophecy is a sample of those that might be called "the literal plus a summation" type of prophecy.

Every prophecy to be found in the Bible falls within one of the four categories just discussed. Let us always bear in mind that all prophecy is to be taken literally and that we are never to force upon any passage a figurative or metaphorical meaning unless the facts of the context demand such. It is true that there are figures of speech in predictive prophecy as in any other type of language. We must interpret figures of speech in the prophetic word upon the sound principles which we use in interpreting such figures in any other type of literature. Let us pray the Lord that He may enable us to understand not only prophecy but all that He has given us in His precious Word.

## THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST (*Installment Three*)

John the Baptist was about six months older than Jesus. He began his work about six months earlier than Jesus commenced His. From the literature of the ancient synagogue we learn that the Jews in the second quarter of the first century were expecting Messiah's appearance. Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver has proved this position in his excellent work, *Messianic Speculations in Israel*. Doubtless this expectation was based upon the predictions made by Daniel recorded in chapter nine of his prophecy.

Very unexpectedly John began his ministry by leaving the center of population and going to the wilderness of Judaea. Soon the report spread about that an unusual preacher had appeared and was delivering a most powerful message. The country was stirred from center to circumference. People went out to hear his message which was summed up in these words: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The great masses of the people showed intense interest in this message and accepted it without question.

Since John did not explain the kingdom, the appearance of which he was announcing, but assumed on the part of his hearers a knowledge of it, the question arises, What kingdom did he mean? The answer to this question can be found in the Old Testament alone, for it is abundantly evident that John, being sent from God, would only speak of the things foretold in the Old Testament. What kingdom therefore was foretold by the prophets? Some will tell us that there is but one kingdom foretold by them; namely, the glorious kingdom of our Lord which He will establish when He returns in power and glory to reign from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. In other words, the great millennial kingdom. With this understanding of the situation, one would say that John announced to the people that the time had arrived for God to establish the millennial reign of our Lord upon earth. If there were but one kingdom (the millennial reign of Christ) foretold in the Old Testament, then this answer would be correct. Before we can accept this position, however, we must investigate more fully the Old Testament message. To its pages therefore let us now turn.

The church of Jesus Christ was foretold in the Old Testament. For instance, in Deuteronomy 32:21 we have this language: "And I will move them [the Israelites] to jealousy with those that are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation."

In Romans 10:19 Paul quotes this very verse and applies it to the church of Jesus Christ. This position becomes very evident when one reads the Jewish section of Romans—chapters 10-11. Isaiah the prophet also foretold the church of Jesus Christ in chapter 65:1 "I am inquired of by them that asked not *for me*; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name."

In Romans 10:20 Paul quotes this very passage and applies it to the church of the present day. There can be no doubt then that Isaiah the prophet saw the church. If one will read Isaiah 65:2-7 he will see that the prophet foretold that Israel would be rejected because of her self-righteousness and her sin, during the time when God is being found by those who were considered no people, the Gentiles. There are many passages in the Old Testament which show that the prophets saw the Christian Dispensation also. For instance, in Psalm 110:1,2 we learn that David saw the first coming of Christ when He would be rejected. After that He saw Him returning to the right hand of the throne of God and remaining there during this Christian Dispensation until God puts the Jews under His feet, at which time the Lord will return and establish His throne in Zion. These passages are sufficient to convince us that the prophets saw the Christian Dispensation and also the church of Jesus Christ.

Though they did see the church and the Christian Dispensation, it is evident that they did not see it so very clearly as we do now, for the Apostle Paul set forth this truth in Ephesians 3:5,6. In speaking of the mystery of Christ he said that it "in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; 6 *to wit*, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the

body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." Paul, in this passage, declared that the mystery concerning the church of Jesus Christ was made known both to the Old Testament prophets and to those of the New; but it was not revealed with the same clarity to the prophets as it has now been revealed to the Holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit. The Apostle Peter also declared that the prophets searched diligently to ascertain what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them "did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them" (I Peter 1:10,11). To them it was revealed that "not unto themselves, but unto you [Christians], did they minister these things which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into" (I Peter 1:12). The prophets, according to Peter, saw this time during which the grace of God would be extended to peoples of earth. What was withheld from them was the "time or what manner of time" when the gospel would be given to the world. In other words, they understood the setup of their own age and also that of the great Millennial Age; but it was not revealed unto them the setup which would exist during the present era. The prophets, therefore, sought diligently to ascertain, if possible, the exact conditions which would obtain at the present time.

In Isaiah 61:1-3 that prophet set before us the entire redemptive career of King Messiah. If one will examine verse 1 he will see that Isaiah foretold the appearance and the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, who would announce the year of Jehovah's favor and the day of vengeance, which follow it. The day of vengeance, as all prophetic students know, is none other than the Tribulation Period. But this time of wrath is to be preceded by the year of Jehovah's favor. If the day of vengeance is a period of seven years, the year of Jehovah's favor, which precedes it, certainly bears a ratio to the seven years of the day of vengeance approximating that which exists between a year and a day. Note, I say *a ratio that approximates* this relationship. These facts indicate that Isaiah saw this dispensation of God's favor which has drawn out to be more than nineteen hundred years long. As all prophetic students know, the Christian Dispensation will be followed by the Tribulation and it in turn by the great Kingdom Age. The same redemptive career of King Messiah is set forth in Isaiah 42:1-4 and in many other places in the Old Testament. It is clear from a study of these passages that God foretold the Christian Dispensation during which His message of love should go out to all the world, this period during which He is taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name. It is plain from a study of all these passages that the Christian Dispensation was clearly foretold and the church was likewise prophesied.

When therefore John declared to the people that the kingdom of heaven had come, there was but one conclusion to which those who knew the Scripture could come; namely, that he was talking about the spiritual phase of the kingdom of God which is known in the New Testament as the church of Jesus Christ consisting of all the regenerated, saved people. It is true that Israel did not understand the message of the Baptist. They thought that he was talking about the great glorious Kingdom when Messiah would reign in Jerusalem, over the entire world. In other words, they were looking for Messiah to set up a political, material kingdom then. That they were thus looking for it is evident from a casual reading of the gospel records.

But why did they not understand the Prophets? The answer is that they were blinded by a theory. They thought that the Messiah abides forever: "The multitude therefore answered him [Jesus], We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" (John 12:34). Even the Apostles, shared the erroneous idea of the populace regarding the Messiah and His death. Six months prior to the crucifixion Jesus revealed for the first time to the Apostles that He would be crucified at Jerusalem. Peter immediately attempted to take the situation in hand and declared to the Lord Jesus that He should not be crucified. Although the Lord on a number of occasions during the last six months of His life foretold His crucifixion, the Apostles, blinded by a human theory, refused to believe that He would be killed. When He was laid in the tomb their hopes in Him were interred with Him. Only by the resurrection from the dead were they begotten again to a living hope.

In view of all the facts one comes to the conclusion that the kingdom of heaven, the approach of which John announced, is the spiritual phase of the kingdom now known as the church of Jesus Christ. Let us remember that Matthew alone uses the expression, “kingdom of heaven.” Mark and Luke in recording the same discourses, uses the expression, “kingdom of God,” where Matthew has “kingdom of heaven.” The kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven is the reign of heaven now upon earth during this Christian Dispensation. This age will be followed by the seven years of the Tribulation Period. At the close of that time the Lord Jesus will come in glory and power and establish the great glorious kingdom throughout the world and will reign upon earth for a thousand years.

John announced that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Jesus proclaimed the same message. He instructed the Twelve when they went out on the limited commission (Matt., chap. 10) to make the same announcement. Since the people misunderstood the nature of the kingdom, the Lord Jesus gave the seven “parables of the kingdom” as referred to in Matthew, chapter 13. A study of this passage shows that He was talking about Christendom. It began with the sower sowing the seed, according to the parable of the sower. In these parables our Lord traced the course of Christian history through the dispensation to the consummation of the age when the dragnet will be drawn in and there will be a separation between the good and the bad which are caught in this dragnet of the kingdom of heaven. Hence in Matthew, chapter 13, Jesus has explained thoroughly what John and He and the Twelve meant by the expression “kingdom of heaven”—the spiritual phase of the reign of God upon the earth during the present time which is known as the church of Jesus Christ.

The people had developed a self-righteousness and were delinquent in their moral and spiritual lives. John therefore called upon them to repent—to change their minds sincerely before God and to turn to Him.

In Matthew 3:3 the Evangelist states that John was the one foretold by Isaiah the prophet (Isa. 40:3). An examination of this prophecy in its original setting shows that it primarily refers to Elijah who will be the forerunner of Christ at His second coming. But this passage is an application of the “law of double reference,” John being seen as the herald of His first coming, whereas Elijah is the forerunner of His second coming. According to verses 4 and 5 John lived a very simple, plain life.

From verses 5 and 6 we see that the great bulk of the people of Israel went out and confessed their sins and were baptized of John in the Jordan. Thus there was a mighty revival which swept the nation.

The leaders—Pharisees and Sadducees—were very critical, in fact were hostile. They came down for the simple purpose of criticizing. Knowing this, John addressed them thus: “Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruit, worthy of repentance: 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” (vss. 8-10).

In order to enforce this lesson, he used the illustration of a tree that was barren and declared that the ax was lying at the root. He then added, “Every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” Continuing his exhortation to the Pharisees, he declared that he was baptizing the people in water unto repentance but that there was One coming after him who was mightier than he and who would baptize them in the Holy Spirit and in fire. John had a mixed audience who, he declared, would be baptized in the Holy Spirit and in fire—a part would be baptized in the Holy Spirit and the other in fire. By this bold imagery he asserted that the nation would be divided into the saved and the lost. The saved would be baptized in the Holy Spirit whereas the lost would be baptized in the lake of fire.

He concluded his direct message to the Pharisees and the Sadducees by comparing the situation to the threshing floor upon which the grain is placed. Then it is threshed. Finally the grain is separated from the chaff. The grain is

to be stored in garners whereas the chaff and straw are to be burned. From the drift of thought it is clear that John was speaking of the ultimate separation of the saved from the lost and the destinies which await both classes.

One day Jesus made His appearance upon the scene, having come from Nazareth to the Jordan to be baptized by John. Instinctively the Baptist drew back when Jesus asked to be baptized and asserted that he himself needed to be baptized by Jesus. In reply the Lord urged him saying, "Suffer *it* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." What did Jesus mean by saying that it was necessary for them to fulfill all righteousness? The baptism of John was clearly from heaven. It was an ordinance authorized by God himself. Concerning all the ordinances of God the Psalmist David in Psalm 19:9 declared: "The ordinances of Jehovah are true, *and* righteous altogether."

All the ordinances and ceremonies commanded by the Lord are a part of God's great redemptive scheme, the core and center of which is righteousness. Because of its being a part of God's plan to make men righteous, Jesus, speaking in terms of the quotation just given, asserted that it became Him and John to fulfill all righteousness to fulfill everything which God requires.

After John baptized Jesus, He came up out of the water and the heavens were opened. From the majestic glory there descended the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. A voice was heard declaring, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (3:17).

Here we see the three persons of the Holy Trinity: God the Father in heaven, God the Son on earth, being baptized, and God the Holy Spirit descending upon the Son as a dove. Matthew assumed a belief in the Trinity on the part of his readers. All of the Old Testament prophets were Trinitarians. The Jews held to the same position until the second century, when they changed their theology. At that time they became Unitarians, which position they hold at the present day. They must therefore be taught from the Old Testament—especially the five Books of Moses—the doctrine of the Trinity, in order to prepare them for the message of Jesus in the New Testament.

In Matthew 4:1-11 we have an account of the temptation, by the devil, of Jesus, the King of the Jews. This account is parallel with that which appears in Luke 4:1-12. Mark's account is very short (Mark 1:12,13). The latter declares that the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. The other Evangelists say that He was led. There is perfect agreement between the three.

Jesus first fasted forty days and was later tempted by the devil. The number forty seems to be symbolic of testing or tempting. Even during this period Jesus was being tempted as we learn from Mark's record.

The devil is a personal, sinister, powerful being. In fact, he was the first creature brought into existence by the Almighty. He summed up wisdom, power, strength, beauty, and glory. Finally, on account of his beauty and position, he revolted against God. In his rebellion he brought about the fall of one-third of the angels. He is the inveterate enemy of God and man. He actually, really, and literally came to Jesus to subject him to temptation. The temptations of our Lord were objective and not subjective as some would have us believe.

When Jesus was hungry, Satan tried to get Him to violate the fundamental principles of the truth by commanding stones to become bread. He put material sustenance ahead of everything else. If Jesus had yielded to the temptation, He would have been taking the same position. Thus in reply our Lord quoted from Deuteronomy, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Man has a spirit with its needs. Food for it is primary, foremost, whereas food for the body is simply secondary. Our Lord fought Satan away by taking His stand upon the Word of God. That is the only way to meet the devil.

Then Satan took Him to the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem and insisted that He jump from it to the valley beneath, because the Lord had promised in Psalm 91 that the angels would be given charge concerning Him. Satan selected that part of Psalm 91 which applies to the Lord Jesus alone. If Christ had yielded to this temptation, He would have been putting God to the test. Therefore the Lord again replied, using the Scriptures and saying, "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God." This second time Satan failed in his purpose. But he tried the third time by taking Jesus into an exceeding high mountain and showing Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. Then he promised to give all of these to Jesus if He would fall down and worship him. In other words Satan offered to Jesus the short cut. The Lord came into the world to do the will of God. It took Him three and one-half years of toilsome, weary labor which culminated with His crucifixion upon the cross and the battle with Satan when He descended to Hades. Satan realized that Jesus had come to snatch the world out of his power and he knew that the Lord Jesus would be victorious; therefore he offered Christ all for which He had come upon the condition that He would fall down and worship him—which would have been a short-cut. For Jesus to have done as Satan desired would have been disloyalty to God. He spurned the offer. Then again He took up the Word of God and said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Thus in the three rounds that our Lord had with Satan, He won each and was a victorious conqueror. Satan left Him for a season "and behold, angels came and ministered unto him" (4:11).

John the Baptist was finally thrown into prison by Herod. When the Lord heard of that, He left Judaea, where He had been laboring for something like six months and went into the remoter regions of Galilee; there He engaged in the most active of His labors. According to the records He spent probably eighteen months making three different tours of the country.

His leaving Judaea and going into Galilee was in fulfillment of the prophecy found in Isaiah 9:1,2.

When the Lord reached Galilee He began to deliver the same message that John had spoken: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Of course He meant the very same thing that John did.

According to verses 18-22 Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee and called four of His early disciples who were engaged in their regular occupation of fishing. They immediately left everything and followed Him. To some this record seems strange; but, when we read John's account of the early life of our Lord, we see that these very disciples had already become followers of Jesus when John the Baptist pointed Him out as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world (John 1). For some reason they had left Jesus when He tarried in Judaea ministering and had returned to their homes; but, when Jesus went to Galilee, He called them, and immediately they followed Him. They remained His faithful servants until death.

In Matthew 4:23-25 we have a resume of our Lord's life and ministry in Galilee. He went about in the synagogues "preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people." A vast host followed after Him. He encountered much demonism and cast out the evil spirits from those possessed. His fame therefore went throughout the entire country which was electrified by the reports of this marvelous Teacher and Miracle-Worker.

## THE MANIFESTO OF THE KING OF THE JEWS (*Installment Four*)

After Matthew told of our Lord's leaving Judaea and going to Galilee, he gave us Christ's "Sermon on the Mount," which is His *Manifesto*, setting forth the principles for which He stood and stands. Chronologically it was delivered in the middle of the great Galilean Ministry which lasted for eighteen months; but, as has already been suggested heretofore, Matthew did not handle his material chronologically but rather topically, since he had in view a definite thesis; namely, that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the Hebrew Messiah and Saviour of the world.

In view of the great diversity of opinions with reference to the Gospel of Matthew in general and the "Sermon on the Mount" in particular, it is necessary for us to have the proper approach to this most wonderful declaration of our Lord's. When one notices certain statements that seem to characterize this Sermon, he is led involuntarily to think of Psalm 37. When one studies this great national hymn of Israel, one sees reflected in it the marvelous promises that God made to Israel at Sinai, as recorded in Leviticus, chapter 26, and later in Deuteronomy, chapter 28. Because of the very close connection between these various passages it becomes necessary for us to note particularly what is said in these Old Testament scripture portions, which study will prepare us for an investigation of the "Sermon on the Mount."

Moses began his message of Leviticus, chapter 26, by calling attention in verses 1 and 2 to the fact that Israel was the covenant people of God. They sustained a special relationship to God that was not enjoyed by any other nation. In verses 3-13 the Lord promised to Israel that, if she would be obedient to Him and walk in His way, her land would be a veritable paradise, a modern Utopia. The seasons would be right; the crops, abundant. The plowman would overtake the reaper because, before the abundant crops could be gathered, the season for sowing the next year's seeds would arrive.

They would have no need of fearing beasts, which normally in ancient times were a threat to the population. Moreover, they would have no need to fear any enemies because the Lord Jehovah would protect their borders and would not permit any of their enemies to cross over the frontier into their own land.

Moreover, the Lord promised that He would set His tabernacle among them, that He would be their God, and that He would meet all their needs.

On the other hand, if she would not hearken to Him but would be rebellious, He would punish her as is set forth in Leviticus 26:14-33. He threatened her with four types of chastisement, the last of which would be banishment from the land that He had given her. This warning was carried out in the Babylonian Captivity and also in the Roman domination, as an examination of verses 27-33 of this chapter, when studied in the light of the parallel passage in Deuteronomy, chapter 28, shows.

Verses 34-39 tell of the desolate condition of Israel's land during the time that she is dispersed among the nations. Finally, in verses 40-42, Moses foretold that the last generation of Israel surviving among the nations of earth would make a confession of the national sin which was committed by the fathers when they were still in the land and on account of which God cast them out and scattered them among the nations. Moses made the definite statement that they shall confess this national sin, which, as we know from parallel passages, was none other than the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Israel never did appreciate her position and her relation to God. She of all the peoples of the earth did God choose and reveal Himself unto her. Nevertheless, she wanted to be like the nations and to practice those things that were done by the heathen. This situation continued throughout the time of the judges and finally, at her insistent request, God gave her a king, Saul. He failed the Lord; then David was chosen to be the fountainhead of the theocratic line. By the Spirit of God, in Psalm 37, David pleaded with his brethren to return in faith and to take

their stand upon the promises which God had made and which, as we have just seen, are recorded in Leviticus, chapter 26. Psalm 37 deals not only with the individual, but also with the nation as a whole. In the first place the psalmist urged his readers not to be fretful because of evildoers. For, declared he, they would soon be destroyed. Moreover, they were urged to trust in Jehovah and to do good and to dwell in the land and to feed upon His faithfulness. The exhortation, "dwell in the land," can mean but one thing: to stay in the land which God gave them and not to move out among the Gentiles, which thing Israel was prone to do. The exhortation, feed on His faithfulness, is an invitation for them to trust God and to allow Him to solve all their problems and to supply all of their needs. He had shown that He was a faithful God and that He would never forsake those who trust Him. He told them to delight themselves in Jehovah and promised that the desires of their hearts would be satisfied. Moreover, they were urged to commit their way unto God and to trust in Him who was able and who would bring their desires to pass.

In verse 6, however, is a national promise which has never been realized but which will in due time come to pass. According to this verse God will make the righteousness of the Jewish nation to go forth as light and her justice as the noonday sun. Here is a vision of the time when all Israel converted and clothed with the righteousness of her Messiah will be basking in His sunlight and will be the nation of destiny. This same promise is found also in Isaiah, chapter 62. One should read very carefully this marvelous promise. Israel will be clothed in God's righteousness, and her justice will go forth when she repudiates her national sin and accepts Him whom she has rejected. Thus we see the national aspect looming very largely in this verse. In verse 7 appears the exhortation for Israel to "rest in Jehovah, and wait patiently for him." To "wait patiently" for Jehovah is repeated again in verse 9 and also in verse 34. When this exhortation is studied in the light of its various contexts in the Old Testament, it will be seen that the writers were speaking of Israel's waiting expectantly in faith for the appearance of Messiah, God in human form. For instance, in Psalm 27:13 and 14 we have this language:

*"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living.  
Wait for Jehovah: Be strong, and let thy heart take courage;  
Yea, wait thou for Jehovah."*

The hope that Jehovah might appear in the land of the living to bring the expected deliverance was the thing that buoyed David's spirit all the time. Had it not been for that expectation, he would never have accomplished the work that he did. Hezekiah after him had this same hope as we see in Isaiah 38:11.

The promise of the extermination of the evildoers and the unrighteous, occurring in verse 1 reappears in verse 9 of Psalm 37 and also in other verses of this Psalm. Here is expressed the hope that the wicked would be destroyed completely from the face of the globe. This of course will occur, as we know from other passages, in the great Tribulation Period.

In verse 9b, the nation is promised that those who wait for Jehovah shall inherit the land. This can be none other than the promise of permanent inheritance of Palestine by the Jews who will wait for the return of Messiah. They are endeavoring at the present time to purchase the land and to acquire it in permanent possession by human efforts. Of course they will fail. But only those who wait for the personal return of the Messiah will enjoy the inheritance which was first made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). Moreover, the meek, according to verse 11, are promised the land as an inheritance.

*"But the meek shall inherit the land,  
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."*

In verse 22 of this psalm we are told that "such as are blessed of him shall inherit the land." Once more, in verse 29 we are told that "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever." Again, in verse 34, the writer

exhorted his readers to wait for Jehovah, to keep his way, and He would exalt them to inherit the land. It is clear from each of these statements that the writer was speaking of those who wait for Jehovah and trust Him and of their inheriting the land of Palestine.

Great emphasis in Psalm 37 is placed upon the righteous and righteousness, together with justice. Moreover, David spoke of the “perfect” man and of that which awaits him. Throughout the psalm we see then the two classes and the fate which awaits each: The wicked, who will suddenly be cut off from the face of the earth; and the righteous, who will inherit the land of the fathers. Several times the writer of the psalm spoke of that period of peace, the abundance of peace, that those who inherit these promises shall enjoy.

When we read the “Sermon on the Mount,” we see that the Lord laid great emphasis upon the spiritual condition of those who are to be blessed. There is an absolute absence of work and merit in His pronouncement of the *Beatitudes*. It is a matter of pure, sovereign grace. If one will read each of these blessings, one will observe that the Lord speaks of the conditions of the heart rather than of the labors and efforts of individuals. For instance, in the first beatitude He declared, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Only those who are poor in spirit—not spiritually poor—will inherit the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom which John proclaimed, and which the Lord himself, and later the Twelve and after them the Seventy, announced was approaching. In the third beatitude He declared that the meek are blessed, “for they shall inherit the earth.” In this pronouncement the Lord laid emphasis upon what David uttered in Psalm 37 as we have just seen.

In the discussion of Psalm 37 we have just noticed that great emphasis was laid upon the righteous. The Lord Jesus declared to His auditors, “For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20). Throughout His message the Lord emphasized the subject of righteousness, the type of righteousness which David mentioned in Psalm 37. It is quite evident that He was not speaking of *imputed* righteousness, but the living of a righteous life. Of course no one can live this kind of life except those who are born again, those who are strengthened by God’s Spirit in the inward man. In order to show what He meant by this higher type of righteousness, our Lord contrasted that which they had heard from their teachers with that which He was saying. They dealt with their subjects superficially; He went behind the overt act and noted the spirit which prompts the act and the heart condition.

In teaching His disciples to pray, the Lord gave the model petition in Matthew 6:9-15. He began it with these words: “Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth” (vss. 9,10). The disciples were urged to pray that men everywhere would hold the name of God in reverence, that God’s kingdom might come upon earth, and that God’s will might be done here as it is being done in heaven. To everyone who is familiar with the prophetic word, these petitions can mean only one thing—prayers that the great millennial reign of our Lord in righteousness might be established upon earth, when the will of God will be done upon earth as it is in heaven. It is quite evident that He was not telling them to pray for the establishment of the church throughout this present Christian Dispensation. God’s will, since the Fall, has never been done upon earth as it is done in heaven; but in the Millennial Age it will be. This petition therefore can only refer to the inauguration and establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth. His instructions to pray for the coming of the millennial kingdom is a counterpart of the advice given by David in Psalm 37 with reference to waiting patiently for Jehovah—to wait patiently for Him to appear, when He will destroy all the wicked and establish the righteous and make them inherit the land.

Our Lord sounded the same note with regard to one’s being perfect as did David in Psalm 37: “Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48).

The discourse closes with our Lord’s comparing those who heard His words to a wise man who built his house upon a firm foundation. Notwithstanding the coming of the winds and the floods, it stood because it was founded

upon a rock. On the other hand, those who heard His words and did not put them into practice were compared to the foolish man who built his house upon the sand which was washed away and destroyed by the torrents. Thus we see the two classes of people: the righteous and the wicked, which appear in Psalm 37.

When we study the “Sermon on the Mount” carefully and prayerfully and when we are aware of the teaching of Psalm 37, which, in turn, echoes the promises of Leviticus, chapter 26, we can see that our Lord was re-affirming the great principles which David enunciated in Psalm 37. David urged his people to trust God, to live in the land, to live lives of consecration and devotion, and to wait for the appearance of Jehovah who would establish His reign of righteousness upon the earth. The people of our Lord’s day were restless and were chafing under the bitter yoke of Roman domination. They were hoping that Jesus would throw off this yoke and establish the millennial kingdom at that time. In order to disabuse their minds of this error, our Lord went, figuratively speaking, in the same groove as did David in Psalm 37—but farther and deeper. He urged them to trust in Jehovah, to be right with God, and to pray for Jehovah to appear—a petition regarding His second coming in glory and power to reign in righteousness—and to fulfill the Old Testament predictions. At the same time He let His auditors know very distinctly that He had not come to set aside the law or the prophets, but that every utterance of theirs would be fulfilled. He knew that the prophets had foretold “the year of Jehovah’s favor”—the Christian Dispensation—which would be followed by the Tribulation, and that the latter in turn would be succeeded by the millennial kingdom. Hence in our Lord’s affirming that one jot or one tittle of the law should not pass until all be fulfilled, He was asserting that the prophetic program of Messiah’s redemptive career would be carried out just as written.

Are the principles of the “Sermon on the Mount” applicable to the children of God today? To this question my answer is in the affirmative. We who are His disciples—and this message was delivered to His disciples (5:1)—are urged to let our light so shine that men may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven, to exemplify the type of righteousness which He advocated instead of that of the scribes and Pharisees and to pray for the establishment of the millennial kingdom when the will of God will be done upon earth as it is done in heaven. From these facts it seems clear that the disciples to whom our Lord gave these instructions are the ones who live in the period of time beginning with the date of the delivery of the message and extending to the time when in answer to their prayers He returns and establishes His reign of righteousness upon the earth.

This conclusion is confirmed by a careful reading and a study of the entire sermon. Our Lord is telling us in this message how we are to live, act, and deport ourselves in order that we might be as shining lights in the world. Moreover, He urges His disciples not to be overly anxious about the necessities of life and assures us that the Lord will provide everything that is needful for us during our earthly pilgrimage. Certainly the conditions that are assumed and the environment which is presupposed in this sermon are the situation in which we *today* live. I therefore have come to the conclusion that in the “Sermon on the Mount” our Lord sets forth principles that are eternal—that were applicable when He spoke, that are true today, and that will obtain throughout the Millennial Age.

Sometimes we are told by good brethren that the “Sermon on the Mount” is based upon legal grounds and not upon the pure, sovereign grace of God. Our attention is likewise called to this statement, “But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (6:15), as proof that we are upon legal grounds when we are studying this sermon. It is assumed by the expositors taking this position that the “Sermon on the Mount” was given under law to the Jews and is therefore legal. But when one turns to such a passage as Mark 11:25, which no one—so far as I know—applies to the Jew exclusively and claims that it is upon a legal basis: “And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses,” one sees that this thought is not necessarily on a legal basis. This statement was made to the disciples after Jesus had arrived in Jerusalem at the Passover at which time He was crucified. He was talking to those who were upon the basis of grace and grace alone, yet He used language similar to that which is employed as proof that the “Sermon on the Mount” is purely legal and spoken to the Jews alone.

When all the facts are taken into consideration, it is clearly seen that our Lord in the “Sermon on the Mount” was simply setting forth the great fundamental principles that are eternally true and that apply to all His disciples. They are applicable to us—Christians—now, and will be observed perfectly by the people in the great Millennial Age. But to this position it is objected that Jesus spoke of His disciples bringing their gifts to the altar and there remembering that others had aught against them. This language, we are told, is legal and belongs to an age of law. The law of Moses was still in force at the time that Jesus spoke. It continued to be so until He nailed it to the cross (Col. 2:14). Jesus spoke in language that they, His disciples, could understand. The principle involved in this language is this: Whenever a worshiper is on his way to the services of God and he remembers that he has wronged a brother, he should not continue his journey but should turn around and first be reconciled to his brother. After the matter has been straightened out, then the disciple is to go on and approach God in worship. Thus we see that here is a principle involved that is true always. We are, in the “Sermon on the Mount,” therefore standing upon the solid rock of the grace of God and are standing for the great fundamental principles of the truth of God which are applicable at all times. Let us remember, as stated above, that by God’s grace the born-again ones can carry out the instructions given in this sermon—but it is only by God’s grace. In the great Millennial Age the same principles will obtain and the born-again people, aided by the Spirit of God, will live them and demonstrate them in their daily work.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Chapter 5)  
(*Installment Five*)

In the preceding installment of this series we saw that the “Sermon on the Mount,” Matthew, chapters 5-7, was our Lord’s *Manifesto*, setting forth the great principles for which He stands. These great principles are for the children of God today, but they can be put into practice only by the aid of the Holy Spirit who strengthens the believer. They will, however, be observed perfectly by those who live upon the earth in the Millennial Age. We shall now look more particularly at Matthew, chapter 5, although the comments must of necessity be brief.

A shorter form of the “Sermon on the Mount” is found in Luke 6:20-49. In this account Luke tells of our Lord’s having gone up into the mountain, of His having spent the night in prayer, and of His then having selected from among His disciples the twelve Apostles. The next morning He came down to a level place where were a great multitude of His disciples and a large number of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon. He then opened His mouth and taught His disciples the message of the “Sermon on the Mount.” It seems highly probable that many of the multitude heard Him as He taught His disciples, because from Luke’s record it is clear that they were present.

As stated before, our Lord laid the emphasis throughout the sermon upon the condition of the heart rather than upon the overt act. We know that He had already taught the necessity of the new birth as set forth in John 3:1-5. It may here be safely assumed that He presupposed on the part of His disciples a knowledge of the new birth. This assumption is reflected in the *Beatitudes*, the first of which is regarding the “poor in spirit” who shall inherit the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom which both John the Baptist and Jesus had taught that it had come near. As we have already seen in a former installment, the first phase of the kingdom of heaven is the spiritual aspect which is known as the church of Jesus Christ. But its latter development is that of the great millennial reign of our Lord.

There is, as I have said before, a great difference between being “poor in spirit,” and “spiritually poor.” This is illustrated by the proud Pharisee, who stood and prayed with himself, and the publican. The one was spiritually poor; the other was poor in spirit.

Those who mourn are blessed for they shall be comforted. The mourning referred to here is not simply ordinary weeping, but rather the mourning over one’s spiritual condition. Such a one shall be comforted.

The third blessing is pronounced on the meek, who shall inherit the earth—in the Millennial Age, as we saw in the former installment of this series. The meek man is the one who is non-resistant, who accepts his lot in life as being permitted by the Lord. An excellent illustration of such a character is Moses.

A special blessing is promised those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Everyone who longs for the truth of God and His righteousness is guaranteed the fulfillment of this desire and the satisfaction of his soul. God promises that truth will be given and justification shall be granted to such characters. No matter where a person is, if he really hungers and thirsts after God’s righteousness; the Lord will see that truth is given to him in order that He may accept it.

The merciful are blessed, for they shall obtain mercy. The attitude which we take towards others will determine, even upon the basis of grace, the attitude which the Lord is forced to take toward us. (See Psalm 18:24-26.) Our attitude toward others determines the Lord’s dealing with us.

The pure in heart are blessed because they shall see God. The pure in heart are those who have honest hearts, who accept the Lord Jesus Christ, and whose hearts are cleansed and purified by the regenerating power of the

Holy Spirit. Those who are thus saved, and who follow after peace with all men and the sanctification without which no man shall see God, shall see the Lord Jehovah in His unveiled glory (Heb. 12:14).

The peacemakers are blessed because they shall be called the sons of God. They shall thus be designated because they are sons of God—demonstrating by their own lives that they are true sons of God and of course they will be heirs of the promises of the Lord.

In verses 10-12 the Lord promised that those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake are blessed and shall be heirs of the kingdom. In verse 11 He made a personal application of this promise to His disciples who should be thus treated. In the event that they are mistreated for the name of Christ, they are to rejoice and be glad, for their reward in heaven shall be great. The prophets took the same attitude and will receive a marvelous reward, commensurate with their labors and sufferings.

When Christ was here upon earth, He was the Light of the world, in a specific and definite manner. In a different sense, however, He is the light of the world, at the present time. The light which streams from Him strikes upon us and we, figuratively speaking, reflect it. We are also the salt of the earth. Salt has preserving power. But if it loses its strength, it is good for nothing. These statements are true but we are not to assume that one who has really been cleansed and saved—who has become a grain of salt—can lose his saving power in the absolute sense of the term. A saved person can follow the Lord afar off and can lose all the influence that he should have for Christ by an ungodly life. So far as affecting others is concerned, the one who has lost his testimony for Christ is like the salt that has lost its saving power.

We Christians are the light of the world. Men do not light a candle or a lamp and put it under a bushel, but upon the lampstand, in order that it might give light to those who are present. In the same manner the Lord has lighted the lamps of our souls by His divine power and He expects us to live in such a way that people will realize that we are saved and are His children. If all the professed children of God were living as they should, their influence for Christ would be tremendous in the world. Men would come flocking to the Lord Jesus Christ and would glorify God.

In order to prepare His hearers against arriving at a wrong conclusion from what He intended to say, the Lord declared that He did not come to destroy the law or the prophets; on the contrary. He said, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." He observed the law and kept it perfectly—both the letter and the spirit of it. Jesus put the stamp of His approval upon everything that was contained in the law and the prophets. Moreover, He declared that not the least particle of the law, not one jot or one tittle, would pass away being unfulfilled. In making this assertion He declared that, "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things are accomplished."

By the statement just quoted, our Lord implied that there would come a time when the heavens and the earth would pass away. This prophecy He affirmed in Matthew 24:35. John in Revelation 20:11 said that these would pass away at the judgment of the great white throne. Every prophecy therefore that refers to anything to come to pass during the existence of the present physical universe will be fulfilled; and God will see that it is fulfilled and will not let the heavens and the earth pass away until all things are accomplished.

After all things have been accomplished and the material heavens and earth which now are pass away, the Lord will create the eternal order referred to in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22.

Our Lord insisted that His disciples must possess and demonstrate a righteousness that is superior to that which the scribes and Pharisees had. Theirs consisted of the outward observance of laws and ceremonials. That which He requires of His children is of a higher type as is illustrated in the rest of the "Sermon on the Mount."

In the paragraph consisting of verses 21-26, our Lord contrasted what had been said by those of old time concerning killing with His own teaching on this point; but He traced the cause of murder to the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The prohibition, "Thou shalt not kill," was spoken at Mount Sinai and is one of the Ten Commandments. Men shall not kill, according to this divine law. When God authorized civil governments, He instituted capital punishment for the murderer (Gen. 9.5,6).

Jesus began tracing murder in its incipency by calling attention to one's being angry with his brother. The one who became indignant against his brother was likely to be brought into trial in the courts of the land. Should one thus be angry and allow his feelings to vent themselves against another and call his brother "Raca," he, said our Lord, would be in danger of the Sanhedrin—either one of the local courts or the supreme Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. But the one whose anger continued to flame and to get the mastery of him, so that he said to his brother, "Thou fool," would be in danger of the Gehenna of fire, hell-fire. That there is a place of punishment by the name of hell is the universal teaching of the men of God. We may not be able to understand the whys and wherefores of the institution of hell, but all who accept the Word of God as authoritative confess that such is its teaching and that there must be a place where the wicked will be banished from the presence of God and the glory of His might forever.

In view of the grave danger of anger's developing and becoming the master of a person, our Lord urged those who as they were on the way to worship and who remembered that a brother had aught against them to turn back and to be reconciled with such a one. After the reconciliation then the worshiper would be in the right spiritual condition to come and to serve God. This principle holds good today just as much as it did when Jesus spoke it.

The matter of separation and divorce is the subject of the paragraph consisting of verses 27-32. Our Lord called attention to the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Again Jesus traced the act back to its source, which is the evil desire arising in the heart of a man. He therefore said that everyone who looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his own heart. Such a one is just as guilty as if he had committed the act. The Lord therefore said, "If thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell." The sin is in the heart and not in the physical eye; but, if Satan uses this physical organ to arouse evil passion by looking upon a woman, it would be better for the man if he did not have his sight for Satan to use in stirring his passions. This is the obvious teaching of the passage.

Our Lord then called attention to the law as found in Deuteronomy 24:1f, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement." To this Jesus added the words, "But I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery." This is a passage about which there has been much controversy. Good men are on both sides of the question. There are those who maintain that Jesus allows a man to divorce his wife when it has been proved that she has been unfaithful to the marriage vow and that he is scripturally allowed to marry another woman. Others insist that a man is allowed to divorce his wife only if she is guilty of breaking her marriage vow but that even the innocent husband is not allowed, scripturally, to re-marry. I cannot settle this question. In Mark, chapter 10, we have these words: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: 12 and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery" (vss. 11,12). Again we find similar words in Luke 16:18: "Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery." For a further study on this point see Matthew 19:3-12.

The matter of oaths came up for consideration as is indicated in Matthew 5:33-37. Jesus called attention to the fact that His disciples had heard the prohibition, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths." To this our Lord added that they were not to swear at all, neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by

Jerusalem. Heaven is God's throne; earth is His footstool; and Jerusalem is the city of the great King—the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jews at that time had various types of oaths, some of which they considered more binding than others. Jesus brushed aside all oaths and told them not to take any. On the contrary, they were to live in such a way that their words would be accepted at their face value. Said He, "But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one." One's life should be such that people will accept any statement which one might make at its face value. But this prohibition against people's taking oaths does not seem to refer to an official oath that is required by the government. There are, however, sincere, devout people who understand it as including such an oath. The government of our country is considerate of such and allows them to affirm. One must be true to his convictions. One must stand for them firmly, but always in a Christ like spirit.

The matter of retaliation comes up for discussion in the paragraph consisting of verses 38-42. Jesus called his disciples' attention to the fact that they had heard it said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." When one looks at the civil code as given by Moses, one finds that this is an exact representation of the case. This is a just and a righteous law. If one man deliberately knocked out the eye of another man, according to the law and justice he should suffer the loss of his own eye. If one should knock a man's tooth out, it would be an equitable, just, and righteous law which would require that his own tooth be knocked out. Such was the pronouncement of Moses and his legislation regarding these matters.

This law was on the statute books of Israel and was to be enforced by the proper officials of the recognized courts of the land. The teachers in Israel of our Lord's day, however, had taken these laws from the civil code and had used them as justification for personal retaliation against some injury that had been done by one person to another. Jesus condemned this wresting of the Scriptures and such an interpretation of the law. He therefore said that His disciples should not resist the evil one. If, however, one should smite a disciple on one cheek, this one was to turn the other also. Of course he should do it in the spirit of love. Moreover, our Lord said that if a man should force one of the disciples to go to law with him and take away his coat that he should give him his cloak also. If someone should compel another to go one mile, he should gladly go with him the second. Whenever these, instructions are observed in the spirit of Christ and with His meekness, the result upon the inconsiderate, unjust persecutor will be tremendous. The Lord will take care of His servant who thus accepts His instructions and acts upon them in faith, doubting nothing and looking to Him for the blessing.

In the closing paragraph of chapter 5, consisting of verses 43-48, our Lord discussed the law of love. In the current teaching of the leaders of Israel, the people were instructed to love their neighbors but to hate their enemies. This is the way that men, who have never been saved, do. This is the natural inclination of the unregenerated heart. The Lord Jesus corrected this evil and insisted that His disciples should love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them, in order that they might demonstrate the fact that they are sons of the Father who is in heaven. God acts in this manner toward all people. He does it every day by making His sun to rise on the evil and the good and by sending His rain upon the just and the unjust. Thus our heavenly Father is showing Himself to be loving, not only to His friends, those who love Him, but to the atheist and the out-and-out sinner. The goodness of God in supplying their needs should lead men to repentance.

But if men simply love those who love them, are they worthy of reward or commendation? The answer is in the negative. Moreover, if people salute only those who salute them, it is evident that they are still in the flesh and dominated by their fallen nature.

Our Lord concluded His teaching on this subject by urging His disciples to be perfect, even as our Father who is in heaven is perfect. Of course He is speaking of the perfection of love, which we are to manifest toward our enemies as well as toward our friends.

In this connection often the question is raised as to whether or not a person can live a perfect life, as is here enjoined. Let me say that God never asks His people to do anything that they cannot do. Of course, in the strength

of the flesh one cannot do this. But "God's commandings are His enablings;" and when He insists that His people live this type of life, we may assume that He will supply the necessary strength and power to do so.

Repeatedly the Apostles urged men to live holy, consecrated lives. For instance, in Romans 12:1,2, such a life of purity is enjoined. The Roman Christians were urged to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which was their reasonable or spiritual service. Moreover, they were exhorted not to be conformed to the world but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds that they might prove "what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." From this we learn that it is possible for people, thus yielded to God and trusting Him for strength, to live in such a way as to prove what is the good, the acceptable, and the perfect will of God. Paul urged the church at Philippi to:

"Do all things without murmurings and questionings; 15 that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world ..." (Phil. 2:14,15).

In other places in the Scripture the same high and lofty type of life of purity and consecration to God is set forth and urged upon us.

As we have rapidly passed over this chapter, we are impressed with the thought that Christ put His words upon an equality with those which were admitted to have been spoken by God through the prophets of the Old Testament. In Christ's doing this is seen the consciousness on His part of His being on an equality with God. He gave His teaching in such a way as to show that He was speaking truth in its finality. Our Lord Jesus Christ was God in human form. He was the God-man. He spoke with authority and power. His words are spirit and they are life. He alone has the power of life and death. May we by His grace follow Him and glorify and honor God through Him!

SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Chapter 6)  
(*Installment Six*)

In this series of articles we have come to the discussion of Matthew, chapter 6. As all biblical students know, this portion of the Word is only a part of the “Sermon on the Mount,” which covers chapters 5-7. Only when we remember the fundamental principles enunciated by our Lord in the beginning of this message, can we properly evaluate His teachings as found in this chapter.

With this in view let me again call attention to the fact that in the “Sermon on the Mount” our Lord issued His manifesto. In other words He proclaimed to His disciples and the multitudes the great, fundamental principles for which He stood and which are true today, just as they were at the time when He spoke them. Moreover, we must remember that Jesus had, much earlier in His ministry, taught the necessity of the new birth and of one’s living the spiritual life in the strength which God supplies. We must remember these facts in order properly to evaluate any utterance which is found in this sermon. As we have already noted, our Lord in the *Beatitudes* placed emphasis upon the spiritual condition of the heart.

If one should be required to give the text of this sermon, one would find it in 5:20. “For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the *righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.” The type of righteousness with which the people were confronted every day was that which was maintained by the scribes and the Pharisees. A study of the gospel records shows that, as a rule, emphasis by the religionist of that day and time was placed upon the external and ceremonial side of religion with little thought of or attention given to the inner spiritual life of the individual. Thus our Lord emphasized the fact that the type of righteousness which God expects of men is on a much higher plane than that on which the religionists of His day lived.

Continuing His method of contrasting what they had seen and heard with the high principles of ethics and morals for which He stood, our Lord (chapter 6:1-4) gave instructions regarding actions which He termed “righteousness,” warning men not to make gifts or donations to be seen of men; for, in the event that they do, they will get no reward from God. Moreover, He warned men against doing as the hypocrites did, who stood in the synagogues and on the street corners sounding a trumpet after they had given some mere pittance of charity to the poor. Our Lord declared that they had already received their reward—the praise and the glory of men—when they do it in order to be seen of men. On the contrary He urged His disciples to do their acts of righteousness and charity in a silent, unseen manner, without letting others know what they have done. The Father sees in secret and will reward all genuine acts of kindness, love, and righteousness.

The next item which our Lord took up in His discourse was the matter of prayer. His hearers were in the habit of seeing the Pharisees and the hypocrites standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the street as they offered long prayers. It was evident to all observant ones that they went into these public places and offered these prayers in order that they might be seen of men who, misunderstanding the real motives, would declare that they were very godly and pious. Concerning them our Lord likewise declared that they have received all the reward that they are to get. God understands the heart and knows the motives that prompt every action.

