

Messianic Series Volume Five

לְכוּ־נָא וְנוֹכַחַה יַאמַר יְהוָה Isa. 1:18

“Come now and let us reason together, saith Jehovah”

MESSIAH: HIS HISTORICAL APPEARANCE

BY

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*To the remnant of Israel of the end time who are
thirsting for God and for fellowship with Him
is this Volume Affectionately Dedicated*

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*The Scripture quotations in this volume are taken from the
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Preface

This treatise, *Messiah: His Historical Appearance*, is the fifth book of the Messianic Series, which, when completed, will contain seven volumes. The four preceding works are *The God of Israel*, *Messiah: His Nature and Person*, *Messiah: His Redemptive Career*, and *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*. The last two are *Messiah: His Second Coming Imminent* and *Messiah: His Final Call to Israel*.

In this the fifth book of the Series we come to grips with the greatest question that has ever engaged the attention of man—that which pertains to Jesus of Nazareth, a historical personage concerning whom multiplied millions of people, both in the past and at the present time, have been convinced by positive evidence that He was a historical person (as the late Dr. Stephen S. Wise declared), that He was what He claimed to be, and what the four evangelists—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—say that He was.

The Apostle John declared, in Revelation 19:11, that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." According to this statement, all revelation revolves around Him, His life, and His labors. Jesus of Nazareth, speaking figuratively, is the leading actor in the great drama of life as presented in the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

But in modern times a section of the world of scholarship imbued with and motivated by the spirit of scientific investigation, apart from divine revelation, calls in question, more or less, the authority of the Scriptures and their message. Rationalism has largely captured the thinking of the man of the twentieth century and is dominating it. I hasten to affirm, however, that there are many scholars who have refused to bow to the dictates of this modern god of rationalism, skepticism, and doubt.

This Baal of modernism at whose shrine very many scholars bow and worship is dictating the life and thinking of multitudes in the educational world, as well as in the religious sphere. I am constrained, therefore, to

begin the investigation concerning the historical Jesus by noting very briefly some general principles of scientific research and some prophecies regarding the Almighty's revelation to Israel and to the world.

This treatise in the unabridged edition naturally falls into four sections—Book One: some general principles taught by scientific observation, practical experience, logical thinking, and open-mindedness to see and to accept truth wherever found—this part of the treatise prepares the reader for an impartial and candid examination of the truths, evidence, and facts presented; Book Two: some dominant prophecies taught by the Eternal Creator in His revelation to Israel, according to Moses, the Prophets, and the writers of the New Testament—this section, which draws its material largely from the messages of Moses and the Prophets, paves the way for the reader's understanding of the testimony presented by the Apostle Matthew, an associate of Jesus and an eyewitness of the things concerning which he has written; Book Three: the inspired testimony of the Apostle Matthew, an eyewitness—with explanatory notes; Book Four: the necessity of the Mosaic doctrine of blood atonement examined scripturally and philosophically.

The abridged edition consists largely of Book Three of the unabridged volume, with some material drawn from other portions of the work. This smaller edition is for the masses who do not have time or inclination to examine the great bulk of material that bears upon the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth.

In 1936 I began work on this fifth volume of the Messianic Series. That year I was engaged largely in doing research in some of the principal libraries of Europe. Since then I have worked on this volume as I have had opportunity. The major part of my time and energy, of course, has been consumed by the multitudinous duties connected with the Biblical Research Society in its world-wide ministry. During these years, I have spent literally thousands upon thousands of hours in the study of this subject.

Ordinarily, a volume such as this one should have a bibliography. My reason for not including a list of the works consulted is that I have examined literally hundreds of volumes in my quest for facts and data that might throw new light upon Messiah's historical appearance.

My studies took me to such libraries as the Library of Congress, the British Museum, the Bibliotheque Nationale, the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, and the library of the Pontificio Istituto Biblico. In my three visits to the Holy Land, I made special investigation of any facts or phenomena that might throw light upon my subject. In all my studies I have, of course, consulted standard works, as well as many others which gave promise of help. If I were to attempt to present the list of books consulted during my long period of research, I would not know where to stop.

I am indebted to various members of the staff and to friends for assisting me in this work—especially to my late private secretary, Miss Annabel Lee Crumly, who went to be with the Lord in October, 1955, for the invaluable assistance that she rendered.

To Miss Aurora Fluker, chief office secretary, I likewise am indebted for typing my dictation and for assisting me in innumerable ways in the prosecution of the work.

To Miss Olive W. Parsons, Ph.D., my assistant, I am greatly indebted for many suggestions and invaluable assistance in the final editing of this volume.

To my faithful, loyal wife, Florence Lita Cooper, who has been an inspiration to me throughout the years, I owe everything, humanly speaking, in the production of this volume. Without her loyal co-operation and prayer life, it could never have appeared.

To David L., Jr., our elder son, vice-president and business manager of Biblical Research Society, I owe much; for he has relieved me of most

administrative duties and enabled me to give more time to the production of this work.

To many prayer warriors and friends throughout the world who have been praying, and who have been giving as they could, I likewise am greatly indebted.

To Mr. Robert S. Smethers, assistant manager of The Evangelical Press, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where this book was printed, I am most grateful for his co-operation and sympathetic assistance in producing this volume.

To Mr. and Mrs. James L. Mitchell, members of our praying family, I am especially indebted for their assistance in various ways. Mrs. Mitchell did special tedious work in connection with the final draft of the manuscript.

To my good friends H. Leo Eddleman, Ph.D.; Charles L. Feinberg, Th.D., Ph. D.; Harry J. Hager, Ph.D.; and Wilbur M. Smith, D.D., I am greatly indebted for their taking the time from their busy lives to read and review this volume in galley form. I appreciate and gratefully accept their suggestions.

To my good friend F. Kenton Beshore, Pastor of First Baptist Church in Oceanside, California, I am greatly indebted for assisting me in Bible Conference work and in otherwise enabling me to devote my time to this volume.

To the Board of Directors of Biblical Research Society, I am indeed grateful for the spirit of co-operation and sympathetic understanding which they have given me during the long years of the preparation and production of this volume, without which I could never have completed it.

If the reader is to get the full force of the message of this treatise, he should have a Bible at hand and look up each reference in its context. The best translation in the English language, in my opinion, is the American Standard Version, 1901 edition—though it is not free from imperfections.

In my translation of the Gospel according to Matthew, I have endeavored to give a literal translation wherever possible. At times it is not wise to follow the original text too slavishly. The Greek idioms frequently do not correspond to the English idioms. The translator is supposed to use his best judgment in such instances. There is danger of paraphrasing at times. The translator, therefore, must be very careful not to inject into the translation his own ideas.

As the reader peruses the comments which I make upon the text of the Gospel according to Matthew in Book Three, Chapters XVII to XXXII, he may wonder why comments are made on certain subjects whereas nothing is said on other points which may seem to him to merit discussion. Personally, I would like to comment on each verse—an absolute impossibility because of lack of space. I have, therefore, chosen those subjects which, as I see the situation, demand special treatment in this treatise. I ask the reader to bear in mind that this volume is the fifth of my Messianic Series. Knowing what has been presented in the first four volumes, I have selected and treated the topics accordingly.

With a note of praise in my heart, and with a prayer upon my lips that God will use this volume in bringing His truth to countless numbers of His Chosen People, Israel, as well as to truth seekers among all nations, I send this volume forth.

David L. Cooper.

Los Angeles. California

December 31, 1958

Table of Contents

BOOK ONE

SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES TAUGHT BY SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATION, PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE, LOGICAL THINKING, AND OPEN-MINDEDNESS

	<i>Page</i>
CHAPTER I	
THE SPHERES OF SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, AND THEOLOGY.....	17
CHAPTER II	
SCIENTIFIC METHODS OF INVESTIGATION.....	20
CHAPTER III	
A HISTORICAL QUESTION.....	22
CHAPTER IV	
THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD TRUTH.....	25
I. Open mindedness. II. Willingness To See Truth. III. An Insatiable Desire for Truth. IV. God’s Resisting the Proud, but Giving Grace to the Humble. V. The Blinding Effects of Theories. VI. Messiah’s Labors in Behalf of the Meek. VII. Teachableness VII. Choosing What One Likes Best. IX. A Deliberate Refusal To Face Facts. X. Being on the Wrong Track. XI. Cutting into Strips and Burning the Word of God.	
CHAPTER V	
THE GOLDEN RULE OF INTERPRETATION.....	35

CHAPTER VI

ARBITRARY BRUSHING ASIDE OF EARLY PROPHECIES.....41

CHAPTER VII

THOSE TO WHOM MOSES AND THE PROPHETS SPOKE.....45

CHAPTER VIII

MIRACLES.....48

BOOK TWO

SOME DOMINANT PHROPHECIES TAUGHT BY THE ETERNAL CREATOR IN HIS REVELATION TO ISRAEL ACCORDING TO MOSES, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

CHAPTER IX

THE CALL OF MOSES.....55

I. A Prophet. II. A Redeemer. III. A Mediator. IV. An Intercessor. V. A Leader

CHAPTER X

THE TESTIMONY OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS REGARDING MESSIAH’S REDEMPTIVE CAREER.....70

CHAPTER XI

THE BLINDNESS OF ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS.....	79
I. Famine of the Word of God Foretold by Amos. II. Judicial Blindness Threatened Israel Foretold by Isaiah. III. The Continuance of Israel's Blindness. IV. The Blindness of the Nations.	

CHAPTER XII

THE FIRST COMING OF THE MESSIAH.....	95
I. To Make His Soul an Offering for Sin. II. To Bring to Naught the Power of the Devil. III. To Bear Witness to the Truth. IV. To Put Away Sin. V. To Redeem Man from all Iniquity.	

CHAPTER XIII

THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION: THE INTERVAL SEPARATING THE TWO COMINGS OF THE ONE MESSIAH.....	100
I. According to Isaiah 42:1-4. II. According to Isaiah 61:1-3. III. According to Daniel 9:1, 2, 24-27	

CHAPTER XIV

THE SECOND COMING OF MESSIAH.....	117
I. To Banish All Evil from the Earth. II. To Solve the Jewish Problem. II. To Establish a Reign of Righteousness over the Earth.	

CHAPTER XV

AUTHENTIC SOURCES OF INFORMATION REGARDING JESUS THE MESSIAH AND HIS WORLD-WIDE SPIRITUAL KINGDOM.....	122
I. The Sources of Information. II. The Credibility of the New Testament Tested by the Laws of Evidence. III. The Crowning Proof That the New Testament Records are Authentic.	

CHAPTER XVI

THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS CAST IN THE PROPHETIC MOLD OF MOSES

AND THE PROPHETS.....154

- I. Pre-existence of Messiah. II. Birth of Messiah. III. Twofold Nature of Messiah. IV. Genealogy of Messiah. V. Some Distinguishing Names and Titles of Messiah. VIII. The First Coming of Messiah. IX. Betrayal, Death, and Burial of Jesus the Messiah. X. Resurrection of Messiah. XI. Ascension of Messiah and His Session at the Right Hand of the Throne of God in Heaven. XII. The Second Coming of Messiah.

BOOK THREE

AN EXAMINATION OF JESUS OF NAZARETH AS THE MESSIAH OF ISRAEL AND THE REDEEMER OF THE WORLD

SECTION A

AN APPROACH TO JESUS OF NAZARETH

CHAPTER XVII

A FOURFOLD PORTRAIT OF JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE HEBREW MESSIAH.....189

- I. Scriptural Testimony. II. The Personal Ministry of Jesus. III. The Living Voice. IV. The Gospel Records.

SECTION B

A STUDY OF THE TESTIMONY OF MATTHEW, AND EYEWITNESS

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BIRTH NARRATIVE AND EARLY LIFE OF JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE HEBREW MESSIAH.....196

Cooper Translation of the Gospel According to Matthew.
 Matthew 1:1-2:23.

I. Jesus a Descendant of David and Abraham. II. Gaps in the Genealogy. III. The Virgin Birth of Jesus the Messiah. IV. Four types of Prophecy. V. Four Types of Messianic prophecy.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FORERUNNER OF MESSIAH AND HIS MINISTRY.....217

Mathew 3:1-17.

I. John the Baptist the Herald of the Messiah. II. John’s Message. III. The Wrath To Come. IV. Baptism in Water, in the Holy Spirit, and in Fire. V. The Baptism of Jesus.

CHAPTER XX

THE OPENING SCENES OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS.....231

Matthew 4:1-25.

I. Satan’s Activities. II. Jesus Establishing His Headquarters in Capernaum. III. The Beginning of the Ministry of Jesus.

CHAPTER XXI

THE MANIFESTO OF JESUS THE MESSIAH.....239

Matthew 5:1-7:29.

- I. Jesus Issuing His Manifesto. II. Jesus Often Repeating Vital Truths.
- III. Jesus Manifesting His Deity. IV. Every Word of the Law To Be Fulfilled. V. The Righteousness Demanded by Jesus. VI. The Model Prayer. VII. The Danger of Having a Sufficiency. VIII. The Golden Rule. IX. The Two Builders, One on the Rock, the Other on the Sand.

CHAPTER XXII

MIRACLES OF JESUS THE MESSIAH.....256

Matthew 8:1-9:34.

- I. The Purpose of Miracles. II. The Miracles of Jesus, His Credentials.
- III. The Miracles of Jesus in Various Spheres. IV. A Brief Study of Demonism.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE RESTRICTED COMMISSION.....271

Matthew 9:35-11:1.

- I. The Choosing and the Training of the Twelve. II. The Restricted Commission. III. The Widening of the Commission. IV. The Contraction of the Commission. V. Disciples Not To Fear Enemies. VI. The Price of Discipleship and Rewards.

CHAPTER XXIV

PERIOD OF CRISES.....276

Matthew 11:2-12:50.

I. The Perplexity of John the Baptist. II. Responsibility of People for Actions and Attitude toward the Light Which Comes to Them. III. The Judgment of the Lost. IV. Radiation of Divine Glory. V. God's Revealing the Truth to Childlike Ones. VI. The Great Invitation. VII. Plot To Kill Jesus. VIII. The Sign of Jonah the Prophet. IX. Men Accountable to God for Idle Words.

CHAPTER XXV

PARABLES.....290

Matthew 13:1-58.

I. The Purpose of Parables. II. The Parables of the Kingdom.

CHAPTER XXVI

PERIOD OF RETIREMENTS OF JESUS FROM THE LAND OF ISRAEL.....300

Matthew 14:1-17:20.

I. Feeding the Multitudes. II. The Signs of the Times. III. Peter's Confession of Jesus as the Messiah. IV. The Transfiguration of the Lord Jesus. V. Removing a Mountain by Faith.

CHAPTER XXVII

CLOSING SCENES OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY.....319

Matthew 17:22-18:35.

I. Jesus Paying the Temple Tax. II. Stumbling Blocks. III. Sheol, or Hades. IV. Forgiving Others.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A GLIMPSE AT THE PEREAN MINISTRY.....326

Matthew 19:1-20:16.

- I. Separation and Divorce. II. Jesus Blessing Little Children. III The Perils of Riches.

CHAPTER XXIX

JOURNEY FROM JERICHO TO JERUSALEM.....332

Matthew 20:17-34.

- I. Prediction Regarding the Crucifixion. II. Selfish Ambition. III. The Two Jerichos.

CHAPTER XXX

THE LAST WEEK OF THE EARTHLY MINISTRY OF JESUS.....335

Matthew 21:1-27:66.

- I. Jesus' Public Entry into Jerusalem on Sunday Morning. II. Events of Monday and Tuesday. III. Jesus' Inactivity for Two Days, Wednesday and Thursday. IV. Thursday Evening the Day of the Passover. V. Events of Friday. VI. The Crucifixion of Jesus. VII. The Burial of Jesus. VIII. Length of Time from the Burial to the Resurrection. IX. Those Responsible for the Crucifixion of Jesus.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE RESURRECTION.....395

Matthew 28:1-15.

- I. Resurrection Foretold in Old Testament. II. Parallel Accounts of the Resurrection of the Crucified Messiah. III. The Testimony of Eyewitnesses. IV. Life and Immortality Now Demonstrated.

CHAPTER XXXII

SALVATION OFFERED TO ALL NATIONS.....400

Matthew 28:16-20.

I. God Gathering Out a People for His Name Now. II. Significance of the Expression *Son of Man*. III. Messiah Awaiting Israel’s Plea for Him To Return. IV. Messiah Solving the Jewish Problem. V. Messiah Solving the World Problem. VI. Messiah Solving the Personal Problem of the Individual.

BOOK FOUR

THE MOSAIC DOCTRINE OF BLOOD ATONEMENT EXAMINED
SCRIPTURALLY AND PHILOSOPHICALLY

(Book four was originally published as Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 9 in
Man: His Creation, Fall Redemption, and Glorification.)

INTRODUCTION.....412

CHAPTER XXXIII

MAN’S POST-FALL STATUS IN THE MORAL KINGDOM.....413

I. The Dominion of Satan, the Minister of Death. II. The World’s Lying in Darkness. III. The Human Procession Crossing the Arena of Life. IV. Blood Sacrifices. V. Author’s Translation of Isaiah 52:13-53:12, with Interspersed Explanatory Notes.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN REDEMPTION.....431

I. The Loss Must Be Retrieved on the Human Level and in the Realm of the Will. II. Could God Have Created Another Man To Redeem Man? III. Could One of Adam’s Descendants Redeem the Race? IV. Could a Celestial Creature Redeem the Race? V. Could God Create Another Being Powerful Enough To Redeem Man? VI. The God-Man.

CHAPTER XXXV

JESUS THE CHAMPION OF FALLEN HUMANITY.....454

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE OFFICE AND THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.....459

BOOK 1

SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES TAUGHT BY SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATION, PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE, LOGICAL THINKING, AND OPEN-MINDEDNESS

CHAPTER I

THE SPHERES OF SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, AND THEOLOGY

In every sphere of the universe there are certain principles and laws that pertain to the particular phenomena in each special area. It is the business of the scientist—the person who is searching for fundamental facts and truths—to seek and to discover the facts, the principles, and the laws that obtain in his special field of investigation.

The various spheres of science may be divided into those dealing with material matter and those investigating psychic and spiritual phenomena. For example, the psychologist, whose realm is almost exclusively that of the mind and human behavior, is as much a scientist as the physicist, biologist, chemist, and other workers in the physical realm.

In modern times the sciences are multiplying with great rapidity. Knowledge is increasing at an unbelievable rate, but the scientist in any special field should recognize the sphere in which he is laboring and should confine his pronouncement to his particular field of investigation about which he can be positive in his assertions. Let the scientists increase in number, in knowledge, but let them recognize their limitations. Let them give forth to the world the principles and the facts which they discover.

Another class of students, the philosophers, love wisdom and knowledge. Their province is to examine the truths, facts, and principles that have been discovered by the patient, diligent labors of specialists in their particular fields and to attempt to give a rational explanation of what has been brought to light by these specialists. The philosopher should confine himself to his own sphere and should teach only that which he knows to be in accordance with truths and established facts. When he stays within

his own sphere, he renders an invaluable service to the cause of education and to man's improvement and advancement.

The philosopher, of course, should discuss the data which he receives from the scientist. He should make it plain that he is not speaking as a scientist, but simply as a philosopher, endeavoring to give a rational explanation of the data placed in his hands. At the same time he should realize that the last word has not been spoken and that further investigation by the scientist may overthrow the conclusion he has reached from the data he has on hand. In making any pronouncement, he should make it clear that he is simply speaking as a philosopher and not as a scientist.

A violation of this principle can prove disastrous. To illustrate the point I wish to call attention to one of my English professors in university. He was a master in his field. Whenever he lectured on any poem, prose composition, or book, his explanations were thoroughly scientific and superb. On several occasions he gave some lectures on the English Bible. In them he presented the documentary hypothesis of the composition of the Scriptures as an established, recognized fact. Only those students who had done advanced work in historical criticism in a standard theological seminary could recognize the source of the material. In these lectures he spoke, as it were, *ex cathedra*. Since he was a specialist in his own field, and since he was speaking so very fluently concerning the Scriptures, the students naturally accepted the lectures as truth.

What this professor should have done was to tell his students that the explanation which he was giving was secondhand material—a theory that had been held by many Bible scholars, but that had been called in question by other scholars of equal learning and erudition.

A third class of students which is making a most positive contribution to civilization is the theologians. They study the sacred Scriptures—Old and New Testaments—and interpret them in the light of actual facts discovered by the scientists and the philosophers, and give the world the benefit of their studies.

Unfortunately, many of the theologians, enamored by rationalistic thought, have come to the point of questioning, often denying, the inspiration of the Scriptures. To them the sacred writings are not what they were to the Lord Jesus, who declared: "But it

is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall” (Luke 16:17) and “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished” (Matt. 5:18).

All thinkers admit that spiritual matters have pre-eminence over material things. As the clouds are gathering thick and fast on the political horizon, real thinkers are coming to the conclusion and are telling the world that we must get back to spiritual values or else our civilization will soon be wrecked by man’s barbarity. Thus the theologians, along with the preachers and ministers of the Word, should give forth to the people the message of God, His infallibly inspired Word—the inspired autographs.

Unfortunately, not all scientists, philosophers, and theologians recognize the spheres in which they are specialists; neither do they stay within the bounds of their chosen fields. For instance, the scientist who is an expert in his field may forget himself and enter the field of the philosopher and make certain pronouncements and advance untenable theories which becloud the issues involved. Likewise the philosopher very frequently forgets his place and his special field of investigation and enters that of the theologian. When he does so, not being an expert in theology, he often propounds and teaches things that cannot be supported. Frequently the theologian attempts to turn scientist overnight and makes incorrect pronouncements. Whenever any of these scholars leave their own spheres and attempt to speak authoritatively in fields with which they are not thoroughly familiar, the inevitable result is confusion worse confounded.

CHAPTER II

SCIENTIFIC METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

Everything that is subject to scientific investigation must be studied in the light of related facts, since certain laws govern the phenomena within the sphere of investigation. In the field of the natural sciences, for example, that equipment must be employed that adapts itself to the subject in hand. In chemistry test tubes and other apparatus are needed in the study of the various elements; and, in physics, research in nuclear energy requires a large laboratory and intricate, delicate, and technical equipment.

On the other hand, to further the study of celestial phenomena, the astronomer has developed mammoth, but extremely delicate, telescopes like the equipment in the observatory on Mount Palomar, California. He must master, not only astronomy, but also higher mathematics and celestial physics. That the principles, discussed above, for which I am contending are correct is admitted by all thinking people.

The scientist must seek for truths, facts, and principles. The theologian must come in the same spirit and with all the training and equipment needed for his special work in order to arrive at the goal of truth.

In an interview which I had with Dr. Joseph Klausner in 1937, when I was in Jerusalem, he insisted that a student of the Scriptures should be guided by the spirit of scientific investigation. Then he stated that he was aware of my knowing what constitutes the scientific spirit, but that he wanted to tell me in his own words his idea of a true scientist (he was speaking in modern Hebrew, but we had a good interpreter). In effect he said that one who has a scientific mind and spirit has one, and only one, objective in view, namely, the discovery of truth. The true scientific investigator never searches for truth to support his theories or his own ideas. He wants truth and truth alone. He faces any new investigation with the thought that, if he discovers anything that upsets or disproves his former ideas or theories, he will accept truth and facts and repudiate what he formerly believed. I thoroughly agree with Dr. Klausner on this point. He is absolutely right in his contention.

In substance I replied to him: The search for truth might be illustrated by the work of the archaeologist. Some of the Palestinian sites, such as Megiddo, Biesan, Lachish, Jericho, Kiriath-sepher, and others, have been partially excavated. The scientific archaeologist recognizes that these mounds contain various levels, each of which is the remains of a destroyed city. The lowest of these is the remains of the first or oldest city that was built upon the mound. The highest level is the ruins of the last city and its civilization. Whenever one of the cities was destroyed, perhaps by a war, either the former inhabitants or immigrants already in the country would build a new city upon the ruins of the old. Thus through the centuries these mounds kept growing in height.

As each level is excavated, the archaeologist makes a full and accurate account of the different artifacts discovered. In this way, with a fair degree of accuracy, he can discover the relationship that the various finds and civilization have to each other and can work out a scheme of chronology. He examines each object carefully and thoroughly in its original setting. He lays aside any former conception that clashes with newly discovered and established data. Such is the procedure of the scientific truth-seeker who is motivated by the truly scientific spirit.

Chapter III

A HISTORICAL QUESTION

Any question relating to Jesus of Nazareth is a historical subject and must be studied according to the canons of historical criticism and the laws of evidence. Just as microbes and germs are studied through the microscope and the heavens are explored by the spectroscope and telescope, all questions concerning Jesus of Nazareth must fundamentally be studied from the standpoint of genuine evidence and by historical methods. But recently an outstanding theologian of international reputation denied this plainly evident truth in a panel discussion of Biblical questions on a national radio hook-up. When one of the speakers mentioned the deity of Jesus Christ, this theologian immediately said that the deity of Jesus Christ was not a historical question and that it must, therefore, be examined in some other way. This distinguished scholar was absolutely wrong in his assertion. Every question relating to Jesus of Nazareth, of whom one reads in the Scriptures, harks back to Him as He was when He was here nineteen hundred years ago and must be studied in the light of all Scripture—the Old Testament which foretells His Advent, the New Testament which records His life and labors—and also in the light of all extra-Biblical evidence available.

Jesus of Nazareth, not only lived some nineteen hundred years ago, but also, after His death, arose from the grave and is living today. As we shall see, He is the living Christ, who from His position of glory and power is overruling all things and is directing the course of human history toward a definite goal. Just as the skipper guides his ship toward the port for which he is sailing, Jesus of Nazareth is directing the course of human history toward that dispensation of the fulness of the times when God will head up all things in Him (Eph. 1:10,11).

After studying the prophecies regarding the earthly career of Messiah, we shall examine the historical facts regarding His entrance into the world and His life and labors during the short span of His earthly sojourn. These facts can be learned only by the method of historical investigation and the laws of evidence.

The deity of Jesus Christ is a historical question, notwithstanding the unsupported assertion of this noted theologian, to whom I have just referred, because what is known of Him historically is based upon reliable evidence—the testimony of competent, credible witnesses. Why are millions of people convinced that He was God in human form—the God-man? They are convinced that He was deity because the Prophet Isaiah in the latter half of the eighth century B.C.E. spoke of the miraculous conception and the virgin birth of a child who would be recognized as Immanuel, which means *God with us* (Isa. 7:14); because Matthew and Luke, credible and competent witnesses, testified that Jesus was miraculously conceived and virgin-born (Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke, chapters 1 and 2); because He performed many supernatural signs and wonders, recorded of Him in the New Testament; because He spoke as never man spoke (John 7:46); because He arose from the dead and thereby proved Himself to be the Son of God (Rom. 1:1-7); and because He ascended after His Resurrection, as the Psalmist had foretold (Ps. 16:8-11 and Ps. 110:1-3).

That the deity of Jesus is a historical question to be established by credible testimony was recognized by Luke, who has proved to be a historian of the first magnitude and worthy of all acceptance. Before writing an account of the life and labors of Jesus, he did thorough scientific research, as he states in the prologue to his Gospel.

1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, 2 even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, 3 it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; 4 that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed (Luke 1:1-4).

Having learned the facts of the life of Jesus and of the early church, this scientific historian, Luke, synchronized Biblical events with Roman history.

At different times rationalistically minded scholars have denied the accuracy of Luke's writings. Their voices, however, have been forever silenced by the faithful labors of Sir William Ramsay and others, who have brought to light archaeological evidence and facts which prove that Luke was right, and his assailants, wrong.

In studying Jesus of Nazareth from the historical point of view, one must also view Him from the standpoint of the transforming and dynamic power which has emanated from Him and has flowed out to the world through the centuries. The correctness of these facts will become increasingly important as we continue our investigation.

CHAPTER IV

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD TRUTH

To speak of the proper attitude toward truth may appear, at first thought, ridiculous to the cultured and educated. The average person would say that he has the right attitude toward truth and facts. In many instances, however, it is found that the one claiming to have the proper attitude does not understand what enters into a correct judgment. Let us, therefore, begin the investigation of the right and wrong attitudes toward truth by examining what it is to have an open mind.

I. OPEN-MINDEDNESS

Open-mindedness is an attitude which is free from prejudice. It is difficult, however, for the average person not to be swayed or unduly dominated by the knowledge which he already has. Someone has very forcefully spoken of prejudice as “being down on what one is not up on.” The one who is prejudiced hastily judges a case before all the evidence is in hand and, consequently, arrives at distorted conclusions.

Frequently one sees the spirit manifested which is spoken of as “big I and little you.” A person with this attitude assumes his own importance, belittles others, and is unwilling to listen to what the other person has to say. “Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth” (I Cor. 8:1).

II. WILLINGNESS TO SEE TRUTH

If a person has the willingness to see truth wherever it is and whatever it may be, he is willing to look at all sides of a given question and to examine carefully, honestly, and conscientiously what is presented by those holding opposite views. He has such an appreciation of truth that he is willing to renounce whatever error he may have held prior to his discovering some truth or fact hitherto unknown to him. A willingness to renounce and to repudiate error, held and cherished, is a rare trait of character.

Having discovered some truth, a person must have the courage of his convictions to take his stand for the right regardless of the consequences. It takes moral boldness to accept truth publicly and to align oneself with the right, which usually is unpopular.

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers;
But error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies among his worshippers.

—*Wm. Cullen Bryant*

III. AN INSATIABLE DESIRE FOR TRUTH

The one having the proper attitude toward truth must have an insatiable desire for it. He must want truth for the sake of truth, because it is right. In Proverbs 2:1-5, Solomon, the great sage of Israel, to whom God gave unusual insight and wisdom, sets forth God's recipe for acquiring the truth and the knowledge of God:

1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words,
And lay up my commandments with thee;
2 So as to incline thine ear unto wisdom,
And apply thy heart to understanding;
3 Yea, if thou cry after discernment,
And lift up thy voice for understanding;
4 If thou seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hid treasures:
5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of Jehovah,
And find the knowledge of God.

The first step in the quest for truth is expressed in these words: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words. ..." Both experience and observation show that, comparatively speaking, very few people are willing to receive truth and God's Word. Nevertheless one must have an open mind and be ready to receive any and everything that is true

and proper. The second step in the quest for truth and the knowledge of God is stated in these words: "And lay up my commandments with thee; So as to incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding..." One must, not only willingly receive truth as such, but also study, to the limit of his ability, all available data in his quest for truth. He must, therefore, as the sage of Israel said, lay up God's commandments in his heart. He must do so to the extent that even the vocabulary of the Scriptures will, at times, echo in his daily speech. The third step is set forth in the following words: "Yea, if thou cry after discernment, And lift up thy voice for understanding..." The God who made the universe is the God who knows the facts and truths concerning all things. One must, therefore, go to Him, the source of all knowledge, in order to learn more of the truth. Man lives in a wonderful world, which consists of a spiritual realm, as well as a material, physical universe. One needs spiritual insight to evaluate the world in which he lives and moves and has his being. Like the psalmist, he should pray, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold Wondrous things out of thy law" (Ps. 119:18). The fourth and last condition in this passage for understanding truth and properly evaluating facts is expressed in these words: "If thou seek her as silver, And search for her as for hid treasures: Then shalt thou understand the fear of Jehovah, And find the knowledge of God." As men in deep mines labor and endanger their lives in order to find silver, gold, and precious gems, the truth-seeker must come to his field of investigation and to the Word of God, searching for truth. In this connection may I give my experience briefly? God knowing my heart, for fifty years I have sought for truth—and nothing but the truth. I have not spared time, or energy, or expense in my quest for knowledge and truth. Yet, after studying as I have, I am constantly discovering truths of which I have not been aware. Hardly a day passes in which I do not make some discovery, new to me, in the Word of God and in the world about me.

If a person will only follow the fundamental principles set forth in Proverbs 2:1-5 and sincerely seek the truth, the God of Israel will overrule in his life and bring him to the truth and to the knowledge of God.

IV. GOD'S RESISTING THE PROUD, BUT GIVING GRACE TO THE HUMBLE

Pride and self-sufficiency are traits which God cannot tolerate. Pride was the occasion of the rebellion and the fall of Satan. "Pride goeth before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). In Proverbs 3:34 God declares that He resists the proud, but always gives grace and assistance to the humble—the person who realizes his limitations, acknowledges the bankruptcy of human nature unaided by divine grace, and seeks for both truth and light.

V. THE BLINDING EFFECTS OF THEORIES

Frequently one must adopt a theory in his investigation of certain data; but, as soon as research reveals that his hypothesis is not workable, he must throw it aside immediately for one that fits perfectly into all the facts. In all fields of human endeavor there are people who have adopted theories, have held on to them for dear life, and have refused to give them up. Thus blinded by error, they, therefore, cannot see truth.

VI. MESSIAH'S LABORS IN BEHALF OF THE MEEK

"The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of *the prison* to them that are bound. ..." (Isa. 61:1). As the facts of the context of this verse show, the prophet, impersonating the Messiah, says that, at His first coming, He will spend His time laboring for and with the meek. It is useless to argue with the proud and self-sufficient.

VII. TEACHABLENESS

Acknowledged as the world's greatest teacher, Jesus of Nazareth pointed out the path of true greatness to His disciples, some of whom at that time were ambitious and wanted to be considered the greatest of the group: "3 ... Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3, 4).

VIII. CHOOSING WHAT ONE LIKES BEST

In a Bible class I once called attention to the fact that a certain sentence in the Greek was capable of two renderings, both of which were grammatically correct. Then I asked, “Which of these two translations must we accept?” Immediately a young man replied, “The one which you like best.” Was he right? Absolutely not. My instant reply was that he was mistaken. The translation to be accepted is the one which accords with all the facts of the given context. Since all truth harmonizes, one must not, therefore, choose arbitrarily any position, but must look at all the facts and select that which accords with all known facts and truths.

IX. A DELIBERATE REFUSAL TO FACE FACTS

A number of years ago a certain minister who prided himself upon his scholarship and his accuracy wrote an article for a certain religious periodical. When I read it, I noted that he had quoted from *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*. Being familiar with the word which was under discussion, I immediately turned to it in the lexicon and discovered that this writer had chosen only one word in the first of the four definitions of this particular term and then had selected one or two words from the third meaning, as given by Thayer. I knew that this Greek scholar listed four different meanings. It was apparent immediately that the author of this article had twisted and distorted the definition of this great lexicographer.

At the time of the writing of this article, there was a controversy concerning the study of prophecy, especially of a given point in prophecy. A friend of mine—a well-educated, cultured, outstanding merchant in the city—was a great admirer of the preacher who wrote this article. One day I took the religious paper and Thayer’s Greek Lexicon to his store and asked him to read the article by his friend. He did so very readily and pronounced it fine. But when I handed him the lexicon and asked him to read the

definition from which his minister friend had quoted, with a vengeance he resented my doing so, saying that he would not look at Thayer's Lexicon unless I first accused his friend of lying and misrepresenting the Lexicon. His excuse for refusing was that his confidence in his friend was unlimited. He was confident that the man had not misquoted or misrepresented the great lexicographer. When I refused to call the writer a liar, I asked him if my bringing the article and the lexicon did not arouse a suspicion in his mind. He denied that it did and persistently, to the very end, refused to look at the lexicon.

This merchant was an outstanding religious leader in his community. Feeling that he had the truth and nothing but the truth, he refused further light—even when attention was called to the possibility of his being in error. Under no conditions would he investigate. Unfortunately this man is typical of vast hosts of people who become followers of men and shut their eyes to every thought that is not in perfect accord with their views. They seldom grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

God cannot show new truth and cannot bring blessings into the life of the person who assumes such an attitude.

X. BEING OF THE WRONG TRACK

When my two sons were very young, we lived in Chicago while I attended the University. One Saturday, after visiting the Field Museum, they were returning home on the streetcar in the late afternoon. We lived on North State Street. There were a number of State Street cars, but only those marked State No. 1 went as far as we lived. Seeing a car that had the name *State*, the boys boarded it and went to the front platform without looking at the number or the full name of the car. When they came to a certain street, the motor-man threw the switch, and the car turned off State into this street. The younger boy said to the motorman, "Hey, you! You are on the wrong track." The motorman smilingly replied, "Hey, you! You are on the wrong car."

This little incident is a graphic representation of many people religiously. They get on the wrong track. Although they are confident that they are right, they are wrong. One

should investigate, search for the truth, and make sure that he is on the right track, for he can easily step aside into some error.

XI. CUTTING INTO STRIPS AND BURNING THE WORD OF GOD

The most vicious and diabolical attitude that one can take toward truth and God's Word is illustrated by Jehoiakim, king of Judah. When the sacred writings of Jeremiah were being read, the king seized the scroll, cut it into strips with his penknife, and threw it into the fire. This case is one of the most daring and defiant on record. What did the impious, godless king accomplish by this act? Could he make null and void what was written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? Evidently he did not know, or else ignored, Psalm 119:89: "For ever, O Jehovah, Thy word is settled in heaven."

Here is the account in full of Jehoiakim's impious act:

36 And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, that this word came unto Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying, 2 Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. 3 It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

4 Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of Jehovah, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book. 5 And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of Jehovah: 6 therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of Jehovah in the ears of the people in Jehovah's house upon the fast-day; and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. 7 It may be they will present their supplication before Jehovah, and will return every one from his evil way; for great is the anger and the wrath that Jehovah hath pronounced against this people. 8 And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of Jehovah in Jehovah's house.

9 Now it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, that all the people in Jerusalem, and all the people that came from the cities of

Judah unto Jerusalem, proclaimed a fast before Jehovah. 10 Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of Jehovah, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the upper court, at the entry of the new gate of Jehovah's house, in the ears of all the people.

11 And when Micaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the book all the words of Jehovah, 12 he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's chamber: and, lo, all the princes were sitting there, *to wit*, Elishama the scribe, and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the son of Achbor, and Gemariah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes. 13 Then Micaiah declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people. 14 Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, unto Baruch, saying, Take in thy hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come. So Baruch the son of Neriah took the roll in his hand, and came unto them. 15 And they said unto him, Sit down now, and read it in our ears. So Baruch read it in their ears. 16 Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they turned in fear one toward another, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words. 17 And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth? 18 Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book. 19 Then said the princes unto Baruch, Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye are.

20 And they went in to the king into the court; but they had laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe; and they told all the words in the ears of the king. 21 So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll; and he took it out of the chamber of Elishama the scribe. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes that stood beside the king. 22 Now the king was sitting in the winter-house in the ninth month: and *there was a fire in* the brazier burning before him. 23 And it came to pass, when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, that *the king* cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was in the brazier, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was in the brazier. 24 And they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words. 25 Moreover Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll; but he would not hear them. 26 And the king commanded Jerahmeel the king's son, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet; but Jehovah hid them.

27 Then the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, 28 Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned. 29 And concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah thou shalt say, Thus saith Jehovah: Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? 30 Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. 31 And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them, but they hearkened not. 32 Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and there were added besides unto them many like words (Jeremiah, chapter 36).

A person does not have to be naive, crude, or defiant in order to be classed, figuratively speaking, with Jehoiakim. He can cut the Word of God into shreds and cast it into the fire by the attitude which he takes toward the Word, the truth, and facts.

Far removed from the position taken by Jehoiakim is that which was taken by the king and the people of Nineveh, to whom Jonah proclaimed the Word of God. The prophet proclaimed the divine message in the power of the Spirit of God. Every word, every sentence, was a flaming dart of conviction that pierced the hearts of the people of that great city and led them to repent toward God and to forsake their evil ways. Their taking this attitude toward the Word of God averted a national calamity that would otherwise have blotted the city from the face of the globe. Let all people like the Ninevites stand in awe of the God of Jonah, who is the God of truth, and in whom we live, move and have our being, and to whom all shall give an account (Acts 17:24-31).

An excellent example of the proper attitude toward truth is that of the people of Beroea. The Apostle Paul went to this city and preached the truth in the synagogue of the Jews. "Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable

estate, and of men, not a few” (Acts 17:11,12). The desire that these Jewish people had for the truth proves that they were free from prejudice. At the same time they were not gullible. Hence, when Paul expounded the Hebrew Scriptures, they examined them daily to see whether or not he was properly interpreting the Word of God. Being both lovers of the truth and students of the Word, they readily saw the truth regarding the Messiah and accepted Him as Lord and Saviour. They showed their nobleness of heart toward truth. Many of the people, the outstanding leaders of the community, saw the truth and believed. May God grant to each of us such a noble heart and spirit as was manifested by the Jewish community of Berea.

CHAPTER V

THE GOLDEN RULE OF INTERPRETATION

The message which a passage in the Scriptures has for the individual is conditioned by his attitude toward truth and by the way in which he approaches it. Of course, the first things which a person should know when he approaches the study of any single Book of the Scriptures are who the writer was, to whom he was writing, the time of his writing, and the occasion of his communication. In other words, the reader should, generally speaking, be able to orient himself, as far as possible, to the position of the writer and the recipients of the communication.

Unfortunately, the principle of ascertaining all possible data relative to a given passage in order that it might be understood correctly has been carried to a dangerous extreme. Some scholars insist that a passage of Scripture—especially a portion from the prophetic word is unintelligible unless one can by historical data orient himself to the position of the original author. This position is unfounded. There are numerous passages throughout the Word in regard to which there is little or no historical data yet these passages are crystal clear. As an example, note Psalm One, the last two verses of which are prophetic. The student must, therefore be careful lest he be misguided by a misleading inference which has been elevated to the level of established unquestioned principles.

In the second place, to attain an accurate understanding of the Scriptures, one must express in his own words what he has read. This principle is of the utmost importance, because words convey ideas. If one has a hazy, indistinct idea of a word, phrase, clause, or sentence, his understanding will likewise be cloudy. Even though he may not, and generally does not, comprehend certain words employed he should clothe the thought with his own diction. One can read, for instance, the first sentence in Genesis and can state the thought in his own words by putting it in indirect discourse as follows: “The writer declares that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). He may not understand what is meant by the phrase “in the beginning.” He has, of

course, a very limited and distorted idea of God. As to what is meant by the expression “the heavens,” he knows that his idea is infinitesimally small in comparison with what the sacred writer meant. Naturally he has a clearer idea of the meaning of “the earth.” Having expressed the thought in his own words, he is better prepared to examine further the terms that are not clear to him.

In the third place, he should know and apply accurately the Golden Rule of Interpretation: “When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise.”

The assumption, of course, is that a person is speaking seriously and means what he says, unless he makes it plain that he is speaking otherwise than literally. When the plain sense of Scripture, therefore, makes common sense, one is to seek no other sense, but is to take each statement at its face value. As anyone can see in a dictionary of any language, words, as a rule, have several definitions; and some have a number of meanings and shades of ideas. That meaning which accords with the facts of the context is to be chosen as its significance in a given case.

Often figurative expressions are used along with the literal terms. When the facts of the context indicate that a word or phrase is not being used literally, then, and only then, should one interpret it symbolically. All figurative language, however, is to be interpreted in accordance with regular usage and with the facts of the context.

To clarify this basic principle, one should study a passage that is obviously symbolic—such as Ezekiel 37:1-14. According to this passage the prophet was given a vision of a valley covered with dry bones. The Lord instructed him to utter a prophecy concerning them. When he did so, there was a rumbling noise and a terrific earthquake. Then all the bones began to move, bone to its bone. In doing so, each bone took its position in relation to other bones so as to form skeletons. Immediately sinews appeared upon the bones, connecting them. Then flesh began to form on these bones, and soon skin covered each of the corpses. Finally, the Spirit of God breathed the breath of life into each body. Then they all arose, a mighty army of God.

What is the significance of this revelation? Is it to be taken literally or symbolically? A glance at verse 11 answers this question: “Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.” These bones are, therefore, not to be interpreted literally, but symbolically: “these bones are the whole house of Israel.” They, therefore, represent the entire Jewish nation.

Do these dry bones represent Israel throughout the centuries or at some particular time? The answer is that they represent the nation when the people are saying, “Our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.”

What is referred to by the words, “Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off”? The hope of Israel is obviously the Messiah for whom the nation through the centuries has been looking. Here the prophet, looking into the future, sees the time that Israel has given up his ancient hope and expectation regarding Messiah and His marvelous deliverance of the nation.

When the people of Israel have given up the expectation of the coming of a personal Messiah, there occurs some event or series of events, properly represented in the vision by a thundering noise and a mighty devastating earthquake. These events affect the nation of Israel and bring the discordant elements together, as indicated by the coming of the bones together. A dispassionate, yet sympathetic, survey of Jewish affairs leads one to see in this prophecy mighty events which unify the nation in preparation for statehood. Personally, I see the beginning of the fulfillment of the prediction in the events of World War I, as they started the unification of the nation and the creation in the hearts of the people of Israel a desire to return to the land of their fathers.

The facts of this entire passage must be taken into consideration; and each word is to be accepted at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the context indicate otherwise.

According to the rule, each statement is to be interpreted in the light of the facts of the immediate context—that is, the facts that are presented both before and after the particular statement under consideration. In serious writings, such as the Scriptures, the

flow of thought is logical. The words preceding a given passage prepare the way for the thought that is flowing into and through it to the words immediately following. The force of this principle appears very clearly in the statement that “a text apart from its context is a pretext.”

According to the rule, a statement must also be studied in the light of related passages, because all truth harmonizes. The force of this principle is further seen in the light of the fact that two or more people speaking on a given subject have each his own personality and point of view. One may also be more verbose than the other. Each has his own story to tell. The purpose of speaking on a given subject also determines the fulness of the discussion and the choice of words. A speaker may at one time make a brief statement in regard to a certain matter, whereas, at another time and under special conditions, he may make a fuller and more extended statement. There is perfect harmony between the two statements, though one is fuller than the other. Jesus, for example, on one occasion said: “But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall” (Lk. 16:17); but, on another occasion, He said: “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished” (Matt. 5:18). By examining both passages, one gets the full thought that Jesus expressed.

According to the rule, each word is to be taken literally unless, when so interpreted, a statement conflicts with some axiomatic or fundamental truth. An example of this principle is the statement in Genesis 6:6: “And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.” One of the fundamental truths concerning the nature of God is that He is unchanging. If, then, *repented* is here interpreted in its primary, ordinary, usual, literal sense, the statement would contradict a fundamental truth. The word *repented*, therefore, is here used anthropomorphically. When man changes, God alters events to fit the changed condition. Man was not created evil; but, of his own free will, he became so corrupt that God, in grief, had to blot out the human race, except Noah and his family.

Genesis 6:6 is also an illustration of the fundamental truth that the Scriptures are never contradictory. If *repented* were interpreted here in the primary, ordinary, usual, literal sense of the word, the verse would contradict Numbers 23:19:

God is not a man, that he should lie,
Neither the son of man, that he should repent:
Hath he said, and will he not do it?
Or hath he spoken, and will he not make it good?

“A text apart from its context is a pretext.” It is a common practice among many devout, sincere people to take a phrase, clause, or a sentence of Scripture apart from its context and from it draw comfort. Isaiah, chapter 40, is, for instance, a special message which God has for His people Israel in the end time. Verses 29-31 is a promise that He will give superhuman strength and assistance to the Jews, who, in the time of Jacob’s trouble, turn to God with all their hearts and sincerely wait for the appearing of the Messiah whose glorious coming is announced in this chapter. Ignoring these simple facts, many Christian people claim these promises for themselves, whereas the context shows that this supernatural assistance is promised to Israel. Another illustration of misinterpreting and misapplying Scriptures is Isaiah 58:11. Frequently the words “Jehovah will guide thee continually” are used as a wall motto by Christian people who hang their hopes for divine guidance upon them. When they are read in the light of the context, it is seen that the prophet was making promises to Israel that, if they turn from their sins and follow God, He will guide them continually. Hundreds of passages are thus taken apart from their contexts and are made to teach something entirely different from what the original writer intended. One of my old professors at the Seminary, in substance, used to say, “I know that the Bible is true because it has survived so very much poor preaching.” Let each reader be careful that he understands the context of each passage and that he interprets the words accordingly.

If one follows the Golden Rule of Interpretation, he will never go wrong: if he fails to follow it, he will never go right.

I wish to conclude the discussion of the Golden Rule of Interpretation with this little illustration, which will, I trust, vividly show the importance of the fundamental principles involved in it. Suppose a philanthropic multimillionaire should write to a young man in whom he saw great talents and possibilities of becoming an executive and business administrator. This financier writes a letter, laying great resources at the disposal of the young man and pledging him his great influence.

Suppose another young man should find this letter and, ignoring the name of the person addressed, should claim the promises made by this generous man, could he expect this philanthropist to make good these promises to him? Such a question is ridiculous. The letter was written to a favored young man, residing at a certain place. The promises are made to him, and to him only. No sensible person would dream of ignoring the one to whom the promises were made and claim them for himself.

There are definite promises in the Bible made to certain people, and to certain ones alone. In order to interpret the Scriptures correctly, one must see to whom each promise is made and act accordingly. Thus the statement frequently expressed that “every promise in the Book is mine” is absolutely false.

CHAPTER VI

ARBITRARY BRUSHING ASIDE OF EARLY PROPHECIES

Dr. Joseph Klausner, Professor Emeritus of Hebrew Literature and Jewish History, of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, State of Israel, is one of the most prominent and outstanding Hebrew scholars in Israel today. He is the author of a number of works, among which are *Jesus of Nazareth*, *From Jesus to Paul*, and *The Messianic Idea in Israel*. In the last of these three volumes, he states that Jewish scholars, as well as Christians, have sought to find Messianic prophecy in its embryonic form in early prophecies in the first Books of the Bible. He calls attention, for instance, to the fact that both Jewish and Christian scholars have interpreted Genesis 3:14,15, as well as Genesis 9:26,27, Deuteronomy 18:15-19, and Job 19:25, as references to the Messiah. Dr. Klausner denies that these passages are genuine Messianic prophecies, but asserts: "All these examples, and very many more like them, are theological interpretations, which it is fitting merely to mention before we pass on to the matter of genuinely Messianic Biblical passages" (*The Messianic Idea in Israel*, p. 27).¹

Why pass by and ignore these passages? Dr. Klausner does not give a logical reason for doing so. Because they are in the early Books of the Bible, does he, like some scholars, consider them to be merely echoes of myths that were floating around in the atmosphere of the ancient Orient? If one is to reject a passage because it is in the early chapters of the revelation of God, then, of course, he shall have to reject the first statement of the Scriptures: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Is this sublime utterance taken from some myth of the Sumerians, Babylonians, or Assyrians; or is it a sober statement of an actual historical fact? I believe that Dr. Klausner and every scholar who has any respect for the sacred Scriptures as being the

¹ Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel from Its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), quoted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

Word of the living God will accept this declaration as being a true statement of fact. If not, why not? Notwithstanding the brushing aside of certain early prophecies, Dr. Klausner accepts such passages as Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 26:4, and Genesis 28:14. These passages, he tells us, contain the germinal thoughts which, under the proper influence, were developed into Messianic oracles and contributed to the formation of the Messianic idea in Israel.

To Abraham God made the following promise:

12 Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: 2 and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: 3 and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3).

Why accept this passage at its face value and reject the others? This original promise made to Abraham, God reaffirmed to Isaac: "... I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these lands; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 26:4).

According to these passages, God will bless all nations in Abraham and in his seed. The word translated is in the singular number and naturally refers to an individual in certain contexts, but in others it is used as a collective noun. One must distinctly note this fact. Taken at its literal specific meaning, the word undoubtedly refers to the Messiah. When, on the other hand, it is used as a collective noun, as is often the case, it refers to the literal offspring of Abraham (Gen. 15:5).

Let us now consider Genesis 3:14, 15: "14 And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Though the language of this passage seems a bit obscure, the general outline is clearly discernible. Here is foretold a conflict between two individuals: the "seed of the woman" and the "seed of the

serpent.” They engage in a mighty struggle. What the seed of the serpent does to his opponent is compared to a bruise on the heel, whereas what the seed of the woman does to his opponent is compared to a crushing blow upon the head. This passage contains the promise of a world redeemer. New ideas were added to this embryonic promise from time to time, until it developed into a clear lifesize portrait of the one and only Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind. When an artist paints a portrait, he first blocks it out. With each stroke of the brush he adds to the development of the portrait until finally it is completed. Thus the prophets were word artists, and each contributed his part in painting the portrait of King Messiah in the Old Testament.

Dr. Klausner states that Christian theologians actually believe that they find a hint of the Messiah in Deuteronomy 18:15-19:

15 Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 16 according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

With one bold brief sentence Dr. Klausner brushes aside, arbitrarily, the idea that Messiah is promised in this wonderful passage. The reason that Christian theologians find in this passage the promise of the Messiah is that it is there and clearly expressed. When God spoke from the heights of Sinai to the assembled congregation of Israel in the plain beneath, they urged Moses to have God speak to him, and not to them any more, lest they die. In this passage God stated that He would grant their request by raising up a prophet like Moses, who would speak to them. In a special manner God had spoken at Sinai directly out of the clouds. In this promise He implied that He would speak to them directly—through a prophet. The implication of this passage is that He would speak to them in a way different from that in which He would speak through the

regular prophets. Yet this one is called a prophet. This passage is, therefore, clearly a Messianic prediction.

One should be very careful in handling the Scriptures and not brush aside any passage because it does not accord with his own ideas. The Word of God means what it says and says what it means. One must accept it upon that basis and explain it according to the Golden Rule of Interpretation, as seen in Chapter V.

CHAPTER VII

THOSE TO WHOM MOSES AND THE PROPHETS SPOKE

Scholars of the liberal school of thought often assert that the prophets spoke only to the people of their day and generation. In other words, they dealt with local, present conditions. The implication is that they did not see by prophetic insight anything in the future. According to this view, they saw only things that were present to their actual physical senses. They could see by natural intuition the trend of the times and spoke of the conditions before their eyes. When one accepts this unproved hypothesis, he cannot accept the Scriptures at their face value. It is true that the prophets spoke to their own generation and often, at the same time, spoke of things in the past, as well as of things in the future—both the immediate and far-distant future. But when anyone adopts the theory that the prophets spoke only to their own generation, and of things present, he must of necessity use his editorial scissors, cut up a given Book of the Scriptures into fragments, and apportion it to different times and to various authors, most of whom are creations of the imagination.

As an example of treating prophetic books in such a manner, I call attention to the Book of Isaiah. Throughout the Christian centuries, as well as in pre-Christian times, the consensus of scholarship has been that Isaiah wrote this entire Book. When, however, the rationalists' conception of history and of religion, especially of miracles and inspiration, was accepted as a working hypothesis, the position that Isaiah wrote the entire Book bearing his name was rejected. In the latter half of the Book, Isaiah speaks of a conqueror and even calls him by name—his anointed, Cyrus (Isa. 45:1). Isaiah, the statesman prophet, lived in the latter part of the eighth century, B.C.E. Cyrus, the Persian, who later became head of the Medo-Persian Empire, began his triumphant career by subduing nations and peoples under him. He was in the plenitude of his power nearly two hundred years later. Those accepting the rationalistic hypothesis that the prophets spoke only to and of their own generations deny to Isaiah the second half of the Book (chapters 40 to 66) and often speak of it as having been written by the

“Great Unknown Prophet of the Exile.” Then these advanced critics continue the dissection of the Book of Isaiah, especially the latter half, and cut out portions which they ascribe to “Deutero-Isaiah,” “Trito-Isaiah,” and various unknown redactors. The process of dissection has continued to the present day, even in the first part of the Book (chapters 1 to 39). These advanced critics deny to the Prophet Isaiah numbers of prophecies in this section.

Thus they have become adept at cutting up various Books of the Scriptures to make the Word fit into their theory of inspiration and revelation. Such a process of cutting the Book into shreds and apportioning them to various unknown authors is made necessary by the unproved hypothesis that the prophets spoke only to the people of their own day and time.

Good, competent Bible scholars, however, have demonstrated the unity of Isaiah. A scholarly work on this subject is *The Unity of Isaiah*, by Dr. O.T. Allis. The recently discovered St. Mark Isaiah Dead Sea Scroll, which is a thousand years older than the Masoretic text—the basis of all our translations of Isaiah to the present—gives no intimation of various authors. The entire make-up of it points in the direction of the unity of the Book. The same basic expressions are found throughout the entire work. The same diction, style, and prophetic outlook are also reflected throughout.

When one recognizes that Isaiah’s ministry extended over a period of at least fifty years, falling in the reigns of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, and when he remembers that there were great political changes in Judah and in the nations surrounding it, he realizes that naturally the prophet spoke of events in the latter part of his ministry that he did not mention in the first part. These facts largely account for the differences that appear in the various sections of the Book.

Having made a careful, scientific, scholarly study and appraisal of the messages of Moses and the Prophets, the truth-seeker comes to the logical conclusion that the prophets, not only dealt with local situations which confronted them, but often spoke of past occurrences and very frequently spoke of the future, especially the great Messianic age, yet in the future, when Israel will be made the head of the nations and Jerusalem will be the capital of the world.

In view of these facts, and many others that could be mentioned, one should apply the Golden Rule of Interpretation to the study of the Prophets. Such an investigation of the prophetic word will yield great dividends of spiritual value to everyone who is seeking God and truth.

CHAPTER VIII

MIRACLES

The philosopher David Hume¹ delivered himself of the following dogmatic statement: “Miracles are incredible.” In order to be able to make that assertion, a man would have to be omniscient and omnipresent. He would have to be in every place in the universe and at all times so that he could intelligently declare that a miracle is incredible. There is a possibility that miracles may have occurred in the past before Hume was born or since he has died. Moreover, in his lifetime, miracles could have been wrought in places where he was not. It was, therefore, ridiculous and absurd for him to say that miracles are incredible.

What is a miracle? According to the derivation of the word, a miracle is an occurrence that causes wonderment. Webster defines a miracle as follows: “An event or effect in the physical world, deviating from the known laws of nature, or transcending our knowledge of these laws; an extraordinary, anomalous, or abnormal event brought about by superhuman agency.” Thus a miracle is that which is an exception to the normal rule of things. The basis of such an event as that which Webster defines as a miracle is to be found in such passages as I Chronicles 29:11,12:

11 Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heavens and in the earth *is thine*; thine is the kingdom, O Jehovah, and thou art exalted as head above all. 12 Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou rulest over all; and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

¹ R. C. Trench in his *Notes on Miracles*, page 73, states Hume’s position as follows:

“While Spinoza rested his objection to the miracles on the grounds that the everlasting laws of the universe left no room for such, while, therefore, the form which the question in debate assumed in his hands was this, Are miracles (objectively) *possible*? Hume, the legitimate child and pupil of the empiric philosophy of Locke, stated his objection in altogether a different shape, namely, in this, Are miracles (subjectively) *credible*? He is, in fact, the sceptic, which,—taking the word in its more accurate sense, not a *denier* of the truths of Christianity, but a *doubter* of the possibility of arriving at any absolute truth,—Spinoza is as far as possible from being.”

According to this statement, the Eternal sits upon the throne of the universe. All things belong to Him. He rules all things, for in His hand are power and might. He is the one who is overruling the free actions of His creatures and directing the course of events throughout the universe toward a glorious consummation. He is exalted as head above all things. The same teaching is found in Psalm 135:5-14:

5 For I know that Jehovah is great,
And that our Lord is above all gods.

6 Whatsoever Jehovah pleased, that hath he done,
In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps;

7 Who causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth;
Who maketh lightnings for the rain;
Who bringeth forth the wind out of his treasuries;

8 Who smote the first-born of Egypt,
Both of man and beast;

9 Who sent signs and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt,
Upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants;

10 Who smote many nations,
And slew mighty kings,

11 Sihon king of the Amorites,
And Og king of Bashan,
And all the kingdoms of Canaan,

12 And gave their land for a heritage,
A heritage unto Israel his people.

13 Thy name, O Jehovah, endureth for ever;
Thy memorial name, O Jehovah, throughout all generations.

14 For Jehovah will judge his people,
And repent himself concerning his servants.

The psalmist declares that God does His pleasure, carries out His program, in the four realms: in the heavens, in the earth, in the sea, and in all deeps. He controls the vapor and rain together with the lightning and winds—in a word, he is controlling all

nature. He is also overruling in human history, overthrowing kings and their governments, establishing others, and giving Israel the land of promise as a special inheritance (v. 12).

On the point of God's controlling all things—most minute as well as world-shaping events—the Saviour declared to His apostles: “And not a hair of your head shall perish” (Luke 21:18). That God is in complete control of nature is also seen from various passages in the New Testament. In Matthew 5:45, Jesus states that God makes his sun to rise upon the evil and the good and sends his rain upon the just and the unjust. Moreover the Lord God feeds the birds of the heavens (Matt. 6:26) and clothes the grass of the field (Matt. 6:30). Not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without God (Matt. 10:29). He also Works all things “after the counsel of his will” (Eph. 1:11).

These passages of Scripture and others that could be quoted show that God is working all things. What is known as the laws of nature in the realm of the physical universe are but God's activity—His regular way of running the universe, since He is working all things according to the counsel of His will. At the same time He allows all His creatures, whom He has endued with freedom of choice, to make their own decisions and to act according to their own wills.

In speaking of the Genesis account of creation, Dr. O. T. Allis, in *God Spoke by Moses*, states: “It [the recurring phrase ‘and it was so’] summarizes and forms a part of the account of the execution of the fiat, which is quite as long as the fiat itself. Nothing is said as to how it was done, about process. This is important. Science is concerned with material and phenomenal things, with processes and changes, with differentiation and combination. This account does not deny process; it ignores it. It speaks in terms of a divine fiat, which can both use and dispense with process. Science deals with second causes: Here the first cause is the almighty actor, and second causes are ignored” (p. 10). Speaking further of the account of creation, Dr. Allis states: “The reason the account of creation given here is so simple and so impressive is that it speaks in terms of the creative acts of an omnipotent God, and not in terms of *limitless space* and *infinite time* and *endless process*” (p. 11).

God is the ultimate cause of all things. As some philosophers assert, He is the uncaused cause of all things. The Scriptures always speak of Him from that standpoint. On the other hand, the scientists deal with secondary causes. They study and investigate material substances and phenomenal experiences—in a word, processes and changes, all of which are secondary causes. Because of these two points of view, there often appears to be a contradiction. The lack of harmony is due to the differences of approach to the subjects and the faulty understanding of the facts and elements entering into each case. God gives to phenomenal and material things their own nature, to each one its special properties. All things being equal, they act and react the same under similar conditions. Because of the consequent regularity in the processes and developments of nature, the scientist knows what to do to produce a given result.

Reason leads one to believe that there are laws higher than those governing material physical phenomena. The omnipotent God can call into action any of these higher laws or principles which produce results different from those which grow out of the application of the known laws of nature. The scientist can handle material phenomena; and, knowing their nature or properties, he can bring about certain desired results. But, being unacquainted with the laws in the higher realm of nature, he cannot produce anything out of the ordinary. As an illustration of this fact, may I call attention to the airplane? Before the days of the Wright brothers, people in general, and, with few exceptions, the scientists, also, believed that aviation was impossible because by no laws of nature, in their opinion, could a heavier-than-air machine rise into the air and operate. As time went on, and as the scientists learned more about the various phenomena of the material world, they were able to make different combinations and to adopt certain processes and principles, whereby results which nature unaided cannot effect have been achieved. Thus there exists today aviation, which, from the standpoint of science before the days of the Wright brothers, was considered nothing less than a miracle.

We are told that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. In this terse, crisp statement volumes of truth are bound up. Millions of men and women know that miracles are possible. In Psalm 34 King David gives his experiences:

34 I will bless Jehovah at all times:

His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

2 My soul shall make her boast in Jehovah:

The meek shall hear thereof, and be glad.

3 Oh magnify Jehovah with me,

And let us exalt his name together.

4 I sought Jehovah, and he answered me,

And delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked unto him, and were radiant;

And their faces shall never be confounded.

6 This poor man cried, and Jehovah heard him,

And saved him out of all his troubles.

7 The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him,

And delivereth them.

8 Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good:

Blessed is the man that taketh refuge in him.

In the first three verses of this hymn, David declares that He will bless God and calls upon others to magnify the Lord with him. In verses 4-6 he states that he was in trouble and called upon the Lord, who delivered him. How did the Lord deliver him out of danger? Verse 7 tells: "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him. And delivereth them."

David then urges people to trust God and allow Him to have His way in their lives: "Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good: Blessed is the man that taketh refuge in him." The thought is put in language very easily understood. Having tasted the Lord by faith, David assures his readers that they will not be disappointed, for God always answers the prayer of faith. They, therefore, may know from actual experience that God does hear and answer prayer and does deliver. Countless myriads of people throughout the centuries have taken God at His word, have trusted Him, have let Him solve their problems, and have let Him meet their souls' need. And they have testified, and continue to do so, that, for the one who lets God have a chance in his life, the Lord

works all things for his good. I am here to testify to the fact that God does hear and answer prayer in a miraculous manner. I urge everyone to “taste and see that Jehovah is good.”

Are miracles incredible, as Hume declared? The Bible is one of the greatest miracles ever wrought. It is a collection of small books, sixty-six in number—thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New. These volumes were written by approximately fifty authors and over a period of several thousand years.² These authors lived in various cultural environments, under different governments, and in varying civilizations. Each of these men had his own personal equation, heredity, and outlook upon life. Each was more or less a child of his environment. Heredity, environment, and will were the three determining factors in their lives, as they are in everyone’s life. Some of these writers lived in luxury and ease in days of prosperity. Others lived in dark, gloomy days of warfare, famine, and pestilence. Each had his own personal, as well as community, problems to face; but each wrote that portion of the Scriptures ascribed to him. Notwithstanding the great diversity of environments, heredity, and outlook, these writers produced the sixty-six volumes, which are in perfect agreement. The same general conceptions and ideas run throughout the entire collection. One Book very frequently supplements the information given in other Books.

If a committee of experts should be chosen to select sixty-six different volumes written over such a long period of time by men of varying personality and living in different cultural environments, the series of books would be contradictory from beginning to end. As the one collection of books in which there is perfect unity, the Bible is a miracle of miracles which Hume and those sharing his views do not recognize. The uniqueness of the Bible is revealed by its depth of thought and wealth of information regarding the Creator, the universe, man in his various relations, the future, and the life beyond this one. The greatest minds have grappled with the Scriptures in an effort to understand and to master their contents. The deeper the intellectual giants have

² For proof supporting this statement, see my volume *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*, chapter 1.

searched the Scriptures, the wider the horizon of unexplored areas have become to them—fields of thought to be examined of which they little dreamed. There flows from the Scriptures an ever deepening and widening stream of information, teaching, thought, prophecy, and wisdom. Thinkers in all fields of human activity and endeavor admit that the Scriptures are inexhaustible. This fact proves conclusively that in the original texts—the autographs—they are the very Word of God.

Evidently Hume forgot or did not know of another miracle possibly as great as the production of the Bible. Frederick the Great, it is said, once asked the court chaplain to show him a miracle. Immediately the minister pointed to a Jew standing nearby and said, “There is a miracle.” The Jewish nation is the standing miracle of the centuries, and the people of destiny. God has a plan and a purpose for them which continue throughout the centuries of the present dispensation and the glorious kingdom age into the eternal years of the future.

No nation has suffered as the Hebrew people have or as they will yet suffer in the Tribulation—“the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). Efforts have been made to exterminate them. Hitler is the last one who tried to do so—on a nation-wide scale. While he launched the greatest persecution of the Jew to date, he was unsuccessful in liquidating this nation of destiny. According to reports, he slaughtered approximately six million of the eighteen million Jews who were living at the beginning of World War II. It was his purpose to liquidate every Jew; but, since Israel is the people of destiny, he was unable to carry out his sinister, diabolical plans. The preservation of Israel under the most trying ordeals of history can be accounted for only upon the basis of direct intervention on the part of God—another miracle of miracles.

To Hume and all who share his views, let me say that miracles are possible. Miracles have been wrought. Miracles are being wrought in answer to prayer. And Israel has been preserved and will continue to be preserved by the power of God. Israel will again in the future figure in world history and will yet play the role foretold by Moses and the Prophets. Miracles are credible—yes, possible.

To deny the possibility of miracles is to deny reality, and to close one’s eyes to the facts emblazoned in God’s Word is to close one’s eyes to eternal truth.

BOOK TWO

SOME DOMINANT PROPHECIES TAUGHT BY THE ETERNAL CREATOR IN HIS REVELATION TO ISRAEL ACCORDING TO MOSES, THE PROPHETS, AND THE WRITERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

CHAPTER IX

THE CALL OF MOSES

In the unfolding of God's redemptive work in Israel, the call and commission of Moses, as recorded in Exodus 3:1-12, stand out most prominently:

3 Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb. **2** And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. **3** And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. **4** And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. **5** And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. **6** Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. **7** And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; **8** and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. **9** And now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. **10** Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. **11** And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I

should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? 12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

To appreciate fully the message of this passage, one should study carefully Exodus, the second book of Moses. Jacob and his family, seventy strong, had gone down into Egypt, where, while Joseph ruled as Pharaoh's assistant under a stable government and favorable conditions, they increased and grew into a great nation. A king arose over Egypt, however, "who knew not Joseph"—the services that Joseph had rendered to the Egyptian nation. This new Pharaoh began to persecute the Hebrews. Obviously he was jealous and fearful of them. He, therefore, launched a campaign of oppression against the people of Israel. For them life became intolerable. Under the lash of slave drivers, they cried out to the Lord for deliverance.

God always has His man at the right time and in the right place—ready to act in an emergency. On this occasion Moses was the man. Providentially, he had been brought up at the court of Pharaoh and had been educated in all the arts and the learning of the Egyptians. In the overruling providence of God, he had fled from Egypt to Midian, where he was to be given, figuratively speaking, a postgraduate course in the desert while he cared for the sheep of Jethro, his father-in-law, priest of Midian. Instead of being wasted, those years were used of God in acquainting Moses with the desert and in training him for his life's work.

At the proper time God gave Moses his call and commission as seen in the Scripture quoted above. While caring for the sheep Moses noticed a bush, ablaze, but not consumed. This unusual sight attracted his attention. He, therefore, decided to investigate this peculiar phenomenon. As he approached the bush, a voice out of the midst of the fire instructed him to remove his sandals for the ground on which he was walking was holy—holy because of the presence of God at that place in a special and particular way. Speaking to Moses out of the midst of the bush, the Angel of Jehovah identified Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He declared that He had come to deliver His people from Egyptian servitude and bondage, and that He would use Moses in accomplishing this purpose. To become the deliverer of the Hebrew

people seemed an impossible task to Moses. He therefore replied to God, “Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? 12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain (Ex. 3:11,12). All the facts of the case clearly indicate that these never-to-be-forgotten events constitute a miniature spiritual tableau, setting forth the fundamental facts, truths, and principles pertaining to God, Israel, and the nations, and the relations existing between them.

The call of Moses and the events connected with it are in perfect alignment with God’s call to various prophets. In the sixth chapter of Isaiah, for instance, is recorded the call of God to Isaiah, a man of special talents and unusual ability, to become His servant in delivering some outstanding messages to Israel. With this call, the Lord gave Isaiah a vision of the great Temple of God which will be standing in the Kingdom Age of the future. In the vision he saw the Lord seated upon a throne high, exalted, and lifted up, and heard seraphim (celestial beings) singing the triple holiness to the triune God: “... Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 6:3). Where there is no vision, the people perish. This vision of the glorious Kingdom Age was granted to this man of God to assure him that Omnipotence was upholding him and sending him forth. It gave him a clearer idea of the holiness of God and emphasized the importance of his doing exactly what the Lord divinely commissioned him to perform. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, was a very young lad when the Lord called him into His service. In this call, the Lord gave him a vision of a branch of an almond tree. When he saw it, he recognized what it was. On being asked what he saw, he replied that he saw the branch of a *watcher tree*, for such is the meaning of the Hebrew word *shaked* (Jer. 1:11,12). The almond tree is called the watcher tree because in Palestine it blooms first in the spring. Then the Lord reminded the lad that He watches over His Word to perform it—every utterance. By the use of this comparison God emphasized the thought that He constantly watches over every word that He has ever spoken to fulfill it at the proper time. When God overthrew Jericho, He pronounced through Joshua a curse upon the man who would rebuild it. This solemn warning is buried in the historical account of

Joshua 6:26. Yet, more than 600 years later, during the reign of Ahab, when Hiel the Beth-elite attempted to rebuild Jericho, the threatened curse fell upon him, and he lost his eldest and youngest sons.¹ When called to the prophetic ministry, Ezekiel saw in vision the Lord Himself seated on a throne supported by a firmament which, in turn, was upheld by cherubim (another order of celestial beings). Thus he saw the glory of the God who commissioned him to minister to Israel, the Chosen People, in exile in Babylon.

From these instances of special visions and revelations made to those to whom God gave calls to proclaim His Word, one can see that each was given to clarify the ideas of the prophet and to give him a crystal-clear perception of the God who was commissioning him to render some special service. One may logically conclude, therefore, that the experience at the burning bush was given to Moses in order to reveal clearly to him the plans and purposes of God with reference to His people Israel.

What is the significance of the scene of the burning bush? Clearly it was a symbolic phenomenon. Providentially, Moses had been thrust from a life of luxury and ease in royal splendor out into the rigors, hardships, and privations of the desert. While he was performing his duties as a shepherd of his father-in-law's flock, his attention was attracted to a bush which was ablaze, but not consumed—as stated before. One has every reason to believe that it was an ordinary bush like many others in that desert. Suddenly it was ablaze. This experience was objective, a tangible lesson, and not a subjective experience, as were some of the visions granted to certain other prophets. God made a clear distinction between Moses and the prophets. In Numbers, chapter 12, God said that He would speak to the prophets in visions and dreams, but face to face with Moses. The instance of the burning bush clearly illustrates the significance of this statement.

¹ And Joshua charged them with an oath at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before Jehovah, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: with the loss of his first-born shall he lay the foundation thereof, and with the loss of his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it" (Josh. 6:26). "In his day did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof with the loss of Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof with the loss of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of Jehovah, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun (I Ki. 16:34).

Since the phenomena of this occasion were symbolic, they constitute a graphic lesson to teach some great underlying principles relating to God's dealing with His Chosen People. What does the bush symbolize? What is the meaning of the fire? And what is the significance of the speaking of the Angel of Jehovah out of the midst of the burning bush? A hint as to the meaning of the fire may be gathered from a glance at several Scriptures. In Deuteronomy 4:20 is this illuminating statement: "But Jehovah hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as at this day." At the dedication of the Temple, Solomon, in his prayer, said: "... for they [Israel] are thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron" (I Kings 8:51). The same imagery appears in Jeremiah 11:4, where the Lord, speaking through the prophet, tells of having brought Israel forth "out of the land of Egypt, out of the iron furnace." Thus the children of Israel were thought of as being in a furnace in Egypt during the persecution heaped upon them by the hostile Pharaohs. Moses was in the desert where there was no furnace, but God miraculously caused a fire to burn in a given bush. Though the fire continued burning, the bush was not consumed. Its not being consumed was obviously intended to convey to Moses that Israel would generally be in the furnace of affliction, but would never be completely consumed. We must conclude, therefore, that the bush in this experience was a symbol of Israel.

Since the bush symbolized Israel, and since it was not consumed, one must conclude that the people of Israel are not to be completely consumed by their many persecutions and the satanic pogroms launched against them through the centuries—and will yet be directed for their destruction. In keeping with this thought is a statement by Isaiah: "Behold, I have refined thee, but not as silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" (Isa. 48:10). By this statement which is an advance over and a development of the thought of Israel's being in the fiery furnace in Egypt, Isaiah is apparently indicating that the plan and purpose of God continually are to purge the Hebrews of the dross of evil by casting them, figuratively speaking, into a furnace of affliction and persecution. But He has never allowed them to be completely consumed. These people have suffered as no other group or nation has. They have suffered for

their faith in the one true and living God and have, in an amazing manner, held on to the Lord their God; and they have weathered the stormiest gales of race-hatred, prejudice, and persecution—as no other nation has done. In the Tribulation—the time of Jacob’s trouble—their affliction will be greater than ever before. In all probability the Lord was teaching the same lesson when the three Hebrew children were thrown into the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:1, ff.). The flames did not affect them. They came forth miraculously out of that terrible ordeal without suffering any harm. In days to come, especially in the days of the Antichrist—during the Great Tribulation—the people of Israel will endure the hottest fires of persecution of all the centuries. But, since the bush was never consumed, a remnant of Israel will survive that time of awful persecution. God will bring all the nations to naught except Israel, who will come through the fiery furnace of the tribulation judgments, purged and purified, to render the greatest service to humanity of all the ages. The assuring word of God, through Jeremiah, to the Hebrew people in the Tribulation is “For I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to save thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished” (Jer. 30:11).

Since Moses was in the desert when he saw the bush burning, it would be ridiculous to assume that there was only one bush in the vicinity. Since the flaming bush symbolized Israel, the others would naturally in such a symbolic setting signify the nations of the world.

The third factor in the symbolism of the burning bush is that “the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. ... And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I” (Ex. 3:2-4). Since the bush signified Israel throughout the entire history of the nation, it follows that, by speaking from the bush, the Lord indicated that He would speak to Israel and to the world out of Israel. A glance at Israel’s history shows this interpretation to be true.

After Israel had been delivered from Egyptian bondage, had crossed through the Red Sea, and had come to Mount Sinai, God descended upon its height; and from there He spoke to the people waiting in the plain below. At that time He delivered the Ten

Words, or Ten Commandments (Exodus, chapter 20, and Deuteronomy, chapter 5). These Ten Commandments are the basic principles referring to the relationship of man to God and man to man. They were spoken for the benefit of Israel—and also for that of the whole world. All human and divine relations are basically involved in these Ten Commandments. As anyone standing near the other bushes close by could have heard God speak to Moses, one logically concludes that the speaking of God out of Israel was to be heard by those peoples near Israel, the nations of the world—especially those that came in contact with Israel. The Ten Words (Deut. 4:13 and 10:4), spoken from the heights of Sinai, were, therefore, both to Israel and through Israel to all nations.

The Lord called, commissioned, and equipped Moses thoroughly to be His spokesman in delivering His word to the people (Exodus, chapters 3 and 4). At various times, as the conditions demanded, God raised up prophets to deliver new messages and revelations to Israel. Speaking anthropomorphically, He said that He had often arisen and had sent them His prophets, but that they would not heed. Read Jeremiah 7:13,25; 11:7,8; 26:5. He has been rising up early and sending at various times His servants, the prophets, to teach His Word.

Where the genuine is, there is also the counterfeit. Where the true is found, also—the false appears. Whenever and wherever God works, Satan always is active. When Moses performed his miracles by the power of God, the magicians of Egypt by the power of Satan performed their miracles—up to a certain point, beyond which they could not go. God permitted them to do so in order to allow a margin for the exercise of faith, for He never coerces anyone, nor does He force the will by overwhelming indisputable evidence so that men have to go by sight and no longer by faith. The Lord foretold that false prophets would arise in Israel and warned the people against giving credence to their messages. He also gave the earmarks of true prophets and those of false ones (Deut. 13:1-5, 18:20-22).

When the Lord personally spoke to Israel from the heights of Sinai, the people pleaded with Moses for God to speak to him and for him to relay the message to them, assuring him that they would be obedient to any and everything which God might speak.

In one of the farewell addresses forty years later, Moses referred to their request that God might not speak again to them directly, but to them through him.

15 Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 16 according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him (Deut. 18:15-19).

Concerning the desire of the people that God speak to them through Moses, and not directly to them, the Lord declared in this passage that they had done well in making this request. Then God promised the people of Israel that He would speak to them, not through Moses, but through one of their brethren who would be like Moses; that He would raise up this prophet and would put His words in this prophet's mouth; and that the prophet would speak all things whatsoever God would tell Him. This language is specific and definite. It refers to one particular prophet, one like Moses. In sending the ordinary prophets to Israel, the Lord, as has already been seen, spoke of Himself anthropomorphically, saying that He would rise up early and send the prophets. As a diligent person, who labors, rises early in the morning, and performs his tasks, God has risen up early and has sent His prophets to Israel to protest against wickedness. This anthropomorphic language refers to the ordinary prophets, but the promise of Deuteronomy 18:15-19 refers to a particular prophet—the one like Moses, being distinguished by the position characteristic of Moses. Notwithstanding the definiteness of this prophecy, some persons still insist that this prediction refers to a succession of prophets whom God would raise up from time to time. This position is untenable, for the word rendered prophet is in the singular and means one. But some may think it indicates a succession, claiming that it is used as a collective noun. There is, however,

no such usage in the Hebrew language. Positive proof that this claim is incorrect is to be found in God's statement to Moses:

6 And he said, Hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream. 7 My servant Moses is not so; he is faithful in all my house: 8 with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches; and the form of Jehovah shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses? (Num. 12:6-8).

God's speaking to Moses face to face (Num. 12:8 and Deut. 34:10) may be illustrated by Jehovah's appearing to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis, chapter 3). From the facts of the context it is clear that the Lord on this occasion assumed a visible form and conversed with them. This appearance was not a subjective experience but an objective reality. In such an objective manner God promised to converse with Moses—and not with the prophets in general.

In this passage God makes a clear and unmistakable distinction between Moses on the one hand and all the prophets on the other. To the prophets, according to this prediction, God would speak in a vision or a dream; but to Moses, He would speak face to face. The inspired author who wrote the obituary of Moses (Deut. 34:10-12) informs us that there had not arisen at the time of this writing another prophet like Moses: "10 And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face, 11 in all the signs and the wonders, which Jehovah sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, 12 and in all the mighty hand, and in all the great terror, which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel."

Some scholars are of the opinion that Ezra, the scribe, was the one who added this obituary to the Book of Deuteronomy. If so, there had not arisen another prophet like Moses up to the time of the writing of this notice, which occurred in that event after the return from Babylon. The unique position of Moses as a prophet is clearly shown by W. M. Taylor in his volume *Moses, the Law Giver*.

“... Jehovah distinctly maintains the supremacy of Moses, and traces that to his own sovereign appointment. It was true that the prophets among them spoke as the Lord had instructed them, but there were particularly three things in which the pre-eminence of Moses was conspicuous. That which was exceptional and ecstatic with them was ordinary and on the level of his common experience with him. The prophets needed a special preparation for the reception of God’s communications. They needed, as Kurtz has expressed it, ‘to pass out of the sphere of the senses, and that of intelligent consciousness, into a state of supersensual perception.’ The Lord made himself known to them in visions and dreams. But he spoke to Moses in his ordinary every-day condition. The great lawgiver received the divine communications, not when he was in a trance, or when he was asleep, but in his usual intelligent consciousness; and so it came to pass that the partial obscurity which was necessarily connected with the revelations that came through others, was conspicuously absent in those which were made by Moses. Again, Moses saw the similitude of Jehovah; and although this cannot mean that he beheld the unveiled glory of the Lord, it must denote that there was before him some visible and objective reality, which symbolized for him the presence of Jehovah, and from which, as from the mouth of a confidential friend, he received, not in dark and mysterious utterances, but in plain and unmistakable terms, the messages which he was to convey to his fellow-men. There was thus a difference, if not in the kind of inspiration which he enjoyed, at least in the nature of the revelations which were made to him; for, as the mind of a man takes clearly in that which is only as a wonder or a dream to a child, so Moses distinctly perceived that which to other prophets was little better than a vague and incoherent vision.

In view of all these facts, one must conclude that God was speaking of a definite, specific person through whom He would speak in a special manner in fulfillment of Israel’s request at Sinai. God gave a special revelation through Moses—the law. From time to time He has spoken through His various prophets, but He spoke in a unique and special manner through Moses. His promise to raise up a prophet like Moses implies, therefore, that He would give a special revelation through this promised prophet. In speaking of the message which this prophet like Moses would proclaim, God declared,

saying, “I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him” (Deut. 18:18). Note the expression “my words”—God’s words. God gives the thought and the words used to express the thought. The prophet will speak all that God commands. This expression read in the light of subsequent revelations is to be understood as referring to the full and complete revelation of God. To arrive at a more definite conclusion with reference to this promised prophet, one should note also the five special capacities in which Moses functioned.

I. A PROPHET

Moses was a prophet. A prophet is a spokesman for God. Moses spoke for God in a special manner. As a prophet he taught the people (Deut. 4:15-40), wrote the outline of Jewish history through the centuries (Leviticus, chapter 26; Deuteronomy, chapters 28, 29, 30), and judged the people (Ex. 18:15, 16).

According to the Apostle Peter, prophets were frequently carried forward in vision by the Spirit of God to some time in the future and were, figuratively speaking, let down in the midst of scenes of these future times and either spoke to the people of these periods or described for the reader what they saw. This great principle governing prophecy is set forth in II Peter 1:21 if the Apostle’s language is translated and interpreted literally. Having this principle in mind, one is prepared to understand the marvelous message set forth in Psalm 95. The inspired psalmist was carried forward in vision from his day to the time of Messiah’s first coming.

- 95 Oh come, let us sing unto Jehovah;
Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving;
Let us make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.
- 3 For Jehovah is a great God,
And a great King above all gods.
- 4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth;
The heights of the mountains are his also.

- 5 The sea is his, and he made it;
And his hands formed the dry land.
- 6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker:
- 7 For he is our God.
And we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.
To-day, oh that ye would hear his voice!
- 8 Harden not your heart, as at Meribah,
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness;
- 9 When your fathers tempted me,
Proved me, and saw my work.
- 10 Forty years long was I grieved with that generation,
And said, It is a people that do err in their heart,
And they have not known my ways:
- 11 Wherefore I swear in my wrath,
That they should not enter into my rest.

In verses 1-7a the author sees God in human form, walking in the midst of Israel. The psalmist, therefore, calls attention to Him and pleads with the people to worship, to bow down, and to kneel before “Jehovah our Maker.” Seeing, by the Spirit of God, that the people of Israel would not hearken to this exhortation to worship Messiah, the psalmist in disappointment laments, “To-day, oh that ye would hear his voice!” The inspired author speaks of the period when God will appear in human form in the midst of Israel as “To-day.” He recognizes that the words of this one are the voice of God. He, therefore, exhorts the people not to harden their hearts as the Hebrews had done during the wilderness wanderings.

When this Psalm is thus interpreted literally as a prediction of the coming of Messiah, it becomes quite evident that the author saw the same one of whom Moses spoke in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. As can be seen in this passage and related ones, God promised, not to speak directly to the people of Israel as He had done from Sinai, but to speak to them in a very special manner, through a prophet who is different from all others. He, the speaker at Sinai, promised to speak in a way different from His speaking

in giving the law. In other words, He promised to clothe Himself with flesh and blood and then to speak to the nation.

II. A REDEEMER

Moses was the redeemer of Israel who brought forth the nation from Egyptian bondage, as the Lord declared: "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Ex. 3:10).

III. A MEDIATOR

Moses was indeed a mediator between God and Israel. He approached God for the people and likewise brought messages from God to the people.

11 And Jehovah said unto Moses, How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have wrought among them? 12 I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they.

13 And Moses said unto Jehovah, Then the Egyptians will hear it; for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them; 14 and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that thou Jehovah art in the midst of this people; for thou Jehovah art seen face to face, and thy cloud standeth over them, and thou goest before them, in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 Now if thou shalt kill this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, 16 Because Jehovah was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. 17 And now, I pray thee, let the power of the Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, 18 Jehovah is slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; and that will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation. 19 Pardon, I pray thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy lovingkindness, and according as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

20 And Jehovah said, I have pardoned according to thy word (Num. 14:11-20).

IV. AN INTERCESSOR

Moses was one of the greatest intercessors mentioned in the entire revelation of God. Examples of his intercessory ministry are found in the following passages:

30 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto Jehovah; peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin. 31 And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. 32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. 33 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. 34 And now go, lead the people unto *the place* of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine angel shall go before thee; nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. 35 And Jehovah smote the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made (Ex. 32:30-35).

6 Moses and Aaron among his priests,
And Samuel among them that call upon his name;
They called upon Jehovah, and he answered them.

7 He spake unto them in the pillar of cloud:
They kept his testimonies,
And the statute that he gave them (Ps. 99:6,7).

23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them,
Had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach,
To turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy *them* (Ps. 106:23).

V. A LEADER

To Moses God said, “And now go, lead the people unto *the place* of which I have spoken unto thee” (Ex. 32:34). Moses led Israel from Egypt, through the wilderness, to the Promised Land.

He served Israel as a special prophet, a redeemer, a mediator, an intercessor, and a leader. One may be certain then that the prophet like Moses, whom God promised to raise up, was and is to function in these various capacities. In acting in these capacities,

Moses, according to the true significance of the symbolism of the burning bush, spoke out of Israel to the Chosen People and to the nations round about.

In vision King David saw the fulfillment of God's promise concerning this unique prophet who would be like Moses.

- 3 The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me:
One that ruleth over men righteously,
That ruleth in the fear of God,
- 4 He *shall be* as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth,
A morning without clouds,
When the tender grass *springeth* out of the earth,
Through clear shining after rain.
- 5 Verily my house is not so with God;
Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all things, and sure:
For it is all my salvation, and all *my* desire,
Although he maketh it not to grow (II Sam. 23:3-5).

CHAPTER X

THE TESTIMONY OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS REGARDING MESSIAH'S REDEMPTIVE CAREER

In every nation of antiquity there have been persons claiming the power to make revelations regarding the present and the future. Certain heathen shrines were popularly known as oracles. In Greece, for example, was the Delphian Oracle. The priestess of this pagan shrine would give forth answers to people who sought supernatural guidance. Usually whatever oracles were issued were ambiguous and could be distorted to mean almost anything. Regardless of the outcome of some crisis, the oracle was worded in such a way that it would appear to be a revelation, notwithstanding circumstances. Not so was the situation in Israel.

Hundreds of times we are told that God spoke to Moses and Aaron and others of the prophets, who delivered to the people the messages received from the Almighty. There is a term that was frequently used, and that was accurately called an *oracle* of Jehovah. By use of this expression, special emphasis was laid upon the fact that it was a disclosure made by the Almighty.

I. THE REDEMPTIVE CAREER OF KING MESSIAH

In Genesis 3:14,15 appears a reference to two outstanding events connected with the Redeemer. He is spoken of as “the seed of the woman.” Without doubt this passage is a veiled reference to the miraculous conception and virgin birth of the world Redeemer. But the same Scripture tells of a conflict that will come to pass between Him and another who is called “the seed of the serpent.” In this titanic struggle the seed of the woman will be victorious. Here one sees a dim, yet distinct, reflection of the two comings of the world Redeemer. His first advent—as the seed of the woman—is His coming into the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth; the second advent, which is also here indicated, culminates in the great conflict in which He will be triumphant over the seed of the serpent. As to how much time intervenes between these

two appearances of Messiah, the passage does not reveal, but one can be quite certain that two comings are indicated here. He is on the solid rock of revealed truth when he thus interprets the passage.

The two comings of the one Messiah are also indicated in Genesis 49:10:

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet,
Until Shiloh come;
And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.”

He who is called Shiloh, admitted by many of the sages of Israel to be another name for the Messiah of Israel, comes to the people while the ruling power remains in Judah. The nations will render obedience to Him. Since the overthrow of the kingdom of Judah and the dispersion of the Jewish people among all nations occurred at the conclusion of the war with Rome in A.D. 70, the Messiah had to come before that tragic event. Otherwise the first part of the prophecy could not have been fulfilled. Since God watches over His Word to perform everything that He has ever asserted (Jer. 1:11,12), Israel’s Messiah of necessity had to come to earth before that time. But the second part of the promise has not yet been fulfilled, for to no Jewish prince has loving obedience been rendered by the nations of the earth. Since, however, every prophecy of God will have a fulfillment, one may be certain that God in His own good time will fulfill the second part of this prophecy as specifically and as accurately as He has accomplished the first part. This verse also does not tell how much time intervenes between the coming of Messiah to Israel and His receiving the obedience of all nations. The second part—his receiving the filial obedience of the peoples—awaits fulfillment.

In the two passages, Genesis 3:14,15 and Genesis 49:10, one sees, therefore, two outstanding events of the life and labors of Messiah—the focal points around which His earthly activities revolve—presented, with the interval of time separating them passed over in silence. But in Psalm 110:1-3 this period of silence is set forth in a clear and distinct manner.

- 110 Jehovah saith unto my Lord,
 Sit thou at my right hand,
 Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
- 2 Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion:
 Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
- 3 Thy people offer themselves willingly
 In the day of thy power, in holy array:
 Out of the womb of the morning
 Thou hast the dew of thy youth.

In these verses King David discloses what God has made known to him regarding the one whom he recognizes as his Lord. From what is known of David and the contents of this oracle, obviously it is a prophecy to be fulfilled sometime in the future. The first part of the prediction is fulfilled when David's Lord comes to earth and is beset by enemies. Jehovah in heaven, therefore, speaks to Him, saying, "Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies thy footstool." By this appeal Jehovah invites David's Lord to leave earth, to ascend to heaven, to be seated at His right hand, and to remain there in this position of honor and glory until Jehovah has made the enemies of David's Lord His footstool.

But who are these enemies? This information is given in verse 2. In the Hebrew poetic parallelism of this verse, the word Zion in line one corresponds to enemies in line two. The people of Zion, Jerusalem, of line one—in the midst of whom David's Lord is to reign in the future—are His enemies. But when will David's Lord rule in Zion in the midst of His enemies? This information is found in verse 3: "Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy power. ..." The people of David's Lord are the Hebrew race. Notwithstanding their having become hostile to Him at His first coming, they will offer themselves willingly in the day of His power—when He shall arise from His throne in heaven and return to earth as a warrior to conquer all opposition and to establish His reign of righteousness.

The manifestation of His power is especially seen in the following passage:

- 39 See now that I, even I, am he,
And there is no god with me:
I kill, and I make alive;
I wound, and I heal;
And there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
- 40 For I lift up my hand to heaven,
And say, As I live for ever,
- 41 If I whet my glittering sword,
And my hand take hold on judgment;
I will render vengeance to mine adversaries,
And will recompense them that hate me.
- 42 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,
And my sword shall devour flesh;
With the blood of the slain and the captives,
From the head of the leaders of the enemy.
- 43 Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people:
For he will avenge the blood of his servants,
And will render vengeance to his adversaries,
And will make expiation for his land, for his people (Deut. 32:39-43).

In the following statement Jesus himself doubtless referred to this prophecy: "Jesus saith unto him [Caiaphas], 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" (Matt. 26:64).

Thus in Psalm 110, and in several other passages, is outlined the redemptive career of Messiah. It begins with His first coming to earth, at which time the Jewish rulers become His enemies and reject Him. He is executed because God makes His soul an offering for sin (Isaiah 53:10). Though He is slain, He rises from the dead. Then God gives Him an invitation to leave earth, to ascend to heaven, and to sit in glory at His right hand and to remain there until the enemies of Messiah, the people of Zion, see the

truth, repudiate their national sin of rejecting Him, and plead for Him to return. Then He will do so. Thus this matchless Psalm, which is quoted more often in the New Testament than any other portion of the Old Testament, presents the entire redemptive work of King Messiah. Since, as already seen, He comes while the ruling power of the tribes is headed up in Judah, and since this power departed in A.D. 70, He evidently came before that event and was rejected, executed, buried, and raised from the dead. At the invitation of God, He ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high and has been there ever since (Matt. 21:41-46). When the people of Israel see their mistake and plead for Him to return, He will do so and will establish His kingdom upon earth.

Hosea the Prophet, in an impersonation¹ of the Messiah, foretells that He will come to earth and be sinned against by Ephraim and Judah. He, therefore, will be as a lion and as a young lion to both houses of Israel. After making this prediction, Hosea declares: “I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry off, and there shall be none to deliver. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly” (Hos. 5:14b,15). According to this prophecy, after returning to heaven, upon the invitation of God recorded in Psalm 110, the Lord will remain there until His enemies, also mentioned in Psalm 110, acknowledge their offense and seek His face. The leaders of Israel will issue the following invitation to their brethren, saying:

6 Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, And we shall live before him. 3 And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth (Hos. 6:1-3).

¹The prophets, generally speaking, used two different methods in which they cast their predictions. The one usually employed was that of presenting themselves to their audiences as ambassadors from the court of heaven. As a rule they introduced their oracles by saying, “Thus saith the Lord” or “Thus saith Jehovah of hosts.” The second method was that of impersonation. In a dramatic manner the prophet played the role of the one whom he was impersonating—either God the Father or God the Messiah—and enacted his message before his audiences. Thus in enacting the part of the rejected Messiah, the prophet declared, “14 I, even I, will tear and go away..., 15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face. ...”

This call is an admission by the leaders that both they and the people have departed from the Lord and that He has afflicted them. It is also an expression of conviction that He will heal and deliver them when they turn to Him. In this prophecy, as in Psalm 110 and many other passages, appear the two comings of the one Messiah and the interval separating them, during which the rejected Messiah, seated at the right hand of power and glory, awaits the turning of the people of Israel to Him for deliverance after their confession and the repudiation of their national sin.

Psalm 80 is a prayer which the penitential remnant of Israel will utter when they learn the facts regarding Messiah, whom David calls Lord. Addressing God, they will pray: "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand. Upon the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself" (Ps. 80:17). Israel will then know that there is a man—the God-man, David's Son and Lord—at God's right hand in heaven and will pray to God that His hand, blessing and power, may be upon this man, and that He may come and deliver them.

Psalm 110:1,2 and Psalm 80:17 furnish the background which makes intelligible the prophecy of Daniel 7:13,14: "13 I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." In this vision One like unto a son of man is ushered into the presence of the Lord Jehovah (God the Father) and is invested with world-wide, everlasting sovereignty. This One who is thus to be enthroned as king of the world is described in this prophecy as being like a man. The reason for this statement is that He is actually a man, the God-man, who, having been executed and raised from the dead, accepted the invitation of God to ascend to heaven and to remain seated at God's right hand until those who rejected Him at His first coming (the Jewish nation) see the facts in the case, repudiate their rejection of Him, and plead for Him to return. When they do so, He will return and establish His reign of righteousness over the world.

II. MESSIAH'S LIFE AND MINISTRY SHAPED BY THE SCRIPTURAL MOLD OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS

The prophets were clear in delineating, in advance, the course of events in connection with Messiah's life and labors. Those who would like to study the entire redemptive work of King Messiah as set forth by Moses and the Prophets will find in the following Scripture references the unfolding of the divine plan which King Messiah is working out through the centuries. In this chapter the references only are given, but the full quotations appear in Chapter XVI.

A. Pre-existence of Messiah

Activity in eternity past (Mic. 5:2; Isa. 9:6,7)

B. Birth of Messiah

Miraculous—born of a woman (Isa. 7:14)

C. Twofold Nature of Messiah

The God-man (Isa. 7:14; Isa. 9:6,7; Ezek. 34:11; Zech. 13:7)

D. Genealogy of Messiah

1. Descendant of God (Ps. 2:7; Prov. 30:4)
2. Descendant of man (Deut. 18:15 ; Isa. 9:6)
3. Descendant of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3)
4. Descendant of Jacob (Num. 24:17)
5. Descendant of Tribe of Judah (Mic. 5:2)
6. Descendant of David (Jer. 23:5,6)

E. Some Distinguishing Names and Titles of Messiah

1. Son of God (Ps. 2:7)
2. Lord (Ps. 110:1)

3. Immanuel—God with us (Isa. 7:14; Isa. 9:6)
4. First and last (Isa. 44:6)
5. Servant of Jehovah (Isa. 52:13)

F. Offices of Messiah

1. Prophet (Deut. 18:15)
2. Priest (Ps. 110:4)
3. Judge (Isa. 33:22)
4. King (Zech. 9:9; Ps. 2:6)

G. Credentials of Messiah

1. Coming of Messiah announced (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1)
2. Miraculous works of Messiah foretold (Isa. 35:5-8; Isa. 26:19)

H. The First Coming of Messiah

1. His coming in humility (Isa. 53:1-10)
2. His coming to make atonement for sin (Isa. 53:10; Lev. 17:11)
3. His coming as a child (Isa. 9:6)
4. Time of His first coming
 - a. Before the destruction of the Second Temple (Dan. 9:24-26)
 - b. During Judah's ascendancy (Gen. 49:10)
5. Result of His first coming (Isa. 11:12; Deut. 28:64-66; Hos. 3:4,5)

I. Betrayal, Death, and Burial of Jesus the Messiah

Ps. 41:9; Isa. 50:6; Isa. 53:7; Ps. 22:16; Ps. 22:7,8; Ps. 22:1; Ps. 34:20; Isa. 53:5;
Ps. 40:6-8; Isa. 53:9

J. Resurrection of Messiah

Ps. 16:8-11

K. Ascension of Messiah and His session at the right hand of the throne of God

Ps. 110:1-3; Mic. 5:3

L. The Second Coming of Messiah

1. Israel's plea for Messiah's return (Ps. 118:22-29; Hos. 5:14-6:3; Zech. 12:9,10; Isa. 25:6-9; Isa. 53:1-9)
2. Time of the Second Coming
 - a. To follow the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7-10)
 - b. To precede Israel's second and final restoration (Isa. 11:11,12; Amos 9:14,15)
3. Events associated with the Second Coming
 - a. Cleansing of Israel (Zech. 13:1)
 - b. Resurrection of the righteous dead (Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2)
 - c. Deliverance of Israel (Zech. 14:1-4)
 - d. Judgment of the nations (Joel 3:12-14)
 - e. Regathering of Israel (Isa. 11:11,12)
 - f. Israel, a universal blessing (Zech. 8:13; Isa. 27:6)
4. Return of Messiah
 - a. Personal (Isa. 62:11)
 - b. Visible (Zech. 14:4; Dan. 7:13,14)
 - c. With power and glory (Isa. 59:19; Zech. 14:9-11)
 - d. Reigning over a warless world (Isa. 2:1-4; Mic. 4:1-8)
 - e. Announced by Elijah (Mal. 3:1-6; Mal. 4:5, 6)

Since both temporal and eternal issues are involved in the question of the true Messiah, it behooves every one to be able to recognize and identify Him by the divine mold in which His life is cast.

CHAPTER XI

THE BLINDNESS OF ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS

According to the Scriptures, man was created in the image of his Maker and had unbroken fellowship and communion with Him. By the disobedience of Adam and Eve, the human family fell and was expelled from God's presence. After the Fall (Genesis, chapter 3) man soon refused to retain God in his knowledge. The Lord, therefore, gave him up to do the base things which his depraved nature craved. This revelation is found in Romans 1:18-32. Thus all people of the earth with few exceptions, became blinded and ever since, have been walking in darkness.

In the process of time, however, the Lord sent the light of His Word to Israel in order that it might shine through that nation to the world. At Sinai He deposited with the Chosen People this marvelous revelation. From time to time He raised up prophets through whom He gave additional messages to Israel and to the world. Thus the light of revelation was flashing forth in a limited way until the close of the Old Testament Canon. As the Old Testament age drew nearer to its close, the flashes of new light grew dimmer and finally ceased. The nation of Israel, of course, had the Word of God that had already been written up to that time; but the prophetic voice ceased with the passing of the Prophet Malachi.

I. FAMINE OF THE WORD OF GOD FORETOLD BY AMOS

Through Amos, one of the earliest writing prophets in Israel God foretold the complete cessation of the prophetic voice in Israel. In this prediction, however, Amos did not think of the Word of God in terms of light but of food. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah" (Amos 8:11). This famine of the word of God began after Malachi had delivered his last message. Israel was, therefore, without the fresh bread of life, new revelations from God, after Malachi's day till John

the Baptist in the first century of the present era electrified the nation by his clarion call to repentance.

II. JUDICIAL BLINDNESS THREATENED ISRAEL FORETOLD BY ISAIAH

Corroborative evidence and further light on this most important theme is found in Isaiah 29:9-14:

9 Tarry ye and wonder; take your pleasure and be blind: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. 10 For Jehovah hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes, the prophets; and your heads, the seers, hath he covered. 11 And all vision is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed: 12 and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned.

13 And the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw nigh *unto me*, and with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment of men which hath been taught *them*; 14 therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

A. The Blinding Effect of Pleasure Seeking

Note these momentous words: “Tarry ye and wonder: take your pleasure and be blind: ...” The marginal reading of these lines is “Be ye amazed and wonder; blind yourselves and be blind ...” Both renderings are grammatically correct. The prophet puts his prediction in the form of a command—a practice frequently adopted by the prophets in making their predictions forceful. By putting the thought in this form, he emphasizes human agency as a determining factor in life’s activities. Man, of his own volition, frequently stops, tarries, wonders about a given situation; and, by so doing, he often blinds himself. One who is self-centered and is seeking only for pleasure blinds himself. Pharaoh hardened his heart against God and the evidence which Moses brought him. God then hardened the heart of Pharaoh because of his attitude toward God and truth.

The result was that his heart was irrevocably hardened. What was true of Pharaoh is also true of any and all men who are living for the gratification of the flesh, and who constantly seek their own pleasure.

When men take this attitude, God hardens their hearts, as shown in the following words: “9 ... they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. 10 For Jehovah hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes, the prophets; and your heads, the seers, hath he covered.” When the people of Israel, according to Isaiah, fritter away their time, take their own pleasure, God punishes them for this attitude. Isaiah thinks of the nation of Israel as an intoxicated man whose mental faculties are so stupefied by drink that he cannot understand the situation in which he finds himself and cannot walk normally. The drunkenness of which Isaiah speaks is not from drinking liquor, but it is the result of God’s pouring out upon the pleasure-seekers the spirit of deep sleep and His closing their eyes, “the prophets.” The spirit of deep sleep is the spirit that causes spiritual slumber and insensibility. The one who is thus spiritually asleep is thoroughly oblivious to the spiritual environment in which he lives. Hence he is irresponsive to the calls and appeals of God.

In this passage God foretells that He will stop the prophetic voice in Israel, just as He has warned in the Amos passage examined above. Isaiah, therefore, declares that Jehovah “hath closed your eyes, the prophets; and your heads, the seers, hath he covered.” This part of the prediction was fulfilled with the cessation of the prophetic spirit in Israel from the days of Malachi and onward. For approximately four hundred years God did not speak to the people of Israel, but covered their heads, “the seers.”

When God punished Israel with judicial blindness, which rendered the people incapable of seeing truth as it is and caused them to stagger like a drunken man, spiritually speaking, the written Word was unintelligible to them: “11 And all vision is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith I cannot, for it is sealed: 12 and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned.” When the spirit of stupor is poured upon the nation, the people cannot understand the message of the Word that has been delivered by Moses or the

Prophets. The Word of God through any of His servants, the prophets, is absolutely unintelligible to them. On being asked to read the message and interpret it, the learned claim that the Word is a sealed book—it is unintelligible to them. The unlearned admit that they cannot understand it, but attribute their inability to their lack of learning. With few exceptions—that is, those who are earnestly seeking God—the nation, as a whole, does not understand the message when this deep sleep comes upon it in fulfillment of this prophecy.