In our Lord’s condemning the prayers of the scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, He was not condemning public prayers. The thing which He censured was the hypocritical manner in which they prayed. If anyone offers prayers just to be heard by and seen of men, such petitions will go no higher than the ceiling. God delights to see and hear prayers that ascend from sincere, believing, trusting hearts.

According to verse 6 our Lord urged people to enter into their closets and pray to God in secret. Then they will be natural, there being no occasion for a desire to use eloquent language or to appear to be different from what one is. He likewise warned them against making vain repetitions as Gentiles do. In various false religions and heathen cults this idea seems to dominate—the longer the prayers and the oftener they are repeated, the more efficacious they become. God appreciates one simple request coming from the heart of a sincere person more than the same petition being repeated millions of times and not coming from the heart. Neither does one have to repeat his petitions in order to receive an answer. We are to come to God in simple faith—just as a little child does to his earthly father. There is neither room nor place for formalism and ceremonialism in prayer. Though God knows that we need certain things, we are to bring these matters to him in prayer. It is His good pleasure that we remind Him of these things in the spirit of faith and of gratitude and in anticipation.

In verses 9-15 our Lord taught His disciples how they should pray. This is a very short petition. The requests are put in plain, simple language. There are no repetitions. There is no idea of formalism, but there is the freedom which is born of knowledge of an access to God and faith in Him. The various things which Jesus mentions should be in the prayers of all God's people. In other words they should pray for these things daily.

The petition begins with the words: "Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." An examination of the prayers of the New Testament leads one to the conclusion that we should address God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ, praying in the power of the Holy Spirit. There are a few exceptions to this general rule. For instance, Stephen prayed to the Lord Jesus, who had appeared to him in vision at the time of his being stoned. The facts that this vision was granted and that the Lord Jesus appeared to him justified Stephen's departure from the normal manner of approaching Deity in prayer. It seems wisest—at least to me to follow the general rule that is set forth in the Scriptures. Jesus here taught His disciples to approach God calling Him "Father." At that time they did not pray in the name of the Son. But on the very night on which Jesus was betrayed, He taught His disciples to approach the Father in His name. Since our Lord has given us these instructions, we should be very careful to observe them, delighting in His way.

We are to pray that God's name be held in reverence and in awe—"Hallowed be thy name."

We likewise should pray "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." It is clear from this petition that He was speaking of the great millennial kingdom when He mounts the throne of David and establishes a reign of righteousness and truth throughout the entire world. As stated in a former article in this series, our Lord in the "Sermon on the Mount" was going in the same groove, figuratively speaking, in which David went in Psalm 37. The king urged the people to dwell in the land of Palestine, to develop and grow in the spiritual life, and to wait for the coming of Jehovah, at which time the wicked shall be destroyed from the world and the righteous and meek shall inherit the land. Our Lord came in fulfillment of definite predictions and established the kingdom of heaven upon earth, as set forth in the parables of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. In this Christian Dispensation only a mere handful, comparatively speaking, have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ and are endeavoring to honor and glorify Him in word, deed, and life. Those who are regenerated may, by the power of the Spirit of God, carry out the high principles set forth here in the "Sermon on the Mount." But *only the regenerated ones, strengthened and, fortified by the Holy Spirit*, can carry out such high ideals. When our Lord returns, however, binds Satan, lifts the curse from the earth, and establishes His reign of righteousness, the high principles set forth in this sermon will be the general practice of all mankind. The people living then, of course, being regenerated and being strengthened of God's spirit, will be able to carry out these lofty teachings. We who are in the kingdom of heaven should pray very earnestly that the time may speedily come when the Lord Jesus Christ will return, set up His kingdom of glory and reign in righteousness.

This teaching is in perfect alignment with the prophetic outline of Messiah's redemptive career as is set forth by the various Old Testament prophets. For instance, in Isaiah 61:1-3 we see, in vision, the Lord Jesus Christ engaged

in the personal ministry of proclaiming the gospel, of saving souls, of announcing the year of Jehovah's favor (Christian Dispensation), the day of vengeance of our God (the Tribulation Period), the conversion of Israel, and her being appointed to positions in His kingdom, during which time God will be glorified throughout the World. We who now live during this "year of Jehovah's favor," the Christian Dispensation, are to pray that God's kingdom may come (the millennial reign of our Lord) and that His will may be done upon earth just as it is accomplished in heaven. Our Lord taught us also to pray for our daily bread. Our heavenly Father gives us sunshine and rain and fruitful seasons in answer to the prayers of His faithful people. It is one of His wise provisions for us that we ask, not only for food for ourselves, but for the whole world. In answer to such petitions the Lord is constantly giving us our sustenance.

We are also instructed to pray for the forgiveness of our sins, as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. The one who has an unforgiving spirit cannot reasonably ask the Lord to forgive him and make him stand approved in His sight. This is true, even during the period of grace in which we are now living. The attitude that people take toward others automatically determines His attitude toward them. This fundamental principle is set forth in Psalm 18:25,26. It was likewise enunciated by our Lord later in His ministry, as we see in Matthew 18:21-35. But we must bear in mind that even with the redeemed, the house of God, judgment begins first. Our sins have all been washed away in the blood of Christ. The sin question has been settled *once and for all* so far as the believer is concerned, but his attitude and actions require chastisement often. Every son whom the Lord receives He chastens, we are told in Hebrews. It is this phase of truth that Jesus had in mind in mentioning this fact.

The final petition that is found in this model prayer is one to the effect that we should pray that we may not be led into temptation but be delivered from the evil one. God is able to deliver us, but His dealing with us is contingent upon and conditioned by our willingness to allow Him to control our lives.

Some of the ancient authorities conclude this petition with the words, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen." The Revised Version calls our attention to the fact that this doxology is not found in the best and oldest manuscripts. Hence with verse 13 this model petition closes.

It is followed, however, by the warning that even the children of God must forgive others their trespasses; otherwise their heavenly Father will not forgive them; that is, He will hold His people to a strict account for their trespasses and will punish them, chastening them for their intolerant spirit. This principle, of course, pertains only to this life, since their sins are washed away in the blood of Christ and forgiven forever. If then we who are regenerated and born again forgive others their trespasses freely, as we have been forgiven, we shall avoid this chastisement concerning which the writer to the Hebrews spoke.

The matter of fasting comes up in verses 16-18 for consideration. The hypocrites of our Lord's day disfigured their countenances in order that they might appear to men to fast. Jesus gave instruction that we, when we fast, should wash our faces and anoint ourselves in order that we might not appear to others to be engaged in such a season of fasting. We should do this in secrecy in order not to appear to men to be fasting. The Lord sees and knows the motives prompting every act and will reward accordingly. It is proper and right that the people who choose to fast and pray do so. This is an optional matter with them and not one that is enjoined by commandment.

Our Lord dealt with the matter of the laying up of treasures, as we see in verses 19-21. Earthly treasures which men store up are perishable. They have to lie down, die, and leave them. Only those things that are stored up in the form of service to Christ and to our fellowmen because of Christ will abide as eternal realities. We are therefore urged to lay up our treasures in heaven by engaging in spiritual activities for God.

In verses 22 and 23 our Lord declared that the lamp of the body is the eye and that, if the eye be single, the whole body is full of light. If on the contrary the light that is in one is darkness, the body is full of darkness. Wrong motives and desires obstruct the vision and blind the eyes. One must have an eye single to the glory and honor of

God. Under those conditions one will have spiritual insight and vision, which one can have under no other conditions.

In verses 24-34 our Lord called attention to the fact that no one can serve two masters. We may serve either God or mammon. But one cannot serve both. One must make the decision whether or not one will serve God with all his heart, soul, mind, strength, and body, or serve the devil. As to whom a person will serve is the paramount question of life. This should be settled in childhood. When one has accepted Christ and God, one should yield one's life to the Lord, trusting Him for everything that pertains to life and godliness.

To those who accept the Lord Jesus Christ, He gives the admonition that they are not to be anxious about anything. Worry and anxiety will do good to no one. One cannot by worry change his physical condition and add one cubit to his height.

Then, in one of the loftiest flights of language, our Lord showed that God, our Father, takes care of the birds and that we are of more value than many sparrows. It is He who, clothes the fields with grass, and He who makes the lilies of the field grow. He is the God of all nature and is amply providing for all. In faith we are to trust Him and let Him solve our problems.

It is for us to "seek ... first his kingdom and his righteousness." In this connection He assures us that "all these things shall be added unto you." Having a sufficiency for all things is the occasion of evil. When we have everything for which we could possibly long, faith and trust are crowded out. It is a good thing for us to have to trust God, who has promised to supply all our needs. If we do this, "our heart shall rejoice in him, Because we have trusted in his holy name."

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in his justice,  
Which is more than liberty.  
"There is welcome for the sinner,  
And more graces for the good;  
There is mercy with the Saviour;  
There is healing in his blood.  
"For the love of God is broader  
Than the measure of man's mind;  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.  
"If our love were but more simple,  
We should take him at his word;  
And our lives would be all sunshine  
In the sweetness of our Lord."

SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Chapter 7)  
(*Installment 7*)

With this month's installment we conclude the discussion of the "Sermon on the Mount." We should remember that the Lord began the discourse by laying emphasis upon the spiritual condition of the heart. As we have already noted, the entire sermon presupposes the regeneration of the heart, for only those who are thus regenerated are able to carry out the instructions which He gives throughout the message. In concluding the sermon, the Lord Jesus constantly contrasted the two ways of life—the one that leads to life everlasting and the other that leads to everlasting destruction. Those whose righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, as set forth in 5:20, are the ones who are able to carry out the instructions given here.

Chapter 7 began with a prohibition against judging: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." From the context it becomes immediately evident that our Lord was condemning the idea that is expressed in the familiar way: "Sizing up one at first sight." Others speak of it as giving another the "once-over." In other words our Lord is condemning people's forming conclusions concerning others without sufficient and adequate evidence. One does another a positive injustice if he, without facts and evidence, forms conclusions regarding him. That this is the correct interpretation of what the Lord meant is evident from the fact that He told us that a tree is known by its fruit. If a person steals and lies and we know positively that he does those things, we are not violating the injunction against judging, but are simply looking facts in the face—and should act accordingly.

In connection with this prohibition our Lord assured His disciples that they should be judged in the manner in which they judge others. In other words, a man reaps exactly that which he sows.

Moreover, the Lord Jesus warned His disciples against criticizing and condemning others for some slight deviation from the correct standard, whereas the critic is guilty of great excesses, going far beyond the conduct of those whom he condemns. He therefore told His disciples that they should first remove the beam or log that is in their own eyes before they attempt to take the little speck out of their brother's eye. In other words, people must first examine their own hearts and lives with the purpose of being right with God and free from sin before they are in a position to point out the errors and the shortcomings of others. Let us therefore first see that we are free from faults and failures before condemning, in most critical terms, others who are living close to the Lord—much closer than we are. If we ignore His injunction, continue to cherish our own failures while condemning others, we are hypocrites.

In verse 6 of this chapter the Lord forbade His disciples giving "that which is holy unto the dogs," and casting their "pearls before the swine." In this setting it is clear that our Lord was not talking about literal pearls, dogs, and hogs. Dogs and hogs do not have any conception of spiritual values or holy things. If pearls and the finest gems were thrown before hogs, they would trample them under their feet and, not having their hunger satisfied by that which was cast to them, would turn in rage upon those who thus tantalized them. By the dogs and hogs of this verse our Lord was referring to men and women who have no appreciation of spiritual truth. According to Isaiah 61:1, the Messiah, when He would come into the world, would give the good message of salvation to "the meek." Our Lord, when here upon earth, avoided giving the truth to those who were not eager to receive it. There was not time to fool with those who scoffed at and rejected the Word. He does not want any of His children to present spiritual things to people who instead of receiving the truth as they should will simply ridicule and scorn the sacred things, which pertain to light and life. Whenever I am in a conversation with a person who convinces me that he is simply talking for the sake of argument, ridicule, or scorn, I instantly break off the conversation. I will not cast my pearls before swine.

In verses 7-11 our Lord gave every assurance that all prayers will be answered. Thus He said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." As we read these verses and ponder upon them, let us remember that the Lord was speaking to His disciples, regenerated, saved people, and was telling them that every petition which they ask will be granted. But I hasten to say, in this connection, that the answer is not always what we expect or what we may desire. The Lord knows what is best for us under the circumstances when we pray and the conditions under which we are living.

Sometimes His answer to a most fervent request is "no." At other times it may be "yes." And on still other occasions His reply may be that we should wait until some future time when He will grant the request. We do not always know what is best for us. Sometimes we very earnestly ask the Lord to give us those things which He knows would be a positive injury to us. Loving us as He does, He will not give us anything that will not contribute to our good. Very frequently He gives us things that are of far greater value than the things for which we ask. He has our welfare at heart always.

In concluding His instructions on this point, the Lord Jesus illustrated God's willingness to grant the petitions of His people by showing that any natural, normal father would grant the petitions of His children who cry for bread and food. There is no one, declared our Lord, who would give his hungry child a stone when he was suffering from hunger and crying for food. The conclusion to be drawn from this illustration is that men, whose hearts are naturally evil, will grant the petitions of their hungry children; so will our Father, who is good and holy, grant to us those things for which we make request—provided they are best for us.

In verse 12 we have the golden rule. "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets." This rule as stated by our Lord was something unique and different from any and all utterances of men. Some have thought that Confucius, for instance, taught the golden rule. He did not. He only stated it in a negative way. Many Jewish scholars have tried to find statements from the rabbis parallel with this one of our Lord, but all the attempts have ended in failure. This statement rises to the highest pinnacle of human relationships. Only those who have been genuinely born again and in whose hearts the Spirit of God is dwelling and dominating can carry out the golden rule as set forth by our Lord. But those who are thus spiritually equipped can carry this precept out to the letter as well as in the spirit—if they are fully yielded to the Lord and trusting.

There are two ways, over one of which everyone must travel through this life as he journeys to eternity. One is the broad way which leads down to everlasting destruction; the other is the narrow way which leads to life. One is traveling the broad road if he ignores spiritual things and refuses to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour. On the other hand, those who, having learned of Christ, accept His loving invitation to come to Him and do so are regenerated, born again, and are the ones who enter through the narrow gate and walk the straight path which leads to everlasting life. On the last day of His earthly ministry Jesus declared to Philip saying, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). It is appointed unto men once to die; after that, judgment (Heb. 9:28). One must be certain that he enters the narrow gate and travels the pathway that leads to life everlasting.

Knowing that impostors would come in sheep's clothing, whereas they are devouring wolves, our Lord warned in verse 15 against false prophets. That this warning against such men was necessary, history has proved. There are many false teachers today. In fact there have always been and will continue to be those who pervert the way of the Lord until He returns.

The Lord expects His people to use good common judgment and sense. We are not to receive everyone who poses as a religious teacher and accept his message because he comes to us as a true messenger of the Word of God. The life must back up the claims of everyone. "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do *men* gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. 7:16). This question demands a negative answer.

In this connection our Lord showed the importance of the new birth by saying that every good tree brings forth good fruit, but the corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. The heart of man is desperately wicked and is capable of committing every crime in the long category of sins. In his natural state man cannot please God. His heart is not subject to the law of God neither can it be. Only by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit can man's heart be cleansed in order that he might produce the good fruit. On this point the Apostle Paul declared in Ephesians 2:8-10 that we are saved by the grace of God through faith and that we who are in Christ are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God afore prepared that we should walk in them. So then, while we are by nature bad or corrupt trees, we may be good trees by accepting Christ and by being regenerated by the Spirit of God. After that we can, in the power of the Holy Spirit, bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) and thus be a blessing to humanity and glorify God in our lives.

Not everyone who claims to have accepted Christ has been born again. Profession is one thing; living the Christ life is an entirely different matter. It has tersely been said that oftentimes what one does speaks so very loudly that others cannot hear what one is saying. The life must correspond to the profession. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

In verses 21-23 Jesus showed that there are or will be two classes of men who come before the Lord at last. There will be many people who will be surprised when they come before Him to hear the words, "Depart from me, I never knew you." Being religious, or belonging to some church organization is not salvation. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new creature in Christ Jesus. Not everyone who shall say unto the Lord Jesus, "Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." From this statement we see that only those who really and actually do the will of God are the ones who will enter into the glorious kingdom of heaven when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. In this connection let me warn against anyone's thinking that he can by works satisfy the will of God and obtain salvation and entrance into the kingdom of God eventually. On this point let me call attention to the fact that the Pharisees on one occasion asked Jesus, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" To this query our Lord replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he has sent." From this question and answer we see clearly that the first step in doing the will of God is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ whom God the Father sent to be the Saviour of the world. As stated in the preceding section, when one believes on the Lord Jesus, his heart is regenerated and the Spirit of God enters into his soul in order to strengthen him and to enable him to do the will of God in daily conduct.

One may ask, How is it possible for one to do the will of God by accepting Christ as Lord and Saviour? The answer is to be found in the quotation from Psalm 40 given in Hebrews 10:5-7 and the apostle's comment upon the same appearing in verses 8-14 of the same chapter. The animal sacrifices and offerings were authorized by the Lord to serve as types and shadows of the real sacrifice of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Israelites were commanded to offer these sacrifices constantly. This ritualism was given to Israel by the Lord at Mount Sinai. Approximately five hundred years later the Spirit of God spoke through David the message of Psalm 40. In this revelation God made known the fact that those sacrifices were only of a temporal nature and that they typified the great sacrifice of the Son of God. Hence, according to this passage, the strong Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, said to the Father when the time came—when He came nineteen hundred years ago—that He would come to carry out the will of God as typified by those sacrifices. The writer of Hebrews therefore, having quoted from Psalm 40, explained that the Lord Jesus Christ in His coming fulfilled this passage and by His sacrificial death upon the cross did the will of God as expressed in the quotation, "Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of

me) to do thy will, O God.” From this comment we see that the Lord Jesus Christ in His offering Himself upon the cross of Calvary did the will of God with reference to the atonement of man’s soul. According to John 6:29, as we have seen, one does the will of God by believing upon the name of the Lord Jesus. These passages supplement one another. Christ, by becoming obedient to death, did the will of God so far as the atonement was concerned. We, by accepting His sacrificial death, do the will of God. Our Lord’s doing the will of God perfectly in His sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection, is imputed to those who accept Him. They therefore in their substitute do the will of God.

All who accept Him and are regenerated are urged and exhorted to maintain good works and thus do the will of God by fully surrendering to God and offering their bodies as sacrifices—holy and acceptable unto God. Thus one can do the will of God in his daily life. All of these things are involved in the passage which we have under consideration. Only those who thus do the will of God will enter the kingdom of heaven.

On the other hand, many, when they appear before the Lord, will say to Him, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?” There can be no doubt concerning these people that they will be sincere in their claims. No one would be, so very much deceived that he would attempt to make false claims before the Judge of the universe, thinking that he, upon his own testimony, would be acceptable. These people doubtless are those who choose to serve the Lord in their own way and to approach Him as they think. Solomon told us that there is a way that seems right unto men but the ends thereof are the ways of death.

In reply to these individuals the Lord Jesus will profess, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” There is no excuse for one’s not receiving the truth. God has guaranteed that He will bring it to everyone who will receive it. The invitation goes out to one and to all. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. God therefore assumes the responsibility of getting the truth in His own good way to everyone who hungers and thirsts after righteousness. If the Lord cannot use one means, He will adopt another. But He will certainly get the message to every soul regardless of all circumstances and conditions, whenever such a one is longing for the truth and will accept it. The responsibility then rests upon the one to whom the truth is brought.

Not a one of these who in that day will make the claim that they have prophesied in the name of the Lord and done many mighty works and who is rejected will have been saved and experienced the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit; for Jesus will declare to them, “I never knew you.” It is true that they doubtless will have been very religious and probably will have made profession of having accepted Christ. Among these there may be some Christian workers who will make these claims; nevertheless the Lord will declare that He never has known them—they have never accepted the grace of God by faith and have never been regenerated. The Lord therefore will not have known them in the sense of having accepted them and of their having been regenerated. They will therefore be told to depart from the Lord, because they have worked iniquity.

The two foundations upon which one may build are set forth in verses 24-28. Our Lord declared that everyone who hears His words and does them will be like the man who builds his house upon the rock. The rain descends, the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon that house; but it does not fall, because it is founded upon the rock. Those who accept the Lord Jesus Christ and do His teachings are thus built upon the Rock of ages. All of the adversities of life and all the attacks of Satan and evil spirits may come like an avalanche upon them, but their spiritual house will not fall. On the other hand, those who hear the words of the Lord Jesus but do not do them, are like the foolish man who builds his house upon the sand. When the rain descends, the floods come, and the winds blow against that house it falls. So is everyone who hears the words of the Lord Jesus and who does not act upon them. Many in that day will be disappointed. The one question that should be foremost with every one is, Have I built upon that one foundation, the Rock of ages? The next question is, Since I have built my house upon

that one foundation, am I by the grace and power of God living daily for the Lord Jesus and thus laying up treasures in heaven?

Of the reader I would ask, Have you built your house for eternity upon the Rock of ages? If you have not, do so now by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ by faith.

When Jesus completed His sermon, the multitudes were astonished, for He did not teach as the rabbis of His day and time. When we look at the Talmud, we see how the various leaders taught. One rabbi would quote from another rabbi, who in turn had quoted from some other one whom he considered as authority. All teaching was based upon the traditions which were handed down from one generation to another. It was not thus with our Lord. He spoke as one who had authority and not as the scribes and the Pharisees. There were freshness and power that characterized every word of His. His auditors could feel this power that was flowing out from Him through His marvelous, matchless message.

When the Lord had thus finished His sermon, He went down from the mountain and great multitudes followed Him. This fact is set forth in chapter 8, verse 1.

## THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD—PART I (*Installment 8*)

In this installment we are to investigate the subject of miracles which Christ performed in order to attest His divine claims. A cycle of these is set forth in chapters 8 and 9 of the Gospel according to Matthew. In this month's article we shall have time only for those given in chapter 8.

There are various and sundry ideas concerning what a miracle is. Certain definitions have been formulated by different theologians. The one which I have composed and used for a number of years is as follows: "A true miracle is a divine act which the Almighty ordinarily accomplishes in a quiet, unobserved manner through the operation of the laws of nature (secondary causes), but which He, for a definite spiritual purpose or end, works in an obvious and open manner, and which usually attests the divine call and commission of the one thus performing it as a teacher sent from God." All acts are performed by some intelligent, rational being. We are in the habit of thinking of certain acts which the Almighty performs as miracles and of distinguishing them from what is usually termed "laws of nature." Most frequently we forget the acts of Satan and demons; but, whenever we investigate the question of miracles, we must take into consideration every phase of this subject in order to arrive at the proper induction.

Jehovah, the God of Israel, is "the Uncaused Cause" of all things. He is the Eternal One. He is the one in whom we live, move, and have our continual being. The one who is known as Satan or the devil was the first creature whom God brought into existence. He was the highest of all. In fact, he was the very perfection of beauty, skill, power, and the possessor of every attribute conferred upon a created being. The angels were likewise created by the Almighty.

Moreover, He brought into existence the material universe and is constantly working in and through it. What we call the laws of nature are but the regular way in which God manipulates the various elements constituting the material universe. This regular, ordinary way of His handling these elements we call the laws of nature, or His "secondary laws." But strictly speaking, they are God's activity.

Satan still has mighty power. Also the demons under him likewise have certain powers and authority. They are constantly acting. In fact, whenever God acts in an open manner for some moral or spiritual end, He allows the devil also to engage in unusual activity. Satan, however, is always under the limitations of God's authority, who rules and overrules.

What is especially meant by miracles in this discussion are those acts of the Lord's which He, for a moral or spiritual purpose, performed in order to attest the divine claims of Jesus of Nazareth and His message of love. All other supernatural activities are not considered in this present discussion.

In this day of skepticism and rationalism men are questioning the possibility of miracles. The attitude of doubt seems to have gripped the educational world and the possibility of miracles is denied.

But let us now examine the miracles that are set forth in Matthew, chapter 8. These fall into three categories. (1) Miracles of healing (vss. 2-17); (2) a miracle in the realm of the physical world (vss. 23-27); and (3) a miracle in the realm of the spirit world (vss. 28-34).

In the Synoptic Gospels we read of our Lord's curing the leper. This is one of the miracles which He wrought when He was on His first tour of Galilee. This case seems to have been an outstanding one, as special notice is given to it. The man came to Jesus and said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." He did not question the possibility of miracles, but assumed them. The only point on which he was in doubt was whether or not the Lord was willing

to cure *him*. He tacitly admitted that Jesus *could* cure leprosy, since he came pleading that the Lord would do it for him.

Jesus stretched forth His hand and touched the man saying, "I will; be thou made clean." Immediately he was cured of his leprosy. Then Jesus commanded him to go and show himself to the priests and make the offering commanded by Moses for the testimony of his cleansing.

When we realize that Jesus of Nazareth was God in human form, that it was He who created the world, and that He has a heart of compassion, we can see how He could perform such a miracle and why it was that He was willing to help the poor man. His performing this act was an attestation of His divine nature and calling.

The next miracle mentioned in this chapter is that of the healing of the servant of the centurion. This man was a Roman soldier who loved the Jews very much and who built a synagogue for them in Capernaum (Luke 7:2-10). It was in this building that Jesus preached the sermon on the bread of life (John, chap. 6).

The servant was sick of the palsy. His condition was critical. Jesus agreed to go with the centurion and heal him. Immediately the centurion, feeling his unworthiness, said, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." This language shows that the centurion had the proper conception of one's place in an organization and that he realized that the place which he occupied in relation to Jesus was that of a servant. He was therefore willing to take that place and to do whatever Jesus might say to him. When he thus manifested such a spirit, the Lord marveled and declared that He had not found so great faith—no, not in Israel. It was indeed remarkable to find a man of this character among the pagan Romans; but when we remember, as we have already seen, that he had built the synagogue for the Jews at Capernaum, we see in that fact a devotion to the God of Israel and a love for His service. He was, indeed, a great man of faith. His faith was honored by the Lord who said to him, "Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And the servant was healed in that hour." According to one's faith is the blessing.

On this occasion the Lord foretold that many would come from the east and from the west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom, but that the sons of the kingdom would be cast into outer darkness where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This passage looks forward to the time when the millennial kingdom of our Lord will be set up and many of the Jews of the Dispersion from all over the world will come and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but that many Palestinian Jews will be cast out. Not only will there be Jews of the Dispersion but there will be the Gentiles who will come from the east and from the west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In other words, the ones of whom Jesus is here speaking are the same ones who are mentioned in the statement concerning the judgment of the nations (Matt. 25:31-46). Those who are put on the right hand are the ones who will come, enter the kingdom, and who will come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The last miracle of healing mentioned in this list is that of the restoration to health of Peter's mother-in-law, who was sick with a fever. The touch of Jesus caused it to leave. She immediately arose and ministered to Him. This miracle of healing was reported throughout the community. People therefore at sundown brought many of those who were possessed of evil spirits, and He healed them with a word. This healing ministry is said to be the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah which declares, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases." Matthew's use of this passage and his applying it to the healing ministry of Jesus shows that Isaiah, in chapter 53 from which this passage is taken, was discussing physical, literal healing. The healing of the body therefore is included in the atonement according to Isaiah, chapter 53, and Matthew 8:17. But let us not think that, since it is in the atonement, it is to be universal at the present time; for such is not the case. It was not universal in the

Apostolic Age. Neither has it been since then, but it will be the order of the day in the great Millennial Age when many shall come from the east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom.

Following this record of the healing ministry of Jesus, we read that the crowds were thronging Him and that He gave commandment to depart to the other side of the lake. Just at that moment there came a scribe who volunteered to follow Jesus. Evidently the Lord knew his heart; so He said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven *have* nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Jesus wanted to let him know that he need not expect any wealth or prestige from his following Him, for He had no material benefits to bestow upon His followers. At the same time another man volunteered to follow Jesus, but asked that he be permitted to bury his dead father. In reply the Lord said, "Follow me; and leave the dead to bury their own dead." According to some authorities certain ones remained with their people until their fathers died. They felt that to remain at home and to assist was an obligation that rested upon them; then, after the death of the father, they would be at liberty to engage in any kind of vocation which they might choose. It is altogether possible that such was true in this case. If this was so, Jesus brushes aside this camouflage and tells the man for him to come and follow Him immediately. No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

The next item to be mentioned in this chapter is the stilling of the tempest at sea. When Jesus entered into the boat, His disciples followed Him. As they were crossing, a great tempest arose in the sea. The waves were beginning to cover the boat. At that time Jesus fell asleep. Then the disciples came and awoke Him, saying, "Save, Lord; we perish." Upon His awaking, Jesus rebuked them because of their little faith. Then He gave a command to the wind, and there was a great calm. The stilling of the tempest produced a profound impression upon the disciples. This miracle shows that the Lord Jesus Christ had power in the realm of the natural world. He still is the Master of the winds and waves.

In the last paragraph of this chapter, verses 28-34, we read of our Lord's casting demons out of the two men (Gadarenes) who were living in the tombs. Upon our Lord's reaching the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, He went out of the boat upon land, and these two men, who were fierce and violent because of the fact that they were possessed by demons, and who lived in tombs in the mountainside, came to Jesus. They were such fierce characters that no one dared to go that way. When they saw the Lord Jesus they cried out, "What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" In some way or other they were able to recognize in Jesus the Son of God. They therefore confessed Him. Moreover they realized that they were destined eventually to be cast into torment. They feared, however, that He was going to cast them there "before the time." Evidently these demons understood that at a certain time in the history of the world they will be cast into the pit of the abyss or the place of everlasting punishment. The time when this will be done is evidently at the beginning of the millennial reign of our Lord. As authority for this position look at Isaiah 24:21,22. Here we see that "it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will punish the host of the high ones on high [the host of evil spirits], and the kings of the earth upon the earth." They then shall be gathered into the pit where they shall be incarcerated for the many days—the thousand years' reign of our Lord.

Near the place where the Gadarene demoniacs were a herd of swine was feeding. The demons, speaking through these men, implored the Lord Jesus saying, "If thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine." The permission was granted. Immediately upon the demons entering the swine, they, the hogs, ran violently down the steep bank and rushed into the water where they were drowned.

The report concerning this unusual occurrence scattered throughout the countryside. Those who owned the swine came out and implored Jesus to leave their borders, which thing He did. He then entered the boat and crossed back to the western side of the Sea of Galilee. Then He came to His own city, doubtless Capernaum, where He had his headquarters at the time.

From the account of our Lord's casting these demons out of the Gadarenes, we see that He had power and authority over evil spirits. He cast them out by His own divine power and authority. Indeed He is Lord of all.

THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD—PART II  
*(Installment Nine)*

As we have already seen, Matthew is not chronological, as a rule, in his arrangement of the material which he presents to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the Hebrew Messiah. He is topical. He therefore selected certain outstanding miracles which the Lord performed and brought them together within the compass of two chapters—8 and 9—and presented these as the credentials of the King of the Jews which attest His claims to the messianic office. In this exposition I shall not attempt therefore to show the chronological order of the events of this chapter, which is presented by both Mark and Luke.

Verse 1 of chapter 9 belongs to chapter 8 and tells of our Lord's return from His trip to the east side of the Sea of Galilee and of His coming back to His own city, Capernaum. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, reared in Nazareth, and, after He began His active ministry, He made Capernaum His headquarters. "His own city," therefore, in this connection was in all probability Capernaum.

In verses 2-8 we have a record of one of the outstanding miracles of our Lord—the healing of the paralytic who was brought on a bed to Jesus while He was in a certain home teaching the multitudes who thronged the place. Upon seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven" (vs. 2).

Jesus saw the faith of the man and that of his friends who were bearing him. Faith always manifests itself in action—whenever there is an opportunity for it to act. By faith Daniel closed the mouths of the lions. There was no opportunity for him to act, but simply to trust. Nevertheless it was pure faith. By faith Abraham and Sarah were empowered to become the parents of Isaac, the child of promise. Their bodies were as good as dead but by faith they received power to conceive seed. There was no opportunity for faith to act in this case. By faith women received their dead back to life (Heb. 11:35). There was no opportunity for faith to act. All these could do was to trust. But whenever there is an opportunity for faith to act it always asserts itself in obedience to the will of God—whenever the Lord has spoken on a definite subject. In the case before us these people knew that Jesus was present in the house. They believed that He was compassionate and that He could heal the man if He chose to do so. The circumstances lead us to believe that all, the sick man and those assisting him, had faith.

The Lord Jesus had power to forgive sins upon earth. Hence when He spoke, saying that He had forgiven the man's sins, they were forgiven.

The carping scribes who were present immediately charged Jesus with blasphemy. They doubtless thought so, for they considered Him simply as a man. They knew that God alone could forgive sins. His stating that the man's sins were forgiven either implied that He was God who had the power to forgive or that He was a blasphemer. Since these scribes considered Him as a mere man, they naturally charged him with blasphemy.

In reply the Lord asked them, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" Then He added, "For which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and walk?" But in order that they might understand that He had authority on earth to forgive sins, He said to the sick man, "Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house." To pronounce the man forgiven and to command him to pick up his bed, arise, and walk are expressions equal to each other—because the Lord Jesus is the one who uttered them.

When the man was thus miraculously restored to soundness of body, he arose and departed as Jesus commanded. Then a great fear came upon all who were present, and they glorified God who had granted such authority to men—to the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the God-man. By this miracle He showed that He had power in both the spiritual realm, to forgive sins, and in the physical realm, to heal the body.

We next come to the call of Matthew, the tax-gatherer, and the entertainment which he extended to the Lord and to his disciples, the record of which is found in verses 9-17.

In the parallel accounts (Mark 2:14-22; Luke 5:27-38), Matthew is simply called Levi and is designated as a tax gatherer. In the first record of the Gospel Levi is given the name of Matthew, to whom the first Gospel is attributed. Our author, without hesitation, mentions his name and his form of vocation prior to his call to the apostolic mission. Matthew's name appears in each of the lists of the Apostles.

As soon as the Lord called him to leave his regular occupation and to follow Him, he did so (Matt. 9:9). It is doubtless true that Matthew was a tax gatherer for the Roman government in Capernaum where Jesus had His headquarters. This being true, he had an excellent opportunity to become thoroughly acquainted with the Lord Jesus and with His work and objectives. He therefore considered it a high honor and privilege to be called into the work of the Master. Let each one of us, regardless of our occupation, be ready for the Lord to call us into any definite, specific work for Him; and may we, like Matthew, answer the call should it come, leaving all to follow Him. When we do so, may we realize that no man having put His hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.

In verses 10-13 we have an account of a feast which Matthew set and to which he invited Jesus and the disciples. Some think that as soon as Matthew received his call, he set this feast. Other scholars are of the opinion that he made it at a later time. The latter position seems to be the correct one.

While Jesus and His disciples were seated at the meal, many tax gatherers and sinners came and sat down with them. It seems from verse 11 that they were partaking of the meal with Jesus and the others; for the Pharisees, upon seeing this, asked the Lord's disciples, "Why eateth your Teacher with the publicans and sinners?" When Jesus heard their question, he said, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what *this* meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Our Lord associated with sinners, not because He loved their evil deeds and took pleasure in their practices, but because He wished to reach their hearts, give them the truth, and save their souls. The Pharisees in their blindness were unable to see behind appearances and to recognize the spiritual work of our Lord. As a matter-of-fact, the unregenerated heart, especially one that is steeped in tradition, is unable to recognize in the least degree spiritual realities.

It seems that while they were partaking of this great feast, certain of John's disciples came to Jesus and asked Him, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?" Our Lord answered this question in the words recorded in verses 15-17 of this passage. He illustrated the truth which He wished to teach by the parable of a wedding. While the bridegroom is present, the guests feast sumptuously. After the festivities are over, they fast—in comparison with their feasting during his presence. Again He illustrated the point by stating that a new piece of cloth is not sewed on an old garment; neither is new wine put into old wineskins. In the event that either of these things is done, the old garment is rent and the old wineskins are burst. The latter situation becomes worse than the former. The lesson to be taught was that it was inconsistent for those who were with the Lord, the bridegroom, to fast while He was present with them. But, said He, "... the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast." This was ample justification for His partaking of a feast with those who were hungering and thirsting after truth and righteousness. The suggestion made regarding His leaving and the development of a changed situation led to His use of the two parables, regarding the rent garment and the old wineskin. When the time should come for the change which would inevitably occur at His departure, there would be a necessity for having new things. The old ceremonial system of the law was insufficient to hold or contain the things of the new order—the coming Christian Dispensation—which would be in the power of the Spirit and would transcend the limits of ceremonialism and legalism.

While our Lord was speaking these things to the multitude, a ruler entered the house and worshiped Jesus, stating that his daughter was at that time dead, but he implored Him to come and restore her to life. The Lord immediately arose and began to follow the man. So did His disciples. As they were going on the way, a woman who had been plagued with an issue of blood for twelve years came behind Him and touched the border of His garment. Immediately power went forth from Him and restored her to perfect health. At this point the Lord turned around and said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith has made thee whole." She was made whole from that hour. Her faith had made her whole—her faith in Jesus as the one who was able to perform the miracle of healing. In the Gospel Records our Lord constantly emphasized that the blessings of God can be procured only by faith. The fact of her touching His garment did not bring the desired result. The faith that lay behind the action was the thing which the Lord honored, as He does on all occasions. Those who come to God must believe two things: first, that He is; and that He is a rewarder of those who seek after Him. This woman was of that character. Hence her faith made her whole.

In verses 23-26 we have the account of our Lord's reaching the ruler's home where his little daughter lay a corpse. The flute players and the multitudes were making a great tumult. Upon arriving He said, "Give place: for the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." At this remark they laughed Him to scorn. Being unmindful of their ridicule, He entered the house, after the multitude had been put forth, and took the damsel by the hand. She immediately arose to life.

Such a miracle as this astounded the people, "And the fame hereof went forth into all that land." From this we see that our Lord is the Master of life and death. He has the keys of death and of hades. He will give life to the dead in Christ when He comes for His saints, which event may occur at any moment. Are we ready for that great event?

In verses 27-31 we have a record of our Lord's restoring sight to two blind men. As He was leaving the ruler's house where He had restored his daughter to life, He was traveling along the way. These men began following Him and crying, "Have mercy on us," and addressing Him as "son of David," a messianic designation. Evidently they had heard from others that Jesus was present. They knew enough about Him to realize that He was able to perform miracles. This belief doubtless caused them to identify Him as the Messiah for whom the nation was looking. When He entered into a house the blind men followed Him and spoke to Him. In reply the Lord said, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Instantly they affirmed their faith in His ability to restore their sight saying, "Yea, Lord." Then He touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith be it done unto you." Instantly their eyes were opened. Then He sternly charged them not to make the miracle known. Nevertheless, they went forth and spread abroad his fame throughout all the countryside. We are not to believe that they willfully disobeyed His instructions, but that through great joy they told what He had done for them. Thus again we see our Lord performing His miracles within the realm of the physical.

The final miracle of this chapter is recorded in verses 32-34. In this paragraph we have the account of our Lord casting out a demon from a man who had been unable to speak. Doubtless this incapacity was due to the influence and the power of the demon. As the multitudes observed the man and heard him speak, all marveled saying, "It was never so seen in Israel." The unprejudiced, unsophisticated multitudes could recognize the power of God in the mighty miracles wrought, but the Pharisees who were standing by, through their prejudice and hatred, were unable to detect the presence and power of God in the miracle wrought. Hence they, in blasphemy said, "By the prince of the demons casteth he out demons." It is not said in this record that they blasphemed, but this is what the Lord called blasphemy against the Son of man (Mark 3:28-30). To all truth seekers it was evident that our Lord was performing His miracles by the power of God. There are none so blind as those who will not see.

In verse 35 we have a record of our Lord's going throughout the country, through cities and villages, "teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness." The sight of the suffering and the sin which was in evidence on every hand touched His compassionate heart; because the people were as sheep scattered abroad without any shepherd. Being able to see the real spiritual situation, the Lord Jesus then said very solemnly to His disciples, "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest." God is interested in the salvation of every man. Christ tasted death for every man. Our Lord invited all who are weary and who are heavy-laden to come to Him and find rest. But people cannot know the spiritual facts and realities as they are unless someone proclaims the truth to them. Recognizing these general principles our Lord said to the disciples that they should pray the Lord of the harvest—God the Father—to send laborers into His harvest. Every real, true laborer who has entered into the harvest has done so because some faithful person who realized the spiritual need prayed earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into the fields, which are white unto harvest. O that we might see the spiritual realities and recognize the days in which we are living! Let us, dear friends, be much in prayer in imploring the Lord of the harvest to send laborers that men may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God.

## THE RESTRICTED COMMISSION (*Installment Ten*)

The section, Matthew 9:35—11:1, constitutes a literary unit and deals with the commissioning and sending forth of the twelve Apostles to the lost sheep of the house of Israel during the latter six months of the second full year of our Lord's ministry. As we saw in last month's installment, our Lord told the Apostles that the fields were white unto the harvest and that they should pray to the Lord to send laborers forth to reap the ripened grain. Of course He was speaking of a spiritual harvest, one of souls. It is altogether possible that they began to pray to this end. They being in this frame of mind were then called and commissioned by Him to go forth on this special mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. According to 10:1 our Lord gave them authority over unclean spirits, and power to cast them out and to heal all manner of diseases and sicknesses.

In the paragraphs constituting verses 2-4, we have the list of the Apostles. They are mentioned in pairs. Peter is named first and is linked with his brother Andrew. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, are mentioned next. From John 1:35ff we learn that one of the two disciples of John the Baptist, who followed our Lord, was Andrew. From the record it becomes quite evident that the other of the two was none other than John the Apostle. Andrew immediately went and found Peter his brother and brought him to the Lord, who looks into the very depths of the soul of every one, and He changed Simon's name to Peter, which means a stone. By giving this name to Simon, the Lord thus indicated the type of character into which he would eventually grow and develop. Naturally he was of a more or less impulsive type. After the coming of the Spirit upon him—from Pentecost on—he was an entirely different man. He developed into a stalwart defender of the faith.

Andrew, which name is derived from the Greek word meaning man, was one of the original disciples who heard John's testimony concerning Jesus and who followed Him. After realizing that Jesus was the Messiah of Old Testament predictions, Andrew went and brought his brother Peter to the Lord. It is quite likely that John, who, as suggested above, doubtless was one of these two disciples, also brought his brother James to the Lord at this time. I say this is quite likely, yet we cannot be dogmatic on this point. The next two mentioned in this list of the Twelve are Philip and Bartholomew. This Philip is also mentioned in John, chapter 1. He it was who brought Nathanael to the Lord, concerning whom He declared, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" From all the circumstances connected with the narratives, it is quite likely that Nathanael is here in the list of the Apostles called Bartholomew. For reasons leading to this view consult any good commentary. Thomas is next mentioned. We know little about him, except that he doubted our Lord's resurrection and would not believe unless he actually saw Jesus and handled Him with his hands. He is mentioned along with Matthew, the tax gatherer, the author of the first Gospel. We know practically nothing about James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus. Also our knowledge of Simon the Cananaean is most limited. The last on the list is Judas Iscariot, who betrayed our Lord. From all the facts we know that he was more or less under the influence of Satan and demonic powers.

Although Peter appears first in all the lists of the Apostles, we are not to accord to him any position of priority. He never assumed such an attitude; neither did anyone in apostolic times accord it to him. In his Epistles (1 Pet. 5:1) he speaks of himself as being a fellow-elder with others. This shows that he was on an equality with, and not superior to, other elders.

A list of the Apostles is found in Mark 3:14-19; Luke 6:12-18; and Acts 1:13.

All who are familiar with the Gospel Records know that the great Galilean ministry lasted probably eighteen months, which covered the latter half of the first full year of our Lord's ministry and the second full year. On the first tour of Galilee, so far as our knowledge is concerned, only the first four or five disciples, whose call is found in John 1:35-51, accompanied our Lord.

Between the second and third tours Jesus appointed the Twelve to be Apostles, who accompanied Him on the second tour. But on the third evangelistic campaign of Galilee, Jesus sent the Apostles out two by two proclaiming the glad message. It appears from the brief account of this last tour that He did not accompany them. On the contrary, He sent them forth while He himself went to other places. Before sending them forth the Lord gave full and implicit instructions as to the preparation that they should make for their journey, what they should preach, what they should do while on the campaign, and where they should stay. The account of these instructions is found in Matt. 10:2-15, Mark 6:7-13, and Luke 9:1-6.

In the first place it is to be noted that the Lord gave them a strict charge not to go to the Gentiles but rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The gospel was first to the Jew and still is—as one sees from Romans 1:16,17. The lost sheep of the house of Israel are the Jewish nation, the twelve tribes. Those people whom we know as Jews today constitute the twelve tribes of Israel. It is a mistake to think of or to speak of ten of the tribes and of their being lost, for such is not the case.