For a person to choose his own way and to follow his own ideas in preference to accepting God's way is one of the most dangerous steps that he can take. Isaiah the Prophet foretold Israel's reinauguration of the temple service—yet in the future. Moreover he saw great activities in connection with the restored worship. He, therefore, said: "3 ... Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations: 4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did that which was evil in mine eyes, and chose that wherein I delighted not" (Isa. 66:3, 4).

Ezekiel was a prophet of the Exile in Babylon. On one occasion the elders of Israel came to him to inquire concerning a message from God.

2 And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, 3 Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them? 4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Every man of the house of Israel that taketh his idols into his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I Jehovah will answer him therein according to the multitude of his idols; 5 that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols (Ezek. 14:2-5).

From this passage it is clear that God will answer a person according to the dominant idea of his heart.

B. The Deadening Effect of Intellectual Formal Worship

The nation, nevertheless, after being blinded, continued with its worship in a formal, perfunctory manner, as the prophet declares in Isaiah 29:13,14: "... Forasmuch as this people draw nigh unto me, and with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment of men which hath been taught them; 14 therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." According to these verses, when God pours out this deep sleep upon the nation of Israel and the people are utterly unable to comprehend the message of the written word which is in their hands, they continue in their worship and divine services. They hold on tenaciously to that which they have been taught by rote. They draw nigh unto God with their mouths and honor Him with their lips; but their hearts, being hardened, are far removed from Him. Their worship is a cold, formal, lifeless observance of religious rites and ceremonies.

What Isaiah foretold concerning Israel in his blindness is also true of all people who are solely intellectual and formal in their religious life, who take their own pleasure, and who thus blind themselves. When people have the truth and do not appreciate it, but fritter away their time with material, earthly things, and do not take spiritual and eternal matters seriously, the shades of spiritual darkness descend upon them. They cannot see truth, but wander and grope like people in the darkness.

C. God Working a Wonder, a Marvel, Before the Eyes of Blinded Israel

While Israel is thus blinded and groping in the darkness, declared Isaiah, the Lord proceeds "to do a marvellous work among this people [the Jewish people], even a marvellous work and a wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." The marginal reading of this passage is "I will again do a marvellous work, even a marvelous work and a wonder among this people." What is the significance of this statement? Isaiah looked back over the history

of the nation and saw a time that God did marvelous works and wonders among the people. Then, looking toward the future, he said that God would do a marvelous work again, for and among the Hebrew people. Undoubtedly the thing at which he looked when he glanced at their past was the marvelous work which God performed in delivering Israel from Egyptian bondage, because the miracles wrought when Israel was delivered from Egypt loomed higher in their thinking than any others. For forty years He also intervened in their behalf, performed one miracle after another, and finally brought His people into the liberty of the promised land. But the Hebrews took His miraculous intervention as a matter of course and constantly departed from Him and were punished.

Looking forward into the future, the prophet sees another time when God will step into the arena of Jewish life and activity and will perform a marvel—"even a marvellous work and a wonder." The implication, drawn from the parallel between the two cases, is that He will perform this future marvel or miracle of redemption for their good.¹ But, being blinded, they are not able to realize or to appreciate the situation.

In the first century of the present era, John the Baptist appeared and stirred the nation of Israel by the startling announcement "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The people, from Dan to Beersheba and from the East to the West, were momentarily shaken out of their lethargy of spiritual sleep and indifference. John made the announcement that he was not the Messiah, nor the Prophet, nor Elijah, but was simply a voice calling attention to the Lord who was coming after him, and whose sandals he was not worthy to unloose. When, according to this prediction, God performs this miracle in the midst of the people of Israel and for their benefit, their wise men and sages are so blinded that they cannot interpret the signs of the times or discern spiritual phenomena and God's special activity in their behalf.

¹ Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that they shall no more say, As Jehovah liveth, who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; 8 but, As Jehovah liveth, who brought up and who led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries whither I had driven them. And they shall dwell in their own land (Jer. 23-7,8).

This prediction should have been a clarion call to the nation of Israel, from that day and onward, to be alert, looking forward to the time that God would perform this wonder of wonders—this miracle of deliverance. God always sounds a warning so that people can flee from the wrath to come, but He does not force them to forsake their evil wicked ways and to turn to Him.

D. God Awaiting Israel's Return to Him

God always has to wait for His disobedient people to return to Him in order to bless them. This fact is clearly shown in Isaiah 30:15-22. The occasion of God's making this revelation was the situation created by the Jewish-Assyrian crisis. At that time the Assyrian Empire was threatening the kingdom of Judah. The pro-Egyptian party in Jerusalem insisted that Hezekiah make a military alliance with Egypt. While the ambassadors of both countries were sitting at the conference table, God revealed to Isaiah Judah's plans of procuring military assistance from Egypt. Isaiah, therefore, urged the officials of the government to break off the negotiations and to recall their ambassadors, assuring them that the only solution to the problem was to trust in the Lord for deliverance. The government of Judah refused to break off negotiations and to trust God alone. When the Lord said, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength," the officials at Jerusalem spurned the divine instructions with an emphatic no and went their own way. The prophet, therefore, laid down the general principles of God's dealing with His rebellious people under such conditions.

15 For thus said the Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength. And ye would not: 16 but ye said, No, for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. 17 One thousand shall flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on a hill.

18 And therefore will Jehovah wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for Jehovah is a God of justice; blessed are all

they that wait for him. 19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; thou shalt weep no more; he will surely be gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear, he will answer thee. 20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be hidden any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers; 21 and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. 22 And ye shall defile the overlaying of thy graven images of silver, and the plating of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as an unclean thing; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence (Isa. 30:15-22).

III. THE CONTINUANCE OF ISRAEL'S BLINDNESS

As has been seen in the preceding discussion, the blindness of Israel nationally began with the cessation of the prophetic voice in Israel, when Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, passed on. This blindness, like a veil over the eyes of a person has remained through the centuries to the present day. Further information concerning this blindness appears in Isaiah 42:18-22:

18 Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. 19 Who is blind, but my servant? Or deaf, as my messenger that I send? Who is blind as he that is at peace *with me*, and blind as Jehovah's servant? 20 Thou seest many things, but thou observest not; his ears are open, but he heareth not. 21 It pleased Jehovah, for his righteousness sake, to magnify the law, and make it honorable. 22 But this is a people robbed and plundered; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison-houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.

Here God speaks of His Chosen People as His blind servant.

A. The Blinded Servant of Jehovah

Isaiah uses the term "my servant" in three different connotations. This fact is seen by a study of the passages in which this term occurs. In the passage just quoted, it is clear from the context that it means the nation of Israel. In Isaiah 42:1-9 the same term refers to the Messiah of Israel, because He is the one, according to verse 1, who will establish

justice in the earth. He alone can and will establish this reign of righteousness. In Isaiah 41:8-16 the term “my servant” refers to the faithful remnant of Israel in the end time, as is seen by the facts of the context. When, therefore, the word servant appears, the context must be studied carefully to ascertain the meaning of the term in a given case.

1. THE FIRST COMING OF MESSIAH

In verses 1-9 appears a prediction concerning Jehovah’s servant in whom the Almighty delights and who will bring justice to the Gentiles. This Servant Messiah can and will establish a reign of righteousness upon earth. According to verse 2, He engages in a preaching ministry, avoiding the tactics of a rabble rouser. According to verse 3, He is kind to and considerate of the unfortunate. In this respect He is different from dictators in general who have political aims. Eventually, according to verse 3, Messiah will bring forth justice in truth. He reaches His goal of establishing justice in the earth by the dissemination of the truth. After His personal ministry His followers carry on the preaching ministry which He inaugurates. To those on the side lines, this Messianic movement inaugurated and carried on by the Messiah and His followers appears to be a failure, but it is not. At His coming and launching this preaching ministry, the isles (the nations of the world) do not receive His law but have to wait for it—in the future when Messiah returns.

Isaiah 42:5-9 is a prediction of Jehovah’s speaking to Messiah, assuring Him of help in fulfilling His mission of binding Israel back to God and of His being a spiritual light to the Gentiles. This prophecy reflects the present period of time, during which the message of redeeming love flows out to the entire world. The prophet looks forward to the first coming of Messiah and His fulfilling His mission of purchasing redemption and sending the message of salvation to the whole world and speaks of these events as “the former things.” Thus in vision Isaiah is taken to the end of this present age and declares, “Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them” (Isa. 42:9).

2. THE WORLD-WIDE REVIVAL

Then seeing what will occur at the end of the age, the prophet makes his announcement in the form of an exhortation to the peoples of the earth, saying, “Sing unto Jehovah a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth; ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein, the isles, and the inhabitants thereof” (Isa. 42:10). This dramatic way of making a prediction reminds one of Psalm 2:1:

“Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples meditate a vain thing?”

In this passage King David in vision saw the rulers of the nations of the world in a great international convention, deliberating upon what he called “a vain thing.” He made an announcement in the form of two rhetorical questions of what he had seen. In the same way Isaiah saw in the passage under consideration vast hordes of peoples of the world with joy in their hearts—a new and thrilling experience. He, therefore, calls upon them to give expression to the joy of their souls by singing the praises of God. When Isaiah 42:10-12 is studied in the light of such passages as Revelation, chapter 7, it becomes evident that the prophet saw this world-wide revival which will sweep vast multitudes into the Kingdom of God.

3. SECOND COMING OF MESSIAH

At the conclusion of this time of revival, the Tribulation Period, the Messiah will return in glory as a mighty warrior (Isa. 42:13). His coming in fulfillment of this prediction is likewise set forth in Deuteronomy 32:39-43.

When He thus comes, He will bring about mighty changes in the topography of the earth (Isa. 42:14-17). At that time He will lift the curse, as we see in parallel passages.

4. GOD'S FINAL CALL TO ISRAEL TO REPENT

In view of the coming of Messiah as a mighty warrior against all wickedness and as the Redeemer and Saviour of those who turn to Him from unrighteousness, the prophet addresses the people of Israel, saying: "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. 19 Who is blind, but my servant? Or deaf, as my messenger that I send? Who is blind as he that is at peace with me, and blind as Jehovah's servant?" (Isa. 42:18,19). The prophet's exhorting the deaf to hear and the blind to see is proof that this deafness, which is spiritual, is not incurable. What the blind and the deaf must do to see and hear is in sincerity to want truth and to turn to Messiah in genuine repentance and in faith for redemption and deliverance. This blindness and deafness, spoken of in connection with Israel's hardness of heart (Rom. 11:25-27), will vanish when the remnant of Israel turns to Messiah, and then "all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written,

There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer;
He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:
27 And this is my covenant unto them,
When I shall take away their sins."

Notwithstanding the blindness and deafness of this servant Israel, God declares, "Thou seest many things, but thou observes not; his ears are open, but he heareth not" (Isa. 42:20). Note the fact that blind Israel sees "many things," but does not fully understand their significance. The Jewish people stand in the foremost ranks of culture, philosophy, and all the arts and sciences—out of all proportion to their numbers—and have made many marvelous contributions to civilization that have at times modified or changed the course of history.

It is one thing to study and to gather facts and knowledge of material things, but it is an entirely different proposition to interpret physical materials in the light of the spiritual world in which they exist. All physical phenomena, therefore, must be studied in the light of the spiritual realm.

Recognizing that the physical and material can be understood only in the light of spiritual data, Isaiah states, "It pleased Jehovah, for His righteousness' sake to magnify the law, and make it honorable" (Isa. 42:21). Why has God magnified His law? He has done so "for his righteousness' sake." What is the significance of this phrase? It may be that what He chooses to do is always determined by the great fundamental principles of righteousness. In other words, He always acts according to His real nature and character. Thus in dealing with Israel, as here foretold, God is acting according to the principles of righteousness. Another possible interpretation of this phrase, "for his righteousness' sake," is that it refers to the righteousness of God which He provides for guilty man. Concerning this righteousness, the Apostle Paul speaks in Romans 3:19-26:

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God: 20 because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin.

21 But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; 24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 whom God set forth *to be* a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; 26 for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.

In all probability both interpretations are correct. Isaiah sees the nation of Israel of the end time, led by their scholars, searching for knowledge and wisdom. In their quest for

knowledge—in their libraries,² laboratories, and daily experiences—they do not find ultimate knowledge and wisdom. They consult the works of men and lean heavily upon the arm of flesh, passing by the only true source of knowledge—the Scriptures which God has through the centuries magnified and made honorable.

God has magnified His Word and made it honorable in that He has given absolute and positive proof that it is a revelation of His will to man. The Scriptures, like a beacon on a lofty mountain, constantly flash their beams of divine knowledge and truth to the world—to those who want light. They are infinitely higher than the works of men—as the heavens are higher than the earth.

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isa. 55:8,9).

On this point the Psalmist very clearly declares that God has exalted His Word even above His name (Ps. 138:2). There is no book or set of books written by philosophers, educators, scientists, or scholars in any field that can in the least compare with this Book of God. God has given His Word, authenticated it, and placed it in a position so that it might send forth its luminous rays for the benefit of man in his quest for knowledge and deliverance. Man, by his diligent, exact studies and research in the physical realm, can never approximate the ultimate. He must have the light which comes from God's Word.

At the time of the remnant's looking to Messiah and accepting Him, the people of Israel will be robbed and plundered: "But this is a people robbed and plundered; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison-houses: they are for a prey,

² Let not the reader conclude from what I have just said that I am speaking disparagingly of research and investigation on any and all subjects. In the libraries of the world there is crystallized in permanent form knowledge discovered and passed on by former generations. To glean from what others have learned and passed on to us is of utmost importance in the quest for knowledge. At the same time one must not be gullible and accept as correct all that he reads. Frequently, in doing research, one is like a man who hunts a needle in a haystack.

Isaiah the Prophet, by the Spirit of God, sees the people of Israel diligently studying the works of men in their quest for knowledge. At the same time they are largely ignoring the one and only source of ultimate knowledge and truth—the Scriptures.

and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore” (Isa. 42: 22).

“Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not Jehovah? He against whom we have sinned, and in whose ways they would not walk, neither were they obedient unto his law” (Isa. 42:24). In lovingkindness God will allow the stroke of judgment to fall upon His chosen, beloved people in order to bring them back to Himself.

To the faithful remnant of Israel at the end time, God speaks a marvelous message concerning His having created the nation of Israel, of His having redeemed them, and of His protecting them from all harm, “whom I [Jehovah] have created for my glory, whom I have formed, yea, whom I have made” (Isa. 43:7b).

B. The Remnant of Israel, God’s Future Witnesses

The redeemed remnant of Israel will be God’s witnesses to the end of the earth (Isa. 43:10). Then all nations of the earth will be blessed in Abraham’s seed (Gen. 12:1-3).

IV. THE BLINDNESS OF THE NATIONS

“... God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions” (Ecc. 7:29). Man originally had a knowledge of God, but he refused to retain that knowledge and became unthankful for the blessings of life which God constantly showered upon him. God then allowed man to go in the way of his own choice. The kingdom of the Almighty is a moral regime in which man, along with others of God’s creatures, is allowed to exercise his own choices—within prescribed limits. The Lord endowed him with this capacity and never infringes upon his rights and prerogatives. He uses moral and spiritual forces to keep man in line of duty as far as possible. The whole world originally blinded itself by rejecting the light. Satan, of course, is the one who blinded man’s eyes, or rather whom God allowed to blind his eyes, when he willed not to retain the truth of God in his knowledge.

Man is a worshipping creature. If he does not worship the Creator, he will worship that which has been created. For a complete statement of man’s case, read Romans

1:18-32. In this passage one learns that man chose to serve and worship the creature instead of the Creator. Men as individuals, as nations and groups, have from times immemorial worshipped the gods of their making. The people of the world, from the highest intellectual ones to the most insignificant peasant, have worshipped the creatures and are doing so at the present time. If man does not make a literal idol, he erects intellectually an idol of something in which he is especially interested and renders to it the devotion and adoration that he should give to the Creator in whom he lives, moves, and has his being.

In Isaiah 44:9-20, the Prophet shows how senseless and brainless it is to make molten and graven images, to call them gods, and to worship them. A glance at the pagan world shows that the most intellectual classes, along with the most unlearned, are firm believers in idolatry; even among the foremost cultured, educated, and scientifically trained men are devoted idolaters. As Isaiah the Prophet declares in this passage, men plant and cultivate trees with the idea of making idols out of wood. They then make axes for cutting down the trees. The trunk is turned over to a carpenter who marks the log in the shape of a god whom he wishes to manufacture. Part of the tree is used for fire wood, by which the man warms himself, and the rest of the wood is used for baking bread.

Concerning such men, Isaiah the Prophet declares: "They know not, neither do they consider: for he [Jehovah] hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. 19 And none calleth to mind, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? 20 He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside; and he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Isa. 44:18-20).

Man whose mind is thus beclouded with darkness, caused by Satan, cannot reason correctly concerning any data or phenomena of the physical or psychic realms, because they are related to the spiritual world—to the kingdom of God and to the kingdom of

Satan. All phenomena must be interpreted and understood in the light of the spiritual spheres in which the universe is submerged.

From the passages studied above, one sees that both Jew and Gentile who deliberately reject the knowledge of God and the truth which is given to them by the Lord for their salvation and blessing are punished with spiritual blindness and are unable to see truth as it is. There is but one remedy; and that is to look to God in faith, doubting nothing, not being gullible, but being ready to receive truth whatever it is and wherever it is. If man takes this attitude, he will find the truth and the knowledge of God, for God will send the truth to him.

CHAPTER XII

THE FIRST COMING OF MESSIAH

In chapter X of the present section is presented the testimony of Moses and the Prophets concerning the redemptive career of King Messiah, which consists of His first coming, rejection, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of the throne of God. Exalted, He sits enthroned in glory until God eventually puts His enemies—His own people—under His feet. When God providentially brings the Hebrew people to this point, they will turn with enthusiasm to King Messiah and offer themselves most willingly—in the day of His power—and become His obedient, filial servants.

At this stage of the investigation, it is most fitting to study the purpose of Messiah's first coming to earth.

I. TO MAKE HIS SOUL AN OFFERING FOR SIN

The servant of the Lord mentioned in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is none other than the Messiah. As a study of this passage with related ones clearly shows, Messiah, in His death, is made an offering for sin: "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand" (Isa. 53:10). God is pleased to smite Him and to make His soul an offering for sin. The primary cause, therefore, for His coming to earth is to lay down His life—to make a blood atonement, as will be seen in Chapter XXXIV of Book Four—for the sins of His people and for those of the entire world: "and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (I John 2:2).

The Lord Jesus Christ declared that He did not come to be served—that is, He did not leave heaven and come to earth to be served by men's hands—but rather He came to serve and to give Himself a ransom for the sins of the world (Matt. 20:28).

In I Timothy, chapter 2, the Apostle Paul insists that prayer and intercession be made for all men, especially for rulers, in order that the people of God living under their authority might lead quiet and peaceful lives in all gravity and godliness. Such a prayer ministry, declares the Apostle, is most acceptable to God.

3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, *himself* man, Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony *to be borne* in its own times (I Tim. 2:3-6).

According to this passage, there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and man, who is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, and “who gave himself a ransom for all”—for all men. In keeping with this statement is the one which declares that He tasted death for every man. “But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every man” (Hebrews 2:9). Thus He made possible the salvation of every human being. To this declaration the inspired writer adds that the testimony concerning the Lord Jesus Christ is to be borne “in its own times.” The time will come that the full proclamation of the gospel will be made to all nations (Matt. 24:14; Revelation, chapter 7). Then all peoples will have a full and free opportunity of accepting or rejecting the truth. This time will come in what is known as the Great Tribulation at the end of this dispensation.

II. TO BRING TO NAUGHT THE POWER OF THE DEVIL

In speaking of men in general, the writer in Hebrews 2:14,15 declares, “Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

As will be shown chapter XX, there is a being who is called Satan, the adversary, the tempter, or the devil. He was the highest, most powerful creature whom God in His

omniscience and omnipotence could bring into existence. He was put over all the hosts of the Lord and over all His works. But becoming puffed up with pride, he fell into condemnation and was demoted from his high position. He still is a mighty, powerful being, who transforms himself into an angel of light¹ in order to deceive men and women. Under God's moral government all creatures have the power of free choice. A limited amount of this delegated authority and power is still in the hands of this wicked one. God cannot arbitrarily take this power from him, for the situation involves moral and spiritual issues. The only possible way for the Almighty to deal with the situation was for the Messiah—the God-man—to give His life a ransom and thus to bring to naught him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.

III. TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

When Jesus went on trial before Pilate, the latter asked Him, “Art thou the King of the Jews?” Jesus then asked whether he had thought of that question of himself or whether others had told him to speak thus. Being enraged by this answer, Pilate retorted: “Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?” Jesus replied by saying, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.” Amazed by this statement, Pilate asked Christ, “Art thou a king then?” Jesus replied that He was, but added this significant statement: “To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice” (John 18:33-37). Christ affirmed that He came into the world to bear witness to the truth. Moses and the Prophets declared truth, but they always viewed it from some special standpoint. All men being sinners, God could not speak His message of truth fully and adequately through any of them. He, therefore, sent His only begotten Son, the

¹ 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. 15 It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works (II Cor. 11:13-15).

One perfect man, through whom He spoke the truth to the world. In the last conversation which Jesus had with His disciples just before He was arrested, Thomas said unto Him: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:5,6). Jesus was the very embodiment of truth. The primary object of His coming to earth to preach was to bear witness of God and of the truth to the world in a perfect manner.

IV. TO PUT AWAY SIN

The purpose of the annual national sacrifice on Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, was to roll forward the sins of the Israelites one year. This same ritualism had to be performed every year in rolling forward, figuratively speaking, the sins of the people. Thus the power of the annual atonement was efficacious in the plan of God for one year. Every year there was, however, a remembrance of the past sins. Thus no sacrifice of any ritualism that was observed could roll sins away forever. But the sin question had to be solved, and solved eternally. Hence, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the inspired writer declares:

24 For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us: 25 nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; 26 else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Heb. 9:24-26).

In commenting on the sacrifice of Christ, this same writer in Hebrews 10:10 declares: "By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Thus the Messiah came nineteen hundred years ago, according to the inspired writer, to put away sins once for all. In doing so, He opened up the new and the living way, the approach to God, whereby men may come by faith and be acceptable to the Eternal God in the light of His holiness.

According to the combined testimony of Moses, the Prophets, and the New Testament writers, all men are sinners and must be saved. Man cannot save himself. He cannot lift himself up by his own bootstraps. He must have a Saviour. As Jesus declared, therefore, He came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

V. TO REDEEM MAN FROM ALL INIQUITY

To Titus the young evangelist, Paul stated that one of the purposes of Christ's coming into the world nineteen hundred years ago was to redeem man from all iniquity.

11 For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; 13 looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works (Titus 2:11-14).

CHAPTER XIII

THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION: THE INTERVAL SEPARATING THE TWO COMINGS OF THE ONE MESSIAH

In Chapter X of the present section, the redemptive career of King Messiah, consisting of His first coming, His rejection, His return to glory, His session at the right hand of God, and eventually His return to establish His Kingdom, was outlined. In addition to the passages showing the entire redemptive career of King Messiah, there are portions of the Scriptures that lay special emphasis upon certain phases of His career. Some of them, for instance, turn the spotlight on the first coming and the events connected therewith. Others focus attention on the Second Coming. And others blend the two advents into a single picture. Still others show the interval separating the two comings during which the rejected Messiah is at the right hand of the throne of God.

I. THE INTERVAL SEPARATING THE TWO COMINGS OF THE ONE MESSIAH ACCORDING TO ISAIAH 42:1-4

42 Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. 2 He will not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench: he will bring forth justice in truth. 4 He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law (Isa. 42:1-4).

With the servant of this passage God is highly pleased. This servant, moreover, is able to bring forth justice to the nations—a task which no man or group of men can accomplish. It is one that only Omnipotence can bring about. In the light of these facts one may be certain that the servant here seen is none other than the Messiah, God in human form. First, one sees Him at the threshold of His redemptive work. When this passage is read in the light of Matthew 3:13-17, it is clear that Isaiah in vision saw the Messiah immediately after His baptism, for at that time the Spirit of God came as a dove

and alighted upon Him. God spoke out of glory and declared that Jesus, who had just been baptized, was His Son—in a unique and peculiar sense. Thus verse 1 is a picture of the Messiah at His first coming.

Verses 2 and 3 show that He is a preacher of truth. He is not a rabble-rouser, as is quite evident from verse 2. As a rule, He goes to the recognized places of worship and of the teaching of the Word of God, the synagogues and the Temple. He avoids doing as the political agitators of the first century did, going into public places and stirring up the people with inflammatory propaganda. According to verse 3, He is not a dictator: “A bruised reed will He not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench.” Dictators ruthlessly crush all opposition, regardless of circumstances. It is not so with Messiah. Dictators have a program to carry out, which is always of a political nature. Messiah also has political aims, the establishment of justice in the earth, but He does not use earthly methods to attain His goal.

That He will reach His objective is stated in verse 3: “He will bring forth justice in truth.” He will use the truth in marching forward to His goal. In other words, speaking literally, He will launch a preaching ministry. Outwardly His work appears to be a failure—enough to discourage the fainthearted—but “He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth.” The preaching ministry which He launches at His first coming, and which is carried on by His servants after His departure, will appear to the world to be a failure—a discouraging proposition. But such is not the actual situation. He will accomplish that which He sets out to do, in the proper time and in the providence of God.

When He comes to launch this ministry, the isles, nations, will have to wait for His law, which He will give at His Second Coming. This statement shows that He does not establish a reign of righteousness at His first coming.

II. THE INTERVAL SEPARATING THE TWO COMINGS OF THE ONE MESSIAH, ACCORDING TO ISAIAH 61:1-3

61 The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of *the prison* to them that are bound; 2 to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified (Isa. 61:1-3).

In verse 1 appears the Holy Trinity: the Messiah upon earth; Jehovah in heaven sending Jehovah the Spirit upon Him, in this way anointing Him for the work which He is to do.

Messiah does not waste any time in speaking to those who do not want the truth, but He knows the hearts that are hungry for righteousness, and that are thirsting for God. He, therefore, devotes His time to giving the good tidings to the meek. He ministers to the brokenhearted and spiritually brings out the captives that are in prison. At the end of His earthly ministry, He is put to death in the flesh, but in the spirit is energized. He then goes to the spirits that are in prison, and that were disobedient in the days of Noah, and makes an announcement to them (I Peter 3:17-22). He seizes the keys of death and of Hades and liberates the spirits of the saved who have been confined there since their departure from this life (Rev. 1:18). His doing so, of course, is in fulfillment of Psalm 68:18: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led away captives; Thou hast received gifts among men. Yea, *among* the rebellious also, that Jehovah God might dwell *with them*." Thus He releases these saved ones and takes them to glory in fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1.

"Being put to death in the flesh" in fulfillment of these predictions, "but made alive in the spirit" (I Peter 3:18), He arises from the dead on the third day. At various times after His Resurrection He appears to certain ones of His disciples. On one occasion He

manifests Himself to a company of above five hundred brethren and gives His apostles the world-wide commission which is found in Matthew 28:18-20:

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 (Matt. 28:18-20).

Messiah instructs His apostles to go into all the world and to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to all nations. In Isaiah 61:2 the prophet foretells that Messiah will “proclaim the year of Jehovah’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God.” During the personal ministry of King Messiah and after His Resurrection, He speaks about the period of time that is here called “the year of Jehovah’s favor,” which is followed by “the day of vengeance of our God.” The first of the two periods of time here mentioned is compared to a year; the second, to a day. The year of Jehovah’s favor is characterized by the special favor and grace of God; the day of vengeance, by the wrath of God—the judgments of God that are poured out upon the world during that period. Since the age of Jehovah’s favor is compared to a year and that of His wrath is thought of as a day, one is logically right in supposing that a ratio exists between these two periods of time approximate to that which obtains between a year and a day. Moreover, it is logical to assume that, during the year of Jehovah’s favor, the truth of God and of His grace is proclaimed to the world. This year of Jehovah’s favor is undoubtedly the present dispensation, which has now been running for nineteen hundred years. This age of grace is to be followed by the day of vengeance, the Tribulation.

According to Isaiah 61:3, at the end of this day of vengeance, Messiah will “appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” At the same time the remnant will see the mistake of the nation, will repent of their sins, and will mourn before God for their unrighteousness.

They will look unto Him¹ and plead for Him to return. When they do so in sincerity and earnestness, as they certainly will do in fulfillment of many predictions, the Messiah will return and establish His reign of righteousness upon the earth.

Thus in Isaiah 61:1-3 appears the interval separating the first and the second coming of the one Messiah. During this intervening period, He is sitting in majesty at the right hand of the throne of God, exercising authority throughout the entire universe.² Also during this period, as seen above, the gospel of the grace of God is being proclaimed³ to all nations because it is the year of Jehovah's favor.

Purged and repentant Israel will be given a new heart in fulfillment of Ezekiel 36:26,27: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep mine ordinances, and do them." Then they will be called "trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified" (Isa. 61:3). Thus will dawn the great kingdom era.

¹ 10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. 11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. 12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; 13 the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the Shimeites apart, and their wives apart; 14 all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

13 In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness (Zech. 12:10-13:1).

² **110 Jehovah** saith unto my Lord,
Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
2 Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion:
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies (Ps. 110:1, 2).

"And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18).

³ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all nations; and then shall the end come (Matt. 24:14). See, also, I Timothy 2:1-7 and Revelation 7:1-17.

III. THE INTERVAL SEPARATING THE TWO COMINGS OF THE ONE MESSIAH, ACCORDING TO DANIEL 9:1, 2, 24-27

9 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, 2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet, for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem, even seventy years. ...

24 Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. 25 Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. 26 And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined. 27 And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations *shall come* one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall *wrath* be poured out upon the desolate (Dan. 9:1, 2 ... 24-27).

Viewed from several angles, Daniel, chapter 9, is one of the most important prophetic pronouncements to be considered in relation to the present theme. Because of its importance to the study of Messiah and His earthly redemptive career, one should note very carefully some of the outstanding features of this marvelous revelation.

Verses 1 and 2 show that in the sixty-eighth year of the Babylonian captivity, Daniel was reading the prophecies of Jeremiah and was studying them in the light of what he termed "the books." In his investigation he was especially interested in the completion of the years of the desolations of Jerusalem, "even seventy years."

Since in Jeremiah, chapters 25 and 29, the prediction of the Babylonian captivity is recorded, it is certain that Daniel read these two chapters. Presumably, he was reading the entire Book, but certainly he was reading these prophecies. As to what other Books he was studying, one cannot be dogmatic. Very likely, however, he was reading the

Books of Kings, and probably Chronicles—or the latter part of them—because they tell, especially II Chronicles, chapter 36, about the restoration of Israel under the mandate of Cyrus, the Medo-Persian King. Very likely, also, he was studying Isaiah, chapters 44 and 45, which foretells Cyrus's issuing a decree for the Jews to return from Babylonian captivity and to rebuild their city and their sanctuary.

According to Daniel 9:1, 2, the prophet was studying the Books and understood that the time of the desolations of Jerusalem was seventy years. This point is most important. Since he was studying the historical Books of the Old Testament and Jeremiah's prophecies, the years of which he was thinking were regular solar years, for nothing but solar years is mentioned in these historical portions of the Word.

In Daniel 9:3-19 is recorded the prayer that Daniel uttered in behalf of his people, the Hebrews, and the Holy City, Jerusalem. He confessed his own private sins and those of the nation and prayed for deliverance. In verses 20-23 is a record of the appearance of the Angel Gabriel, who was dispatched by the Lord to Daniel to give him the correct information necessary for the understanding of the prophecy. Finally, in verses 24-27, is Gabriel's explanation of the situation to Daniel.

From verses 20-23 it is clear that Daniel did not understand what he was reading. One should remember that he was a prophet, inspired of God on certain occasions to make definite revelations. But when the Spirit of God was not upon him, speaking through him infallibly, he could arrive at a wrong conclusion the same as any other uninspired man can draw an incorrect conclusion from what he reads and studies. The Angel Gabriel exhorted Daniel to consider the divine message, for it was given to clarify the matters which he had read, but had not understood.

In this connection one should remember that Jeremiah, chapters 29-33, constitutes a marvelous prophecy concerning the restoration of Israel in the end time when God will gather back His people from the four corners of the globe and establish them in their own land.

Chapter 29 is a letter that Jeremiah wrote to the restless captives who had already gone into Babylonian Exile. False prophets had arisen who were urging the exiles not to

settle down into an ordered life; for they would soon, declared the false prophets, return to their own land. Still in Jerusalem with the rest of the nation that had not been carried into captivity, Jeremiah wrote this inspired letter instructing the people to settle down into a well-ordered life that they might enjoy the blessings of God. Then Jeremiah made the following predictions:

10 For thus saith Jehovah, After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith Jehovah, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope in your latter end. 12 And ye shall call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. 13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. 14 And I will be found of you, saith Jehovah, and I will turn again your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith Jehovah; and I will bring you again unto the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive (Jer. 29:10-14).

In verse 10 is God's promise to restore the captives who wished to return to their homeland at the expiration of the seventy years of captivity. In verse 11 the prophet explained why God would take them back at the expiration of the seventy years—namely, because He had thoughts of peace concerning the nation in their latter end. This prophecy of returning after the Babylonian captivity (verses 10 and 11) is followed by another prediction concerning God's regathering the Jewish people from the world-wide dispersion, which will be at the end of the present dispensation. Thus the two restorations of the people of Israel to their own land are blended into a single prophecy as if there were but one definite prediction. This passage is developed in accordance with the well-known law of double reference.

It is practically certain that Daniel failed to note in Jeremiah 29:10-14 that there are two separate and distinct prophecies of restoration of Israel to the land of the fathers. Since in chapters 30-33 there is a very extended prophecy concerning the final restoration of Israel, when King Messiah will reign over the nation, Daniel concluded that this final and complete restoration would follow the Babylonian captivity. It was to

correct this error that the Angel Gabriel came to Daniel and delivered the oracle found in Daniel 9:24-27.

A. The Significance of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9:24

“Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy” (Dan. 9:24).

As the text reads, according to the Angel Gabriel, seventy weeks were decreed upon the Jewish people and the Holy City. In the regular translation appears the expression “seventy weeks.” A correct literal rendering of the original text is “seven seventies are decreed upon thy people and thy Holy City.” The English word week does not convey to the average reader the meaning of the original text. The words in the original simply mean seven seventies or seventy sevens; namely, 490.

Instantly, the inquiring mind asks of what the 490 are. The answer is found in verses 1 and 2. Daniel had been reading and studying about seventy years of Babylonian captivity—seventy literal solar years, during which Jerusalem would remain in ruins and the exiles would be in Babylon. Thus he had concluded that at the end of the Babylonian captivity the complete regathering of Israel would occur. The Angel Gabriel, in effect, said to Daniel, “No, Daniel, you are wrong. The final and complete restoration of Israel to the land of the fathers will not occur at the end of this period of seventy years of Babylonian captivity. On the contrary, there are seven periods of seventy years each before Israel will be restored to the land and the glorious era of Messiah will dawn.”

That such is the import of verse 24 is evident from the following facts. At the end of the seven seventies of years, (1) the transgression of Israel will have been finished—on God’s ledger the record of Israel’s national sin will be a closed account; (2) an end of sins so far as the Jewish people are concerned will have been reached—in other words, the vision of Balaam in Numbers 23:21 will have been realized; (3) reconciliation* for iniquity will also have been made; (4) a new standard of ethics and morals will have been introduced—the standard of ethics and morals that obtains

throughout all ages of eternity; (5) vision and prophecy will have ceased, because the prophecies will have been realized in actuality; (6) finally, the anointing of the Most Holy will have been accomplished. “Most Holy” here probably refers to the Temple of God which will have been built at that time, because at different times it is called the Holy of Holies.

At the expiration of this period of 490 years, the great kingdom age of Israel will become a reality. God’s ancient people will be free from all sin, and a regime of righteousness will begin. Since the text mentions seven sevens, three score and two sevens, and a final seven—of years, of course—one wonders whether there is a gap following the seven sevens and separating them from the sixty and two sevens. He wonders, moreover, whether there is a gap existing between the sixty-ninth seven and the seventieth seven.

B. The Initial and Terminal Dates of the 490-Year Period

According to verse 25, the initial date of this period is the year that “the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” is issued. “Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times.” From all the facts connected with this passage and related ones, it is clear that the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem refers to a command issued by someone in authority, allowing the Jews to return from Babylon to their own land and to build their city.

* The word in the original rendered *reconciliation* literally means “to atone iniquity” or “to make atonement for iniquity.” Thus the blessed results of the atonement of Messiah will have become a reality to all Israel at that time.

Who issued this decree? Isaiah the prophet, whose ministry fell in the latter half of the eighth century before the Common Era, foretold that Cyrus, King of the Medo-Persian Empire, would issue such a decree. Concerning Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, Isaiah, speaking for God, said, “26 She [Jerusalem] shall be inhabited; and of the cities of Judah, They shall be built, and I will raise up the waste places thereof; 27 that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; 28 that saith of Cyrus, *He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid*” (Isa. 44:26-28). Continuing to speak of Cyrus in the following chapter, Isaiah foretold that God would prosper the way of Cyrus and would let him become conqueror of many nations. Finally, in verses 12 and 13, the Lord declared, “I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens; and all their host have I commanded. 13 I have raised him [Cyrus] up in righteousness, and I will make straight all his ways: he shall build my city [Jerusalem], and he shall let my exiles go free, not for price nor reward, saith Jehovah of hosts.” According to these verses, Cyrus would perform all God’s pleasure, “even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and of the temple. Thy foundation shall be laid.” In these passages the Lord declared that Cyrus would build His city, Jerusalem, and would order the rebuilding of the temple.

This prophecy concerning Cyrus was made about two centuries before he did exactly what was here foretold. How was Isaiah able to make this prediction? Solely by the insight of the Spirit of God, who infallibly inspired him and gave him a picture of that which would come to pass.

Isaiah foretold that Cyrus would issue a twofold decree: first, the decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem; second, for the rebuilding of the temple. Did Cyrus actually issue this twofold decree? My answer, based upon the Scriptures, is yes. In II Chronicles 36:22, 23, the inspired historian makes the following historical statement:

22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, 23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven,

given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all his people, Jehovah his God be with him, and let him go up.

When the foreseen time arrived and Cyrus was enthroned as the ruler of Medo-Persia, the Spirit of God stirred him to do that which the Lord had foretold through Isaiah regarding him. In this account Cyrus states that God “hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem.” Whether or not some prophet of God gave Cyrus a special message, no one can say. But God’s Spirit caused him, in fulfillment of the prediction, to issue the decree as recorded in Ezra 1:1-4. The decree mentions only the building of the house, that is, the Temple of God in Jerusalem. Some scholars have concluded that, since nothing is said in the decree about the rebuilding of Jerusalem, Cyrus, therefore, did not issue the decree for the rebuilding of the city. This reasoning is very shallow. All logicians know that reasoning from silence is very precarious and will lead one astray if he is not exceedingly careful.

Armed with this decree issued by Cyrus for the exiles to rebuild their temple, they went back to the land of their fathers and were building the city. This fact is seen in Ezra, chapter 4, in the letter that was written by the enemies of the Jews to the Medo-Persian king. In this letter the king is told: “Be it known unto the king that the Jews that came up from thee are come to us unto Jerusalem; they are building the rebellious and the bad city, and have finished the walls, and repaired the foundations.” In the decree recorded in Ezra 1:1-4, nothing specifically is said concerning the building of the city; but, since the Jews with the decree of Cyrus in hand were building the city after completing the walls and were attempting to build their temple, one knows positively that he is the one who issued the decree for them to rebuild Jerusalem. These statements being true, one can know that the decree mentioned by the Angel Gabriel in Daniel 9:25 was issued by Cyrus in the first year of his reign, which, in the common chronology, was the year 536 B.C.E. Thus the initial date of this period of 490 years mentioned by the Angel Gabriel was the year 536 B.C.E.

In the examination of verse 24, it was seen that a kingdom age of sinlessness and righteousness will follow the 490th year of this period. The terminal date of this period,

therefore, is the year that the kingdom of God will be established upon earth and King Messiah will begin His reign of righteousness from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

C. Breaking Down the 490-Year Period Into Its Component Parts

With the initial and terminal dates of the 490-year period established, the next step in the unfolding of this marvelous prediction is to see how the Angel Gabriel divided the period into its component parts. He said, “Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times” (Dan. 9:25). The period, therefore, from Cyrus’s issuing the decree “unto the anointed one, the prince,” or Messiah, consists of seven sevens of years plus three score and two sevens of years. The first part of this period, the seven sevens, is the forty-nine years of the rebuilding of Jerusalem “in troublous times.” The second part, the sixty-two sevens, or 434 years, began immediately after the first part, the seven sevens, or forty-nine years, and advanced to the time of Messiah, the prince. Thus, from the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the time of Messiah, there are 49 plus 434, or 483 years.

At this point arises the question “To what event or period of time in the Messiah’s career is reference made by the phrase, ‘unto the anointed one, the prince’?” Some scholars have thought that it refers to His birth; others, to His manifestation to Israel or to the beginning of His labors for the nation. Still others, however, think that it refers to His execution. The significance of this phrase is explained in verse 26: “And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing....” From the drift of the thought one sees clearly that the reference is obviously to the cutting off of Messiah. From Cyrus’s issuing the decree, therefore, to the cutting off of Messiah—the Crucifixion— there were to be 483 years.

But from the first year of Cyrus, 536 B.C.E., when he issued the decree, to the year of the Crucifixion of the Messiah in A.D. 30 are 566 years, whereas, according to Daniel, there were to be only 483 years. There is, therefore, an excess of 82 years (a year is lost in the reckoning in passing from the B.C. to the A.D. dates). How do we account for the discrepancy in the chronology? The error is easily discovered. The regularly accepted chronology worked out by Ussher has a number of errors in it. As I have shown in my book *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*, the inspired prophet Daniel was correct in stating that there would be 483 years from the first year of Cyrus, when he issued the decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, to the cutting off of the Messiah.

Since this first period consists of “seven sevens” and “sixty-two sevens,” or 483 years, only 7 of the total of the 490 years remain after the cutting off of Messiah. Did these 7 years follow immediately the 483? Obviously not; for, if they had, the blessings of the glorious millennial reign of Messiah, mentioned in verse 24, would have been brought into existence seven years after the Crucifixion of the Messiah. History proves, therefore, that the last seven years of this period did not follow His execution.

Additional proof that this interpretation of the facts is correct is seen in the latter part of verse 26: “And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined” (Dan. 9:26). One sees that the people of the coming prince destroy the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary, the Temple. Who is the prince that will come? And who are his people? Gabriel’s mentioning the coming prince, without any explanation, assumes that this prince is outstanding, being thus designated. When one examines Daniel 7:1-25, he discovers that there is a succession of four kingdoms, the fourth of which will devour the whole earth, tread it down, and break it in pieces. According to verse 24, this world kingdom will collapse and fall into ten divisions, over each of which a dictator will arise. After the rise of these ten dictators, who are represented by the ten horns of this passage, another dictator will come forth out of obscurity. He will advance in power and might and, after liquidating three of the

original ten, will himself become the dictator of dictators. He stands out above all others as the coming prince of the future. The same evil, wicked prince is set forth in the symbolism of Daniel 8:23-27. There can be no doubt that this one thus represented in these two prophecies is the coming prince to whom the Angel Gabriel refers. He is known as the willful king in Daniel 11:36ff., but in the New Testament he is called the Antichrist. Who are the people of the prince? Daniel 9:26 reveals that the people of this coming prince will destroy the city of Jerusalem and the temple of God. History shows that the ones who overthrew the Jewish nation and destroyed Jerusalem were the Romans. Since this coming prince is to be of that people, he will then be of Roman extraction.

The prophecy in Daniel 9:26 concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple was fulfilled in A.D. 70. The fact that Gabriel, in his message, passed over the forty years intervening between A.D. 30, when the Messiah was executed, and A.D. 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed, shows that the last 7 of the 490 years did not follow the 483rd year, the time of the Crucifixion.

In this same verse is another very significant statement: “and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined.” What is meant by “and even unto the end shall be war”? Preceding this statement is the clause “and the end thereof shall be with a flood. ...” In this sentence the end of the Jewish commonwealth which was brought about in A.D. 70 is referred to. At this point, Gabriel added, “and even unto the end shall be war.” To the end of what does this reference point? There can be but one answer: the end of the period that the Angel had under consideration; namely, the end of the 490-year period. This period of time comes to a close with the passing of the last seven years. Thus the clause “and even unto the end shall be war” takes the reader from the events of A.D. 70 through the centuries to the end of this seventieth week of years of this prophecy.

Verse 27 sets forth the events of this last week: “And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations *shall come* one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out

upon the desolate” (Dan. 9:27). This last seven-year period is spoken of in related passages as the Tribulation, the day of Jehovah, the day of wrath. This era will be one of war, as set forth in the Book of Revelation. Four wars will occur during the Great Tribulation, three of which will be world conflicts. The first one will occur soon after the seven years begin. Following it by a short period, a local war which affects only one fourth of the earth will break out. In the middle of the Tribulation will come World War II of that period of wrath. This day of judgments will be concluded by the war of the great day of God the Almighty, the war that will be fought to stop all wars. Thus wars are determined, according to Gabriel, for the Jewish people from A.D. 70 onward through the centuries to the end of the Tribulation. They certainly have been involved in wars such as no other nation has endured, but the faithful remnant of Israel will be preserved and will survive even the Tribulation.

At the end of these seven years of the Tribulation, the great kingdom age will dawn. Evil will be put down; the King of righteousness, King Messiah, will be enthroned; and His reign will become world-wide.

From the prophecy of Daniel, chapter 9, one sees that Messiah was executed at the end of the 483rd year. Then is introduced an indefinite period of time—so far as this passage is concerned—which separates the 483rd year from the 484th. This era is known as the Christian Dispensation. During this Dispensation, God gathers out from all nations a people for His name who take the place of His ancient people Israel for the time being (Deut. 32:20ff). Isaiah the Prophet likewise foretold the gathering of people from all nations to be a peculiar people of God at the present time (Isa. 65:1). Malachi foretold that God would gather out from the nations a people for His name during the present dispensation (Mal. 1:10,11), This interpretation of these passages is in harmony with Acts 15:14-18.

To make the truth of this great prophecy stand out in bold relief, I shall use the following illustration: At the publishing house where this book was printed, there is a large clock of the latest type which runs night and day—365 days out of every year. It always indicates the flight of time. The manager, however, has on his desk a stop clock, which he uses to time long-distance telephone conversations. The large clock running

night and day may be thought of as the chronometer of God that ticks off the years and centuries of time, whereas the stop clock runs only at certain times, starting and stopping as He wills. Thus, figuratively speaking, God started His stop clock the year that Cyrus began to reign and stopped it 483 years later when Messiah was cut off. At this time Israel was rejected for failing to recognize Messiah at His first coming. The nation, so to speak, took the siding, leaving the main line of God's plan and purpose.

Then began a period of time, indefinite so far as this prophecy is concerned. This period has continued, as is evident, for nearly two thousand years. In due time, God will put his stop clock into operation again, and it will continue for seven years. This final period will close when the Messiah comes again and establishes His reign of righteousness, peace, sinlessness, sickness, and universal blessing.

Chapter XIV

THE SECOND COMING OF MESSIAH

The next phase of the study of the redemptive career of King Messiah is the analysis of the objective that He had in view when, as the glorified Son of man in His immortalized body, He returned to glory after His Resurrection. Ever since His Ascension into heaven, He has been seated at the right hand of the throne of God, where He awaits the time that He will return to earth to take the governments of the world into His omnipotent hands and establish a reign of righteousness. When the time arrives for the fulfillment of the vision of Daniel 7:13,14, He will appear before the Almighty and be invested with world-wide authority: "I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

When He returns to earth, He will have three special objectives in mind: first, to banish all evil from the earth; second, to solve the Jewish problem once and for all; and, third, to establish a world-wide reign of righteousness, Jerusalem becoming the capital of the world.

I. TO BANISH ALL EVIL FROM THE EARTH

In Isaiah 24:1-20 the prophet gives a detailed graphic description of the wreckage which will be wrought during the Tribulation. At the conclusion of that period Isaiah 24:21-23 will be fulfilled.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. 22 And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison; and after many days shall

they be visited. 25 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed; for Jehovah of hosts will reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem; and before his elders shall be glory (Isa. 24:21-23).

At that time the hosts of the high ones on high, together with the kings upon the earth, will be gathered together and will be incarcerated in the pit of the abyss where they will remain for “many days.” These hosts of high ones are none other than Satan and his evil, wicked spirits—demons—who are at the present time wielding a tremendous evil influence upon the human family. The kings of the earth who will be defiant of God will also be gathered together with the evil spirits and put in this place of incarceration. Then the Lord Jehovah, the Messiah of Israel, will reign on Mount Zion, which will be the beauty spot of the world (Psalm 48).

At the end of the period called “many days,” these evil spirits and wicked men will be punished, as is stated in the marginal reading of the word *visited* in verse 22. In the Book of Revelation, chapters 6-19, appears a complete and detailed chronological account of the events that will occur during the Tribulation. This era of wrath will be brought to a close by the personal bodily return of Jesus of Nazareth as a warrior to conquer the world. A graphic picture of His appearing thus is found in the following Scripture:

11 And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 And his eyes *are* a flame of fire, and upon his head *are* many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself. 13 And he *is* arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. 15 And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:11-16).

Armed with omnipotence, this mighty warrior will slay the Antichrist (II Thess. 2:8) and the kings of the earth, along with their armies (Rev. 19:21). The Antichrist will be

revived and cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20). The spirits of the kings of the earth and their followers will be cast into the pit of the abyss with Satan, where they will remain for “many days” (Isa. 24:22), or the thousand years of the reign of the Messiah upon earth, as Revelation 20:1-6 shows.

20 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed *it* over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-6).

Thus the omnipotent warrior, the Messiah, will banish all evil from the earth.

II. TO SOLVE THE JEWISH PROBLEM

During the centuries of Israel’s dispersion among the nations, the Chosen People have been without a home, kicked from pillar to post. They have been made the football of the nations. This condition will not continue always. Moses and the Prophets foretold the time that God will intervene in behalf of His Chosen People and will restore them to their own land. Moses foretold that Messiah will take the field of battle and will champion the cause of His people. When He does so, the nations are called upon to

“Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people:

For he will avenge the blood of his servants,

And will render vengeance to his adversaries,
And will make expiation for his land, for his people” (Deut.32:43).

The psalmists constantly sang of the time that Israel will be restored to fellowship with God in the land of the fathers. Then the Chosen People will be the head of the nations instead of the tail, as at present. In Jeremiah 31:1-14 the weeping prophet gives a most wonderful prediction concerning the solution of the Jewish problem and Israel’s being restored to fellowship with God. Ezekiel, a contemporary of Jeremiah, gave two wonderful predictions concerning the solution of Israel’s problem. These prophecies, in Ezekiel, chapters 34 and 36, should be read very carefully; for they have a message that will cheer the heart of every Hebrew and every servant of God who sees Israel’s place in God’s plan.

The restoration of Israel will be in two phases: national and individual. The first of these will consist of the return of the people to the land of their fathers and their being established therein when the desert shall blossom like a rose. Then the curse will be lifted from the earth, which will bring forth its full strength. The second phase of the problem is the regeneration of the individual Israelite, according to the following promise.

25 And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep mine ordinances, and do them. 28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God (Ezek. 36:25-28).

When these foretold events become accomplished facts, Israel’s problem will be solved forever—to the blessing of Israel and all humanity and to the glory of God.

III. TO ESTABLISH A REIGN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS OVER THE EARTH

Many are the promises of the personal reign of King Messiah. One of the most important and familiar ones is found in Isaiah 2:1-4:

2 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. 4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

God in the person of King Messiah, who is God in human form, in His glorified body, will reign in righteousness over a warless, sinless, sickless world. Jerusalem will be the capital of the world, and all nations will go there from every part of the globe to worship the true God and to serve Him. Beautiful graphic pictures of Jerusalem and of the earth under the reign of King Messiah are found in Isaiah, chapters 49, 60, and 65. Psalms 72 and 132 likewise give glowing descriptions of His reign.

CHAPTER XV

AUTHENTIC SOURCES OF INFORMATION REGARDING JESUS THE MESSIAH AND HIS WORLD-WIDE SPIRITUAL KINGDOM

At this stage of investigation consideration must be given to the sources of information regarding Jesus Christ, the apostles, the New Testament, and any other reliable information concerning the Christian faith.

I. THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The sources of information fall into three classes: heathen, Jewish, and Christian.

A. Heathen

Little information regarding Christ and Christianity can be gleaned from heathen sources. In A.D. 64 Emperor Nero burned Rome and laid the blame upon innocent Christians in order to divert attention from himself and to cast ignominy and shame upon the despised Christians. Both Tacitus and Suetonius, Roman historians, refer to Christ and the Christians in their accounts of the burning of Rome. Since the Christians were a despised group of people, these historians said as little as they could in their narrations concerning why Rome was burned. About A.D. 117 Pliny the Younger¹ reported to Emperor Trajan concerning the Christians that were in his province. His letter is a famous document, which gives an insight into Christianity as it existed in that province of the Roman Empire at that date.