The theme of their message was to be, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” John the Baptist broke the silence of the approximately four hundred years of the interbiblical period by proclaiming in the wilderness that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. When Jesus began His great Galilean ministry, He took up the same theme, for in Mark 1:15 we learn that He proclaimed, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.” A comparison of the account of Matthew with Mark and Luke reveals this fact: Matthew in all, except four places uses the expression, the kingdom of heaven, whereas Mark and Luke speak of the same thing as the kingdom of God; but in four places Matthew himself uses the expression, the kingdom of God. Hence when Jesus began to preach that the kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God, was at hand, he was sounding the same note which John the Baptist did. On this last tour of Galilee the Apostles were to proclaim the same message. What is meant by the expression, the kingdom of heaven? The answer is to be found in a study of the parables of Matthew, chapter 13. When one examines this passage, one sees that the expression is synonymous with Christendom. The parables of the sower and the wheat and tares, together with all the other parables of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, present some phase of Christendom as we know it during the present age. In other words, our Lord, in these seven parables, was outlining the course that Christian history would take through the present age.

By some good, sincere, earnest brethren the expression, kingdom of heaven, as it was used by John, is taken to indicate the earthly kingdom that was foretold in the Old Testament when the Messiah should sit upon the throne of David and reign over the earth. These brethren tell us that the expression had this signification up until we come to the thirteenth chapter of Matthew—after the leaders of the Jews showed great hostility and plotted to kill Him, which record is found in Matthew 12:14. Then, we are told, in the parables our Lord made a new revelation and gave a different meaning to this expression from that which it had had prior to this time. Hence, according to this explanation, the term, kingdom of heaven, prior to the events of Matthew, chapter 12, meant the kingdom which will be established at the second coming of our Lord whereas after that event it signified Christendom.

The parables of the kingdom were given between the first and second tours of Galilee. If a change in the program was brought about when the Jews plotted to kill Jesus, then the kingdom, in the sense of the millennial reign of our Lord, was postponed and was not at hand. But full six months after this crisis, our Lord sent the Apostles out proclaiming the same message to the people that John the Baptist had proclaimed in the wilderness and that He had been preaching all along. These facts and many others lead me personally to the conclusion that the expression, kingdom of heaven, as proclaimed by the Twelve when they were on the restricted commission meant exactly what it signified when used by John and by Jesus and as is explained in Matthew, chapter 13.

When we study the redemptive career of Messiah as it is set forth in various Old Testament passages, such as Isaiah, chapters 42, 61, and 65, we see that the prophet foresaw the first coming of Messiah, His launching a preaching ministry, His being rejected, His return to heaven, and His session at the right hand of the throne of God during the present era. Following this age the judgments of the Tribulation come upon the earth. At the end of the Tribulation the Lord returns and sets up the kingdom which was foretold clearly by the Old Testament prophets.

From this little outline of Old Testament prophecy, we can see clearly the fact that the kingdom in its present phase—Christendom—was foreseen by the Old Testament prophets. This interpretation is confirmed by the Apostle Paul's quoting Deuteronomy 32:21 and Isaiah 65:1 and applying these passages to the church (Rom. 10:19,20). Thus it is clear from these statements that the prophets of the Old Testament did see the present era and also the gathering out from among the nations of earth a people for the Lord. The students of the Old Testament who heard John announce that the time was fulfilled and that the kingdom of heaven was at hand would naturally understand that He was talking about this spiritual phase of the kingdom which is known as Christianity. When Jesus preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, His auditors understood that He was speaking of the present Christian Dispensation—this Age of Grace. When the Seventy, in fulfillment of this charge which we are studying, proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, their hearers understood naturally that they were speaking about this spiritual phase of the kingdom. When Jesus was at Jerusalem during the feast of Tabernacles, six months before the crucifixion, He declared, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall become one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:16). This prediction clearly refers to the present phase of the kingdom of God, which, as we have already seen, was foretold by the Old Testament prophets and was proclaimed as being at hand by John the Baptist, Jesus, the Twelve Apostles, and by the Seventy during the latter Judean ministry.

According to Matthew 10:8 the Apostles were to perform miracles of healing, to cast out demons, and to raise the dead. These miracles were to attest their authority as ministers of the Gospel. When the Apostles began the proclamation of the truth from Pentecost and onward, they performed miracles which attested the genuineness of their message. But, as Paul shows in I Corinthians, chapter 13, those miraculous works were to attend the ministers of the truth for a limited time and then to cease—after they had served their purpose.

When one reads Matthew 10:9,10, he sees that there were negative elements in the instructions. The Apostles were not to take gold, nor silver, nor brass in their purses. They were not to take a wallet for the journey, nor two coats, nor extra shoes, nor a staff. The assumption was that those to whom they proclaimed the Word of life should support them in their ministry.

The Lord expected them to be entertained in the homes of the people wherever they went, but they were not to select the best, the nicest, and the most comfortable places in a locality for a temporary home. They were to accept an invitation for entertainment and remain at that place until they left the locality. Upon arrival at any home they were to pray God's peace upon that place, if there was a son of peace residing there, that is, if there was someone who wanted truth and was a servant of God. If, on the other hand, the home to which they were invited was not worthy, they were to let their peace return to them. If at any time they went to a place and their message was rejected, they were to shake off the dust of the place from their feet as a testimony against those who did not want truth—when they left the city. Whenever God gives people an opportunity to receive the truth and they will not embrace it, then the responsibility for their condition rests upon them and not upon the messenger. "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for those cities whose people have had an opportunity to receive the truth, but have rejected it.

The Lord knows the human heart, which is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). Jesus knew the character of the people to whom He was sending the Apostles on their mission. He therefore forewarned them saying, "Behold, I sent you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as

doves” (vs. 16). The one thing that was to be the great concern with the Apostles was that they should be wise and discreet, giving no occasion for needless offense. During the last six months of the second full year of our Lord’s ministry there is nothing in the Gospels to indicate that they were ever arrested and brought before any Jewish councils or synagogues, or before governors or kings of the Gentiles. When we note this fact we see that this commission—usually called the limited or restricted commission—cannot be limited to the preaching activity of the Apostles at that time, but that it reached out beyond Pentecost, at which time the Apostles were to begin preaching the gospel first in Jerusalem, then in Judaea, next in Samaria, and then to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). This commission, however, strictly speaking, was limited to the Jewish people and was not for the Gentiles.

When the disciples would thus be brought before governors and rulers, they were to consider those occasions as opportunities for them to testify and to proclaim the gospel. Moreover our Lord told them that, whenever they should be arrested, they were not to be disturbed and anxious concerning how they were to make their defense, for they would not have to depend upon themselves; but that the Holy Spirit would give them their message in the very hour and enable them to give the proper testimony. This part of the promise was fulfilled by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them at Pentecost, who did inspire them to give the infallible message to those to whom they ministered on all occasions.

According to verse 21 the message would not be received by all alike; but in a family one would receive it and another would reject it. Thus there would arise division within the family unit. They would not be welcomed by the unsaved. On the contrary, they would be hated. But the ones enduring to the end the same are to be saved. The same promise is found in Matthew 24:13, which is indeed parallel to this case. In the Olivet Discourse our Lord, speaking of the time of the Tribulation, said that many would stumble and would deliver one another up to death. Those stumbling and delivering one another to death are certainly not saved people. Of course there is no promise of salvation for such. Now in contrast with them the promise is made to those who enduring to the end shall be saved. Only those enduring the persecutions and standing true to Christ will be saved. But only those will stand true to Christ who are regenerated and who are strengthened by the Spirit of God to endure such persecution. We are not to consider that the Saviour is promising salvation to the one who simply by grim tenacity and strength of character faces all opposition and remains true to the end. Such an interpretation would take salvation from the basis of grace through faith and put it upon one of works and merit. But the promise of salvation in both the passages under consideration is given in the spirit of those promises which are mentioned in the seven letters to the churches of Asia (Rev., chaps. 2, 3). For instance, to him who overcomes the promise is made that he shall eat of the tree of life. One cannot overcome and thus upon that basis be granted the privilege of eating of the tree of life. Such doctrine is legalism, but in this and all the passages of Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, of this character are assurances that there are rewards awaiting the one who stands firmly and loyally throughout all opposition to the end. In the language of II Peter, chapter 1, there will be granted an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

According to verse 23 of our passage the Lord assured the Apostles that they would not have gone through all the cities of Israel until He, the Son of man, should be come. The coming of which He spoke was none other than that which we term the second coming and which occurs at the end of the Tribulation. When we recognize this fact, we see that the Lord blended the Apostles labors which they performed in Israel before and after Pentecost with the labors of His disciples in Israel which will be put forth by the faithful servants of the Lord in Israel in the end time. Here we see an application of the principle which Bible students recognize as the “law of double reference.” The Apostles did not complete the evangelization of Israel during their day but were hindered by opposition from the Jews. This unfinished task will, however, be resumed in Israel in the closing days of this dispensation, but even then this task will not be completed prior to our Lord’s coming in glory at the end of the Tribulation.

Who will take up this evangelization of Israel in the end time? Of course we Christians who are interested in Jewish evangelization are doing all that we can under present circumstances to give the truth to the Jew. From other

scriptures we know that those who will evangelize the cities of Israel will be the 144,000 Jewish evangelists of whom we read in Revelation, chapter 7. But who will give these future evangelists the truth? The answer is this: Those who have it now and who see God's plan for Israel in the future and are willing to cooperate with God in the working out of His plan.

Jesus was persecuted by the religious authorities of His day. He therefore told the disciples that they need not expect any better treatment than He had received. They were to face the situation which confronted them with boldness, in the power of the Spirit. Moreover, they were to proclaim to the world that which He had spoken to them in private. They were to sound forth the message with no uncertain note. Moreover, they were not to fear those who would oppose them. The Lord gave assurance to the disciples that all who would confess Him before men He would confess before His Father. Those who deny Him before men would be denied before His Father in heaven. This is a general principle which obtains at all times.

In verses 34-39 our Lord again called attention to the fact that the gospel message would be received by some and rejected by others. In other words, certain members of a family would accept the message and be saved, while the others would refuse and become hostile toward even those of their own blood-kin who accepted Him. These divisions must come. If anyone will live godly in Christ Jesus, he must suffer persecution. The Lord does not promise to exempt anyone from trials, difficulties, and persecutions.

In verses 40-42 the Lord promised the appropriate reward to those of His disciples who went forth and served Him in the proclamation of the truth of the gospel. The Lord is a good paymaster. He will give rewards according to a person's work. Men are saved by the grace of God through faith, but they will be rewarded for the labors which they perform. When the Lord awards the rewards, He will take into consideration the spirit in which the service is rendered, the quality and the quantity of the work or the task accomplished. When Jesus had finished giving instructions to the disciples regarding their new task to which they were to go immediately, He went by himself, it seems, to preach and to teach in the cities of Galilee.

JESUS' EULOGY OF JOHN, HIS UPBRAIDING CITIES OF PRIVILEGE, HIS PRAYER, AND INVITATION  
(*Installment Eleven*)

In our exposition of the Gospel according to Matthew we have arrived at chapter 11. As we have previously noted, Matthew as a rule is not chronological, but is topical in his arrangement of the material which he presents to us. As we recall from last month's issue, chapter 10 gives the "restricted commission" which consists of the instructions, given by our Lord to the disciples, that were carried out on the third tour of Galilee. But the events recorded in Matthew, chapter 11, occurred between the first and the second tours of Galilee. As has already been suggested in this series, Matthew selected and arranged his material topically in order to present to the Jewish people the proof that Jesus of Nazareth was and is their Messiah.

In Matthew 11:2-6 we have an account of John the Baptist's sending two of his disciples to Jesus with an inquiry concerning whether or not He was the expected Messiah. At the time John sent them he had been in prison a little over six months. According to Josephus the place of his incarceration was Machaerus, a fortress in the land of Moab.

Although John had been confined in prison, it is clear from the record that he received reports through his disciples concerning the things which Jesus was doing and teaching. Having heard of His marvelous performances, he sent his disciples with this inquiry.

This question immediately arises in this connection: Did not John bear testimony to the fact that Jesus was the Messiah and did he not point Him out to some of his disciples as the long-expected one? Why the change in his attitude? Had John's faith been eclipsed by the cruel confinement in which he had been held? Someone has said that logic and reason during times of prosperity are cogent and powerful, but that they are entirely different to one who is suffering, is discouraged and downhearted. There can be no doubt concerning John's sanity when he bore testimony which proved the messiahship of Jesus (John 1:29-42). To John in prison the situation appeared quite altered from what it had seemed when he was at the height of his great preaching campaign. Doubts had begun to eclipse his faith. This fact seems to be echoed by our Lord's statement to John's disciples, "And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me" (Matt. 11:6). The Lord had just called attention to the marvelous miracles which He was performing and then added the statement just quoted, which seems to be a gentle rebuke to John because of his doubts.

After the messengers had departed from Jesus, He turned to His disciples and asked them concerning their estimate of John: "What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft *raiment*?" (vss. 7,8). Did they expect to see a prophet? Then Jesus immediately answered this last question by asserting, "Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet." To this testimony He added the information that John was the one of whom Malachi in 3:1 had spoken: "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way before thee" (vs. 10). John was a prophet, in the true sense of the term; but, as Jesus said, he was more than a prophet. He was the herald of the true Messiah who had entered the world to work out man's redemption.

Our Lord spoke further concerning John and his greatness by saying that he was the greatest man who had ever been born of woman. As we scan the pages of history we see that God has had his noblemen at various crises in the history of redemption. But John, according to our Lord, towered above them all—even above Noah, Moses, Samuel, and David. His greatness consisted in his recognition of who he was and the place which he was filling. He was free from all pride and jealousy. He was indeed the loyal disciple of the Lord. He pointed away from himself to Jesus and did all within his power to magnify Him—even at the expense of his falling into disfavor with the people. He was an honest, conscientious, sincere prophet of God. Never did he curry favor with anyone. He spoke boldly his convictions, even though it did cost him his life.

Although John was the greatest of all the men of the old dispensation, the least one in the kingdom of heaven is even greater than John. The least member of the church of Jesus Christ, which is His body, is greater than John, in that he is lifted to a higher position of spirituality and relationship to God. He has been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ—things of which John and all others in the old dispensation had been denied.

According to verse 12, from the days of John the Baptist until the time that Jesus was delivering this eulogy regarding him, the kingdom of heaven was suffering violence and men of violence were attempting to take it by force. Jesus became very popular with the masses as we see in our study of the great Galilean ministry. For instance, when He fed the five thousand at the conclusion of the Galilean ministry, there were those who recognized in Him the Hebrew Messiah. Not being of a spiritual nature and yet wanting the Messianic Era to dawn, they attempted by force to take Jesus and make Him king (John 6:15). Our Lord would not of course submit to any such procedure as this.

According to verse 13 “all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.” God gave the law to Moses. At various crises in the history of Israel the Lord raised up prophets who spoke for Him, delivering His message to the people to meet their immediate needs. Finally, God ceased to raise up more prophets, and there ensued what is known as the inter-biblical period during which the voice of prophecy died out. John the Baptist broke this silence of approximately four hundred years by declaring that the time had been fulfilled and that the kingdom of heaven was then at hand. Thus a new note was sounded which added force, power, and emphasis to the message of Moses and the prophets. This is the significance of verse 13 of our chapter.

Following this statement our Lord declared to the people, “And if ye are willing to receive *it*, this is Elijah, that is to come.” But we know from related passages the people would not receive the truth regarding him. Hence John the Baptist was not, to them, the real Elijah. According to Matthew 17:9-13 John was *an* Elijah but not *the* Elijah. According to Malachi 4:5,6, Elijah the prophet will personally appear upon earth, heralding the approach of Messiah. This coming is yet in the future and will be fulfilled immediately before the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ. But in a manner analogous to the work of Elijah in the future, John the Baptist became the forerunner of Messiah at His first coming. John was simply, as stated above, an Elijah but was not Elijah himself. That this proposition is true is evident from John’s own reply to the delegation which came from Jerusalem to ask concerning who he was. When he was asked if he were Elijah, he frankly confessed that he was not. We therefore know that John was simply an Elijah, a man of like temperament and disposition as the true Elijah of the future.

Seeing the critical attitude that the people had taken with reference to Himself, the Lord compared His generation to children sitting in the market places, who call to their fellows and say, “We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not mourn.” Nothing could please them. John came, living an abstemious life. Some said therefore, “He hath a demon.” Jesus came, living a normal life and associating with the people, accepting invitations to dinners. Concerning Him, therefore, the people said, “Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!” No one can please the unregenerated heart, that does not want truth.

There were certain places to which Jesus was accustomed to go, and in which He performed His mightiest works. Two of those cities were Chorazin and Bethsaida. Notwithstanding the great advantages which they had enjoyed by His presence, they had not repented. Our Lord therefore upbraided them very severely and declared that it would be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Tyre or Sidon than for them, the reason being that had He appeared in either of these heathen cities and preached and performed the miracles which he had wrought, they would have repented and would have accepted Him. Capernaum likewise came in for condemnation. During our Lord’s entire Galilean ministry, consisting of approximately eighteen months, Capernaum was His headquarters. Those who lived there had unparalleled opportunities and advantages. Nevertheless they would not accept the

truth. Jesus therefore declared that it would be more tolerable for Sodom than for Capernaum in the day of judgment.

The “day of judgment” here doubtless refers to the time when all the wicked are raised and are brought before the judgment of the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15). This great assize of lost people will be held after the millennial reign of our Lord. None of the saved will appear there to be judged. The judgment of the believer occurred at the cross. He who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ has passed from death unto life and shall not come into judgment (John 5:24). The commonly received teaching that there will be one great judgment day on which all—both saved and lost—will be raised and brought before the throne to be judged according to the deeds of the body is erroneous. It does not find support in any passage when it is properly interpreted in the light of its context. The righteous are raised and come to life before the Millennial Age begins. They reign with Christ during that time. The dead who are lost do not come to life until after the thousand years are finished. Then they are raised to appear before the judgment seat of the great white throne at which their condemnation will be pronounced upon them. After that event they will be cast into everlasting punishment—because they have refused to accept the free grace of the Lord Jesus and be saved.

According to Matthew 11:25-27, at that season our Lord prayed and thanked God that the spiritual realities had been hidden from the wise and prudent of this world and had been revealed unto babes. Such an arrangement was in perfect accord with the Father’s good wishes.

In this connection Jesus, in prayer to His Father, said, “No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal *him*.” There is no mortal who can by philosophy or any other means ferret out God and understand Him. Neither is there anyone who has ever lived and who can understand fully the Lord Jesus Christ, who was and is the God-man. He was perfect man. He was, at the same time, perfect God. There was a union between those two natures which made Him the God-man. No mortal has ever been able to grasp the depth, the height, and the breadth of such marvelous teaching. Although we may not be able and cannot understand fully the significance of the incarnation, we can, by faith, accept the biblical teaching and receive the blessing which flows to all honest hearts who do accept.

The great invitation which our Lord extended to the people burdened with the cares and responsibilities of life is found in verses 28-30. This invitation was primarily open to those who were burdened. To them the Lord promised peace and joy. It seems to be characteristic of man that he never appreciates God until he is brought to his extremity. Hence we say “Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.” Whenever things are going well with the average person, he thinks little of God. As a rule, it takes adversity and disappointment to bring people to the point that they will accept the kind, loving invitation of the Lord Jesus Christ. May we who know Him and the power of His resurrection first live before men the Christ-life and then invite all to come, accept, and enjoy the full and free salvation which He has given us who have accepted Him.

## DETERMINED OPPOSITION AGAINST JESUS (*Installment Twelve*)

When we read chapter 12 of the Gospel according to Matthew, we come to a group of incidences in which a determined opposition to Jesus is set forth. As has been noted heretofore, Matthew is topical in his arrangement of the material which he presents. He therefore, in chapters 5-13, does not follow the chronological order, which is found in Mark and in Luke. On the contrary, he assembles his material according to subject matter.

When the four records of the Gospel are studied together, it is seen that the material which appears in Matthew, chapter 12, occurred both at the beginning of our Lord's second tour of Galilee and at the close of the same. This tour covered the first six months (roughly speaking) of the second full year of His ministry. The incidences that are mentioned in the first 21 verses occurred near the beginning of this second tour, whereas the events of verses 22-50 were connected with the very closing of this tour.

As we study the harmony of the Four Gospels, we see that the events recorded in John, chapter 5, occurred immediately before those appearing in Matthew 12:1-21. An examination of the former passage, in the light of all the facts, leads one to the conclusion that the feast of the Jews mentioned in verse 1 was in all probability the second of the four passovers of our Lord's ministry, which are given in John. In this chapter we see that our Lord healed a crippled man in Jerusalem on the Sabbath. This precipitated the first great controversy concerning working on the Sabbath. He left Jerusalem and returned to Galilee immediately. A year earlier when He visited Jerusalem—at the first recorded passover during His ministry—He launched the early Judean ministry which continued for something like six months. The occasion for His leaving on that occasion was that great opposition developed on the part of the Pharisees and He could no longer do any good in Judea. He therefore left that section of the country and went northward to Galilee, going through Samaria (John 4:1-4). And immediately after His visit to Jerusalem at the second passover (John, chapter 5) He also on account of opposition immediately left and returned to Galilee.

The opposition which began at Jerusalem by His healing the crippled man on the Sabbath continued. It seems that the enraged Jerusalem authorities sent their representatives wherever He went to keep their eyes upon Jesus and to stir up trouble on every occasion when it was possible. A vivid picture of this hostility to our Lord, Matthew presents in chapter 12.

### Jesus And The Disciples Passing Through The Grainfields

Matthew presents the first instance of opposition in Galilee by saying, "At that season Jesus went on the sabbath day through the grainfields; and his disciples were hungry and began to pluck ears and to eat" (12:1). The expression, "at that season," simply is speaking of the time of this opposition in general terms. The grain was ripening, which shows that the time was between passover and Pentecost. The disciples being hungry pulled some of the heads of wheat, crushed the grain out of the heads in the palms of their hands, and then blew the chaff with their breath from the wheat; then they ate the grain. To the carping, critical Pharisees, this was a violation of the Sabbath law prohibiting work on that day. This is an instance of their straining at gnats and swallowing camels.

In reply our Lord called attention to what David and those who were with him did on the Sabbath. As we see in the historical account, the king entered into the house of God and ate the showbread, a thing which was prohibited by the law. The showbread was for the priests alone. Yet David, in an emergency, did that which was strictly forbidden by law. Nevertheless, he was not punished by the Lord for this act. An emergency existed. The life of the people of God and their blood are precious in His sight. Things that are not lawful under ordinary conditions are permissible in times of a crisis.

Again our Lord cited the incident of the priests who offered more sacrifices on the Sabbath than on other days. In their doing this, they were laboring more on the Sabbath. Thus Jesus declared that in their doing this, they profaned the Sabbath, yet were guiltless. In discussing this same incident, Mark informs us that Jesus summed up the situation by saying, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: so that the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath." The laws regulating the amount of work to be done on the Sabbath were enacted by the Lord in the interest of man's welfare. If, therefore, an emergency arises in which one's welfare is at stake, God prefers the meeting of the actual needs of the individual rather than making man a slave to some arbitrary interpretation concerning the fundamentals of the Sabbath law. The Lord desires mercy rather than sacrifice. Our Lord thus from the Scriptures silenced His critics on this occasion.

#### Jesus' Healing The Man With The Withered Hand

According to verses 9-14 our Lord went from His encounter with the Pharisees, as just described, into the synagogue. There He found a man with a withered hand. Some of those present, were antagonistic to Jesus. They therefore asked Him, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" This they did "that they might accuse him." In reply the Lord Jesus asked them, "What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day." The critics of Jesus were absolutely silenced by His incisive logic. All of them knew that they would, on the Sabbath, pull a sheep or an ox out of a pit in order to save the life of an animal. Of course, they would do this in the interest of preserving their own property. If they thus could work on the Sabbath and save the life of a sheep, certainly Jesus could heal a man with a withered hand on that sacred day—and at the same time be guiltless. This is especially obvious, because man is of more value than a sheep. It is therefore lawful to do good on the sabbath.

When our Lord had thus answered the critics, He turned to the man and said, "Stretch forth thy hand." He did this and instantly it was restored as the other. The healing of this withered hand was the result of the exercise of the mighty power of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was and is master of all disease, and all situations as far as that is concerned.

Since our Lord's enemies could not answer His arguments, neither could they condemn Him for restoring the man's withered hand, they went out and took counsel how they might destroy Him. Think of it!—pious, religious people allowing their prejudices to drive them to such lengths that they would, when they lost their argument in the controversy, resort to plotting a cold-blooded murder. But this is what prejudice will do for people who have not a burning desire for truth above everything else.

#### Jesus' Teaching And Healing Ministry Beside The Sea

Perceiving the plot to destroy Him, our Lord withdrew from that place. When He did that, vast multitudes followed Him and He healed all of them. He charged them that they should not make Him known. From all the circumstances it appears that the excitement was running very high. The country was aglow with high, messianic expectations. A misunderstanding of the mission of Jesus and an ardent desire on the part of many for the starting of a revolutionary movement against the Romans would have injured the cause of the Lord Jesus. Knowing this fact, He sternly charged the people to be quiet—neither start nor pass on any rumors.

In His doing this, He was fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 42:1-4. Our Lord always had in mind that which had been written concerning Himself. All His actions, movements, and declarations were directed to the fulfillment of the ancient predictions.

An examination of this quotation in the original and in its setting in the Book of Isaiah shows that the entire redemptive career of King Messiah is set forth in the original prediction. According to verse 1 Messiah appears

upon the scene, and, having been anointed with the Holy Spirit at the time of His baptism (Matt. 3:13-17), He faces the future with a definite objective in mind, namely, that of establishing a regime of righteousness and justice in the earth; but, unlike dictators and earthly rulers, He is not to be, according to Isaiah, a rabble-rouser, appealing to the masses for a following. On the contrary, He refrains from inflaming the populace in public places by appealing to their prejudices. The prophet therefore foretold that He would not strive nor cry aloud, nor harangue the multitudes.

Moreover, He is unlike dictators in another respect—"A bruised reed shall he not break, And smoking flax shall he not quench, Till he send forth judgment unto victory." He is to be kind and considerate of the unfortunate and oppressed—something that dictators do not do. Whenever anyone gets in the way of an ambitious ruler, he is liquidated at once. Then the ruthless monarch goes on, marching frequently through rivers of blood, in order to attain his goal. On the contrary, Messiah is considerate and helpful to the downtrodden and the oppressed.

A glance at the original passage in Isaiah 42:1-4 shows that the prophet saw the present Christian Dispensation, during which the preaching ministry begun by the Master continues through the centuries while the nations await the time for Him to bring His laws and proclaim them to a submissive world. In view of these facts we see in this passage a prediction of our Lord's beginning His personal ministry after receiving the Spirit at His baptism, of His launching this preaching ministry which continues during the period of His absence—the Christian Dispensation—and, finally, of His second advent when He brings His laws and establishes His reign upon the earth.

By quoting this passage from Isaiah, chapter 42, Matthew shows that our Lord was guided by the principles set forth in this prediction. Of course, He was also governed by principles given in other forecasts relative to His redemptive work.

#### A Blasphemous Accusation Launched Against Jesus

The three incidents mentioned in the first twenty-one verses of this chapter occurred shortly after the passover season, two years prior to our Lord's crucifixion. During the six months prior to this passover Jesus had engaged in His first general tour of Galilee. Capernaum was His headquarters. Between the first and second tours, He chose twelve Apostles after a night of prayer and then delivered His manifesto—the Sermon on the Mount. In this He set forth the principles for which He stands—now and always. When we compare the records of the Gospel, we see that this masterful sermon (Matt., chaps. 5,6,7; Luke 6:20-7:1) actually comes between verses 21 and 22 of Matthew 12. Also the labors for the next six months, following the preaching of the Sermon on the Mount, likewise come in between these two verses. The events recorded in the rest of this chapter occurred at the conclusion of the second preaching tour of Galilee. It is very important that we understand these facts, especially so since some excellent brethren have thought that our Lord's teaching in the parables of the kingdom (Matt. Chap. 13) was occasioned by the active opposition mentioned in Matthew 12:14. The historical facts show that the six months of this second tour intervened, as stated above, between the time of the Pharisees taking counsel against Jesus and His giving the parables of the kingdom.

On another occasion (later in the ministry of Christ and in Judaea), within six months of our Lord's crucifixion, this same blasphemous accusation was hurled against Jesus of being in league with Beelzebub (Luke 11:14-16). An examination of this latter passage shows that the circumstances connected with it were entirely different. These two accounts must not be confounded.

The Pharisees and the other opponents of Jesus knew that He had performed a superhuman feat. This they could not deny. But, being prejudiced and refusing to see truth and acknowledge facts, they attributed His mighty miracles to the power of Satan. In reply our Lord showed the inconsistency of such a position. If Satan were casting out Satan, or demons were warring against demons, then his kingdom is divided—so are his subjects. Under such

conditions there is but one result, namely, the destruction of his kingdom. The force of this argument silenced the opponents of Jesus.

Moreover He showed His opponents that, if He by the Spirit of God was performing the miracles which He was working, then was the kingdom of God come upon them. Our Lord was exerting His powers against evil spirits as the occasion demanded. What He did, when He was here upon earth, was but a sample of that which He will do eventually when He returns. This work of putting Satan and his hosts out of commission and incarcerating them in the pit of the abyss are necessary or preliminary to the taking over of the world and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth. Such in substance is the argument of our Lord set forth in verses 28 and 29 of this chapter.

Doubtless there were some in our Lord's audience who endeavored to be neutral, desiring not to be involved in a controversy that would in anywise be injurious to their own personal interests. Our Lord therefore declared, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathered not with me scattereth." When it comes to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, men must take a positive stand either for or against Him. There is no neutral ground which one may occupy. If one will not step over on the side of the Lord, one naturally is against Him and of course will have to suffer the consequences.

The circumstances of this occasion caused our Lord to warn His auditors against blasphemy against the Spirit of God—the unpardonable sin. To them He declared that all blasphemy and sin that people might commit against Him as a man could be forgiven. The reason for this doubtless was the fact that His divine nature was shrouded by His humanity. Under such conditions only the spiritually-minded had vision enough to look behind the veil of flesh and to sense the presence of His divine nature. That men could thus see and recognize Him as the God-man is evident from the case of Nathanael who, as soon as He came face to face with Jesus of Nazareth, declared "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49). But there were very few Nathanaels in the first century. Comparatively speaking, there are very few Nathanaels today. In fact, there have been very few through the centuries. In view, then of the fact that His divine nature was veiled behind His humanity, our Lord declared that, all sin and blasphemy committed against Him could be forgiven—when men repented of their attitude and actions and accepted Him by faith.

On the other hand, the work of the Spirit of God was not thus veiled, as was the work of the Son of God. There were those in His day, as there had been before and have been since, who, by the power of Satan, did perform miracles; but their works were on a very low plane in comparison with those wrought by the Spirit of God through some servants of His or through the Son of God himself. There was therefore no excuse for anyone's mistaking the work of the Spirit of God and attributing it to the power of demons or to Satan himself. Our Lord therefore declared that the blasphemy against the Spirit of God could not be forgiven—neither in this age nor in the one to come.

Jesus, seeing the situation and knowing the corruption of the human heart, declared that the tree must be made good first in order that its fruits might be good. In this utterance He was speaking of the doctrine of the regeneration of the heart by the Spirit of God, which is accomplished when one in faith, doubting nothing, accepts Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. The heart is deceitful above all things and is desperately wicked. It must therefore be regenerated—the tree must be made good.

In verses 36,37, our Lord declared that men shall have to give an account for every idle word which they utter, for "... by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." We must understand this language in the light of subsequent revelations. When one accepts the Lord Jesus Christ and is regenerated, his sins are forgiven, for time and for eternity. Men are justified by the grace of God through faith. Men are not saved by their good words or deeds. When God forgives, He forgets. In view of these great fundamental principles of the

truth, we can be certain that our Lord in these verses was not speaking about saved people, but was talking about men of the world—who are never saved. At the same time we must remember this further teaching that the saved will be rewarded according to their deeds and the spirit in which they serve.

### The Craving For Signs Rebuked

At this season the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus to perform a miracle, to give them a sign as proof of His claims. He had just cast out a demon from a man who was blind and dumb and had restored him to perfect soundness. They would not accept this evidence, but wanted Him to perform some more spectacular feat. Evidence was not what they wanted; for, as we see from all the facts, they were present to criticize and to find fault. The craving for a sign—an abnormal spiritual condition—is, declared our Lord, an indication of “an evil and adulterous generation.” Those who are living upon a high moral plane and walking by faith with God do not crave the performance of miracles in order to believe. The continual performance of miracles will not sustain faith. This is seen in the fact that God performed daily miracles in behalf of Israel at the time of the Exodus and during the wilderness wanderings. Nevertheless she disbelieved (Num. 14:11,12).

Although Jesus on this occasion refused to perform a miracle to satisfy the depraved cravings for signs on the part of the Pharisees and Sadducees, He did indicate that there would be one great miracle, the miracle of miracles, which He would work in behalf, not only of Israel, but of all men. This miracle would be sufficient to convince any man of the truthfulness of His claims of being the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world. This sign to which He referred was His resurrection from the dead. In speaking of it, He declared that “... as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale [Gr. *Sea monster*]; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12:40). In Psalm 16:8-11 appears a prediction of the resurrection of the Messiah. His being restored to life is likewise set forth in Psalm 22 and in Isaiah, chapter 53.

On this occasion, which was, as the facts indicate, about eighteen months before the crucifixion, our Lord did not intimate anything as to how He would descend to the heart of the earth. He simply made the categorical statement that He would go there as Jonah had gone and would come back to life again as Jonah had.

That Jonah was drowned, that his body sank to the bottom of the sea, that his spirit went to Sheol and that it, after three days and three nights, was released and came back and re-entered his body, are set forth clearly in Jonah, chapter 2. When Jonah was drowned, upon being thrown out into the water, his spirit descended to Sheol. His body sank to the bottom of the ocean and was swallowed up by a fish that was especially prepared for the purpose. It remained in the belly of this sea monster during the three days and three nights that Jonah’s spirit was in Sheol. At the expiration of that time, his spirit was released from Sheol and came and re-entered his body. Then he prayed the petition found in Jonah, chapter 2. When Jonah thus promised the Lord that he would pay his vows which he had made, the fish which by this time had come to the shore, vomited him out upon the land. Jonah then went and did the preaching which God had commanded him. Jonah actually died. Jonah was really brought back to life again. Our Lord declared that just as that miracle had been performed in the case of Jonah, so one would be wrought in His case—He would be killed; His body would be laid in the tomb; His spirit would go to Hades and would return, re-entering His body; and He would come forth a triumphant victor over the forces of Satan. This thing He did, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Our Lord declared that the men of Nineveh and also the queen of the south would rise up in the judgment against the people of His generation because they had sought truth as the people of His day and time were not.

In verses 43-45 our Lord spoke of the condition of a man from whose body a demon had been cast. If such a person who is thus liberated does not fill his heart and life with the spiritual things, that demon, declared our Lord, will return, bringing other evil spirits with him. There can be no such thing as a vacuum, either in the natural realm

or in the spiritual sphere. What is true of the individual is likewise true of the Jewish race. It is clear from all the circumstances that our Lord in this description went beyond relating the facts concerning an individual and was speaking of the condition of the nation to which He came and ministered. Their latter condition would be worse than their first state if, after having enjoyed the light of His presence and His truth—and having Satan, relatively speaking, banished from the nation—they did not fill up the vacuum that was left by accepting Him and His truth. Then the spirit cast out, under those conditions, would come back into its former residence, bringing seven others worse than himself. Thus the latter end of the people of that generation would be worse than in the beginning.

#### Spiritual Ties Stronger Than Fleshly

According to the last paragraph of this chapter, verses 46-50, our Lord's mother and brothers on this occasion were seeking to speak with Jesus. From other passages we conclude that they were uneasy about His mental condition and they seemed to want to take Him home—at least that suggestion has been made by some scholars. Our Lord's attention was called to the fact that they were present and were desiring to see Him. Immediately He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples and declared, "Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." Of course this language is a play upon ideas, a pun upon words. Nevertheless there is set forth clear, positive teaching concerning fleshly ties and those of a spiritual nature.

Although our Lord from the standpoint of the flesh did sustain personal relationship to His mother and His own brothers, in the light of eternal verities those fleshly ties had been dissolved and only the spiritual ones have lasted.

I am wondering if my reader has actually and really accepted the Lord Jesus Christ personally as his Saviour and has thus entered into spiritual communication with Him. If so, there has been created a bond between the Lord and himself which is so strong that it can never be broken throughout time or eternity. If the reader has not thus accepted Him, my plea is that he do it immediately. The Lord bless each of us.

## THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM (*Installment Thirteen*)

In our study of the Gospel of Matthew we have reached the time of the close of the second general tour of Galilee by our Lord and His disciples, which was about one year and a half before the crucifixion. A comparison of Matthew, chapter 13, with the parallel account in Mark, chapter 4, shows that on this occasion our Lord spoke more than seven parables. Notwithstanding this fact, it is quite evident that Matthew, who is topical in the development of his material, attached significance to seven of these parables and presented them together as a whole, a single unit. An examination of these parables reveals the fact that there is progress and development in the thought. When one studies carefully the entire chapter, one sees that the first one begins with the sower, who is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, and ends with the parable of the dragnet, which foretells the winding up of the affairs of this age and the introduction of the great Millennial Kingdom upon earth. The five between the two extremes likewise give a very definite idea of progress and development. When this fact is noted and when one remembers that the first one gives the beginning of this age and the last one the close of it, one inevitably comes to the conclusion that these parables constitute a general outline of the course of events of the entire Christian Dispensation, judged from the spiritual angle of things.

If one will study Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, carefully and will compare them with the seven parables of Matthew, chapter 13, one will inevitably come to the conclusion—provided he is free of all prejudice—that there is reflected in these letters to the seven churches of Asia the same general outline and development of church history that appears in the parables of the kingdom of Matthew, chapter 13.

### The Significance Of The Term Kingdom Of Heaven

A careful study of the expression, kingdom of heaven, as it appears in Matthew, shows that he used this term almost exclusively. On four occasions, however, he employed the phrase, the kingdom of God. Mark and Luke, on the other hand, employed the term, kingdom of God, in all the places where Matthew used “the kingdom of heaven.” This is a very important fact and should be recognized by all Bible students. One would do well, in his study of the parables of Matthew, chapter 13, to read the account of the same parables as found in Mark, chapter 4. One will then see by personal investigation that where Matthew used the expression, kingdom of heaven, Mark employed the term, the kingdom of God. It is clear from all the facts that Mark is giving an account of the same sermon or discourse of which Matthew is speaking. An examination and comparison of Matthew’s use of “the kingdom of heaven” with Mark and Luke’s use of “the kingdom of God” shows beyond a peradventure that they use “the kingdom of God” in referring to the same thing that is called “the kingdom of heaven” by Matthew.

Whenever “the kingdom of God” is mentioned in Scripture, all the facts of the context must be studied carefully in order to determine what is meant in any given case. All Bible students recognize that this term has various connotations. For instance, in Psalm 103:19-22 it indicates the entire universe—the material things as well as various intelligent beings. But in Colossians 1:13, “the kingdom of the Son of his love,” the kingdom of God, is the church of Jesus Christ. The same connotation appears in Romans 14:16,17. In certain passages it refers to the glorious reign of our Lord upon earth during the Millennium, but in the parables of the kingdom which we are to study this month our term—the kingdom of heaven, or, kingdom of God—signifies Christendom, the reign of God upon the earth as it exists during the present era. With these facts clearly in mind, let us now note very briefly each of the parables of our lesson.

### The Parable Of The Sower

The gist of the parable of the sower is as follows: The sower went forth to sow seed, which fell upon four different types of soil: the wayside soil, stony ground, that upon which the thorns thrived, and the good soil. That which fell upon the wayside was quickly devoured by the birds of the heavens. The seed falling upon stony ground soon

sprang into life but was scorched by the intensity of the heat, because it had little depth of soil. The seed falling among the thorns germinated, grew, and developed into plants, which never bore fruit to perfection, the reason being that the plants were choked out by the thorns. Finally, the seed which fell into good soil yielded different amounts: some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundredfold. Having spoken this parable, our Lord exhorted those in His audience, which was composed of great multitudes, who had ears to listen attentively to what He said and to give heed.

The disciples came to Jesus and asked why He was speaking to the multitudes in parables. His answer was that, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath" (13:11,12). In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord stated the general principle regarding God's getting the truth to those who want it: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). Everyone who wishes truth will be given it. God will see that one has an opportunity to hear and to receive His Word; but those who do not care for His Word—who are indifferent toward it—do not have the truth thrust upon them. God never coerces nor forces the will of anyone.

From our Lord's use of the expression, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, it is clear that the parables which are recorded in this chapter constitute a revelation of the mysteries. A mystery is not something that is incomprehensible or intangible. On the contrary, the word simply indicates a secret, that which has not been revealed. We may expect then, in the study of these parables, to learn things in regard to the kingdom of God that were not revealed in the Old Testament. At the same time we must bear in mind that certain features or phases of the kingdom of God as it exists today were disclosed in the former revelation. For instance, Moses spoke of the believers of today, who constitute the church of God, in the following passage: "I will move them [Israel] to jealousy with those that are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation" (Deut. 32:21). Isaiah also saw the church of Jesus Christ as it consists of those from among the nations who seek God. For example, note this quotation: "I am inquired of by them that asked not *for me*; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name" (Isa. 65:1). That I have correctly interpreted these two scriptures in the Old Testament foretelling the church of Jesus Christ is evident from the fact that the Apostle Paul quoted these very passages in Romans 10:19,20 and applied them to the church. There can therefore be no doubt concerning the fact that the church was foretold, even though in a limited sense, in the Old Testament revelation. That the Christian Dispensation likewise was made known in the Old Testament is clear from Psalm 110:1:

"Jehovah saith unto my Lord,  
Sit thou at my right hand,  
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

In speaking of Psalm 110 in dramatic terms, I would say that, when the curtain is raised, Jehovah the Father is in heaven whereas Jehovah the Son is upon the earth. He is at Jerusalem and is being opposed by the leaders of Israel. When this unfortunate situation arises, Jehovah in heaven speaks to Jehovah the Son upon earth and invites Him to leave the Jews to their fate and to sit at His right hand in the heavens, "Until I [Jehovah in heaven] make thine enemies thy footstool." When the Lord thus puts the people of Israel under the feet of King Messiah and they offer themselves willingly—acknowledging their national sin and pleading for Him to return—He will come back and God will send forth the strong sceptre of King Messiah out of Zion, who will rule among the very people that at His first coming rejected Him. This period during which Messiah is seated at the right hand of God, awaiting Israel's acceptance of Him, is recognized and is set forth in the New Testament as the Christian Dispensation. See, for instance, Acts 2:14-36. Repeatedly Psalm 110—especially the period during which Messiah is seated at the right hand of God, having been rejected by Israel at His first coming—is quoted and alluded to by the New Testament writers. There are a number of passages in the Old Testament which outline Messiah's redemptive career,

consisting of His first coming, His rejection, His ascension to the right hand of the throne of God, His session beside the Majesty on High, and His final return to set up His kingdom at the end of this age. Thus, beyond controversy, the Old Testament Scriptures do foretell the Christian Dispensation and the gathering out from among the Gentiles a people who seek God, who are received by Him, and who are acceptable to Him. As stated above, those who are thus gathered out from among the Gentiles during the present era are recognized as the people of God. Two of these passages foretelling this turn of events at the present time are applied to the church of Jesus Christ today. We may therefore be assured that the prophets saw this period of time and the gathering out from among the Gentiles a people for the name of the Lord Jesus. Further proof that the Church Age and the church were foretold in the Old Testament is seen in the following quotation: "Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come: how that the Christ must suffer, *and* how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:22,23). The reader should ponder this quotation well. It is the conclusion of Paul's speech before Festus. Here he declared that he was saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come to pass. He therefore declared that these Old Testament men of God foretold that the Messiah should suffer, and "that he [Messiah] first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles." From this passage it is clear that the prophets foresaw the crucifixion of the Messiah and that they also foresaw that, after His resurrection from the dead, He should send forth the message of light and life to both the people [Jews] and to the Gentiles. This preaching ministry, which was for the purpose of calling out from among the nations a people for the name of God—the church—was, according to the Apostle Paul, made known by Moses and the prophets. This position is confirmed by the following statement of the Apostle Peter:

"10 Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that *should come* unto you: 11 searching what *time* or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. 12 To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into." (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

According to this passage, the Spirit of Christ spoke through the prophets. They spoke both concerning the sufferings of Christ and the glorious things which follow His crucifixion. What are these glories that should follow them (the sufferings)? The next verse answers this question: "To whom [the prophets] it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you [the Christians to whom Peter was writing], did they [the prophets] minister these things, which now have been announced unto you [the message of redemption through Christ our Lord] through them that preach the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven ..." Thus Peter affirmed that the prophets of the Old Testament foretold the present preaching of the gospel to call out from among the nations a people for His name, the church of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul recognized that the Old Testament prophets foretold the present dispensation and the church of Christ, but said that the revelation made through the prophets was not so full and clear as that which has now been made known to us through the Apostles and prophets of the New Testament era. In the following words he spoke of "the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to *wit*, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body ..." (Eph. 3:5,6). Thus it is clear that a revelation concerning the church was made known in former times, but not with the fullness and clarity as it is given in the New Testament.

Our Lord recognized that this revelation regarding the church and the present dispensation had been made known by Moses and the prophets. He, in effect, said to His disciples that, in His giving the parables of the kingdom, He was making a fuller, an additional revelation to that made known in the Old Testament. In other words, He was

making known to them certain secrets regarding these matters, more details which make the picture of the prophets clearer. But He did not reveal all of the secrets regarding the church. Further disclosures were made by the Apostles, guided by the Spirit after the ascension of our Lord, as we see in the letters to the churches. Though our Lord spoke this additional revelation regarding the kingdom of God, the multitudes to whom He gave the message were unable to understand it. The reason of their inability on this point had been foretold by Isaiah the prophet in the following quotation: "14 And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith,

By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand;  
And seeing ye shall see, and shall in nowise perceive:  
15 For this people's heart is waxed gross,  
And their ears are dull of hearing,  
And their eyes they have closed;  
Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,  
And hear with their ears,  
And understand with their heart,  
And should turn again,  
And I should heal them." (13:14,15).

From this passage we see that by the continuous proclamation of the truth of the gospel the hearts of those who are not interested and who do not want the truth are hardened and their eyes are closed. The Lord never closes the eyes of anyone nor hardens the heart of any soul that yearns and longs for truth. On the contrary, as stated above, He guarantees that the truth shall be given to all who hunger and thirst for it.

#### The Parable Of The Sower Explained

The Lord Jesus declared that the Apostles were blessed in that they had eyes which could see and ears which could understand and that the very things which many prophets and righteous men in the past had longed to see, but had been denied that privilege, were being granted to them. In other words, Jesus pronounced the Apostles blessed because they wanted truth and were living in the era when additional light was being given to men.

When the sower, the Son of God himself, went forth to sow seed, some fell by the wayside and were devoured by the birds of heaven. These seed thus falling on the roadside represented those people in the audiences of our Lord, who heard the message; but, since they were indifferent to it, the devil immediately came and snatched away the word from their hearts lest perchance they might believe. Satan is a personality. He was the highest created being whom God brought into existence. He finally rebelled against God and led one-third of the angels in revolt against the Almighty. He now is the prince of the powers of the air, the spirit that works in the sons of disobedience. He either personally comes and snatches the word out of the heart of the hearer, or some of his servile spirits do this. There is power in the Word of God. Satan recognizes this fact. When men are indifferent to the word which they hear and do not eagerly seize it as their own possession, Satan or some of his emissaries instantly snatch the word out of their hearts. Thus they do not believe, because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. (See Romans 10:16.)

The seed that falls upon rocky places represents those people who hear the word, receive it with gladness, but, not having any depth of character, become offended over trivial matters and persecution; then they fall away.

Those represented by the seed falling among thorns are those who hear and receive the word but allow "the care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches" to choke the word and they become unfruitful. These bear not any fruit unto perfection.

Finally, the seed falling into the good ground represents those people who hear the word, who receive it, and who bear fruit to the glory of God. But all do not yield the same amount and quality of fruit. Some bring forth thirtyfold; others, sixtyfold; and still others, one hundredfold. Thus all do not bear the same amount of fruit, the difference being in the soil (the heart) in which the seed is sown.

Since Christ is *the* sower, the parable indicated the results upon His immediate hearers of the preaching of the Word. But the same general principle applies in all cases wherever the Word is proclaimed, regardless of the speaker or the time. This parable, therefore, is applicable to the preaching of the Word by anyone who sows the seed.

One's own attitude toward God, the world, and His truth determines his classification as set forth by the parable of the sower. Let us be diligent in the sowing of the seed, the true unadulterated Word of God. Knowing the fear of the Lord, let us persuade all men everywhere concerning the gospel of the grace of God—while we have time and opportunity. Let each of us who have accepted the truth yield ourselves to Him and, in the power of the Spirit, let us bear fruit one hundredfold.

### The Parable Of The Tares

The second parable of this list is that of the wheat and the tares and may be briefly stated as follows: A man sowed good seed in his field. While he was asleep, an enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. When the grain sprang up, the tares appeared also. When his servants discovered the presence of the tares, they asked their master if he had not sown good wheat in his field. They of course were puzzled by the appearance of the tares. The master's reply was that an enemy, during the night when he was asleep, had sown the tares. Then the servants wished to know whether or not it was his desire that they go and pull out the tares. His answer was that they should not. Both the wheat and tares were to grow together. At the harvest, he said, he would instruct the reapers to gather the tares and to bind them into bundles, but to garner the wheat into his barn. This parable, like that of the sower, was spoken beside the sea to the multitudes. It is found in verses 24-30. After speaking this parable, the Lord gave the one concerning the grain of mustard seed, and then followed this by the parable of the leaven in three measures of meal. After speaking these parables, Jesus went into a house. Thereupon the Apostles came to Him and asked for an explanation of the parable of the tares. This exposition is found in verses 36-43 and in substance is as follows: The sower is the Son of man, the Lord Jesus Christ. The field is the world. The Lord sowed the seed only in Israel personally, but He commissioned His Apostles to sow it in the entire world (Matt. 28:19,20). The good seed consists of "the sons of the kingdom." Thus the message of the first parable has become incarnated, figuratively speaking, in the form of men and women who have accepted the truth and who are the very embodiment of it. Thus there is progress in the second parable over that which is indicated in the first one. The tares are "the sons of the evil one." These are the men and women who become associated, outwardly at least, with the sons of the kingdom, those genuinely saved. The enemy who has sowed the seed is none other than the devil. Thus these unsaved ones, sons of the evil one, are allowed to continue in association with the sons of the kingdom—during the present age. The harvest is at the consummation of the age—at the rapture and the second coming of our Lord. Thus from the rapture until the glorious consummation of our Lord's return, there is a process of separation of the sons of the kingdom from the sons of the evil one. At the end of the Tribulation, when the Son of man comes forth in His glory and power, He will send forth His angels who will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and do iniquity and will cast them into the furnace of fire, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. In the parable the tares are thrown into the fire and are burned. In the exposition of the significance of this parable, our Lord declared that the sons of the evil one would be cast "into the furnace of fire." Let us recall that this is His interpretation of the parable. Our Lord does not say that the fire in which the tares are burned signifies some kind of mental torture, but interprets this point of the parable literally as He has done with regard to the other items. In view of this fact, the earnest truth seeker is driven to the conclusion that, according to our Lord's teaching, there is such a thing as a literal hell. One cannot escape this conclusion unless he can find

some definite, unequivocal statement in some other portion of the Word that indicates differently. But regardless of the real significance of “the Gehenna of fire,” let me say that it is something awful, something to be avoided. It is a fearful thing to be lost. On the other hand, the righteous ones, the sons of the kingdom, shall shine forth in the kingdom of their Father after the separation of the sons of the kingdom from the sons of the evil ones. This kingdom of their Father is nothing less than the millennial kingdom of our Lord here upon earth. Jesus concluded His exposition of the parable by repeating His warning, “He that hath ears, let him hear.”

#### The Parable Of The Grain Of Mustard Seed

The third parable in the series is that of the grain of mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field, and which, although it is the smallest of all seeds, grew and developed into an abnormal growth, a tree in which the birds of the heavens came and lodged. Let us note the fact that the kingdom of heaven or of God in this parable is compared to a mustard seed which a man planted in his field and which developed into this abnormal growth. Our Lord simply gave this parable but did not explain it. There are however certain things in regard to it which are self-evident.

The mustard seed, according to Jesus, was the smallest of seeds. We are not to understand that He was talking about mustard such as we have here in America. This mustard is a Palestinian plant. I have been shown in the Holy Land a tree which is called the mustard plant. But there is a diversity of opinion as to which of several plants is the one mentioned by our Lord. By His selecting this very small seed, it is evident that the Lord Jesus was referring to the small beginnings of Christianity, the movement which He was launching. Moreover, this thing which had such an insignificant start developed abnormally and became a great tree in which the birds came and lodged. Some interpreters have seen in these birds agents of evil, birds of prey. I am inclined very strongly to this position, because the forces of evil, as we have already seen in the discussion of the parable of the wheat and tares, appear there as the tares, sowed by the evil one. Then in the following parable, that of the leaven, we still see the forces of evil. Thus when we look at these first four parables spoken to the multitudes, we see the small beginning of Christianity in the parable of the sower. Then evil is introduced into it in the parable of the wheat and tares. By this time pure Christianity has developed into Christendom, with an admixture of the evil with the good. (The parable of the wheat and tares could not represent the true church and her withdrawing fellowship from those walking disorderly; but it is a picture of the growth and development of Christendom and the departure of this movement from the purity of its beginnings under the ministry of the Son of God himself.) In the parable of the mustard seed, the birds, coming and lodging in this abnormally developed tree of Christendom, represent the forces of evil. The farther the movement has advanced from its beginnings through the centuries, the greater and more numerous have been the forces of evil that entered into and became associated with the forces of righteousness. Thus the departure from true primitive Christianity appearing in the first parable and carried forward in the second is still emphasized in the third one.

#### The Parable Of Leaven In The Three Measures Of Meal

In verse 33 our Lord gave us the parable of the leaven in the following words: “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.” The kingdom of God here is compared to leaven which a woman put into three measures of meal and which affected all the meal. Our Lord did not explain this parable. At least there is no record of any exposition of it. Let us remember that this parable was spoken to the multitudes. As we have already seen, parables were used to reveal the truth to those who have eyes and ears for the same but to conceal it from those who do not have eyes and ears for the message of God.

What is the significance of leaven? Yeast is leaven. It is a microscopic growth that produces fermentation. When it is at work, it causes dough, for instance, to rise. Leaven is used in the literal sense of the term in different passages of scripture, but it is also used with a symbolic or figurative meaning. Thus the significance of leaven in any given

case must be determined by the facts of the context. When, however, the data show that it is used symbolically, we may be certain that it indicates something evil. This is the deduction from an examination of all the cases in the Scriptures where leaven is used symbolically. The parable under consideration is the only place, so far as I can recall, where leaven is used symbolically without any explanation indicating such a connotation. Since it in all other cases, when used symbolically, signifies evil and since in our present verse it is used symbolically, we must understand that it has the same connotation of evil unless there is something in this context that indicates clearly otherwise. A glance at the passage shows that there are no such indications. Neither are there any data in parallel passages which indicate that it is used to signify something good. In view of these facts we are therefore driven irresistibly to the conclusion that leaven here is indicative of some evil force. This leaven, with its fermenting, permeates all three measures of meal. We may understand therefore that our Lord was foretelling the introduction of some evil force into the movement of Christianity, which He launched and which developed into Christendom as we know it through the centuries. A glance at church history shows that evil was clearly introduced into it and has continued to grow and increase. It permeates every section of Christendom.

Who is the woman in this parable? This is a difficult question to answer. We know that the church is represented as a pure, chaste virgin, the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-33). On the other hand, we are aware of the fact that a harlot was used by the Apostle John to symbolize the false ecclesiastical octopus that will be supported by the world kingdom in the end of the age. Certainly this woman, who introduces the leaven into the meal, cannot signify the true church. But since a false church is represented by a harlot and since this woman introduces a foreign corrupting element into true Christianity, it is quite likely that this woman signifies a false ecclesiasticism.

Jesus spoke these things in parables to the multitudes, as we see from verses 34 and 35. His doing this was in fulfillment of a prediction found in Psalm 78:2. In these parables He was giving details concerning the kingdom of God, which had never been revealed by the prophets. Thus our Lord added new touches to the picture of the kingdom that had been begun by Moses and the prophets.

#### The Parable Of The Treasure In The Field

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field” (13:44).

In the parable of the tares, the field is the world. In this field there is a hidden treasure. The man who finds this treasure sells all that he has and buys the field, and with it also the treasure therein. No further explanation is made by our Lord. There is only one who is able to purchase the field—the world. That one is none other than the Son of God himself, who purchased the entire world and all contained therein with His precious blood upon the cross. What treasure is there in this world that is so very precious to the Son of God? The suggestion has been made, which I think is most highly probable, that Israel is this treasure; for so she is called in the Old Testament God’s peculiar treasure. If this interpretation is correct—and I do not doubt it—the Son of God purchased the world by giving Himself a ransom in order that He might redeem Israel, His treasure.

#### The Parable Of The Pearl Of Great Price

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: 46 and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (13:45,46). The man, in the preceding parable, who purchased the field, is without doubt the goodly merchant of our present parable who sells everything that he has and purchases this one pearl of great price. Who gave up everything that he had? In considering this question our minds naturally go to the Son of God who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor that we, through His poverty, might become rich. The pearl is in the world, the field. This is a most

valuable pearl. The suggestion has been made, with great probability, that this pearl is none other than the church of Jesus Christ—the true church, consisting of born-again people. This is not the visible church, but the aggregate of genuinely born-again people. The Lord Jesus thus purchased this pearl of great price. It is His. He who withheld not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, will certainly give us all things that are necessary for our existence and spiritual development. (See Romans 8:32.)

#### The Parable Of The Dragnet

In verses 47-50 our Lord compared the kingdom of heaven in the end of the age to a dragnet which was pulled ashore and in which were both clean and unclean things—fish and other unclean marine life. Then the good was separated from the bad, being gathered into vessels, and the bad was cast away. This is illustrative of the separation of the good from the bad at the end of the age.

“47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: 48 which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away. 49 So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.”

#### Every Well-Taught Disciple

When Jesus had finished His parables of the kingdom, He compared the well-taught, truth-seeking disciple to the man who brings out of his treasures things both new and old. The man who stays in a rut, speaking only the things that we have heard from childhood, cannot be a disciple in the true sense of the term. Neither can the one who does not teach the fundamentals of the faith, but who constantly is bringing forth something new, fantastic and weird—something sensational. The true disciple proclaims the old, well-known, fundamental truths and at the same time he preaches these new things in the Word that have not been noted before and proclaims them along with the old things. God expects us to study the Word and to discover new truths and to proclaim them as well as the fundamental and well-known facts and principles.

#### Jesus' Last Visit To Nazareth

When our Lord had finished these parables, He crossed the Sea of Galilee, stilling the tempest while enroute. He reached the east side, healed the Garasene demoniac, then returned to the west side. At this time He healed the woman with an issue of blood and raised Jairus' daughter. Following this, He healed two blind men and a dumb demoniac. Having done this, He made a last visit to His home town of Nazareth. At this time He spoke in the synagogue and His friends and neighbors were amazed at His teaching and at His works. They could not understand how that one who had lived in their midst could do such things. On account of their unbelief, He did not many mighty works on this occasion (13:58). Thus He gave them their last chance to hear the words of life from Himself personally.

## HEROD'S GUILTY FEARS AND CHRIST'S FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND (*Installment Fourteen*)

As has been noted in this series of expositions, Matthew in this section of his Gospel is not chronological. He presented his material topically. Mark and Luke give the chronological order of the events of the life of our Lord. In fact, Luke tells us that he drew up an orderly narrative (Luke 1:1-4). When Mark is laid beside Luke, one sees that Mark is likewise chronological throughout, with few exceptions, even though he does not give nearly so much material as does Luke, who gave us the fullest account of the life of Jesus.

By comparing the three Synoptics, one sees that Matthew 9:35-11:1 comes in chronologically between chapters 13 and 14. The parables of the kingdom, found in chapter 13, chronologically were given toward the close of our Lord's second tour of Galilee, which occurred at least six months prior to the time mentioned in chapter 14.

### Herod's Guilty Fears

Both Mark and Luke show that Herod's fears were aroused by the events which occurred on the third preaching tour of Galilee, conducted by the Twelve as they went out two by two and by the Lord himself. Mark gives the restricted commission (this third tour of Galilee) in 6:7-13. Immediately following this, in verses 14-29, he recounts Herod's fears. Luke in like manner connects these two events in chapter 9:1-6 and in verses 7-9.

In Matthew 14:1 the Evangelist tells us that at that season Herod the tetrarch heard reports concerning Jesus. The phrase, at that season, is a general note of time and must be interpreted in the light of facts presented by the other two Evangelists. When we do this, we see that the time of which he was speaking was that at the conclusion of the third tour, which closed at the passover of 29 A.D., one year before the crucifixion.

Herod the tetrarch was one of the sons of Herod the Great. He was the ruler, under the Roman authorities, of Galilee and Peraea. Thus it was in his territory that the activities of John the Baptist were largely carried out—when he was in Bethany beyond the Jordan (John 1:28).

Since eighteen months of our Lord's ministry was devoted to the Galilean campaign and since Herod was ruler of Galilee, Jesus was during this time under the jurisdiction of Herod, who therefore became very much alarmed at what was going on, in the way of miracles and preaching, in his territory.

We know that Herod cast John the Baptist into prison approximately eighteen months prior to the time of which we are now studying. John's arrest and incarceration were two of the reasons why Jesus left Judaea and went into Galilee (Matt. 4:12; Mark 1:14,15; Luke 5:18-20). According to Josephus John was imprisoned in the fortress of Machaerus in the land of Moab.

The three Evangelists, who tell us about Herod's guilty fears at this time, tell, in connection with this event, about Herod's having caused John the Baptist to be beheaded. None of them informs us at what time this cold blooded murder was perpetrated. Some scholars think that possibly John languished in jail for six months, whereas others think that he was incarcerated for about a year. We are positive that he lay in prison at least six months. The proof for this position is found in the following facts: John sent messengers to Jesus inquiring concerning whether or not He (Jesus) was the Messiah, or whether they should look for another (Luke 7:24-35). Luke put this visit by the messengers as occurring before Christ made His second tour of Galilee, which was around the passover, one year before Herod became alarmed, according to our present lesson. On account of the few details, no one can say just when John was beheaded. The Evangelists have passed over that event and have mentioned it only in connection with Herod's fright.

What were some of the things connected with the ministry of the Twelve Apostles and Jesus, which alarmed Herod? We can gather the answer to this question by looking at the instructions which our Lord gave to the Apostles when He sent them out under the restricted commission. The fullest account is found in Matthew 9:35-11:1. The miracles which the Apostles were to perform are related in 10:5-8. The outstanding ones which they were to perform were to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to cleanse the lepers, and to cast out demons. In connection with all of these miraculous powers, they were to make the announcement that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Thus the message regarding the approach of the kingdom was confirmed and strengthened powerfully by these unprecedented miracles performed by the Apostles and doubtless by Jesus himself. Thus Herod doubtless became alarmed thinking that there would result, from this great preaching campaign that was being conducted throughout Galilee, a revolt against his authority and the establishment of a new government in its place.

Herod declared, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore do these powers work in him." From this verse it seems that Herod connected all these miracles, which were being performed, with his belief that John had been raised from the dead. We may discover in this reasoning of Herod some possible intimation of the message of John which lingered in the mind of the guilty king. If this assumption is a sound one—I for one do not doubt it—we may conclude that John spoke to Herod regarding the resurrection and of man's having to give an account to God for the deeds done here in the body. It is quite likely that his message to Herod was similar to that delivered by Paul to Felix and Drusilla his wife. Concerning the Apostle's speaking to these dignitaries, Luke tells us, "And as he [Paul] reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me" (Acts 24:25). From Luke 3:18-20, we see that John the Baptist reprov'd Herod for having taken his brother's wife and for all the evil things which he had done. Doubtless John told him that he would have to give an account to God, when he would be raised from the dead and be brought before the judgment of the great white throne, and when the wicked will all be raised and will be judged for their evil deeds.

The healing of the sick, the cleansing of the lepers, the casting out of demons, and the raising of the dead, which were wrought by Jesus and the Apostles on this famous third tour of Galilee, were but samples of the miracles that will be wrought in the bringing in of the Millennium, when the curse will be lifted from the earth, when Satan will be bound and cast into the pit of the abyss for a thousand years, and when the reign of righteousness begins. In view of the preaching of the prophets and of John the Baptist, it is practically certain that Herod was brought to the conviction that the time for the restoration of all things whereof God had spoken through the prophets (Acts 3:19-21) was at hand. He, like Felix and Drusilla when Paul preached of righteousness, self-control, and of the judgment to come, dreaded to appear before God to give an account for his wicked, corrupt life.

The occasion of Herod's arresting John and imprisoning him was John's telling him that he should not take his brother Philip's wife: "It is not lawful for thee to have her." This statement enraged Herod to the extent that he would have killed John, had he not feared the multitudes, who counted the Baptist as a prophet (Matt. 14:5). He was therefore satisfied with imprisoning John.

The occasion of Herod's having John beheaded came on his birthday when he prepared a banquet for the great ones of his kingdom. At that time the daughter of Herodias danced before the king and his companions. Like the old Persian monarch on a similar occasion, Herod promised to grant any request that the girl might make of him, even to the half of his kingdom. From what we know of Herod, his family, and the times, we may conclude that Salome danced in an indecent manner before the drunken king. The young girl, not knowing what request she was to make, went without the banquet hall to her mother, who had been nursing in her wicked heart evil intentions against John, abiding her time to wreak her vengeance on him because of his righteous reproaches against her. Her moment had come, and revenge was sweet to her. She therefore instructed her daughter to ask for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. She then returned to the banquet hall and presented her petition to King Herod.

Upon her making this request, Herod was grieved, but on account of his oath and on account of those who sat at the banquet table with him, he commanded that her request be granted. This greatest of all men, who had ever been born of women up to that time, was ruthlessly beheaded. The executioners gave the head to the damsel who in turn took it to her mother. Then John's disciples came, took up the corpse, and buried it. When that was done, they reported the event to Jesus.

The study of the life and character of John the Baptist is most illuminating. From birth to the time of the beginning of his ministry he seems to have lived apart from the world and in closest touch with his God. He cared little for this world's goods. His whole desire seems to have been to please God and to assist others. He was free from the petty jealousies and enmities that usually rankle in human hearts, even in the hearts of some who have been born again, all too frequently. On one occasion some of his disciples, who were jealous in his favor, were complaining to John about Jesus' making and baptizing more disciples than he. The Baptist instantly took the proper attitude and said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). In Jesus having influence with the people John was overjoyed.

He was a man of conviction. Boldness characterized his life and actions. Thus he had the courage of his convictions. The world needs more John the Baptists. Such is the crying need of the present time. May the Lord raise up fearless men who want to know the will of God and who will make every effort, humanly possible, to ascertain the exact meaning of the Scriptures. Then may they have the courage to speak forth that which they see in the Word, giving of course the message in love and consideration for all others, but never compromising.

#### Feeding Of The Five Thousand

The next subject discussed by Matthew in chapter 14 is the feeding of the five thousand. He begins his narrative thus: "Now when Jesus heard *it*, he withdrew from thence in a boat, to a desert place apart: and when the multitudes heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot from the cities" (vs. 13). This verse starts with the temporal clause, "Now when Jesus heard *it*." What did He hear? The answer is: either the report concerning the murder of John the Baptist or concerning the fears of Herod, who thought that John had been raised from the dead. In either case, it was a part of wisdom for Jesus to withdraw from Herod's territory. In doing so, He eased the tension of the situation. The Lord with His disciples withdrew to the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, which was sparsely inhabited. The Lord chose a place in the mountains east of the Sea of Galilee as an ideal place of rest for Himself and the weary Apostles. In this connection let us remember that the Sea of Galilee is 680 feet below sea level. Hence a spot up in the mountains in a thinly-settled community was chosen as the place for rest and recuperation.

That the Apostles needed rest is quite evident to us when we remember that they had been conducting a strenuous campaign for something like six months. As we have already learned, they performed many miracles. There was great excitement among the people. Their evangelistic campaign had thus run through these several months. Naturally, then, the Apostles were more or less tired and weary. The same thing was true of our Lord. He therefore said to them, as Mark has recorded, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). Christian workers who have really labored in the gospel and who are weary should follow the example of our Lord and rest awhile in order that they may regain strength and be prepared for still further and more efficient service in the Master's cause.

Although the Lord and the Apostles had withdrawn for the purpose of rest, upon their reaching the place chosen by the Lord, the people of that region, having learned in some way concerning the place to which they were going, gathered there in vast numbers. Matthew informs us that they "followed him on foot from the cities." It is quite likely that the cities referred to were those both on the west side and the east side of the sea.

In verse 14 we are told that Jesus came forth “and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick.” Of course the entire country and adjoining lands were agog with great excitement because of the healing ministry of Jesus and His disciples during the previous six months. Those who had not been healed therefore were brought to our Lord when He was in retirement in order that He might heal them. When the Lord saw their faith, He naturally responded to their pleadings for restoration to health.

When it was evening, the Apostles reminded the Lord of the fact that the place where they were was a desert, a sparsely inhabited place, and that He should send the people away to go into the villages in order that they might buy food. This suggestion was indeed thoughtful on the part of the disciples. We should learn to be mindful and considerate of others and their welfare.

But our Lord replied, “They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat.” Doubtless this statement was indeed a great surprise to them. They therefore replied, “We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.” Although the Apostles had been performing unparalleled miracles in their healing ministry, it does not seem to have occurred to them that the Lord could or would miraculously provide food for feeding the vast multitudes on this occasion. Naturally they would not think along this line, unless the Lord’s providing food for Israel in her trek through the desert on the way to the promised Land had come into their minds.

The Lord then commanded the Apostles to bring the five loaves and the two fishes, all that they had, to Him. When they did that, He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. Mark, in recording this same incident, tells us that they sat down in companies.

Doubtless, when everything was quiet, our Lord blessed, returned thanks, for the loaves and the fishes. Then He brake them and gave to the disciples, instructing them to give to the multitudes. Thus the loaves and fishes were multiplied. In this connection the question arises, “Were the loaves and fishes multiplied in the Saviour’s hands before He gave them to the Apostles, or were they multiplied in their hands?” One cannot be dogmatic in answering this question. If one takes Matthew 14:19 literally and adheres strictly to the principles of grammar, one might conclude that Jesus broke the loaves and fishes after having given thanks and turned them over to the Apostles, and that the multiplication of the food occurred while it was in their hands. Regardless of which way we look at this, a miracle was performed, an emergency was met, and the people who were fed had their hunger satisfied.

Those who ate were “about five thousand men, besides women and children.” Our Lord who gives us our daily bread today feeds the multiplied millions and hundreds of millions of men, women, and children upon the earth, as well as providing food for the birds and the animals. When we recognize that it is the Lord Jesus who feeds us constantly, we need not be surprised at His performing this miracle on the occasion of which we have just been studying.

It is in the Lord that we live, move, and have our continual being. He gives us our food, as I have just said, all the time. He does it through what we call the natural means, according to natural law. Man plants the seed, cultivates, and expects the harvest. Thus our Lord is cooperating with us and thus gives us our food daily. Although we, by cultivating and reaping do cooperate with Him, He nevertheless gives us what we eat. He could withhold the increase, and we would go hungry. Man plants and waters, but God gives the increase.

Upon the occasion of feeding the five thousand men, besides women and children, the Lord was filling, figuratively speaking, a “rush order.” There was an emergency. The people, in their great interest in His healing ministry, as well as in His teaching, were continuing with Him, forgetting the oncoming darkness. By His mighty power He gathered the elements from earth, air, and water, combined them in the proper proportions, and subjected them to the influences that converted them into loaves and fishes. In other words, what the Lord does through natural

means over a period of time for the maturing of the crop and the growth of the fishes, He, on account of the emergency, did instantly or in a few seconds of time. This we call a miracle, which word is of Latin origin and means “to cause wonderment, surprise, amazement.” What our Lord did on this occasion was the result of His omnipotent power; so is His producing food and sustenance for us in the ordinary, natural means, which nonetheless is the result of His same omnipotence.

Let us praise God for His providing the food in this manner for the five thousand as well as thank Him for giving us our daily needs.

As we contemplate the fact of His feeding the five thousand with the material food, we naturally think of the spiritual food which our souls need. There are vast hosts of people throughout the world who have never been given the opportunity of eating of the “bread of life.” Of the two billion people on earth, one-half have never heard a gospel message—after the proclamation of the truth for nineteen hundred years. Even in so-called Christian lands, there are countless hosts who know nothing of the real bread of life. The Lord has laid it upon us who know Him to feed them with this heavenly manna of the gospel. Are we obeying His injunction to preach the Word both in season and out? Let us, so long as we have time and opportunity, proclaim the Word; for the night is coming in which no man can work.

After Jesus had fed the multitudes, he insisted upon the disciples getting into the boat in order to go to the other side of the lake. Then He sent the people away and went up into a mountain apart to pray. He was therefore alone in communion with God. Very frequently He did things similar to this, leaving the multitudes and getting alone with God. Luke, who presents Christ as the ideal, perfect man, lays great emphasis upon the prayer ministry of our Lord.

#### Jesus Calms The Tempest

At its widest point the Sea of Galilee is approximately seven miles across. As the disciples were crossing the lake, there was a wind which was contrary to them. The waves of the sea were dashing high. Progress was difficult. By the fourth watch of the night (3:00—6:00 A.M.) they were still in the middle of the sea. Doubtless they had rowed hard and laboriously in order to make this point. They were, however, still in danger.

In the fourth watch, Jesus came to them walking upon the sea. When they saw Him, they were affrightened, thinking that He was a ghost. They therefore cried out for fear. Immediately He spoke to them, assuring them that there was no occasion for fear and saying, “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.” By His supernatural power He was able to walk on the water as easily as if He were on solid ground.

Peter still seems to have had doubts about Jesus’ presence. Nevertheless he said, “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters” (vs. 28). Immediately our Lord answered, “Come.” Thereupon Peter got down out of the boat and began walking on the water toward Jesus. About that time he took his eyes off the Lord and saw the waves as they were rushing toward him. His faith wavered, he became afraid, and began to sink. Then, in helplessness and desperation, he cried out, “Lord, save me.” Jesus then stretched forth His hand, took hold of him, and reproved him saying, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” When Peter and Jesus had got up into the boat, the wind ceased and there was a great calm. Jesus is the master of both wind and waves, as well as of all the various elements.

When Jesus was safely with them in the boat, the Apostles worshiped Him saying, “Of a truth thou art the Son of God.” Their vision of Jesus was clarifying, and they were coming to a clearer understanding of who He was. About six months after this, the Father revealed to Peter that Jesus was not only the Son of God, but the Messiah of Israel.

As we walk with the Lord daily, may we too come to a clearer understanding of His blessed person and of what He is to us. May the path grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day!

#### Jesus' Healing Ministry In Gennesaret

Upon reaching the west bank of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus and the Apostles landed in the Plain of Gennesaret. As soon as His presence was recognized, the people of the region brought their sick to Him and besought Him that they might touch only the border of His garment, and as many as did so were made whole. Their touching Jesus was a manifestation of their faith. It was not necessary for them to touch His garment in order to be healed. We learn that Jesus spoke the word and healed the son of the nobleman of Capernaum. He did it while He was still in Cana of Galilee. Our Lord was not and is not shut up to any one method of manner of bestowing His blessings.

May we in faith always look to the Lord for the fulfillment of His promises and for the obtaining of the blessing which He offers to us.

Jesus healed people during His personal ministry and raised the dead. This He did as the Messiah. The miracles He wrought at His first coming were for the purpose of identifying Him as the Messiah of Israel and of confirming His Word. What He did then on a small and limited scale, because of the unbelief of the people, He will do on a world-wide basis when He comes again, lifts the curse, delivers the world from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

CEREMONIAL vs. REAL DEFILEMENT—JESUS FEEDS THE FOUR THOUSAND  
*(Installment Fifteen)*

This month we are to study the events recorded in Matthew, chapter 15. But in order to appreciate the facts, we must get our connection with that which has preceded. As we saw in last month's study, Jesus fed the multitude of "five thousand men, besides women and children," at the time of the passover (Matt. 14:13-23). Though Matthew does not say that the passover was the time, John does so state this fact (John 6:4). After the feeding of the multitude, our Lord constrained the disciples to enter into a boat in order that they might go back to the west side of the lake. After He had dismissed the crowds, He went up into a mountain apart to pray. About the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came walking upon the water to the disciples, who had been distressed by a severe storm at sea. Jesus stilled the tempest and brought them safely to their destination.

They landed in the Plain of Gennesaret. Upon His arrival, the people of the community, recognizing the Lord, went throughout the region bringing their sick in order that He might heal them. Thus He engaged in a great preaching and healing ministry.

From this place He went to Capernaum, where He had His headquarters. In the synagogue of the city, He preached the marvelous message on the bread of life, the record of which is found in John 6:22-71.

On the day after Jesus fed the five thousand, the multitudes who had been fed crossed the sea to Capernaum in search of Him. When they found Him, they asked when He had come. Jesus, knowing their hearts and realizing that they were simply seeking for material things, preached the sermon on the bread of life. Thus it is clear that this great message was spoken the next day after the feeding of the five thousand, which was at the season of the passover.

In Matthew 15:1 we are told that the Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem to Jesus and questioned Him concerning His disciples not observing the tradition of the elders. Though we cannot be dogmatic as to the exact location where this interview took place, it is quite likely that it was in Capernaum. We may be confident that Jesus was still in Galilee and that the scribes and Pharisees were at Jerusalem to observe the passover when it occurred, but on this occasion they were in Galilee attacking Jesus. In view of these facts we may be certain, therefore, that the events of which we are now studying occurred some little time after passover—after the festivities had ceased. They would have to make the journey to Galilee after the feast, but we may be certain that they were hot on the trail of our Lord and did not lose any time after the passover in arriving in Galilee.

Ceremonial Defilement vs. Real Defilement

These carping critics of our Lord had accosted Him with the question, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread." Traditions are those things that are handed down from one generation to another—things passed on from father to son. A tradition is all right provided it is in accordance with facts and the Word of God. For instance, the Apostle Paul commended the church at Corinth because it was holding "fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you" (I Cor. 11:2). The same Apostle lauded the church at Thessalonica saying, "So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours" (II Thess. 2:15). To the same church he wrote, "Now we commend you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us" (II Thess. 3:6). Traditions in these passages indicate the true revelation of God which He made through the Apostle Paul. It is proper and right that we should observe these.

But traditions, in the sense of that which was originated by man and passed from one generation to another and which is not to be observed, are mentioned by the Apostle Paul in the following quotation: "And I advanced in the Jews religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:14). Tradition is used in the same sense in the following passage: "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8). Of course, in this passage the Apostle was speaking of the philosophies and the speculations of men along with traditions of men in general. Anything, therefore, which is of human origin and contrary to the revealed will of God falls into the category of traditions which must be rejected in toto.

By our Lord's day and time the Pharisees had collected many of the opinions of their ancestors and had stamped these with the approval of ecclesiastical authority, which, in the eyes of the masses elevated them to the same plane with the revelation of God. A glimpse of some of these man-made regulations may be seen in Mark 7:3,4. Men seem to be prone not to investigate personally the Word of God themselves but to rely upon what others have thought and said about its meaning. This condition should not exist.

The Pharisees who were attacking Jesus on this occasion felt that the disciples of the Lord were transgressing or doing wrong in failing to observe the ritualistic requirements of their traditions. Obviously they were not observing these traditions. There was no necessity for their doing that. They were with Jesus and had the true light. Hence they had seen the futility of observing tradition and the commandments of men.

Jesus answered His critics by asking them, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? 4 For God said, Honor thy father and thy mother: and He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou 73ndureth73 have been profited by me is given to God; 6 he shall not honor his father. And ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition" (Matt. 15:3-6). Doubtless many of the Pharisees—possibly the majority of them—did not know the difference between the traditions of men and the revealed will of God. They had accepted what their elders had said without question. Little therefore did they realize that they were making void the Word of God by observing traditions. Nevertheless, in their holding on to the traditions of their fathers, they were making null and void the Word of God. Today people can do the same thing. They can accept without question, though being honest and sincere in doing so, what they are taught by parents and by others. Notwithstanding their sincerity they are making the Word of God void by practicing those things that are handed down by tradition. In view of these facts it behooves each one of us to make a personal investigation of the things which we believe and teach and be certain that we have a "thus saith the Lord" for those things which we teach and practice.

In the quotation which we have just studied, our Lord called the Pharisees' attention to instances of their making null the Word of God by their traditions. God had given the specific command that children should honor parents, but by rabbinical sophistry and quibbling, this direct command had been made void. Their teachers had said that a person did not have to support his parents whenever it was necessary, if only he would dedicate what he had to the service of God. In other words, those responsible for these traditions declared that a person could donate his substance to carrying on the worship of God in general. If he did this, he was under no obligation at all toward his parents from that time on in using his means to take care of his aged parents.

Our Lord did not mince matters. He called those men who had attacked Him and His disciples hypocrites and declared that Isaiah had spoken of them in the following passage:

“8 This people honoreth me with their lips;  
But their heart is far from me.  
9 But in vain do they worship me,  
Teaching *as their* doctrines the precepts of men.”

We are not to assume that Jesus included in this denunciation all of the Pharisees. There were doubtless many of them who were honest and sincere, nevertheless blinded. We may be certain that those who were attacking Him on this occasion and many others were not sincere but were teaching and practicing religion from a professional standpoint. The Lord detests all cant, hypocrisy, and professionalism. He therefore denounced these hypocrites.

After dismissing the Pharisees, Jesus called the multitude to Him and explained thoroughly that which defiles one. (Let the reader now turn to Matthew, chapter 15, and read carefully our Lord’s words on this point.) In substance He declared that anything entering the person’s body physically does not defile him in the sight of God. These Pharisees were of the opinion that the food of which one partakes was contaminated and thus rendered impure if one did not wash one’s hands in a certain prescribed way before one took hold of the food. According to their conception, when a person thus ate, he was ceremonially unclean and could not worship God acceptably. Jesus disposed of this cavil by showing that all the food of which a person partakes, and which cannot be assimilated into the body, is cast off by the organs of elimination. Thus he may partake of food without washing his hands ceremonially. Of course for sanitary reasons a person should wash his hands before eating food.

Having disposed of this phase of the subject, our Lord then explained that which does in reality defile a person. Before He did this the disciples called His attention to the fact that the Pharisees were offended at His explanation. Jesus did not ruthlessly offend anyone. He was always gentle and kind to others. Nevertheless whenever it was necessary for Him to use sternness He did not hesitate. Moreover, He did not shun exposing hypocrisy and evil. He therefore told the disciples, “Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. 14 Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit.” From this language we see that those Pharisees attacking Jesus were absolutely blind, being unable to perceive the primary principles of truth. They believed what they taught, but their trouble was that they were not sincere and were not seeking for truth and light. Had they been of this attitude, our Lord would have given them the proper understanding. In the Sermon on the Mount He had declared, “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” This special group of men was so very blind and they were so committed to their position that they did not want any further light. Our Lord therefore compared them to a plant which God had by no means planted. They were blind and put themselves up as leaders of the untaught. They therefore, being blind, could not lead and guide the uninstructed ones who looked to them for direction. Jesus therefore declared that both they and those whom they were leading would fall into the ditch and perish.

Peter, according to verse 15, asked our Lord to explain the parable. Jesus expressed surprise that they, the Apostles, were without understanding. He thereupon told them that the food which enters the body does not defile one for the unused portions are eliminated. Then He called attention to that which in reality does defile a person—the things which proceed out of the heart. God created man perfect. He was pure and holy. When he transgressed the one and only command or prohibition laid upon him when he was in the Garden of Eden, sin entered the world and contaminated his very nature. Since then the heart of man has been deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). Every type of evil thought and wicked deed proceed from the heart. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Evil deeds are simply expressions of the thoughts that well up from the corruption of human nature. These are the things which defile a man and which corrupt his life. The only thing that can counteract this evil in the heart is the regeneration of the soul by the Spirit of God and the indwelling of the Spirit.

## The Second Withdrawal

In verses 21-28 we have Matthew's record of our Lord's second withdrawal from the Holy Land. As we have already noticed on a former occasion, He first withdrew to the regions at the northeastern side of the Lake of Galilee. But His rest was interrupted by the multitude. After the feeding of the five thousand, He returned to Galilee and was attacked, as we have just seen, by the carping Pharisees. He, with His disciples, therefore withdrew from Palestine, going up into the regions of Tyre and Sidon. It is highly probable that He was seeking an opportunity, not only of rest, but of teaching the disciples and of preparing them for the work which they were to carry on after His departure.

Upon His arrival in the regions of Tyre and Sidon, a Syro-Phenician woman came to Him and implored Him to have mercy upon her daughter who was grievously vexed with a demon. In speaking to Him, she addressed Him as, "O Lord, thou son of David." This fact shows that she had some knowledge as to who He was. This fact is easily understood in the light of the statement found in Matthew 4:24. In this passage of scripture we are told that, when Jesus began His ministry, the report concerning Him went out into all Syria; hence those who had relatives sick and possessed with demons brought them and Jesus healed them. She had therefore probably known of Him for at least eighteen months.

Although the leaders of Israel did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, this woman did. She was of an alien race and did not enjoy the spiritual blessings of the Jews; nevertheless she had faith and sufficient understanding that she recognized Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of David. God does show the truth to those who are honest and who are seeking for light. The case therefore of this woman should be of great encouragement to all.

When the disciples saw her and heard her request, they asked Jesus to dismiss her, claiming "... she crieth after us." Thereupon Jesus told her that He had been sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That statement would have settled the case with the average person. But she wanted truth; she wanted her daughter healed; she had faith to believe that Jesus could and would heal the child. She therefore came close to Him and worshiped Him saying, "Lord, help me." Again He spoke, still giving her no encouragement. "It is not meet," said He, "to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." This language seemed to be ruthless. Nevertheless it was not. It was designed to call forth her faith. She was equal to the occasion and said, "Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters table." She realized that she and her people were of a different race from the Jews and that they were not the Chosen People of God. Doubtless she realized her sinful condition also. To all such our Lord's heart of compassion goes out. He therefore said, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt." "And her daughter was healed from that hour."

In order for one to obtain the blessings of God, one must believe. If one does not, one has no right to expect anything from God. (See Hebrews 11:6.) What all of us need is a genuine faith in God. "Belief *cometh* of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). This faith must be exercised by trusting the Lord, who is willing to solve all of our problems at any time. Indeed it is blessed to have an experimental knowledge of God and of the Saviour. This can be obtained only by walking with Him daily by faith.

Jesus told this woman that He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel the Jews. In making this statement, He affirmed that His personal ministry was to be confined to the Hebrew people. The gospel was *to the Jew first* in that day. After our Lord's resurrection and ascension He commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel "... in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This is the program which He inaugurated. This same principle should govern the Christians today. As proof of this position, may I call attention to Romans 1:16 which declares: "... the gospel ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." This order still obtains. So long as the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, that long is it to be given to the Jew first locally—and then to the Greeks (Gentiles).

That this interpretation is true may be gathered from the practice of the Apostle Paul. Whenever he went to any place where there were Jews, he gave the gospel to them first. After they had had ample opportunity to accept it, he then turned to the Gentiles of the same community (Acts 13:44-52; 18:5-11; 28:23-28). Paul's practice of going to the Jew first of a given locality and then turning to the Gentiles of the same community shows unequivocally what he meant by saying that the gospel is to the Jew first today and then to the Gentiles. Since the Lord has not rescinded this measure, every group of Christians should place the Jew in its program, just where God has put him. Brother, are you putting the Jew first? May the Lord enable each of us to follow Him in this as well as in all other matters.

### The Third Withdrawal

From the regions of Tyre and Sidon, our Lord went eastward into the territory east of the Jordan and south to a locality on the southeastern side of the Sea of Galilee. Upon His arrival He went up into a mountain and sat there. It is quite likely that He was at this time continuing His private instructions to His disciples, but He could not have any privacy; for we are told in verse 30 that "there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet." He of course had compassion on them and healed them. People were amazed that such marvelous, complete healings should take place. Therefore "they glorified the God of Israel." The Almighty is here called "the God of Israel." In their use of this name for God is echoed the fact that Jesus was in Gentile territory, when He was performing these miracles. In this general locality there were ten cities, the inhabitants of which were of Gentile origin. They were called "the Decapolis"—ten cities. Though as Jesus told the Syro-Phenician woman that He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, our Lord here ministered to these Gentiles. They had faith and were hungry for truth. Jesus recognized this fact and met their faith with His bountiful mercies of ministry and healing.