Such enemies of Christianity as Lucian, Julian the Apostate, Porphyry, and Celsus refer to Christ, but in a disparaging manner—some of them in a bitter and hostile spirit. Though derogatory to Christianity, their statements nevertheless have some evidential value in that they throw a faint glimmering light upon the beginnings of Christianity and upon the life of Christ himself.

¹ It is my rule, my lord, to refer myself to you in all my doubts; for who is more capable of removing my scruples or informing my ignorance? Having never been present at any trials of the Christians I am unacquainted, not only with the nature of their crimes or the measure of their punishment, but how far it is proper to enter into an examination concerning them. Whether, therefore, any difference is usually made with respect to the ages of the guilty, or no distinction is to be observed between the young and the adult; whether repentance entitles them to a pardon; or, if a man has once been a Christian, it avails nothing to desist from his errors; whether the mere name unattended with crime, or only the crimes themselves associated with the name are punishable; in all these points I am greatly doubtful.

“In the meanwhile the method I have observed toward those who have been brought before me as Christians is this: I asked them whether they were Christians; if they confessed I repeated the question twice again, adding threats at the same time, when, if they still persevered, I ordered them to be led away to punishment; for I was persuaded, whatever the nature of their opinions might be, that a contumacious and inflexible obstinacy certainly deserved punishment. There were others also brought before me, possessed with the same infatuation; but being citizens of Rome I directed them to be carried thither. But this crime spreading (as is usually the case) while it was actually under prosecution, several instances of the same nature occurred. An anonymous paper was presented to me containing a charge against several persons, who, upon examination, denied they were Christians, or had ever been so. They repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered religious rites with wine and frankincense before your statue (which for this purpose I had ordered to be brought, together with those of the gods), and even reviled the name of Christ; whereas there is no forcing, it is said, those who are really Christians into a doing of any of these things.

“I thought proper, therefore, to discharge them. Some of those who were accused by an informer at first confessed themselves Christians, but immediately after denied it; while the rest owned, indeed, that they had been formerly, but had now (some above three, others more, and one even twenty years ago) forsaken that error. They all worshipped your statue and the images of the gods, and cursed Christ. They affirmed that the whole of their guilt or error was that they met on a certain stated day before it was light, and sang antiphonally a hymn to Christ, as to some god, binding themselves by a solemn oath, not for the purpose of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery; never to falsify their word nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up. After which it was their custom to separate and then to reassemble, to eat in common a harmless meal. From this custom, however, they desisted after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your orders, I prohibited fraternities (*hetaeriae*). After receiving this amount I judged it so much the more necessary to endeavor to extort the real truth, by putting two female slaves to the torture, who were called deaconesses (*ministrae*); but I could discover nothing more than a depraved and excessive superstition.

“I thought proper, therefore, to adjourn all further proceedings in this affair in order to consult with you. For it appears to be a matter highly deserving your consideration, more especially as great numbers must be involved in the danger of these prosecutions, this inquiry having already extended, and being still likely to extend, to persons of all ranks and ages and even of both sexes. For this contagion of this superstition is not confined to the cities only, but has spread its infection among the villages and in the country. Nevertheless, it still seems possible to remedy this evil and restrain its progress. The temples, at least, which are almost deserted, begin now to be frequented, and the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are again revived, while there is a demand for fodder for the victims, for which previously hardly a buyer was to be found. From hence it is easy to imagine what numbers might be reclaimed if a pardon were granted to those who shall repent.”—JOHN FIETCHER HURST, *History of the Christian Church*, I, 167-68.

B. Jewish

Little authentic information concerning Christ and primitive Christianity can be gathered from purely Jewish sources. Josephus, the great Jewish historian, who wrote *Antiquities of the Jews* and *Wars of the Jews*, was born about A.D. 37 and lived to the turn of the century. In the *Antiquities* he has a paragraph concerning Jesus. He also speaks of John the Baptist and of James the brother of the Lord Jesus. Scholars are divided in their opinions relative to the historical value of any of these quotations. Arguments can be advanced in favor of the genuineness of these passages. At the same time other arguments can be brought which seem to mitigate the circumstances and to throw discredit upon the testimony of Josephus. Little, therefore, that is genuine and unquestioned can be gathered from these sources regarding Jesus and early Christianity.

One would expect references to Jesus of Nazareth in the Talmud and the early writings of the Jewish sages, but they contain no direct unambiguous references that can be pointed to as positive testimony regarding Him. A few passages are interpreted by some scholars as referring to Him, but they are so very vague and indiscriminate that they have little or no historical value.

Why the silence of these Jewish sages? Did Jesus actually live and, in His short lifetime, do the things ascribed to Him in the Gospel Records? Dr. Joseph Klausner, in his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, calls attention to the fact that very little is said in the Talmud of that which occurred during the time of the Second Temple. If many of those things that pertain to the heart of the Jewish religion are passed by in the Talmudical writings, there is no wonder that the sages of Israel would likewise pass by Jesus, since His movement was a despised one, which they thought would fade out and disappear.

Some opponents of Christianity claim that, if Jesus did live and perform the labors reported of Him, there would certainly be evidence in some form among the Jews that would show the historicity of Jesus and the beginnings of Christianity. This conclusion is not necessary. An analogous case to this one is Israel's sojourn in Egypt. Jacob and his

family, seventy strong, went down into Egypt and resided there for 215 years.² When they came out of the land of bondage, they were a host of approximately three million people. Yet no evidence whatsoever has been discovered upon the monuments of Egypt showing that they ever dwelt there. Certainly one would argue that, if, as the Scriptures state, such a nation of people so miraculously escaped from Egypt, there should be some record of their residence in Egypt and of their escape from the country. But this conclusion is not necessary, especially since the Hebrews were a Semitic people—Asiatic. The Egyptians, on account of the Hyksos kings, hated all Asiatics. They would, moreover, naturally hate the Hebrews because of their successful flight from Egypt and the consequent disgrace which settled down over the country. These facts are ample reason for the destruction of all evidence of the sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt.

Emperor Julian the Apostate was an inveterate enemy of Christianity who did his utmost to suppress Christianity in order to revive and re-establish the old pagan religions. Concerning him the historian Philip Schaff declared: “The ruling passion of Julian, and the soul of his short but most active, remarkable, and in its negative results instructive reign, was fanatical love of the pagan religion and bitter hatred of the Christians, at a time when the former had already forever given up to the latter the reins of government in the world. He considered it the great mission of his life to restore the worship of the gods, and to reduce the religion of Jesus first to a contemptible sect, and at last, if possible, to utter extinction from the earth” (*Hist. of the Christian Church, III, 46-47*).

² The usual opinion among Bible students is that the Hebrews were in Egypt either 400 or 430 years. But a glance at the data embedded in the Scriptures shows that this statement is incorrect. Abraham reached the land of Palestine in the year 2083 A.H. (in the year of man). At that time he was 75 years of age (Gen. 12:4). It was then that God entered into a covenant with him (Gen. 12:7). In Galatians 3:17 Paul states that the law came 430 years after the covenant. Since the covenant was made in the year 2083 A.H., and since the law was given 430 years after it, the law was, therefore, given in the year 2513 A.H. Abraham, as one sees, was 75 years old when the covenant was made. Isaac was born 25 years later, when Abraham was 100 years old. Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob and Esau were born. Jacob was 130 years of age when he and his family went down into Egypt. Thus the first 215 years of the 430 had passed when Jacob and his family entered Egypt. Since they came out at the end of the 430 years, and since 215 years of that period had passed before they went into Egypt, they were in Egypt only 215 years. For further facts in the case, see my volume *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*.

Concerning Julian, John Fletcher Hurst declared: “It was a pleasing fancy among some of the Christians that just before his death he confessed failure with the words, ‘Tandem vicisti, Galilaeae’ [At length Thou has conquered, O Galilean]”—(*Hist. of the Christian Church*, I, 421; see, also, Schaff, III, 58, note 2).

In such fanatical, blind, unremitting zeal to re-establish paganism, Julian doubtless destroyed much evidence that would support Christianity.

C. Christian

Notwithstanding the terrific fires of persecution that burned against the early Church and doubtless destroyed much evidence, an abundance of proof yet remains which indicates the source and genuineness of the Christian religion. Archeology is bringing to light many facts that prove the genuineness of the claims of Jesus. In the Graeco-Roman world, for example, the remains of churches from different periods of the early stages of Christianity are silent witnesses to the existence of the Christian religion. Some few inscriptions here and there point the finger of positive historicity to the origin, source, and development of Christianity. Literary remains are likewise infallible proofs of its divine origin. In this investigation one can start in the year A.D. 300 and wend his way backward through the debris of the times to Jesus and John the Baptist. Here and there all along the road he will find bits of evidence of Christianity. Giant defenders of the faith have left literary remains of their activities. Catalogues of the Books constituting the New Testament also bear silent, yet incontrovertible, evidence. Eusebius (260?-340?), called the father of Church History, who had access to original sources and records, and who did special research in the records of the churches of the early centuries, wrote an invaluable history of the beginnings and the spread of Christianity up to his day, the early decades of the fourth century. The testimony of such men as Origen, Irenaeus, Papias, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr take one back to the Apostolic Era. Polycarp, for instance, was personally acquainted and closely associated with the Apostle John, who wrote five of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. The Didache, the teaching of the Twelve, is one of the most primitive and important Christian Documents extant—except the New Testament writings. The voluminous writings of the

Ante-Nicene Fathers—ten large volumes—contain the writings of the exponents of Christianity during the first three centuries of the religion of Christ. These works bear ample testimony to Christ and Christianity. The existence, also, of foreign versions of the Scriptures in the early centuries likewise bears unimpeachable evidence of the existence and genuineness of the Christian religion.

The consideration of the Books of the New Testament and their historical testimony is of first importance. In the New Testament there are twenty-seven Books. The first are the Gospel Records, written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They give accounts of the life of Jesus. According to the law of Moses, every legal procedure had to be established at the mouth of two or three witnesses. Two of these writers, Matthew and John, were eyewitnesses of the events which they recount, because they were associated with Jesus during His earthly ministry. One of these writers, Mark, was associated with Peter and was his interpreter, according to Papias, an early Christian writer. Thus Mark in reality presents the testimony of the Apostle Peter, who was an eyewitness from the beginning.

The relationship between Peter and Mark is parallel to that between the prophet Jeremiah and Baruch, his attendant. Originally, God said to Jeremiah, “Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah even until this day” (Jer. 36:2). According to this verse, God gave the very words that Jeremiah used in delivering this oracle to the people. In explaining to the princes of Judah how the scroll had been written, Baruch said that Jeremiah pronounced all these words (the words that Jehovah had spoken to Jeremiah originally) unto him, and that he, Baruch, had written all of them in a book with ink. This incident shows how the Scriptures were given. God inspired the thought and led the writer to choose from his own vocabulary and style the words and expressions by which the ideas were to be conveyed. Peter was inspired by the Lord and delivered his messages. Mark accompanied him on some of his travels, according to Papias, and was his interpreter. Probably Mark wrote down the very words that were spoken by the inspired

apostle and preserved the account in the form of the second record of the Gospel, which bears his name.

The third record, the Gospel of Luke, was written by one of the most highly educated men of that day. He was a master in the use of the Greek language. He did special research, gathering all possible data regarding the life and labors of Jesus. He then wrote an account of the life of Jesus in a chronological order. He was associated with the Apostle Paul, who wrote thirteen of the books of the New Testament—possibly fourteen.³ Having gathered the information from all available sources, and being led by the Spirit of God and associated with the inspired Apostle Paul, this scientific historian wrote his record of the life of Christ and also the Acts of the Apostles.

We have, therefore, four records of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, each of which supplements the information that is found in the others. Each was written by an inspired apostle or one most closely associated with the Apostles. These facts give weight and authority to the records. The Acts of the Apostles, the history of the early Church (A.D. 30-63), was written by Luke and is the second volume by this noted, scientific, inspired writer. The first three Records of the Gospel, called the Synoptics, were written around A.D. 60-63. The Gospel of John, in all probability, was written around A.D. 80 to 85. Knowing what was in the first three records, he gave additional information, especially of the ministry of Christ in Judæa when He attended the annual feasts at Jerusalem. The first three writers give more details concerning the great Galilean ministry, also the Perean and the latter Judæan ministries.

There are twenty-one Epistles written to different churches and to young ministers of the Word, instructing them in Christian doctrine and proper conduct. Here and there the writers make a historical reference to events in the life of Jesus. Their statements, of course, are equal in value, from a historical standpoint, to the Records of the Gospel.

³ Personally, I am strongly inclined to believe that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews.

II. THE CREDIBILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TESTED BY THE LAWS OF EVIDENCE

It is now proper to look at the Gospel Records and the Epistles in the light of the laws of evidence. To this end I wish to call attention to a work by Simon Greenleaf, LL.D., Late Dane Professor of Law in Harvard University, author of "Treatise on the Law of Evidence," namely, *The Testimony of the Evangelists Examined by the Rules of Evidence, Administered in the Courts of Justice*. Though Greenleaf is especially examining, in this volume, the testimony of the evangelists, the same principles of evidence that govern the testimony offered in courts of justice in support of any historical proposition obtain with reference to any of the New Testament. Thus these laws of evidence are universal principles to which he calls attention, and to which he subjects the testimony of the evangelists regarding the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

In introducing his examination, he gives the following advice:

"1. In examining the evidences of the Christian religion, it is essential to the discovery of truth that we bring to the investigation a mind freed, as far as possible, from existing prejudice, and open to conviction. There should be a readiness, on our part, to investigate with candor, to follow the truth wherever it may lead us, and to submit, without reserve or objection, to all the teachings of this religion, if it be found to be of divine origin. 'There is no other entrance,' says LORD BACON, 'to the kingdom of man, which is founded in the sciences, than to the kingdom of heaven, into which no one can enter but in the character of a little child.' The docility which true philosophy requires of her disciples is not a spirit of servility, or the surrender of the reason and judgment to whatsoever the teacher may inculcate; but it is a mind free from all pride of opinion, not hostile to the truth sought for, willing to pursue the inquiry, and impartially to weigh the arguments and evidence, and to acquiesce in the judgment of right reason. The investigation, moreover, should be pursued with the serious earnestness which becomes the greatness of the subject—a subject fraught with such momentous consequences to man. It should be pursued as in the presence of God, and under the solemn sanctions created by a lively sense of his omniscience, and of our accountability to him for the right use of the faculties which he has bestowed.

“2. In requiring this candor and simplicity of mind in those who would investigate the truth of our religion, Christianity demands nothing more than is readily conceded to every branch of human science. All these have their data, and their axioms; and Christianity, too, has her first principles, the admission of which is essential to any real progress in knowledge. ‘Christianity,’ says Bishop Wilson, ‘inscribes on the portal of her dominion “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.” Christianity does not profess to convince the perverse and headstrong, to bring irresistible evidence to the daring and profane, to vanquish the proud scorner, and afford evidences from which the careless and perverse cannot possibly escape. This might go to destroy man’s responsibility. All that Christianity professes, is to propose such evidences as may satisfy the meek, the tractable, the candid, the serious inquirer.’

3. The present design, however, is not to enter upon any general examination of the evidences of Christianity, but to confine the inquiry to the testimony of the Four Evangelists, bringing their narratives to the tests to which other evidence is subjected in human tribunals. The foundation of our religion is a basis of fact—the fact of the birth, ministry, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. These are related by the Evangelists as having actually occurred, within their own personal knowledge. Our religion, then, rests on the credit due to these witnesses. Are they worthy of implicit belief, in the matters which they relate? This is the question, in all human tribunals, in regard to persons testifying before them; and we propose to test the veracity of these witnesses, by the same rules and means which are there employed. The importance of the facts testified, and their relations to the affairs of the soul, and the life to come, can make no difference in the principles or the mode of weighing the evidence. It is still the evidence of matters of fact, capable of being seen and known and related, as well by one man as by another. And if the testimony of the Evangelist, supposing it to be relevant and material to the issue in a question of property or of personal right, between man and man, in a court of justice, ought to be believed and have weight; then, upon the like principles, it ought to receive our entire credit here. But if, on the other hand, we

should be justified in rejecting it, if there testified on oath, then, supposing our rules of evidence to be sound, we may be excused if we hesitate elsewhere to give it credence.”

Greenleaf enters into a brief, yet adequate, discussion of the definite fundamental principles which obtain in law courts regarding evidence, and which apply to the writings of the New Testament. He prefaces the first principle with this statement:

“8 ... The genuineness of these writings really admits of as little doubt, and is susceptible of as ready proof, as that of any ancient writings whatever. The rule of municipal law on this subject is familiar, and applies with equal force to all ancient writings, whether documentary or otherwise; and as it comes first in order, in the prosecution of these inquiries, it may, for the sake of mere convenience, be designated as our first rule.

“Every document, apparently ancient, coming from the proper repository or custody, and bearing on its face no evident marks of forgery, the law presumes to be genuine, and devolves on the opposing party the burden of proving it to be otherwise.”

When the principles set forth in this statement are applied to the Gospel Records and other New Testament writings, it is seen that they come within the scope of this general law. Any document meeting these qualifications is accepted as evidence in the law courts according to Greenleaf, whose name is a household word in the circles of the legal profession.

In contrast to certain bogus religious documents, Greenleaf declares of the Gospel Records:

“9 ... they are received as the plain narratives and writings of the men whose names they respectively bear, made public at the time they were written; and though there are some slight discrepancies among the copies subsequently made, there is no pretense that the originals were anywhere corrupted. If it be objected that the originals are lost, and that copies alone are now produced, the principles of the municipal law here also afford a satisfactory answer. For the multiplication of copies was a public fact, in the faithfulness of which all the Christian community had an interest; and it is a rule of law, that,—

“In matters of public and general interest, all persons must be presumed to be conversant, on the principle that individuals are presumed to be conversant with their own affairs.”

After a brief introductory paragraph, Greenleaf discusses at length the principle involved and then applies it to the four Records of the Gospel. Then he shows that they are within the bounds and limits of this principle. At this point the noted jurist plunges into his subject by making the following statement:

“26. Such are the brief histories of men, whose narratives we are to examine and compare; conducting the examination and weighing the testimony by the same rules and principles which govern our tribunals of justice in similar cases. These tribunals are in such cases governed by the following fundamental rule:—

“In trials of fact, by oral testimony, the proper inquiry is not whether it is possible that the testimony may be false, but whether there is sufficient probability that it is true.”

Having stated the third general principle, Greenleaf declares, “It should be observed that the subject of inquiry is a matter of fact, and not of abstract mathematical truth. The latter alone is susceptible of that high degree of proof, usually termed demonstration, which excludes the possibility of error, and which therefore may reasonably be required in support of every mathematical deduction. But the proof of matters of fact rests upon moral evidence alone; by which is meant not merely that species of evidence which we do not obtain either from our own senses, from intuition, or from demonstration. In the ordinary affairs of life we do not require nor expect demonstrative evidence, because it is inconsistent with the nature of matters of fact, and to insist on its production would be unreasonable and absurd. And it makes no difference, whether the facts to be proved relate to this life or to the next, the nature of the evidence required being in both cases the same. The error of the skeptic consists in pretending or supposing that there is a difference in the nature of the things to be proved; and in demanding demonstrative evidence concerning things which are not susceptible of any other than moral evidence alone, and of which the utmost that can be said is, that there is no reasonable doubt about their truth.”

This third principle, under examination, declares that one is not to discuss the question as to whether a narration is possible, but whether “there is sufficient probability that it is true.” This principle is of the utmost importance in the quest for truth on this subject.

Continuing the investigation of this crucial subject, this learned legal expert makes the following statement:

“27. In proceeding to weigh the evidence of any proposition of fact, the previous question to be determined is, *when* may it be said to be proved? The answer to this question is furnished by another rule of municipal law, which may be thus stated:

“A proposition of fact is proved, when its truth is established by competent and satisfactory evidence.

“By competent evidence, is meant such as the nature of the thing to be proved requires; and by satisfactory evidence, is meant that amount of proof, which ordinarily satisfies an unprejudiced mind, beyond any reasonable doubt. The circumstances which will amount to this degree of proof can never be previously defined; the only legal test to which they can be subjected is, their sufficiency to satisfy the mind and conscience of a man of common prudence and discretion, and to convince him, that he would venture to act upon that conviction in matters of the highest concern and importance to his own interest.”

Greenleaf next considers “on which side lies the burden of establishing the credibility of the witnesses.” In this respect he cites from municipal law the following rule, which is constantly applied in all trials by jury:

“28. In the absence of circumstances which generate suspicion, every witness is to be presumed credible, until the contrary is shown; the burden of impeaching his credibility lying on the objector.

“This rule serves to show the injustice with which the writers of the Gospels have ever been treated by infidels; an injustice silently acquiesced in even by Christians; in requiring the Christian affirmatively, and by positive evidence, *aliunde*, to establish the credibility of his witnesses above all others, before their testimony is entitled to be considered, and in permitting the testimony of a single profane writer, alone and

uncorroborated, to outweigh that of any single Christian. This is not the course in courts of chancery, where the testimony of a single witness is never permitted to outweigh the oath even of the defendant himself, interested as he is in the cause; but, on the contrary, if the plaintiff, after having required the oath of his adversary, cannot overthrow it by something more than the oath of one witness, however credible, it must stand as evidence against him. But the Christian writer seems, by the usual course of the argument, to have been deprived of the common presumption of charity in his favor; and reversing the ordinary rule of administering justice in human tribunals, his testimony is unjustly presumed to be false, until it is proved to be true. This treatment, moreover, has been applied to them all in a body; and, without due regard to the fact, that, being independent historians, writing at different periods, they are entitled to the support of each other: they have been treated, in the argument, almost as if the New Testament were the entire production, at once, of a body of men, conspiring by a joint fabrication, to impose a false religion upon the world. It is time that this injustice should cease; that the testimony of the evangelists should be admitted to be true, until it can be disproved by those who would impugn it; that the silence of one sacred writer on any point, should no more detract from his own veracity or that of the other historians, than the like circumstance is permitted to do among profane writers; and that the Four Evangelists should be admitted in corroboration of each other, as readily as Josephus and Tacitus, of Polybius and Livy.

“29. But if the burden of establishing the credibility of the evangelists were devolved on those who affirm the truth of their narratives, it is still capable of a ready moral demonstration, when we consider the nature and character of the testimony, and the essential marks of difference between true narratives of facts and the creations of falsehoods. It is universally admitted that the credit to be given to witnesses depends chiefly on their ability to discern and comprehend what was before them, their opportunities for observation, the degree of accuracy with which they are accustomed to mark passing events, and their integrity in relating them. The rule of municipal law on this subject embraces all these particulars, and is thus stated by a legal text-writer of the highest repute.

“The credit due to the testimony of witnesses depends upon, firstly, their honesty; secondly, their ability; thirdly, their number and the consistency of their testimony; fourthly, the conformity of their testimony with experience; and fifthly, the coincidence of their testimony with collateral circumstances.”

Greenleaf applies these five standards of measurement to the testimony of the gospel writers and finds that they meet the standards in every particular. He concludes, therefore, that in the four Records of the Gospel is testimony of the highest order, given by men who were honest, who knew what they were talking about, who gave a consistent story, and some of whom sealed their testimony with their blood in martyrdom.

Having shown the unshakable character of the evangelists’ testimony when examined according to the laws of evidence by an open-minded, honest-hearted person, Greenleaf concludes:

“48. Lastly, the great character they have portrayed is perfect. It is the character of a sinless Being; of one supremely wise and supremely good. It exhibits no error, no sinister intention, no imprudence, no ignorance, no evil passion, no impatience; in a word, no fault; but all is perfect uprightness, innocence, wisdom, goodness and truth. The mind of man has never conceived the idea of such a character, even for his gods; nor has history or poetry shadowed it forth. The doctrines and precepts of Jesus are in strict accordance with the attributes of God, agreeably to the most exalted idea which we can form of them, either from reason or from revelation. They are strikingly adapted to the capacity of mankind, and yet are delivered with a simplicity and majesty wholly divine. He spake as never man spake. He spake with authority; yet addressed himself to the reason and the understanding of men; and he spake with wisdom, which men could neither gainsay nor resist. In his private life, he exhibits a character not merely of strict justice, but of overflowing benignity. He is temperate, without austerity; his meekness and humility are signal; his patience is invincible; truth and sincerity illustrate his whole conduct; every one of his virtues is regulated by consummate prudence; and he both wins the love of his friends, and extorts the wonder and admiration of his enemies. He is represented in every variety of situation in life, from the height of worldly

grandeur, amid the acclamations of an admiring multitude, to the deepest abyss of human degradation and woe, apparently deserted of God and man. Yet everywhere he is the same; displaying a character of unearthly perfection, symmetrical in all its proportions, and encircled with splendor more than human. Either the men of Galilee [the apostles] were men of superlative wisdom, and extensive knowledge and experience, and of deeper skill in the arts of deception, than any and all others, before or after them, or they have truly stated the astonishing things which they saw and heard.”

Greenleaf closes this primary, preparatory discussion with the following comment:

“The narratives of the evangelists are now submitted to the reader’s perusal and examination, upon the principles and by the rules already stated. For this purpose, and for the sake of more ready and close comparison, they are arranged in juxtaposition, after the general order of the latest and most approved harmonies. The question is not upon the strict propriety of the arrangement, but upon the veracity of the witnesses and the credibility of their narratives. With the relative merits of modern harmonists, and with points of controversy among theologians, the writer has no concern. His business is that of a lawyer, examining the testimony of witnesses by the rules of his profession, in order to ascertain whether, if they had thus testified on oath, in a court of justice, they would be entitled to credit; and whether their narratives, as we now have them, would be received as ancient documents, coming from the proper custody. If so, then it is believed that every honest and impartial man will act consistently with that result, by receiving their testimony in all the extent of its import. To write out a full commentary or argument upon the text, would be a useless addition to the bulk of the volume; but a few notes have been added for illustration of the narratives, and for the clearing up of apparent discrepancies, as being all that members of the legal profession would desire.”

In the main part of the book, Greenleaf presents a Harmony of the Gospels* and calls upon members of the legal profession, especially, to examine by the principles that obtain in all courts of law the testimony of the evangelists which he has conveniently arranged in juxtaposition.

III. THE CROWNING PROOF THAT THE NEW TESTAMENT RECORDS ARE AUTHENTIC

The study of miracles, Book One, Chapter VIII, reveals that they are, in fact, not only possible, but also necessary to the carrying out of the plan and program of the Scriptures. They are part of the spiritual aspect of the great redemption offered to man by his Creator. The heart of the question of miracles is set forth in the answer to the following question: “Was Jesus Christ raised from the dead?” If He was, the New Testament together with the Old Testament stands. If He was not raised, the entire body of the Scriptures is proved false. The basis for this assertion is found in Revelation 19:10: “... for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

A. The Resurrection of Jesus

The Apostle Paul in Romans 1:1-4 affirms that Christ was declared to be the Son of God by the Resurrection.

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord.

*I wish it were possible for everyone who reads this volume to have access to Greenleaf’s treatise entitled *The Testimony of the Evangelists Examined by the Rules of Evidence, Administered in the Courts of Justice*. Since this work appeared in 1874, it is probably out of print and unobtainable except in a secondhand bookstore or in some public library. To the one who wants to examine the case thoroughly, this volume is indispensable—there is nothing comparable to it.

The body of Jesus was laid in the tomb on Friday evening after the Crucifixion. It lay there throughout the Sabbath and was not there at dawn on the first day of the week.

50 And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a councillor, a good and righteous man 51 (he had not consented to their counsel and deed), a *man* of Arimathæa, a city of the Jews, who was looking for the kingdom of God: 52 this man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb that was hewn in stone, where never man had yet lain. 54 And it was the day of the Preparation, and the sabbath drew on. 55 And the women, who had come with him out of Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how his body was laid. 56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. And on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

24 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 And it came to pass, while they were perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel: 5 and as they were affrighted and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, 7 saying that the Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. 8 And they remembered his words, 9 and returned from the tomb, and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the *mother* of James: and the other women with them told these things unto the apostles. 11 And these words appeared in their sight as idle talk; and they disbelieved them. 12 But Peter arose, and ran unto the tomb; and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths by themselves; and he departed to his home, wondering at that which was come to pass (Luke 23:50-24:12).

The Apostle John gives his testimony concerning the empty tomb.

20 Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb. 2 She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him. 3 Peter

therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. 4 And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; 5 and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in. 6 Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, 7 and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10 So the disciples went away again unto their own home (John 20:1-10).

Now note the significant statement found in verses 8 and 9: “Then entered in therefore the other disciple also who came first to the tomb, and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead.”

In these verses John states that he and Peter, together with the rest of the disciples, did not understand the Scriptures relative to Jesus’ rising from the dead. When the body of Jesus was laid in the tomb, they gave up all hope that they had had in Him. On the evening of the Resurrection day Jesus appeared to two of His disciples as they were going from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Upon His joining them, He asked what they were talking about as they were walking along the road. They were surprised at the question. One of them then asked, “Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days?” Jesus asked, “What things?” They replied, “The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21 But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel.” Then they added: “Yea and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. 22 Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; 23 and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not” (Luke 24:18-24). This conversation clearly reveals that the disciples did not believe that He would rise from the dead. With the interment of His body they buried all hope of His redeeming Israel.

The Apostle Peter also makes it clear that he did not believe Jesus would rise from the dead and that he buried all hopes that he had had in Jesus when the body was laid in the tomb.

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (I Pet. 1:1-5).

Peter had his hopes centered in Jesus; but, as stated before, during his personal ministry, when Jesus was crucified, these hopes died. When he discovered that Jesus had been raised from the dead, his hopes that had died at the Crucifixion were revived and became a living hope.

On the morning of the Resurrection, when the women reported that Jesus had been raised from the dead, Peter and John did not believe them. When they both went into the tomb, they saw the linen burial cloths, that had been wrapped around the body for burial, lying untouched and undisturbed by mortal hands. When Jesus was prepared for burial, about one hundred pounds of spices were used (John 19:39) according to the Jewish method of burial. The juices naturally saturated these cloths and stiffened them to a certain extent. Peter and John could see very clearly that no human hands had touched the cloths, although the body of Jesus was not there. They had to account for the disappearance of the body. How could it get out of this cast, as it were, the cloths retaining the shape that they took when they were wrapped around His body? And how could He arise without disturbing the cloths? Only one explanation was possible to them—His transformed, resurrection body had passed through these cloths and left them undisturbed. The condition, therefore, of the cloths was the crowning proof on this occasion to the apostles that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Thus the condition

of the cloths led the apostles from their negative attitude toward the Resurrection of Jesus to a positive, firm conviction that He had been raised from the dead. Upon no other ground could they account for the condition in which they found the cloths on this occasion.

Jesus told the disciples before His Crucifixion that He would meet them in Galilee. Being convinced that He had been raised from the dead, they met Him at the place previously designated. Concerning this meeting, we read: “When they saw him, they worshipped *him*; but some doubted” (Matt. 28:17). But these doubts were dispelled by the appearance of Jesus on that occasion.

The Apostle John gives a fine statement concerning why the apostles were of the profound and unshakable conviction that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

1 That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life 2 (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal *life*, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); 3 that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: 4 and these things we write, that our joy may be made full (I John 1:1-4).

The apostles had heard with their ears, seen with their eyes, and handled with their hands the Word of life—Christ, the Word of life. They had the testimony of three of their normal senses. They, therefore, were thoroughly convinced that it was He who appeared to them. The infallible proofs that convinced the apostles that Jesus had been raised from the dead are sufficient to convince anyone who will look at the facts and the evidence.

On the first Pentecost after the Resurrection of Christ, the Apostle Peter with the other apostles proclaimed in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead, giving scriptural proof of that momentous fact. In order that the reader might hear the testimony of Peter, who doubtless, with John, examined the actual evidence of the empty tomb, I shall quote his message in its historical setting:

2 And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans? 8 And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, 10 in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabians, we hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God. 12 And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another. What meaneth this? 13 But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, *saying*, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day; 16 but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel:¹

¹ The prophecy of Joel which Peter quoted was spoken to the Jewish people. To ignore this fact and to apply it indiscriminately to people in general is to misinterpret and to misapply it.

That which occurred on Pentecost (Acts, chapter 2) was a partial, limited, and incomplete fulfillment of the prediction, which still awaits its complete materialization immediately before and during the Tribulation. Peter in referring to those things which were occurring at that time declared: "This is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel. ..." In other words, he pointed out that the things transpiring before their eyes were foretold in Joel's prophecy. But he did not say that all things mentioned in the prophecy were then coming to pass. I may enforce the point by saying that all people who live in Los Angeles live in California, but that all people who live in California do not live in Los Angeles.

This prophecy interpreted in the light of all the facts foretells the beginning of the revival in Israel before the Tribulation, which, at the close of the Tribulation, will sweep the nation of Israel surviving to that time into the kingdom of God.

17 And it shall be in the last days, saith God,

I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh:

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

And your young men shall see visions,

And your old men shall dream dreams:

18 Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days

Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

19 And I will show wonders in the heaven above,

And signs on the earth beneath;

Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness,

And the moon into blood,

Before the day of the Lord come,

That great and notable *day*:

21 And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; 23 him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

25 For David saith concerning him,

I beheld the Lord always before my face;

For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

26 Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;

Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades,

Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.

28 Thou madest known unto me the ways of life;

Thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance.

29 Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set *one* upon his throne; 31 he foreseeing *this* spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto

Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. 34 For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself,

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? 38 And Peter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. 40 And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. 41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. 46 And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved (Acts, chapter 2).

According to Peter's inspired statement, Jesus of Nazareth had been approved of God to Israel by wonders and signs and mighty works, but He had also been delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God and crucified. Though He had been executed and buried, He did not remain in the tomb. On the third day He was raised from the dead and appeared to chosen witnesses who testified to the fact of His Resurrection. About three thousand of the audience were convinced by the message and accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. The proof presented in this

message was sufficient to convince those people who were on the ground when Jesus was crucified that He had been raised from the dead.

In the third chapter of Acts appears the second recorded sermon of the Apostle Peter.

11 And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. 12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people. Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? Or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? 13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. 14 But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, 15 and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. 16 And by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. 17 And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. 18 But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. 19 Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; 20 and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: 21 whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old. 22 Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. 23 And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. 24 Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days. 25 Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities (Acts 3:11-26).

The inspired speaker acknowledged that those who had executed Jesus had done so in ignorance, but that, in demanding His death, they had simply carried out the plan

of God which He had purposed before the foundation of the world—for the good of all. He then called upon the nation of Israel to repent of their having rejected Jesus and to turn to Him in order that their sins might be blotted out, to the end that God might send seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord and might send back the very Messiah whom He had already sent, and whom they had rejected. When Israel repents of this national crime and pleads for the Messiah to return, He will do so and solve the Jewish problem—once and for all.

After Jesus had risen from the dead, He appeared to various ones at different times. On one occasion, as previously shown, He appeared to above five hundred people at once (I Cor. 15:6), witnesses chosen beforehand of God to testify to His Resurrection (Acts 10:41).

The heart of the New Testament message is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. His Resurrection as an established fact, therefore, proves that the gospel records are true—are authentic, genuine documents, worthy of all acceptance.

B. The Conversion of the Apostle Paul

The conversion of the Apostle Paul is of first importance in the examination of the genuineness and the authenticity of the Books constituting the New Testament. Saul of Tarsus was one of the bitterest opponents of Christianity. According to the record of Luke, found in Acts of the Apostles, Saul left no stone unturned in his fight against Christians. He pressed his warfare against them throughout Judæa; and then, armed with documents from the High Priest at Jerusalem, he went to Damascus, to continue there his warfare against believers in the Lord.

As he and those with him were approaching Damascus, suddenly something happened—something that changed the entire life and conduct of this zealous young Pharisee, who was standing in the foremost ranks of the Jewish religion: "... 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). Up to this point he had been a bitter opponent of Christ and Christianity. What occurred on this occasion

radically changed his outlook. Instead of fanatically continuing to oppose Christianity and trying to destroy it, he became its most ardent advocate. Concerning this change, he makes this profound statement in I Timothy 1:12-14: “I thank him that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to his service; 13 though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief; 14 and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” He also records what the churches in Judæa were saying about him: “22 And I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judæa which were in Christ: 23 but they only heard say, He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc; 24 and they glorified God in me” (Gal. 1:22-24).

What was this dynamic event that changed one of the bitterest opponents of Christianity into its most ardent advocate? The answer to this question will open up new vistas of truth. The best way—the scientific way—to get this answer is to classify all possible motives which prompt people to change their convictions and their religious affiliations. In my volume *The Eternal God Revealing Himself to Suffering Israel and to Lost Humanity*, pages 282-290, I have listed and classified all possible motives which cause people to change their religious convictions. Herewith I quote from this work: “A careful survey of such motives yields the following list: (1) weakmindedness; (2) unstable character; (3) lack of knowledge and independent thought; (4) a disgruntled spirit; (5) monetary considerations; (6) popularity; (7) persecution; (8) conviction. By ‘weakmindedness’ is meant a subnormal mental condition. In the class of ‘unstable character’ may be placed those individuals whose sentiment and emotions predominate over purpose, reason, and will. In the third class are those who do not know facts but who depend upon others to point out the way in which they are to go. In the class of ‘disgruntled spirit’ are those who are unhappy in a certain environment or position, and who imagine that some other place will yield greater happiness, advantages, opportunities, and the like. In the classification of ‘monetary considerations’ are those who are insincere, and who, having very low standards of right and wrong, make wealth and pleasure the supreme object of life. In the ‘popularity’ group are classed those

individuals who prefer the praise and honor of men to that of God and act accordingly. In the 'persecution' group are those who change their affiliation rather than be persecuted for their conscientious convictions. In the last class, namely, that of 'conviction', are those who think for themselves and, being convinced that they are wrong, accept that which they know is right.

"No one for a moment would class Saul among the weakminded, for his epistles reveal the fact that he was an intellectual giant. It is admitted by logicians that the Book of Romans, which he wrote, is one of the most logical and powerful documents extant from all antiquity. Neither can he be classed among those of unstable character, for his entire life showed that sentimentality and emotionalism, while present in his make-up, were subordinate to reason, plan, and will. Again, he cannot be classed among those who lacked knowledge, and who looked to others for leadership, because he was a leader of men and gave evidence of a very broad culture and acquisition of knowledge. Neither can he be classed among the disgruntled spirits, for in the Jewish religion he was most powerful and influential. There was nothing that caused him to be agitated, disturbed, and disquieted because of factions or trouble in the ranks of Judaism. Money consideration never entered into his life. Had he chosen money he would have remained where he was. By making the change, he gave up the prospects of acquiring wealth and luxuries of life. Neither did popularity have any allurements for him. Had he desired it, he would have remained in Judaism; but by identifying himself with the Christians he, like Moses, who gave up the wealth of Egypt, and who identified himself with his persecuted brethren, stepped over into the ranks of the extremely unpopular. He did not change his religious association because he feared persecution. While he remained in Judaism, he was on the persecuting side; by identifying himself with the Christians, he joined the ranks of the persecuted.

"Having seen that it is impossible to classify Saul with any of the first seven groups, the reader is now asked to consider thoughtfully placing him in the last group, namely, those who change their religious affiliation because of honest, conscientious convictions which are based upon absolute and overwhelming proof. In this connection it is best to let him speak for himself and relate why he changed his conviction concerning Jesus

and identified himself with the Christians.” Here is Paul’s² own testimony as to why he changed, followed by Luke’s account of the same event:

22 Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now make unto you. **2** And when they heard that he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet: and he saith, **3** I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day: **4** and I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. **5** As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to Damascus to bring them also that were there unto Jerusalem in bonds to be punished. **6** And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. **7** And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? **8** And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutes. **9** And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. **10** And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me. Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. **11** And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me I came into Damascus. **12** And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there, **13** came unto me, and standing by me said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in that very hour I looked up on him. **14** And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. **15** For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. **16** And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name. **17** And it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, **18** and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me. **19** And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: **20** and when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him. **21** And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles (Acts 22:1-21).

² Saul’s name was changed to Paul.

“Before King Agrippa II Paul delivered his second speech, in which he explains why he became a Christian.”

26 And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defence: **2** I think myself happy, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defence before thee this day touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews: **3** especially because thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. **4** My manner of life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; **5** having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. **6** And now I stand *here* to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; **7** unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O king! **8** Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead? **9** I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. **10** And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. **11** And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities. **12** Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, **13** at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. **14** And when we were all fallen to the earth I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. **15** And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. **16** But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; **17** delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, **18** to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. **19** Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; **20** but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judæa, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. **21** For this

cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me. 22 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; 23 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.

24 And as he thus made his defence, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad. 25 But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness. 26 For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. 28 And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian. 29 And Paul said, I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds (Acts 26:1-29).

“Dr. Luke gives the following account of Saul’s conversion to Christianity in Acts 9:1-22:

9 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: 4 and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he *said*, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: 6 but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. 11 And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; 12 and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 But Ananias

answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. 18 And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized; 19 and he took food and was strengthened.

And he was certain days with the disciples that were at Damascus. 20 And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God. 21 And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havoc of them that called on this name? and he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests. 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ.

“From Paul’s own testimony and the historical statements of Luke one learns why Paul became a Christian. The facts, briefly stated, are these: as he in company with others was journeying toward Damascus, Jesus, the ascended Christ, caused a miraculous light to shine round about Saul, which was brighter than the noonday sun. Out of heaven He spoke to him. Saul, being brought in touch with Jesus Christ and being in full possession of his mental faculties, realized that Jesus of Nazareth whose followers he was persecuting was the Christ, the Hebrew Messiah. Being fully persuaded of his error in rejecting Jesus, he surrendered fully and completely to Him, accepting Him as his Lord and Saviour. Being blinded by the brilliancy of the light, and being led by others of his party, he entered the city of Damascus, where he remained three days in prayer and fasting. At the expiration of this time the Lord sent Ananias, who laid his hands upon him, thus imparting the Holy Spirit to him and restoring his sight. He also baptized him. From that day Saul became a most ardent and powerful preacher of the Gospel.

“Paul’s sudden ‘right about face,’ spiritually speaking, may be illustrated as follows: If a person, being in full possession of his mental powers, is walking rapidly down the street, evidently with some object in mind, and suddenly turns around, walking just as rapidly in the reverse direction, one would conclude that there was a rational reason for his sudden change. Spiritually speaking, such is what Paul did. He was going in one direction (persecuting the Christians); after this experience he turned around and went in the direction from which he came, identifying himself with the Christians and preaching Christ. There was a reason for his turning, which is that he was thoroughly convinced that he had been mistaken, and that Jesus of Nazareth was his Messiah. Thus one of the intellectual giants of the world of that day and time, being convinced of the Lordship of Jesus of Nazareth, *in full and complete surrender*, bowed to Him and accepted Him as his Lord and Saviour, the Messiah of the Tenach.”

All the evidence proves that Jesus Christ rose on the third day according to the Scriptures and that, forty days after His Resurrection, He ascended to the right hand of the throne of God. Moreover, the evidence, positive and unequivocal, is that He, the glorified Son of Man seated at the right hand of God, spoke audibly to Saul of Tarsus as he was approaching Damascus with authority to persecute the Christians there. These two miracles—the Resurrection of Christ and the appearance of the glorified Son of Man to Saul of Tarsus with his rightabout-face—prove conclusively that the books, of which the historical facts are the very core, are true and authentic records. A minute examination of the New Testament records shows that all other data is in perfect alignment with these two miracles—the empty tomb and the appearance of the glorified Lord Jesus to Paul. With the Apostle Peter one may say that, in following Jesus, he is not following “cunningly devised fables” (II Pet. 1:16), but that he is on historic ground declaring nothing but that which Moses and the Prophets foretold would come to pass.

With the New Testament documents established as genuine, authentic writings of men inspired of God, the next step in the investigation of the historical appearance of Jesus Christ is to see how His life and labors were cast in the mold set forth by Moses and the Prophets.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS CAST IN THE PROPHETIC MOLD OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS

In the present section, Chapter X, is found the prophetic mold as set forth by Moses and the Prophets, in which the life of King Messiah was to be cast. It is now proper and fitting to look at this mold again and at the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth to determine whether or not He and His activities were cast, figuratively speaking, in this mold. Everyone may know the shape of this mold and its measurements, so to speak, by the data which is presented in Chapter X. One may measure accurately the mold that Moses and the Prophets present and then measure the person, life, and labors of Jesus of Nazareth. If they are of the exact measurements, it is conclusive proof that He, figuratively speaking, was cast in the mold of Moses and the Prophets. The inevitable conclusion drawn from these facts is that He was and is the Hebrew Messiah of ancient expectation, and that He, who fills out the mold up to the present time, will carry out the program of the Messiah yet to be fulfilled.

In preparation for the study of the Scriptures giving the mold in which Messiah's life was to be cast, one should first note Israel's great confession found in Deuteronomy 6:4, which grammatically and literally rendered is "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity." In this marvelous statement Moses calls attention to the fact that the Eternal, the self-existing One, "the uncaused cause of all things," is Israel's God. In the original text the Hebrew word here translated "our Gods" is in the plural number and should be thus rendered and understood. In this word is reflected a plurality of divine personalities. Although there is this plurality of persons, they constitute a unity, as is indicated by the word *'echad*, which, unfortunately, in the average English version, is rendered one. Deuteronomy 6:4 is a declaration by Moses that Israel's Gods are a unity—one in essence, nature, and being. At the same time they are a Trinity,¹ as is seen in a number of passages by Moses and the Prophets. When these vital facts are

¹For full discussion of the triune nature of the God of the universe, see my volume *The God of Israel*.

borne in mind, many passages of Scripture become intelligible that, to one not knowing these facts, are enigmatic. This literal translation of this most important passage is in harmony with the entire revelation of God, both in the Old and in the New Testament.

A second factor that must be clearly understood and borne in mind is that Moses and the Prophets held up to Israel the coming of a personal Messiah who would be a descendant of David. A beautiful picture of King Messiah and His reign over the world is seen in II Samuel 23:3-5:

3 The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me:

One that ruleth over men righteously,
That ruleth in the fear of God,

4 *He shall be* as the light of the morning,
when the sun riseth, A morning without clouds,
When the tender grass *springeth* out of the earth,
Through clear shining after rain.

5 Verily my house is not so with God;
Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all things, and sure:
For it is all my salvation, and all my desire,
Although he maketh it not to grow.

A third great truth that must be kept in mind is that Moses and the Prophets foretold the time that God himself would come to earth. David claimed that he would have given up because of life's burdens if he had not believed to see Jehovah in the land of the living: "*I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living. 14 Wait for Jehovah: Be strong, and let thy heart take courage; Yea, wait thou for Jehovah" (Ps. 27:13, 14). King Hezekiah, also, when informed that he would die shortly, declared that he would not see Jehovah in the land of the living. The Prophet Hosea urged Israel to turn and to "wait for thy God continually" (Hos. 12:6), that is, to wait for the personal coming of God to earth.

From these and many other Scriptures it is clear that God held out the hope to Israel that Messiah would come in the flesh and would bring the desired blessings. Many passages of Scripture, moreover, foretell that God will come and will reign over Israel. These two groups of promises meet in the person of Messiah, who is God in human form, entering the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. Twelve different groups of prophecy in the Old Testament, with the fulfillment in the New, constitute the mold in which the life of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, was cast. On the left side of the page are the Old Testament predictions; on the right, the New Testament¹ fulfillments.

I. PRE-EXISTENCE OF MESSIAH

OLD TESTAMENT

But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting (Micah 5:2).

NEW TESTAMENT

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. There was the true light, *even the light* which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his

¹ In a number of instances, it is impossible to quote all the passages to which references are given, because of limited space. It is hoped that the reader will take the time to examine these passages in his own Bible. The American Standard Version (1901 edition) is, in my judgment, the most nearly accurate English translation available.

own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of 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 beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, This was he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me: for he was before me. For of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him* (John 1:1-18).

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am (John 8:58).

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven and *things* on earth and *things* under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:5-11).

God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in *his Son*, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time,

Thou art my Son,

This day have I begotten thee?

And again,

I will be to him a Father, And he shall be to me a Son?

And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith,

And let all the angels of God worship him.

And of the angels he saith,

Who maketh his angels winds,

And his ministers a flame a fire:

but of the Son *he saith*,

Thy throne, O God, is

for ever and ever;

And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

Thou hast loved righteousness,

and hated iniquity;

Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee

With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

And,

Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth,

And the heavens are the works of thy hands:
They shall perish; but thou continuest:
And they all shall wax old as doth a garment;
And as a mantle shalt thou roll them up,
As a garment, and they shall be changed:
But thou art the same,
And thy years shall not fail.
But of which of the angels hath he said at any
time,
Sit thou on my right hand,
Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy
feet? (Hebrews 1:1-13).

II. BIRTH OF MESSIAH

One may see how the purpose of God in coming to earth makes His entering it by miraculous conception and virgin birth the most reasonable way of His coming in fulfillment of His promise. Let a person, for example, think of himself as having the power of creating a universe. He creates a world and peoples it with creatures upon whom he bestows the power of free choice. He wants to communicate with them in a manner whereby he may respect their personality and freedom of choice. What is the best way of his doing so? The logical and intelligible way is for him to assume the form of his creatures and to speak to them in their own language and approach them in like manner. Such a hypothetical case shows the reasonableness of the scriptural teaching concerning God's coming to earth and entering it by miraculous conception and virgin birth. A philosophical explanation on this point is given in Book Four of this volume, chapter XXXIV.

OLD TESTAMENT

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign¹: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14).

NEW TESTAMENT

Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us (Matthew 1:23).

¹The Hebrew word translated *sign* has two connotations. In many instances it refers to an ordinary event or is the name of some object; for instance, the Sabbath is a sign between the Lord and Israel. On the other hand, in certain connections, this word refers to a supernatural act or event. In answer to Pharaoh's demand that Moses and Aaron perform some wonder, Aaron cast his rod on the ground, and it became a living serpent. This act is also designated as a sign. Clearly, therefore, in this case, as in a number of others, *sign* designates a miracle. The fact of each context in which this word occurs indicates its significance. In the context of Isaiah 7:14 the word *sign* connotes a miracle.

III. TWOFOLD NATURE OF MESSIAH

According to Isaiah 7:14 one of the persons of the Trinity comes to earth, entering it by miraculous conception and virgin birth. Such a position is summed up by Ezekiel in chapter 34. In verse 11 of this chapter one sees the analogy drawn between a shepherd who is in the midst of his distressed flock, and who saves them, and God who is here in person in the midst of and delivering His flock Israel, that has been persecuted through the centuries. According to Zechariah 13:7, the sword, or possibly the one who wields it, is commanded to smite the shepherd of God, whom God declares to be His equal, His fellow. He is both human and divine.

OLD TESTAMENT

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14).

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful,

NEW TESTAMENT

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over

Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this (Isaiah 9:6, 7).

For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out (Ezekiel 34:11).

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones (Zechariah 13:7).

the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:30-35).

See Hebrews 1:1-2:18

IV. GENEALOGY OF MESSIAH

According to the quotations below, the Messiah is the Son of God and a descendant of man, descendant of Abraham, of Jacob, and of the Tribe of Judah.

OLD TESTAMENT

NEW TESTAMENT

*A. Descendant of God**

I will tell of the decree:
Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son;
This day have I begotten thee (Psalms 2:7).

And lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matthew 3:17).

Who hath ascended up into heaven,
and descended?
Who hath gathered the wind in his fists?
Who hath bound the waters in his garment?
Who hath established all the ends of the earth?
What is his name, and what is his son's name, if
thou knowest? (30:4).

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (John 1:18).

And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God (John 1:34).

*The expression "descendant of God" in this case is used anthropomorphically in order to show, humanly speaking, the genealogy of the God-man.

B. Descendant of Man

Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken (Deuteronomy 18:15).

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

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, the son of Matthat, the *son* of Levi, the son of Melchi, the *son* of Jannai, the *son* of Joseph, the *son* of Mattathias, the *son* of Amos, the *son* of Nahum, the *son* of Esli, the *son* of Naggai, the *son* of Maath, the *son* of Mattathias, the *son* of Semein, the *son* of Josech, the *son* of Joda, the *son* of Joanan, the *son* of Rhesa, the *son* of Zerubbabel, the *son* of Shealtiel, the *son* of Neri, the *son* of

Melchi, the *son* of Addi, the *son* of Cosam, the *son* of Elmadam, the *son* of Er, the *son* of Jesus, the *son* of Eliezer, the *son* of Jorim, the *son* of Matthat, the *son* of Levi, the *son* of Symeon, the *son* of Judas, the *son* of Joseph, the *son* of Jonam, the *son* of Eliakim, the *son* of Melea, the *son* of Menna, the *son* of Mattatha, the *son* of Nathan, the *son* of David, the *son* of Jesse, the *son* of Obed, the *son* of Boaz, the *son* of Salmon, the *son* of Nahshon, the *son* of Amminadab, the *son* of Arni, the *son* of Hezron, the *son* of Perez, the *son* of Judah, the *son* of Jacob, the *son* of Isaac, the *son* of Abraham, the *son* of Terah, the *son* of Nahor, the *son* of Serug, the *son* of Reu, the *son* of Peleg, the *son* of Eber, the *son* of Shelah, the *son* of Cainan, the *son* of Arphaxad, the *son* of Shem, the *son* of Noah, the *son* of Lamech, the *son* of Methuselah, the *son* of Enoch, the *son* of Jared, the *son* of Mahalaleel, the *son* of Cainan, the *son* of Enos, the *son* of Seth, the *son* of Adam, the *son* of God (Luke 3:23-38).

C. Descendant of Abraham

... And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Genesis 12:3).

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1).