Our Lord was able to leave the people and come to the disciples. Thereupon He told them of the compassion of His heart toward the multitudes, because they had followed continually with Him for three days and had nothing to eat. He then said that He could not send them away fasting "lest haply they faint on the way." In reply the disciples asked, "Whence should we have so many loaves in a desert place as to fill so great a multitude?" This question is indeed surprising to us, as we have already seen how our Lord fed five thousand men, besides women and children, with the five loaves and two fishes. How prone we are to forget! To our Lord's question, "How many loaves have ye?" the disciples answered, "Seven, and a few small fishes'." Immediately the Lord commanded the people to sit down upon the ground. Then He took the loaves and the fishes, gave thanks, and broke them, giving them to the disciples who in turn gave them to the multitudes. All were satisfied. There were taken up of the portions that were broken seven baskets full. The number of those eating were four thousand men, besides women and children. Thereupon the Lord dismissed the multitudes, entered into a boat, crossed the sea, and came into the borders of Magadan.

In Matthew 14:19 we read of the Lord's commanding the multitude to sit down on the grass when He fed the five thousand. By comparing Matthew's account with that of John we know that it was at passover time when He fed the five thousand. The grass in Palestine is green and most beautiful at that season. At the time our Lord fed the four thousand the grass had doubtless withered away under the summer heat, for we are told in Matthew 15:35 that Jesus caused the multitude to "sit down on the ground." Everyone who is acquainted with Palestine knows that the grass in the early spring is most beautiful and very prolific. After the moisture from the spring rains has disappeared from the soil, the grass completely dries up. These incidental remarks by the Evangelists show that they spoke forth truth, actual facts, as an honest man does when he is relating an incident without any ulterior motives in view.

Only twice did our Lord feed the multitudes. There was a crisis on both occasions. The people were hungry, both for the bread of life and for the actual physical food. It was the part of wisdom by our Lord to perform the miracle

and to feed the multitudes on these two occasions. If He did it at any other time, we have no record of it. We are to assume therefore that probably He did not feed them at any other time. His feeding the multitudes raises the question as to how much material assistance the Christian can give to those who are in need. This is a burning question, at least with those who are conducting missions for the "down and out" in our large cities. It is also a live issue with missionaries on the foreign field. If material assistance is given to people constantly, they will become pauperized and little spiritual benefit will accrue from the practice of doling out relief. If a man will not work, neither shall he eat (II Thess. 3:10). At the same time children of God should be considerate of and helpful to the unfortunate.

JESUS REBUKES THE PHARISEES; TESTS THE FAITH OF THE DISCIPLES WITH REFERENCE TO HIS MESSIAHSHIP;  
FORTELLS HIS DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND HIS COMING AGAIN  
(*Installment Sixteen*)

In last month's study we examined the contents of chapter 15. Our portion for investigation this month is chapter 16. As has already been noted previously, Matthew, beginning with chapter 14 and onward, is more or less chronological. We see this by comparing his record with those of Mark and Luke.

After Jesus fed the four thousand men, besides women and children, He crossed the Sea of Galilee to the western side, landing at Magadan. The exact location of this spot has not been absolutely confirmed by archaeological evidence. It is most highly probable that it was on the western side of the lake south of Capernaum—between Capernaum and Tiberius. It is quite likely that it was in the Plain of Gennesaret.

#### The Pharisees Seek For A Sign

The Pharisees, in connection with the Sadducees, teamed up on Jesus and attacked Him as soon as He set foot upon Galilean soil. As all Bible students know, the Pharisees were sticklers for the Word of God—especially for their traditions. They believed in the spiritual realm—in God, the immortality of the soul, and of rest with God in the world to come. They likewise believed in the existence of the angels and of their assistance to man. On the other hand, the Sadducees were the materialists of that day and time. They belonged largely to the wealthy, influential class. They therefore were not very numerous. Doctrinally they were diametrically opposed to the Pharisees, denying the essentials of the Pharisaic creed. Notwithstanding their differences, they combined in their antagonism against the Lord Jesus. They considered Him a common enemy and were willing for the time being to sink their differences in a united effort against Him. Later we shall see them by themselves in their determined opposition to the Lord Jesus.

On the occasion of which we are now studying, these opponents came asking the Lord to give them a sign from heaven. This they did, notwithstanding the fact that He had performed numbers of miracles and wonders in their presence. It was not evidence of His divine call and commission that they sought. They were set in determined opposition against Him. Every scheme that promised in anywise success in their enterprise was resorted to by them.

Our Lord was equal to the occasion. He answered them by saying, "When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather: for the heaven is red.* 3 And in the morning, *It will be foul weather today: for the heaven is red and lowering.* Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot *discern* the signs of the times. 4 An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah" (16:2-4). There are always conditions in the physical realm that indicate a change in the weather. This is a universal rule. Anyone can soon, in a limited way, determine a change of weather by the appearance of certain atmospheric conditions. This was especially true then of Palestine and continues this way today. In the same manner there are certain things or phenomena that accompany changes in the moral and spiritual spheres. God has a moral government which He administers throughout the universe. Those who understand the great fundamental principles which obtain in His government can detect, in a limited way, the approach of a crisis. This principle obtained in the days of the Lord Jesus and also at the present time. The prophets had pictured in no uncertain manner the conditions that would obtain at the time of the Messiah's first appearance upon earth. By the Spirit of God they foresaw the moral and spiritual conditions that would exist and that they would call forth certain things—acts on the part of the Almighty. Thus the spiritually-minded people in Israel could detect that the time was at hand for Messiah to make His appearance. This general, feeling was confirmed by the definite prediction made by Daniel, chapter 9. This prophet foretold that Messiah would be cut off and have nothing at the end of sixty-nine weeks of years, 483 years. The initial point of this period was the year when Cyrus ordered the Jews to

return to Jerusalem and to rebuild their city and Temple. Since the Messiah would have to be born into the world before He could be cut off, it was logical to conclude that He would be born prior to the expiration of the 483 years. His birth would occur sufficiently long before that time for Him to grow up to manhood and perform His life's task by the time He was to be cut off. Thus the definite prediction in this prophecy confirmed the general impression that the spiritually-minded people could and did receive from observing the phenomena round about them. Jesus censured these leaders of the nation for not being able to discern the signs of the times which indicated to the truth-seeking one that the time was at hand for Messiah to appear. There was no excuse for their not recognizing Him. Moreover, there was no reason for their asking for an additional sign, He had given ample and sufficient evidence of His messiahship.

The Lord has told us the conditions that will exist in the end of this age. Those who are acquainted with the scriptural teaching and who have spiritual discernment can see and recognize that the conditions of the end time are here. That we are in the end of the age there can be no doubt to the one who is familiar with the prophetic word. Absolute and unqualified proof of this proposition is to be found in my volume, *Future Events Revealed*, an exposition of Matthew, chapters 24 and 25.

#### The Fourth Retirement

Since the Pharisees and the Sadducees attacked Jesus upon His return to Galilee, He immediately withdrew from the country for the fourth time. On this occasion He went in a northeasterly direction. Before leaving, the disciples had forgotten to purchase some bread. Upon their arrival on the opposite shore, our Lord warned them against "the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." On account of the lack of spiritual perception, the disciples thought that He was speaking of their not having brought any bread along with them. Jesus, perceiving their dullness spiritually, said, "O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have no bread? 9 Do ye not yet perceive, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 11 How is it that ye do not perceive that I spake not to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (vss. 8-11).

It is somewhat difficult for us to see how the Apostles, having enjoyed such marvelous, unprecedented teaching as that given by the Lord himself, should not understand what He meant on this occasion. They should have readily understood that He was warning them against the Pharisees and Sadducees who had just attacked Him. It is quite evident that He was not talking about the literal bread but was warning them against these opponents, who were corrupt and their lives, teaching, and activity would corrupt those who would be brought under their influence. This interpretation is the only possible one, since leaven, wherever it is used symbolically, always signifies something that is evil, corrupt, and demoralizing. On this occasion Jesus especially had the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees in mind. They would encompass land and sea to make one proselyte. In doing so, they would prejudice the mind of their convert and warp his thoughts to the extent that he could not see truth. Knowing these facts, our Lord warned the Apostles to beware of them. In the sequel of their life story which is found in Acts, we see that the warning was justified.

#### Jesus Tests The Faith Of The Disciples With Reference To His Messiahship

The record of this testing is found in verses 13-20 of our chapter. Here we read that when Jesus with His company arrived in Caesarea Philippi, He asked them, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" Why was it that Jesus asked this question of the disciples? To find the answer we must remember that on the last tour of Galilee He had sent the Twelve out two by two preaching in all the cities of the country. They had mixed and mingled with the people and doubtless heard many rumors and expressions regarding Jesus—who He was and questions in respect to His teaching. On the three previous retirements, it seems that events were occurring thick and fast and that our

Lord had very little opportunity of privacy with His disciples. On this occasion they were free from the interruptions of the masses. He therefore asked them as to what men said in regard to Him.

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets" (vs. 14). The fact that the people thought that Jesus, was John the Baptist or one of the prophets is proof that there was something unusual—something marvelous and great—that characterized Jesus and distinguished Him from all other men. Though the masses did not recognize in Jesus the promised Messiah, they knew that He was a most unusual, unique character. Moreover, they realized that the divine purpose was working out in His life. Doubtless the miracles which He performed led them to identify Jesus as one of the old prophets. In this connection let us remember that the Jews were expecting Elijah because Malachi, in the last few verses of the Old Testament, foretold that he would come before the great and terrible day of the Lord, the great Tribulation. The people of that day did not see the distinction between the first and second comings of Messiah. Since in many scriptures those two events, though removed far apart by centuries, are described—the one in connection with the other—naturally many who were expecting Elijah to appear thought that probably Jesus was Elijah, the herald of the Messiah. Others considered Him to be John the Baptist, whom Herod had beheaded. John was such a great and a marvelous man and had been so very unjustly persecuted—finally having been put to death—the people concluded that in all probability God was vindicating him by raising him from the dead and by allowing him to perform unprecedented miracles. Still other people identified Jesus as Jeremiah, who was called the "weeping prophet." There was a sadness about Him, a seriousness not usually observed among men, which characterized His every action and expression. Thus the people identified the Lord Jesus as Jeremiah come to life again.

Then our Lord put the direct question to the disciples, asking them, "But who say ye that I am?" Peter, on this occasion as on almost all others, spoke first and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The word, Christ, is the Greek term for the Hebrew *Messiah*. Thus Peter said that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah of Israel, the Son of the living God. Though he recognized that Jesus was a man, every inch a man, at the same time he saw that the Lord Jesus was the long-expected Hebrew Messiah, who is none other than the Son of the living God. Thus Peter confessed that Jesus of Nazareth was the God-man, the Messiah and King of Israel. Caiaphas the high priest, before whom Jesus stood trial, asked Him this question after having put Him on oath: "Tell us whether thou art the Christ [Messiah], the Son of God" (Matt. 26:63). The wording of this statement of Caiaphas, the representative of the nation, shows that the Jews of the first century understood that the Messiah, though a man, would be the Son of God in a unique and special manner. They knew from the Scriptures and from the teachings of their rabbis that He would be the Son of God who enters the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth.

Today, however, the Jews do not mean by the word, Messiah, what their ancestors of the first century indicated by it. Today the term, Messiah, simply connotes a leader of the people, either in the political sense or in the intellectual and spiritual realms. But especially the Messiah is thought of as a political leader. Today He is considered only a human being with unusual ability, who will lead the nation back to its former strength, glory, and power. For a Jew, therefore, to confess that he believes that Jesus of Nazareth is the Jewish Messiah is not to be taken seriously. Many of the reformed rabbis believe that He was their Messiah in the sense of being their greatest leader, whose life and teachings will eventually prevail in Israel and will bring them back to the enjoyment of their ancient glory. To believe that Jesus was Messiah in this lower sense of the term as it is used today is not sufficient to bring one to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We who wish to give the truth regarding Him to His brethren according to the flesh must understand the scriptural teaching of the word, Messiah, and must likewise know its meaning upon the lips of the Jews of today. We must show, beyond peradventure, what the scriptural teaching is regarding the Messiah and convince them from their own Scriptures that Jesus of Nazareth was this one—the God-man who entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, and who laid down His life as a ransom for the sins of all who will accept Him.

Jesus informed Peter that he had not learned the truth regarding His identity from men, but that God the Father had revealed that marvelous truth to him. But the Scriptures are given us by inspiration of God. We are to study them most diligently in order to determine what the truth is. An education and mental training are absolutely essential in the comprehension of truth, but they are not *the* essential in the quest for truth. As one searches the Scriptures, focusing all one's mental acumen upon the text, one must look to God to open the eyes in order that one might see and understand the deep spiritual meaning of the Word. The other Apostles had been associated with Jesus and, it seems, had heard His teaching, but somehow or other they had not learned who He was. Because of Peter's great desire for the truth and for the service of God, the Lord opened his spiritual vision and enabled him to see that Jesus of Nazareth, his leader, was actually and really the long-expected Messiah, the God-man.

When Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God, our Lord responded by saying, "... thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (vss. 18, 19).

It is clear that the direct address of the Lord Jesus to Peter was determined by Peter's statement to Him, "Thou art the Christ ... Thou art Peter ..." Our Lord promised Peter that "... upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Upon what rock? The name *Peter* in Greek means a *small stone or rock*. Did Jesus tell Peter that He would build His church upon him, Peter? The answer is a most emphatic denial. Why? Our Lord used a different but kindred word which indicates, not a small stone but an underlying ledge of rock. By the choice of this latter word, our Lord differentiated between Peter and the foundation upon which He had promised to build His church. In view of this fact there is no justification for anyone's claiming that the church was built upon Peter. The one foundation, according to the Apostle Paul, upon which the church of God is built is Jesus Christ: "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11). In view of this parallel passage we see that this great ledge of rock to which our Lord referred, symbolized the Lord Jesus Christ himself—His two natures, human and divine.

Probably the imagery of this passage was drawn from some scene near at hand. The picture is this: Here is a city built and inhabited, situated on a hill or a ledge of solid rock. There is a second city being constructed by others. The inhabitants of the first city are thought of as being hostile and of making attempts to prevent the building of the new city. The one which the Lord Jesus said that He would erect is nothing less than the city of God. His spiritual kingdom, which is built upon the one foundation of His divine-human nature. The king of the first city is none other than Satan and its inhabitants are the evil, wicked spirits under him. When the Lord Jesus attempts to lay the foundation of His city, according to the imagery, the inhabitants of the first—the city of Satan—sally forth in an attempt to thwart the building of this new city of God. They make repeated attacks to prevent its being constructed. Nevertheless the Lord assured Peter and the other Apostles that He would be successful in building it.

To the Apostle Peter our Lord promised to give the keys of this kingdom, of this newly built and fortified city. The keys of an ancient city were used in locking and unlocking the gates through which those permitted to enter could do so. Peter therefore is represented as the gateman who would unlock the city and allow people to enter and would lock it to prevent others from going in. An examination of Acts, chapters 2 and 10, shows that the Apostle Peter opened the gates of the kingdom of heaven to the Jews on Pentecost and to the Gentiles at the household of Cornelius. He thus opened the kingdom of heaven by laying down the conditions upon which people could accept the Lord Jesus Christ and enter "the kingdom of the Son of His love." Moreover, he locked the gates of the kingdom against those who would not accept the Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning blood.

But was Peter given primacy over the rest of the Apostles? Some answer this question in the affirmative. I cannot do that, for Peter himself did not thus think of himself. In addressing the elders of the various churches in "Pontus,

Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,” Peter spoke of himself as a fellow-elder (I Peter 1:1,2; 5:1). For further conclusive proof that Peter was not given any authority which was not delegated to the rest of the Apostles, see the following passage of scripture found in John 20:20-23: “And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” Those who know the Scriptures therefore realize that Peter was not given any more authority or power than was delegated to the rest of the Apostles. Why, then, did the Lord speak to Peter as He did, on the occasion of which we are studying? Simply because Peter, by nature, was the spokesman. The Lord recognized this fact and said that He would allow him the privilege of preaching the first gospel sermon, after the resurrection and the ascension, to the Jews and later to the Gentiles.

After Peter made his confession regarding Jesus, our Lord charged His disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Messiah. This was simply a precautionary measure. The country was astir with the expectation of the imminent appearing of the Messiah. There were very many fanatical patriots throughout the land who were seeking an opportunity to start a revolt in order to throw off the Roman yoke. Figuratively speaking, the whole countryside was inflammable material. Jesus wanted to prevent any disorders. He therefore solemnly charged the disciples to keep to themselves the secret regarding His being the true Messiah.

#### Jesus Foretells His Death And Resurrection

This record is found in verses 21-26. From the time of Peter’s confession and onward, our Lord frequently spoke of the fact that He would go to Jerusalem, be mistreated by the leaders, be slain, and finally rise from the dead. One wonders why it was that they did not realize from the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures that He would have to suffer, die, and rise again. That teaching is plainly set forth by Moses and the prophets. The Apostles shared the popular view concerning the Messiah, which was that He continues forever—is born into the world not to die. This is seen in the episode recorded in John, chapter 12. Our Lord made certain statements as we see in John 12:20-32. These He uttered “signifying by what manner of death he should die.” The multitude answered, “We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?” (vss. 33,37). The Pharisaic section of the nation, or those who had given serious thought to the question doubtless came to the conclusion that the Messiah would be born, would be God manifested in the flesh, and therefore would never die. When Jesus spoke of His death, the people were shocked. They understood that Messiah was also called “the Son of man” and asked, “Who is this Son of man? That he will die?” They could not understand how the Son of man, the Messiah, could die. It is most highly probable that this false theory concerning Messiah’s dying held by the Jews in general, was also shared by the Apostles. Since they had this prejudice, our Lord withheld the evidence from them until late in His ministry—until within six months of His crucifixion.

At the time of which we are studying, the opportune moment had come for the Lord Jesus, to reveal the fact proclaimed by the prophets that He should suffer, die and rise again on the third day.

When our Lord revealed this fact, Peter reprimanded Him, saying that such should never come to pass. Peter became very bold on this occasion, but a rebuke from our Lord showed Peter his place.

Moreover the Lord in this connection showed that there is a cross for all of His followers to bear. He himself would bear the literal cross and would be nailed to it, for our redemption. The sufferings and the privations which the true believer suffers because of his faith in the Lord are here spoken of as a cross. Do we shun such suffering? We must take up our cross and follow Him daily.

## The Coming Of The Son Of Man

In the two concluding verses of this chapter our Lord spoke of His return in glory, at which time He will appear with all the angels of God and will render to each man his reward according to his works. When Jesus returns, therefore, we shall receive our reward.

In concluding the discussion of His return, our Lord promised to give some who were standing there a vision of the same before they would ever have to taste of death: "Verily I say unto you, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (vs. 28). The significance of this promise we shall see in next month's installment.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD; HIS HEALING OF THE EPILEPTIC BOY; HIS FORETELLING OF HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION; HIS PAYMENT OF THE TEMPLE TAX  
*(Installment Seventeen)*

At the conclusion of the last article, we saw that our Lord gave a promise to certain ones who were standing with Him that they should not taste of death until they should see the Son of man coming in His kingdom (Matt. 16:28). In the parallel passage found in Mark 9:1, we have these words: "Who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power." These statements are supplemental. What does this promise signify? It can mean only one of two things: first, that the Lord would grant a vision of His coming in His kingdom (the second coming in glory) to certain ones who were standing there, during their own natural lifetimes: or, second, that the ones to whom He made this promise would be sustained in life supernaturally throughout the entire Christian Dispensation and would never taste of death until the Lord Jesus returns in glory at the end of this age. Which of these two interpretations seems the most probable? Instantly our minds turn to the first, as the most logical and the most plausible. This interpretation is confirmed by Peter's reference to it, found in II Peter 1:15-21. An examination of this passage shows that Peter interpreted the significance of the vision at the time of the Transfiguration as referring to the "power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." In view of this fact we may be certain that Jesus promised certain ones of His disciples that He would give them a vision during their own natural lifetime which would picture to them His coming in power and great glory.

#### The Transfiguration Scene

According to Matthew 17:1 six days after our Lord made His promise to certain disciples, He took Peter, James, and John with Him and went up into a high mountain and was there transfigured before them.

Where was this mountain? There are some who think that it is Mount Tabor in lower Galilee. This supposition is purely speculation. In fact everything is against it. Jesus with His disciples was in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, which nestled near the base of Mount Hermon, in Syria. The more plausible suggestion is that in all probability the mountain where our Lord was transfigured before His disciples was none other than Mount Hermon itself. From Jerusalem on a clear day one can see this mountain, with its snowcapped top. It is probably around 150 miles northeast of Jerusalem.

When the miracle of the transfiguration occurred, our Lord's face did shine as the sun and His garments "became white as the light." Then suddenly there appeared talking with Him Moses and Elijah.

Peter in his customary impetuous manner spoke up and said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." In making this suggestion Peter did not know what he was talking about, as we learn from Luke's statement of the case.

From Luke's record we learn that the three Apostles were weighed down with heavy sleep. At the time of the transfiguration, however, they became fully awake and saw Jesus in His glory and Moses and Elijah talking with Him. It was when they were about to depart from Him that Peter made the suggestion concerning building three tabernacles.

This occurrence gives us some idea as to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though He laid aside the glory which He had with the Father from before the foundation of the world, when He became incarnate (John 17:5), He did not give up any element of His essential being. In fact such a thought is contrary to all scripture teaching. Being God, He could not change His nature from being what He was. Thus in the incarnation our Lord simply laid aside the outward manifestation of His glory and veiled Himself behind the thin form of His earthly human nature. But on the occasion of His transfiguration, He allowed that glory to shine forth through His fleshly nature and the Apostles

for the first time got a glimpse of His real nature. At the time of His resurrection His body became immortal. Nevertheless, as He associated with His disciples during the forty days after the resurrection, He did not allow, as a rule, His glory to shine forth as at the time of the transfiguration. It is, however, quite likely that on certain occasions He did manifest His glory as on this one. The fact that both Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ on this occasion is most informative. The fact that they did come and were talking with our Lord is proof of the consciousness of the soul after death. Death, as we often hear, does not end everything. As to the saints, when they pass out of this life, they really begin to live as never before, for they depart and are with Christ which is very far better than remaining here. Of course the believers go to be with Christ upon death since our Lord won the victory at Calvary. But before the death of our Lord, the believers went to that apartment of Sheol known as Paradise, whereas the wicked when they died went to another apartment, to which the rich man went (Luke, chapter 16).

Samuel departed this life and went to Sheol, to the place where the righteous went at that time. When Saul consulted the witch of Endor, Samuel appeared on the scene. She, however, did not call him up from the nether world. The Lord permitted him to come and to deliver a message on that occasion. But it was Samuel, nevertheless. The witch became terrified when she saw him. What she experienced on this occasion was entirely different from that to which she was accustomed. We may infer from all the facts that, usually when she had a seance, some demon impersonated certain characters. But when the real character, Samuel, came up, his appearance was so very different from the experiences which she had had that she became terrified.

Moses died and the Lord buried him. He, like Samuel, went to that apartment of Hades to which the righteous went. Not so with Elijah. He was translated that he should not see death. Though we are not told, we may infer that he was taken to glory, his body being immortalized.

On the occasion of which we are studying, these two, Moses and Elijah, appeared with our Lord and were conversing with Him. That they were talking about His decease and the future glories, we may be certain.

Moses was the great lawgiver of Israel and stood for the ideals and the realities of the old economy. Elijah, a true prophet, stood for or represented those who follow the Lord amidst trials and difficulties, but who are faithful and true to Him. His translation, so that he did not see death, prefigured the translation of the saints who in the end of this age, will not die but will be caught up to be with the Lord forever and ever.

Since these two outstanding representatives appeared with our Lord, and since the entire scene set forth the power, the coming, and the regal majesty of our Lord—as Peter explained in II Peter, chapter 1—we may see reflected in this scene the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as He will be when He returns. Moses stood for the saved under the old economy of Judaism, whereas Elijah, in this little symbolic picture, represents the true believers of the present age. If this interpretation be correct—and I do not doubt it—then we have a picture of the glorious era when the saints of the present age shall be made perfect along with the saints of former ages and shall reign with the Lord in glory upon this earth for one thousand years.

When Peter suggested making a tabernacle to each—Jesus, Moses, and Elijah—a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice came out of it saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” Peter, in his impetuosity, was unconsciously putting Moses and Elijah on an equality with the Lord. Instantly the divine voice tabued this idea and called upon them to look to the Lord Jesus Christ alone and to obey Him. There was a time when the children of Israel were commanded to obey Moses. Later, in the days of Elijah they were called upon to heed the message which God gave to this dauntless prophet. Now, since the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, has come, the voice from heaven declared that all men should hearken to Him. No one has any hope of salvation except those who come and accept Him and His atoning blood. There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby they may be saved except the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

When this voice came to the Apostles, they fell upon their faces and were greatly terrified. Then Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and be not afraid." Then they lifted up their eyes and they saw Jesus only. This means that Moses and Elijah had disappeared. He was remaining with them, to continue His work of redemption, to the end.

### The Coming Of Elijah

When Elijah appeared with Moses as they talked with Jesus in the transfiguration scene, naturally the Apostles thought of that prediction found in the last two verses of the Old Testament, which foretells the coming of Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. But Elijah's appearing at the transfiguration scene caused great concern to the Apostles. They were bewildered as to the hope of Elijah's coming. They therefore asked Jesus why the scribes preached that Elijah would come first. In the vision of the transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appeared together with Jesus as He was glorified. Thus it appeared to the Apostles that the prediction concerning Elijah's appearing first must be wrong, or their understanding of it was incorrect. Hence their question.

Jesus in substance told the Apostles that the scribes were right in saying that Elijah comes first; for He declared, "Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things: but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they would." From this statement we see that Elijah is scheduled to come and to restore all things—the things mentioned by the prophets as occurring at the coming of Elijah. Thus we may confidently expect Elijah to come first—before the Lord appears in glory—and to restore the things mentioned in the prophets.

Notwithstanding this prediction that Elijah will come and will restore all things, our Lord asserted that Elijah had already come, that the people had not recognized him, and that they had done unto him as they chose. The Apostles correctly understood these statements as referring to John the Baptist. How can this be? In order to understand the various statements and to harmonize the data, we must take a rapid glance at passages bearing upon this subject. In Malachi 4:5,6 God makes a promise that He will send Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. Note the Lord said that this one whose coming He announced was to be Elijah the prophet, the man who lived in the days of Ahab, who was translated so that he did not die. According to this promise he is scheduled to come immediately before the great Tribulation Period, the great and terrible day. When John began his ministry, a deputation was sent from the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, asking him if he were Elijah. To their inquiry he gave a most emphatic denial. John certainly knew who he was. Since he said that he was not Elijah, then we may be certain that he was not. But when the announcement was made to Zacharias of his birth, the angel Gabriel said that he, John the Baptist, should go before the face of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah. This language shows that John the Baptist was not literally Elijah, but that he was, a man like Elijah, a man of similar temperament, courage, and valor. Now since Malachi declared that Elijah must come before the great and terrible day of the Lord, since Gabriel said that John the Baptist would go before the face of the Lord in the power of Elijah, and since John declared that he was not Elijah, and since Jesus in this passage declared that Elijah indeed comes and shall restore all things, we may be certain that Elijah is yet scheduled to appear before the great and terrible day of the Lord to perform a ministry in Israel that will be essential for that day and time. Moreover, since John the Baptist was to go before the face of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, we may be certain that that is what Jesus had in mind when He said that Elijah had already come and that people had done to him as they chose. The orthodox Jews today are looking for the appearance of Elijah. Part of their ceremony at the paschal supper makes provision for his coming.

## The Healing Of The Epileptic Boy

While Jesus and the three disciples were upon the mountain, a man whose son was an epileptic brought the afflicted child to the other Apostles in order that they might heal him and cast the demon out of him.

Notwithstanding the fact that these Apostles had, when they were on the third Galilean tour, performed many mighty works—healing the sick, casting out demons, and raising the dead and bringing them back to life—they were unable on this occasion to heal this epileptic boy.

When Jesus and the three disciples came down from the mountain, they found the nine Apostles, the father of the epileptic child, and a great multitude. There seems to have been great excitement among the people.

When Jesus arrived on the scene, the father came kneeling to Him and telling the sad story that his child was suffering grievously, oftentimes falling into the fire and sometimes into water. Moreover he informed the Lord that he had brought the boy to His Apostles in order that they might cast out the evil spirit, but that they had been unable to do so.

Upon hearing the man's story our Lord said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? Bring him hither to me" (vs. 17). The Apostles, who had enjoyed such a marvelous ministry as we have just seen, had lost their faith and with it went their ability to perform miracles. Hence our Lord spoke of that faithless and perverse generation.

Why was it that they lost their faith? Doubtless they had neglected the prayer hour and secret communion and worship of God. We know that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, but that faith must be nourished by living in close touch with the Lord, in fellowship with Him. As they became negligent in their prayer life, in their devotional exercises, the power which had characterized them when they were on that preaching tour gradually slipped from them.

Finally the disciples came and asked Jesus, "Why could not we cast it out?" They had been helpless before this demon—due to their lack of faith and fellowship with the Lord. In reply our Lord said, "Because of your little faith: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (vs. 20).

God delights to exercise the faith of His children. A study of Hebrews, chapter 11, gives us a clear understanding of what faith is. As we go through the account of the worthies of old found in that chapter, we see that faith is simply an attitude of trust toward God, implicit trust. Moreover a careful study shows that faith is simply trust, unswerving confidence in God that He will do what He promises. Some have erroneously concluded that belief is not considered faith in the Scriptures until after it has manifested itself in some overt act of obedience. This is a mistake. Sarah by faith received power to conceive. She simply believed the promise of God, which trust was counted to her for righteousness. God honored her faith and gave her the child of promise. Some who were weak physically were strengthened bodily by simply trusting God. There was nothing which they were commended to do or could do. They simply believed God and the Lord injected power into their bodies. Certain women, by faith, received their dead back to life again. They did nothing but take their stand in an unswerving attitude of dependence upon God and looked to Him to fulfill His Word. Some even by faith stopped the mouths of lions. They did nothing but trusted God who worked upon the lions and kept them back from hurting these servants of His. In fact, a careful study of Hebrews 11:32-38 shows that the great heroes of faith were great because of their enduring suffering. In view of the teaching of this chapter, it is indeed erroneous to assert that faith is not counted for faith until after it has asserted itself in some act of obedience. Faith is simply the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Heb. 11:1).

On the other hand, whenever a person has faith and the Lord instructs him to do something, without hesitation he does it. But the faith expressing itself in action is no more faith than a believing attitude of the child of God who by faith understands that the worlds were created by the Word of God. God promised Abraham that his seed should be as numerous as the stars of the heavens. He believed that promise and his faith was reckoned to him for righteousness. He never turned his hand upside down, yet he was justified by faith. He took God at His word. Years later, when Isaac was a young man, God commanded Abraham to offer him upon an altar as a sacrifice to Himself. By faith Abraham did that. Originally he was justified by faith, pure faith, simple faith, and faith only; but that faith by which he was justified led him to obey the Lord when he was commanded to offer his son upon the altar. May God strengthen and increase our faith! It is only as we have faith that God can bestow the riches of His goodness upon us and can use us in a greater way than at the present time. If we simply had faith as small as a grain of mustard seed—unalloyed faith—we could say to this mountain, Be ye removed to yonder place, and it would be moved. But if we had such a faith as this, we would not promiscuously speak to this or that mountain and tell it to be moved. Only when the moving of a mountain would glorify God and honor Him, would those who have such faith exercise it in performing such a marvelous feat. What we need above everything else is pure, unadulterated faith—trust in God.

#### Jesus Foretells His Death And Resurrection

After the fourth retirement Jesus with His disciples returned to Galilee. While He was there on this occasion, our Lord again foretold His death and His resurrection on the third day. This prediction caused grief on the part of the disciples.

In certain passages our Lord, in speaking of His resurrection, said that He would rise *after three days*; in others, *on* the third day; and in one other (Matt. 12:39,40), He stated that, for *three days* and *three nights*, He would be in the heart of the earth. There was a certain definite period between the time of His crucifixion and that of His resurrection. In referring to this definite period, our Lord used the three phrases. The fact that He did use these three terms to refer to a very definite period of time shows that the Jews used these terms with somewhat of a margin.

How long was our Lord in the tomb? A glance at the last verses of Luke, chapter 23, and the first verse of chapter 24 makes it plain—in my judgment. According to 23:50-54 Christ was buried on “the day of the Preparation, and the sabbath drew on.” Then the women who had followed Him from Galilee watched Joseph as he buried the body of Jesus in his own new tomb. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. Then on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment. Thus the weekly sabbath, which was a day of rest according to the commandment of Moses, followed the “Preparation,” mentioned in verse 54. But note that in verse 1 of chapter 24 we are told, “But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they [the women] came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared.” When they arrived, they found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. Moreover two angels who were present informed them that Jesus had been raised from the dead, and they instructed them to give this information to the Apostles, which thing they did. Thus there are three days mentioned in this passage and each succeeded the other. The first was the “Preparation” which was followed by the sabbath. It was on this day that Christ was crucified at nine o’clock in the morning and buried between three and six. This “day of the Preparation” was followed by the weekly sabbath on which according to the law of Moses the Jews rested. At the end of the sabbath and early on the first day of the week the women came and found the tomb empty. If this language is allowed to speak its message, there was one full day and portions of two other days during which our Lord was in the tomb. He was therefore crucified on Friday morning, buried late Friday afternoon, was in the tomb during Saturday, but early on the first of the week He arose, leaving the tomb empty. This period between the burial and the resurrection is thus spoken of as “after three days,” “on the third day,” and “three days and three nights.”

## Jesus Pays The Temple Tax

According to the law each male was required to pay the half-shekel or the Temple tax. This money was used for the maintenance of the services at the national shrine, the Temple.

The next incident after our Lord's prediction concerning His passion and resurrection is that of Jesus paying the Temple tax. Matthew is the only one who gives us an account of this incident and records it in 17:24-27. When He and the disciples came into the city of Capernaum, the question was put to Peter, "Doth not your teacher pay the half-shekel?" To this query the Apostle Peter answered in the affirmative. Knowing what had been said, Jesus, upon Simon's coming into the house, said to him, "What thinkest thou, Simon? The kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? From their sons, or from strangers?" Peter's reply was, "From strangers." Jesus rejoined by saying, "Therefore the sons are free." Notwithstanding this fact, Jesus did not wish to give any offense; hence He instructed Peter to go to the lake, cast his hook, take up the first fish that he caught, and open its mouth. In it, declared our Lord, "thou shall find a shekel: that take, and give unto them for me and thee." The Apostle did as he was commanded and found the facts to be exactly as our Lord foretold.

The Temple tax was usually paid in the early Spring, around passover. Jesus began to withdraw from the country on account of the opposition, which faced Him, as we have already seen, about the first of the year. Evidently He had not paid the Temple tax then. Having been out of the country for about six months, upon His return Peter was asked if Jesus, being a good Jew, paid the Temple tax, to which Peter replied yes. Evidently He had seen Jesus paying it before. Jesus observed scrupulously the law and the prophets, as we know.

THE TEACHING OF OUR LORD AS FOUND IN MATTHEW, CHAPTER 18  
(*Installment Eighteen*)

As stated in the last study, Matthew is chronological from chapter 14 to the close, with few exceptions. The last incident, which we have studied, is our Lord's paying the Temple tax, upon His return from His six months' period of retirement from the Holy Land. It was at Capernaum that He paid this half-shekel, one for Himself and one for Peter. The next incident of our Lord's life as related by the Evangelist was the contention that arose among the disciples as to which of them should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. This dispute occurred when they were in Capernaum.

The Dispute Regarding Rank

The dispute regarding rank among the Apostles as to who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven is recorded in Mark 9:33-37, Matthew 18:1-5, and Luke 9:46-48. Luke simply states that there arose a reasoning among them, whereas Matthew says, "In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" According to Mark's account, "When he [Jesus] was in the house he asked them, What were ye reasoning on the way?" From these various statements we see that there was a dispute among the disciples when they were traveling on the way. We cannot be positive just where they were when the dispute occurred or exactly when it was. It is altogether possible that it arose when they were returning from the fourth and last retirement. Or it may have been when they were on the road coming into Capernaum on this occasion. But no point is involved in this issue. The dispute occurred. Such ideas as to the rank and the position each should occupy in the kingdom should never have entered the heart of any of the Apostles, nor any of us today. It was to the shame and discredit of the Apostles that they stooped so low as to dispute about rank.

God gives to each one the talents which he possesses. Each of us should use these talents or capacities for the glory of God. As we use what He has given us, our abilities will increase and fit us for greater service in His cause. As we thus develop, the Lord, by His overruling providence, will bring us into the place which He wishes us to occupy. The Lord places each member of His body in the position which He wants him to fill. Whenever we realize this fact, we shall be satisfied with what the Lord assigns to us.

The Apostles were discussing the matter as to their positions in the kingdom of heaven. What is meant by this expression? There can be no doubt concerning the proposition that the Apostles at this time thought that Jesus would establish a literal kingdom upon the earth. Thus one of the Apostles doubtless wanted to be what we would call the prime minister. Possibly another wanted to be the secretary of state, or foreign secretary. Another might have wanted to become the treasurer. The Apostles were mistaken concerning our Lord's establishing the millennial kingdom at that time. Had they only studied the prophets, they would have known that He was not to establish such an earthly rule at His first coming. The entire redemptive career of King Messiah is set forth in the Prophets and in the Psalms. For instance, in Psalm 110:1,2 we see the entire redemptive career of King Messiah which consists of His first coming, His rejection, His ascension to the right hand of the throne of God, His session there in glory, and finally His return at the end of the age to establish His kingdom of glory upon the earth. When the psalm opens, speaking in dramatic terms, I would say that Messiah is seen in Jerusalem, being bitterly opposed by the leaders of His people. When this unfortunate situation arises, God the Father in heaven tells Him to leave the earth, to ascend to His right hand, and to stay there until He makes His enemies the footstool of His feet. This psalm does not tell us to what extent *their* hostility drives them. This information must be gathered from parallel passages. When we read Psalm 110 in the light of parallel passages, we see that their enmity drives them to the point that they execute Him. After that He is buried but rises on the third day. After His resurrection, at the invitation of God the Father He ascends from this earth, going to God's right hand and sitting there during the present dispensation, the Christian Era. At the conclusion of this age, the Jewish people, who reject Him at His first coming, become enthusiastic and welcome Him at His return. Then He establishes His kingdom of glory upon the earth. From this passage, and numbers of others in the Old Testament, we see that the prophets clearly outlined

Messiah's redemptive career. Moreover they show that at His first coming Messiah launches a preaching ministry which continues after His rejection and ascension to the right hand of the throne of God. They also show that the kingdom of glory would be only at the second coming of the Messiah.

We must study the kingdom of heaven—or the kingdom of God—in the New Testament in the light of the Old Testament predictions. To ignore the plain prophecies of the Old Testament is only to invite confusion in our understanding of the kingdom as presented in the New Testament.

Although the Apostles had erroneous ideas concerning the kingdom which our Lord established on the first Pentecost after His resurrection and ascension, nevertheless they were ambitious and wanted positions of preference and honor—a most deplorable and shameful attitude for those whom the Lord had chosen and whom He afterwards used, in a most marvelous manner. There is however great encouragement for us who have so very many faults when we start out in our Christian life. When the Spirit of God came upon the Apostles at Pentecost, they seem to have lost all of those earthly ambitions and to have become out and out for God, seeking to do that alone which is pleasing to the Lord, and no longer seeking their own private or personal interests. Just as the Apostles grew in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, so can we. Let us therefore, forgetting the things that are behind, press forward to the things that are before, always seeking the glory of God and the blessing of others.

In order to enforce the lesson which the Apostles so very sadly needed, our Lord took a little child and set him in their midst and said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (vss. 3,4). Childlikeness should be the dominant characteristic of everyone who is working for God. The language of these verses was spoken directly to the Apostles. In it Jesus told them that, except they turned and became as little children, they could not enter that kingdom. This language shows that the kingdom at that time was not established. When we study all the facts we learn that it was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord. But praise God they did turn from their self-seeking and became like little children. Hence when the Spirit came upon them they did enter as charter members into that kingdom. From then on they continued to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. There is no room at the present time for self-seeking or personal interest. In honor let us prefer the other. One will accomplish more and be used of God if he thus humbles himself and becomes Christlike.

#### The Zeal Of The Apostle John Rebuked

In verses 6-14 we have our Lord's teaching concerning the placing of stumbling blocks in the way of even the least of those who believe upon Him. Matthew mentions His teaching on this point immediately after he has narrated the incident concerning the Apostles' dispute about rank. But what was the occasion of His speaking about these stumbling blocks? From Matthew's record one cannot learn the facts. He must turn to the parallel accounts found in Mark 9:38-50 and Luke 9:49-50. When we read these passages, we see that the Apostle John reported to Jesus that they had seen a man casting out demons in Christ's name. Because this unknown disciple was not in the original apostolic group, John took it upon himself to rebuke him for performing this miracle in the name of Christ. John confessed saying, "We forbade him, because he followed not us." John certainly had the wrong spirit and the incorrect idea concerning spiritual matters and his relation toward others who believed in the Lord Jesus. To sum up the case we would say that John had a greatly accentuated sectarian spirit. We may also detect in this incident the same selfish ambition which led the Apostles to dispute about rank.

In John's reprimanding this unknown miracle worker as he did, he was approaching the sin of casting a stumbling block before a humble, true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the original the word rendered *stumbling block* carries the idea of one's placing something before another in order to entrap him. From this fact we see that

the motive which prompts a person to do that which causes another to fall enters largely into the consideration of one's putting a stumbling block before another. One must be prompted by the sincerest and purest motives in all of his actions toward his fellowman.

Our Lord declared that it is necessary for stumbling blocks to come, but He pronounced a woe upon those through whom these are brought about. People must be tested. God uses wicked and debased people by overruling what they do in His developing the characters of His saints. When some wicked person casts a stumbling block before a child of God, the Lord will make a way of escape in order that he may not be ensnared—if this one is only trusting God.

Indeed grave is the matter of casting stumbling blocks before others. In order to show the gravity of such a situation, our Lord said that it would be better to cut off one's hand or foot, or pluck out one's eye and to enter into life maimed or halt rather than to have all one's members and to be cast into the eternal fire. From this statement we can see how serious is the matter of causing others to stumble.

The Scriptures assert that there is a place of punishment for all unbelievers and the wicked. When they are judged at the great white throne judgment, they will be sent off into everlasting punishment, which was originally designed and prepared for the devil and his angels. When men therefore elect to follow Satan and his cunning devices rather than to accept the Lord Jesus Christ, there is but one thing which God can do, namely, let them go on with their master, the devil, whom they have willfully chosen. It is not the will of God that anyone should perish, but that all should repent and come to a knowledge of the truth. Men and women who are unregenerated would not be happy and contented in the company of the redeemed in glory. Neither will they be happy in association with the devil and his angels, together with the other lost. But since they elect to reject the mercy and the grace of God, there is but one thing which a just and righteous God, who has made all provisions for the salvation of everyone, can do.

In further warning against casting stumbling blocks before the least of those who believe in Christ, our Lord declared: "See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10). In different portions of the Old Testament we get pictures of the throne of God and of the angelic beings that behold God in His august holiness and majesty. This same thought therefore is presented in the verse just quoted. Does this passage teach the doctrine of a guardian angel which is assigned to every child born into the world? Many see the foundation for this teaching in this passage. The facts however are not sufficient to justify such a doctrine. But of this fact we may be confident, namely, that all the angelic beings are ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14). A study of the Old Testament especially yields the fact that the angels often have in the past been dispatched to render service to those who shall inherit eternal salvation. There can be therefore no doubt concerning their great ministry to us today. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them.

In our Lord's rebuking John for his sectarian spirit, He repeated the parable of the lost sheep and the ninety-and-nine that were not lost (cf. Matt. 18:12-14 with Luke 15:3-7). Regardless of circumstances, wherever there is a lost sheep—no matter how insignificant the sheep may be—the Lord is hunting for that one. From the standpoint of the Apostles this lone miracle worker was a lost sheep and was no concern for the great Shepherd. In this John was greatly mistaken. The Lord goes to the very limit of His moral and spiritual powers in searching for the lost sheep. Regardless of circumstances, Christ will use all means and will bring the truth to everyone who really and truly longs for God and for salvation.

## Right Treatment Of An Erring Brother

The transition from our Lord's teaching in connection with John's rebuking the unknown miracle worker, of whom we have just studied, to that of instructions regarding forgiving offenders is not very great. Thus Jesus gave implicit instructions concerning the matter of forgiving others. If one person sins against another, the innocent one should, in the spirit of Christ and in meekness, go to the offender alone, telling him the difficulty and endeavoring to win him back to the truth and the right. In the event that he will not listen to the pleadings of love, the innocent one is to take one or two witnesses, that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. This procedure is designed to win the sinner from his evil ways. In case he will not listen to the pleadings of the three, the case is to be turned over to the church which, if its efforts fail, is to take action against the offender and to withdraw fellowship from him. This action also is designed to win the one who has done the wrong back to the Lord and to restore him to fellowship. Public action against an offender is to be taken only after the private means of restoration have failed. After a church has withdrawn fellowship from a brother walking disorderly, all the members are to treat him not as an alien, but as an erring brother, whom they love.