D. Descendant of Jacob

I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not nigh:
There shall come forth a star out of Jacob,
And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel,

... and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end (Luke 1:33).

And shall smite through the corners of Moab,
And break down all the sons of tumult
(Numbers 24:17).

E. Descendant of Tribe of Judah

But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting (Micah 5:2).

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judah and his brethren; (Matthew 1:1-2)

... and one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof (Revelation 5:5).

F. Descendant of David

Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1).

And the multitudes that went before him, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest (Matthew 21:9).

Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star (Revelation 22:16).

Note: Descendant of David through the line of Nathan (Luke 3:23-39).

Note: Descendant of David through the line of Solomon (Matt. 1:1-17).

V. SOME DISTINGUISHING NAMES AND TITLES OF MESSIAH

OLD TESTAMENT

NEW TESTAMENT

A. *Son of God*

I will tell of the decree:
Jehovah said unto me,
Thou art my son;
This day have I begotten thee (Psalms 2:7).

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matt. 16:16).

She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, *even* he that cometh into the world. (John 11:27).

B. *Lord*

Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool (Psalms 110:1).

And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10-11).

And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit (Act 9:17).

C. *Immanuel (God with us)*

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14).

Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,

And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us (Matthew 1:23).

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

... Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God (John 20:28).

D. The First and the Last

Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God (Isaiah 44:6).

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13).

E. Servant of Jehovah

Behold, my servant shall deal wisely, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high (Isaiah 52:13).

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him (Acts 3:13).

VI. OFFICES OF MESSIAH

In the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus is represented as the King of the Jews. To this end He was born into the world. But He will at His Second Coming reign as King, not only over Israel, but also over the entire world.

OLD TESTAMENT

NEW TESTAMENT

A. Prophet

Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken (Deut. 18:15).

Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people (Acts 3:22-23).

B. Priest

Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent:
Thou art a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek (Psalms 110:4).

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, *even* Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house (Hebrews 3:1,2).

C. Judge

For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king; he will save us. (Isaiah 33:22)¹

I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom (2 Timothy 4:1).

¹ This passage becomes especially intelligible if one assumes that Jehovah becomes incarnate and functions in the various capacities mentioned in this prediction. This view is demanded by many predictions of Moses and the Prophets.

D. King

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass (Zechariah 9:9).²

Yet I have set my king
Upon my holy hill of Zion. (Psalms 2:6)

Now this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying,

Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, Meek, and riding upon an ass, And upon a colt the foal of an ass.

And the disciples went, and did even as Jesus appointed them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their garments; and he sat thereon. And the most part of the multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut branches from the trees, and spread them in the way. And the multitudes that went before him, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

(Matthew 21:4-9)

² In this prediction Jehovah, Israel's great future King, enters Jerusalem riding upon an ass. This prediction compels one to accept the scriptural teaching concerning the Son of God's entering the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth and thus becoming the God-man with a human physical body.

VII. CREDENTIALS OF MESSIAH

OLD TESTAMENT

A. *Coming of Messiah Announced*

The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God (Isaiah 40:3).

Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts (Malachi 3:1).¹

NEW TESTAMENT

This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way before thee (Matthew 11:10).

He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet (John 1:23).

¹ Malachi: 3:1 speaks especially of the herald of Messiah at His Second Coming, who will be Elijah the Prophet (Mal. 4:5,6). John the Baptist was the herald at Messiah's first coming (Matt. 3:1-12)

B. *Miraculous Works of Messiah Foretold*

According to Isaiah, chapter 35, and parallel passages, when Israel accepts Messiah, He will perform all kinds of miracles, lifting the curse from the creation. One sees, for instance, that Messiah will open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, heal the lame, restore the dumb, and raise the dead.

Opening Eyes of Blind

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the glowing sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water: in the habitation of jackals, where they lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for *the redeemed*: the wayfaring men, yea fools,

When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing (John 9:6-7).

shall not err *therein* (Isaiah 35:5-8).

Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise.
Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy
dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall
cast forth the dead (Isaiah 26:19).¹

Opening Ears of Deaf

And he took him aside from the multitude privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain (Mark 7:33-35).

Healing at Pool

And a certain man was there, who had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity. When Jesus saw him lying, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wouldest thou be made whole? The sick man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk. And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked. Now it was the sabbath on that day (John 5:5-9).

¹ An examination of the facts of the contexts of these two passages, Isaiah 35:5-8 and Isaiah 26:19, shows that the prophet was speaking of what Messiah will do when He returns to earth and sets up His reign of righteousness. Since at His Second Coming He will lift the curse from creation and restore Edenic conditions (Acts 3:19-21), it is logical to suppose that, at His first coming, He performs such miracles as are mentioned in this prediction as proof of His ability to fulfill completely these prophecies when He returns. This supposition is lifted out of the realm of conjecture to the level of certainty by the instructions regarding the credentials of prophets whom God would send to Israel from time to time. The true prophet would be recognized as such if his predictions came to pass or if the miracle which he wrought was accompanied by exhortations to worship Jehovah (Deut. 13:1-5).

That this interpretation is correct is seen from Matthew 11:2-6: "2 Now when John heard in the prison the works of the Christ, he sent by his disciples 3 and said unto him, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? 4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. 6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me." On this occasion Jesus refers to His miracles and His preaching the gospel to the poor as proof of His Messiahship.

Casting out Demons

And as they went forth, behold, there was brought to him a dumb man possessed with a demon. And when the demon was cast out, the dumb man spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel (Matthew 9:32-33).

Raising Lazarus

And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go (John 11:43-44).

VIII. THE FIRST COMING OF MESSIAH

OLD TESTAMENT

NEW TESTAMENT

A. His Coming in Humility

Who hath believed our message? And to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name (Philippians 2:5-9).

See Matthew 27:1-50 in Book Three

him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who *among them* considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand (Isaiah 53:1-10).

B. His Coming to Make Atonement for Sin

Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand (Isaiah 53:10).

For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life (Leviticus 17:11).

For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works (Titus 2:11-14).

C. His Coming as a Child

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:7).

For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11).

D. Time of His Coming

1. Before the destruction of the Second Temple

Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined (Daniel 9:24-26).

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matthew 21:43).

But he answered and said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down (Matthew 24:2).

Jerusalem destroyed in A.D. 70

2. During Judah's Ascendancy

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
Until Shiloh come:
And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples
be (Genesis 49:10).

For ye, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judæa in Christ Jesus: for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they did of the Jews; who both killed the Lord Jesus and the

prophets, and drove out us, and pleased not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins always: but the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16).

E. Result of His First Coming

Failing to recognize Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, Israel is dispersed among the nations, and the temple and city are destroyed.

And he will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth (Isaiah 11:12).

And Jehovah will scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot: but Jehovah will give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul; and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have no assurance of thy life (Deuteronomy 28:64-66).

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall come with fear unto Jehovah and to his goodness in the latter days (Hosea 3:4-5).

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 (Matthew 23:37-39).

But he answered and said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down (Matthew 24:2).

IX. BETRAYAL, DEATH, AND BURIAL OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

That the Messiah would be betrayed by a friend, be spit upon, become dumb before His accusers, be pierced, ridiculed, and forsaken of God, His bones not broken, and that He would die a sacrificial death—a willing sacrifice—and be buried with the rich are all foretold in the following Old Testament quotations.

As is set forth in Book Three, Chapter XVIII, there are four types of prophecy. The first is literal (Matt. 2:2-6); the second is the literal plus a typical import (Matt. 2:15); the third is the literal plus an application (Matt. 2:18); and the fourth is the literal plus a summation (Matt. 2:23). The prophecies listed below fall either in the first or the third classification.

They are nevertheless genuine prophecies. (These Scriptures are so numerous that they are cited instead of being quoted here.)

OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Psalm 41:9	John 13:18
Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67
Isaiah 53:7	Matthew 27:12,14
Psalm 22:16	Luke 23:33, John 19:34
Psalm 22:7,8	Matthew 27:41,43
Psalm 22:1	Matthew 27:46
Psalm 34:20	John 19:33,36
Isaiah 53:5	I Peter 2:24, Titus 2:14
Psalm 40:6-8	John 10:17,18
Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60

X. RESURRECTION OF MESSIAH

OLD TESTAMENT

I have set Jehovah always before me:
Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth;
My flesh also shall dwell in safety.
For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol;
Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.
Thou wilt show me the path of life:
In thy presence is fulness of joy;
In thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore
(Psalms 16:8-11).

NEW TESTAMENT

And the angel answered and said unto the women, 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 (Matthew 28:5-6).

Jesus of Nazareth was raised from the dead and was thus proclaimed to be the Son of God.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 1:1-4)

For further light on this most important subject, see John 20:1-10. By all means read the classical passage on the Resurrection I Corinthians, chapter 15.

XI. ASCENSION OF MESSIAH AND HIS SESSION AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF GOD IN HEAVEN

The Lord Jesus Christ, after His Resurrection, showed himself by many infallible proofs to witnesses chosen beforehand of God who ate and drank with Him after His

resurrection from the dead (Acts 10:41). At the invitation of God and in fulfillment of Psalm 110:1-3, Jesus ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

OLD TESTAMENT

Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people offer themselves willingly In the day of thy power, in holy array: Out of the womb of the morning Thou hast the dew of thy youth (Psalms 110:1-3).

Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth: then the residue of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel (Micah 5:3).

NEW TESTAMENT

And he led them out until *they were* over against Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God (Luke 24:50-53).

A careful study of the passages from Moses and the Prophets shows that there is given a definite idea concerning Messiah and His major activities when He leaves heaven, enters the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, and in the power of the Spirit of God performs His life's tasks and duties. From these and many other passages one can get a definite idea of the exact shape and size, figuratively speaking, of the mold into which Messiah's life was to be cast.

Then a careful study, with a mind open to truth, of the passages quoted in the right-hand column of this chapter shows that the life and activities of Jesus of Nazareth were cast in this Old Testament mold. It is utterly impossible to reach any other conclusion when all the facts are taken into consideration. Without hesitation one comes to the profound conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah of Hebrew expectation. He was the Prophet promised Israel at Mount Sinai, whom God would send into the world.

Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 16 according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him (Deut. 18:15-19).

XII. THE SECOND COMING OF THE MESSIAH

A. Israel's Plea for Messiah's Return

The Lord Jesus concluded His Message to the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew, chapter 23) with these words:

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. (Matthew 23:37-39)

As He declares in this passage, He will never return until the people of Israel, given the facts concerning Him, acknowledge their offense, repudiate the national sin, and plead for Him to come.

The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.

This is Jehovah's doing; It is marvellous in our eyes.

This is the day which Jehovah hath made;

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Save now, we beseech thee, O Jehovah:

O Jehovah, we beseech thee, send now prosperity.

Blessed be he that cometh in the name of Jehovah:
We have blessed you out of the house of Jehovah.
Jehovah is God, and he hath given us light:
Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.
Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto thee:
Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.
Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good;
For his lovingkindness *endureth* for ever (Psalms 118:22-29).

For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry off, and there shall be none to deliver. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly.

6 Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him. And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth. (Hosea 5:14-6:3)

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born (Zechariah 12:9-10).

And in this mountain will Jehovah of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering that covereth all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He hath swallowed up death for ever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people will he take away from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have

waited for him, and he will save us: this is Jehovah; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. (Isaiah 25:6-9)

Who hath believed our message? And to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. (Isaiah 53:1-9)

B. The Time of the Second Coming

As the prophets reveal, the return of Messiah will follow the time of Jacob's trouble, and it will precede the second and final restoration of Israel.

OLD TESTAMENT

Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds; and strangers shall no more make him their bondman; but they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. Therefore fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith Jehovah; neither be dismayed, O

NEW TESTAMENT

And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And his eyes *are* a flame of fire, and upon his head *are* many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself. And he *is* arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed

Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be quiet and at ease, and none shall make him afraid (Jeremiah 30:7-10).

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, that shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth (Isaiah 11:11-12).

And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God (Amos 9:14-15).

in fine linen, white *and* pure. And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, **KINGS OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come *and* be gathered together unto the great supper of God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great.

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, *even the sword* which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh (Revelation 19:11-21).

For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written,

There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: And this is my covenant unto them, When I shall take away their sins (Romans 11:25-27).

C. Events Associated with the Second Coming

When the people of Israel, in genuine faith, repent and acknowledge the Messiah, He will return and solve the Jewish problem once and for all. But it will never be solved in any other way.

1. Cleansing of Israel

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness (Zechariah 13:1).

Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even* Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old (Acts 3:19-21).

...Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities (Acts 3:26).

2. Resurrection of the Righteous Dead

Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead (Isaiah 26:19).

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2).

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw

the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection (Revelation 20:1-5).

3. Deliverance of Israel

Behold, a day of Jehovah cometh, when thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall Jehovah go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall be cleft in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be a very great valley*; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south (Zechariah 14:1-4).

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying,

Blessed *be* the Lord, the God of Israel; For he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people,

And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of his servant David (Luke 1:67-69).

4. Judgment of the Nations

Let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about. Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, tread ye; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of Jehovah is near in the valley of

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: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto

decision (Joel 3:12-14).

them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? Or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25:31-46).

5. Regathering of Israel

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto

recover the remnant of his people, that shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth (Isaiah 11:11-12).

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 (Matthew 23:37-39).

6. Israel, a Universal Blessing

And it shall come to pass that, as ye were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing. Fear not, *but* let your hands be strong (Zechariah 8:13).

And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; And let all the peoples praise him (Romans 15:10-11).

In days to come shall Jacob take root; Israel shall blossom and bud; and they shall fill the face of the world with fruit (Isaiah 27:6).

D. The Return of Messiah

Also as foretold by the prophets, Messiah will return in person, visibly, in power and glory, to reign over a warless world; and Elijah will announce His coming.

1. His Return Personal

Behold, Jehovah hath proclaimed unto the end of the earth, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him (Isaiah 62:11).

... Who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven (Acts 1:11).

2. His Return Visible

And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall be cleft in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall* be a very great valley; and half of

Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen (Revelation 1:7).

the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south (Zechariah 14:4).

I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:13-14).

3. His Return with Power and Glory

So shall they fear the name of Jehovah from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come as a rushing stream, which the breath of Jehovah driveth (Isaiah 59:19).

And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one. All the land shall be made like the Arabah, from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; and she shall be lifted up, and shall dwell in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananel unto the king's wine-presses. And men shall dwell therein, and there shall be no more curse; but Jerusalem shall dwell safely (Zechariah 14:9-11).

... And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30).

4. His Return to Reign over a Warless World

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and

be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Isaiah 2:1-4).

But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem; and he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it. For all the peoples walk every one in the name of his god; and we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever.

In that day, saith Jehovah, will I assemble that

cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed *it* over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I* saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-6).

which is lame, and I will gather that which is driven away, and that which I have afflicted; and I will make that which was lame a remnant, and that which was cast far off a strong nation: and Jehovah will reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the hill of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, yea, the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem (Micah 4:1-8).

5. *His Return Announced by Elijah*

Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts. But who can abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto Jehovah, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years. And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the sojourner *from his right*, and fear not me, saith Jehovah of hosts. For I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed (Malachi 3:1-6).

And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And he answered and said, Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things (Matthew 17:10-11).

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse (Mal. 4:5-6).

Messiah is eagerly waiting for Israel to repudiate the national sin and to plead for Him to return so that He can carry out the remaining part of the plan of God as announced by Moses and the Prophets. To this end let each one pray very earnestly—and labor.

BOOK THREE

AN EXAMINATION OF JESUS OF NAZARETH AS THE MESSIAH OF ISRAEL AND THE REDEEMER OF THE WORLD

SECTION A

An Approach to Jesus of Nazareth

CHAPTER XVII

A FOURFOLD PORTRAIT OF JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE HEBREW MESSIAH

I. SCRIPTURAL TESTIMONY

The Lord is the God of truth. Everything which He does is in the open. He wants truth and facts always to triumph in everything. At the mouth of competent, truthful witnesses was everything to be established in the law courts of Israel. In regard to a man or woman who was accused of worshiping idols, the Lord gave the following instructions:

2 If there be found in the midst of thee, within any of thy gates which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that doeth that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah thy God, in transgressing his covenant, 3 and hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, or the sun, or the moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded, 4 and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it; then shalt thou inquire diligently; and, behold, if it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel, 5 then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, who hath done this evil thing, unto thy gates, even the man or the woman; and thou shalt stone them to death with stones. 6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is to die be put to death; at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. 7 The hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and

afterward the hand of all the people. So thou shalt put away the evil from the midst of thee (Deut. 17:2-7).

Whenever a report came to the civil authorities that a certain person or persons had gone into idolatry, investigation was to be made. If the charges were established beyond a doubt by credible witnesses, the guilty ones were to be executed.

Whenever a person was condemned in court of being guilty of idolatry, the witnesses, whose testimony convicted—caused the conviction of—the accused, were to cast the first stones in the execution. By the testimony of one witness, no one was to be executed. Since the witnesses were to cast the first stones in executing the criminal, a witness was most careful not to give any false testimony, because he knew that he would have to initiate the execution.

We have every reason to believe that God desires a thorough and impartial investigation of every matter and wants the truth and the facts to be presented accurately in all cases. In keeping with these general observations, one may be sure that God follows the same definite, clear-cut principles with reference to Jesus of Nazareth, the Hebrew Messiah and Saviour of the world.

II. THE PERSONAL MINISTRY OF JESUS

In fulfillment of prophecy, the Lord sent a herald to announce to the nation the approaching manifestation of the Messiah. This herald was none other than John the Baptist, who electrified the nation by his fearless preaching, calling upon the people to repent, and by his making the startling announcement that the Messiah was to appear shortly.

The Lord gave John the sign by which He could identify the Messiah. On one occasion, as he was standing with some of his disciples, he saw Jesus coming toward him. Then he bore this testimony:

29 On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who

is become before me: for he was before me. 31 And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water. 32 And John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. 34 And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God (John 1:29-34).

From the time that John the Baptist bore this testimony to Jesus, some of his disciples left him and followed Jesus.

From this time and onward the Lord went about doing good and speaking nothing in private, but being open and above board in His teaching and labors. On this point, the Apostle Peter declared to the household of Cornelius:

34 Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. 36 The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)—37 that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 *even* Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. 40 Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, 41 not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, *even* to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God *to be* the Judge of the living and the dead. 43 To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins (Acts 10:34b-43).

The life, teaching, and activities of the Lord Jesus were well known to the people of Israel, for the Apostle Paul, in speaking to Festus declared, “For I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him [Agrippa]; for this has not been done in a

corner” (Acts 26:26). So well known were they among the people of Israel that the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost could say to a large Jerusalem audience:

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; 23 him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it (Acts 2:22-24).

If Jesus, His activities, and teachings were so well known throughout the nation of Israel, one naturally inquires how it is that there is practically no clear-cut mention of Jesus found in the Talmud and other Jewish sources. Dr. Joseph Klausner states that in the Talmud very little is said about anything that occurred during the time of the Second Temple. The world would know practically nothing about the long and bitter struggle between the Greco-Syrian kings and the Judæan Maccabean princes if it had not been for the apocryphal books of First and Second Maccabees and the Greek writings of Josephus. Dr. Klausner is also of the firm conviction that the labors of Jesus were, in the eyes of the leaders of Israel of His day, insignificant in comparison with the events connected with the Herods and the Roman procurators. He also believes that, when the sages of Israel compiled the Talmud, the times of Jesus and things connected with Him had receded into the darkness of the past, being overshadowed by current events. Whereas the heathen opponents of Christianity perverted the teachings of Jesus and attributed to Him occult powers, the Jews who spoke of Him distorted His teachings and attributed His miracles to the power of the evil one.

III. THE LIVING VOICE

From the first Pentecost after the Resurrection of Christ and onward, the apostles, who had been instructed by the Lord Jesus during His personal ministry, bore testimony to what Jesus taught and did. They went everywhere preaching the Word and giving their testimony. They had a definite plan outlined to them by the Lord Jesus Himself (Acts 1:8). According to this program, they were to await the coming of the Holy Spirit, who would speak through them. Being thus inspired, they were to testify concerning Him first in Jerusalem, then in all Judæa, and next in Samaria. Lastly they were to go to the uttermost parts of the earth. In the Book of the Acts of the Apostles we see that they followed these instructions. The eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word, therefore, went everywhere preaching the gospel. Naturally the people wanted to hear the message from the lips of those who had actually been associated with Jesus Christ during His personal ministry, and who had heard Him on many different occasions. The preaching done by eyewitnesses was called the living voice. As time passed, these eyewitnesses began one by one to die. There arose, therefore, a situation which demanded that the story told by these eyewitnesses be put in the permanent form of writing.

IV. THE GOSPEL RECORDS

To meet this demand God gave through four of His messengers accounts of the life, labors, and teachings of the Saviour. Let us recall that at the mouth of two or three witnesses everything should be established. Following that definite principle, the Lord gave three records of the life of Jesus of Nazareth which are called the synoptic Gospels. They are thus designated because of their giving a synoptic, or general, idea of Christ's life and labors.

Matthew is rather topical in the treatment of his material, although in certain portions he is chronological. Mark and Luke are more nearly chronological. Luke states that,

“having traced the course of all things accurately from the first,” he has written an orderly narrative.

According to tradition, Matthew, an eyewitness, an associate, and an apostle of the Lord Jesus, wrote his account of the life of Christ for his Jewish brethren. He assumed on the part of his readers a knowledge of Jewish affairs and teachings. He also assumed on their part a belief in the prophecies of the Old Testament. Sometimes he quoted verbatim from the Septuagint, a Greek version of the Old Testament, and sometimes he was freer in his quotations. He alone of the three evangelists assumed that his readers accepted the Old Testament. Thus Matthew is very readily understood by the Hebrew people who have a knowledge of the Old Testament. The Gospel of Matthew is placed first in the canon of the New Testament. For many people it is the favorite Gospel account.

On the other hand, Mark, the writer of the second record of the Gospel, wrote for the Roman people, presenting the message of life and light through Jesus Christ. One of their chief characteristics was an admiration for a man of action, one with a heroic spirit, who would dare and do. According to tradition, Mark wrote, as just stated, for the Roman people and presented his material in such a way that they could readily understand his message and be captivated by it.

Luke, the beloved physician, was led of God to write a record of the life of Christ for the Greek people. The language of the Gospel of Luke and of the Epistle to the Hebrews is literary *koine* Greek of the period. The introduction to Luke’s record has been recognized as equal to anything that is found in classical Greek.

Renan called the Gospel of Luke the most beautiful book in the world. It gives a fuller account of the life of Jesus than any of the other Gospel writers. Mark and Luke go along, figuratively speaking, in the same groove, the former being briefer than the latter. The literary style of Luke had an appeal to the cultured, educated Greeks; yet his story is told in a simple straightforward manner.

God raised up these three witnesses to testify concerning the matchless life of Jesus of Nazareth. These three records were written around A.D. 60-63 as the living voice was dying out.

Later, somewhere between A.D. 85 and 90, John, the beloved Apostle, was led to write the record which bears his name, the Gospel of John, which is called a spiritual Gospel by one of the early church fathers. A perusal of the Gospel of John shows that he says less about the actual works of Jesus than the other writers do, though he mentions some of them. He devoted his time to presenting Christ in His true nature as the God-man. There beams forth from every page testimony that He was the Eternal Word, who was in the beginning with God, who was God, and who, in the course of time, laid aside the glory which He had with the Father and took upon Himself the form of a servant, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

For the truth-seeker it is wonderful to study each of these Books separately—just as they were given. It is also a most delightful and profitable study to put them together in the form of a harmony. When one engages in such a study logically, he sees the entire life of Jesus as set forth by competent, truthful, capable witnesses.

Sometimes one of the writers alone mentions a certain incident in the life of Christ. Oftentimes only two of them mention another event. At times all three of the synoptics describe or narrate a certain occurrence; and, in a few instances, all four of the writers mention some events. All of them are very explicit and full with reference to things that occurred during the last week of Christ's life.

But the testimony of the apostles must be considered separately and together and treated according to the principles of valid evidence which obtain in the courts of the land. This fact was shown in Chapter XV of Book Two as set forth by the renowned scholar Dr. Simon Greenleaf.

I wish that space permitted my presenting the four records of the Gospel in the form of a harmony, but it is impossible to do so because of the limited space. Some day I hope, if God wills, to make a harmony of the Gospels in my own translation.

SECTION B
A Study of the Testimony of Matthew, an Eyewitness

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BIRTH NARRATIVE AND EARLY LIFE OF JESUS OF NAZARETH,
THE HEBREW MESSIAH
ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW
(Matthew 1:1-2:23)

COOPER TRANSLATION

[The Old Testament was written in Hebrew with certain short sections in Aramaic. The New Testament is in Greek. The Scriptures, therefore, have to be translated from these original tongues into the language of the people for whom the translation is being made. A number of English translations have been made; but, in my judgment, the American Standard Version, 1901 edition, is the very best. Yet it is not perfect; for anything that man does is, more or less, marred with imperfection. Some translations are better than others. For the book *Messiah: His Historical Appearance*, I felt led to make my own translation of the Gospel according to Matthew. In a few passages I think I have made a more accurate translation than the American Standard Version.

In making the translation, I tried to adhere to the text of the American Standard Version as much as possible, but in instances I was forced to depart from this version in order to bring out more accurately the thought of the original text.

Since the Greek idioms often do not correspond to those of the English language, it is frequently very difficult to translate literally. In translating, I have been governed by the Golden Rule of Interpretation: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise." The translator of the Scriptures must first be an interpreter. He must understand thoroughly

the idioms of the language out of which the translation is to be made, and must also have a thorough knowledge of the idiomatic expressions of the language into which the translation is to be made. At times, it is absolutely necessary to depart from the literal, exact meaning and resort to a paraphrase in order to make a smooth English translation. Endeavoring to avoid this expediency as much as possible, I have done my best to represent in this translation the literal, exact meaning of the original text.

The Greek text which I have used is that of Dr. Eberhard Nestle—newly revised by Dr. Erwin Nestle, sixteenth edition. At times I also used the text of Westcott and Hort.

In passages where God or Christ is addressed or referred to, I have retained the old forms—*thee*, *thou*, *thy*, and *thine*—since they are woven into the very fabric of our thinking.

I have made this translation praying the Lord to use it to His glory and to the blessing, salvation, and edification of the readers.]

1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, a descendant of Abraham.

2 Abraham was the father¹ of Isaac; Isaac, the father of Jacob; Jacob, the father of Judah and his brothers; 3 Judah, the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar; Perez, the father of Hezron, Hezron, the father of Ram; 4 Ram, the father of Amminadab; Amminadab, the father of Nahshon; Nahshon, the father of Salmon; 5 Salmon, the father of Boaz by Rahab; Boaz, the father of Obed by Ruth; Obed, the father of Jesse; 6 Jesse, the father of David the king.

¹ Literally, begat.

David was the father of Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah; 7 Solomon, the father of Rehoboam; Rehoboam, the father of Abijah; Abijah, the father of Asa; 8 Asa, the father of Jehoshaphat; Jehoshaphat, the father of Joram; Joram, the father of Uzziah; 9 Uzziah, the father of Jotham; Jotham, the father of Ahaz; Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah; 10 Hezekiah, the father of Manasseh; Manasseh, the father of Amon; Amon, the father of Josiah; 11 Josiah, the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the Babylonian captivity.

12 After the Babylonian captivity, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel; Shealtiel, the father of Zerubbabel; 13 Zerubbabel, the father of Abiud; Abiud, the father of Eliakim; Eliakim, the father of Azor; 14 Azor, the father of Sadoc; Sadoc, the father of Achim; Achim, the father of Eliud; 15 Eliud, the father of Eleazar; Eleazar, the father of Matthan; Matthan, the father of Jacob; 16 Jacob, the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus who is called Christ [Messiah] was born.

I. JESUS A DESCENDANT OF DAVID AND ABRAHAM

The Gospel of Matthew, the first Book of the New Testament, begins with these words, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, a descendant of Abraham." This verse definitely points back to II Samuel, chapter 7, in which appears the record of God's covenant with David, regarding the dynasty of which he was the head. It also points definitely to Abraham, the great progenitor of the Jewish race.

When King David purposed to build a temple in Jerusalem, he divulged his plans to Nathan the Prophet, who was one of his Spiritual advisers. Replying to the king, Nathan approved of the plan. He made a mistake in not first consulting the Lord about the matter. That night the word of Jehovah came to Nathan and told him that he had made an error, and that he would have to correct it. The prophet, of course, went to David and acknowledged his mistake. He also made known what the Lord had disclosed to him. Since David had been a man of war who had shed much blood, the Lord refused to allow him to build this temple. The Lord was, however, well pleased with David's good intentions. He, therefore, made a definite promise to him, which is recorded in II Samuel 7:8-16.

8 Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be prince over my people, over Israel; 9 and I have been with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee; and I will make thee a great name, like unto the name of the

great ones that are in the earth. 10 And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as at the first, 11 and as from the day that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel; and I will cause thee to rest from all thine enemies. Moreover Jehovah telleth thee that Jehovah will make thee a house. 12 When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; 15 but my lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. 16 And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

In this message the Lord gave assurance that He would build David a house and would appoint a place in which the people of Israel would dwell in perpetual peace. The house which the Lord promised to build was a dynasty—the Davidic dynasty—to rule over Israel. Solomon, his son and immediate successor to the throne, is mentioned as the one who should build the literal house which the Lord denied David's constructing. The Lord, moreover, promised to perpetuate the Davidic throne, as well as the kingdom, but warned that He would punish any of the regal line who should commit iniquity. He would, however, never cast aside the Davidic house as He had rejected the house of Saul, David's predecessor, who had sinned so grievously that God withdrew His mercies from him. In II Samuel, chapter 7, Nathan the Prophet saw the entire Davidic dynasty. The floodlight of revelation is thrown upon the people, the king, and the kingdom of Israel through the centuries. In this passage one does not clearly see the culmination of the dynasty, but simply a succession of kings ruling and being punished whenever they sinned against Jehovah.

Information supplemental to this passage is found in I Chronicles, chapter 17. In it the floodlight is no longer used; on the contrary, the spotlight is turned on. Here the entire regal line descending from David is dimly seen with the light brilliantly focused on the one in whom the dynasty culminates.

11 And it shall come to pass, when thy days are fulfilled that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will set up thy seed after thee, who shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He shall build me a house, and I will establish his throne for ever. 13 I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee; 14 but I will settle him in my house and in my kingdom for ever; and his throne shall be established for ever (I Chron. 17:11-14).

Nothing here is said about any of the kings' committing iniquity, as is done in the original passage, II Samuel, chapter 7. The reason for this omission is that the spotlight is used instead of the floodlight. Nothing is said about sin in connection with this One on whom the light is focused, because He is free from sin. Proof that the writer sees such a One is revealed in the following words: "I will set up thy seed after thee, who shall be of thy sons...." What is the significance of the words "who shall be of thy sons"? This expression is very peculiar; yet it is to be taken at its face value. A child can have only one father; hence the word *sons* cannot be used literally in the usual sense of the term. It can have but one meaning: namely, that the sons here referred to are the descendants of David from whom comes this last reigning sovereign, the sinless one.

This One in whom the dynasty culminates is the One who is to build the Temple of God. Solomon is the one who built the First Temple, which was destroyed by the Babylonians, but rebuilt on a much smaller scale by Zerubbabel at the time of the restoration from Babylonian captivity. The Second Temple was destroyed by Titus, the Roman general, in the catastrophe of A.D. 70. It is to be rebuilt in the kingdom age. Who then will build it? The answer to this question appears in Zechariah 6:12,13: "... Behold the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah; 13 even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." The term

*branch*¹ occurring four times in the prophetic word, has a definite technical meaning. It is one of the names of Messiah—as many of the sages of Israel have recognized. That this interpretation is the correct one is confirmed by Jeremiah 23:5, 6:

5 Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness.

This “righteous branch,” who will reign as King in Judah and deal wisely, executing justice and righteousness, will be recognized as “Jehovah our righteousness.” Thus He is the sinless One, in whom the dynasty of David culminates. He will build the Temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem of the great Kingdom Age and will reign in righteousness (Ps. 72).

Matthew also points back to Abraham in the opening statement of his Gospel. When God called Abraham to leave the land of his nativity in Chaldea, God entered into a sevenfold covenant with him: 12 Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto the land that I will show thee: 2 and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: 3 and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3).

This passage is a clear indication of the divine purpose of blessing all nations in and through Abraham, to whom and to whose seed God promised that He would give the land of Palestine as a perpetual inheritance (Gen. 12:7; 13:14-16; 15:1-21; 17:1-8; 22:1-18). These passages also make quite evident that God plans to bless all nations in and through Abraham’s seed—Israel, the literal seed, And Messiah, the seed *par excellence*. The statement in Matthew 1:1, therefore, points definitely to the Davidic and

¹The passage upon which the predictions regarding “the branch” are based is the last clause of II Samuel 23:5. In this statement appears the verbal form from which the noun “branch” is derived. This term, a generally recognized Messianic title, appears in Isaiah 4:2; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15; Zechariah 3:8 and 6:12. The two passages in Jeremiah are one in import. A different word translated *branch* occurs in Isaiah 11:1, 2. Thus, in reality, there are only four famous *branch* passages.

To many scholars the two passages in Jeremiah furnish the theme of the Gospel of Matthew. Zechariah 3:8, which speaks of “my servant the Branch,” seems to be the theme of Mark, who wrote the second record of the Gospel. Zechariah 6:12, which speaks of “the man ... the Branch,” furnished the theme for the writer of the third Gospel, who presented Jesus of Nazareth as the ideal man. Isaiah 4:2, which speaks of “the branch of Jehovah,” may well be considered as the theme of the fourth writer of the Gospel.

Abrahamic covenants into which God entered with those two outstanding men of the Hebrews. This fact shows that the Gospel of Matthew and the rest of the New Testament were cut off the same piece of goods, figuratively speaking, that had been woven by Moses and the Prophets.

II. GAPS IN THE GENEALOGY

17 All the generations, therefore, from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David unto the Babylonian captivity, fourteen generations; and from the Babylonian captivity unto the Messiah, fourteen generations.

When one compares the genealogy given by Matthew (Matt. 1:1-17) with the genealogies found in the Old Testament, he will see some gaps in it. Why did Matthew omit some of the names? Verse 17 points to the answer: "All the generations, therefore, from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David unto the Babylonian captivity fourteen generations; and from the Babylonian captivity unto the Messiah fourteen generations." This genealogy extends from Abraham to Jesus and falls into three divisions, in each of which fourteen names are listed. Verse 17 immediately points in the direction of the answer to the question "Why the gaps?" Doubtless the omissions are to aid the memory, and probably the persons whose names were omitted were of lesser importance in the Davidic line. Gaps appearing in such a long list of names are not surprising. In Ezra 7:1-6, for example, several omissions similar to those in Matthew 1:1-16 appear in the genealogy of Ezra, a descendant of Aaron, the high priest.

A reading of Matthew 1:1-16 and a study of the history of the monarchs of Israel show that the genealogy which Matthew gives is that of the regal line of David. Messiah could not come of the line descending from David through Jehoiachin, whom Jeremiah also called Jeconiah or Coniah. The reason is found in Jeremiah 22:24-30:

24 As I live, saith Jehovah, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence; 25 and I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them of whom thou art afraid, even into the hand of

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. 26 And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die. 27 But to the land whereunto their soul longeth to return, thither shall they not return. 28 Is this man Coniah, a despised broken vessel? Is he a vessel wherein none delighteth? Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into the land which they know not? 29 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.

According to this prediction, after Jehoiachin, no descendant of David through the regular reigning house could ever sit upon the throne. Thus the royal line was blocked in him. Since Joseph was a direct descendant of Jehoiachin, this genealogy is the royal line, and not the actual genealogy of Jesus of Nazareth.

The real genealogy of Jesus and Mary is found in Luke 3:23-38. This passage is the genealogy of a branch of the house of David different from that of Solomon; yet it was of David. Joseph was of the Solomonic branch of the house of David, whereas Mary, to whom Joseph was engaged, and of whom Jesus of Nazareth was born while she was still a virgin, was of the branch of Nathan.

Being of the branch of the reigning house of David, Joseph was heir to the throne. This fact is the reason Matthew has given the genealogy that he has. Since Mary was married to Joseph of the reigning branch, Joseph was the foster father of Jesus, humanly speaking. On account of this relationship, therefore, Jesus was legally the heir to the throne.

Matthew writes his Record of the life of Jesus on the assumption that, being the foster son of Joseph, He was heir apparent to the throne. When speaking of the actual birth of Jesus, Matthew calls Him the King of the Jews. This assumption runs throughout the entire book of Matthew. It becomes more apparent as one notes the various outstanding statements, facts, and prophecies of this Book.

III. THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

18 The birth of Jesus Christ was in this way. After Mary, His mother, had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband,¹ since he was righteous and was not willing to make her a public example, planned secretly to divorce² her. 20 When he began to think on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord in a dream appeared to him, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not begin to fear to take Mary your wife,³ for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bear a son, and you shall call His name JESUS; for this one will save His people from their sins. 22 Now all this has come to pass in order that there may be fulfilled that which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, And they shall call His name Immanuel;⁴ which is, when interpreted, God with us. 24 When Joseph had arisen from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and he took his wife; 25 but he did not know her until she had borne a son; and he called his name JESUS.

¹ In ancient Israel, the parents arranged the marriage of their children. The relationship between the young man and young woman who were engaged was as binding as if they were married. Hence Joseph is called Mary's husband.

² Though Joseph and Mary were not married, Joseph planned to break the marriage contract.

³ When Mary was espoused to Joseph, she was, in the language of the times, his wife.

⁴ Isaiah 7:14.

In Matthew 1:18-25 is an account of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. The inspired author states that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was engaged to Joseph. Before the marriage ceremony she was discovered to be with child. This situation was very embarrassing to Joseph, who was a righteous man, and who did not want to make a public example of his intended bride. While he was in a quandary as to what to do, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision and gave him the exact facts: namely, that the Holy Spirit had begotten the Christ child in Mary, in fulfillment of the prophecy found in Isaiah 7:14. Matthew quotes this prophecy from the Greek version of the Old Testament: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, And they

shall call his name Immanuel” (Matt. 1:23). In the main, this translation is a very good one. Some of the Hebrew manuscripts of Isaiah have the article *the* before *virgin*, whereas others omit it. Hence in the text of the American Standard Version (1901 edition), the prophecy reads: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

A great controversy has raged for years concerning the significance of the word *‘almah* in the original text of Isaiah. Some scholars insist that it means a young married woman, whereas others contend that it means simply what the English word *virgin* connotes—an unmarried, virtuous woman of marriageable age. There is but one way to determine its significance, which is to examine every occurrence of this word in the Hebrew Bible and study it in the light of the facts of each context. By such a method one can find its exact meaning. It occurs seven times in the Hebrew Scriptures. In my book *Messiah: His Nature and Person*, I examine microscopically the facts of each context in which this word occurs. In the six other places in which it is found, the facts show that the writers, without exception, had a pure, unmarried virgin in mind. The assumption, therefore, is that it has the same signification in Isaiah 7:14 as it does in the other occurrences, unless there are facts in the context which show positively that it has a different meaning.

What are the facts of this context? The occasion of Isaiah’s uttering this prophecy was as follows: The kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and of Syria had entered into an alliance to fight against Judah, to overthrow Ahaz, the reigning monarch, and to place their own appointee on the throne. In anticipation of the coming war, Ahaz was inspecting the water supply of the city. The Lord sent Isaiah the Prophet to the young king and offered to perform a miracle either in the heavens above or in the deep beneath—wherever Ahaz designated—in order to strengthen his faith. It is clear that the word *sign* here indicates supernatural activity. Ahaz was simply to tell where he wished the Lord to perform this miracle. Though a descendant of David, Ahaz was an impious hypocrite who was determined to have his own way. When the Lord offered to perform this miracle, he made a pious dodge, saying, “I will not ask, neither will I tempt Jehovah.” Suddenly he became very pious and godly—judged by his words. He had

already made his plans to enlist Tiglath-pileser III, ruler of the great Assyrian Empire, in his struggle against his enemies. He, therefore, did not want to change his plans. When he spurned truth and divine help, Isaiah turned from him and addressed the house of David of the future saying: “Hear ye now, O House of David, Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” The word *sign* meant a miracle when it was addressed to Ahaz. It had the same connotation when it was addressed to the house of David of the future. Thus in Isaiah 7:14 it means a miracle; namely, that there is to be an extraordinary birth of a child—“behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” [God with us]. Thus verses 13 and 14 of chapter 7 foretell the miraculous conception and virgin birth of a person, who is to be God in human form.

Verses 10-12 are addressed to Ahaz, as proved by the use of the personal pronouns in the singular number. Another important fact to note in this connection is that in verses 13 and 14 the plural pronouns are used in reference to the house of David: “13 ... Hear ye [plural] now, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you [plural] a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Thus in verses 13 and 14 Isaiah was speaking to the house of David of the future.

In verses 15-17 the number of the pronoun has been changed again—this time, back to the singular. These verses were spoken directly to Ahaz since the child whose birth is foretold in them was to be born in the very near future. Thus one sees in verses 13 and 14 the birth of the child who is Immanuel; but, in verses 15-17, the birth of the child of the immediate future.

In verses 15-17 Isaiah speaks thus: “15 Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good. 16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken. 17 Jehovah will bring upon thee and upon thy people, and upon thy father’s house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—even the king of Assyria.”

Because of the pronoun *he* in verse 15, some scholars insist that only one child is mentioned in verses 14-17. Of these, some declare that the reference is to the child born of an *'almah*, mentioned in verse 14, and that, therefore, this child is the one referred to throughout the prophecy. In verses 15-17, however, Isaiah states that, before the child to be born “shall know to refuse the evil and to choose the good,” the lands whose two kings Ahaz abhors—the land of Israel and the land of Syria—will be forsaken, and that Jehovah will bring upon Ahaz and Judah days that they have not experienced since “Ephraim departed from Judah—even the king of Assyria.” Since this king of Assyria is the one who overran Syria in 734 B.C., and who in 721 B.C. overran Israel, the child mentioned in verses 15-17 was to be born in the very near future. Some scholars who insist that only one child is mentioned in the prophecy declare, therefore, that the child who was to be born in the near future is the one referred to throughout verses 14-17. This method of handling the facts is a superficial way of looking at the situation. One must note carefully all the facts of the context. The number of the pronouns of the second person is singular in verses 11 and 15-17, because they refer to Ahaz, and plural in verses 13 and 14, because they refer to the house of David of the future. In each instance, the birth of a child is foretold: to the house of David of the future is given the prophecy concerning the child to be born of an *'almah*, a virgin; to Ahaz, that pertaining to the child to be born in the immediate future.

How can this situation be explained? All thorough students of the Bible know that there is a principle which obtains throughout the prophetic word, and which may be illustrated thus: A picture is thrown upon the screen. Then as it begins to dim, the faint outline of another appears. By the time the first one has faded from the screen, the second is in full view. This illustration adequately sets forth the principle of the law of double reference. An excellent example of this law is found in Ezekiel, chapter 26. In verses 7-11, one finds a definite oracle concerning Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, who fought against Tyre for thirteen years, as history shows; but he did not capture the city. The pronouns *he*, *him* and the possessive adjective *his*, referring to Nebuchadnezzar, occur a number of times in this block of Scripture; but in verse 12 these terms cease. Instead, the pronoun *they* is used. In verses 7-11, which are

devoted to the oracle regarding Nebuchadnezzar, there is no word that can be the antecedent of the pronoun *they* of verse 12. To what word does this pronoun refer? The answer is to be found in the content of this prophecy and in a knowledge of Greek history which one gets from profane records. As suggested above, after a hard war of thirteen years, Nebuchadnezzar gave up the siege of Tyre as a failure and abandoned the conflict. The Tyrians did not want to undergo another such siege. They, therefore, built a new city on the island, which was about a half mile from the mainland. They strongly fortified this new position. Approximately three hundred years after Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great came upon the scene, sweeping everything before him. In order to capture this island fortress, he made a causeway from the mainland to it. The material which he used for this purpose was the ruins of continental Tyre, that had been forsaken. Over this causeway he sent his battering rams to the city and soon captured it. Thus Alexander fulfilled the prophecy in Ezekiel 26:12.

This prophecy of Ezekiel then is a case of double reference. Figuratively speaking, continental Tyre is thrown upon the screen in verses 7-11. Then it begins to fade, and at the same time the dim outlines of another siege, that of insular Tyre 500 years later, by Alexander the Great is thrown upon the screen. No other way of interpreting the passage can be found if one is willing to let the words stand as they appear in the text. The passage in Isaiah 7:10-17 is fashioned after the same pattern of the law of double reference. Thus in verses 13 and 14 is the prediction of the miraculous conception and virgin birth of Him who is called Immanuel, God in human form, the Messiah of Israel; but in verses 15-17 there is another prophecy of an altogether different child. The birth of this child was in the very near future from Isaiah's day, but centuries intervened between the fulfillment of these two predictions.

According to this same pattern, the prophets frequently spoke of the first coming of the Messiah and blended their predictions with oracles concerning His second advent. In such predictions the entire Christian Dispensation is passed over in silence, the two pictures blending one into the other. Isaiah 11:1,2, for example, foretells the first coming of the Messiah; verses 3-5, the second. Another illustration of the same law of double reference is found in Zechariah 9:9,10. Verse 9 undoubtedly is speaking of the first

coming of the Messiah; verse 10 is devoted entirely to the second advent; but the entire Christian Dispensation separating the two advents is passed over in silence. Thus the prophecy presenting the first coming and blending with the prediction concerning the Second Coming is in a way analogous to that foretelling the births of the two boys in Isaiah, chapter 7.

For further study of the matter of the virgin birth of the Messiah, the reader is asked to study carefully the birth narrative of John the Baptist and of Jesus as presented in the scholarly writing of Luke, the author of the third Record of the Gospel. For a thorough, exhaustive, and scholarly work on the virgin birth of the Messiah, one should read Dr. Gresham Machen's *The Virgin Birth of Christ*.

IV. FOUR TYPES OF PROPHECY

Actual examination shows that between one fourth and one third of the Bible is devoted to prophecy. Some predictions have been fulfilled, but the greater portion of them has not. What has not been fulfilled awaits materialization in the future.

The Bible is God's Word to man put in intelligible language; and God expects man to study, comprehend, and follow it. Though prophecy may be understood and obeyed, much speculation and guessing in regard to vast portions of it are indulged in.

In an effort to ferret out the future, many prophetic students have made out schedules and timetables, as it were, and have expected God to follow them. The Lord has His plans and purposes and marches majestically through the centuries toward the final goal, which is given in the Scriptures. He fulfills prophecy as written, and not as interpreted by the guessings and the speculations of men. Because of so very much unscientific exegesis of the Scriptures, many honest, sincere men and women have reached the conclusion that prophecy cannot be understood, and that it is a waste of time to try to understand it. There is no occasion for such gross and fantastic misinterpretation of prophecy. Essentially, history and prophecy are written upon the same basic principles. History tells what has occurred; predictive prophecy tells what

will be. The same fundamental laws of logic and of language govern in both instances. If one gets these facts clearly in mind and approaches prophecy just as he does history, recognizing that the same principles obtain in both cases, he is in a position to understand prophecy more nearly accurately than is usually the case.

All the prophecies in the Scriptures fall into four general types, or classifications. A sample of each of these is found in Matthew, chapter 2.

2 When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise-men¹ from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, 2 Where is He who is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and we have come to worship Him. 3 When Herod the king heard *it*, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him, 4 and he gathered together all the chief priests and scribes of the people and kept inquiring from them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 And they said to him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it has been written by the prophet:

6 And you Bethlehem, land of Judah, you are by no means the least
among the governors of Judah,
For out of you will come forth the One governing
Who will shepherd My people Israel.²

¹ Greek, magi.

² Micah 5:2.

7 Then Herod secretly called the Wise-men and inquired with exactness from them the time of the appearing star. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, Go and search out accurately concerning the child. When you have found *him*, report to me in order that I also may go and worship him. 9 When they had heard the king, they went on their way; and, behold, the star which they had seen in the east went before them until it came and stood over *the place* where the child was. 10 And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 11 And when they came into the house, they saw the child with Mary His mother; and, falling down, they worshipped Him. Then opening their treasures, they offered to Him gifts—gold, and

frankincense and myrrh. 12 And since they had been warned *of God* in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed by another way to their country.

13 And when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, saying. Arise and take the child and His mother and flee into Egypt, and be there until I speak to you; for Herod will seek the child to destroy Him. 14 Then he arose and took the child and His mother during the night, and departed into Egypt, 15 and was there until the death of Herod, in order that the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: Out of Egypt I called my son.³

³ Hosea 11:1.

16 When Herod saw that he had been mocked by the Wise-men, he became exceedingly furious and sent and killed all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all its regions, from two years and under, according to the time which he had accurately inquired from the Wise-men. 17 At that time was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

18 A voice in Ramah was heard,
Weeping and great lamentations.
Rachel weeping for her children;
And she was not willing to be comforted, because they were not.⁴

⁴ Jeremiah 31:15.

19 When Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream in Egypt, saying, 20 Arise, and take the child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the life of the child have died. 21 Then he arose, took the child and His mother, and entered into the land of Israel. 22 When, *however*, he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in the place of his father, Herod, he became fearful to go there; and, having been warned *of God* in a dream, he departed into the regions of Galilee; 23 and, going, he settled in a city called Nazareth, in order that there might be fulfilled that which was spoken through the prophets, that He should be called a Nazarene.

A. Literal Prophecy

The first type of prophecy consists of literal predictions. An illustration of this type is found in Matthew 2:6. The context shows that wise men from the East had come to Jerusalem, claiming that they had seen Messiah's star in the East. Thinking that the King of the Jews would be born in the royal palace, they went to Herod. When he heard their story, he became greatly agitated. As the news spread throughout the city, the people were alarmed. Herod, therefore, gathered together the chief priests and the scribes of the people and inquired of them where, according to prophecy, the Messiah would be born. The scribes, who were students of the Word, replied that He was to be born in Bethlehem of Judah—not Bethlehem of Galilee, as some have asserted. As proof of their position, they quoted from the Greek translation of Micah 5:2:

And you Bethlehem, land of Judah,
You are by no means the least among the governors of Judah,
For out of you will come forth the One governing who will
shepherd My people Israel (Matt. 2:6).

Where did the prophet say that Messiah would be born? The answer is “In Bethlehem, in the land of Judah.” Bethlehem meant Bethlehem, and Judah meant Judah. According to this prophecy, out of Bethlehem would come the One who was to be the governor and shepherd of God's people Israel. Thus Micah 5:2 is a literal prophecy of the town in which Messiah would be born. Hundreds of prophecies fall in this classification.

B. Literal Prophecy Plus a Typical Import

The second type of prophecy, the literal plus a typical meaning, is found in Matthew 2:15 and is a modified quotation from the Greek translation of Hosea 11:1: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” To see its significance, one must read the original statement in its context: “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” The expression “called my son out of Egypt” refers primarily and originally to the nation of Israel. In order, however, to understand this statement more accurately, one must

turn back to the original passage upon which Hosea 11:1 is based, namely, Exodus 4:22: "Thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Jehovah, Israel is my son, my first-born: 23 and I have said unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me; and thou hast refused to let him go: behold, I will slay thy son, thy first-born." In this passage, undoubtedly, the Lord calls the nation His son, His first-born. Using the terms *my son* and *my first-born* with the same significance as is found in Exodus 4:22, 23, Hosea the Prophet called Israel God's Son, God's first-born. Hence, when Israel was a child, that is, when Israel was in the childhood stage of development, God loved him, and called His son out of Egypt. The nation of Israel was in the land of Egypt. God loves His people and has a glorious plan for them. He called them forth under the leadership of Moses out of Egypt and brought them through the wilderness into Canaan, the Land of Promise. Israel has always borne a special relationship to God, which is represented by that of a son to his father.

When Herod planned to slay the infant Jesus, God told Joseph to take Mary and the child, flee into Egypt, and remain there until called forth. Joseph was the literal foster father of Jesus, and Mary was His natural mother. Egypt was a literal land. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus went down into literal Egypt, remained there for some time, and then came back to the land of Israel. Thus everything about the prophecy was literal. That which was literal, and which was spoken originally to Pharaoh about Israel, is applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, to His residence in Egypt, and to His final coming forth out of that country into the land of Israel. Israel's unique relationship to the Lord, called that of son to his father, typifies the relationship that exists between Jesus, the God-man, and God the Father. Thus this passage is an illustration of that classification of prophecies which is properly termed the literal plus the typical significance.

C. Literal Prophecy Plus an Application

The third type of prophecy, the literal plus an application, is illustrated in Matthew 2:18. When Herod realized that the Wise-men had returned to their land without telling him where the Christ-child was, he became very indignant and issued an order that all the male children of Bethlehem under two years of age should be slaughtered. When this decree was put into effect, there was great mourning and lamentation among the mothers of Bethlehem. Matthew states that Jeremiah 31:15 was fulfilled in this event:

A voice in Ramah was heard,
Weeping and great lamentations.
Rachel weeping for her children;
And she was not willing to be comforted,
because they are not (Matt. 2:18).

From the context out of which this passage is taken, one learns that Jeremiah was speaking of the sorrow and grief which the Jewish women experienced when they bade farewell to their sons who were in concentration camps in Ramah, and who were ready to be deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. This historic fact was a literal one. That which is spoken about the sorrow of the Hebrew mothers of Jeremiah's day was equally literal concerning the mothers of the babes of Bethlehem of the first century. As is quite evident, Matthew simply applies the language of this prophecy to a similar situation of his day. Thus this passage is a literal statement plus an application.

D. Literal Prophecy Plus a Summation

The fourth type of prophecy, the literal plus a summation, is illustrated in Matthew 2:23. Matthew states that Joseph brought Jesus and Mary to and settled in Nazareth, a little city in Galilee, "in order that there might be fulfilled that which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene" (Matt. 2:23).

Nazareth was a small city in Galilee. There is, however, no prophecy in the Scriptures saying that Messiah would be called a Nazarene: yet Matthew states that the family's locating in Nazareth was in fulfillment of such a prophecy. The word *Nazarene*

was in the first century a term of reproach and shame. When Philip spoke to Nathanael about Jesus, Nathanael asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). That Messiah would be despised and hated was foretold in Isaiah 53:3: "He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not." Since the name *Nazarene* was a term of reproach, and since there are prophecies indicating that the Messiah would be hated, Matthew simply summarizes the gist of such predictions by the use of the term *Nazarene*. Matthew 2:23, therefore, is an illustration of the fourth type of prophecy, which is the literal plus a summation.

Every prophecy can be logically placed in one of these four classifications. In the study of the prophetic Word, therefore, it is of paramount importance that these four types be mastered.

V. FOUR TYPES OF MESSIANIC PROPHECY

It is fitting to conclude this chapter by calling attention to the four specific types of Messianic prophecy in the writings of Moses and the Prophets. The first type deals with predictions relating to the Messiah's first coming. Examples of this classification of prophecy are found in the following passages of Scripture: Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Psalm 16:8-11; 40:6-10; 69:13-28; Isaiah 7:14; and Zechariah 13:7. This list could be greatly increased, but these passages are sufficient. In this type of prophecy the inspired writers speak of some event or events that are connected with Messiah's first advent. In Isaiah 7:14, for instance, is a prophecy referring to the virgin birth of the Messiah. But in most of the other passages of this list reference is made to something connected with His death, burial, or Resurrection.

The second type of Messianic prophecy focuses attention on His Second Coming and events connected with His majesty and power. Examples of this class of predictions are as follows: Psalm 2:7-9; Psalms 48, 72, 132; Isaiah 2:1-4; Isaiah, chapters 24, 32, 33, 35, 60; Jeremiah 3:11-18; 23:1-8; Ezekiel, chapter 34; Amos 9:11-15; Habakkuk, chapter 3; Zephaniah 3:8-20; and Zechariah, chapter 2.

The third type of Messianic predictions blends prophecies concerning the two comings of the one Messiah into a single picture. Examples of this type are found in Genesis 49:10; Psalm 22; Isaiah 9:5-7; 11:1-12; Zechariah 6:9-15 and 9:9,10.

The fourth type, the one discussed above in Book Two, Chapter X, gives the whole redemptive career of King Messiah, consisting of His two comings separated by the interval during which the rejected King of Israel is enthroned in glory in heaven.

When these facts are clearly seen, those passages that at first sight seem to be contradictory appear in their true light and are seen to be in perfect harmony with other Scriptures.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FORERUNNER OF MESSIAH AND HIS MINISTRY

ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

(Matthew 3:1-17)

3 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, **2** Repent, for the kingdom of heaven¹ has come to hand. **3** For this is the word spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
Make ready the way of the Lord,
Make His paths straight.²

4 John himself had his clothing of camel's hair and a leather girdle about his loins, and his food was locusts and wild honey. **5** Then Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region about the Jordan kept going out to him **6** and were being baptized in the Jordan River by him, confessing their sins. **7** But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them: You brood of vipers, who made known to you to flee from the coming wrath? **8** Produce fruit, therefore, worthy of repentance; **9** and do not begin to say within yourselves, We have Abraham as our father; for I say to you that God is able out of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. **10** And now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree, therefore, not producing good fruit is to be cut down and thrown into the fire. **11** I am baptizing you in water unto repentance, but the One coming after me is mightier than I, the sandals of whom I am not worthy to carry: this One will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire; **12** whose winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His threshing floor and will gather His grain into the granary, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire.

¹ Literally, *the kingdom of the heavens*.

² Isaiah 40:3.

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. 14 But John attempted to hinder Him, saying, I have need to be baptized by Thee, and art Thou coming to me? 15 Then Jesus replied and said to him, Permit it now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he permitted Him. 16 When Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water; and, behold, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon Him; 17 and, behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my Son, the beloved One, in whom I am well pleased.³

³ Isaiah 42:1.

I. JOHN THE BAPTIST THE HERALD OF THE MESSIAH

In Matthew, chapter 3, John the Baptist steps forth upon the historic scene without any introduction. Information, however, concerning his birth is found in Luke 1:5-25, 57-80. Isaiah the Prophet foresaw John as the herald announcing the coming of Jesus the Messiah (Isa. 40:3-5). Malachi likewise foresaw him as the royal herald (Mal. 3:1). These prophecies fall into the third classification of prophecy, the literal plus an application, as seen in the previous chapter. Both of these predictions are quoted in the New Testament to prove that John was foretold by the prophets. These predictions, while they speak of John as a forerunner of Messiah at His first coming, present the Messiah at His Second Coming and His being preceded by a herald, who will be none other than Elijah the Prophet (Mal. 4:5,6). Josephus, the Jewish historian, in an undisputed passage, refers to the ministry of John the Baptist.

II. JOHN'S MESSAGE (Matthew 3:1-12)

John broke the silence of four hundred years, the interbiblical period, by announcing that the "kingdom of heaven" had come to hand. He, therefore, called upon the nation, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come to hand." John made the plain announcement regarding the kingdom, but did not explain what he meant by the expression "kingdom of heaven." His manner of announcing it proves that he assumed on the part of his audience a knowledge of this kingdom.

What kingdom did John announce? To this question theologians give two answers. One group of students believe that the kingdom which John announced is what is known as the literal earthly Messianic kingdom. When this kingdom is established, the Messiah will reign in Jerusalem over a converted world. At that time the curse will be lifted from the earth, and the glory of God will encircle the earth as the waters cover the sea. Promises relating to this literal reign of King Messiah are found in such passages as Isaiah 2:1-4; 11:5-16, and chapter 35. Numerous prophecies foretell the glorious reign of King Messiah. Other Bible students understand John's announcement of the kingdom as a prophecy regarding the establishment of a spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, which will spread over the world by the preaching of the gospel.

Those who interpret John's announcement as referring to the literal earthly Messianic kingdom insist that there is but one kingdom foretold in the Old Testament, the earthly reign of Messiah. They deny that a spiritual kingdom of the Messiah is revealed in the Old Testament. Since they believe that the literal earthly kingdom is the only one foretold, they maintain that it is obviously the one that John announced.

These interpreters also call attention to the fact that there was a growing opposition to Jesus practically from the beginning of His ministry. Nevertheless, in the first twelve chapters of Matthew, Jesus and the apostles offered to the Jewish people the earthly Messianic kingdom if they would accept Him as King. About the middle of His ministry certain of the leaders of the Jews, according to Matthew 12:14, took counsel how they might kill him. When they took this attitude, these interpreters further believe, Jesus no longer promised to establish the earthly kingdom at that time. On the contrary, they say,

He showed that what would be done was the establishment of a spiritual kingdom, which is described in the parables of Matthew, chapter 13. In the first twelve chapters of Matthew, therefore, the expression “kingdom of heaven” means the literal earthly reign of Messiah. After the crisis just mentioned, they explain, Jesus revealed to His audience that the earthly kingdom would not be set up then, but that the kingdom which would be established would be a spiritual one. This spiritual kingdom is interpreted as the church—broadly speaking, Christianity.

On the other hand, those who claim that the kingdom announced by John and later by Jesus was a spiritual kingdom cite definite prophecies in the Scriptures which foretell God’s setting Israel aside temporarily and His calling forth from among all nations a people to take the place of Israel in His program at the present time and to carry on His work—the program of giving the truth to the world. To substantiate this position, they call attention to Deuteronomy, chapter 32, the national anthem of Israel, wherein is revealed the course of Jewish history through the centuries. In verses 15-18 Moses shows that the people of Israel, after entering the land of promise, corrupt themselves by going after other gods. In verses 19-25 he shows how abominable to the Lord idolatry among His ancient people Israel is. According to this prediction, the people of Israel turn from the Lord God to idols. Thus they move God to jealousy. Then the Lord declares, “They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God: They have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those that are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. For a fire is kindled in mine anger, And burneth unto the lowest Sheol, and devoureth the earth with its increase, And setteth on fire the foundations of the mountains” (Deut. 32:21, 22). In this prediction the Lord declares that, because the people of Israel provoke Him and move him to jealousy by those that are not gods, He, therefore, provokes them to jealousy with them that are not a people. Obviously, this language is a play on words. The nation of Israel is the Chosen People of God. When they provoke Him to jealousy with non-gods, He moves them to jealousy by a non-people—those who are not the favored race. After making this prediction, the Lord tells how deeply His anger is being stirred by their spiritual delinquencies. In verses 23-25 He speaks of the terrible

catastrophe that, we know, overtook Israel in A.D. 70. Then, according to verse 26, the Lord scatters the disobedient people among the nations.

Isaiah, the statesman prophet, likewise sees a time when people of all nations will come together and will find the Lord. Hear him: "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). In verses 2-7 of this prophecy, God shows that, at the time that He accepts other people, Israel is set aside temporarily because of moral and spiritual delinquencies.

In the Jewish section of the Epistle to the Romans—chapters 9-11—the inspired Apostle discusses the present state of the Hebrew people. In Romans 10:19-21 he shows that both Moses and Isaiah foresaw and foretold the time that God would reject Israel temporarily as His chosen nation through whom to work and would call forth and accept people of all nations to constitute a group known as the body of Christ, who would serve Him and carry on His work at the present time.

Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, foresaw the same situation. In his day religion in Israel was at a very low ebb. The people who continued the worship had perverted ideas regarding the holiness of God and their worship of Him. He, therefore, expressed the wish that someone would lock the doors of the Temple and stop the worship that was being conducted there, because it was futile—yes, abominable to the Lord.

10 Oh that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle *fire* on mine altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, saith Jehovah of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. 11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name *shall be* great among the Gentiles, saith Jehovah of hosts (Mal. 1:10, 11).

In this prediction the inspired prophet declares that, when the acceptable worship of the Temple has ceased, people from all nations will bring appropriate sacrifices and offer incense to God. Here the prophet speaks of the worship of true believers among

all the nations in terms of the Mosaic ritualism. He clearly predicts that Israel will be set aside and that a spiritual worship will be inaugurated in which people from all nations will engage. From these predictions it is clear that Moses, Isaiah, and Malachi foretold the establishment of a spiritual kingdom upon Israel's being rejected temporarily and set aside.

Further confirmation of this position is found in Isaiah 61:1-3:

1 The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening *of the prison* to them that are bound; 2 to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified.

In verse 1 of this passage, the Holy Trinity is clearly revealed. Impersonating the Messiah, Isaiah declares that the Lord God has anointed Him with the Spirit of the Lord, who is none other than the Holy Spirit. Thus the three persons of the Holy Trinity appear here: God the Father; God the Holy Spirit; and God the Messiah, the Son.

One of the purposes for which Messiah is anointed is "to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor and the day of vengeance of our God; ..." Two periods of time are here mentioned: the year of Jehovah's favor and the day of vengeance of our God. As has been seen in Book Two, Chapter XIII, the first period is compared to a year; the second, to a day. Obviously the first is the longer one, since it is compared to a year, whereas the second one is a very short one, being thought of as a day. One may logically assume, moreover, that an approximation of the ratio which exists between a year and a day likewise obtains between these two periods. The first is an era of grace; the second is a time of judgment. The day of vengeance of Jehovah obviously is another name for what is known in the writings of the Prophets as the great and terrible day of Jehovah. See, for example, Zephaniah 1:14-18. The length of this period of wrath is seven years, as is shown by a careful study of related passages. Since at least an

approximation of the ratio existing between a year and a day exists between these two periods, and since the latter is of seven years' duration, the former can be logically two thousand or more years. From Isaiah 61:1-3, it is clear that this long period of grace is the present Christian Dispensation, during which God is extending mercy in the fulness of abundance and is calling out from among all people those who want the truth, and who will stand for righteousness. At the same time Israel, as a nation, figuratively speaking, is on the siding. This long period of grace is to be followed by the relatively short seven-year period of Jehovah's wrath.

The same fundamental idea is set forth in Isaiah 42:1-4:

1 Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. 2 He will not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench: he will bring forth justice in truth. 4 He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law.

Verse 1 shows Messiah beginning His work, which verses 2 and 3 reveal to be a spiritual ministry. He is not a rabble-rouser; neither is He a dictator. On the contrary, He comes to establish justice upon the earth "in truth," by the proclamation and dissemination of the truth. According to verse 4, when He makes His first appearance on earth in fulfillment of this prediction, He will not establish a reign of righteousness; but, instead, He will launch a preaching ministry. Until He returns, the nations must wait for His law by which they will be governed. This passage shows also that the spiritual phase of the kingdom of God, foretold by the Prophets, comes first on the program of God. It is to be followed by the visible, literal, earthly reign of King Messiah at His Second Coming.

III. THE WRATH TO COME

(Matthew 3:7)

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them: You brood of vipers, who made known to you to flee from the coming wrath?

John the Baptist spoke to the Pharisees and Sadducees who manifested a carping, bitter spirit and asked them who had warned them to flee from the wrath to come (Matt. 3:7). Then he divulged the fact that the axe was lying at the root of the trees and that every tree which was not bringing forth fruit would be hewed down, cast into the fire, and burned. He was, of course, speaking figuratively of the people as trees and of Jehovah as the woodman with His axe in readiness to cut down all trees that were not bearing good fruit. Since John said that the axe was lying at the root of the trees “even now,” he was obviously talking about the generation to which he was ministering. God poured out His wrath upon that generation in the catastrophic events of the war with Rome which culminated in the overthrow of the nation in A.D. 70.

In the Tribulation God will again pour out His wrath upon Israel. At that time He will purge out all the dross from the gold and silver and will destroy all the wicked from among the righteous. Thus He will purify the entire nation. The honest spiritual ones will be saved and will enter the Messianic kingdom. The wrath to come which John foretells is obviously the wrath of the day of Jehovah foretold many times by the prophets.

IV. BAPTISM IN WATER, IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND IN FIRE

(Matthew 3:11, 12)

A. Baptism in Water

5 Then Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region about the Jordan kept going out to him
6 and were being baptized in the Jordan River by him, confessing their sins (Matt. 3:5,6).

John the Baptist called upon the entire nation—both religious and non-religious people—to repent and submit to baptism. Many accepted his teaching and were baptized of him in the River Jordan, “confessing their sins.” Some of the leaders, however, refused to do so:

And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. 30 But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him (Luke 7:29, 30).

Luke speaks of John’s baptism as a “baptism of repentance unto remission of sins ...” (Luke 3:3). It was the outward visible expression whereby the penitent Israelites virtually declared to the world that they had repented of their sins and intended to forsake them. There was no efficacy or cleansing power in the waters of baptism. When, however, anyone under conviction of sin and by faith submitted to John’s baptism, he was forgiven.

In the great commission Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize their converts:

18 And Jesus came and talked to them, saying, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto Me. 19 Go, 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 that I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you all the days, *even* unto the consummation of the age (Matt. 28:18-20).

Christ’s baptism differs from John’s in that it is administered “into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

B. Baptism in the Holy Spirit

I am baptizing you in water unto repentance, but the One coming after me is mightier than I, the sandals of whom I am not worthy to carry: this One will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire ... (Matt. 3:11).

John spoke of baptizing the people in water unto repentance. John's baptism was simply a rite or ceremony, an outward symbol and a pledge on the part of the one being baptized that he would accept the Messiah when He appeared. In contrast with this purely legalistic, symbolic ordinance, John spoke of the work which Christ performs in the heart of the believer—the one accepting Him—in terms of the ordinance of baptism: "I baptize you in water ... He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit ..." Obviously this language is a play on words.¹ John baptized in water; the coming Messiah, declared John, would baptize in the Holy Spirit. Thus what John did for his converts was to administer an outward symbolic ordinance; what the Messiah performs is an inward work of grace in the heart of the believer. In other words, this inward work of grace is regeneration of the believer by the Holy Spirit. That this interpretation of John's language is correct is seen by a study of I Corinthians 12:13: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit." John had said, "I indeed baptize you in water, but he [the Messiah] will baptize you in the Holy Spirit." This language is echoed in the Corinthian passage: "For in one spirit [not in water, as in the case of John's baptism] were we all baptized into one body." The spirit in this passage, therefore, is thought of as the element in which the penitent believer is baptized. In being thus spiritually baptized, he is brought into the one body, into fellowship with Christ and with all believers.

Thus the work of regeneration of the believer is thought of as baptism in the Holy Spirit. Everyone who has been regenerated and saved has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is, therefore, a spiritual experience which the believer enjoys when he accepts Christ as Saviour and Lord.

The one who has thus been baptized in the Spirit into the one body is urged from time to time to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-21).

¹ Paronomasia, a play on words, is one of the most important and most frequently used figures of speech in the Scriptures. The failure to recognize it brings nothing but confusion and misunderstanding.

C. *Baptism in Fire*

John the Baptist said that Christ would “baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire” (Matt. 3:11). To whom was John speaking? The answer is found in verse 7: “When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said ...” These religious leaders were there to criticize and to obstruct the work as much as possible, but were not seeking God. Proof of this interpretation is seen in what John said to them: “You offspring of vipers ...” At the same time there were many sincere people who had come in their quest for God. John, therefore, was addressing a mixed audience. Some of these, sincerely accepting Christ, would be baptized in the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, the carping, criticizing religious leaders were warned that they would be baptized in fire. That this interpretation is correct is seen by the words that follow:

... whose winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His threshing floor and will gather His grain into the granary, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire (Matt. 3:12).

To be baptized in the Holy Spirit is to be regenerated, to be saved; to be baptized in fire is to be banished from the presence of God and the glory of His might forever.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, *even* the lake of fire. 15 And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

V. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS
(Matthew 3:13-17)

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. 14 But John attempted to hinder Him, saying, I have need to be baptized by Thee, and art Thou coming to me? 15 Then Jesus replied and said to him, Permit *it* now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he permitted Him. 16 When Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water; and, behold, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* coming upon Him; 17 and, behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my Son, the beloved One, in whom I am well pleased.³

³ Isaiah 42:1.

John the Baptist began what might be called a back-to-God movement in Israel. He, therefore, called upon the entire nation—the leaders and laymen alike—to repent, to confess their sins, and to come back to God. When men, as individuals, groups, and nations, forsake God, the only way for them to escape disaster is to do as John said: repent, confess, forsake their sins, and return to God with all their hearts.

John engaged in his ministry largely along the Jordan River. Just where, we cannot say. The traditional site of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan is about five miles north of the Dead Sea. But the place of the baptism is immaterial.

Jesus left Nazareth, His home, and went to John to be baptized. Though John did not know Jesus personally, he recognized Jesus at once as his superior. John, therefore, recoiled from baptizing Him, protesting, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Jesus assured him that it was proper and fitting that they both should submit to every righteous ordinance of God. Then John ceased to object and immediately baptized Jesus. When he did so, the heavens were rent asunder, as it were, and the Holy Spirit in the visible form of a dove descended out of heaven and lighted upon Jesus. There came at the same time a voice to John the Baptist saying, "This is my Son, the beloved One, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). This scene

was most impressive: Jesus the Messiah of Israel was baptized; God the Father spoke audibly, so that John could understand; the Holy Spirit descended from heaven in the form of a dove and lighted upon Jesus. Thus at the baptism were present the three persons constituting the God-head. (For a full discussion of this point, see Volume I of this Messianic Series, *The God of Israel*.)

That three divine personalities constitute the Godhead is reflected in the important utterance of Moses, which declares, when literally translated: “Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity” (Deut. 6:4). They are one, viewed from one standpoint, but are three when looked at from another. They are one in essence and nature, but three in personality.

In a number of passages, two of these divine personalities appear on the stage of action. In other passages three are seen—but never more than three. When one takes these facts into consideration, he is forced to believe that the Godhead exists in the form of three persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus was baptized, a voice from heaven said: “This is my Son, the beloved One, in whom I am well pleased.” These words are an echo of Isaiah 42:1: “Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.” Instantly one sees that Matthew identified Jesus as the servant of whom Isaiah in chapter 42:1-4 spoke. A comparison of this passage with the record of the baptismal scene of Jesus (Matt. 3:13-17) shows that Isaiah in his prediction, by prophetic insight, saw the Messiah immediately after His baptism when the Spirit came upon Him.

Isaiah uses the word *servant* with three connotations. In certain contexts, as in chapter 41:8ff., *servant* refers to the faithful remnant of Israel in the end time, whom God will restore to the land of the fathers and will make the head of the nations instead of the tail, as they are at the present time. In Isaiah 42:1-4, therefore, the facts of the context indicate that the servant is none other than the personal Messiah, an individual, in whom God is delighted, and who does God’s pleasure, and God’s pleasure alone. But in chapter 42:18-22, the word *servant* refers to the entire nation of Israel, as the facts of the immediate context indicate. For other passages which speak of the Messiah

as the servant, see Isaiah 49:1-7, chapter 50, and 52:13-53:12. An examination of the context of these passages shows that *servant* denotes an individual—the Messiah—the spotless, sinless one. Matthew thus identifies Jesus of Nazareth as this servant of prophetic forecast and as King of the Jews.

CHAPTER XX

THE OPENING SCENES OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

(Matthew 4:1-25)

4 Then Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil. 2 And having fasted forty days and forty nights, He later became hungry. 3 And the tempter came to Him and said, If Thou art the Son of God, command that these stones may become bread. 4 But He replied and said, It is written, not upon bread only shall man live, but upon every word proceeding through the mouth of God.¹ 5 Then the devil took Him to the holy city, stood Him on the small wing of the temple, 6 and said to Him, If Thou art the Son of God, throw Thyself down; for it is written:

To His angels will He give instructions concerning Thee:
and Upon their hands they will bear Thee,
Lest perchance Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.²

¹ Deuteronomy 8:3.

² Psalm 91:11, 12.

7 Jesus then said, Again it is written, You shall not make trial of the Lord your God.³ 8 Again, the devil took Him into an exceedingly high mountain, and showed to Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, 9 and said to Him, all these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then Jesus said to him, Be gone, Satan; for it is written, The Lord your God you shall worship, and to Him only shall you render service.⁴ 11 Then the devil left Him; and, behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

³ Deuteronomy 6:16.

⁴ Deuteronomy 6:13.

12 When *Jesus* heard that John had been arrested, He departed into Galilee. 13 Leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14 in order that the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah, the prophet, saying:

15 Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,

The way of the sea beyond the Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles,

16 The people who sat in darkness Have seen a great light,

And to those sitting in the region and shadow of death,

Light has arisen to them.⁵

⁵ Isaiah 9:1,2.

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.

18 And as Jesus was walking along the sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, throwing their casting net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

19 And He said to them, Come, follow me, and I will make you fishermen of men. 20 Then immediately they left their nets and followed Him. 21 And as He went from there, He saw other two brothers, James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, repairing their nets; and He called them. 22 And immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him.

23 And He went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every malady⁶ among the people. 24 And the report of Him went forth into all Syria, and they brought to Him all those who were sick with various diseases and were suffering from torturing afflictions—demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics—and He healed them. 25 Great multitudes followed Him from Galilee, Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

⁶ i.e., every type of disease and malady among them.

Whenever God moves forward in His majestic tread through the centuries, Satan becomes especially active, attempting to counteract what God is doing. This fact was quite evident when the Almighty delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage and brought His beloved people to Sinai in order to make His revelation known to them. As soon as Moses began to perform miracles, the magicians began to duplicate them. They were able by the power of Satan to produce miracles similar to those of Moses, but they soon reached a point beyond which they could not go.

When Jesus of Nazareth, the Hebrew Messiah, came into the world to redeem fallen, lost humanity, God began to step forward in a majestic manner in executing His plan of the ages. The devil was present and endeavored with his utmost ingenuity, power, and skill to thwart God at every turn. But, of course, he could not. In Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13 are accounts of this titanic struggle between the Lord Jesus and the devil.

I. SATAN'S ACTIVITIES

A. *Satan's Attack on God*

On every hand there is evidence of conflict with and enmity against God. When God created the universe, it was in perfect order, for all His works are perfect (Deut. 32:4). There is abundant evidence throughout the earth that a mighty struggle has raged between opposing forces and continues to the present time. God and those who are on His side are for order and for the good. There is also an evil kingdom recognized in the Scriptures, led by that mighty being Satan, who is opposing God and all that is good. (What is seen, generally speaking, in the physical world can be understood only by what is found in the Scriptures.) In Ephesians 6:10-20 one learns much concerning this kingdom of darkness, over which Satan rules. Satan is a personal being. Concerning his creation and his fall, much is recorded in Ezekiel 28:10-19. He was the highest, most powerful creature whom God in His omnipotence and omniscience could bring into existence. He was called the anointed cherub, the cherub that covereth, and was in command of the great hosts of God. On account of his high official position in the

government of God and of his beauty, wisdom, strength, and power, he became puffed up with pride. He conceived the idea that he could match swords with the Almighty and attempted to do so. Thereupon he was cast from his high and holy position and was demoted to an inferior position in the universe. He still has great power and is indeed wise and sagacious. Though in a fallen condition, he has access to the throne of God. This fact is quite evident from a perusal of Job, chapter 1. Like Hannibal of old, who swore eternal vengeance against Rome, Satan has sworn everlasting vengeance against God, Israel, and all who are on the Lord's side.

B. Satan's Attack on Israel

A prophetic utterance showing his hatred against Israel appears in Zechariah 3:1-5.

1 And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand to be his adversary. 2 And Jehovah said unto Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, 0 Satan; yea, Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? 3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the angel. 4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take the filthy garments from off him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with rich apparel. 5 And I said, Let them set a clean mitre upon his head. So they set a clean mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments; and the angel of Jehovah was standing by.

Israel is called God's servant, especially by Isaiah. In the servant passages of the Scriptures, the significance of this term can be determined only by the facts of each context. Without question the servant of Isaiah 42:18-22 is the nation of Israel. Any individual or group that sustains such a relationship to the Almighty is an object of Satan's hatred and activity.

Frequently God presents truths and spiritual realities under the imagery of material objects and scenes. In Zechariah 3:1-5 a court trial yields itself most favorably to the expression of the thought. The judge seated on the bench is none other than "the angel of Jehovah," who is one of the divine personalities constituting the Trinity. This fact is

proved by an examination of the various occurrences of this expression. See my volume *Messiah: His Nature and Person*, Chapter II.

The prosecuting attorney is Satan, who is standing at the right hand of Joshua the high priest to be his adversary. Like some unprincipled attorney, Satan distorts facts and truths in an effort to make a plausible case against the defendant. This fact is echoed in the statement of the judge: "Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan." The defendant is "Joshua the high priest." Is one to understand that "Joshua the high priest" is to be interpreted literally? No. This truth is shown by the following fact: When Satan hurls his charges against Joshua the high priest, Jehovah the judge rebukes him, saying: "Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan; Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Joshua the high priest, therefore, symbolizes Jerusalem and the Jewish people.

Joshua the high priest is clothed "with filthy garments." Doubtless these garments symbolize, in this case, moral and spiritual filth. One may be certain that Satan bases his entire case against Joshua upon his being clothed with filthy garments, for the judge in reply orders the court attendants—probably the angels—to remove the filthy garments from the defendant. When they do so, the judge declares: "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with rich apparel" (Zech. 3:4). Furthermore the judge orders the attendants, saying: "Let them set a clean mitre upon his head." Thus the trial results in the removal of the filthy garments from Joshua, clothing him in clean raiment, and placing the priestly mitre on his head.

This entire symbolic presentation sets forth, therefore, Satan's prosecution of Israel and the nation's final acquittal by Jehovah, the Judge of the universe, who always does right (Gen.18:25).

This presentation assumes, therefore, that the people of Israel take the right attitude toward Jehovah and rectify, as far as possible, the wrongs of which they are guilty. In other words, the penitent remnant repudiate the national sin of rejecting Messiah and, looking to Him, plead for Him to return and to deliver them (Zech. 12:10-13:1).

C. Satan's Attack on Jesus

After God had acknowledged Jesus as His Son in a unique and special manner, the Spirit of God led Him out into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. As one learns from Mark 1:12, 13, the devil tempted Him for forty days. During this time, He was in the desert with the wild animals and Satan. After forty days, the devil delivered his three major strokes, trying to tempt Jesus through the desire of the flesh, through the desire of the eye, and through the vainglory of life (I John 2:16).

A fast of forty days is a grueling experience. When these days were ended, hunger seemed to grip Jesus in a very special and peculiar manner. Matthew and Luke state that He became hungry. Doubtless He was hungry all the time, but at the end of the period the hunger began to gnaw at His vitals as never before.

Since Jesus, being in the form of a man, was in this weakened condition, Satan came to Him and said, "If Thou art the Son of God, speak to these stones that they may become bread." This statement is a first-class conditional sentence in the Greek and assumes that the condition is true. In other words, I could paraphrase the thought and reasoning of Satan in the following manner: "Since Thou art the Son of God, speak to these stones that they may become bread," Satan knew what God had said at the baptismal scene with reference to Christ's being His Son in a unique and special manner. Satan's course of reasoning was probably as follows: "God admits that Thou art His Son, and Thou likewise believest it. He is supposed to take care of all His creatures, but look at the condition in which Thou findest Thyself; Thou hast not had any food for forty days. Is that the way He treats His Son?" Temptation could not have been put more subtly and more powerfully. But Jesus, having set His face like a flint to do the will of God, spurned this suggestion, taking His stand upon the written Word of God, saying, "It is written, not upon bread only shall man live, but upon every word proceeding through the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4 and Deut. 8:3).

Satan then took Him to the Holy City. They went out on a wing of the Temple, which overlooked the deep valley on the east side of the city. In the presence of the throng of worshipers there assembled, Satan tried to get Jesus to leap from this height into what

was, at that time, a deep gorge below, calling His attention to what is written of Him in Psalm 91 concerning God's taking care of Him:

To His angels will He give instructions concerning Thee: and,
Upon their hands they will bear Thee,
Lest perchance Thou dash Thy foot against a stone
(Ps. 91:11,12 as quoted in Matt. 4:6).

Instantly Jesus replied, "You shall not make trial of the Lord your God." If Jesus had taken the suggestion of Satan, He would have leaped from the pinnacle of the Temple into the yawning gorge below; but, by this act, He would have been putting God to a test as to whether or not He would fulfill the promise. But to leap from this place in making trial of God was contrary to the spirit and the teaching of the Scriptures. Hence Jesus spurned the suggestion, calling Satan's attention to that which had been written.

Satan's third and last attempt on this occasion was to take Jesus to an exceedingly high mountain and to show him in a moment of time the kingdoms of the world, all of which would be His, if He would simply prostrate Himself and worship Satan—just one time. This short cut to power, the tempter thought, would appeal to Jesus; for had it not been to snatch the kingdoms of the world out of his grasp that Jesus had come to earth? Satan, therefore, volunteered to surrender everything to Jesus if He would only bow the knee in worship. To do so would be conceding to Satan divine authority and prerogatives. Such a thought Jesus spurned with contempt and again took His stand upon that which was written: "You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve."

Thus, defeated each time, Satan left the Lord—but only for a season. He will come to everyone who is on God's side and will do all in his power to discourage and to lead into forbidden paths anyone who is trying to serve God. He will come in disguise, for he transforms himself as an angel of light.

13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. 15 It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works (II Cor.11:13-15).

II. JESUS ESTABLISHING HIS HEADQUARTERS IN CAPERNAUM

(Matthew 4:12-16)

When John the Baptist was imprisoned by Herod Antipas, Jesus left Judea and went into Galilee. The ministries of John and Jesus overlapped for a while. But upon John's being thrown into prison, Jesus established His headquarters at Capernaum (Matt. 4:12-16).

III. THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

(Matthew 4:17-25)

According to Matthew 4:17, Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." He struck the same note which John the Baptist sounded.

After being tempted, Jesus came back to the place where John was baptizing. At that time He gained four or five of His early disciples who followed Him in the beginning of His ministry, and who with Him attended the first Passover of His ministry (John 2:13ff.). When Jesus went to Jerusalem at that passover season, He continued His ministry in Jerusalem and in Judea for approximately six months. Then He went northward through Samaria into Galilee. But His early disciples seem to have left Him in Samaria, preceded Him to Capernaum, and resumed their old occupation of fishing. When Jesus arrived in Capernaum, He saw these disciples fishing and called them again. They immediately responded and continued with Him to the very end.

Jesus engaged in a preaching, teaching, and healing ministry. He laid emphasis upon the teaching and the preaching. He engaged in a healing ministry because He was God in human form and His heart went out to suffering humanity. His healing ministry as recorded in the New Testament differs vastly from the healing campaigns which we often see today.

CHAPTER XXI

THE MANIFESTO OF JESUS THE MESSIAH ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (Matthew 5:1-7:29)

5 When *Jesus* saw the multitudes, He went up into the mountain; and, when He had sat down, His disciples came to Him; 2 and He opened His mouth and began teaching them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be satisfied.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the sons of God.

10 Blessed are those who have been persecuted on account of righteousness: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when *men* shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you, speaking falsely, because of me. 12 Keep on rejoicing and keep on exulting: for your reward in heaven is great: for in like manner they persecuted the prophets who were before you. 13 You are the salt of the earth; but, if the salt has become tasteless, with what shall it be made salty again? It is good for nothing still, except to be cast away to be trodden under foot by men. 14 You are the light of the world. A city built upon a hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do *men* light a lamp and place it under the bushel, but upon the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In like manner let your light shine before men in order that they may see your good works and praise your Father who is in heaven.

17 Do not begin to think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I did not come to destroy, but to fill *them* to the full. 18 For in solemn truth I am telling you, Until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle by no means shall pass away from the law until all comes to pass. 19 Whoever, therefore, breaks one of these, the least commandments, and teaches men thus, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I am telling you,

that except your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, by no means shall you enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21 You have heard that it was said to men of old, You shall not murder, and whoever murders is liable to court action. 22 But I am telling you that everyone who is angry with his brother is liable to court action; and whoever says to his brother, Empty *head*, is liable to the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, You stupid one,¹ shall be liable to the Gehenna of fire. 23 If, therefore, you are offering your gift at the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave there your gift before the altar, and go and first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Be favorably disposed toward your adversary quickly while you are with him in the way, lest perchance the adversary deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the attendant, and you be cast into prison; 26 in solemn truth I am telling you that by no means will you come out therefrom until you pay the last farthing.

¹ Greek is *Moreh*, a Hebrew word of condemnation.

27 You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery. 28 But I am telling you that every one looking upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery in his heart with her. 29 But if your right eye cause you to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it away from you, for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish and not your whole body be cast into Gehenna. 30 And if your right hand cause you to stumble, cut it off and cast it from you, for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body should go away into Gehenna.

31 And it has been said, Whoever divorces his wife, let him give to her a certificate of divorce. 32 But I am telling you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the matter of fornication, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries her who has been divorced commits adultery.

33 Again, you have heard that it was said to the men of old, You shall not swear falsely, but shall fulfill your oath to the Lord. 34 But I am telling you not to swear at all; neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; 35 nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; 36 nor shall you swear by your head, for you are not able to make one hair white or black. 37 Let your word be, Yes, yes, *and* No, no; but that which is more than these is of the evil *one*.

38 You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. 39 But I am saying to you not to oppose the evil *doer*, but whoever strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him also the other; 40 and to the one who wishes to go to law and to take your undergarment, give to him also the outer garment; 41 and whoever forces you to go a mile, go with him two. 42 To him who asks you, give; and the one who wishes to borrow from you, do not turn away.

43 You have heard that it has been said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. 44 But I am saying to you, keep on loving your enemies, and pray in behalf of those who persecute you, 45 in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven, for He makes His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and He sends the rain upon the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same thing? 47 And if you salute your brethren only, what do you do *more than others*? Do not even the heathen do the same thing? 48 You shall, therefore, be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.

6 Keep on taking heed not to do your acts of righteousness in the presence of men, to be seen by them; but, if you do, you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. 2 When, therefore, you perform a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you, just as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, in order that they may be praised of men; in solemn truth I am telling you, they *already* have their reward. 3 But when you perform an act of mercy, do not let your left *hand*, know what your right does, 4 in order that your charitable deed may be in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 5 And whenever you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites; for they love to pray, having taken their stand in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, in order that they may be seen of men. In solemn truth I am telling you, They already have their reward. 6 But when you pray, enter into your inner chamber; and, after you have locked the door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7 And as you are praying, do not start repeating idly *the same words* as the heathen do, for they think that in their much speaking they shall be heard. 8 Be not, therefore, like them; for God your Father knows of what you have need before you ask Him. 9 In this way, therefore, always pray: Our Father who art in heaven, may Thy name be revered. 10 Let thy kingdom come; let Thy will be done as in heaven, also upon earth. 11 Give us our daily bread today. 12 And forgive us our debts as also we have forgiven those indebted to us. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil *one*. 14 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your Father, who is in heaven, will forgive you; 15 but, if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.

16 And when you fast, be not as the hypocrites—of a gloomy countenance; for they disfigure their faces in order that they may be seen of men *to be* fasting; in solemn truth I am telling you, They already have their reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 in order that you may not appear to men as fasting, but to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

19 Stop laying up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal; 20 but keep on laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves do not break through or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there will also be your heart. 22 The light of the body is the eye. If then your eye is single, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is diseased, your whole body will be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness. 24 No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and will love the other, or he will cleave to the one and will despise the other. You are unable to serve God and money. 25 Therefore I am telling you, Stop being anxious for your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or for your body, what you will wear. Is not the life more than the food and the body more than the raiment? 26 Look at the birds of the heaven, for they do not sow or reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds these. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which one of you by being anxious is able to add to his stature one cubit? 28 And concerning clothing, why are you anxious? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they do not labor neither spin; 29 but I tell you that Solomon in all his glory was not robed as one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *green* today and tomorrow is cast into the oven, will He not much more *clothe you*, O you of little faith? 31 Do not then start being anxious and say, What shall we eat or what shall we drink, or with what shall we be clothed? 32 for all these things the heathen constantly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you are in need of all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Do not then start to be anxious for tomorrow, for the morrow will take care of its own things; *to have a sufficient supply of the necessities of life* for the day is the *occasion of the* evil thereof.

7 Stop criticizing, in order that you may not be criticized; 2 for with what criticism you criticize, you shall be criticized; and with what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you. 3 Why do you keep looking at the speck which is in your brother's eye, but never consider the beam that is in your own eye? 4 Or how will you say to your brother, Permit me to cast the speck out of your eye; and, behold, a beam is in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite first cast the

beam out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to cast the speck out of the eye of your brother.

6 Do not start giving that which is holy to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine, lest perchance they trample them with their feet, turn, and tear you to pieces.

7 Keep on asking, and it shall be given to you; keep on seeking, and you shall find; keep on knocking, and *the door* shall be opened to you. 8 For everyone who keeps on asking receives; and the one who keeps on seeking finds; and to him who keeps on knocking, *the door* shall be opened. 9 Or what man of you is there who, if his son asks for a loaf, will give to him a stone; 10 or, if he asks *for* a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If, therefore, you who are evil know to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good *things* to those who ask him? 12 All things, therefore, whatsoever you will that men do to you in like manner also keep on doing to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

13 Enter through the narrow gate; for broad is the gate, and wide is the road leading to destruction, and there are many who are entering in through it; 14 for narrow is the gate, and difficult the way leading to life, and few are they who find it.

15 Constantly watch, out for false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but within they are devouring wolves. 16 By their fruits you will know them. Men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles; do they? 17 In like manner, every good tree produces good fruit, but the worthless tree produces bad fruit. 18 A good tree is unable to bear bad fruit; neither does a worthless tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree not bearing good fruit is to be cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Indeed, therefore, by their fruits you shall know them. 21 Not every one saying to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one doing the will of My Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out demons, and in Thy name do many mighty works? 23 And then will I confess to them, I never knew you; depart from me, workers of lawlessness.

24 Every one, then, who listens to these My words and does them will be like the wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock. 26 But everyone who listens to these My words and does them not will be like the foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain descended, and the rivers came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

28 And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were astounded at His teaching, 29 for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

In a regular election year in America the people choose their president, senators, and representatives to the congress, as well as state, county, and municipal officials. Candidates tell the people, the voters from whom they wish support, the things for which they stand. Unfortunately, when elected, they very frequently forget their campaign promises. It is proper, however, for them to tell the people the principles for which they stand and then to stand for them. In doing so, they are only meeting their obligations.

Soon after Jesus had begun His public ministry in Galilee, great throngs of people from the countryside and the surrounding nations began to flock in great droves to hear the new and unique preacher as He delivered an unusual message of courage and hope. Matthew states, "Great multitudes followed Him from Galilee, Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judea, and beyond the Jordan" (Matt. 4:25). Doubtless various motives prompted the people to come to hear Him. Without question many of them came only to be healed physically. Others came through idle curiosity, wanting to hear the latest word concerning impending events. Some thought that He was a prophet and that mighty changes were imminent since He and John the Baptist had proclaimed that the kingdom of God was at hand. Some undoubtedly had political aspirations, hoping to be appointed to positions of honor and power in the new regime.

I. JESUS ISSUING HIS MANIFESTO

Jesus wanted the people to know exactly what the situation was. He, therefore, issued His manifesto to the world in the form of the Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew, chapters 5, 6, and 7.¹ Seeing the multitude, He went up into the mountain in the vicinity where He was. He sat down and taught His disciples. Although He directed His message to His disciples, He spoke in the presence of the vast multitudes that had begun to throng about Him.

No discourses or lectures on ethics and morals delivered by men equal those spoken by Jesus. Moses and the Prophets frequently were lifted, as a study of their writings show, to a high level of morals and ethics. But never was any prophet lifted to such a high plane and never did one give such pronouncements as Jesus did on this occasion. All right-thinking people admit that the Sermon on the Mount is the highest expression of ethics and morals to be found anywhere.

II. JESUS OFTEN REPEATING VITAL TRUTHS

Scattered here and there in the Gospel Records are exact statements or ones similar to some of those appearing in the Sermon on the Mount. An examination of them shows that they were spoken at different times and places and under varying conditions. Some scholars have concluded from these facts that Jesus did not preach the Sermon on the Mount as recorded by Matthew (chapters 5-7). They say, rather, that Matthew really compiled this sermon out of various quotations and attributed this message to Jesus.

Every preacher constantly repeats statements and messages that have crystallized in his mind into stereotyped expressions. Jesus, however, because of similar conditions and needs, wisely repeated the truth applicable in each case. Hence His repetitions.

¹ An abridged account of the Sermon on the Mount is found in Luke 6:20-49. That Matthew and Luke are recording the same message—though Luke's account is an abridged form—is clear to one who notes that they begin alike with the beatitudes, that the trend of thought is the same in each account, and that they both conclude with the parable of a man who built his house upon a rock and another who built his on the sand.

III. JESUS MANIFESTING HIS DEITY

To those who accept the Sermon on the Mount as being the Word of God—and I certainly do—I wish to call attention to the facts and data interwoven in the Sermon which prove that Jesus was conscious of His being God in human form. These elements are woven so closely into the entire fabric of the sermon that they are a vital part of it and to remove them from the rest of the message would be to wreck the entire discourse.

A. *Significance of the Expression “I came”*

(Matthew 5:17)

In Matthew 5:17 Jesus says, “Do not begin to think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I did not come to destroy, but to fill *them* to the full.” No other Hebrew had ever spoken of his own birth as his coming; yet Jesus spoke thus of His birth. Solemnly ... He warned His listeners not to think that He had come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them—in the spirit and the letter of the law. This warning implies that He had been somewhere else, had left that place, and had come to earth. His purpose in coming was to fulfill the law and the prophets—to bring them to the fullest expression of import and meaning. On another occasion Jesus spoke similarly, “... I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matt. 9:13). Once more He declared, “Do not begin to think that I came to bring peace upon the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Matt. 10:34). Here again He assumed that He had been somewhere else, and that He had left that place to come to the earth. He came not to bring peace, but a sword. What He meant by a sword was that, in a family, for instance, some would see the truthfulness and correctness of His message and would accept; others, being unable to see it, would reject and would become hostile. If following Jesus or accepting the will of God causes trouble, one should joyously accept the new situation. Those who oppose are the ones who will have to give an account to God for the trouble. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is often quoted as saying that He had been sent by God the Father to this world to do His will. These statements of Matthew, read in the light of the luminous record of John on this point, show exactly what Jesus meant

when He said, “I came.” For only one who had been in heaven, and who was God, could and would speak truthfully in terms such as Jesus used on different occasions.

B. The Words of Jesus Equal to Those of God

(Matthew 5:21)

In Matthew 5:21 Jesus says, “You have heard that it was said to men of old, You shall not murder ...” This quotation is from the Ten Commandments, as recorded in Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17. Then Jesus refers to a gloss which was probably added by the leaders of Israel, saying, “... and whoever murders is liable to court action. 22 But I am telling you that everyone who is angry with his brother is liable to court action; and whoever says to his brother, Empty *head*, is liable to the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, You stupid one, shall be liable to the Gehenna of fire” (Matt. 5:21b,22). Jesus put His utterance on a level with what God had said.

Jesus declared, “You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery” (v. 27). This quotation from the Ten Commandments is taken from Exodus 20:14 and Deuteronomy 5:18. God spoke this command through Moses. Jesus went back behind the literal act of committing adultery to the desire in the heart to do so. If one looks upon a woman to lust after her, he has in his heart, in reality, committed adultery and is guilty of that sin before God. Thus Jesus lifted this one commandment to a higher level than the one on which it had been placed by Moses. The time was ripe for God to trace this overt act back to its genesis in the evil desire of the secret parts of the heart. In the discussion of this point Jesus places His utterances on an equal with the words of God.

Once again, Jesus quotes from the law in verse 38: “You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” This quotation is taken from Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, and Deuteronomy 19:21. God enacted this precise legislation. He meant exactly what He said. This law was on the statute books of Israel. All laws were to be carried out by the officials of the government after the person accused had been found guilty. The sentence was, of course, to be made according to the evidence. Instead of recognizing this legislation as one of the laws of the land to be enforced by the courts, many persons were using it as justification for taking revenge—a misinterpretation and misapplication of the law. Again Jesus went back behind the overt

act to the thought and intentions of the heart or mind and urged His disciples to act accordingly, and again He placed His statements on a level with the law of God.

Throughout the entire sermon, rays of divine glory flash forth from Jesus as He delivers this great manifesto. Again one sees that the consciousness of Jesus as being the Son of God is part and parcel of the entire message.

C. Jesus the Judge of All Men

(Matthew 7:21-23)

According to Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus will sit upon the throne of judgment on the last day and judge all peoples. He foretells that many will come to Him and say, "Lord, Lord [a recognition of His divine nature and authority] did we not prophesy in thy name, and in Thy name cast out demons, and in Thy name do many mighty works?" Then He will profess to them that He never knew them and will command them to depart from Him.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself: 27 and he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man (John 5:26, 27).

Thus again His words reflect His consciousness of His divine nature, being, and prerogatives.

If one accepts the high standard of morals and ethics that are set forth in this sermon, he must likewise accept the doctrine that Jesus, who spake as never man spake, is none other than the Son of God, as He often affirmed.

IV. EVERY WORD OF THE LAW TO BE FULFILLED

(Matthew 5:18)

The Scriptures are inspired of God—both the Old and the New Testament. But concerning the Old Testament, Jesus said, “... Until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle by no means shall pass away from the law until all comes to pass” (Matt. 5:18). A jot is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet. A *tittle* is in the Greek *horn*, denoting a very slight projection at the corner of certain Hebrew letters which distinguishes these from others that are rounded. In other words, Jesus said that there cannot be the slightest change in the meaning of any word of the Scriptures and that each utterance shall be fulfilled as written. The Apostle Paul by inspiration declared that all of the Scriptures are infallibly inspired of God. “16 Every scripture² inspired of God *is* also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: 17 that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (II Tim. 3:16,17).

On another occasion the Lord Jesus put the case stronger, saying: “But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall” (Luke 16:17). Why will every word that God has spoken be carried out to the very letter and in the spirit of the utterance? Jeremiah gives the answer. God watches over His word to perform each utterance that He has spoken, to carry out every threat and warning, and to fulfill all promises.

11 Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond-tree. 12 Then said Jehovah unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I watch over my word to perform it (Jer. 1:11,12).

² The word *scripture* is derived from the Latin word meaning “to write.” In the Greco-Roman world of the first century any writing was known as scripture. In this passage Paul states that only those writings that are God-breathed are profitable for spiritual guidance.

V. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS DEMANDED BY JESUS

(Matthew 5:20)

Jesus declares that whosoever breaks the least of the commandments of the law and teaches men so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whosoever does and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven: “For I am telling you, that except your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, by no means shall you enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20). The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees consisted largely of doing exactly what the letter of the law said—plus the observance of the teaching, the doctrines, and the traditions of men. Their righteousness was, therefore, largely legalistic—the result of an attempt at punctilious observance of rights, ceremonies, and laws. The righteousness of the law demands that every regulation and every legal enactment be observed perfectly. If a person violates the law in one point, he is as guilty as if he had violated the whole category of regulations.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all. 11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law (Jas. 2:10,11).

At the dedication of the Temple Solomon declared: “If they [the people of Israel] sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not), and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive unto the land of the enemy, far off or near; 47 yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn again, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captive, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have dealt wickedly; 48 if they return unto thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies ... and pray unto thee toward their land ... 49 then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause; 50 and forgive thy people ...” (I Kings 8:46-50). By inspiration Solomon knew that there is not a person who observes the law perfectly. Thus righteousness that is acceptable to God cannot be brought about by observing rites, laws, ceremonies, and sacrifices. Such in substance is what Jesus meant in stating that one’s righteousness must exceed that

of the scribes and Pharisees. The Apostle Paul, one of the greatest Pharisees who ever lived, stated what he did not want and what he desired above everything, and had—in Christ the righteousness of God.

Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith ... (Phil. 3:8,9).

Isaiah the Prophet states that the remnant of Israel in the end time will see this grand and glorious truth here enunciated by the Lord Jesus. In his prediction (Isa. 63:7-64:12) is one version of Israel's penitential confession and prayer, which the remnant will make in the end time. In this confession they will say: "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou wast wroth, and we sinned: in them *have we been* of long time; and shall we be saved? 6 For we are all become as one that is unclean, and all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment: and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away....

"8 But now, O Jehovah, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand" (Isa. 64:5, 6, 8). In this prediction one sees that the remnant will long and plead for this higher type of righteousness—the righteousness that God requires and provides for all who accept Christ as Saviour.

VI. THE MODEL PRAYER (Matthew 6:9-15)

In Matthew 6:9-15 is recorded a model prayer which Jesus taught His disciples to pray. Unfortunately, this petition is popularly known as "the Lord's Prayer." That which properly is the Lord's Prayer is recorded in John, chapter 17. That the prayer of Matthew 6:9-15 is a model petition, which the disciples are in spirit to follow, is evident from the following exhortation: "In this way, therefore, always pray."

The disciples are to pray to the Father in heaven that His name may be hallowed—that is, revered in the true spirit of worship. Then they are to pray that the Kingdom of God may come when His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. The Kingdom of God, which is often discussed in the New Testament, has two phases—the spiritual and the literal earthly Messianic reign. The spiritual phase of the Kingdom was established on the first Pentecost after the Resurrection of Christ. Prior to that date (Matt. 16:13-20 and 18:15-20), it was spoken of as being in the future. After that date it is spoken of as being in existence (Acts 8:1 and 9:31). This phase of the Kingdom is spoken of as the Church, or the body of Christ, which began at Pentecost and continues until the Second Coming of Christ.

The second, or literal, phase of the Kingdom will be established on the earth when the Prince of Peace returns, having been invested with supreme power:

13 I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:13, 14).

When this Kingdom is established upon the earth, God's will shall be done here absolutely as it is done in heaven:

2 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2 And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. 4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Isa. 2:1-4).

20 I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. **2** And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, **3** and cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed *it* over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. **5** The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. **6** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-6).

Being utterly dependent upon God for all blessings, all believers are to pray for daily food, provision, and protection. They are, moreover, to forgive others who have treated them unjustly and are to maintain the proper Christian attitude toward all men.

VII. THE DANGER OF HAVING A SUFFICIENCY

(Matthew 6:34)

A person's having a sufficiency of all things is the occasion of evil in the correct sense of that term. When a person knows that he has everything that he can use or wants, unknown to him there subtly develops in his heart the spirit of independence and self-sufficiency. Whenever such a spirit dominates a person, he is incapable of seeing himself as he is in his utter dependence upon God.

Instead of developing a spirit of self-sufficiency and independence of God, each one should pray as the psalmist prayed in Psalm 39:4-8:

- 4** Jehovah, make me to know mine end,
And the measure of my days, what it is;
Let me know how frail I am.
- 5** Behold, thou hast made my days as handbreadths;

- And my life-time is as nothing before thee:
Surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity. [Selah]
- 6 Surely every man walketh in a vain show;
Surely they are disquieted in vain:
He heapeth up *riches* and knoweth not who shall gather them.
- 7 And now, Lord, what wait I for?
My hope is in thee.
- 8 Deliver me from all my transgressions:
Make me not the reproach of the foolish.