In our Lord's giving these instructions, He was anticipating the time when the church would be established. As all Bible students know, the preparatory-work for the establishment of the church on earth was accomplished by John the Baptist and by our Lord and His disciples during His personal ministry. But the church came into existence on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, when the Spirit of God came in power and filled the Apostles who, thus led, proclaimed the gospel in all its fullness. On that day Christ, as the one and only foundation of the church, was laid (1 Cor. 3:11; Acts, chap. 2).

According to verse 18 of our passage, the Lord will ratify in heaven the action of the believers and of His true church when they, in the spirit of this passage, take scriptural measures against an unrepentant disciple. When therefore brethren, in the Spirit of Christ, follow out the instructions for the restoration of an erring child of God and their efforts fail, God recognizes the action that they take in withdrawing from such a one. It is a serious matter, therefore, when an erring Christian has thus been dealt with; but when we look around at the churches of today, we see little discipline. Brethren, these things ought not to be. The Lord has expressed His will on this point, and it should be carried out in the spirit and letter of His teaching. The Lord will hold the leaders of the churches responsible for not administering church discipline to those walking disorderly. It is my firm conviction that, if the leaders of the various congregations would follow our Lord's teaching and in the spirit of Christ deal with those walking disorderly, the church would be in a flourishing spiritual condition. The subtraction of the worldly members from the fellowship would open up the way for numerous additions of real spiritually-minded people.

Naturally there grew out of our Lord's teaching on these points the assurance that whenever two or three are agreed on earth as touching anything for which they should make request, it shall be done for them by the Father. Wherever there are two or three or more true believers gathered together and when they are agreed thoroughly concerning the thing for which prayer should be made, our Lord assures us that the petition will be granted. Of course we are to understand that the thing requested must be in harmony with the will of God, for we must always pray according to His will. The Lord hears every cry and opens the door to every one who knocks. He may not do it at the moment when we expect, or He may not give the answer in the form in which we are anticipating, nevertheless He answers every petition. "Prayer changes things." As our hymn states, we often must suffer and endure many things, all because we do not take everything to the Lord in prayer.

"O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer!"

When Jesus finished giving His instructions regarding dealing with offenders, Peter, in his usual impetuous manner, came forward and asked the Lord, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" (vs. 21). Peter did not question one's duty regarding forgiving another when the offender has repented, but the Apostle thought that there was to be a limit to the number of times one should forgive another. So he asked if he should do it "seven times." Seven, as all biblical students know, is the number that indicates perfection or completion. Thus Peter was under the impression, it seems, that should one forgive another seven times, one will have performed his Christian duty and will be under no obligation to continue to forgive.

In reply our Lord said, "I say not unto thee until seven times; but, until seventy times seven!" Of course this reply is an echo of Peter's statement—"Until seven times?"—no, until seventy times seven! Did Jesus mean that one should forgive another four hundred and ninety times and then stop? Such a rigid and literal interpretation of the flow of thought here is not justified by the facts of the context. It is clear from the drift of thought that Jesus meant an indefinite number—just as many times as one sins and repents and asks to be forgiven. Of course Jesus assumed that the one thus asking for forgiveness is sincere, genuinely sincere. That this interpretation is correct may be seen from the parable which our Lord spoke and which is recorded in verses 23-35. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a king, who was making a reckoning with his servants. One was brought who owed him ten thousand talents. In the footnote of the Revised Version a talent is said to be equivalent to \$1000 in American money. This debtor therefore owed the king \$10,000,000. When the sovereign demanded payment, the debtor pleaded his inability to pay and asked for mercy. The king, being moved by his helpless, pitiable condition, forgave him the debt—wrote it off the books. Having had his debt cancelled, this man went out and found one of his fellow-servants who owed him one hundred shillings. Again in the footnote of the Revised Version we are told that this coin was worth about 17 cents in American money. The debt, therefore, was \$17.00. The creditor, forgetting that mercy had been extended to him by his sovereign, and that his debt had been written off, began by violent treatment of his fellow-servant to force him to pay the little amount of \$17.00. He went so far as to have the man arrested and put into prison, thinking that by this method the man would be able to influence his friends to give him the money or by some other means he could acquire it.

When other servants of the king saw what this unmerciful man was doing, they, remembering that this man had been forgiven a \$10,000,000 debt, went and reported to the king the unmerciful treatment that he was dealing out to his fellow-servant. The king immediately summoned this man into his presence and questioned him about his conduct. It is needless to say that the man was nonplused—there was nothing that he could possibly under any condition say. The king was indignant in the extreme. He showed him how unjustly and unmercifully he had acted toward his fellow-servant. Then he delivered him over to tormenters "till he should pay all that was due" which he owed.

This parable was spoken to enforce the thought that men who have been forgiven the enormous debt of their sins against a holy God must in turn be appreciative of their position and must mercifully forgive others who transgress against them. Our Lord therefore said, "So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts" (Matt. 18:35). We cannot win or gain favor or mercy by being merciful to others, but those who have been forgiven should have a sense of appreciation that they will overlook and will forgive others who wrong them. Thus our Lord emphasized the necessity for forgiving others.

## JESUS ON THE LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM (*Installment Nineteen*)

When the material found in John 7:2—12:1 is laid beside that appearing in Luke 9:51—18:14 (records that are not found in either Matthew or Mark) and when this new material is properly correlated, the one with the other, one sees that, after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John, chap. 11), He went northward and was in seclusion in the hill country of Ephraim. Finally, at the time of the Passover, He returned to Galilee and joined the pilgrim band as it was moving along the border of Galilee and Samaria, going eastward to Peraea, the land east of the Jordan. All of the pious, faithful Jews, in their travels from Galilee to Jerusalem and return, avoided passing through Samaria. They therefore crossed the Jordan into Peraea, went southward through Gilead and then crossed back to the west side of the Jordan at Jericho and went up to Jerusalem.

In our exposition of Matthew we have reached chapter 19. In verses 1 and 2 of this chapter, we see that when Jesus “had finished these words” He left Galilee and came into the region of the Jordan, came into the borders of Judaea beyond the Jordan eastward. The material found in Luke 17:11-18:14 is to be interpreted as having occurred on the way from Galilee after Jesus spoke “these words” and before He reached the borders of Judaea beyond the Jordan.

### The Matter Of Divorce

While Jesus was still in Peraea, certain Pharisees came to Him and asked Him, “Is it lawful *for a man* to put away his wife for every cause?” To their query He replied, “Have ye not read, that he who made *them* from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:4-6). Then the Pharisees asked Him, “Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away?” (vs. 7). In reply our Lord declared, “Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery” (vss. 8,9).

Since the Pharisees were trying Jesus, as stated in verse 3, it becomes immediately apparent that they were not asking for their own edification. They were probably up to their old tricks—trying to ensnare Him and get Him involved in some legal technicality in order to discredit Him in the eyes of the people. If this supposition is correct, these men were prompted by the wrong motive. One should seek for truth for the sake of truth and for the sake of conforming his life thereto. Everyone should be like Ezra, who set his heart to know the law of God in order that he might do it and might teach it to others (Ezra 7:10).

Is it ever lawful for a man to put away his wife? This is the question which the Pharisees put to Jesus. In reply our Lord said that from the beginning the Almighty made them male and female and for that reason a man should leave his mother and father and should cleave to his wife, and that they two should become one flesh. They are no longer two, but one flesh. What God has joined, man should not attempt to put asunder. Then the question arose concerning Moses’ granting to Israel the privilege of a man’s divorcing his wife under certain conditions. (See Deut. 24:1-4.) Why did Moses concede the privilege to a man of divorcing his wife, if it were not God’s will that there should be any divorces—under any conditions? No provisos were made originally; but on account of the hardness of Israel’s heart God did permit a man to give a bill of divorcement to his wife. This permissive legislation was doubtless included in Ezekiel’s statement found in Ezekiel 20:25: “Moreover also I gave them statutes that were not good, and ordinances wherein they should not live ...” When men will not accept God’s number one plan for their lives, He will let them adopt a secondary plan. But who wants to be in the permissive will of God whereas he may be in God’s holy directive will?

In contrast to what God had spoken through Moses, our Lord, in verse 9, declared: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." There is echoed in our Lord's statement here the consciousness of His own divine nature and authority. This same consciousness is reflected in His utterances found in the "Sermon on the Mount" (Matt., chaps. 5-7). His teachings have the ring of divine authority and omnipotence. His is the final or last word on every theme. From Him there can be no further appeal.

But what is the correct interpretation of this verse which I have just quoted? One group of scholars understand that it teaches the right of an innocent person to divorce an unfaithful companion and to remarry. In other words, they see in this passage the authority for a person to divorce an unfaithful companion and to marry another. They affirm that there is but one scriptural ground for divorce. When an innocent person is certain that his or her companion is guilty of adultery, then he or she can institute legal proceedings which dissolve the bond uniting the two. Then he or she is at liberty to take another companion.

There is still another school of thought which interprets the passage as allowing the innocent person to get a divorce from his or her unfaithful companion, but does not allow such a one to remarry. Of course this group of interpreters does not believe that the guilty person has any right to remarry.

This whole question should be studied in the light of Luke 16:18, which reads as follows: "Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery." There is no proviso in this passage which allows the dissolution of the marriage vow. According to this statement, if a person puts away his wife and marries another, he commits adultery. Should another marry the divorcee, he commits adultery.

To say the least in regard to the matter, one may be certain that it is safe for the innocent person to remain single, if a divorce is obtained. There can be no question about the soundness of this interpretation.

In view of the seriousness of the marriage and divorce situation, it behooves every one to be very careful before entering into the marriage relationship. It is to be "until death do us part." If people only recognized this fact and would enter into the marriage relationship only after earnest, sincere, believing prayer, there would be fewer divorces.

After Jesus answered the Pharisees, the disciples came and asked him, "If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry." In reply to this statement the Lord Jesus answered, "Not all men can receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs, that were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, that were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, that made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (vss. 11, 12). All people do not have the same gift. God gives to each one according to His wisdom and the individual's need.

#### Jesus' Receiving Little Children

At this time there were those who brought little children to Jesus in order that He might lay His hands upon them and pray for them. When they did this, the disciples rebuked the people for bringing their children. Then Jesus reproved them and said, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven" (vs. 14). The kingdom of heaven belongs to little children. And from Matthew, chapter 18, we learn that it also belongs to those who become like little children.

Jesus laid His hands upon the children and blessed them. After this episode, He went on His way.

## Rich Young Ruler

At this time one came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?" (vs. 16). In reply our Lord said, "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments" (vs. 17). According to Matthew, Jesus asked the young man why he asked Him concerning the good. In the parallel passage in Mark 10:17,18 Jesus is reported to have asked, "Why callest thou me good?" We have a right to believe that Jesus asked both of these questions. Doubtless He did so to call forth the young man's faith with reference to Himself. Our Lord urged him to keep the commandments, to which he replied, "Which?" Then Jesus mentioned several of them. The young man asserted that he had observed all of these from his youth up and inquired, "What lack I yet?" Then Jesus instructed him that, if he would be perfect, he should go and sell all that he had and give to the poor and come and follow Him. When the young man heard this, he went away sorrowful, because he had great possessions. The wealth which the young man had was evidently a millstone about his neck. Our Lord's telling him to sell these things and distribute the money to the poor was His effort to remove such a burden from him that would sink his soul into perdition. Our Lord does not insist upon people's giving up things, necessarily; but if one's possessions are a hindrance to one and one's full surrender to the Lord, one is urged to lay aside all these weights and hindrances to one's spiritual progress.

What one possesses is not his own, for it belongs to the Lord. What we have has been entrusted to us. We are simply stewards of the manifold grace of God. One question which should concern us is: Am I faithful as a good steward of Jesus Christ? This rich young man was not. He under no conditions would give up his possessions in order to walk with the Lord.

At the conclusion of this episode, our Lord remarked to the disciples, "Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (vss. 23,24). Wealth and earthly possessions are frequently hindrances which make it impossible for one to come to God. In fact, the Lord has to extend special grace to the rich in this world's goods, otherwise they would be unable to come to the Lord in full surrender and faith.

According to our Lord it is just as difficult for a camel to go through the eye of a needle as it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. What is meant by the eye of a needle? We are to understand this statement literally. I am perfectly aware of the fact that an explanation has been given to this effect: There was a small wicket gate which constituted part of the city gate of Jerusalem. This was there for travelers who came to the city late in the day. In order for one with his camel to enter the city through the gate, the animal had to get down on its knees and crawl in. This is a beautiful little theory, if the facts justified it. So far as I have been able to see, I have found nothing to substantiate such a position. I therefore take the passage literally.

When the Lord showed how difficult it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, He looked around and said, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." We praise God for this assurance. God takes into consideration one's circumstances and removes the difficulties that stand in the way of one's coming to Him for salvation.

Peter, as usual, spoke up by asserting that he had left everything and followed Jesus. He therefore wanted to know what he would receive. Our Lord's reply was: "Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." According to this verse, the Apostles will sit upon twelve thrones in the Millennial Age—the regeneration—and will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. We who use our pounds (Luke 19:11-27) will reign with our Lord in the Millennial Age according to our works.

It seems from the last two verses of Matthew, chapter 19, that Peter thought that he and the other Apostles had a kind of priority right on the positions of honor and trust in the Millennium, since they had followed Jesus first. But our Lord showed that such was not true. There are many who are first, but who will be last. Also there are many who are last, but who will become first. The principle governing such matters will be discussed in the next article of this series, which will take up the parable found in chapter 20, verses 1-16.

THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS AS SET FORTH IN MATTHEW, CHAPTER 20  
*(Installment Twenty)*

In the last installment of this series we studied about the rich young ruler who volunteered to follow Jesus, but who was not willing to pay the price—to sell all that he had and to follow Jesus. His wealth and property were a millstone about his neck. Our Lord in telling him to dispose of his property and to give the proceeds to the poor was simply attempting to remove from him this great hindrance. Not having a sufficient appetite for spiritual things and not being surrendered to the will of God, the young man went away sorrowful. This incident called forth the statement from our Lord that it is as difficult for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle as it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. This last statement astonished the disciples, who asked the question, “Who then can be saved?” Peter, in his impulsive manner spoke up and said, “Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have?” (19:27). Our Lord then showed what the Apostles would receive in the regeneration—the great Millennial Age. In doing this, He made a definite promise to everyone who will forsake houses, lands, brothers, sisters, father and mother, and children for His sake and for the gospel. These shall receive in this life a hundred fold and in the one to come eternal life. But there are many who shall be last but who are first, and visa versa. To illustrate this point our Lord gave the parable of the laborers in the vineyard.

The Laborers In The Vineyard

In Matthew 20:1-16 Jesus gave us the parable in which He compared the kingdom of heaven to a householder that hired men in his vineyard, agreeing to pay them a shilling a day. This is a most beautiful and marvelous parable, the details of which are as follows: Early in the morning the landlord went to the market place, where those desiring employment would congregate with the hope of finding a job, to hire laborers in his vineyard. At this “employment office” he found a number of men with whom he agreed that they should work in his vineyard for one shilling a day, the ordinary price for a day’s work at that time. At the third hour of the day he went out to the employment bureau and hired others. He did this again at the ninth hour. Finally at the eleventh hour, late in the afternoon, he did the same thing and found men standing there idle. Of them he asked the question, “Why stand ye here all the day idle?” In reply they said, “Because no man hath hired us.” Then he told them to work in his vineyard, promising that whatever was right he would pay them. Without any discussion they went and labored faithfully during that last hour of the day. When quitting time came, the householder told his steward, or foreman, to begin with those who came in last and to give each one a shilling, which thing he did. Those who labored only one hour received the shilling and of course were delighted with their remuneration. Those who came at the ninth and the sixth hours likewise received a shilling. When, however, those who had labored all day came and received only one shilling—that upon which they had agreed with the landlord—they began to murmur and complain, thinking that they had been treated unjustly. They stated that they had borne the burden and the heat of the day and had received only a shilling, whereas those who came in at the eleventh hour did very little work, and yet they received an amount equal to theirs. To this complaint the landlord correctly stated that he had done them no wrong, for they had agreed to work for a shilling. Before they had entered the vineyard, they had a clear understanding with the employer, who carried out his part of the contract just as faithfully as they had done. It was a clear case of both the employer and the employee living up to their respective parts of a contract or a bargain. These laborers had no right, either moral or legal to complain about the action of the landlord.

The employer, out of the goodness of his heart and in accordance with his will, decided to give to those laboring only one hour a shilling, as he agreed to do for those laboring all day. He had a right to do with that which was his own as he chose. The laboring man today has a right to do as he chooses with that which is his own property, and no one has any right or authority to question his action in any disposition of his own property—so long as it does not injure another and does not break or violate any law. This same right the employer has. It is therefore a breach of human rights for one to complain and murmur against another in any disposition that he may make of his own

personal, private property. Thus the grumbling and complaining laborers were entirely out of order in finding fault with the action of their landlord.

This parable, though not intended to deal with any economic problem that arises between capital and labor, is drawn from that field and does throw light upon the relationship of the employer and the employee. From it we learn that the employer should give the regular standard living wage to those who labor for him. Every man and woman has a right to just remuneration. Any employer who does not consider his help, but who wishes to get just as much as he can out of the laborer irrespective of how the latter has to live and is deprived of the necessities of life, is untrue to society and is not worthy of the position he occupies in the community. Every Christian employer should practice the Golden Rule with reference to his employees. To fail to do this is to live out of harmony with the will of God.

On the other hand, the employee has duties and responsibilities to perform and is morally obligated to fulfill his contract and to give honest, conscientious labor. It is obligatory upon him to look out for the interests of the man who is employing him. If at the present time both labor and capital would view their mutual relations from this standpoint, all our labor troubles in this country would be a thing of the past. But of course we cannot expect such ideal conditions so long as the devil is present in the world and so long as people are unregenerated and unsaved. Only in the Millennium can we expect a cessation of labor troubles. Let Christians, however, observe the broad, general principles that are set forth in the Scriptures in their relationship one to another and to those with whom they have any working connection.

The main point in the parable is that the landlord has a perfect right to do with his own property as he chooses. If he is minded to divide his goods and his profits with anyone of his employees, or with anyone else, that is a matter for him to decide and not for any third person. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own or is thine eye evil, because I am good?"

This parable was spoken by our Lord to correct the Apostle Peter's erroneous ideas concerning having an agreement with the Lord as to what reward he should have for a certain amount of service. Peter told the Lord what he had done and what sacrifices he had made and asked what his reward would be. In other words he had a bargaining, dickering spirit and wanted to know exactly what he might expect from the Lord. Jesus abominates that spirit. It manifests a lack of faith. It is walking by sight. It is the opposite of trusting the Lord's goodness and mercy and His sense of right.

Those laborers who entered at the eleventh hour, responding to the first opportunity that they had for work that day, did not have the bargaining, dickering spirit, but trusted implicitly the goodness of the employer to do that which was right. The landlord appreciated that spirit and rewarded them for manifesting it. It is not for us to work for the Master expecting a definite, specific reward—so much work, so much reward. We are not to enter into any bargaining with Him. He will do that which is right; yes, He will do far more, exceedingly and abundantly, for us by His grace than that which we can even think or ask. When the Lord sits upon the judgment seat to award the rewards of the saints, one of the factors that will enter into the decisions is that of the spirit in which we serve: whether or not we are trusting Christ and His goodness, or whether we have this bargaining spirit. Two other elements entering into the decision is that of the quality of the work which we render and also the quantity.

#### The Passion And The Resurrection Foretold The Third Time

The Hebrew people of the first century, knowing that the Messiah was God in human form according to the predictions, thought that He would abide forever. This fact is seen in John 12:34. That they believed that he was the Son of God is clear from Matthew 26:63: "And the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God." This verse records the language of Caiaphas, the

high priest, to Jesus when He was on trial. It is clear from this statement that the high priest, who was voicing the sentiments of the nation, believed that the Messiah was the Son of the living God, although He was a man. But believing that He was God in human form, they did not think that He would or could die. Hence the question found in John 12:34 relative to who this Son of man is.

The disciples likewise were blinded by the same theory, that the Messiah, being the Son of God, abides forever— never dies. This inference was a hasty deduction which they drew from the Old Testament Scriptures. It was of course an induction based upon a partial and incomplete survey of the various prophecies relating to Messiah and His life and works. Had Israel only studied the various passages relating to His entire redemptive career, she would have seen that He was scheduled to die. But she, like people in general today, took a partial and an incomplete survey of all related passages on certain subjects, and drew erroneous conclusions. The Apostles likewise shared this same error. Doubtless because of the power of prejudice and an unwillingness on the part of humanity to abandon beliefs that have been inherited from forefathers, our Lord did not mention the subject to His disciples for three years. Not until within six months of the crucifixion did He broach the subject. They were not prepared to hear any such message as this, and, when He did mention it for the first time, Peter rebuked Him and said that such a fate should never overtake the Lord. This incident occurred when Jesus and the Apostles were at Caesarea-Philippi (Matt. 16:21-28).

We today should profit by the experience of the Apostles. Doubtless there are many things regarding which we have inherited certain ideas and prejudices. We will not therefore open our minds to receive new light and information. We are determined to continue in the way that we have gone. Let us by the help of God abandon such an idea and be open to conviction on any and every point. We should desire the truth above everything else.

As we see in Matthew 20:17-19, the Lord for the third time foretold His rejection, crucifixion, and resurrection. This message should not have been new to the Apostles, because the prophets had clearly foretold them. For instance, in Psalm 22:1-21, David spoke of the execution of King Messiah. Again, in Isaiah 53:1-9 the passion is prophesied. His resurrection is clearly revealed in Psalm 16:8-11. Jesus, in foretelling His death and resurrection, said that He would rise on the third day. There are other passages which clearly show that He would rise after three days. There is still one other prediction that declares that, as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Some earnest students have concluded that our Lord intended us to understand that He would be actually seventy-two hours in the grave. If we take all these statements literally and rigidly, there is a plain contradiction. It is clear that all three expressions refer to the time beginning with his interment until He rose from the dead. This period was a certain definite, specific time. It could not be *after three days* and at the same time literally *on the third day*. Neither could it be equal to seventy-two exact hours and be either on the third or after the third day. How long, then, was our Lord in the tomb? By looking at the record found in Luke 23:50-24:12, we can get the facts and can determine the significance of these expressions. According to Luke 23:54 Jesus was buried on the day of the preparation and the Sabbath was drawing on. According to verse 56 the women who watched the interment of Christ rested on the Sabbath. Then, on the first day of the week, Jesus arose from the dead (24:1). It is clear from reading the context of these verses that Luke is narrating what occurred at the time of the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, and he is itemizing the accounts, day by day. Jesus was placed in the tomb late on the day of the preparation as the Sabbath day, the weekly Sabbath, was drawing on. This places the interment of Jesus on Friday afternoon. While He was in the tomb on Saturday, the women who observed the burial rested according to the commandment. Then on the first day of the week when they visited the tomb, they found that He had been raised from the dead. These facts show that on the third day our Lord came forth from the tomb, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel. The first day of the week, which follows Saturday, the Sabbath, was the third day after His interment. He was in the grave actually a small portion of Friday, all day Saturday, and a small portion at the beginning of the first day of the week.

In view of the actual facts, the literal time of his being in the tomb, we must conclude that the Jews used the expression “after three days” and “on the third day” synonymously. A similar usage of this kind is found in Acts, chapter 10. An angel of God appeared to Cornelius on a given day, at the ninth hour (Acts 10:3). On the morrow (vs. 9) the messengers from Cornelius were approaching the city where Peter was, Joppa. On the morrow (vs. 23) Peter arose and went with these messengers from Cornelius. Upon his arrival at Caesarea Cornelius said to him, “Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house ...” (vs. 30). In reality the time was actually and literally seventy-two hours—no more, no less. Nevertheless, Cornelius said “four days ago.” Four days were involved in this computation—two full days and parts of two others. Nevertheless, Cornelius said that, when the angel first appeared to him, it was four days ago. From these facts it is clear that parts of days are sometimes spoken of as if they were whole days. The expression, “three days and three nights,” is simply another way of saying “three days.” In Genesis, chapter 1, we read that there was evening and morning, day one; evening and morning, day two, etc. Thus the expression, “three days and three nights,” simply is just another way of saying three days. But the expression “three days” is a synonym for “on the third day” as we have already seen. Jesus was in the tomb parts of two days and one whole day.

We thank God for the empty tomb and for our risen Lord who conquered death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (II Tim. 1:10).

#### The Worldly Ambition Of James And John

In Matthew 20:20-28 we have an account of the mother of James and John, who came to Jesus and asked Him to grant that her two sons should sit, one on His right hand and the other on His left hand in His kingdom. It is clear from the record that she, as well as they, expected Jesus to set up a political kingdom upon earth. Why was it that they expected Jesus to set up a temporal kingdom and not a spiritual one as He actually did? The answer to this question is to be found in the way that they, together with all other Jews, viewed the Old Testament predictions. There are four types of messianic prophecy to be found in the Old Testament. One of these focuses attention exclusively upon the first coming of the Messiah; the second, on the contrary, devotes the entire time to a discussion of the events connected with the second coming; a third type blends a description of the two comings into a single picture—as if there were but one event; and the fourth gives a blueprint, so to speak, of Messiah’s entire redemptive career consisting of His first coming, rejection, death, burial, resurrection, ascension to the right hand of the throne of God, His session there during the present era, and His coming again to reign and to rule for one thousand years. There are numbers of passages of scripture that show this redemptive career. Unfortunately, the sages in Israel focused their attention on those prophecies that speak of His glorious reign when Israel shall be the head of the nations instead of being the tail, as she is at the present time. They therefore passed over those that foretold His sufferings. Whenever they saw anything that spoke of His rejection, they either forced an interpretation upon it contrary to the facts of the context, or ignored it. The result was that the whole nation was expecting Him to establish His reign of righteousness at His first appearance upon earth. The Apostles shared this same view. It seemed impossible for Jesus to correct this error to which they were committed. From the beginning of His ministry until the very close they kept their eyes focused upon a glorious political kingdom, although Jesus from time to time taught them that the kingdom which He was then going to establish was a spiritual one. His teaching was in perfect alignment with that of the prophets, concerning His death, burial, resurrection, and His inauguration of the Gospel Era, during which the truth was to be proclaimed to all nations. Even after Christ’s resurrection the Apostles still held to these views. He appeared to them during a period of forty days, talking on the subject of the kingdom of God. Nevertheless, in His last interview with them at the time of the ascension, they asked Him, “Dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” If they had only known the messages of the prophets, they would have seen clearly that, upon His first coming, Messiah would establish a spiritual kingdom upon the earth, that this reign during the Dispensation of Grace would culminate in apostasy, and that this era would be followed by the Tribulation Period, which in turn would be followed by the great Kingdom Era, when Christ will reign upon the earth.

Since James and John did not see the Old Testament picture of this present phase of the kingdom, they asked Jesus to allow them to occupy the highest positions in the political kingdom which they expected Him to set up at that time, which He did not then bring into existence, but which He will establish when He returns in glory and power.

The request of James and John made the other ten Apostles indignant at them. Why was this? Evidently because they themselves cherished such temporal ambitions. That which in another person irritates one is probably the latter's own besetting sin—as a rule. Jesus reprimanded James and John for entertaining such worldly ambitions and told them that the rulers among the Gentiles exercised authority over others, but that it should not be that way with us today. The one who really wishes to become great, let him become a servant first. The Lord Jesus has set the example. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

The very heart of the gospel is expressed in verse 28, which declares that Jesus gave His life a ransom for many. He paid the redemption price. The stroke that was due to fall upon each of us fell upon Him. He tasted death for every man. No man will be condemned because of Adam's transgression, because Christ paid the penalty. Men will be lost eternally because of their not accepting the atonement which the Lord Jesus made.

#### The Healing Of The Two Blind Men

Matthew informs us that as Jesus and those attending Him went out of Jericho He healed two blind men. Mark, in recording this same incident, tells us that, as He entered into Jericho, He healed a blind man by the name of Bartimaeus. There seems to be a contradiction between the two records, but, when we recognize the historical facts, we see that there is perfect harmony. There were two Jerichos at the time of Jesus—the ancient fortress overthrown by Joshua and the Roman city of the first century. The road up from the Jordan to Jerusalem passed through the two. Thus as He went out of one, He was approaching the other. These facts remove this phase of the difficulty. Mark tells us that one blind man was healed and gives his name. Matthew says that there were two. There is no disagreement in these statements. Mark is simply calling attention to the outstanding one of the two and gives his name. He does not say that there was but one. If he had made a statement like that whereas Matthew says that there were two, then there would have been a contradiction. But as the statements appear, there is no contradiction.

According to Matthew 20:31 the blind men cried out to Jesus saying, "Lord, have mercy on us, thou son of David." When this passage is viewed in the light of the predictions found in the Old Testament relative to the Messiah, it is seen that this is purely a messianic title; because the Messiah was to be a descendant of David. By way of pre-eminence He is called *the* Son of David.

Jesus was moved with pity and had mercy upon them. He therefore touched their eyes, immediately their sight was restored, and they followed Him. There was no question at any time concerning the reality of the cures which Jesus performed. Unfortunately, there are many today who are claiming that they have the ability to heal the sick; but when a thorough and scientific investigation is made concerning many of these claims, it is discovered that they are only claims, and that there is no reality backing them.

The Lord can and does answer prayer. He often heals people in answer to prayer—even at the present day. When sickness or other things come into the life of the faithful child of God, one can know that there is a reason in the divine mind for permitting such a condition to arise. When God finishes His plan in His permitting one of His saints to be sick, He cures that one. He may use medical science or He may effect the cure in answer to believing prayer. The Lord is not shut up to any one method. He does that which meets the situation. He is the one who "healeth all our diseases."

## AN EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW, CHAPTER 21 (*Installment Twenty-One*)

In the study of the life of our Lord, we have come to His entry into Jerusalem found in chapter 21. As we saw in the last installment, He with His disciples and the pilgrims on the way to Jerusalem had been in Trans-Jordan just east of Jericho (Matt. 19:1,2). From 20:17 we saw the party going up the road from Jericho to Jerusalem. In 21:1 we see them approaching the Holy City and coming to Bethphage, near Bethany, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives near its summit. From the accounts in Matthew, Mark, and Luke one would draw the conclusion that Jesus and His party entered Jerusalem immediately upon reaching Bethphage and Bethany, without any break in their travel. But a glance at John's record shows that our Lord arrived at Bethany six days before the passover (John 12:1). As we shall see later in these studies, He was crucified on Friday and hence partook of the passover on Thursday night. Since He came to Bethany six days before the passover, He evidently arrived there late Friday evening of the preceding week. If we had John's record alone, we would conclude that Jesus was entertained at supper, where Martha served and Lazarus was one of the guests, on the first Friday night when He arrived there from Jericho (John 12:2-8). A comparison of this record with Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9 shows that these three Evangelists were speaking of the same supper, which was held in the house of Simon the leper in Bethany. Now from Matthew and Mark we see that this supper was given two days before the passover, that is, on Tuesday night. We therefore see that there is a gap of four days intervening between John 12:1 and 12:2. A study of the four records and a comparison of them with each other account for the labors and activity of our Lord on the three days—Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday of Passion Week. From these facts we gather that our Lord, since He arrived at Bethany six days before the passover, reached that town late Friday afternoon, rested on the sabbath, and entered Jerusalem on Sunday morning of the last week.

### Christ's Entry Into Jerusalem

We often hear people speak of our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem at which time He rode upon an ass and was hailed as Zion's King by the multitudes who preceded Him and those who followed Him. I have been unable to accept this view. Since Jesus had for the preceding six months foretold on different occasions that He was going up to Jerusalem to be mistreated, betrayed, and killed, and after three days to be raised from the dead, and since the leaders of the Jews had all their plans perfected for His arrest and execution, which were literally carried out, I fail to see or recognize in this event a triumphant entry. It is true that the great masses of the people welcomed Him at first, but those jubilant, enthusiastic multitudes were soon turned into a howling mob demanding His death. If we are still to consider this as a triumphant entry, we must conclude that it was of very short duration.

What was the purpose of our Lord's entering the Holy City as He did, riding upon an ass? Did He at this time offer Himself to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the Jewish people as their King? To this query many excellent commentators answer in the affirmative. I have never been able to see this point. Why then did our Lord enter the city in this manner? Matthew clearly tells us. When Jesus was at Bethphage, He sent two of His disciples for an ass in order that He might enter the city of Jerusalem as revealed by the prophet (Zech. 9:9). Zechariah foretold the manner of His entering in order that there might be no excuse for the inhabitants of Jerusalem in not recognizing Him as their rightful King. Did he say that our Lord at that time would offer Himself to Israel as her King? Positively not! On the other hand he affirmed that Messiah in thus entering Jerusalem would do so "having salvation." Our Lord therefore upon entering Jerusalem did not offer Himself to become the literal King of the Jews, but came offering salvation, which the nation, as foretold, would not and did not accept. This fact is shown in John 1:11, 12.

A study of the history of the great Galilean ministry shows that to all practical intents and purposes the leaders of Israel had rejected Jesus as their Messiah after the first tour of that section of the country. Jesus of course knew all the facts and did not at this time offer Himself to become the King of the Jews in the political sense in which He will be their sovereign when He returns in glory at the end of the Tribulation. A careful study of the teachings of our Lord from the very beginning to the close of His personal ministry shows that He clearly spoke of the spiritual

kingdom which we know as the church. Jesus therefore would not, at the very conclusion of His ministry, act in such a way as would contradict all of His teaching.

There were those in Jerusalem who, knowing that Jesus was at Bethany, went out to meet Him as He, with friends and followers, was entering the city. These gave Him a royal ovation and welcome. They spread their garments on the way and branches that were cut from the trees. As they approached the city, they cried: "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." This is a quotation from Psalm 118 and, when understood in the light of the original context, is seen to speak of His second coming. But the multitudes applied it to His first coming. Naturally the city was stirred by such an exciting scene as this, and the multitudes continued to say, "This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."

When Jesus had entered the city, He went to the Temple and engaged in a healing ministry, as is seen from Matthew 21:14-17. As He was engaged in these acts of mercy, the leaders of the Jews came and reprimanded Him because He did not rebuke the children who were crying in the Temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David." They reproved Him for not rebuking the children when they thus recognized Him. In answer to them Jesus quoted from the eighth Psalm a passage bearing upon the matter of the worship rendered by children.

In Mark's account of our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem on this occasion, he simply tells us that He entered the Temple, looked around, and returned to Bethany. It is clear, therefore, from the two records that He engaged in this healing ministry on Sunday when He entered the city. He also inspected the situation in the Temple and then returned to Bethany.

The next morning, Monday, the Lord with His disciples returned to the city. As He was going along, He saw a fig tree by the way, that had leaves only—without any fruit. He went to it and, not finding any fruit, pronounced a curse upon it. Did Jesus, as critics assert, lose His temper and take vengeance on the fig tree? No one who knows the Lord Jesus would make such a statement as that. There evidently was a lesson which He had for His disciples. The clue to this incident is to be found in the fact that the fig tree is, *in certain passages*, used as a type of the Jewish nation. For instance, in Joel 1:7 Israel is represented by a fig tree and also by a vine. In Luke 13:6-9 we have a parable in which Jesus spoke of a fig tree that had been unfruitful and that the owner was going to have dug up and destroyed. But his gardener insisted that he have the privilege of putting fertilizer around it and giving it another chance. This is clearly a parable and is thus designated. A parable is a known fact that is placed beside an unknown truth in order to illustrate the latter. Since Israel is, in Joel 1:7, represented by the fig tree, and since this is a parable, we are logical in concluding that she is represented by the parable of the fig tree.

The situation in Matthew 24:32f is entirely different. The facts of that context shows that Jesus was not using the fig tree as a symbol of the Jewish nation, but was drawing a lesson from nature to illustrate truths concerning His return. It is illogical, therefore, for us to assume that in Matthew 24:32f Jesus was speaking of the Jewish nation.

In view of all the facts which we have noted, we may be certain that Christ had an object lesson in the cursing of the fig tree on this occasion, namely, that he was showing the divine displeasure toward the Jewish nation which had all the indications of outward religious life and power but was not bearing the fruit of correct conduct in her daily life.

### The Cleansing Of The Temple

Having cursed the fig tree our Lord continued His journey, entered the city, went to the Temple, and immediately proceeded to drive out the money-changers and those who were buying and selling in the Temple. The record of this second cleansing of the Temple is found in verses 12 and 13. At this point of the narrative Matthew is not

chronological in his arrangement of the material which he presents. From the standpoint of time, then, verses 12 and 13 follow verse 19.

We must not confuse this *second* cleansing of the Temple with that which occurred at the beginning of our Lord's ministry and which is recorded in John, chapter 2. I recognize the fact that some critics assail John's record and state that he put the cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of the life of our Lord, whereas the Synoptic writers put it at the end. We have every reason to believe that there were two cleansings of the Temple. When wickedness is purged from an institution or place, Satan will see that it is quickly brought back again. Three years intervened between the two cleansings.

#### The Power Of Faith

After Jesus cleansed the Temple and engaged in public ministry on Monday, He returned to the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus at Bethany Monday night. Then on Tuesday morning, He, with His disciples, returned to the city. As they were going along the way, they came to the place where the fig tree which Jesus had cursed the morning before was. The disciples noted that it had withered away and they marveled that the curse was so very quickly performed. Our Lord therefore said, "If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done to the fig tree, but even if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Our God is faithful. His ears are open to the cries of His people. We must come to God in faith, doubting nothing, and bring our petitions to Him. He assures us that He will honor the prayer of faith. Those who have faith are fully assured in the Word that God will honor their petitions offered in faith. Our faith of course must be based upon the written Word. If it is genuine and we ask according to His will and are in fellowship with Him, He will never disappoint us but will grant the petition requested.

(We of the Biblical Research Society have proved the faithfulness of the Lord. We began in 1930 this work of faith. We have never asked a person for a dollar, but have told the Lord our needs. In answer to believing faith He has met the needs. It has therefore gone forward steadily. We are facing the future with confidence—not in man, but in God who controls the future, and who will hear the cries of His people. Pray for us, dear friends, that God may keep us in the center of His holy directive will, that He may prosper the work to which He has called us.)

#### Jesus Attacked By The Jewish Leaders

Upon our Lord's return to the Temple on Tuesday morning, the chief priests and the elders came to Him as He was teaching and challenged His authority by saying, "Who gave thee this authority?" In reply He said that He would answer their question provided they would answer one of His, which pertained to the origin of John's baptism—whether it was from heaven or from men. Realizing that they were caught in a trap, the opponents of Jesus professed ignorance on the question and refused to commit themselves. Thereupon He would not answer their question. The reason that they refused was that they were afraid of the people who considered John as a prophet.

Then our Lord answered their challenge by speaking three parables: That of the two sons; that of the vineyard; and that of the marriage feast of the king for his son (Matt. 21:28—22:14). The gist of the first parable is this: A certain man had two sons. To one he gave instructions to go and work in his vineyard, who at first refused but later repented and went. The second son agreed to go but did not. To our Lord's question relative to which of the two did the father's will, they replied that the first one did it. Jesus therefore said that the publicans and harlots would go into the kingdom of God first, before the leaders of the nation. John, He declared, came in the way of righteousness, but the leaders did not believe him. On the contrary, the publicans and harlots did believe and, when they saw, they repented and did accept the truth—whereas the leaders did not. This parable, as we see, is

very closely connected with the question in regard to the origin of John's baptism and shows where the leaders, who rejected the same, stood before God.

The next parable, that of the vineyard, is found in Matthew 21:33-41. A comparison of this passage with Isaiah 5:1-7 and Psalm 80:8ff shows that this parable is based upon those two Old Testament passages. The vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is Israel and her land. The Jewish people were the choice vine which God brought out of Egypt and which He planted in His vineyard. These passages must be studied in the light of the context, for each one brings out a different phase of the truth with reference to the nation of Israel.

In each instance we see that the Lord spared no effort or means in providing the proper environment for His vine that it might produce the most perfect fruit. These facts set forth the further truth that God did everything for the nation of Israel which was possible for him to accomplish in order that she might be what she should be and might produce fruits honoring to God.

But in the parable under consideration the Lord Jesus brought out new truths which were not mentioned by the Old Testament writers. At the season of fruit the householder sent various servants to receive the harvest. The workmen in the vineyard mistreated them and killed some. These husbandmen were none other than the leaders of the Jews, both political and religious.

Finally, the householder sent his son, saying that they would respect and reverence him. Instead of their doing that, they decided to kill him, which thing they did.

The servants who were sent for the fruit were the various prophets who were wickedly treated by the workers. The leaders of the people, as we see from various records, mistreated these men of God who ministered to them in the name of the Lord. (On this point see Matthew 23:37-39.) The son of the householder is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, who came in the fullness of time to gather the fruit from the vineyard and to present it to God. The leaders, not knowing Him, rejected His message and finally executed Him. In concluding this parable, our Lord asked the Jewish leaders what would the lord of the vineyard do to the workers who thus mistreated his servants and finally killed his son. In reply they said: "He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons." Their answer was correct. Then Jesus confirmed their opinion by a quotation from Psalm 118:22f. According to this prediction, "The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner ..." Whenever stone is used symbolically, as in this case, it always signifies the Messiah. An examination of Psalm 118 shows that at the end of this age the stone rejected by the builders at His first coming will be placed in its proper position by the builders at the very end of this age. In other words, the leaders of Israel yet in the future will see the mistake that was made by their predecessors in office and position nineteen hundred years ago. They will reverse the decision that was rendered against Jesus of Nazareth and will accept Him and give Him His proper place in their hearts and lives. In our Lord's quoting this passage regarding His ultimately being given His rightful place as the Head of the Jewish nation, He was foretelling the fact that they would reject Him then, which thing they did, as we see in the four records of the Gospel.

The leaders had replied that the owner of the vineyard would take it from the husbandmen and turn it over to others bringing forth fruit. The Lord said that therefore the kingdom of God would be taken from the people of Israel and given to another nation bringing forth fruit. The people to whom He referred in this language (vs. 43) are those who now accept Him from both Jews and Gentiles. In other words, the church here is spoken of as the nation to whom the kingdom is given and who will bring forth the fruit.

But our Lord followed this prediction by giving the terrible warning: "He that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces," and further, that "... on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust." This prediction indicates the

judgment that would come upon the Jewish people because of their rejection of Him as Messiah. The leaders to whom this was spoken realized that the parable was spoken against them. They therefore became indignant and sought how they might lay hold of Him, but they were afraid of the people because the masses considered Him as a prophet.

The parable regarding the marriage feast of the king's son, the third in this series of parables, will be discussed in next month's issue.

As we saw in last month's study, the Pharisees attacked Jesus and challenged His authority for doing the things in which He was engaged. In reply our Lord asked them to tell Him from what source was the baptism of John the Baptist—from heaven or from men. Seeing that they were trapped they declared that they did not know. In reply our Lord asserted that He would not tell them by what authority He was performing His works. Then, in order to expose their hypocrisy and lay before them their condition, He spoke three parables—as we have already seen. The first one was that of the two sons (21:28-32); the second, the parable of the vineyard (21:33-46); and the third one, the parable of the marriage feast of the king made for his son. Last month we studied the first two of these parables. It is now for us to begin the present investigation by study of the third one.

#### The King's Marriage Festivities For His Son

The parable is as follows. The kingdom of heaven is compared to a king who made a marriage feast for his son. When he planned the festivities, he sent out his servants to invite certain guests to attend the ceremonies. Later he sent other servants to those who had been bidden, telling them that the banquet had been prepared, and that all things were ready; therefore they were to come to the feast. But when these heard the announcement that the time had arrived for them to attend the festivities, they showed indifference and a lack of concern and interest in the entire affair. They therefore went their several ways: one, to his farm; another to his merchandise; and still others ill-treated the king's servants and killed them. The king therefore became angry and sent his troops to fight against them and to burn the city of those murderers.

Then he said to his servants that the wedding was ready but that those who had been bidden were unworthy. They were therefore to go out into the highways and the byways and make the announcement that the wedding feast was to be held and that everyone who wished might attend. Those servants, thus instructed, went forth and brought in people of every type, both good and bad, and had the bridal-hall filled with guests.

Finally the king came in and looked over the company assembled and found one man present who did not have the wedding garment on. The king therefore addressed him, asking him why he had not the wedding garment on. The man was speechless because he realized that there was no reason why he should appear without the garment proper for the occasion. The king therefore told his servants to bind him, hand and foot, and to cast him forth into the outer darkness where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Our Lord concluded the parable by saying that these facts set forth the additional truth that many would be called but few would be chosen.

(The reader should study very carefully Matthew 22:1-14 in order to grasp the great truths to which I shall now call attention and which are set forth in this parable.)

Our Lord compared the kingdom of heaven to this marriage feast of which I have just spoken. What is the significance of the expression kingdom of heaven? John the Baptist announced that the kingdom of heaven had come to hand. Jesus took up the same refrain and proclaimed the same thought. Later the Twelve, when they went out on the restricted commission, made the same announcement. Finally the Seventy, in the latter Judean ministry, proclaimed this same glorious fact. The kingdom of heaven had come to hand in the days of John the Baptist and in the days of our Lord, but what was it that had come? Jesus, as we have already seen in Matthew 13, gave us a fine description of this institution known as the kingdom of heaven. When one studies those parables, he will see that the kingdom of heaven, as set forth in this passage, is none other than Christendom. It began with the sower, Christ, who first sowed the seed of the kingdom. It continues through the present dispensation and is brought to its consummation at the second coming of Christ, when it will be like the dragnet which is pulled ashore and out of which the good is separated from the bad. In view of all the facts set forth in the Gospel Records, we

must conclude that the kingdom of heaven, as used by Matthew, is none other than Christendom which continues throughout the present dispensation.

There was a certain king who made a marriage feast for his son. Since this is a parable and was so designated by our Lord, who is the king of this passage? The answer is apparent—God the Father. Who is the king's son? Instantly one replies that he is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

According to our Lord's statement, the king made a breakfast, or a meal to be eaten in the forenoon, as a banquet for his son. The word used in the original indicates what we in America think of as breakfast, which is usually eaten somewhere between nine and twelve o'clock in the forenoon.

In Palestine during our Lord's earthly ministry, timepieces were not possessed by everyone; in fact, there were very few of them in existence. The custom was for the host to send his servants to invite the prospective guests to a feast. Then later, when the banquet was prepared, they went and made the announcement to the guests that everything was ready, and that they were to come immediately to participate in the feast. Our Lord, speaking in terms of these well-known facts, said that God had made the announcement regarding the wedding feast for His Son. The servants through whom He made the first announcement and thus gave the invitation to the guests were none other than the prophets of whom we read in the Old Testament. When however the time arrived for the invited guests to come and engage in the marriage festivities, the servants who made the announcement that all things had been prepared and that the guests were to come and enjoy the feast were none other than John the Baptist and the Apostles and probably the seventy who worked under the direction of the Lord Jesus during the later Judean ministry. The banquet of the parable, of course, signifies the spiritual feast of good things of which those who accept Christ become partakers. This morning banquet was set first and fully on the day of Pentecost. The Jews were invited to sit down to the banquet table and to partake of these rich spiritual things which we have by accepting Jesus as our Lord, Saviour, and Messiah.

Those who had been invited were not, according to the parable, interested in accepting the invitation; hence, when the announcement came that everything was in readiness and that they should immediately come, they went their own ways, following their special interests and desires. This is set forth in verse 5: "But they made light of it, and went their ways ..." In the original the words, "They made light of it," are the translation of a participle which literally means *they were not concerned*. The same form of this word appears in Hebrews 2:3 and is translated, "If we neglect." In both of these passages our translators would have done well, had they rendered this participle of the original as "... they were not concerned." They were not interested; doubtless many of them made light of the invitation—some even may have scorned it. All of this is implied in the original as possibilities.

Only a handful of those who were invited by the prophets to the breakfast banquet accepted the invitation. Of course, three thousand did so on the day of Pentecost, but this number was infinitesimal in comparison with the entire nation.

When the invited guests took such a hostile attitude as they did toward the king and his invitation, his wrath was kindled and he sent his troops against their city to destroy it and to slay those murderers. This item of the parable found its fulfillment in the Lord's sending the Romans to overrun Palestine, to destroy Jerusalem and to scatter Israel abroad. Thus by the overthrow of the nation, Israel was scattered abroad, and the national worship was terminated.

Then the king sent other servants who were instructed to go into the highways and byways and to give the invitation to one and all, both the good and the bad. This phase of the parable was fulfilled in the fact that, after the overthrow of Jerusalem, the church that was scattered abroad went throughout the gentile world and proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many accepted, outwardly at least, the truth. From 70 A.D., the time of the

overthrow of the Jewish nation, until the present time the invitation has been given to those in the highways and byways of the world, calling them to come and partake, not of the breakfast as the first were bidden to do according to verse 4, but to come and partake of the great dinner at the end of the dispensation. The latter meal is eaten after darkness has come. This fact is seen by the statement in the latter part of the parable. The king comes into the bridal-hall and sees a man who does not have a wedding garment on. He gives instructions to his servants to cast this one forth into the darkness without. This fact implies a meal different from the first one.

The evening meal is served after dark. This fact differentiates the meal to which all are invited from that special morning meal to which only the guests who were previously invited were called.

As stated above, the Jews were invited to the morning meal. If Israel as a nation had accepted, her peace would have been like a river and her righteousness as the waves of the sea (Isa. 48:17-19). (For a full exposition of Isaiah 48—one of the most important passages in the Old Testament— see chapter V of my volume, *The God of Israel*.) Since Israel would not accept the invitation to embrace the salvation which was offered to her by the Messiah when He first came, the stroke of judgment fell upon her and her city, Jerusalem, was destroyed, and she was scattered throughout the world. Then the world-wide invitation went forth as never before to all nations who are invited now to partake of the evening meal in connection with the festivities of the marriage of the Lamb. That there is a difference between the first meal to which the invited guests were asked to come and the latter one to which all nations are invited, see the remarks of Dr. John A. Broadus in the American Commentary on Matthew, chapter 22.

When all the guests were seated at the banquet table, the king came in and observed one who did not have a wedding garment on. He was speechless when he was asked why he did not have on the wedding garment. This shows that there was no reason for his not having it. This was not a feast to which the poor were invited who could not provide the wedding garment. The facts of the context show that the man could have had a wedding garment had he so desired. He was absolutely to blame and he suffered the consequences of his deeds and actions.

We must not confuse the point that was made by our Lord with the doctrine of imputed righteousness which is set forth so very clearly in the Pauline Epistles. As just stated, this man was responsible for not having made the preparation necessary to an occasion of this kind. Whether or not the garment was provided for the guest is not the question. The sole point is the fact that the man could have had the wedding garment on but did not; therein lies the crux of the entire situation.

When we look at the Pauline doctrine of imputed righteousness, we can see that this glorious truth fits in perfectly with the parable—even though that was not the special point that our Lord had in mind. Man is in a lost and undone condition. He cannot save himself. His righteous acts are as filthy rags in God's sight. If the penitent believer will look to the Lord and trust Him to clothe him with the robes of Christ's righteousness, the Lord will instantly impute righteousness to him; and he will be clothed with the righteousness of our Lord. All who are not thus clothed will be cast into the outer darkness eventually.

#### Tribute Money To Caesar

After Jesus spoke these parables, the Pharisees went out and took counsel how they might ensnare Him. They sent some of their disciples along with the Herodians, members of a political party, who came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?"

Jesus knew their motive and asked his opponents why they were making trial of Him. In addressing them, He called them hypocrites. Then He asked them to show some tribute money. As He looked at it, He asked whose image and

whose superscription were inscribed on the coin. They replied that it was Caesar's. Instantly our Lord said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Thus they were unable to draw anything forth from His mouth by which they would be able to condemn Him.

It is proper and right that we should render to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar; that is, we should give to civil government the taxes and customs which are due them; on the other hand, we should give to God all that belongs to God. As we meditate on these things, we should remember that we are not our own; neither are any of the things which we possess our own property. They have only been entrusted to us by the Lord. We are to use what He places in our hands as faithful stewards. If we will be faithful over that which belongs to God, then He will commit unto us that which is our own, the true riches.

#### The Question Regarding The Resurrection

On that very day the Sadducees who denied that there was any such thing as the resurrection came to Jesus and asked Him this question: "Teacher, Moses said, If a man die, having no children ... Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first married and deceased, and having no seed left his wife unto his brother; in like manner the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And after them all, the woman died. In the resurrection therefore whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her." (Matt. 22:24-28)

In reply Jesus said that the Sadducees made a serious mistake in not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. People today make a fatal mistake by not studying and understanding what the Scriptures teach and by not trusting God and allowing Him to strengthen them in the inward man. God knows all things and has revealed certain events and truths to us in His Word. If we are wise, we will endeavor by honest, conscientious, faithful study of the Word to determine what is the revealed will of God. We will furthermore trust Him and let Him empower us in our lives that they may count for Him.

Then the Lord called attention to the fact that in the resurrection men and woman neither marry nor are given in marriage but are as the angels in heaven; that is, they are like the angels in that they do not marry. By referring to the resurrection in verse 30, our Lord was speaking of the Millennial Age. The dead in Christ are raised before the Tribulation, when Jesus descends from heaven to the air to catch up His saints (I Thess. 4:13-18). At the end of the Tribulation, the saints who will be killed at that time will be raised (Rev. 20:4,5).

Our Lord called the Sadducees' attention to the fact that Moses spoke of the resurrection: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead, God spoke to Moses at the burning bush and said that He was the God of those three patriarchs. By this statement He was affirming that they were alive, even though they had died in the flesh. This truth shows that there is bound to be a resurrection. The spirits of these men will reunite with their bodies at the time of the resurrection here spoken of. There is therefore the resurrection of the dead.

#### The Greatest Commandment

After Jesus silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees came to Him and asked Him which was the greatest commandment of the law. In reply our Lord called attention to the fact that man is commanded to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his mind. This of course is the greatest commandment found in the law of Moses. The second one is like the first; namely, that man shall love his neighbor as himself. These two commandments embrace all the teachings of Moses and the prophets. If anyone in reality fulfills these commandments, he will be carrying out all that Moses and the prophets enjoined upon Israel.

### Whose Son Is The Messiah?

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus put a question to them, saying, "What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he?" In reply they said that He was the son of David. Then our Lord asked how could that be; for David declared, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I put thine enemies under thy feet." This is a quotation from Psalm 110:1. David, whose descendant the Messiah is, acknowledged that this one was his Lord, his superior. In what sense then could He be his son? The Pharisees could not answer this question. Everyone who has both the Old and New Testament, and who believes them, can answer this question accurately: He is David's son in that He is a descendant of the great king of Israel; He is David's Lord in that He is one of the Holy Trinity.

From this time on no one asked Christ any other questions.

## AN EXPOSURE OF THE PHARISEES (*Installment Twenty-three*)

An examination of the Four Gospels brings the fact to light that opposition to the Lord Jesus on the part of the Pharisees began early in His ministry and continued to grow and increase with the passing of the days. It finally culminated in a demand for His destruction. A study of John's Record of the Gospel shows that, whenever Jesus appeared in Jerusalem, the Pharisees as a rule attacked Him and tried to discredit Him in the eyes of the people. Even at the first recorded Passover when Jesus visited Jerusalem, the authorities challenged His cleansing of the Temple (John 2:13-22). Though we are not told that the Pharisees as a group opposed Him on this occasion, we may be certain that they were among those who did; because they were most influential in the government at that time and seem to have dominated the policies of the nation. According to John 4:1f Jesus left Judea and went into Galilee because of the Pharisees who had become jealous of Him because of His having more influence than John. It seems that they kept hounding Him when He went from place to place. Even the authorities in Jerusalem sent spies who continued on His trail, and who on every occasion possible clashed with Him in an effort to discredit Him in the eyes of the people. At different times He referred to them and their hypocrisy. When He was engaged in His latter Perea ministry, He lamented Jerusalem's attitude and pronounced her doom (Luke 13:34-35). At various times He laid bare the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. We do not, as some critics do, believe that Matthew has gathered up certain instances scattered here and there through the other Gospels and presented them to us as a connected sermon delivered on the last day of His public ministry before His crucifixion. All public speakers repeat their sayings, and some, often their sermons. Whenever a situation similar to another one arose, Jesus met the issues involved in the same way— unless there were modifying circumstances. Since there is no reason for our not accepting the account as given in Matthew, chapter 23, we shall believe that Jesus delivered this sermon just as it is written here. We therefore ignore the specious claims of critics of the Gospel Record.

Because of our Lord's incisive remarks regarding the Pharisees in this and other messages, some have concluded that He condemned all the Pharisees. This is not necessarily the case. There were some who were friendly to Him. He was entertained by a certain Pharisee (Luke 14:1). About the same time certain Pharisees warned Him of Herod's intention to kill Him (Luke 13:31).

Are we to conclude that the Pharisees were the basest of hypocrites? Doubtless many of them were; but it is difficult for us to conclude that all of them were of this type. There are hypocrites and unscrupulous people in every group of any size. There are likewise honest, sincere persons in all groups. When we view the entire situation, we cannot avoid the conclusion that the majority of the leaders of the Pharisaic party in our Lord's day and time were professional in their religious confession, were legalistic in their attitude, and were hypocritical in their hearts. Had they been otherwise, they certainly would not have rejected the plain, clear teaching of the Son of God and opposed Him as they did.

### Respect For Authority Of The Rulers

In introducing His message on the occasion of our study, our Lord stated to the multitudes and to His disciples that the scribes and Pharisees were sitting in the seat of authority —"on Moses' seat"—and that they should obey the instructions and regulations that were issued by these authorities. This is seen in the first four verses of Matthew, chapter 23. From this we can see that the disciples of the Lord Jesus are to obey the laws and the regulations of those who are in authority—in the state or in the community. The Apostle Paul, in Romans, chapter 13, commanded the Roman Christians to be obedient to the civil powers, which have been ordained of God to keep order, in order that we Christians might lead quiet, peaceful lives in all godliness and gravity. The Apostle urged Timothy to pray for the rulers that they might govern in such a way that we might live pious lives in the service of God (1 Tim. 2:1).

If, however, the civil authorities should require us to do something that is contrary to the written Word of God, we are to follow the example of Peter and John as set forth in Acts, chapter 4. These Apostles were commanded to preach in the name of Jesus the resurrection from the dead. The Sanhedrin forbade their doing this. The Apostle Peter therefore, guided by the Spirit of God, declared: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." Should any officer of the law require us to do something that is positively contrary to the will of God, we must therefore be firm, yet at the same time manifest the gentleness of Christ. But while manifesting this gentleness, we can at the same time also exemplify Him in sternness and resoluteness for the right and for the justice.

Jesus warned the disciples not to follow the example of the authorities of His time, for they were saying, but not doing. Moreover, they had no consideration for the poor and the unfortunate. They even laid heavy burdens upon men which they themselves would not attempt to bear. Neither would they assist anyone who was bowed beneath a heavy load. Christians are urged to practice the Golden Rule and to do unto others as they would have them do unto themselves.

#### The Pharisees Lovers Of The Praise Of Men

In verses 5 and 6 of this chapter we hear our Lord charging the Pharisees that they were doing what they did in order to be seen of men and in order to receive praise from them. They would make the phylacteries and the borders of their garments especially broad in order that everyone might be able to see them. They thought that by thus enlarging the borders of the garments, they would be considered the more pious and holy. Real piety is of the heart, but it always manifests itself in meekness and gentleness in the life.

Moreover, the Pharisees delighted in obtaining the chief places at the feasts and the leading seats in the synagogues. In other words, they were seeking their own and were not interested in the welfare of others. They also wanted to be saluted in the market places and to be recognized as great.

#### Prohibition Against Ecclesiastical Titles

The word, *rabbi*, in the original Hebrew means *great or large*. Thus the Pharisees, in selecting this word as a title, showed that they themselves had exalted opinions regarding themselves. The spirit of our Lord was not to think more highly of oneself than he ought to think, but to think soberly, righteously, and justly. The men whom our Lord here was condemning were those who had exalted opinions of themselves and whose egotism was most highly developed. He therefore said that no one should call another *rabbi*. This prohibition raises the question concerning the use of titles. Personally, I think that it is safest to avoid all ecclesiastical names and titles.

But someone will ask: How about academic distinctions? What about people calling others "doctor" and the like? If a man has taken certain courses in the university and is graduated as a doctor of medicine, it is nothing but proper and right to recognize his academic acquirements and his standing in the medical world. The same thing is true of dentists. It is also true concerning those who hold a Ph.D. degree. To my mind there can be no question concerning recognition of one's academic training by the use of the word "doctor." But to use the term in an ecclesiastical sense is, to my way of thinking, improper and is contrary to the spirit of this passage.

Our Lord also prohibited the use of the word "father" as a religious title. Under no condition would I allow anyone to call me by such, because I would consider it a violation of this prohibition of our Lord.

We are therefore to call no one upon earth our master. One who wishes to be great let him become the servant of all. The way to greatness is by the road of humbling oneself and becoming a servant of others. This is the true measure of greatness. One, on the other hand, who exalts himself shall be humbled in due time.

### The Seven Woes

In verse 13 our Lord addressed the scribes and Pharisees and designated them as hypocrites. In doing so, He pronounced the first woe upon them. The thing for which they were here condemned is that they were shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men and were not entering into it, neither were they allowing those who desired to enter to do so.

Was the kingdom at this time established so that people could enter into it? This question is answered in various ways. I believe, however, that, when all the facts are learned and recognized, one must come to this conclusion. The kingdom was announced as having come to hand by John the Baptist and Jesus. The Lord did the preliminary work of establishing the kingdom during His own personal ministry. But it was thoroughly and completely established on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came and brought together into a living organism the material which had been prepared by John and our Lord. In the sixteenth chapter of Matthew we read of the establishment of the kingdom as being in the future. At the end of Acts, chapter 2, we read of the church as being in existence at that time. Thus one, in view of these facts, comes to the conclusion that the church was actually founded on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came.

As the Lord Jesus Christ was gathering His material and doing the preparatory work for the establishment of the kingdom, the Pharisees were endeavoring to block His way on every occasion and were trying to turn people from the truth. These leaders were not in sympathy with His work. On the contrary, they opposed it and hindered the masses of the people from coming to the Lord and accepting the truth. Because of this attitude and their actions, Jesus pronounced this woe against them.

The second woe is found in verse 15. It is pronounced against the same group of hypocrites because they would compass land and sea to make one Jewish proselyte. After anyone was won to their peculiar views and tenets, he, having committed himself, became "twofold more a son of hell" than they themselves. When people once accept some doctrine, it is very difficult for them to change their mind and admit that they have been wrong. This is especially true with reference to the acceptance of false religious teachings.

May God enable us, who are endeavoring to win people to the Lord Jesus, to know whereof we speak and to give forth nothing but the truth. May we be very careful in teaching the Word. Let us avoid all speculation and guessing. Let us be certain that we know what is true before we attempt to teach anything in the name of the Lord.

On the one hand, since it is human to err, and since it is possible that we may be mistaken on some points, let us be open to conviction and receive new light from any source whatsoever. But on the other hand, let us not be gullible and accept just anything that may be given us. In other words, we are to be established and not be moved around by every wind of doctrine.

The third woe was directed against the different oaths that were taken by the Jews. They split hairs with reference to this subject. For instance, as our Lord pointed out, they taught that "Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor." The great masses of the people did not know the fine, hairsplitting technicalities of Pharisaic theology and philosophy. According to them one could swear by the Temple in confirming a certain position to another; but if brought into court, the oath would not necessarily stand, unless it squared with their theological conceptions. But they thought that, if one swore by the gold of the Temple, he was under obligation to carry out that oath and would be forced to do so by a court of law.

These fine distinctions were made in swearing by the altar or the gift upon it. All such hairsplitting distinctions were contrary to the high ethical standards set forth in the Scriptures.

In reply to these people our Lord said that the one who swore by the Temple swore “by him that dwelleth therein”; that is, by the Lord himself. The one who would swear by heaven would swear by the throne of God, and by Him who sat upon it. Thus with a few words our Lord brushed away all of these pious dodges invented to relieve one of responsibilities.

James urged the brethren not to swear at all: neither by heaven nor by earth; but their “yes” must be “yes” and their “no” must be “no.” In connection with the consideration of this passage, the question arises as to legal oaths. Some people are conscientious and cannot, on account of our Lord’s teaching and that of James, take an official oath. The high priest Caiaphas, put Jesus under oath and asked Him a question concerning His being the Messiah, the Son of God. Then Jesus admitted that He was the Messiah and made a prediction concerning His session at the right hand of the throne of God and of His return (Matt. 26:63,64). Notwithstanding our Lord’s taking the oath and testifying, many sincere, honest Christians endeavor to avoid taking an official oath. Our government recognizes the *Bill of Rights* and allows men to affirm rather than taking an oath if they request to do so. I am very thankful that our government thus respects the conscientious convictions of people on this point. I personally always affirm that what I am saying is the truth. In doing this, I know I cannot be mistaken.

In verses 23 and 24 Jesus condemned the practice of the scribes and Pharisees in their being so very meticulous in observing the tithing of mint and anise and cumin, but at the same time leaving the weightier matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faith—undone. It is very easy for one to fall in line with this practice of the Pharisees. Let us observe the letter of the law wherever it is possible and also the letter of the instructions that are found in the New Testament; but let us be certain that we are in harmony with the spirit of any bit of instruction which the Lord gives us. Everyone who realizes his position in Christ wants to follow the spirit of the instructions found in the New Testament. We are not under law but are under grace. Yet we want to give no occasion to anyone to complain of our being lawless and disregarding of certain legal requirements.

The fifth woe is found in verses 25 and 26. In this denunciation our Lord exposed the hypocrisy of His opponents by calling attention to their desiring to make an outward show and appearance regardless of what was on the inside or behind the scenes. He stated His principles by use of the cup and the platter. It is not enough to wash the outside of these and leave the inside uncleansed. The first thing to do is to cleanse the inside and then the outside also. The tree must first be made good in order that it might bear good fruit. Man must be cleansed by regeneration and the Holy Spirit must dwell in his life. Thus anyone is cleansed within in order that he might be clean in his outward life and actions.

In the sixth woe (vss. 27,28) our Lord condemned His opponents because they were like whited sepulchres. Outside these tombs appeared beautiful, but within was the stench of decaying bones. So Jesus said that His opponents were outwardly, from a ceremonial standpoint and the standards of the day, clean and beautiful, but within they were not. They had not been regenerated and saved.

The seventh and last woe is found in verses 29-36. At this time our Lord condemned His opponents for building the sepulchres of the prophets and decorating their tombs and at the same time saying, “If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.” They revered the memories of these great heroes of faith who laid down their lives for God. What they were doing was engaging in a type of hero worship. But Jesus saw in the conduct of His adversaries evidence that they had the same spirit as their fathers who actually did the killing of the prophets. He therefore urged them to fill up the measure of their fathers.

Our Lord never minced words. He called a shovel a shovel and a spade a spade. He therefore spoke to them saying, "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" There never was stronger language than this spoken by anyone to others. Jesus knew what He was saying. He knew the people to whom He was talking. Thus He compared them to serpents and vipers and asked how could they escape the judgment of Gehenna.

Gehenna is different from Hades or Sheol. The latter terms refer to the place of departed spirits, after death and prior to the resurrection. Gehenna on the other hand is the place of eternal punishment where the wicked will be and will suffer throughout all eternity for not having accepted the unbounded, unlimited grace of Almighty God.

To show that they—His opponents—were of the same character as their fathers, our Lord foretold that He would send to them prophets, wise men, and scribes, and that they would kill some, crucify others, scourge others in their synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. This was literally fulfilled in the Apostolic Age. The Lord said that they would do this and that, in doing so, there would be required all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the days of Abel to Zachariah of that generation. In other words, every type of person who had been slain by wicked men from Abel to Zachariah, who was slain "between the sanctuary and the altar," would be slain in the Apostolic Age by those whom He addressed. History bears out the correctness of this statement.

#### Lament Over Jerusalem

In verses 37-39 we have our Lord's lament over Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

We must not confuse this lament, which concluded our Lord's last public discourse, with His bursting into tears upon His approach to the city on what is usually called Palm Sunday, the record of which is found in Luke 19:41-44. Of course this latter event occurred on Sunday before the lament of the present passage, which was at the close of Tuesday of Passion Week.

Our Lord accused Jerusalem of killing the prophets and stoning those sent unto her. He of course was speaking of official Jerusalem.

Moreover, He told His adversaries that He would often have gathered Israel, who is scattered among the nations, if she had allowed Him to do so. On the contrary, the people were unwilling for Him to do so. This thought is in perfect accord with a prediction of Isaiah. If Israel had only accepted Messiah when He appeared the first time, her peace would have been like a river and her righteousness like the waves of the sea (Isa. 48:18). Since Israel did reject her Lord, refusing to accept His salvation, He foretold that her house, the Temple, would be left to her desolate. God forsook the house. He would not accept any worship that was rendered in that place after they rejected Him. Finally, in 70 A.D., it was destroyed.

Jesus concluded His lament by saying that they would never see Him anymore till they say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Here of course our Lord was speaking of His returning in glory to the Jewish nation. His statement on this point is in perfect alignment with that of Hosea 5:14. Here the prophet, impersonating Messiah, said that, after the two houses of Israel rejected Him, He would go away and return to His place "till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face." Our Lord then, in fulfillment of Hosea's prophecy and His own forecast, went away to glory after His rejection. During this present dispensation He has been seated at the right hand of the throne of God. He will remain there until Israel, having heard the truth of the message of

the gospel, repents of her sins, confesses her national sin, and accepts Him, imploring that He return for her deliverance. When she does this, He will return—but never until then.

It is our duty and privilege to give this saving message concerning the Lord Jesus Christ to all Israel in this generation in such a way that the nation will be convinced of its crime of rejecting Him and will be brought to the point that she will repudiate her national sin and accept Him. May the Lord enable you and me, dear friends, to do what we can to bring this message to suffering Israel at this time.

## THE OLIVET DISCOURSE (*Installment Twenty-four*)

In Matthew, chapters 24 and 25; Mark, chapter 13; and Luke, chapter 21, we have a record of our Lord's Olivet Discourse. These three accounts should be read in order that one may have the proper and full conception of our Lord's teaching on this occasion.

This Olivet Discourse is one of the most important prophetic utterances for our day and time. In this message our Lord outlined the present dispensation, gave the sign of the end of the age, discussed the Tribulation, and spoke of His second coming in glory and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth.

The occasion of His giving this message was His prediction concerning the destruction of the Temple built by Herod. As He was going forth from it on the last day of His public ministry, the disciples called attention to the large stones used in the construction of the temple and the trophies that had been dedicated to the Lord by devoted souls in the Temple as remembrances before God.

After the Lord made this prediction and walked to the summit of the Mount of Olives, He sat down. There Peter, James, John, and Andrew (as we learn from Mark's account) came and asked Him two questions: "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3).

The question immediately arising in this connection is, Why did they ask concerning His second coming and the consummation of the age? The answer is clear to the one who is familiar with the Old Testament background. If anyone will look at Zechariah, chapter 14, and read it carefully, he will note that there are three things mentioned as occurring in connection with each other: The siege and the fall of Jerusalem in the day of Jehovah, the second coming of Christ when His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, and the close of this age and the introduction of the new age—the Millennium. The mention of any one of these, to the one who is familiar with the passage, would immediately bring up into the field of consciousness the other related events. When therefore the Lord foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred as we know from history in 70 A.D., the Apostles immediately thought that He was speaking of the prediction of Zechariah, which will be fulfilled in the end of the Tribulation, as we know from other passages. Thus it is evident that they misunderstood Him on this point. But their misunderstanding Him called forth these questions. We are indeed glad that they did misunderstand it and did ask these questions, because of the information which their questions brought forth from His lips.

### The Two Questions

The two questions asked by the disciples were: "When shall these things be?" and "what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?" In this connection let me call attention to the fact that though our Lord answered both of these, Luke alone gave His reply to the first one, which is found in Luke 21:20-24.

Unfortunately many expositors have endeavored to find in Matthew, chapter 24, Christ's answer to both questions. To show that Matthew did not record His reply to the first one, all one has to do is to note the fact that, in verse 6, our Lord said: "But the end is not yet." The end of what? The end of the thing about which they asked, namely, the end of the world. Again, in verse 13, we see these words, "He that endureth to the end ..." The end of that about which they asked, the end of the age. Again, in verse 14, we read, "and then shall the end come." The end of what? The end of the world. When we also examine verse 15, we read these words, "When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation ..." Thus the adverbial conjunction "when" links verse 15 with verse 14, which speaks of the end. An examination of verses 15-28 shows that our Lord was speaking in them about the Tribulation. Verses 29-31 likewise discuss the very end of the Tribulation. In view of all these facts we see that, in the section, verses 6-31, our Lord was speaking about the end of the world.

The second question, “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” is a double one. The Apostles understood that there would be some sign or event that would occur, and that would signify two facts: That His return is close at hand, and that the end of the world is near—one event signifying the two others.

If anyone will notice the marginal reading of the expression, “the end of the world,” he will see that there is a footnote in the Revised Version which reads: *the consummation of the age*. The term, end of the world, means *consummation of the age* in the Greek and should have been rendered that way in the text. The Apostles were not asking about the end of the world, the physical universe, but the end of the present age. This fact must be clearly held in mind as we continue this study.

### The Answers

As stated above, our Lord answered the first question regarding the time when His prediction concerning the destruction of Jerusalem would occur. This answer is found in Luke 21:20-24. A glance at this passage shows that He was foretelling the siege of Jerusalem by Titus and its subsequent fall. Thereupon the Jews were dispersed among all the nations and Jerusalem was trodden down of the Gentiles and will continue to be so until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The answer to this second question is found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But we shall notice only Matthew’s record. As stated above, the disciples were very much interested in our Lord’s return. Knowing what would arise in the future, Jesus foretold that many would come in His name claiming that they were the Messiah of Jewish prophecy. This prediction is found in verses 4 and 5. A glance at Jewish history shows that, at various times, there have arisen pretenders to the messianic honors, who have misled multitudes of Jews and have wrought havoc in various communities from time to time.

Since, as we have already seen, the disciples’ minds went to such passages as Zechariah, chapter 14, when our Lord uttered His prediction concerning the destruction of the Temple, we can see more clearly why our Lord, in verse 6, spoke about local wars that would occur all during His absence. In this verse He in substance told them that there would be wars and rumors of wars during His absence, but that these would have no prophetic significance. Hence when one would break out, they were not to conclude that the end of the age was at hand. The conditions which produce wars are here. So long as they exist, just so long there will be conflicts among the nations. A glance at the history of the Christian centuries shows that there have been many such wars, and we may conclude that there will be wars until the end—just as our Lord said. Hence, said Jesus, when a war breaks out, the end is not yet—the end of the age about which they asked Him.

The reason for His making this statement is: “For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places.” Luke in his account adds pestilences. What is the significance of this verse? An examination of such passages as II Chronicles 15:1-7 and Isaiah 19:1-5 shows that this idiom indicated a war that would affect all the territory before the prophet’s mind when he used it. Since our Lord had a world outlook in the Olivet Discourse, as is evident from a glance at the entire passage, it is clear that He had a world vision. Then from His use of the expression, “nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,” we know that He was speaking, not of a local war, one between two or more nations, but of a global conflict. Moreover, He said that such a war as the one of which He spoke would be attended by famines, pestilences, and great earthquakes in different places. Whenever therefore you see, said Jesus, a global war which begins by one nation’s rising up against another, and when this conflict is enlarged by other nations’ coming into the struggle until it becomes a world war, and you see famines, pestilences, and great earthquakes accompanying such an upheaval in the political world, then you can know that such a conflict together with these plagues are the beginning of travail.

According to verse 8 our Lord declared, "But all these things are the beginning of travail." The Common Version says "the beginning of sorrows," a very inaccurate translation. A better one would be, "All these things are the first birth pain." What is the meaning of travail, or the period of birth pains? An examination of the prophetic word, together with the Psalms, reveals the fact that the prophets and psalmists often spoke of some great conflict through which Israel would pass as her *travail*. In speaking on a number of occasions of the Great Tribulation through which Israel must yet pass, they likewise compared these sorrows and distress to that of birth pains. When our Lord said that a world war, attended by famines, pestilences, and earthquakes are the first birth pain, He was simply indicating that the disciples were not to arrive at the conclusion that the end was at hand until after such a global conflict occurred.

These events constitute *the sign*—the infallible, unmistakable sign—of the end of the age.

Have we had such a world conflict? When we take all the facts into consideration, we can hardly avoid the conclusion that we have already had that which Jesus designated as *the sign* of the end of the age. This occurred in the years 1914-1918. It is generally accepted that the great war was World War I, and that the recent conflict was World War II. These statements being true, we know that we are in the end of the age. Let us bear in mind that the Apostles asked for *the sign of His coming and the consummation of the age*. Jesus said for them to wait until they saw such a global conflict, accompanied by famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. When these occur, said He, they constitute the sign of my return and of the end of the age. In view of these facts no one had any right to expect the return of the Lord until after this conflict, which we know occurred in 1914-1918. Someone might hastily conclude that this interpretation robs the Christians of former generations and centuries of the blessed hope. Not so. No generation since the Apostles could be positive and know that such a global conflict would not occur in their own time. So far, then, as the Christians of the first century were concerned, they could not tell when that conflict would develop. Hence they were to live upon the tiptoes of expectation inasmuch as such a conflict might occur in their time, and following it the Lord would return.

In Matthew 24:9-14 we have a general description of the first part of the Tribulation, the first three and one-half years of the seven years of wrath. There will occur during this first half of the Tribulation many sorrows and distresses for those who take their stand for the Lord Jesus Christ and the things of God. Believers will be opposed by those of their own immediate family. Iniquity will abound, but there is a promise to the ones who will endure to the end, the end of the Tribulation, that they will be saved. Those who, during that time of stress, prove the sincerity of their hearts, that they are wanting truth and are determined to stand for the right, and who maintain this attitude all the way through the Tribulation will, at its end, see and accept the truth and be saved. They will be saved, not by their having endured to the end, but because, when the truth is presented to them, they will receive Christ with all their hearts.

This gospel of the kingdom, according to verse 14, will be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations and then the end will come, the end of the Tribulation. What is "the gospel of the kingdom?" There is but one gospel—that is, the good news concerning the redemption wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ. As we look back at His suffering on the cross, the substitute for our sins when He poured out His life for us, we are thinking about and considering the gospel of the grace of God. On the other hand, when we are looking forward to the establishment of His millennial reign upon earth and the introduction of that glorious Kingdom Age, we are talking about the gospel of the kingdom. There is but *one gospel*, which is the everlasting gospel. Now this gospel will be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end comes. The gospel was preached in all the world, in the first three decades of the existence of the Christian church. This is seen by a glance at Romans 10:18, which declares that the message went out to the uttermost parts of the earth. In the Colossian Epistle (1:6, 23) we are told that the gospel was preached in all creation under heaven. The letter was written between 61 and 63 A.D. From these statements we see that the gospel was preached to the whole world in the Apostolic Age. But since the Apostolic Era closed, the church has not one time given the gospel to the whole world.

It is to be said to the credit of the Hebrew Christians in the first three decades of the church, they largely gave the gospel to the world. But after the Jewish elements ceased to predominate in the church, she has not given the gospel to all nations. The missionary zeal began to die down and its activities slowed up until, in the middle Ages, Christendom had lost its worldwide vision. Only after the Reformation did it begin to look out upon the world and see that the heathen needed the gospel which she enjoyed. The modern missionary movement is one of the great marvels of the age. Thank God for what has been done thus far. But Christendom has been blighted by rationalism under the name of modernism. We are now in the Apostasy, without a doubt. The nearer we approach the end of the age, the deeper will the falling away be, and the greater will be the spread of wickedness and sin. According to the prophetic word we cannot expect any great sweeping revival prior to the Tribulation. But, after the church is gone, which event occurs before the Tribulation bursts forth upon the world, there will arise 144,000 Jewish servants of God, "Pauls," who will conduct the greatest revival of all the ages during the first part of the Tribulation. The result of this ministry will be the conversion of an innumerable host of people who come out of the Tribulation and wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. The number who will be saved will be innumerable. It is this world-wide evangelistic campaign, doubtless, to which our Lord referred in Matthew 24:14.

The latter part of the Tribulation is described in verses 15-28. In the middle of the Tribulation, as we learn from Daniel 9:27 and Revelation 13:1-8, the Antichrist will set up an image of himself in the Jewish Temple which will have been rebuilt and which will be standing during the Tribulation. This image is called "the abomination which maketh desolate." An idol in the Old Testament was called an "abomination." It is therefore this thing to which the Lord referred in Matthew 24:15,16. Since the Antichrist sets up his image in the middle of the Tribulation, we know that the judgments referred to in verses 15-28 are descriptive of that time of unparalleled suffering. As the Tribulation advances, the strokes of judgment become harder and more thorough-going. The judgments of the latter half of the Tribulation are set forth in a symbolic form in Revelation, chapter 16.

The Tribulation will be a time of unprecedented suffering and trouble. There has never been anything like it from the beginning of time until it occurs and there never will be after that anything comparable to it. At the conclusion of the Tribulation, as we learn in verses 26 and 27, our Lord will come in glory and power, and every eye shall see Him. Immediately after the Tribulation has come to a close, there will be a universal blackout of the light from the heavenly bodies. This is set forth in verses 29-31. There will then penetrate this Egyptian darkness the sign of the Son of man coming from heaven to earth. As He approaches the earth, the sight will be terrifying; for all the tribes of earth will mourn because of Him, He will come and take the government of the world into His own hands.

In view of the facts which I have just narrated, one can see that from verses 4-31, our Lord was giving a description of the Christian Dispensation, of the Tribulation Period, and of His second coming. In verses 32 and 33 He set forth the parable of the fig tree. Whenever anyone sees the buds on the fig trees beginning to swell and observes the appearance of the leaves, he knows that summer is near. In the same manner, said Jesus, when "you see all these things [a world war, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places] know ye that he is nigh, even at the doors." Since He was talking about *the* sign of the end of the age in these verses, and since He declared that those seeing this sign could know that His coming is close at hand, we know positively that in these verses our Lord took us back in His thinking to the time of World War I, the sign of the end of the age. To the generation arising at that time and old enough to interpret the prophecy and to recognize in the current happenings the fulfillment of the prophecy, our Lord gave this sign. Thus the rising generation of the time of World War I could arrive at the conclusion from the fulfillment of the prediction that the coming of the Lord for His saints was at hand. That He was talking about the rising generation is evident from the fact that He could not have been talking about the generation that had spent half or two-thirds of its life. The only reasonable interpretation is that He was talking to the rising generation that was able to interpret the passage and the signs of the times.

Jesus furthermore said that that generation would not pass away until the entire prediction is fulfilled. The length of a scriptural generation according to Psalm 90 is three-score years or, if by reason of health and strength, four-score years. Since that sign first began to appear upon earth thirty years ago, quite a bit of time has been lopped off of that generation. We refuse, however, to set any dates. We can, as the Lord said in Hebrews 10:25, see the day approaching. To all prophetic students, it is evident that we are approaching the great crisis.

There are some sincere brethren who believe that we may expect a revival now. I cannot share these views. There may be a local turning to God here and there, but a mighty, sweeping national or international revival is not scheduled for this time of the age, but only in the Tribulation. Jesus compared the closing days of this age with those of the days of Noah immediately before the Flood. They were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, buying and selling, until the day that Noah entered the ark. Thus it will be in the closing days of this age before the Tribulation. The Flood came suddenly upon the ungodly ones of Noah's day. "So will the Tribulation come upon the world suddenly, as set forth in I Thessalonians 5:1f. But the days before the Tribulation are the days of the coming of the Son of man. When He comes, two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, the other left; two men will be plowing in the field, one will be taken, the other left; two men will be lying on a bed at night, one will be taken, the other left. The ones taken will be the saints, who will be caught up in a moment of time, when the Lord descends from heaven to the air. The ones left will be those not born again, the ungodly.

Concerning the day and hour no one knows. We can see the time approaching, but cannot tell on what day or what time of day our Lord will call us hence. We should therefore be ready: "... for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh" (vs. 44).

The wise and faithful servant is contrasted with the unfaithful servant in verses 45-51. Of course only the wise and faithful servants are those who are born again. The unfaithful servants are those who are not born again.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins ..." (25:1). When will the kingdom of heaven be like ten virgins? *Then*—at the time of the rapture. This interpretation is demanded by the drift of thought of the sermon. But what is "the kingdom of heaven"? John announced that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Jesus sounded the same note. The Twelve preached the same message. Near the conclusion of our Lord's ministry, the Seventy did likewise. We read of the kingdom of heaven from the third chapter of Matthew on to the Olivet Discourse. Our Lord in the parables of the kingdom (Matthew, chapter 13) tells us exactly what the kingdom of heaven is. (On this point see Installment 13, August, 1945 issue of the *Monthly*, which discusses the parables in detail.) When a person studies this chapter, he comes to the conclusion that this expression includes all Christendom—all who have heard the message, the seed that falls upon the four types of soil in the parable of the sower. All the people thus represented in this parable are in the kingdom of heaven. Then this kingdom, embracing all who have ever heard—whether they accept or whether they reject—will be like ten virgins, five wise and five foolish. The wise ones will be admitted to the marriage feast; the foolish ones will be turned away. The wise ones, the saved ones, will enter into the joys of their Lord; the foolish ones, the unsaved ones, will be banished from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His might for ever.

In Matthew 25:14-30 our Lord gave us the parable of the talents and connected it with the parable of the ten virgins by the conjunction, *for*. This fact is significant. The parable of the virgins, as we have just seen, illustrates Christendom at the time of the coming of the Lord for His saints. Since the parable of the talents is linked indissolubly with the parable of the ten virgins, the parable of the talents likewise refers to the time of the rapture and our being caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

In this parable a certain man went abroad, but before leaving home he delivered to his servants his goods, giving to each according to his ability. To one he gave five talents; to another, two; and to a third, one. The man who received the five talents went and gained therewith five others; he who received two gained two more; the one

who received one hid it in the earth and made no attempt to invest his master's money. After a long time abroad the master of those servants had a reckoning with each. The one who gained five talents was allowed to enter into the joys of his lord. The same thing was true with reference to the one who received two and gained two. But the man who hid his, the unsaved man, was driven into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. A close study of the section, Matthew 24:32—25:30, shows that these verses, which I have barely skimmed in this cursory review, deal with the rapture of the church and the events connected therewith. But verses 31-46 are separated from this section and are set apart from it by the disjunctive conjunction, but. "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory ..." (vs. 31). This passage refers to the glorious manifestation of our Lord which occurs at the end of the Tribulation. Thus we know that at least seven years separate these two comings—the coming of Jesus *for* His saints *before* the Tribulation, and the coming of Jesus *with* His saints *after* the Tribulation.

The judgment of the nations described in 25:31-46 occurs upon earth when our Lord returns. Those who survive the Tribulation will be brought before Him, and He will separate them as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. To those who have lived up to the best light—all the light that they have—and who have been kind toward Christ's brethren, especially the Jews, will be given the privilege of entering into that kingdom. Being of this character when the full light of the truth of the gospel is given to them, they will accept. On this point see Psalms 15 and 24. These will "receive a blessing from Jehovah, And righteousness from the God of his salvation" (Ps. 24:5). Those put on the left hand are the ones who have not lived up to the light which they received, and who have been inconsiderate of the least of Christ's brethren. These will be banished into outer darkness.

There is nothing said of any resurrection in this passage. There is nothing to favor the theory of a general judgment for all people as is taught by some. This judgment is at the beginning of the Millennium. But the judgment of the wicked dead will occur at the conclusion of the Millennium (Rev. 20:11-15).

## THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE ARREST OF JESUS (*Installment Twenty-five*)

The Olivet Discourse, found in Matthew, chapters 24 and 25, was delivered as our Lord sat upon the Mount of Olives on Tuesday evening of Passion Week, as we have already seen. When His labors for that day were over, He went out and started on His way to Bethany where during that time He was spending the nights. When He reached the summit of the Mount, He sat down and, as may be seen from Matthew 24:1-3, delivered the Olivet Discourse. When this discourse was completed, He made a further disclosure concerning His being delivered up to be crucified at the passover.

### The Crucifixion Foretold

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these words, he said unto his disciples, 2 Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified. 3 Then were gathered together the chief priests, and the elders of the people, unto the court of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas: 4 and they took counsel together that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him. 5 But they said, Not during the feast, lest a tumult arise among the people" (26:1-5).

Since this was Tuesday evening, and since the passover was to come after two days, it then was to begin on Thursday evening at sundown. When all the statements of the Evangelists are studied closely, one sees that they are in perfect agreement as to the time of the crucifixion.

The passover was instituted when Israel came out of Egypt. On that memorable night Israel slew the passover lamb and sprinkled the blood upon the doorposts and lintels. The promise of the Lord was that the death angel, when he passed over the land of Egypt that night, would pass over every house where the blood was sprinkled—"When I see the blood, I will pass over you." This lamb was typical of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul, in I Corinthians, chapter 5, speaks of Christ as "our passover" who has been slain. Our hearts have, figuratively speaking, been sprinkled by the blood of the Lord Jesus whom we have accepted. We are secure, then, behind His blood. It seems fitting that He should be crucified and give up His life for us at the passover season.