Men are prone to think that they can largely determine and shape their destiny by their own sagacity and efforts. To those holding such a philosophy, James declares:

13 Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain: 14 whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. 16 But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil (James 4:13-16).

VIII. THE GOLDEN RULE

(Matthew 7:12)

In Matthew 7:12 the Lord Jesus states what has become known as the Golden Rule: "All things, therefore, whatsoever you will that men do to you, in like manner also keep on doing to them; for this is the law and the prophets." Never had mortal man uttered such a far-reaching, fundamental principle of conduct as this one stated by the Son of God; at least, there is no record of anyone's having done so. It is all inclusive.

If every human being could and would practice this fundamental principle, the world would be changed instantly into a veritable paradise; but, on account of the fallen nature of man, he cannot of his own self carry out this principle in practical living. But one who has been regenerated and saved can, by the aid of the Spirit of God in his heart, live in accordance with this high and holy principle.

Sometimes we are told that Confucius, the great Chinese moralist, enunciated this same principle. This claim is incorrect. He stated a negative principle, that men should not do to others as they would not have others do unto them. One could follow this negative principle without obeying the Golden Rule, which commands one to do good, not merely to refrain from evil. It is also claimed that certain of the sages of Israel who lived after Jesus of Nazareth taught the Golden Rule. Though they may have done so, it is logical to conclude that, since they lived at a later date, their utterances are simply echoes of those of Jesus of Nazareth.

IX. THE TWO BUILDERS, ONE ON THE ROCK, THE OTHER ON THE SAND
(Matthew 7:24-27)

In this Sermon on the Mount, Christ concludes with an illustration drawn from nature. He declares that the one who hears His words and does them, in the right spirit, of course, will be like a wise man who built his house upon a rock. The rains descended and the floods came and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it was founded upon a rock. On the other hand, the one who hears the words of Jesus, but does not do them, is like the man who built his house upon the sand. The rains came, the winds blew, the floods beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof. This parable is, of course, an illustration showing the absolute necessity on the part of every individual of seeing, accepting, and acting upon the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Speaking by the Spirit of God, Moses foretold that God would raise up a prophet from the midst of Israel, who would speak the very words of God. Concerning this prophet God declared, "... I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deut. 18:18,19). This prophet was undoubtedly Jesus of Nazareth. To turn from Him is to sin against one's soul.

CHAPTER XXII

MIRACLES OF JESUS THE MESSIAH ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (Matthew 8:1-9:34)

8 When He came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. 2 And, behold, a leper came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou art able to cleanse me. 3 And He stretched forth His hand and touched him, saying, I am willing; be cleansed. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 And Jesus said, Look; speak *of this* to no man; but go show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.

5 When He entered into Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, begging Him, and saying, 6 Lord, my servant lies at home, a paralytic, grievously tormented. 7 He said to him, I will go and heal him. 8 And the centurion replied and said, Lord, I am not fit that Thou shouldst come under my roof; but only speak a word, and my servant shall be healed. 9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does *it*. 10 And when Jesus heard this *statement*, He marveled and said to those who were following *Him*, In solemn truth I say to you, With no one have I found such faith in Israel. 11 And I say unto you that many will come from the east and the west, and will recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; 12 but the sons of the kingdom will be cast into the outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 13 And Jesus said to the centurion, Go; as you believe, let it be done to you. And his servant was healed in that hour.

14 When Jesus came to the house of Peter, He saw his mother-in-law lying in bed, sick with a fever, 15 and He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she arose and began waiting on Him. 16 And when evening came, they brought to Him many who were possessed with demons; and He cast out the evil spirits with a word; and all who were sick, He healed, 17 in order that the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, He took our weaknesses and bore our sicknesses.¹

¹ Isaiah 53:4.

18 When Jesus saw a multitude around Him, He gave orders to go to the other side. 19 And a scribe came to Him and said, Teacher, I will follow Thee wherever Thou goest. 20 And Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven *have* nests, but the Son of man does not have a *place* where He can lay His head. 21 Another of the disciples said to Him, Lord, permit me first to go back and bury my father. 22 But Jesus said to him, Keep on following me, and let the dead bury their own dead.

23 His disciples followed Him as He entered into the boat. 24 And, behold, a great storm came up upon the sea, so that the boat was being covered by the waves; and He himself was asleep. 25 And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save; we are perishing. 26 And He said unto them, Why are you fearful, you *men* of little faith? Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. 27 But the men marveled, saying, What manner of person is this One, that even the winds and the sea are obedient to Him?

28 And when He came to the other shore unto the country of Gadarenes, there met Him two men under the power of demons, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no one was able to pass along that road. 29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What is there between us and Thee, Thou Son of God? Hast Thou come here to torment us before the time? 30 There was some distance from them a drove of many swine feeding. 31 And the demons kept imploring Him, saying, If Thou cast us out, send us into the drove of swine. 32 And He said to them, Go. And they went forth, and they went away into the swine; and, behold, all the drove rushed down over a steep cliff into the sea and died in the water. 33 But those feeding *the swine* fled; and, going into the city, they reported all things, even the things in regard to the demonized *men*. 34 And, behold, all the city went forth to meet Jesus; and, when they saw Him, they implored that He depart from their territory.

9 Having gotten into a boat, He went to the other side and came into His own city. 2 And, behold, they were bringing to Him a paralytic, lying upon a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, Be of good courage, son; your sins are forgiven. 3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said in themselves, This man blasphemes. 4 And knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, Why do you think evil *things* in your heart? 5 For which is easier, to say, Your sins are forgiven, or to say, Arise and walk? 6 But in order that you may know that the Son of man has authority on the earth to forgive sins (then He said to the paralytic), Arise, take up your bed, and go into your house. 7 And he arose and went into his house. 8 And the multitudes, seeing, became fearful, and they glorified God who had given such authority unto men.

9 As Jesus was passing by from thence, He saw a man, Matthew by name, seated at the tax office; and He said to him, Keep on following me. And he got up and followed him. 10 And it came to pass, when He was reclining at meal in his house, that, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and His disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw, they began saying to His disciples, Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? 12 And when He heard, He said, Those who are well have no need of a physician, but *only* the sick. 13 But you go and learn what *this* is, I desire mercy and not sacrifice,² for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

² Hosea 6:6a.

14 Then the disciples of John came to Him and said, Why do we and the Pharisees constantly fast, but Thy disciples do not continually fast? 15 And Jesus said to them, Can the sons [friends] of the bridegroom mourn so long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them and then they will fast. 16 But no one sews a patch of unshrunk material upon an old garment, for that which should fill it up takes away from the garment, and the rent is made worse. 17 Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins; and, if they do, the wineskins burst, the wine runs out, and the skins are destroyed; but they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.

18 As He was speaking these things to them, behold, a ruler came up and knelt before Him, saying, My daughter just now died; but come, lay Thy hand upon her, and she will be restored to life. 19 And Jesus arose and followed Him, and His disciples. 20 And, behold, a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood twelve years came up behind and touched the tassel of His mantle; 21 for she was saying in herself, If only I may touch His mantle, I shall be cured. 22 But Jesus turned, saw her, and said, Be of good courage, daughter; your faith has saved you. And the woman was healed from that hour. 23 And when Jesus went into the house of the ruler and saw the flute players and the multitude causing a disturbance, 24 He began saying, Withdraw, for the little girl did not die, but is asleep. And they began laughing Him to scorn. 25 But when the multitude had been put out, He went in and took her by the hand, and the little girl rose up. 26 And this report went forth into all that country.

27 And as Jesus was passing by from thence, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, Have mercy upon us, Son of David. 28 And as He entered into the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? They said to

Him, Yes, Lord. 29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith let it be done to you. 30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus charged them sternly, saying, See that no man knows. 31 When they went forth, they spread the report concerning Him in all that land.

32 As they were going, behold, they brought a dumb man who was under the power of a demon. 33 And when the demon was cast out, the dumb man began to speak. And the multitudes were amazed, saying, Never has it been seen on this wise in Israel. 34 But the Pharisees began, saying, By the prince of demons, he is casting out demons.

In the Greek New Testament three words are used to refer to the manifestation of the supernatural in the sphere of human activity. The inherent dominant idea of one of these words is that of a marvel—that which amazes; of the second, that of powers, manifestations in a special way of the presence of God; and of the third, that of a sign, indicating some purpose for which the miracle is wrought. In other words, the miracle is looked upon as evidence, signifying some spiritual fact. In the history of Israel, whenever God, so to speak, came out in the open and performed miracles on a large scale, He allowed Satan to do likewise. But He always put a limit upon the devil's activity in order that there might be left to the people a margin for the exercise of faith. In all of these demonstrations of supernatural power, the men of God excelled and made it manifest that the power which was working through them was superior to that which was operating through the false prophets, magicians, and those dabbling with the occult.

I. THE PURPOSE OF MIRACLES

A thorough study of the subject of miracles in both the Old and the New Testament leads one to the conclusion that miracles were primarily wrought to arrest the attention of the people so that they would listen to the Word of God, which alone can produce faith in the heart of the honest truthseeker: “So belief *cometh* of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17).

When miracles are wrought constantly, they become commonplace and soon lose their power of attracting attention. This fact is clearly seen by investigating the miracles God wrought at the time of Israel's exodus from Egyptian bondage. Moses and Aaron appeared before the children of Israel and performed certain miracles which caught the attention of their elders for the time being. Then they appeared before Pharaoh and performed the ten miracles—the plagues wrought against Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt. Finally, after the death angel had passed over Egypt, Pharaoh consented, with the greatest reluctance, to let the Israelites leave the country. But when they started on their long trek, he sent his armies in an effort to restrain them and to force them to return.

Israel passed through the waters of the Red Sea, which were divided and congealed by a miracle, and thus made a way of escape for the fleeing Hebrews. Attempting to follow, the Egyptians were drowned, because the waters were no longer held back by the power of God. The Almighty met the needs of Israel on their forty-five days' journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai. At Mount Sinai He performed most marvelous miracles and signs in connection with the giving of the law. After the people of Israel had stayed nearly a year at Sinai, they made the eleven-day journey through the desert to Kadesh-Barnea, where they encamped. From this place Moses sent forth twelve leaders to spy out the land of Canaan and to obtain all information possible regarding the condition of the land and the possibility of Israel's entering and taking possession of it. During the trek of the Israelites from Egypt by way of Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea, God sent a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to guide them. He also provided them with food and water.

When the twelve leaders returned from spying out the land, ten of them reported that it was impossible for the Israelites to enter the country and take possession of it. Two of them, Caleb and Joshua, declared that they could and should immediately go into and possess the land. As a result of the discouraging majority report, a murmuring arose at once among the people. Soon there was an outburst of rebellion against the leadership of Moses and Aaron—and also against God. And the people said, "... Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt" (Num. 14:4). Joshua and Caleb tried to

calm the people and to reason with them, but to no avail. The aroused congregation shouted that Caleb and Joshua should be stoned (Num. 14:4-10). But God spoke to Moses and Aaron:

11 And Jehovah said unto Moses, How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have wrought among them? 12 I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they (Num.14:11,12).

Circumstances show that miracles, mighty works of God, were being wrought every day and every hour in behalf of the Israelites. They, therefore, became commonplace in the eyes of the people, who lost sight of the person of the Almighty and doubtless attributed the entire situation to nature. Let me repeat: Though miracles have their purpose in arresting attention, they do not have the power to sustain faith. An example from the New Testament will prove this point. According to the record of John, chapter 6, one day Jesus fed five thousand men, besides women and children. The next day some of the people who had been fed met Him in Capernaum and asked Him to show them a sign in order to prove that He was the Messiah. Though He had performed that marvelous and wonderful sign of feeding the five thousand—enough evidence to convince any honest heart—they did not have eyes to see. There are none so blind as those who will not see. Miracles, then, will not convince anyone when the heart is not right and is not open to conviction.

II. THE MIRACLES OF JESUS, HIS CREDENTIALS

God had promised Israel that He would raise up prophets to them from time to time, but He warned that a prophet had to present his credentials before the people should give credence to what he said (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:22). Whenever a prophet appeared to Israel, the people, in accordance with instructions as given by Moses, were to insist upon his performing a miracle. And after he had done so or had made a prediction that came to pass exactly as he had foretold, the people were to listen to the message which he brought. If, however, the prophet performed a miracle and, at the same time, urged the people to serve other gods, his performance of a miracle was not to be accepted as

proof of his having been called of God. The final authority and power were in the message which was delivered. The people of Israel were right in demanding that Jesus show His credentials, and He did.

III. THE MIRACLES OF JESUS IN VARIOUS SPHERES

(Matthew 8:1-9:34)

Matthew 8:1-9:34 presents the credentials of Christ in three realms—of disease, of physical nature, and of the spirit world—in which He performed miracles to support His claims of being the Messiah of Israel.

A. In the Realm of Disease

In Matthew 8:1-4 Christ heals a leper. Conscious of who He is and what He is doing, He touches the leper and says, “Be cleansed.” Immediately the leprosy departs. Then He instructs the healed man to go to the authorities in Jerusalem and make the offering commanded by Moses for a testimony to them. Verses 5-13 is a record of His healing the servant of a Roman army officer, a centurion. Verses 14-17 relate that He not only healed Peter’s mother-in-law of a fever, but also cast demons out of many people and cured all those who came to Him for healing.

In connection with the healing ministry of Jesus, one should note that very frequently He urged a person whom He had healed to say nothing about the cure, lest the people in their great excitement think of healing instead of salvation. He healed the diseases of the people because in Isaiah 53:4 the prediction is made that He would bear their sicknesses. Healing is in the Atonement. By the blood of His cross, all things are reconciled unto God (Col. 1:18-20). Though healing is not universal today, it will be at the coming of the Lord, according to many Scriptures.

B. In the Realm of Nature

According to Matthew 8:23-27, Jesus went with the disciples across the sea of Galilee to the east side. After the boat had left the shore, Jesus went to sleep. While He was thus resting, there arose a great tempest. The winds were dashing the waves over

the boat. It looked as if all in the boat would perish. The disciples immediately went to Jesus and awoke Him, begging Him to save them, and saying that they were perishing. Jesus reprimanded them for their lack of faith and for their fear. Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the waves. Immediately there was a great calm. Thus He who controls the elements calmed the storm.

C. In the Realm of the Spirit-world

According to Matthew 8:28-34, when Jesus and His disciples arrived in the country of the Gadarenes, two men who lived in the tombs, and who were possessed by demons, came forth to meet them. The demons who indwelt the men cried out and asked Him if He had come to torment them before the time. They implored Him, moreover, that, if He sent them out of the men, He would allow them to enter into a drove of swine feeding nearby. Then Jesus commanded them to leave. Immediately they entered into the swine. Then these hogs ran down the steep embankment and were drowned in the sea.

The people of the community were awe-stricken and amazed. They were thinking, however, more of swine's flesh, profits, and material possessions than they were of things spiritual. Hence they begged Jesus to leave their country and not to bother them, and He did.

That there is such a thing as demon possession, or Satanic powers, operating in the lives of certain disobedient people, is manifest both by the Old and the New Testament. One of the most thorough discussions of demonology is by my friend Dr. Unger, of the Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas.

IV. A BRIEF STUDY OF DEMONISM

The Scriptures recognize the existence of Satan, the archenemy of God, and of all that is good, who led a revolt among the angels of the Almighty. Satan and these rebellious angels were hurled, figuratively speaking, from their high positions of honor

and trust. They constitute the kingdom of darkness that wages everlasting warfare against God and His Kingdom.

A. Demons Opposing Moses

Here and there in the Scriptures are references to these malevolent spirits and some of their activities. When Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, demanding the release of the Hebrew captives, the God of Israel gave them as their credentials the power to perform miracles. The first one wrought was turning a literal rod into a living serpent. The second miracle was turning the water of the rivers, pools, streams, and ponds into blood. But Pharaoh would not hearken. Then, at the command of Moses, frogs came up out of the waters and filled the entire land—a mighty plague. When Moses and Aaron performed each of these miracles, the magicians and enchanters of Egypt duplicated these wonders.

The fourth miracle which Moses and Aaron wrought was bringing lice upon the land of Egypt. At this point in the contest between Moses and the magicians, the latter, figuratively speaking, threw up their hands, admitting candidly that they were unable to duplicate this miracle.

It was quite evident that Moses and Aaron performed the miracles which they wrought by the power of the God of the Hebrews. It is also clear that the magicians by some other mighty power duplicated the first three miracles wrought by Moses and Aaron. By what power did the magicians perform their miracles? Certainly not by the power of God, because they were opposing Him and Moses and Aaron, His representatives. This mighty power was able to convert the rods of the magicians into living serpents and to bring forth frogs, living creatures, from the rivers throughout the land of Egypt. Evidently such power or powers consisted of intelligent, invisible creatures—evil spirits.

Further light on these subjects is shown by a glance at certain passages found in the Book of Deuteronomy. Moses repeatedly warned Israel against the idolatry of the nations living in Canaan whom they were to dispossess. See Deuteronomy 7:1-5 and parallel passages. He likewise warned them against every phase of witchcraft and

sorcery, and the like. See Deuteronomy 18:9-14 and related Scriptures. By reading all the passages uttered by Moses on these subjects, one can clearly see that in the mind of Moses idolatry and spiritism are indissolubly associated. In Deuteronomy 32:16-18 Moses clearly revealed this connection:

16 They moved him to jealousy with strange *gods*;
With abominations provoked they him to anger.
17 They sacrificed unto demons, *which were* no God,
To gods that they knew not,
To new *gods* that came up of late,
Which your fathers dreaded not.
18 Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful,
And hast forgotten God that gave thee birth.

From this passage it is clear that in worshiping idols, one is worshiping demons. This explanation is confirmed by the following quotation:

34 They did not destroy the peoples,
As Jehovah commanded them,
35 But mingled themselves with the nations,
And learned their works,
36 And served their idols,
Which became a snare unto them.
37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto demons,
38 And shed innocent blood,
Even the blood of their sons and of their daughters,
Whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan;
And the land was polluted with blood (Ps. 106:34-38).

From these passages and others which might be studied, it is evident that in the law of Moses demonism is recognized and exposed.

B. Demons Sent on Certain Missions by Jehovah

Again we get a glimpse of the spirit world in Judges 9:23: "And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech."

Once again there flashes a light upon the world of evil spirits in I Samuel 16:14: "Now the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him." The same situation is seen in I Samuel 18:10,11: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as he did day by day. And Saul had his spear in his hand; 11 and Saul cast the spear; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall. And David avoided out of his presence twice." When this evil spirit was upon Saul, he endeavored to slay David, whose music was the only thing that had brought peace and tranquility to his troubled soul. His attempt to slay his benefactor was an illogical and irrational act. Evidently this evil spirit was dominating his mind and actions. Once more we get a glimpse of the world of evil spirits in I Kings 22:19-23:

19 And *Micaiah* said, Therefore hear thou the word of Jehovah: I saw Jehovah sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. 20 And Jehovah said, Who shall entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner; and another said on that manner. 21 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before Jehovah, and said, I will entice him. 22 And Jehovah said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt entice him, and shalt prevail also: go forth, and do so. 23 Now therefore, behold, Jehovah hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets; and Jehovah hath spoken evil concerning thee.

These evil spirits here are none other than demons who are under Satan, the prince of demons.

C. Demons Hindering Angels

In Daniel, chapter 10, is a very illuminating revelation concerning the world of evil spirits in their opposition to the Kingdom of God. According to this revelation, Daniel prayed to the Lord. When he did so, setting his heart to understand and to humble himself before his God, his prayer was heard:

12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thy heart to understand, and to humble thyself before thy God, thy words were heard: and I am come for thy words' sake. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me: and I remained there with the kings of Persia (Dan. 10:12, 13).

The very day that he uttered this petition, an angel was dispatched by the Lord to him. As the angel sped from heaven to earth, he was intercepted by the “prince of the kingdom of Persia” and detained for twenty-one days. Finally Michael the archangel came to his rescue and fought off the opposition, allowing the angel to continue his Journey to Daniel’s side.

D. Demon Activity in the Days of Jesus

The New Testament recognizes the existence of Satan and demons and their activities. The first mention of demon possession and activity is found in a brief reference in Matthew 4:24. In Matthew 8:28-34 is an account of the Gadarene demoniacs. These men were completely under the control of demons and were a terror to the whole countryside. The demons by whom they were possessed recognized Jesus as the Son of God, who will eventually consign them to the place of torment. They, moreover, pleaded that, if He intended to cast them out of the men, He would allow them to enter a herd of swine. Jesus permitted them to go into the swine, which rushed down the cliff into the sea and perished. The citizens of the community implored Jesus to leave their shores. He did so and left them to their fate.

For a fuller and more graphic account of this case of demon possession, see the parallel passage in Mark 5:1-20.

Two other instances of Christ's casting out demons are recorded in Matthew 12:22-37 and 17:14-20. Further examples of demon possession and activities are recorded in Acts of the Apostles.

E. Demons and Idolatry in Israel of the End Time

As the last passage from the Prophets on the subject of evil spirits, or demons, see Zechariah 13:1-6, but note especially verses 2 and 3:

2 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered; and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. 3 And it shall come to pass that, when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of Jehovah; and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.

Here is a prophecy concerning the land of Israel of the end time and of the prevalence of idolatry and demonism. This prediction concerning idolatry in Israel is no surprise to the one who is familiar with the writings of Moses, who foretold that Israel, scattered among the nations, would worship idols: "And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell" (Deut. 4:28). Since Israel dispersed among the nations has never engaged in worshiping idols, and since in this passage the prediction is made that the nation will, one may be certain that this prophecy will be literally fulfilled in the end time. This interpretation is confirmed by the context of Deuteronomy 4:28, which immediately speaks of Israel's turning to God in the latter days (vv. 29-31).

F. Demons Warring Against the Saints

Satan and the demons, as suggested above, constitute the kingdom of darkness—thoroughly organized and alarmingly efficient in operation. This fact is seen in Ephesians 6:10-20:

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. 13 Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil *one*. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, 19 and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

The inspired Apostle Paul informs us that our wrestling is not with men, but with these evil spirits who are ever vigilant in their fight against the people of God. He, moreover, shows the only method of successfully fighting against the enemy. Man in his own strength will fail. He, therefore, must be made strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Each born-again believer must put on the whole armor of God and fight in the strength which God supplies. If one will follow these instructions and resist the devil and his host, they will flee.

7 Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded (Jas. 4:7, 8).

5 Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; 7 casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you. 8 Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 whom

withstand stedfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world. 10 And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you (I Pet. 5:5-10).

G. Demon Activity in the Last Days

Satan and the evil spirits are especially active in these dark days, as foretold by the Apostle Paul:

4 But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 through the hypocrisy of men, that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth (I Tim. 4:1-3).

According to this passage, a person who wants truth must be on his guard lest seducing spirits palm off upon him their doctrines.

According to Revelation 12:7-12, the time will come when Satan will put forth a titanic effort of persecution against the people of God, but they can be victorious through the blood of the Lamb and through the word of their testimony.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels *going forth* to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; 8 and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. 10 And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying,

Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time (Rev. 12:7-12).

CHAPTER XXIII

THE RESTRICTED COMMISSION ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (Matthew 9:35-11:1)

35 Then Jesus began going about all their cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every *type of* disease and every ailment. 26 And when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion toward them, because they were distressed and scattered, like sheep not having a shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, The harvest is great, but the laborers are few. 38 Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He send forth laborers into His harvest.

10 Then He called His twelve disciples and gave to them authority over unclean spirits, so that they could cast them out, and heal every sickness and every ailment.

2 The names of the twelve apostles are these: the first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James, the *son of* Zebedee, and John, his brother; 3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the taxcollector; James, the son of Alphseus, and Thaddseus; 4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, charging them, saying, Do not go into a way of the Gentiles, and do not enter into a city of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying that the kingdom of heaven has come near. 8 Keep on healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, casting out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. 9 Do not accept any gold, silver, or copper money for your purses, 10 nor a bag for the way, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staff; for worthy is the worker of his food. 11 Into whatever city or village you enter, seek diligently who in it is worthy, and there stay until you go forth. 12 When you enter a house, salute it; 13 and, if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but, if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whoever does not receive you, nor hear your words, as you go forth out of the house or that city, shake off the dust from your feet. 15 In solemn truth I am telling you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

16 Behold, I am sending you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be, therefore, wise as serpents and harmless as the doves. 17 And beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the courts; and they will scourge you in their synagogues; 18 and you will be brought before governors and kings because of me, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 Whenever they deliver you up, do not begin to worry *about* how or what you will speak, for it will be given to you in that hour what you will say, 20 for you are not the ones speaking, but the Spirit of your Father *will be* the one speaking in you. 21 And brother will deliver up brother to death; and father, child; and children will rise up against parents and will put them to death. 22 And you will be hated by all on account of my name, but the one enduring to the end, this one shall be saved. 23 And whenever they persecute you in this city, flee unto the other, for in solemn truth I am telling you, you will not complete *covering* the cities of Israel until the Son of man comes.

24 The disciple is not above his teacher, nor the servant above his lord. 25 It is sufficient for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant as his master. If they call the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household! 26 Do not begin to be afraid of them, for nothing has been covered which will not be uncovered, and secret which will not be made known. 27 What I am telling you in the darkness, speak in the light, and what you hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops. 28 And stop fearing those who can kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them will not fall to the ground without your Father. 30 But even the hairs of your head have all been numbered. 31 Now stop fearing, therefore; you are of greater value than many sparrows. 32 Every one, therefore, who will acknowledge Me before men, I shall acknowledge him before My Father who is in heaven; 33 and whoever denies Me in the presence of men, I will also deny him in the presence of My Father who is in heaven.

34 Do not begin to think that I came to bring peace upon the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and daughter against her mother, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36 And enemies of the man will be the members of his household. 37 The one who loves father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me, and the one loving son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me, 38 and whoever does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. 39 The one who finds his life will lose it, and the one losing his life on account of Me will find it.

40 The one who receives you receives Me, and the one who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. 41 The one receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. The one receiving a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. 42 Whoever gives to drink to one of the least of My disciples a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, in solemn truth I am telling you he will not lose his reward.

11 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished charging his twelve disciples, He went from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

Matthew 9:35-38 furnishes the background of the message of chapter 10. Here one finds that the masses of Israel at that time were distressed and scattered like sheep. This sight stirred the heart of Jesus to the very depths with pity. This condition was doubtless the result of a failure on the part of the leadership of the nation. Those who are put in positions of authority have a responsibility toward the masses to lead them in the ways of the Lord. The Prophet Ezekiel in his day condemned the unfaithful shepherds of the people for dereliction of duty (Ezekiel, chapter 34).

I. THE CHOOSING AND THE TRAINING OF THE TWELVE

(Matthew 10:1-4)

After a night of prayer Jesus selected from His group of disciples twelve whom He chose to be His special representatives in carrying forward His world-wide work after His departure. He remained here upon earth for three and a fraction years, selecting, teaching, and training those who were to carry on His work to the uttermost parts of the earth.

II. THE RESTRICTED COMMISSION

(Matthew 10:5-15)

Jesus had made two tours of Galilee prior to this time. In Matthew 10:5-15 are found instructions as to how the twelve on this last tour of Galilee should deport themselves as they went only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It was important that they should observe all instructions and restrictions literally. Israel had the priority in the benefits to be derived from this special ministry.

III. THE WIDENING OF THE COMMISSION

(Matthew 10:16-20)

Close attention to the text shows that the vision of verses 5-15 blends almost imperceptibly into an enlarged one shown in verses 16-20. In this latter section we see that Jesus was no longer concerned with Israel alone, but was looking beyond the confines of the Chosen People to the nations of earth.

IV. THE CONTRACTION OF THE COMMISSION

(Matthew 10:21-23)

By the time we come to verse 21, we see that Jesus lowered His eyes and ceased to look out upon the nations of the world, but restricted His remarks and instructions to the land and the people of Israel of the end time, the end of the Christian Dispensation. This fact is seen in verses 21-23.

This passage assumes the existence of the State of Israel in the end time: "... You shall not complete covering the cities of Israel, until the Son of man comes" (Matt. 10:23). The Lord Jesus, therefore, saw the situation existing in the land of Israel today, with its rapidly growing civilization and culture.

Zephaniah the Prophet saw the re-establishment and rehabilitation of Israel in the land of the fathers as it has been developing and as it is continuing to do so (Zeph. 2:1-3). The return of Israel to his land is a mass movement without parallel. The spirit of

those backing the movement is unique in the history of mankind. The sacrifices made by the Jewish people in this bold venture of faith is entirely unknown among the Gentiles. The advances in every field of human activity are amazing. The difficulties encountered and overcome reveal an indomitable spirit of sacrifice, service, and devotion to an ideal. Underlying this whole movement—if not in the consciousness of the average Israeli citizen, at least in his subconscious mind—is the scriptural hope that Israel will be re-established in the land of the fathers. This hope is the dominating force of the whole movement. The Gentile nations that are acquainted with the actual facts in the Holy Land stand amazed and overwhelmed at the grandeur of the magnificence of the project—a modern miracle.

Foreseeing Israel dwelling in his towns and villages of the present day, Jesus foretold that the messengers of the cross will not have gone over all the cities of Israel before He returns personally and bodily—at the end of the Tribulation. When He returns, He will establish Israel as the head of the nations, and Israel will then become the channel of blessing to the whole world.

V. DISCIPLES NOT TO FEAR ENEMIES

According to Matthew 10:28, Jesus urges His disciples to “stop fearing those who can kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.” Compare this verse with Luke 12:1-12.

VI. THE PRICE OF DISCIPLESHIP AND REWARDS

According to Matthew 10:34-42, the Lord Jesus shows that men and women must pay the price of being His disciples. The call of God is always one to separation from all that is worldly and sinful to a life of consecration, devotion, and service (see, for example, Genesis 12:1 ff. and, also, Luke 14:25-35).

CHAPTER XXIV

PERIOD OF CRISES ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (Matthew 11:2-12:50)

2 When John heard in prison of the works of the Messiah, he sent by his disciples, 3 and said to Him, Art Thou the coming one, or shall we keep on looking for a different one? 4 And replying, Jesus said to them, Go and report to John what you are hearing and seeing: 5 the blind are receiving sight, the lame are walking, the lepers are being cleansed, and the deaf are hearing, and the dead are being raised, and the poor are having the good news preached to them.¹ 6 And blessed is he who is not caused to stumble in me.

7 As these were going, Jesus began to speak to the multitudes concerning John, What did you go out into the wilderness to observe? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft *raiment*? Behold, those who wear soft *raiment* are in the houses of kings. 9 But why did you go forth? To see a prophet? Yes, and I am telling you, one even more than a prophet. 10 This one is he concerning whom it has been written,

Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face,
Who shall prepare Thy way before Thee.²

11 In solemn truth I am telling you, There has not arisen among those born of women a greater one than John the Baptist, but the least one in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven is torn by violence, and violent men are seizing it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14 And if you are willing to receive *the thought*, this is Elijah, the one about to come. 15 The one who has ears, let him hear.

¹ Isaiah 61:1.

² Malachi 3:1.

16 To what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call to one another, 17 saying, We played the flute for you, but you did not dance; we wailed, but you did not beat your breasts. 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He has a demon. 19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winedrinker, and a friend of taxcollectors and sinners! Wisdom, however, is justified by her works.

20 At that time He began to reprove the cities in which His mightiest works had been done, because they repented not. 21 Woe unto you, Chorazin! Woe unto you, Bethsaida! For if the works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 Nevertheless I am telling you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to the skies? You shall go down unto Hades; for, if the works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 Nevertheless I am telling you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, Father, Lord of the heaven and the earth, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and the understanding and hast revealed them to little children; 26 yea, Father, because thus it was Thy good pleasure. 27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one thoroughly knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father thoroughly except the Son and he to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*. 28 Come to Me, all you who are laboring and who are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. 29 At once take My yoke upon you and start learning of Me, because I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy, and My burden is indeed light.

12 At that time Jesus went on a Sabbath through the grainfields, and His disciples became hungry and began to pluck the ears of grain and to eat *them*. 2 But the Pharisees, looking on, said to Him, Look! Your disciples are doing that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath. 3 But He said unto them, Did you never read what David did when he became hungry, and those with him? 4 How he entered into the house of God and ate the loaves of presentation [showbread], which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, except for the priests only?³

³ | Samuel 2:16.

5 Or did you never read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless? ⁴ 6 But I am telling you that One greater than the temple is here; 7 and, if you had known what *this statement means*, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,⁵ you would not have condemned the innocent. 8 For the Lord of the Sabbath is the Son of man.

⁴ Numbers 28:9,10.

⁵ Hosea 6:6a.

9 And departing from that place, He went into their synagogue; 10 and, behold, a man having a withered hand. In order that they might accuse Him, they asked Him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? 11 And He said to them, What man is there among you who will have one sheep, and, if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath, will He not lay hold of it and lift it out? 12 How much, therefore, is a man of greater value than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. 13 Then He said to the man, Stretch forth your hand. And he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole as the other. 14 Then the Pharisees went forth and took counsel against Him in order that they might destroy Him.

15 Knowing this *plot*, Jesus withdrew from that place. And many followed Him, and He healed all of them, 16 and He strictly charged that they should not make Him known, 17 in order that the word might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying:

18 Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen,
My Beloved in whom My soul delights;
I shall put My Spirit upon Him,
And justice He will proclaim to the Gentiles.

19 He will not strive, nor cry out,
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.

20 The reed that has been bruised,
He will not break,
And a flickering wick will He not put out,
Until He brings forth justice to victory.

21 And in His name will *the* Gentiles hope.⁶

⁶Isaiah 42:1-4.

22 Then a blind and dumb man, who was demonized, was brought to Him, and He healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw. 23 And all the multitudes were amazed and said, Is not this one the son of David? 24 But the Pharisees, hearing *of it*, said, This one does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, prince of the demons. 25 Since Jesus knew their thoughts, He said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself cannot be made to stand. 26 If Satan is casting out Satan, he is divided against himself. How, then, shall his kingdom be made to stand? 27 And if I, by Beelzebub, am casting out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? On this account they will be your judges. 28 But if by the Spirit of God I am casting out demons, therefore the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 Or how can anyone enter into the house of the strong one and spoil his goods except first he bind the strong one? And then he will thoroughly plunder his house. 30 He who is not with me is against me; and he who is not gathering with me is scattering abroad. 31 On this account, I am telling you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit will never be forgiven. 32 And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it will be forgiven him; but whosoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the one to come. 33 Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for by the fruit the tree is known. 34 Brood of vipers, how can you speak good things while you are still wicked? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good man out of the good treasure brings forth good *things*, and the wicked man out of the wicked treasure brings forth wicked *things*. 36 I am telling you that, for every worthless word which men speak, they will give an account in the day of judgment; 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

38 Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees replied, saying, Teacher we desire to see a sign by Thee. 39 Replying, Jesus said to them, A generation wicked and adulterous is constantly seeking a sign, but a sign will not be given except the sign of Jonah the prophet. 40 For just as Jonah was in the belly of the sea monster three days and three nights, thus will the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. 41 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, because they repented when Jonah preached; and, behold, One greater than Jonah is here. 42 The queen of the south will rise up in judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, One greater than Solomon is here. 43 And whenever the unclean spirit goes forth from a man, it goes through waterless places

seeking rest, but does not find it. 44 Then it says, I shall return into my house from which I came forth; and, going, he finds it unoccupied, swept, and in order. 45 Then he goes and takes along with him seven other spirits more evil than himself; and, entering in, he dwells there; and the last things of that man are worse than the former. Thus it shall be also to this evil generation.

46 While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers had taken their stand outside, seeking to speak to Him. 47 And someone told Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy brothers have taken their stand outside seeking to speak to Thee. 48 But replying, Jesus said to the one speaking to Him, Who is My mother? And who are My brothers? 49 And stretching forth His hand toward His disciples, He said, Behold, My mother and My brothers; 50 for whoever does the will of My Father, who is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.

Times of crisis or testing come into the life of every individual. These trials are permitted by the Lord and are designed for the good of the one thus involved. In such crises the individual has to look at the facts in the case, reach a decision, and then take a definite stand either for or against that which he understands and knows to be right, just, and holy—and in accordance with the will of God as found in the Scriptures.

I. THE PERPLEXITY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

John the Baptist had been arrested and thrown into prison. He languished in his dungeon and doubtless suffered great mental torture, as well as many physical privations. At the same time, his disciples had access to him.

As shown in the Gospel of John, chapter 1, John the Baptist bore witness to the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the Son of God upon whom the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove had descended and alighted. God had told him that, whenever he saw such a sight, he could know that the one upon whom the Holy Spirit came was the Messiah of Israel. John saw the fulfillment of this promise and proclaimed to his disciples that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah.

But logic and evidence are one thing when all is going well with a person. They are entirely different, frequently, when the storms of opposition and persecution arise. As John languished in prison, he heard of the marvelous works which Jesus was performing. He, therefore, sent two of his disciples to Jesus to inquire whether or not He was the one and only Messiah, as He had testified, or whether the nation was to look for another Messiah. In asking this question, John was not necessarily doubting the correctness of what he had seen and the phenomena to which he had borne witness. But there are two types of prophecy regarding the Messiah in the writings of Moses and the Prophets. One foretells His coming to Israel, His suffering and ignominious death; the other speaks of His coming in glory and power to reign. It is altogether possible, and quite probable, that John was studying these two classifications of prophecy and wanted further light upon them. Thus he asked whether Jesus was the fulfillment of both these types of prophecy or whether the people should look for another Messiah—one who would fulfill the prophecies relating to this glorious reign.

Jesus instructed John's disciples to return to their master and report to him the miracles which were being wrought, and which they themselves personally had seen. They were to conclude their report by stating that the gospel was being preached to the poor. Why emphasize this last thought? The answer probably is that, while miracles lay the foundation for faith by attracting attention, they do not nourish and sustain it. The gospel message, however, does nourish and sustain the tender plant of faith which is quickened into life by the miracles.

Jesus called John's attention to the miracles which He had been performing, and which were positive evidence that He was the Messiah of Israel. Some of the prophets had performed one or two types of miracles, but not one had wrought all the miracles listed in Matthew 11:4,5. The fact that He, and He alone, had performed all these miracles pointed to His Messiahship. But Jesus completed the list by saying, "and the poor are having the good news preached to them." Doubtless the main reason for calling John's attention to this fact is to be found in the unquestioned Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-3. In this passage Isaiah the Prophet, impersonating the Messiah, declared, "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath

anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives ..." According to this passage, the outstanding work of the Messiah is to proclaim good tidings to the meek. The miracles of physical healings are secondary; the miracle of regeneration of those who hear and receive the good tidings is primary. By calling attention to the spiritual phase of the ministry of Messiah, as foretold by the prophet, Jesus positively affirmed that He was the Messiah.

Of all the men who had been born of women, said Jesus, none had arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least one in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Jesus thus declared that the least of those who enter the kingdom of heaven, the establishment of which was being announced, is greater than those who were born into the kingdom of Israel. In other words, the kingdom which He and John had foretold would be on a higher spiritual level than the fleshly, natural kingdom of Israel.

II. RESPONSIBILITY OF PEOPLE FOR ACTIONS AND ATTITUDE TOWARD THE LIGHT WHICH COMES TO THEM.

According to Matthew 11:20-24, Jesus upbraided some of the cities in which His mightiest works had been wrought, because the people, being engrossed generally with the cares and pleasures of life, were indifferent to His presence, works, and message. It will be more tolerable, asserted Jesus, for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for the Israelitish cities that had enjoyed, but had rejected, such marvelous light, opportunity, and blessing—Israel being custodians of the revelation of God, the Temple, and the divine services, as well as the recipients of the unparalleled blessings of His personal ministry.

Whenever God brings truth to any person, He expects such a one to face the situation honestly and conscientiously, to evaluate the new facts and truths, and to act accordingly. If the person does not respond in this manner, he is held responsible for not receiving this additional light which has been brought to him.

God never forces anyone's will. He brings the light and truth to a person and uses moral suasion to influence him to accept it as it is. It is, therefore, left to the person to make his own decision and to act accordingly.

III. THE JUDGMENT OF THE LOST (Matthew 11:22-24)

In Matthew 11:22-24 the Lord Jesus makes reference to the day of judgment. To what does He refer? The judgment of the believer occurred at the cross. The stroke that was to fall upon each one of us fell upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (John 5:24).

One should distinguish carefully between prophecies regarding different judgment scenes. When Christ comes with His saints (Ps. 50:1-6), He will gather them before His judgment seat and reward them according to their works (II Cor. 5:10).

When He comes all the way to the earth at the end of the Tribulation, He will judge those who survive the Tribulation and separate them as sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:31-46).

Having reigned upon the earth for a thousand years, Christ Jesus will mount the great white throne before which all the lost, the unbelievers, will be gathered; and He will judge them according to their works (Rev. 20:11-13) and consign them to their eternal doom. It is to this judgment that Matthew 11:22-24 refers.

IV. RADIATION OF DIVINE GLORY

In meditating upon the manifesto of the King of the Jews, the Sermon on the Mount, one sees rays of Messianic glory radiating from Jesus throughout the entire sermon. These gleams of glory burst in full-orbed splendor in Matthew 11:25-30. In this passage Jesus declares, "All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and no one thoroughly knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father

thoroughly, save the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Matt. 11:27). Here the Lord declares that no mortal can understand Him. God is the only one who can. He asserts, moreover, that He can understand and comprehend God the Father. Only a divine, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent Being can make such claims as these. Since He did make these claims and proved them by His teachings and His works, He is such a Being. Thus Matthew presents the King of the Jews to his nation as God in human form. This theme is that which is dealt with largely in the Gospel according to John. In the most vigorous and picturesque manner the inspired Apostle Paul sets forth the twofold nature of the Lord Jesus.

5 Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; 8 and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; 10 that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:5-11).

The twofold nature of Jesus of Nazareth is also set forth in the first two chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews: in chapter 1, His divine nature; in chapter 2, His human nature.

V. GOD’S REVEALING THE TRUTH TO CHILDLIKE ONES

(Matthew 11:25,26)

The attitude which a person assumes in general determines, to a certain extent, the attitude which God takes toward him: “Surely he scoffeth at the scoffers; But he giveth grace unto the lowly” (Prov. 3:34); “With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; With the perfect man thou wilt show thyself perfect; 26 With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; And with the perverse thou wilt show thyself froward” (Ps. 18: 25,26); “Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble” (I Pet. 5:5).

Man by his wisdom can never find God. Many have sought Him through philosophy, but all have failed. As the inspired Apostle Paul declared:

18 But as God is faithful, our word toward you is not yea and nay. 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in him is yea. 20 For how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea: wherefore also through him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us. 21 Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God (II Cor. 18-21).

VI. THE GREAT INVITATION

(Matthew 11:28-30)

The greatest invitation to mortal man is found in Matthew 11:28-30. All people are laden with sin and have many oppressive burdens which, figuratively speaking, are crushing their very souls out of them. The Lord Jesus Christ invites them all to come to Him and promises that He will give them rest for their souls. Millions of people have accepted this invitation and have taken His yoke upon them, which they have found to be easy and light. Friend, if you have not accepted Him, do so today; and He will make good every promise which He has made to you.

VII. PLOT TO KILL JESUS

(Matthew 12:14)

The Pharisees registered a complaint to Jesus against His disciples for plucking heads of grain as they were walking through the fields on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:1-7). Jesus answered them in a most satisfactory manner. He showed that, in plucking the grain, the disciples were not violating the Sabbath law any more than David and those who were with him had done in a case of emergency when they ate the loaves of showbread (I Sam. 21:1-6). He showed, moreover, that the priests in carrying out their ministrations on the Sabbath were actually working on that holy day. They were guiltless because they were performing the necessary services (Num. 28:9,10). The normal

person has to eat on the Sabbath, the same as on any other day. Those of His disciples who were violating the Sabbath, as the Pharisees understood them to be doing, were simply meeting the demands of their nature. They were, therefore, not violating any portion of the Sabbath law, but were following Him, the Son of man, who is Lord of the Sabbath (Matt.12:8).

It is quite possible that, in an effort to magnify some portions of the Word of God, one loses sight of other facts that are just as important and weaves theories and binds them upon men to be observed. One should be careful in this matter.

On the same Sabbath Jesus went into the local synagogue and healed a man who had a withered hand. He was again attacked by His opponents for working on the Sabbath. Immediately, according to verses 12-14, the Pharisees went out of the synagogue and took counsel how they might destroy Him. Here some of the strictest of the religious people among Israel were planning how they could murder a man who had done nothing worthy of condemnation. People can allow their zeal for religion to carry them so far that they plan the destruction of the life of a man. Fanatical zeal and prejudice often drive good men to diabolical extremes. Other Pharisees seem not to have taken any offense at the things which Jesus did and taught. For instance, a Pharisee, regardless of the motive, invited Jesus to take breakfast with him. Jesus accepted his invitation and was treated most cordially (Luke, chapter 14). There were, therefore, good, devout, consecrated men among the Pharisees, as well as those who were mere timeservers, and who were insincere in their religious walk. The same characteristic is true of any religious group today. There are good, devout people; at the same time there are hypocrites among them. Let no one condemn the class because of the lives of some who are associated with it.

VIII. THE SIGN OF JONAH THE PROPHET
(Matthew 12: 22-37)

In Matthew 12: 22-37 is an account of Christ's healing a man who was possessed by demons, blind, and dumb. When he was healed, he spoke and saw normally. The multitudes were amazed, saying, "Is not this one the son of David?" But certain Pharisees said, "This one does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, prince of the demons." They admitted that Jesus had performed a miracle but attributed the act to the power of Satan.

Notwithstanding the fact that Jesus had just performed a notable miracle in the healing of this man, certain of the scribes and Pharisees came, saying, "Teacher, we desire to see a sign by Thee." Obviously, these men were insincere and hypocritical. They were not wanting the truth; neither were they wanting signs, because He had just given them a convincing sign.

Jesus replied that no sign would be given except the sign of Jonah the prophet; for, just as Jonah had been three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so the Son of man would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. A careful examination of the Book of Jonah reveals that, when the prophet was thrown overboard by the sailors, he bobbed up and down in the water for some time. He prayed while he was there, but finally the waters compassed him about "even to the soul." This expression is the idiom used in Jeremiah 4:10 to indicate death. The facts that are revealed in Jonah, chapter 2, prove that Jonah actually drowned, that his body was carried by a downward flowing current to a place between some mountains on the bottom of the sea, and that his spirit went to Sheol. After Jonah had drowned, his body was swallowed by a great sea monster which God had created for the purpose (for such is the significance of the term *prepared* found in Jonah 1:17; 4:6,7,8). Jonah's body remained in the belly of this creature for three days and three nights. During this time

the fish was swimming toward the shore. When Jonah prayed¹ the petition recorded in Jonah 2:1-9, his spirit had been released from Sheol and had re-entered his body. Then

the sea monster vomited Jonah out upon the dry land. Immediately he went to Nineveh and did as God had first instructed him.

In view of all the facts as they are revealed in the Book of Jonah, one cannot escape the conclusion that Jonah actually died, that his spirit went to Sheol, that it was released, that it re-entered his body, and that Jonah became alive again.

Jesus said that, as Jonah had died, had gone to the place of departed spirits, and had come back again, so would it be with the Son of man. He would be put to death in the flesh, would go in the spirit to the place of departed spirits, and then would come back again after three days and three nights. Thus this experience of Jonah is typical of that of the Son of God.

What is the significance of three days and three nights as used here by Jesus? On occasions He spoke of His being raised on the third day. At other times He said that He would rise after three days. On this occasion, He spoke of His Resurrection after three days and three nights. Thus these three expressions refer to the same period of time—the time that His body was in the tomb. An examination of the statements as they are found in Luke 23:50-24:11 shows that Jesus was crucified on Friday, that He was buried toward the close of that day, that He was in the grave during the following Sabbath, and that He arose on the first day of the week. Thus He was in the grave one full day—the Sabbath—and parts of two others, Friday and Sunday. Yet, according to the usage of the time, He was spoken of as being in the grave three days and three nights, rising after three days, and rising on the third day. The proof is overwhelming that He was executed and buried on the day before the Sabbath; that He remained in the tomb on the Sabbath; that He arose on the day after the Sabbath, the first day of the week; and that He appeared to witnesses previously chosen, who have given the facts as they actually occurred nineteen hundred years ago.

¹ He concluded this petition by promising the Lord that he would pay that which he had vowed. When a person makes a vow or promise to the Lord, he must fulfill it to the letter or suffer chastisement from the Lord.

IX. MEN ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD FOR IDLE WORDS

(Matthew 12:36,37)

According to Matthew 12:36,37, men will have to give an account to the Lord for every idle word which they utter. Of course, this statement refers to those who are unsaved and whose sins will face them when they come before God in the judgment.

But this situation will not be true of the saved. Their sins are forgiven them and will never be remembered against them any more—that is, they are cancelled once and for all:

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 20 but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it (Isa. 1:18-20).

To the penitent remnant of Israel of the end time the Prophet Micah declared:

18 Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in lovingkindness. 19 He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:18-20).

Jeremiah, also, from whom the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews quotes, declared that God will remember the iniquities of the penitent believer no more: “For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And their sins will I remember no more” (Heb. 8:12). In the light of these facts, Matthew 12:36, 37 applies especially to the unbelievers.

Although the saved are forgiven their sins, and their iniquities are not held against them any more, they are all to be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body (II Cor. 5:10). Since the believers are to be rewarded according to their conduct, their idle talking will probably enter into the withholding of some rewards.

CHAPTER XXV

PARABLES

ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

(Matthew 13:1-58)

13 On that day Jesus went forth out of the house and sat beside the sea; 2 and great multitudes were gathered to Him, so that He, entering a boat, sat down; and all the multitude had taken their stand on the beach. 3 And He spoke to them many things in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went forth to sow; 4 and, in his sowing, some *seeds* fell along the way, and the birds came and devoured them. 5 And others fell upon the rocky ground, where they had not much earth, and immediately they sprang up on account of their not having any depth of soil; 6 and, when the sun had arisen, they were scorched; and on account of not having root, they withered. 7 And others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them. 8 And still others fell upon the good soil and kept bearing fruit—some one hundred, some sixty, and some thirtyfold. 9 The one who has ears, let him listen.

10 And the disciples came up to Him and said, Why art Thou speaking in parables to them?
11 And replying, He said, Because to you it has been granted to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. 12 For to whoever has, it shall be given, and he shall have more in abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 13 Therefore I am speaking to them in parables, because, though they keep on seeing, they never see, and, though they keep on hearing, they never hear, or understand. 14 The prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in them, which declares:

By hearing you will hear,
But by no means will understand;
And, seeing repeatedly, you will see,
But will by no means perceive.

15 For the heart of this people has grown fat,
And they hear with their ears with difficulty,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest perchance they might see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,

And understand with their heart,
And should turn again,
And I should heal them.¹

16 But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. 17 For in solemn truth I am saying to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you are seeing, but did not see, and to hear what you are hearing, but did not hear.

18 Now listen attentively to the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, but does not understand, the evil *one* comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart; the same is the one sown along the wayside. 20 And the one sown on the rock, this one is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 but he does not have root in himself, but is short-lived, so *that*, when tribulation and persecution arise on account of the word, immediately he is caused to stumble. 22 The one that is sown among the thorns, the same is the one who hears the word, and the cares of the age and the deceitfulness of riches choke out the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23 But the one sown upon good ground, the same is the one who hears the word and understands, who indeed bears fruit and yields—some one hundred, some sixty, and some thirtyfold.

24 Another parable he set forth before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while men slept, an enemy of his came and sowed tares among the wheat and went away. 26 But when the stalk grew up and bore fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 Then the servants of the householder said to him, Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Whence then has it tares? 28 And he said to them, A hostile man has done this. But the servants say to him, Do you desire therefore, that we should go and gather these? 29 And he said, No, lest perhaps in gathering the tares, you root up at the same time the wheat. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the season of the harvest I shall say to the reapers, Gather together first the tares, and bind them in bundles in order to burn them, but the wheat gather into my granary.

¹ Isaiah 6:9,10. For a freer, but very helpful, translation of these verses, see The New Testament, translated by Edgar J. Goodspeed.

31 Another parable He set before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like a seed of mustard which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 and which is less than all of the seeds; but, when it grew up, it was greater than the garden herbs and became a tree, so that the birds of the heaven came and roosted in its branches.

33 Another parable He spoke to them, The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened.

34 All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes, and apart from a parable He was speaking nothing to them, 35 in order that the word might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying,

I shall open my mouth in parables;

I shall utter things hidden since creation.²

36 Then leaving the multitudes, He went into the house, and His disciples came to Him, saying, Explain thoroughly to us the parable of the tares of the field. 37 And replying, He said, The one sowing the good seed is the Son of man; 38 the field is the world; the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; but the tares are the sons of the evil *one*; 39 and the enemy who sowed these is the devil; and the harvest is the consummation of the age; and the reapers are the angels. 40 As, therefore, the tares are gathered together and are burned in fire, thus shall it be in the consummation of the age. 41 The Son of man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that are causes of stumbling and those who practice lawlessness; 42 and they will cast them into the furnace of fire; there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The one who has ears, let him hear.

44 The kingdom of heaven is like to a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid, and out of his joy he went and sold all which he had and purchased that field.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking good pearls; 46 and, having found one *especially* valuable pearl, he went away, sold all things whatsoever he had, and purchased it.

² Psalm 78:2, not a literal translation. Jesus gave something in addition.