According to verses 3 and 4 the leaders of Israel planned to take Jesus by subtlety and kill Him. It seems that, on that very Tuesday when Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives overlooking the Temple, they were in session planning His arrest and crucifixion. According to verse 5, however, they were afraid to take Him during the feast lest there should be a riot among the people.

### The Anointing Of Jesus At Bethany

"6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, 7 there came unto him a woman having an alabaster cruse of exceeding precious ointment, and she poured it upon his head, as he sat at meat. 8 But when the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? 9 For this *ointment* might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. 10 But Jesus perceiving it said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. 11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. 12 For in that she poured this ointment upon my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. 13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her" (vss. 6-13).

Matthew and Mark give us the account of our Lord's being anointed when He was in the house of Simon the leper in Bethany. An examination of John's Gospel (John 12:2-8) shows that this Evangelist was speaking of the same occurrence. Some scholars, have thought, however, that this anointing was earlier than the one mentioned by Matthew and Mark. Rationalistic critics have said that there is a plain contradiction between the Synoptic Records

and that of John. In John 12:1, mention is made of Lazarus in connection with our Lord's going up to Bethany six days before the passover. Since John mentioned Lazarus, and since he, together with his sisters, Martha and Mary, were at the supper, naturally John mentioned this incident in connection with his speaking of Lazarus, without intending to indicate any chronological order of events. Luke omits this item. The suggestion is made that he did pass over this event because he had mentioned a similar anointing of Jesus in Galilee much earlier in the ministry of our Lord. The two cases, however, are entirely different. One incident occurred in Bethany, near Jerusalem; the other in Galilee. The one was in the house of Simon the leper; the other in the home of Simon, the Pharisee. Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, a true character, anointed the head of our Lord for burial and also anointed His feet (John 12:3); in the other case, the one doing the anointing was a sinful, immoral woman of the city who anointed His feet with ointment. In the case of the anointing at Bethany the disciples complained about the waste; no such protest was registered at the other anointing. When all the facts are taken into consideration, it is clear that these are two different anointings, separated by space, time, and circumstances.

Evidently Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were people of some means; otherwise they would not have had such expensive ointment or perfume. But nothing was too good for the Lord in Mary's eyes. In all probability Martha and Lazarus acquiesced in her anointing of the Lord Jesus, for nothing is said of their making any protest.

But we are told that the disciples did reprove Mary for this seeming waste. We may be sure that Judas was the one who was loudest in his protest against her apparent extravagance. He wanted the ointment sold in order that the proceeds might be put in the common treasury of the party, from which he constantly stole money. The pretext was offered that the poor could have been helped. Some of the party may have been thoughtful of the poor, but the probabilities are that selfish interest entered into this protest.

Of all present Mary seems to have had the clearest insight into the significance of the development of events. She anointed Jesus in preparation for His burial. Although the disciples did not understand when He told them clearly that He would be crucified, nevertheless Mary seems to have understood this more perfectly than the rest. Hence she anointed His body.

"Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world," declared our Lord, "that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." Unfortunately, most people want to put up memorials in the form of material objects that may be seen of men and may become a source of comment for people. Mary was not thinking of that type of memorial. What she did was performed in a spirit of love and devotion to her Master. The enduring monuments that will last throughout all eternity are those things that today are done for the Master in unselfish, unstinted service and to others. May the Lord enable each of us to erect monuments or memorials that will endure throughout all eternity.

#### Judas' Bargain

"14 Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, 15 and said, What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver. 16 And from that time he sought opportunity to deliver him *unto them*" (vss. 14-16).

In the accounts of Matthew and Mark Judas' bargaining with the Jewish authorities to sell his Lord for thirty pieces of silver is mentioned immediately after the record of the anointing of Jesus. Since Luke does not record Mary's anointing Jesus, and since he is usually chronological in his order, he follows the account of the plot on the part of the Sanhedrin to arrest Jesus after the feast with the record of Judas' bargain with the Jewish leaders. In Luke's account of Judas' bargaining, he tells us that Satan entered into the betrayer. This explains why it was that Judas performed such a diabolical act. But why did the devil enter into his heart? He can never enter a heart that is not yielded to him. Judas had, by his former life and actions, rendered his heart receptive to Satan so that, at the crucial time, he entered into Judas and caused him to perform this diabolical act.

Upon Judas' going to the chief priests and volunteering to betray Jesus, the authorities were delighted and offered him, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah 11:12, thirty pieces of silver. The scripture was literally fulfilled in this, as in all other cases, where the predictions are spoken in literal language.

We are told, in verse 16, that from that time on Judas sought an opportune time in which to deliver Jesus to His enemies. It seems that he went out from the banquet in the house of Simon the leper and made his evil bargain, which was on Tuesday evening. On Thursday evening he betrayed Jesus, who was immediately arrested. Thus during those two days intervening, Judas sought for the opportune moment.

Judas actually and literally betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. Doubtless many have proved traitors to the Lord Jesus on different occasions since then. It would be better not to have been born than to betray the Son of God. But many people today doubtless verge on the matter of betraying Him in times when it is not popular to stand for one's real heart conviction. But whoever is ashamed of Jesus in this wicked and adulterous generation, of him the Son of man will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of the Father with the holy angels.

#### Preparations For The Last Supper

"17 Now on the first *day* of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the passover? 18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Teacher saith, My time is at hand; I keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. 19 And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them; and they made ready the passover" (vss. 17-19).

On the first day of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him if He wished them to make ready for Him to eat passover. Mark (14:12) tells us that on the first day of unleavened bread the passover was sacrificed. From all accounts it was sacrificed between the two evenings—three and six o'clock. Our Lord instructed Peter and John to go into the city and make the necessary preparations (Luke 22:8-12).

They were to enter the city; and, when they met a man carrying a pitcher of water, they were to follow him. Upon arrival at the house they were to say to the goodman of the house that the Master wanted to eat the passover there. They were also instructed to say: "The Teacher saith, My time is at hand; I keep the passover at thy house with my disciples." Peter and John did as they were instructed.

#### Observing The Feast Of The Passover

"Now when even was come, he was sitting at meat with the twelve disciples" (26:20). In this verse Matthew simply calls attention to our Lord's sitting and eating the passover with the Twelve. Mark makes the statement, "And when it was evening he cometh with the twelve" (Mark 14:17). Luke gives the fullest statement regarding our Lord's eating the passover, which is found in Luke 22:14-18; 24-30.

The next item found in the Gospel Records is our Lord's washing the disciples' feet. John alone tells us about this occurrence in John 13:1-20.

After Jesus had washed the disciples' feet, He foretold His betrayal by Judas. Matthew's account of the identification of the betrayer is found in the following words:

"21 And as they were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. 22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it I, Lord? 23 And he answered and said, He that dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. 24 The Son of man goeth, even as it is written of

him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born. 25 And Judas, who betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith unto him, Thou hast said" (vss. 21-25).

Mark's account is found in his Gospel in 14:18-21. In Luke the record is found in 22:21-23. John gives the fullest account of this incident (John 13:21-30). After Jesus had given the sop to Judas, he went out, leaving the Apostolic company and making contact with the Jewish leaders.

#### Peter's Denial Foretold

Following our Lord's identification of the traitor and his leaving the company, our Lord then foretold Peter's denial of Him. The following is Matthew's account of this prediction:

"31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended in me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. 32 But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee. 33 But Peter answered and said unto him, If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended. 34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 35 Peter saith unto him, Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples" (vss. 31-35).

Mark's account of this occurrence is found in 14:27-31. The same thing is recorded in Luke 22:31-38 and in John 13:31-38.

#### The Institution Of The Lord's Supper

"26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins. 29 But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. 30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (vss. 26-30).

Chronologically, in all probability, the institution of the Lord's supper followed the prediction regarding Peter's denial. The reason for placing it here is that John, who gives us the fullest account of the events in connection with passover supper mentions our Lord's washing the disciples feet first. After this he records Jesus' identifying Judas as the traitor. He then follows this with a prediction concerning Peter's denial of Him. In connection with the statements of Matthew and Mark concerning the institution of the Lord's supper, is the one which tells that they, after they observed it, sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. This statement seems to put the institution of the Lord's supper as one of the last things done while the Lord and the disciples were in the upper room. Following the singing of the song is the quiet talk of our Lord, found in John, chapter 14. At the conclusion of this, Jesus said, "Arise, let us go hence."

The Lord's supper is an institution to be observed in memory of Him till He comes. The loaf represents His body, which He gave for us, whereas the fruit of the vine symbolizes His blood which He poured out for the remission of our sins. The supper is a symbolic feast, of which we partake most joyfully in memory of Him. It is not, as some have supposed, a means of grace. It has a deep, spiritual significance in bringing to our minds and hearts what our Lord did for us. This observance is to continue until He comes.

Jesus in speaking of the loaf said, "This is my body" and of the fruit of the vine, "This is my blood." This language is either literal or figurative. It could not possibly under any conditions be literal because Jesus was still in His literal body when He uttered these statements. These elements are therefore symbolic and simply *represent* His body.

This language is like that in Ezekiel 37:11, "These bones are the whole house of Israel." In vision Ezekiel had been shown a valley in which dry bones appeared. In interpreting this vision, the prophet said that these bones were the whole house of Israel. They could not have been this literally, but all the thought demands that we understand them as being symbolic of the house of Israel. The teaching that the loaf and the cup when blessed becomes the actual literal body and blood of Jesus is therefore fallacious, without an element of scriptural warrant.

According to the statement in the latter part of Acts, chapter 2, the early Jerusalem church partook of the Lord's supper every day. This they did, since the believers were ostracized by the inhabitants of Jerusalem and they had no occupation. They therefore spent their time in worshiping and praising God. Later on, as we see in Acts 20:7, it seems that the disciples met on the first day of every week to partake of the supper. There is a weekly meeting of the saints referred to in I Corinthians 16:1. In the sub-Apostolic days the Christians still met upon the first day of the week to worship the Lord Jesus. This is seen in Pliny's letter to Trajan the Emperor, written about 117 A.D.

People are to examine themselves and are to partake of the supper discerning the Lord's body until He come. This is a very sacred and solemn ordinance. Paul declared, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death until he come" (I Cor. 11:26).

After Jesus and the Apostles left the upper room, where they had observed the supper, they went on their way towards Gethsemane. As they went, He had a quiet talk with them, which is recorded in John, chapters 15 and 16. Somewhere on the way before they reached the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed that great intercessory petition found in John, chapter 17. "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into which he entered, himself and his disciples."

#### Christ's Intercession In Gethsemane

"36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray. 37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and sore troubled. 38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with me. 39 And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. 40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 42 Again a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done. 43 And he came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. 44 And he left them again, and went away, and prayed a third time, saying again the same words. 45 Then cometh he to the disciples, and saith unto them. Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me" (vss. 35-46).

When He entered Gethsemane, He took Peter, James, and John with Him and went forward a little distance from the rest of the Apostles. These three, the inner circle, He left and went about a stone's throw, where He fell upon His face and prayed that, if it could be possible, the Father would let the cup of suffering pass from Him. At the same time He added that He did not want to do His will, but the will of God only. Having thus prayed, He came to the three disciples and found them sleeping. He reproved them and asked, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" Then He went away the second time and prayed as He did the first and returned, finding them sleeping "for their eyes were heavy." He then left them and went away the third time, praying the same words. Finally, He came to them and said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." It was too late for them to pray. About that time, Judas with the soldiers from the high priest were close at hand. He therefore said, "Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me."

It is impossible for any of us to realize the situation which existed there in the Garden. Jesus the Son of God alone, suffering the agonies of His coming execution, His very best, tried, and true friends, who had pledged their love and loyalty to Him, lying fast asleep and not realizing the significance of the occasion.

## THE ARREST AND TRIALS OF JESUS (*Installment Twenty-six*)

The records concerning our Lord's last week are given by all four Evangelists. It is necessary for one to know all the facts as presented by them in order to have a clear picture of the events of this period, the accounts of which the Lord has preserved to us.

### The Arrest Of Jesus

"47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. 48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he: take him. 49 And straightway he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Rabbi; and kissed him. 50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, *do* that for which thou art come. Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. 51 And behold, one of them that were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his ear. 52 Then saith Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. 53 Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 How then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? 55 In that hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves to seize me! I sat daily in the temple teaching, and ye took me not. 56 But all this is come to pass, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left him, and fled" (Matt. 26:47-56).

After Jesus came back from His praying to the Apostles and found them asleep for the third time, He said to them, "Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me" (26:46). It is quite likely that Jesus by His divine nature realized the presence of Judas and the soldiers with him, or it is altogether possible that He heard them coming. With Judas and the officers there was a great multitude, having swords and staves, who had come from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

Judas had already given a sign to the officers, saying that the one whom he kissed was the Lord Jesus; they were therefore to take Him. According to prearrangement Judas came up and very enthusiastically kissed Jesus. The Greek indicates the perfection of the idea, that is, he did it much and enthusiastically though in hypocrisy. To this greeting Jesus answered, "Friend, *do* that for which thou art come." Then the officers laid hands on Him.

At this juncture one of the servants of the Lord struck off the ear of the slave of the high priest. John in his Gospel says that it was Peter who did this. The Synoptic Gospels mention the fact but withhold the name. Some consider that the reason for withholding the name in the earlier accounts was that Peter was still alive while they wrote. To mention Peter would possibly have endangered his life and caused trouble for him. But after Peter died John, who of the four wrote last, mentions the fact that it was Peter. Jesus rebuked Peter for this act, stating that "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," and adding, "Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels?" The Lord did not need any protection from the Apostle Peter, or anyone else. He could have called upon God, who would have sent angels enough to destroy the whole nation and all in it, but Jesus did not use this divine power in His own defense. The Lord realized that that which was happening was in fulfillment of the Scriptures and in the plan of God.

Finally He spoke to the multitudes and asked them why they had come out against Him with swords and staves, whereas He had sat daily in the Temple teaching the people. Nevertheless they had not laid their hands upon Him. Again the statement occurs that all of these things transpired in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

When our Lord was arrested, He was bound and led away to trial before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. This account is found in John 18:12-14; 19-23. Had it not been for the record of John, we would not have known that Christ appeared first before Annas.

#### Trial Before Caiaphas

"57 And they that had taken Jesus led him away to *the house* of Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. 58 But Peter followed him afar off, unto the court of the high priest, and entered in, and sat with the officers, to see the end. 59 Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death; 60 and they found it not, though many false witnesses came. But afterwards came two, 61 and said, This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. 62 And the high priest stood up, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God. 64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven. 65 Then the high priest rent his garments, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard the blasphemy: 66 what think ye? They answered and said, He is worthy of death. 67 Then did they spit in his face and buffet him: and some smote him with the palms of their hands, 68 saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee?" (vss. 57:68).

Our Lord was led from the hall of Annas to the court of Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and elders were gathered together. As they led Him from one place to the other, Peter was following him afar off. When Jesus was brought before the court, the chief priests and the whole council sought false witnesses against Him. But they were unable to find those who would agree. Finally two came forward and testified saying "This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." When they gave this testimony, the high priest arose and said to Jesus, "Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?" But Jesus remained silent. This fact puzzled Caiaphas, who then put Jesus upon oath saying, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether Thou art the Christ, the Son of God? It is clear from the statement of Caiaphas that he, and the Jews, generally, believed that the Messiah would be a man, and that He would be the Son of God in a special and unique sense. In reply the Lord said, "thou has said: nevertheless I say unto you Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of Heaven." The sentence, "Thou has said" is equivalent to an affirmation. This was one of the regular methods in Greek used in saying *yes*. Notwithstanding the fact that Jesus was the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel, He knew what the Sanhedrin would do with him—that they would execute Him. He was therefore about to die, but would rise from the dead, and would ascend to the right hand of the throne of God in fulfillment of the prediction of Psalm 110. Moreover, He knew that Caiaphas and his colleagues, who were trying Him, would likewise die. They, of course, upon death would go to Hades. From their place in the underworld they would look up to the very heaven of heavens and see Jesus seated at the right hand of God Almighty. The word in the original translated "henceforth" means *from now on*. Thus in this connection Jesus said that they would die and from that time they could look upon and could see Him in the far distance at the right hand of the throne of God. This doctrine does not conform to the modern theory of soul-sleeping. Those who are lost are conscious of things upon the earth, at least in a limited way; and those who are saved and who are in glory can know certain things that are transpiring upon the earth.

Our Lord said that the Sanhedrin and others who go to the underworld will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven. We know when He will thus appear—at the end of the Tribulation. Doubtless many thousands of times Caiaphas and those who condemned Jesus have looked into the heavens and have seen Him in glory. Furthermore, when He returns, they will see Him as He descends from heaven to the earth, accompanied by myriads of angels.

When Jesus made these statements, the high priest rent his garments and pronounced that He had "spoken blasphemy," and that therefore they did not need any further evidence. In reply to him the fellow members of the Sanhedrin said that He was worthy of death; and they began to spit in His face and to strike Him with the palms of their hands, saying, "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee?"

#### Peter's Denial Of Jesus

"Now Peter was sitting without in the court: and a maid came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilaean. 70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. 71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and saith unto them that were there, This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. 72 And again He denied with an oath, I know not the man. 73 And after a little while they that stood by came and said to Peter, Of a truth thou also art *one* of them: for thy speech maketh thee known. 74 Then began he to curse and to swear, I know not the man. And straightway the cock crew. 75 And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly" (vss. 69-75).

When Jesus and His disciples were observing the passover, the Lord identified the one who would be His betrayer, namely Judas. Moreover, our Lord, during the institution of the memorial supper foretold that Peter would deny Him three times before the cock would crow thrice. When Jesus was being tried before Caiaphas and the minority of the Sanhedrin, a maiden came up to Peter who was standing in the courtyard warming himself by the fire together with others. When she declared that he, Peter, was one of Christ's disciples, he denied with an oath saying, "I know not the man." After a little while, certain ones who stood by came to him and said that he was one of Christ's disciples for "thy speech maketh thee known." Then Peter began to pronounce anathemas and to swear saying, "I know not the man." Immediately the cock crew. Then "Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Then he went out and burst into bitter tears.

According to the Jewish law as set forth in the Talmud, no person accused of murder could be tried and sentenced at a night session of the court. The council was dismissed therefore to reconvene early in the morning in order to have a semblance of legality in pronouncing sentence upon Jesus. We do not know whether there was simply a quorum present or not, or whether the entire Sanhedrin was in session. Anyway according to Matthew 27:1,2 there was a morning session of the court. Mark likewise speaks of this in 15:1. The fullest account, however, is found in Luke 22:66-71.

#### The Suicide Of Judas

"3 Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? see thou *to it*. 5 And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. 6 And the chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is the price of blood. 7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. 8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. 9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced, whom certain of the children of Israel did price; 10 and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me" (27:3-10).

If Matthew is giving the chronological order of events, we would judge that, early in the morning—possibly the Sanhedrin was meeting to vote finally against Jesus, Judas felt condemned, had remorse for his deed, came to the priests and brought back the thirty pieces of silver. We are not necessarily to conclude that he did this very early in

the morning. Matthew is the only one who gives us an account of his remorse and of his returning the silver with the statement that he had sinned against innocent blood.

The priests were indifferent toward Judas. They were not concerned about him or his spiritual condition. He had played into their hands, and they had obtained their desire against Jesus. They therefore dismissed his case and said for him to see to his own affairs.

Judas threw the money down in the sanctuary, departed, went out, and hanged himself. In Acts, chapter 1, we see that when he did kill himself, he fell headlong and his vital organs burst forth through the walls of his abdomen. It is quite likely that, when Judas hanged himself, he remained in that posture until the body had begun to decay. By the fall of the body the walls of the abdomen were broken, and his vitals gushed forth. The two accounts are in perfect harmony. Someone may have cut the rope by which he was hanging, or it may have broken. We can only conjecture.

The high priest refused to return the thirty pieces of silver to the treasury of the Lord, but with it they purchased a plot of ground for a burial place for strangers. This piece of land became known as the potter's field.

#### Jesus Before Pilate In His First Trial

"Now Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. 12 And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. 13 Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? 14 And he gave him no answer, not even to one word: insomuch that the governor marveled greatly" (vss. 11-14).

When Jesus was brought before Pilate, the governor asked Him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" To this query Jesus replied in the affirmative. Jesus was charged with making Himself the King of the Jews, which would have been in rebellion against Roman authority. The Jews knew this and informed Pilate, who therefore went to Jesus and asked him directly, "Art thou the King of the Jews." They brought Him therefore as a political prisoner—as if they were so very loyal to the Romans. It seems from the record that the chief priests and the elders appeared at the judgment seat of Pilate against Jesus; for, when He heard them accusing Him, he answered nothing. Pilate marveled at His silence and asked Him if He were not answering to the many things that were being brought against Him. Even to Pilate Christ gave no reply, not even a word. This attitude caused the governor to marvel the more.

From Luke's account we see that the Jews, in bringing their accusation against Jesus, spoke of His stirring up the people throughout all Judaea beginning from Galilee. As soon as Pilate heard mention of Galilee, he asked if Jesus were of that province. Immediately he sought to get Jesus off his hands by sending Him to Herod, the ruler of Galilee, who was at that time in Jerusalem. Herod had been wanting to see Jesus for a long time and was exceedingly glad when he had the opportunity to talk with Him. But Jesus would not answer him a word, although Herod asked him about many things. While He was before Herod, the chief priests and the scribes stood, vehemently accusing Him. After Herod tried Jesus, he was more perplexed than ever; and not finding anything whereof he could accuse Him, he sent Him back to Pilate.

#### Second Trial Before Pilate

"Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner, whom they would. 16 And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. 17 When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? 18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up. 19 And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying,

Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. 20 Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. 21 But the governor answered and said unto them, Which of the two will ye that I release unto you? And they said, Barabbas. 22 Pilate saith unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ? They all say, Let him be crucified. 23 And he said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, saying, Let him be crucified. 24 So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye *to it*. And all the people answered and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children. 26 Then released he unto them Barabbas; but Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified. (vss. 15-26).

The governor had a custom of releasing to the Jews a prisoner whom he held at that season of the year. On this occasion there was a prisoner by the name of Barabbas, who had engaged in insurrection and in murder, during a popular uprising against the Romans. Pilate, in an effort to get rid of Jesus, thought of his custom of releasing a prisoner to them. He therefore asked them the question, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" (According to verse 18 Pilate knew that it was through envy that the chief priests and the elders had *delivered* Christ up to trial.) While Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, passing on the case of Christ, His wife sent a message to him, warning him not to have anything to do with "that righteous man"; for, said she, "I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." Nevertheless, the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitude and they shouted that Barabbas should be delivered to them, and that Jesus should be killed. Again the governor asked the crowd which of the two they wished to be released. And again they cried out that it should be Barabbas. At this point Pilate asked them, "What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ?" With one voice they shouted, "Let him be crucified." In protest against this action Pilate asked: "Why, what evil hath he done?" But they cried out the more saying, "Let him be crucified."

When Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing with the multitude, he took water, washed his hands before the multitude, and said that he was innocent of the blood of that righteous man. He therefore warned the Jews to see to it themselves. Then the multitude shouted out: "His blood be upon us, and on our children." Then Pilate released "unto them Barabbas; but Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified."

## THE CRUCIFIXION (*Installment Twenty-seven*)

In the last installment of this series we saw that our Lord was tried three times by the Jews and three times by the Gentiles. There were responsibility and guilt enough for all. Pilate yielded to the clamor of the leaders of Israel and surrendered Him to their will. In this connection let us remember that it was *the leaders* and not the nation as a whole that rejected Jesus. At the same time not all of the leaders participated in that crime. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, for instance, were notable exceptions. The rejection of Jesus was the result of blindness and ignorance as Peter in Acts 3:17, declared. Nevertheless, ignorance does not excuse anyone; for all who will to do the will of God shall know of the teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord—whether He spoke from Himself or from God. The Lord will get the truth to the ones who will accept it.

It was necessary for Jesus to be crucified for the redemption of mankind. This fact was foretold clearly by the Old Testament prophets. In speaking of this phase of the subject on the day of Pentecost, Peter declared: "Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:23,24). Those who participated in the crucifixion were free to do as they chose. They blindly went on their way, ignoring facts and testimony. They therefore were wholly responsible. At the same time, in their exercise of their free will and in their rejection of the testimony, they were simply carrying out that which God had fore-ordained and determined should be. With these considerations before our minds, we are now prepared to view the events leading up to and connected with our Lord's crucifixion.

### Jesus Mocked By The Roman Soldiers

"27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium, and gathered unto him the whole band. 28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. 29 And they platted a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! 30 And they spat upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head" (Matt. 27:27-30).

Jesus being delivered by the governor to the soldiers, they removed His own garments and placed upon Him a scarlet robe, platted a crown of thorns, placed it upon His head, put a reed in His right hand, and finally knelt before Him in mockery saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" After this insulting treatment, they spit upon Him, took the reed from His hand, and smote Him on the head. Finally, they removed the princely robe and put His own garments upon Him.

### Jesus On The Way To Golgotha

"31 And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the robe, and put on him his garments, and led him away to crucify him. 32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to go *with them*, that he might bear his cross.

33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull, 34 they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it, he would not drink (vss. 31-34).

After all these insults and indignities had been heaped upon Him, Jesus was rushed on to Golgotha. He started out bearing His cross, but it seems that it was so very heavy that He became exhausted under it. A certain Cyrenian, Simon by name, was compelled by the officers to bear Christ's cross behind Him. They led Him out to "Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull," which is about two city blocks northeast of the present Damascus Gate, that is in the central part of the north wall of Jerusalem. There can be no reasonable doubt about this place's being the one where our Lord was crucified.

In preparation for the actual crucifixion those executing Him attempted to give Him wine, mingled with gall. But He simply tasted it and refused to drink. There is a statement in the Babylonian Talmud, according to Lightfoot, that wine mingled with a bit of frankincense was given to criminals just before their execution in order to stupefy them and lessen the pain. This is probably correct. It is quite likely that friends provided this drink in their love and consideration for Him.

### The First Three Hours On The Cross

"35 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments among them, casting lot; 36 and they sat and watched him there, 37 And they set up over his head his accusation written, *This is Jesus the King of the Jews*. 38 Then are there crucified with him two robbers, one on the right hand and one on the left. 39 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, 40 and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. 41 In like manner also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, 42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. 43 He trusted on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God. 44 And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach" (vss. 35-44).

According to different accounts the victim was usually nailed to his cross, while it was lying on the ground, and then it was reared in an upright position.

What type of cross was used? The one with which we are familiar? This cannot be ascertained with our present knowledge. When our Lord was crucified, the soldiers cast lots for His garments and then sat down to view the situation.

According to verse 37 this inscription was written over Jesus: "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." Mark says that the inscription was: "THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Mark 15:26). Luke gives the accusation as, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Luke 23:38). John gives it exactly as does Mark (John 19:21). Matthew and Luke seem to have quoted it verbatim. Mark and John give the gist of it. There is perfect harmony between all their statements.

With Jesus were crucified two thieves. Both of these at first began to rail at Him and to taunt Him. Finally one of them saw his sinfulness and recognized in Jesus the Saviour of the world. He therefore reprimanded his fellow in crime for his mockery. Then, turning to Jesus, he pleaded to be remembered by Him. In answer our Lord gave him this promise: "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shall thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Thus in answer to the thief's plea for mercy and salvation, our Lord redeemed his soul and assured him that he would be with Him in Paradise that day. The Lord will accept anyone who will come to Him in simple faith and true repentance, doubting nothing, and trusting Him for salvation.

Those who passed by kept wagging their heads in mockery and saying: "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself; if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross" (vs. 39). The chief priests, scribes, and elders joined in this chorus of insults and blasphemies. Thus they said: "He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God." For the first three hours of the crucifixion insult after insult, and blasphemy after blasphemy were hurled, against Him by those poor, blind, prejudiced people who had rejected the light of God's eternal truth—to their own condemnation throughout all eternity.

## The Last Three Hours On The Cross

"45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 47 And some of them that stood there, when they heard it, said, This man calleth Elijah. 48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a Sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed and gave him to-drink. 49 And the rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save him. 50 And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit" (vss. 45-50).

At the sixth hour, twelve o'clock noon, there came a sudden change—darkness; crept over all the land until the ninth hour. What was the cause of this phenomenon? Was it an eclipse of the sun? No, this could not have been; for our Lord was crucified at the passover which was in the middle of the month, that began with the new moon. The moon therefore was full, that is, it was on the opposite side of the earth from the sun. But some have thought from Luke's statement, "The sun's light failing," that he considered it an eclipse of the sun. This is an unwarranted inference. Luke simply means that the usual light from the sun was cut off from the earth. There is but one conclusion to which we can come and that is that this darkness was caused by the direct intervention of God.

About the ninth hour Jesus cried out to God in terms of Psalm 22, which is a messianic passage of scripture: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Jesus was man; He was God; He was the God-man. During His entire career God was with Him in a special and unique manner. It was by the finger of God that He accomplished all of His marvelous works. The Almighty had thus accompanied Him in this unique manner up to the moment of this darkness. From this time on the Father withdrew. Jesus had to tread the rest of the way alone, enduring untold agonies for the last three hours of the crucifixion, had to go down to Hades to grapple with Satan and the powers of the unseen world, and to come forth a triumphant Conqueror over the powers of Satan and his hosts. The loneliness of our Lord is inexpressible. We doubtless can never know the darkness and the terror of the valley of the shadow of death through which He passed in working out our redemption for us. It was therefore natural that He should cry out to God in such a time and ask why He had forsaken Him. According to Isaiah, chapter 50, Messiah-Jesus set His face like a flint to do the will of God irrespective of all circumstances. His path, in redeeming humanity, led through death and Hades. He therefore unflinchingly went forward. Man, by disobedience and by pitting his will against God, fell and brought ruin upon all. Man, must pass out of this life, through death and go down to Hades, the place of departed Spirits. The entire human family, from Adam to the resurrection of Christ—with the exception of Enoch and Elijah—was forced to tread the path of life, to pass out through the portal of death, and to go down into Hades, where all had been confined up till the resurrection of our Lord. By man (the first Adam) ruin and death came to the human family; by man (the second Adam) came life and immortality. It was necessary that our Lord should do as He did in redeeming mankind, because we are living in a moral universe. Man is given the power of free choice. It was upon the basis of the exercise of the will of man against that of God that ruin came. His loss could be retrieved only in a moral universe, by a man who set His face like a flint to do the will of God and did it absolutely and perfectly in order that sin and death might not have any claim upon Him. Thus Our Lord, the God-man, was free from sin—sin apart. Since He had no sin, He was in a position to redeem man. He therefore lived as man during His life, went out of life by way of the portal of death, as all other men do, went down to Hades, won the victory over Satan and the powers of the unseen world, grasped the keys of death and Hades, and came forth the triumphant Conqueror, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel. When He Came forth from the grave, He released some—if not all—of the saved who had been held as captives by Satan. "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men. (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth?" (Eph. 5:8,9). Those who came forth at the time of His resurrection, as we shall presently see, went to glory when He ascended. Since our Lord's triumph, all who die in Christ go immediately into the presence of God, for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (II Cor. 5:6-8).

When Jesus therefore cried aloud, certain ones standing by thought that He was calling for Elijah. One immediately got a sponge, filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed and placed it at the Saviour's mouth. We cannot be absolutely sure whether or not our Lord even tasted this. When Jesus, according to John 19:30ff received the vinegar, He said: "It is finished." At this time He yielded up His Spirit.

The Four Gospels must be studied in order to understand the "seven sayings" of our Lord upon the cross, all of which are most marvelous and wonderful.

#### The Phenomena Accompanying The Death Of Christ

"51 And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; 52 and the tombs were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many. 54 Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. 55 And many women were there beholding from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: 56 among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee" (vss. 51-56).

When Jesus expired, the veil in the Temple separating the most holy place from the holy place was rent from top to bottom. This miracle is interpreted by the writer of Hebrews as signifying that the way into the most holy place in heaven was now opened up by the veil of our Lord's flesh (Heb. 10:19-26). Both the Tabernacle and the Temple were typical of our Lord.

At the time of Christ's death there was a great earthquake which rent the rocks in the vicinity of Jerusalem and opened up many of the graves of the saints. On the western slopes of the Mount of Olives is a very extensive Jewish graveyard. But of course this is not the only burial place around Jerusalem. Many of those graves were opened at that time in conjunction with the earthquake. The bodies of those in the tombs did not come forth until after our Lord was raised from the dead. Those coming forth appeared to many with Jesus in Jerusalem during the forty days of His stay after the resurrection.

When the Centurion who was watching Jesus felt the earthquake and saw its effects and the things that were done, he feared exceedingly and said, "Truly this was the Son of God." This Gentile, like Cornelius, was not prejudiced; but was open to conviction and came to faith in Jesus as the Son of God. Standing and observing that which was transpiring were many women who had followed Jesus and ministered unto Him as He was engaged in the great Galilaean ministry. When the Lord came to Jerusalem to observe the passover, they likewise came. They therefore followed Him to the last and watched from a distance.

#### The Burial Of Jesus By Joseph Arimathaea

After the death of Jesus Joseph of Arimathaea went to Pilate and asked for the body, which was granted to him (vss. 57,58). Nicodemus came and brought a hundred pounds of spices to anoint the body of Jesus and assisted Joseph in taking the body and placing it in the latter's own new tomb. The part which Nicodemus played in the burial of Jesus is set forth in John 19:34-42. Mary Magdalene, as we learn in Matthew 27:61, with the other Mary was sitting over against the sepulchre where Jesus was buried.

"57 And when even was come, there came a rich man from Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: 58 this man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded it to be given up. 59 And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which

he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. 61 And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre" (vss. 57-61).

#### The Sealing Of The Tomb By The Jews

"62 Now on the morrow, which is *the day* after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate, 63 saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again. 64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: and the last error will be worse than the first. 65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a guard: go, make it as sure as ye can. 66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them" (vss. 62-66).

On the day after the Preparation, which was the sabbath, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together to Pilate and asked that he have the tomb of Jesus "made sure." The reason for their doing this was that, as they said, they remembered how Christ had foretold that He would be raised after three days. They asserted that they feared the disciples would steal the body of Jesus and claim that He was raised from the dead. In reply Pilate told them that they had a guard, and that they should seal the tomb and make it as sure as they could, which thing they did. But, as we shall see in our next study, nothing that man was able to do could in anywise prevent His coming back to life. He was and is the *life* of the world; He was and is the *light* of the world. He is the Lord of creation and the Lord, Master, and Saviour of all who come to Him and trust Him.

## THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS (*Installment Twenty-eight*)

In the Old Testament it was foretold that the Messiah would suffer, die, and be buried. Along with these predictions was the one that He would be raised triumphantly from the tomb. For example, see Psalm 16:8-11. In fulfillment of the Old Testament forecast, our Lord, after He won the victory, came forth a conqueror over the powers of the unseen world.

The empty tomb, which had been secured against all possible fraud by its being sealed and watched, together with the post-resurrection appearances of our Lord on ten different occasions, proved conclusively without a doubt that Jesus was raised from the dead.

### The Visit Of The Two Women To The Tomb On The Sabbath

"Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre" (Matt. 28:1). In this verse we see that late on the sabbath, toward the first day of the week, they came. The first day of the week began at sunset on the sabbath. Hence the visit of Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the tomb at this time was late on the sabbath.

### The Earthquake And The Rolling Away Of The Stone By The Angel

"And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. 3 His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: 4 and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men" (vss. 2-4). There was a great earthquake, and an angel who had descended from heaven rolled away the stone. Just at what time the earthquake occurred and the angel appeared on the earthly scene is not stated. It evidently occurred sometime during the night following the sabbath on this occasion. It is immaterial to us just when it occurred.

The angel descended, rolled the stone away, and sat upon it. I have visited the garden tomb in Jerusalem and feel certain from all the evidence that this is undoubtedly the tomb in which our Lord was buried. This tomb is hewn out of the solid rock, and before it is a groove in which a large stone, similar to old-fashioned mill stones, was rolled back and forth. I have seen just such stones in a position to be rolled in front of the door to the sepulchre. This massive stone, in the case of Christ's tomb, was rolled back and the entrance into it was clear. But the angel sat upon it as if on guard. His appearance was "as lightning, and his raiment white as snow." His presence there terrified the soldiers who had been guarding the tomb and they became as dead men. One is not surprised that they were frightened as they were. In all probability you and I, dear friend, would have felt the same way.

### Visit Of The Women To The Tomb Early On The First Day Of The Week

"And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. 6 He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples. He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. 8 And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word" (vss. 5-8).

For an account of this visit, see Mark 16:2-8 and Luke 24:1-8. When we notice carefully these parallel passages, we see that this visit of the women was early on the morning of the first day of the week. We must therefore differentiate it from that of the two Marys mentioned in verse 1, which we have just noticed. The former, as I have just stated, *was late on the sabbath*; this one which we are now discussing *was early on the first day of the week*.

When the women came up to the tomb, they of course saw the angel who spoke to them a message of comfort, since it was evident that they were frightened. "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples. He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you." These words were indeed comforting and most reassuring to these devoted women. Their fears were doubtless allayed by this message. They were, as we note, commanded to go and tell His disciples that the Lord had risen and that He would meet them in a mountain in Galilee, just as He had instructed them prior to His crucifixion.

Having received this message from the angel, the women departed quickly from the tomb and ran to tell the disciples about it. The reader should study the record found in Luke 24:9-12 and then turn to John 20:2-10. From these passages we learn that they told the disciples, especially Peter, who with John immediately ran to the tomb. From John's account we learn that John outran Peter. On his arrival at the tomb he stooped down and looked into it, but would not venture inside. Later Peter came up and, having looked in, entered the tomb and there he saw the grave clothes in which Jesus had been buried, lying untouched. Also the napkin, or cloth, that was wound around His head, was in its place, still in its position as it was when it was on the Saviour's brow. John also entered into the tomb then and with Peter stood gazing at these clothes. They were convinced from the clothes that the Lord had been raised from the dead.

We must remember that one hundred pounds of spices had been procured by Nicodemus, and that they had been used in the preparation of the body of Jesus for burial. There would exude from these crushed spices sufficient juices to moisten the grave clothes that were wound around His body. During the time that our Lord was in the tomb, these juices would stiffen the clothes sufficiently so that they would retain the appearance and shape that they had when wound around His body. We can understand this fact by remembering that, when a plaster of Paris cast is put around some part of the body, it hardens and takes the shape of that part of the body around which it is placed. Thus these graveclothes were lying in the place where our Lord was left by Joseph and Nicodemus.

But, when they arrived at the tomb, the body of our Lord was not there. Since the clothes were in the shape in which they were when they were around His body, and since there was no evidence of their being touched by mortal man, it became obvious to the Apostles that His body had been transformed, and that He had passed out through these clothes and left them as they were. This fact was overwhelming proof that He had been raised from the dead. Peter and John saw the undisturbed clothes and the empty tomb and have testified to that fact. Historical facts are proved by historical testimony. Thus we have the evidence of thoroughly competent witnesses to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

The next item found in the Gospels, but not in Matthew's account, is the appearance of the Lord Jesus to Mary Magdalene, the record of which is found in Mark 16:9-11 and John 20:11-18. We should study these two accounts very carefully if we wish to get a clear picture of our Lord's association with His disciples after His resurrection.

#### The Appearance Of Jesus To The Other Women

"And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. 10 Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not: go and tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me" (vss. 9,10).

Chronologically this is the second appearance of Jesus to any of His disciples. This one was to the group of women who came early to see the empty tomb. Jesus met and greeted them saying, "All hail." They came, reverently taking hold of His feet and worshipping Him. Then He said to them, "Fear not: go and tell my brethren that they

depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me." This appearance to the women was of course on Easter Sunday, the resurrection day.

#### The Report Of The Soldiers Who Guarded The Tomb

"11 Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city, and told unto the chief priests all the things that were come to pass. 12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave much money unto the soldiers, 13 saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. 14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of care. 15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews, *and continueth* until this day (vss. 11-15).

As the women were leaving the tomb, the guards who had been placed there by the Sanhedrin went into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had come to pass. Of course, they knew about the earthquake, but concerning the appearance of the angel and the rolling away of the stone they probably knew nothing. Thus the report of the guards was new to them. In all probability these men told the facts as they had occurred.

The chief priests gathered the council together, that is, the Sanhedrin, and gave much money to the soldiers, bribing them and saying, "Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of care."

Such conduct as this is beyond one's comprehension. One would think that, since there had been darkness caused supernaturally over the earth for three hours while our Lord was on the cross, and since there was the earthquake at the time of the descent of the angel, and other unusual phenomena, the members of the Jewish council would have feared to act as they did and to bribe the soldiers giving them money to lie about the situation. But this case shows what even good men, after they have taken a position, may be driven to do. These men were the leaders in Israel; yet they taught the soldiers to bear false testimony and paid them money to tell a lie if the report should get to the governor's ears. They assured the soldiers that they would take care of them in the event of their being held accountable for anything.

May the Lord never let us espouse any position whatsoever and become wedded to it and blinded by it to the extent that we will lower our Christian standard by lying and bribery. Such conduct is beneath—far beneath—that of any servant of God. In this connection let us remember that the men who did this were a small number and that they did not represent the heart of the Jewish nation. There were then, as now, many noble, sincere souls, who prized truth and righteousness above everything else.

Matthew tells us in 28:15 that this falsehood concerning the disciples' stealing the body away while the guards were asleep was current among the Jews until the day on which he was writing his account of our Lord's life. Conservative scholarship places the composition of Matthew around 60 or 61 A.D. Thus that false report was in circulation for at least thirty years or more.

A careful study of the other three records of the Gospel shows that our Lord appeared to different ones of His disciples seven other times prior to the one about we shall study in the next section.

Jesus' Appearance To The multitude In Galilee  
And The Great Commission

"16 But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. 17 And when they saw him, they worshipped *him*; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (vss. 16-20).

In all our Lord appeared ten times to various disciples during the period of forty days between His resurrection and the ascension.

On this occasion the eleven disciples were in Galilee, in the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. When the Lord was crucified and buried, there was interred with Him their hope that He would be their Messiah. But when He was raised from the dead, and when overwhelming evidence proved that fact, they were, as Peter asserts in his first Epistle, begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Buoyed by this turn of affairs, the eleven disciples went into Galilee to meet the risen Lord. It is usually supposed that the time of which we are now studying is the same one of which the Apostle Paul spoke in I Corinthians 15:6. If this is the occasion, then He appeared to above five hundred brethren at this time. When Paul wrote the Corinthian letter, probably 56 or 57 A.D., more than half of this number who had seen the Lord on this occasion were still alive.

When the eleven disciples saw Jesus, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. Were these doubters among the Twelve, or among others of the five hundred? It is impossible for us to state. We may be certain that their doubts were dissipated, as were those of Thomas when he saw the risen Lord.

On this occasion the Lord stated to His Apostles that, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." Of course according to John, chapter 1, He is the Creator of all things. According to Hebrews 1:1-4 He is bearing or carrying all things toward one great consummation. It was and is to the God-man, Christ Jesus, that all authority in heaven and in earth is given. He had it when He appeared to these disciples; He has it now—even though He is not exercising all the prerogatives that belong to His office. But He will do that at the proper time.

Since He has all authority throughout the universe, He told the Apostles to go and make disciples of all the nations; that is, they were to enroll them in the school of Christ. Mark says, "teach all nations." People cannot hear without a preacher; and ministers cannot preach except they be sent of God. This fact is set forth in Romans, chapter 10. Men are to go forth, who are called of God, delivering the message of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

According to our Lord's instructions, the Apostles were to baptize all those who became disciples of the Lord. In other words, they were to baptize all believers. That is the first thing that the Lord asks of anyone who accepts Him, namely, to declare his faith in Him as the Son of God to the world by the confession in the form of baptism.

This baptism is to be "... into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This is to be done in the name of the Holy Trinity.

Those who believe and who are baptized are to be taught all things whatsoever the Lord has commanded. I am afraid the Christian world fails in this particular. It is proper and right and necessary to preach the gospel. But it is also obligatory upon those who preach to *teach* all things that the Lord has commanded. I believe in revival services. Every church should have a continual revival. But to preach the gospel, at all services, to tell sinners how to be saved, and to neglect teaching all that the Lord has said to the disciples is to violate His teaching.

Jesus promised to be with His disciples always as they went forth proclaiming the truth, "even unto the end of the world." Though He was going away from them to heaven, He declared that He would be with them as they went from city to city, country to country, and continent to continent. He would be with them to own and to bless their labors and to protect them, meeting all their needs.

This commission is, according to the Lord Jesus, to continue unto "the end of the world." The marginal reading of the Revised Version is unto *the consummation of the age*. This latter reading is the correct literal one and should be in the text. Jesus meant that He was going to leave them personally and bodily, but that He would be with them in spirit all during the time that He would be absent from the world. The age here referred to is that of the present era—the Christian Age—which will be brought to a conclusion by the personal coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His saints.