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet, thrown into the sea and enclosing fish of every sort, 48 which, when it was full, they hauled up on the beach; and, having sat down, they gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they threw away. 49 In like manner will it be in the consummation of the age. The angels will go forth, and separate the evil from among the righteous, 50 and cast them into the furnace of fire; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51 Do you understand all these things? They said to Him, Yes. 52 And He said to them, Therefore every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a householder, who brings forth continually out of his treasure things *both* new and old.

53 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from that place.

54 And coming into His own country, He was teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were amazed and said, Whence does this man have this wisdom and the powers? 55 Is He not the son of the carpenter? Is not His mother named Mary and His brothers, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Whence, therefore, does He have all these things? 57 And they took offense at Him. And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor, except in his own locality and in his house. 58 And there He did not perform many powers because of their unbelief.

The word *parable* appears several times in the writings of Moses and the Prophets. An examination of each context in which it appears shows that it is a name of a terse statement, which is usually in the poetical form of Hebrew parallelism. The Book of Proverbs is called the Book of Parables. In the New Testament this word is derived from two Greek terms, a preposition and a verb, which mean "to lay or thrown down beside." The thought is, for instance, that there is an unknown distance to be measured. A person has a standard of measurement. This fundamental idea developed into that of an illustration. Parables were primarily, therefore, used to make plain the thought to be conveyed.

A study of the four Records of the Gospel shows that from the first Passover during the earthly ministry of Jesus onward there was an increasing hostility toward Him on the part of some of the leaders of Israel. He labored in Judea approximately six months. During the first full year of His preaching ministry, this hostility continued to grow until it

became evident to all that the breach would never be healed. During the first part of His ministry, He spoke plainly. After certain of the Pharisees took counsel against Him how they might destroy him (Matt. 12:14), He seems to have adopted a definite principle with reference to His teaching ministry and service. This method becomes apparent to the student who closely studies Matthew's Record of the Gospel.

John the Baptist had announced that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. When Jesus began His ministry, He did likewise. So did the apostles. Considering the message of Matthew, chapter 13, one sees that Jesus began the use of parables in a special manner. Why did He do so?

I. THE PURPOSE OF PARABLES

A parable is an illustration to make plain some unknown truth or principle. An illustration that does not generally clarify the subject fails of its purpose. God wants everyone to have the truth, to come to a knowledge of it, and to be saved eternally; but He does not force any man's will. The path of the just, that is, the good moral man, is uprightness. He selects only such a course of conduct for himself. The Lord who is upright desires the salvation of all and directs the path of the honest, conscientious one toward the truth:

The way of the just is uprightness: thou that art upright dost direct the path of the just (Isa. 26:7).

It is, therefore, with the idea of leading the honest, conscientious souls to a knowledge of the truth that the parables found in the Bible ordinarily were used.

But some of the parables of Jesus are exceptions to the rule. He knew the temper of His audiences and frequently used parables to meet the situation. He often used parables to conceal, instead of to reveal, the truth, as Matthew 13:10-15 clearly shows. Doubtless, many in the audience on this particular occasion had no appreciation of truth whatsoever. In fact, many of them were probably hostile and were eager to catch some word out of His mouth to use against Him. He, therefore, used parables to conceal the truth from them. In the Sermon on the Mount He told His disciples not to give that which is holy to the dogs or to cast pearls before swine. He practiced what He preached.

His reason for concealing the truth from these bitter enemies is stated in His own words: "Therefore I am speaking to them in parables because, though they keep on seeing, they never see, and, though they hear, they never hear or understand" (Matt. 13:13). They saw, and yet they did not see. This statement of Jesus seems to be a contradiction, but it is not. To show what He meant, He quoted from Isaiah 6:9, 10. Isaiah was commissioned to preach continually to Israel, proclaiming the message of God, but was assured that his preaching would harden the hearts of the people. Hence they would be unable to understand his message. The form of the Hebrew verb in this passage is significant. It shows that Isaiah was commanded to continue to preach the same message, and that the repetition would continue to cause the hardening of the heart. The effect that the preaching of the Word of God has upon the heart is determined by the attitude which the hearer takes toward it. Heat melts wax, but hardens clay. The same force or element has exactly opposite effects upon the two different substances. Thus it is with the Word of God. It hardens the heart that is not receptive, and that does not want it; it mellows and melts the heart of the one who is thirsting after God, and who wants truth and facts.

II. THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM (Matthew 13:1-58)

Matthew records seven parables of the kingdom of heaven. In the parallel passage found in Mark, chapter 4, it is stated that on this occasion Jesus spoke to the multitudes in many like parables (vv. 33,34). The two accounts, however, are not contradictory. Jesus did in reality use many parables, but Matthew gives only seven. As all Bible students well recognize, the number seven denotes completeness and perfection. Doubtless it was for the purpose of giving a complete picture of the various phases of the kingdom of heaven that Matthew was divinely led to record these seven parables.

The first of these parables is that of the sower who went forth to sow seed. This sower is interpreted by Jesus Himself as being the Son of man. He was the one who left heaven, came to earth, and began to sow the seed of the Word of God in a new and a peculiar manner. The word of this great salvation, as Hebrews 2:1-4 shows, was begun

by the preaching of Jesus, the Son of man, the God-man. The last parable of the series is that of the dragnet, which Jesus interprets as referring to the situation which will exist in the kingdom of heaven when He comes back to earth at the end of the Tribulation. The series, as just stated, covers the entire period during which the spiritual phase of the kingdom of heaven will be in existence. The parables employed between the first and the last set forth the unfolding of the idea of the kingdom of heaven.

This period under the spotlight of these parables is the Christian Dispensation, which intervenes between the first and the second coming of the Messiah.

In the period of His rejection He is in glory, awaiting the time when Israel turns to Him and calls upon Him for deliverance. (See Book Two, Chapter XIII.) Let us look at these parables briefly to see the general thought and development of the teaching through the seven.

A. The Sower

(Matthew 13:3-9; 18-23)

The sower is none other than the Son of man, the Lord Jesus Christ. He goes forth to sow seed. Some of the seeds fall on the wayside and are devoured by the birds. Other seeds fall on rocky ground where there is little earth. They spring up; and, when the sun becomes hot, the tender plants are scorched and wither. Still other seeds fall among the thorns, which choke them out, while some seeds fall on good ground and bring forth fruit, some yielding a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

The same seeds fall on four different types of soil. The effect is different in each instance. The seeds falling beside the way are devoured by the birds. Jesus interprets this statement as follows: When the Word is preached and falls into a heart that is like the hard soil of the road, the devil snatches away the message, and the man is exactly where he was when he heard it—except he is hardened to a certain extent, because the Word always hardens the heart when not accepted and embraced. There is also a class of people in whose hearts the Word is sowed, and who enthusiastically accept it, but they have no depth of character or stability and by and by become offended and discouraged by the Word; hence they fall away. Such people are never regenerated. Their interest in spiritual matters is simply a passing fancy in their lives. Seeds falling

among the thorns are the Word that falls in the hearts of certain ones who receive the message enthusiastically, but the cares of life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word so that it does not bring forth fruit to perfection. These people likewise are not saved. The fourth class of hearers, those represented by the seeds falling on good ground, consists of those who hear the Word, who have depth of purpose and a yearning for God, and who accept the Word with all enthusiasm and with purpose of heart. They bring forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundredfold. This class is the only one that really amounts to anything in the kingdom of God.

B. The Wheat and the Tares

(Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43)

The second parable is that of the wheat and the tares. A certain man sowed good seed in his field. While men slept at night, an enemy came and sowed tares also in the field, which sprang up and began to grow. The servants of the landlord, discovering the presence of the tares, reported their find to their master and asked what they should do. His instructions were that they should let both the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest, when he would instruct the reapers to bind the tares in bundles for burning and to gather the wheat into his garner. This parable is an advance upon the first one. It shows that in the kingdom of heaven there are good as well as bad—saved as well as unsaved—people.

C. The Mustard Seed

(Matthew 13:31,32)

The third parable, that of the mustard seed, is a still further advance in the development of the thought regarding the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed "which a man took and sowed in his field, and which is less than all of the seeds." The plant springing therefrom develops abnormally until it is sufficiently large for the birds of the heavens to roost in it. By this abnormal, unnatural growth, the plant doubtless foreshadows the kingdom of heaven, which has a lowly beginning, and which develops into a monstrous organization. Keen students of the Word have seen the fulfillment of this parable in the conversion of

Constantine the Great, who adopted Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire and forced the people, irrespective of position and Christian experience, to become members of the church—an abnormal, unnatural development, which proved disastrous in its blighting, blasting effects upon true New Testament Christianity.

D. The Leaven in Three Measures of Meal

(Matthew 13:33)

The next parable, that of the woman who put leaven in three measures of meal, carries the thought of the kingdom another step forward. An examination of all Scriptures where leaven is used symbolically shows that it signifies something evil. Since there is no evidence in the context of this parable that indicates a departure from this usual symbolic meaning, one must conclude that leaven in this parable represents something that is evil. When the woman in the parable puts the leaven into three measures of meal, it spreads through all the meal. Thus the leaven signifies some corrupting element introduced into Christianity which affects the entire movement. Some excellent expositors interpret this parable as setting forth what was done by the great body of the Christian movement during the Dark Ages (A.D. 600-1517).

E. The Treasure in the Field

(Matthew 13:44)

The fifth parable is that of the treasure which a man discovered in a field, and thereupon sold all his possessions and bought the field in order that the treasure might become his. According to the parable of the wheat and the tares, the field is the world. There is a hidden treasure in it. What is this treasure? Some excellent Bible students—and with them I agree—think that this treasure is Israel. The one purchasing the field is none other than the Son of man who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor (II Cor. 8:9). He purchased the world with His sacrificial death upon the cross in order that He might ransom the treasure and obtain it by actual price. He is especially interested in Israel, this hidden treasure in the field.

F. The Pearl of Great Price

(Matthew 13:45,46)

The sixth parable is that of the pearl of great price, which a merchant seeking goodly pearls found, and sold everything that he had, and purchased it. Since the treasure of the preceding parable signifies Israel, the pearl of great price doubtless indicates the Church—people called from all nations, tribes, tongues, and languages and formed into a spiritual communion and fellowship spoken of as the body of Jesus Christ.

G. The Dragnet

(Matthew 13:47-50)

The last parable of the series is that of the dragnet. As such a net catches all the life within reach, so the kingdom of heaven is a great spiritual dragnet that gathers all kinds, both good and bad. This parable represents God's taking into hand the world situation at the time of Christ's Second Coming. God will gather out and cast aside that which is bad, but will preserve that which is good. Then shall the righteous shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of the Father.

From this brief survey of these parables, it is quite evident that they portray in a very vivid way the course of history from the first coming of Christ to His Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation.

CHAPTER XXVI

PERIOD OF RETIREMENTS OF JESUS FROM THE LAND OF ISRAEL ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (Matthew 14:1-17:20)

14 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report of Jesus ² and said to his servants, This one is John the Baptist; he has been raised from the dead; and, therefore, powers are working in him. ³ For Herod had arrested John, and bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of Philip, his brother. ⁴ For John kept saying to him, It is not lawful for you to have her. ⁵ And, though he wished to kill him, he was afraid of the multitude, because they held him as a prophet. ⁶ But on the occasion of Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced in their midst, and she pleased Herod; ⁷ whereupon with an oath he swore to give her whatever she might ask. ⁸ And being incited by her mother, she said, Give me here upon a platter the head of John the Baptist. ⁹ Though the king was saddened, because of the oath and those reclining with *him*, he ordered *it* to be given; ¹⁰ and he sent and had John beheaded in prison. ¹¹ And his head was brought on a platter and given to the maiden, and she brought it to her mother. ¹² Then his disciples came, and took the body, and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus. ¹³ When Jesus heard these things, He departed from thence in a boat unto a desert place privately; and the multitudes, hearing, followed Him on foot from the cities. ¹⁴ And going forth, Jesus saw a great multitude, and was moved with pity toward them, and healed their sicknesses. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to Him, saying, This place is desolate, and the hour has already passed; send the multitudes away, in order that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves. ¹⁶ But Jesus said to them, They do not have any need to go away; you give them *something* to eat ¹⁷ But they said to Him, Here we have nothing except five loaves and two fishes. ¹⁸ Then He said, Bring them here to me. ¹⁹ And He ordered the multitudes to recline upon the grass; took the five loaves and the two fishes; looked toward heaven; gave thanks; and, having broken, gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples *gave them* to the multitudes. ²⁰ And all ate and were filled, and they took up that which remained over of the broken fragments, twelve baskets full. ²¹ And those eating were men, about five thousand, apart from women and children.

22 And immediately Jesus had the disciples get into a boat and to precede Him to the other side, until He should send the multitudes away. 23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into the mountain privately to pray; and, when it was evening, He was there alone. 24 But the boat already was many furlongs distant from the land and was being lashed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. 25 In the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking upon the sea. 26 And seeing Him walking on the water, the disciples became terrified, saying, It is a ghost; and they cried out from fear. 27 Immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, Be of good courage; it is I; cease being afraid. 28 And replying to Him, Peter said, Lord, if it be Thou, order me to come to Thee on the water. 29 And He said, Come. And getting down out of the boat, Peter walked upon the water and went to Jesus. 30 But, when he saw the wind, he became frightened, and began to sink, and cried out, saying, Lord, save me. 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, took hold of him, and said to him, You *are* of little faith; why did you doubt? 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased; 33 and in the boat they knelt before Him, saying, Truly, Thou art the Son of God.

34 Crossing over to the other side, they came to the land, to Gennesaret. 35 The men of that place recognized Him, and sent to that entire region round about, and brought to Him all that were sick. 36 And they kept imploring Him that they might just touch the border of His garment, and as many as touched were completely healed.

15 At that time Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, 2 Why do Thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat food. 3 But replying, He said to them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God on account of your tradition? 4 For God said, Honor your father and your mother, and whoever speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death. 5 But you say, Whoever says to his father or his mother, That wherewith you might have been profited by me is given *to God*, 6 he shall by no means honor his father or his mother. You nullify the word of God because of your traditions. 7 Hypocrites, accurately Isaiah prophesied concerning you, saying,

- 8 This people with their lips honor me,
But their heart is far from me.
- 9 Vainly they worship me,
Teaching for doctrines commandments of men.¹

¹ Isaiah 29:13.

10 Then He called the multitude and said to them, Listen and understand: 11 not that which enters into the mouth defiles the man, but that proceeding out of the mouth, this defiles the man. 12 Then the disciples came to Him, saying, Dost Thou know that the Pharisees, *upon* hearing this message, were offended? 13 And replying, He said, Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. 14 Let them alone; they are blind leaders of the blind; and, if one blind man leads another, both will fall into the pit. 15 Replying, Peter said to Him, Explain to us this parable. 16 And He said, Even now are you also without understanding? 17 Do you not know that everything entering into the mouth goes into the stomach and then is cast out into the draught? 18 But the things coming out of the mouth come forth out of the heart, and these things defile the man. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts: murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, *and* blasphemies. 20 These are the things defiling the man, but eating with unwashed hands does not defile the man.

21 When Jesus left there, He withdrew into the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a Canaanitish woman of those regions came and kept crying out, saying, Have mercy upon me, Lord, Son of David. My daughter is terribly demonized. 23 But He did not answer her a word. Then His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away, because she keeps crying after us. 24 Then replying, He said, I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 25 Then she came and knelt before Him, saying, Lord, help me. 26 Replying, He said, It is not fitting to take the children's loaf and to throw it to the little dogs. 27 Then she said, Yes, Lord, for even the little dogs *always* eat of the crumbs falling from the table of their masters. 28 Then replying, Jesus said to her, O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done as you will. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

29 Now when Jesus left that place, He went along the sea of Galilee, and went up into the mountain, and kept sitting there. 30 And great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, the crippled, the blind, the dumb, and many others, and laid them at His feet; and He healed them, 31 so that the multitude marveled when they saw the dumb speaking, the crippled made whole, and the lame walking around, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

32 And Jesus called His disciples and said, I am moved with pity toward the multitude, because already three days they have remained with me, and they do not have *anything* to eat; and I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the road. 33 And the disciples said to Him, Whence can we get bread enough in this desert place so as to fill such a multitude? 34 And Jesus said to them, How many loaves do you have? They said to Him, Seven loaves

and a few small fishes. 35 And Jesus commanded the multitude to recline on the ground, 36 and He took the seven loaves and the fishes; and, having returned thanks, He broke and kept giving to the disciples; and the disciples, *in turn*, to the multitudes. 37 And all ate and were filled, and of the fragments which remained, they took up seven baskets full. 38 And those eating were four thousand men, besides women and children. 39 When Jesus had sent the multitudes away, He got into a boat and went into the regions of Magadan.

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came up and, to test Him, asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. 2 And replying, He said unto them,² When it is evening, you 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. You know how to discern the face of the heaven; but you cannot discern the signs of the times. 4 A wicked and adulterous generation constantly seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. Then he left, and He went away.

5 When the disciples went to the other side *of the lake*, they forgot to take bread. 6 And Jesus said to them, Look out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. 7 But they thought within themselves, saying, We took no bread. 8 But knowing it, Jesus said, Why reason among yourselves, O you of little faith, because you have no bread? 9 Do you not yet know, and do you not remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets full you took up? 10 Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets full you took up? 11 How do you not consider that not of bread I spoke to you? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. 12 Then they understood that He spoke not to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

13 As Jesus was coming into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is? 14 They said, Some say, John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. 15 He said to them, But who do you say that I am? 16 Replying, Simon Peter said, Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God. 17 Replying, Jesus said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father, who is in heaven. 18 And I say to you that you are

² "The following words to the end of verse 3 are omitted by some of the most ancient and other important authorities" (American Standard Version).

Peter [Gr. *Petros*], and upon this rock [Gr. *Petra*] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19 I shall give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind upon the earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose upon the earth will have been loosed in heaven. 20 Then He strictly charged the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Messiah.

21 From that time *and forward*, Messiah Jesus began to show clearly to His disciples that it behooved Him to go to Jerusalem, to suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, to be killed, and to be raised the third day. 22 Then Peter took Him and began to reprove Him, saying, Lord, *may God be merciful to Thee*; this shall by no means come to Thee. 23 Turning, He said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan; for you are a stumbling block of mine, because you are not considering the things of God, but the things of men.

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wills to come after me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross and keep on following me. 25 For whoever wills to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life because of me will find it. 26 For what is a man profited if he gain the entire world, but forfeit his own life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his life? 27 For the Son of man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then will He render to everyone according to His practice. 28 In solemn truth I am telling you that some of those who are standing here will by no means taste of death until they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.

17 And after six days Jesus took Peter, and James, and John his brother, and led them up into a high mountain privately. 2 And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone as the sun, and His garments became white as the light. 3 And, behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4 Replying, Peter said to Jesus, Lord, it is good that we are here. If Thou art willing, I shall make here three tabernacles: one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. 5 While he was talking, behold, a white cloud overshadowed them; and there was a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him. 6 And the disciples heard, and fell upon their faces, and became exceedingly afraid. 7 Jesus came and touching them said, Get up and stop being afraid. 8 When they lifted their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus only.

9 And as they were coming down out of the mountain, Jesus strictly charged them, saying Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man is raised from the dead. 10 And the disciples asked Him, saying, Why, then, do the scribes say that it is necessary for Elijah to come first? 11 And replying, He said Elijah comes and will restore all things. 12 But I am telling you that Elijah

already has come, and they did not recognize him, but they did in his case whatever they wished; in like manner also will the Son of man suffer by them. 13 Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

14 When they came to the multitude, a man came to Him, falling on his knees and saying, 15 Lord, have mercy upon my son, because he is an epileptic, and he is sick, for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. 16 And I brought Him to Thy disciples, and they have not been able to heal him. 17 Replying, Jesus said, O generation without faith and perverted, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me. 18 And Jesus rebuked it, and the demon came out of him, and the child was healed from that hour.

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, Why were we not able to cast it out? 20 And He said to them, On account of your little faith; for in solemn truth I am telling you that, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will speak to this mountain, Remove from here to there, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you.

Chronologically Matthew 14:1-17:20 covers the first six months of the last year of the public ministry of Jesus. By this time the opposition against Him had grown to such an extent that it became necessary for Him to retire from Galilee into Gentile territory. At first He went across the sea of Galilee to the northeastern shore and fed five thousand men, besides women and children, who followed Him from various parts of the country (Matt. 14:15-33). After feeding the five thousand, He came back to the west side of the sea, landing in the place called Gennesaret. Upon arrival, He was met by a great host of people, including His enemies, as well as many who brought their sick to Him for healing (Matt. 14:34-36). Thereupon Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem attacked Him because His disciples were not observing the traditions of the elders in regard to washing their hands before eating (Matt. 15:1-20). Immediately He withdrew from the Holy Land into the regions of Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 15:21-28) and healed the daughter of a Canaanitish woman.

Leaving those parts, He returned to the country east of the sea of Galilee, called Decapolis, a circle of ten cities, where He fed a vast multitude—four thousand men, besides women and children (Matt. 15:29-39).

Then He took a boat crossing to the west side of the sea of Galilee. But, being attacked again by the Pharisees and the Sadducees, who demanded that He perform a sign from heaven, He left immediately with His disciples. Landing on the northeastern coast of the sea, He went into the regions of Caesarea Philippi for a short while (Matt. 16:5-17:21). From this fourth retirement, He returned to Galilee.

I. FEEDING THE MULTITUDES

(Matthew 14:13-21, 15:29-39)

Matthew 14:13-21 contains an account of the feeding of the five thousand upon Christ's first retirement. In Matthew 15:29-39 appears the account of the second feeding of a multitude—four thousand. Feeding the multitudes on these two occasions was miraculous. What indeed is a miracle? As intimated previously, a miracle is an act of God which causes wonderment on the part of men. But are not miracles contrary to the laws of nature?

God's moral government extends throughout the universe. He feeds His creatures every day by causing the rain to fall and the sun to shine. More explicitly, He gives man his daily bread, but does so by acting in His regular way. He gathers elements from earth, air, and water, and compounds them in the proper proportions in His little laboratory of stalks of grain, and extends the process over a period of months. People become so very much accustomed to His regular way of giving them food that they lose sight of the fact that it is the eternal God who is feeding them and think of the entire situation as if it were a process resulting from cold, inanimate laws of nature. For God to by pass His regular procedure of feeding humanity and to produce food in a manner which is called miraculous is out of the ordinary—an exception to the rule. An illustration of this principle is seen in the Gospel Records. The Lord Jesus miraculously fed above five thousand men, besides women and children, on a given occasion. He performed the miracle which produced actual bread and flesh of fish that satisfied the hungry multitude. On that occasion He gathered the elements necessary for the production of bread and of fish from earth, air, and water and compounded them in the proper proportions, acting upon the grain in such a way that those elements were in the same

condition as if they had been grown in the field and had been ground and baked in an oven. The same phenomenon is true in regard to the fishes. His acting thus was an occasion of filling a rush order in a given emergency. Throughout the Scriptures—both Old and New Testaments—are records of miracles wrought by various messengers of God and by the Saviour himself.

But the philosopher David Hume, as previously indicated, asserted that miracles are incredible. He thus denied that Jesus Christ fed the five thousand, as the Gospels clearly state. Both Matthew and John who were present assert that Christ did perform that miracle. Hume was not present, yet he had the temerity to say, in substance, that the record is false—the record of these two credible witnesses who were present, saw, and knew the facts concerning which they testified, namely, that Jesus did perform this miracle.

II. THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Notwithstanding the fact that Jesus had performed many miracles, which were His credentials proving His Messiahship and divine mission, certain Pharisees and Sadducees came to Him in an effort to trap Him. They asked Him for a sign from heaven. He stated that they could read the heavens as to whether or not there would be foul or fair weather, but could not read the signs of the times which proved that they were in Messianic times and that the Messiah had already come. That none are so blind as those who will not see is universally true. If a person does not want the truth on a given point, no matter how clear and how positive the evidence supporting it may be, it will not be convincing to him. One has to will to do the will of God in order to see the truth. To will to do the will of God is to determine in the depths of one's soul to obey the will of God regardless of circumstances or what the price may be.

Certain signs foretold by the prophets are indicative of the closing of this age. For instance, the unanimous testimony of Moses and the Prophets is that in the end time there will be a falling away from God and from clean, chaste living. Another sign of the end of the age is peoples turning away from the Word of God to fables and fancies. One

of the sure signs of the end of the age is the development of the world situation. According to Daniel the Prophet, in the end time a world government—a super-kingdom over all nations—will develop. This kingdom will devour the whole earth, tread it down, and break it in pieces; and its ruler will reign with an iron hand. Everyone who knows the political trend of today realizes that such a regime is now in the making. The strife between capital and labor likewise is another sign of the end of the age.

But there is what is properly called *the* sign, the infallible, the unmistakable sign of the end of the age and the Second Coming of the Messiah. This question is discussed in the notes on Matthew, chapter 24, of this volume.

III. PETER'S CONFESSION OF JESUS AS THE MESSIAH

(Matthew 16:13-20)

When Jesus and His apostles came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked them concerning what men thought of Him, the Son of man. In the six months preceding this period of retirement, Jesus had sent the twelve apostles throughout Galilee, preaching. They had come in contact with the people and had felt the pulse of the great Galilean populace. Hence Jesus asked them what expressions they had heard from the people concerning Himself.

According to their replies, some said that He was John the Baptist, who had been killed, but had been raised from the dead. Others were of the opinion that He was Elijah the Prophet, who, according to the last two verses of Malachi, is scheduled to appear before the great and terrible day of Jehovah; yet others declared that Jesus was Jeremiah or one of the other prophets. From these various answers one can see that the people were thinking about Jesus and were strongly impressed by Him. Something profound and mysterious about Him made them believe that He was one of the prophets who had been raised from the dead.

Turning to the apostles, Jesus asked who they thought He was. Peter instantly replied: "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God." The word *Messiah* means "anointed." Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed in the Old Testament days by an authorized representative of God, inducting them into their official positions. The term

anointed applied to these three offices. The anointed one was generally understood to be the king unless there were indications pointing to one of the other positions. The prophet Samuel anointed Saul to be king over Israel. When the Lord rejected Saul, Samuel anointed David as king. Thus these two became known as *the Lord's anointed*. So were all the kings that sat upon the throne of David. Such being the significance of the word *anointed*, Peter's use of it indicated that Jesus was the King of Israel, the Son of the living God, the God-man. Peter saw and recognized the truth that the Messiah of Israel is the Son of God—in a peculiar and unique sense, in which no one else can be called a Son of God. In the recognition of this truth, Peter was simply repeating what the prophets had said.

Isaiah, for instance, saw the Messiah of Israel reigning, not only over Israel, but over the entire world: "6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:6,7).

This prophecy foretells the coming of a child, namely, a son—the Son of God—who is given to Israel. He is recognized as the Wonderful one, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. He is to mount the throne of David and establish a well-organized righteous government in Israel. His rule will spread and increase until it includes all nations, tribes, tongues, and people. He will reign in righteousness. Jeremiah the Prophet saw a vision of the same one, the Messiah of Israel, the Son of the living God. In the following prophecy Jeremiah saw the one who is called the Branch, a descendant of the house of David reigning over Judah and Israel in righteousness and recognized as "Jehovah our righteousness." When He comes to reign, He will perform miracles which will so far eclipse all those that were wrought when Moses led Israel out of Egyptian bondage that they will never come to mind again.

5 Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6

In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness. 7 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that they shall no more say, As Jehovah liveth, who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; 8 but, As Jehovah liveth, who brought up and who led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries whither I had driven them. And they shall dwell in their own land (Jer. 23:5-8).

Zechariah also saw Messiah and spoke of Him:

... 12 and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah; 13 even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (Zech. 6:12, 13).

It becomes increasingly evident that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the fulfillment of the Messianic predictions which foretold that God would enter the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth and restore Israel eventually to favor with Himself and to the position of being head of the nations instead of the tail, as at the present day.

Replying to Jesus, Peter said, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus formed His reply after the pattern used by Peter, "Blessed are you, Simon, Bar-Jonah [the son of Jonah]." But there is a great contrast between the two men and the expressions, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God" and "You are Simon, Bar-Jonah." One is God in human form; the other is simply a man.

That Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God, was revealed to Peter by God Himself: "... flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but my Father who is in heaven." God made a special revelation to Peter regarding Jesus' being Messiah, the Son of the living God. What He did for Peter, He will do for anyone else who wills to do the will of God—as Jesus promised: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, *whether* it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (John 7:17).

To you, my friend, I wish to say that, if you are in doubt as to Jesus' being the Messiah, the Son of the living God, but wish to know from the very depths of your soul, you can and will know—provided you are willing to do the will of God, even at all costs and at all hazards. If you want to know the will of God in order that you might carry it out in your own life, the God of truth will lead and guide you providentially and bring the truth to you so that you can take your stand upon it, be blessed, and be used of Him in a mighty way. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be satisfied" (Matt. 5:6).

Peter's original name was Simon. When, however, Simon answered the call to follow Christ, Jesus gave him the name *Cephus*, an Aramaic term which means "a stone"; and, at the time Simon made this great confession, Jesus spoke to him by his new name *Peter*, a Greek word meaning "a small stone." The Lord gave Peter this name by way of anticipation. By nature Peter was very impetuous and went to extremes. When, however, the Spirit of God came into his heart, he became like a solid rock, standing for the right and for the truth. Eventually, if tradition be true, he laid down his life in martyrdom for the Lord, whom he loved and served.

Jesus said to Peter, moreover, "And upon this rock I will build my church." The word rendered *rock* in this sentence is the Greek term *petra*. This word is in the feminine gender and means "a large solid ledge of rock." It is in contrast with *petros*—in English, *Peter*, a word in the masculine gender which, as just stated, means "a small rock." When Jesus said, "Upon this *petra*," He was not speaking of Peter whom He called *Petros*, a little stone. Upon what then did Jesus say He would build His church? G. Abbott Smith, in his *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, shows very beautifully the contrast between the words *petros* and *petra*. In defining *petra*, he states: "A rock, i.e., a mass of live rock as distinct from *petros*, a detached stone or boulder." In the imagery that Jesus used, He declared that He would build His church upon a massive large rock, which is different from the one used to represent Peter—a small stone or boulder. Upon what was the Church built? Upon the great truth that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the Jewish Messiah, the Son of the living God. In speaking of the foundation of the Church, the Apostle Paul declared, "For other foundation can no man

lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11). Jesus was rejected and was executed, but was raised from the grave on the third day in accordance with Old Testament prediction. Concerning the Resurrection, the Apostle Paul wrote that Christ "was declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead ..." (Rom. 1:4). The crowning proof that Jesus of Nazareth was and is Messiah, the Son of the living God, is His Resurrection from the dead in power and glory. On the day of Pentecost (Acts, chapter 2), the same Apostle Peter declared to a vast throng of people in Jerusalem: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2:36). Thus the foundation of the Church was laid on the first Pentecost after the Resurrection of Christ. This foundation was the great fact proclaimed by Peter on that occasion: that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ—demonstrating this fact to the world by the Resurrection of Christ.

According to this prediction, Jesus intended to establish His Church upon the great fundamental fact which He speaks of as a solid rock. He then made a further revelation: "... and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it." The imagery here used doubtless was borrowed from the locality where Jesus was when He made this prediction. Cities in Palestine and surrounding countries are usually built on knolls. Sometimes they are called mountains. Jesus pictures a city as located on one such knoll. Then He speaks of another one on which He himself expects to build a city, His Church. The authorities of the existing city—the kingdom of Satan—will send their forces through their gates against those who are attempting to build this new city—the Kingdom of Christ. The opposition will not succeed, but will fail in reaching its objective. The Church's foundation was laid on Pentecost. Since that time God's servants have been building upon that one foundation. Satan and his emissaries have launched persecution after persecution and attack after attack against the building of this great spiritual edifice, but they have not succeeded, and they never will.

Jesus promised to give Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the Church. What is the significance of these words? Keys are the means by which doors and gates are

locked or unlocked. On the day of Pentecost, Peter was granted the privilege to open the gates of the kingdom of heaven, or the doors of the Church. The Lord honored him in the same way at the conversion of the first Gentiles to the Christian faith (Acts, chapter 10). On both occasions, Peter told the people how they could enter by accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Was it granted to Peter to pass on the keys of the kingdom to successors, as the Roman Catholic Church claims? Did Peter have any priority or superiority over the rest of the apostles? Since the Lord gave Peter the right and the privilege of opening the doors of the Church on the two occasions just mentioned, let no one assume that Peter was given any priority or authority that was not delegated to the rest of the apostles. This fact is clearly seen by a glance at Acts, chapters 10 and 11. When Peter returned to Jerusalem from his ministry at the household of Cornelius, the apostles and the brethren held a meeting. Those of the circumcision reprimanded Peter for going to the Gentiles and receiving them into fellowship by confession of faith and baptism. If Peter had had any priority over the rest of the apostles, they and the brethren—the entire church at Jerusalem—would not have had the boldness to reprove him and to call him to task about what he had done. Peter did not understand that the Lord had conferred more authority upon him than upon the rest of the apostles; for, in writing his First Epistle, chapter 5, verse 1, he exhorts the elders, saying, "The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ ..." Peter recognized his position among the apostles as being one of the company without any special authority whatsoever. One cannot, therefore, in the light of these Scriptures, believe that Peter had any pre-eminence and authority above the rest of the apostles. Furthermore, the doors of the Church have never been closed since Peter opened them to the Jews at Pentecost and to the Gentiles at the household of Cornelius. There is then no need of his having a successor to repeat a work that has already been accomplished. He, therefore, has no successor.

Jesus, moreover, said to Peter, "I shall give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind upon the earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose upon the earth will have been loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:19). The

rendering of this verse is that which is recognized by all Greek grammarians as the literal, exact translation of the original text. In other words, certain things, said Jesus, would be bound in heaven. These, and these only, Peter would bind on earth in proclaiming the gospel as on Pentecost. Also certain things would be loosed in heaven. These and these only would be loosed on earth. The binding and the loosing in heaven come first. Guided by the Spirit of God, Peter was to do that which God in heaven had already determined. How could he thus act? Psalm 119:89 gives a little hint: "Forever, O Jehovah, Thy word is settled in the heavens." Being guided by the Spirit of God, the Apostle Peter, when opening the doors of the Church, would simply be saying just what had been determined and ratified in heaven.

IV. THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD JESUS

(Matthew 17:1-13)

Where there is no vision, the people perish. This statement is true. God recognizes the value of vision. God gave Moses a vision at the burning bush. He appeared in vision to Isaiah in the Temple of the great Kingdom Age and gave him his call to the ministry. At various times He gave to His messengers spiritual visions and prophecies. To Peter, James, and John, Jesus gave a vision. In II Peter 1:12-21, the Apostle interprets the Transfiguration scene (Matt. 17:1-13) as a vision of the coming, the power, and the regal splendor of the Lord Jesus Christ when He returns as King of the Jews and reigns over the world. In other words, the Transfiguration scene was a miniature vision, or picture, of the great Kingdom Age.

In this vision Christ was transfigured before Peter, James, and John. Divine glory radiated from His being. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared—talking with Him. When one passes out of this life, he lays aside this body, which the poet calls "this mortal coil," but he continues to live on and on. To Moses at the burning bush God declared that He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At that time those patriarchs had been dead for years. Yet the Lord spoke of His being their God. This statement meant that they were very much alive and conscious, and that He was their God. He is the God of the living only. He is still the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of Moses and

Elijah, and of every true servant of God who passes out of this life, as well as of those who are still here in the flesh. Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ and were conversing with Him about His death, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Whether or not the saved ones who go on beyond can come back to this earth, as Moses and Elijah did on this occasion, no one can say dogmatically. But one can be positive that the saved, upon death, go into the presence of the Lord. They can, if they choose to do so, direct their attention toward this earth and can understand certain things, at least, about what is transpiring (Rev. 6:9-11; Heb. 12:1,2).

In this connection one should remember that it is not a serious thing to die, but it is a serious matter to live. In life a person must prepare for the great exchange of worlds. He should be certain that he will be ready when his summons comes. There is a place of bliss and happiness where the redeemed will be with their saved loved ones, with the angels, and with God forever and ever. But the lost, the unsaved, will be banished from the presence and the glory of God forever and ever.

In ecstasy at the Transfiguration Peter exclaimed, "Lord, it is good that we are here; if Thou art willing, I shall make here three tabernacles: one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." In his excitement he did not really know, of course, what he was saying. While he was speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed the group, and a voice out of the cloud said: "This is my Son, the Beloved, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him." Peter, in his impetuosity, put Moses and Elijah on an equality with Jesus, in that he wanted to build three tabernacles—presumably alike—one to each of the three. Hence the voice commanded the apostles to hearken to Christ—not to Moses or to Elijah. Being the great lawgiver, Moses, of course, stood for the law. Elijah, one of the greatest prophets, stood for the prophets. Instead of turning to the Law and the Prophets now, all people are commanded to turn to the Son and to hear Him. He is the Prophet whom God promised to raise up, as seen in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. God has put His words in this one's mouth, and He is going to require every Hebrew—and all people—to give heed to this Prophet. Those who do not hear and obey Him will suffer throughout all eternity for not having done so. "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deut.

18:19). Since God has come and has spoken to Israel through the Lord Jesus Christ, men and women must turn to Him if they are to enjoy the salvation of God throughout all eternity. So long as they turn away from Him and still look to Moses as the authority in matters religious, a veil lies over their faces.

12 Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness of speech, 13 and *are* not as Moses, *who* put a veil upon his face, that the children of Israel should not look stedfastly on the end of that which was passing away: 14 but their minds were hardened: for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remaineth, it not being revealed *to them* that it is done away in Christ. 15 But unto this day, whensoever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart. 16 But whensoever it shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit (II Cor. 3:12-18).

As Jesus and the three apostles were coming down from the mountain, He urged them not to tell anyone the vision that they had seen until after He would be raised from the dead. Then they asked Him, "Why, then, do the scribes say that it is necessary for Elijah to come first?" Jesus replied, "Elijah comes and will restore all things" (Matt. 17:11). God redeems and fulfills every promise that He makes. In Malachi 4:5,6 He promises to send Elijah the Prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah comes—before the Tribulation begins.

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Everyone who knows and believes the Scriptures is convinced that God will send Elijah the Prophet back to this earth before the Tribulation begins, to engage in a special ministry to Israel, that of restoring, according to these verses, the family relations. I should not be surprised to hear reports from Palestine that some unique

personage has appeared there who is engaging in social reforms and restoring the family relations. The Jewish people are absolutely right in expecting Elijah to come, as the herald of the Messiah. See such passages as Isaiah 40:3-5 and Malachi 3:1-6; 4:5,6.

After the Lord Jesus had foretold that Elijah would yet come, He declared, "12 ... Elijah already has come, and they did not recognize him, but they did in his case whatever they wished; in like manner also will the Son of man suffer by them. 13 Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist" (Matt. 17:12,13). When the angel appeared to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, he said that the child whose birth he announced would go before the face of the Lord in the spirit and in the power of Elijah. This statement shows that John the Baptist was not Elijah, but a man like Elijah in many respects. When John the Baptist began his ministry, calling the nation to repentance, the Jerusalem authorities sent a delegation of priests, Levites, to interview him concerning his identity. Upon being asked who he was, he confessed and denied not, saying, "I am not the Messiah." They then asked him, "Are you Elijah?" His answer to this question was the categorical statement, "I am not" (John 1:19-21). He certainly knew who he was. He was not Elijah. Then Jesus, speaking of John the Baptist, said that he was Elijah that was to come—that is, he was not the literal Elijah, but he was a man like Elijah. God will yet send Elijah the Prophet to Israel before the great and terrible day of Jehovah.

V. REMOVING A MOUNTAIN BY FAITH

(Matthew 17:14-20)

In Matthew 17:14-20 is an account of a man who brought his son, an epileptic, demon possessed boy, to Jesus, stating that he had brought his son to the disciples of Jesus, but that they were unable to cast out the demon and restore him to health. Then the Lord Jesus cast out the demon and restored the boy to his normal condition. Thereupon the disciples asked the Master, "Why were we not able to cast him out?" Jesus replied, "On account of your little faith; for in solemn truth I am telling you that, if

you have faith as of a grain of mustard you will speak to this mountain, Remove from here to there, and it shall remove and nothing shall be impossible to you" (Matt. 17:20).

Is the promise of this verse made to any and all believers through the centuries? Noting the exact statement of Jesus points one in the right direction. He said "this mountain," a definite specific mountain which was visible to them. He said, moreover, that by faith they could remove this specific mountain to a definite place. It is an utter impossibility for any believers, except those who were present and to whom Jesus spoke on that occasion, to accept this challenge to their faith. Had any of the disciples who were present accepted the challenge and spoken to that definite mountain, in faith, he could have removed it as Jesus had promised. In other words, this promise was designed to strengthen the faith of the disciples present by permitting them to perform a miracle.

A situation parallel to this one is found in the case of Ahaz, king of Judah, the account of which is recorded in Isaiah 7:1-17. The kings of Syria and Israel had laid a plot to war against Judah, to depose Ahaz, and to place upon the throne their own appointee, the son of Tabeel. When the plot became known, Ahaz and the inhabitants of Jerusalem became panicky. The king began inspecting the water supply of the city. The Lord at that time sent Isaiah the Prophet to the king, assuring him that He himself would protect the kingdom, but warned, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established."

In order to strengthen the faith of Ahaz, God spoke again through Isaiah to him, saying, "Ask thee a sign of Jehovah thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above." In other words, God promised to perform a miracle which would strengthen the faith of Ahaz, but he spurned this divine offer of assistance. It would be foolish for any one to say that God would now fulfill this promise to the one who asks. The promise to Ahaz was to meet a special situation. In like manner the promise to the disciples to remove a definite mountain to a given place was to meet a definite situation in which the disciples found themselves. It is, therefore, incorrect to claim that this promise is a universal one.

CHAPTER XXVII

CLOSING SCENES OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

(Matthew 17:22-18:35)

22 Now while they were gathering themselves together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, 23 and they will kill him, but on the third day He will be raised up. And they became greatly sorrowful.

24 As they were entering Capernaum, those collecting the temple tax came to Peter and said, Does not your Teacher pay the half-shekel? 25 He said, Yes. And when they had entered into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect custom or taxes? From their own sons or from aliens? 26 And when he said, From aliens, Jesus said to him, Therefore the sons are exempt. 27 But in order that we may not cause them to stumble, go to the sea, throw your hook in, and take the first fish coming up; and, when you have opened his mouth, you will find a shekel;¹ take this and give it for me and for you.

¹ Greek, *stater*.

18 In that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Who, therefore, is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2 Having called a little child, He stood him in the midst of them 3 and said, In solemn truth I am telling you that, if you do not turn and become as little children, you will under no condition enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever, therefore, will humble himself as this little child, this one is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoever receives one such child in my name, receives me. 6 Whoever causes one of these least ones who believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a millstone be tied around his neck, and he be cast into the depths of the sea. 7 Woe to the world because of occasions of stumbling, for it is necessary that occasions of stumbling come; nevertheless, woe to the man through whom the occasion comes.

8 And if your hand or your foot cause you to stumble, cut it off, and cast it away from you; it is good for you to enter into life maimed or crippled, rather than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire. 9 And if your eye cause you to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from you; it is good for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than, having two eyes, to be cast into the Gehenna of fire. 10 See that you not look down with scorn on one of these little ones, for I am telling you that their angels in heaven continually look upon the face of My Father, who is in heaven. 12 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wander away, will he not leave the ninety-nine upon the mountains and go and seek the one straying away? 13 And, if so be that he finds it, solemnly I am telling you that he rejoices more over this one than over the ninety-nine that did not wander away. 14 In like manner it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

15 And if your brother sin, go and show him his fault between you and him alone; and, if he listen to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But, if he will not listen, take with you yet one or two, in order that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 But if he will not listen to them, tell it to the church; and, if he will not listen to the church, let him be to you as a heathen and a taxcollector.

18 In solemn truth I am telling you that whatever you bind upon earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose upon earth shall have been loosed in heaven. 19 Again in solemn truth I am telling you that, if two of you agree upon earth concerning any matter for which they will ask, it shall be done for them by my Father, who is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.

21 Then Peter came to Him and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? 22 Jesus said to him, I say not to you until seven, but until seventy times seven. 23 Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to make a settlement with his servants. 24 When he began to make *this* settlement, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.² 25 Since he was not able to make payment, his master ordered that he be sold, his wife, his children, and whatever he had, and that payment should be made. 26 The servant, therefore, falling down, prostrated himself *at his feet* and said, Be patient with me, and I will pay you all. 27 And the lord of that servant, being moved with pity, released him and canceled the debt. 28 As that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred shillings;³ and, having seized him, he choked him, saying,

² Ten million dollars.

³ A shilling—in American money about seventeen cents.

Pay what you owe. 29 So his fellow servant knelt down and kept beseeching him, saying, Be patient with me, and I will pay you. 30 And he was unwilling, but went away and threw him into prison until he should pay that which was owed. 31 Seeing what had taken place, his fellow servants, therefore, were greatly saddened and went and fully reported to their master all things that had taken place. 32 Then his master called him to him and said, Wicked servant, all that debt I forgave you, since you implored me. 33 Did it not behoove you also to show mercy toward your fellow servant as I had mercy upon you? 34 And his master became enraged and delivered him to the tormentors until he should pay all that was owed to him. 35 In like manner also My heavenly Father will do to you if you do not forgive each one his brother from your hearts.

I. JESUS PAYING THE TEMPLE TAX (Matthew 17:24-27)

In Matthew 17:24-27 is the account of Christ's paying the Temple tax, which was required by the law of Moses (see Exodus 30:13 ff., II Chronicles 24:6, Nehemiah 10:32, II Kings 12:4). Christ laid emphasis upon and practiced strict obedience to the law. The Temple tax was levied in order to provide funds to help carry on its services. There were other offerings and gifts required of the people of Israel to carry on the services of God.

Frequently, however, the people ceased to pay their tithes and to make their offerings. As a result, the work of God was hindered. Such a situation arose in the days of Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets. This messenger of God reproved the people for their failure and threw out a challenge to them that, if they would be faithful and true in bringing their tithes and offerings, God would bless them abundantly.

7 From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. But ye say, Wherein shall we return? 8 Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we

robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye are cursed with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation. 10 Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. 11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the time in the field, saith Jehovah of hosts. 12 And all nations shall call you happy; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith Jehovah of hosts (Mal. 3:7-12).

II. STUMBLING BLOCKS

(Matthew 18:1-14)

In Matthew 18:1-14 appears the record of a dispute among the disciples as to which one of them would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Such ambitions are always disastrous to spiritual life and growth. In order to teach the truth on this point, Jesus had a little child brought into the midst of the group. Then He declared that, except a person become as a little child, he can not enter into the kingdom of heaven. He also warned against putting stumbling blocks in the way of little children or of those who in their attitude become like little children.

III. SHEOL, OR HADES

Moses and the prophets constantly spoke of Sheol. An examination of this Old Testament word reveals that it was the name given to the place of departed spirits. From Adam to the Messiah, the spirits of both the saved and the unsaved went to Sheol. From the Resurrection of Christ, the spirits of the saved have been going immediately into heaven, but the spirits of the lost still continue to go to Sheol. When the brothers of Joseph showed his coat, sprinkled with blood, to Jacob their father, he exclaimed, "For I will go down to Sheol to my son, mourning" (Gen. 37:35). From the context of this passage, it is clear that Jacob thought that Joseph had been devoured by

a wild beast, that the spirit of Joseph had descended to Sheol, and that he himself would go there and be with his son. A vivid picture of Sheol is found in Psalm 49:14:

They are appointed as a flock for Sheol;
Death shall be their shepherd:
And the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;
And their beauty shall be for Sheol to consume,
That there be no habitation for it.

In this passage the inspired writer sees the spirits of the unsaved, worldly people descending to Sheol, death being their shepherd; but it was revealed to him that, though he himself would die and descend to Sheol, God would deliver him from that realm eventually:

But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol;
For he will receive me. [Selah] (Ps. 49:15)

In the New Testament the name for Sheol, the spirit world, is *Hades*. In Luke 16:19-31 is a vivid picture of it as it existed from Adam to the Messiah. According to this Scripture, there were two compartments separated by a vast impassable gulf. To one of these the lost went; to the other, the saved. As will be shown, all were conscious and aware of their condition. The lost were being punished, whereas the saved were at rest and in comfort.

When the Messiah was put to death in the flesh, He went in the spirit to Sheol (I Pet. 3:18-22), seized the keys of death and Hades (Rev. 1:18), and led all the spirits of the saved forth from this place of confinement. When He ascended on high, He took them to glory (Ps. 68:18).

Another term in the New Testament for the place where the unsaved go and remain throughout all eternity is *Gehenna*, which is translated in some versions "the Gehenna of fire." Note its usage in the text above, Matthew 18:1-9. It is a serious matter to cause little children, or those who become childlike before God, to stumble. Terrible will be the

fate of those thus acting. The Gehenna of fire is called "the eternal fire."¹ It is a fearful thing to be lost—to be banished from the presence of God forever and ever.

IV. FORGIVING OTHERS

(Matthew 18:15-20)

Inevitably, misunderstandings and differences arise even among the very best of people. In such a case those involved should seek immediately to adjust the differences and to be reconciled. One who wishes to do the will of God will follow the instructions given by Jesus (Matt. 18:15-20).

Peter, in his impulsiveness, wanted to know how often one should forgive his brother, "until seven times?" Jesus reply was, "Until seventy times seven." These instructions are followed by the forceful parable which shows that everyone must forgive from the depths of his heart the other who has sinned against him—provided he repents.

17 And he said unto his disciples, It is Impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come; but woe unto him, through whom they come! **2** It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble. **3** Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. **4** And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him (Luke 17:1-4).

¹ 38 John said unto him, Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us. 39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. 40 For he that is not against us is for us. 41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. 42 And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. 43 And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire. 44 And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell. 45 And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell; 46 where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 For every one shall be salted with fire. 48 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another (Mark 9:38-50).

If one who has been forgiven his sins by the Lord does not forgive his brother (fellow believer) his trespasses, the Lord will have to punish him in this life commensurately with the offense (Matt. 18:15-35).

CHAPTER XXVIII

A GLIMPSE AT THE PEREAN MINISTRY ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (Matthew 19:1-20:16)

19 And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these words, he left Galilee and went into the regions of Judea beyond the Jordan. **2** And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there.

3 And Pharisees, trying Him, came and said, Is it lawful *for a man* to divorce his wife for every cause? **4** And replying, He said, Did you never read that He who created them in the beginning made them male and female? **5** And He said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall be united to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. **6** So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God has joined together, let a man not separate. **7** They said to Him, Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of separation and to divorce *her*? **8** He said to them, On account of the hardness of your heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it has not been thus. **9** But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except for fornication, and marries another *woman*, commits adultery. **10** The disciples say to him, If the relation of the man with his wife is thus, there is no advantage in getting married. **11** And he said to them, All cannot receive this word, but only those for whom it has been given. **12** For there are eunuchs who have been thus from *their* mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who are made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who make themselves eunuchs because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who is able to receive *this word*, let him receive *it*.

13 Then little children were brought to Him, in order that He might lay His hands upon them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. **14** But Jesus said, Allow the little children, and stop hindering their coming to Me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. **15** And He laid His hands on them and went on from there.

16 And, behold, one came to Him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do in order that I may have eternal life? **17** And He said to him, Why are you asking Me concerning the good? There is one good; but, if you want to enter into life, keep on observing the commandments. **18** He said to Him, Which ones? Jesus said, You shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, you

shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, 19 honor your father and your mother, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. 20 The young man said to Him, All these things have I observed; what do I still lack? 21 Jesus said to him, If you want to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven, and come and keep on following Me. 22 When the young man heard this word, he went away, being very sorrowful, for he had many possessions.

23 But Jesus said to His disciples, In solemn truth I am telling you that with great difficulty will a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I am saying to you that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man *to enter* into the kingdom of God. 25 When the disciples heard this word, they were exceedingly astounded, saying, Who, therefore, can be saved? 26 Looking at them, Jesus said, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. 27 At that time Peter, replying, said to Him, Behold, we have left all and have followed Thee; what, therefore, shall we have? 28 Jesus said to them, In solemn truth I am telling you that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man will sit upon the throne of His glory, you also will sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or fields, because of My name, he will receive many times more and will inherit eternal life. 30 Many *who are* first will be last, and many *who are* last will be first.

20 For the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. 2 When he had agreed with the workers for a shilling a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And he went out about the third hour¹ and saw others standing in the market place idle; 4 and to these he said, Go also into my vineyard, and whatever is right I shall give you. And they went. 5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour and did likewise. 6 And about the eleventh *hour* he went out and found others standing and said to them, Why have you stood here idle all the day long? 7 They said, No one has hired us. He said to them, Go also into the vineyard. 8 And when evening had come, the master of the vineyard said to his foreman, Call the workers, and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first. 9 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a shilling. 10 And when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more, but they likewise received every man a shilling. 11 Receiving it, they began to

¹ Third hour is 9 A.M. in our system of time.

grumble against the householder, 12 saying, These last ones worked only one hour, but you have made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the day and the heat. 13 And replying to one of them, he said, Friend I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a shilling? 14 Take your own and go; I want to give to this last one as also to you. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do whatsoever I wish with my own *goods*? Or is your eye wicked, because I am good? 16 Thus the last will be first; and the first, last.

I. SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

(Matthew 19:1-12)

In the first century there was a sharp controversy in Israel between the schools of Hillel and Shammai in regard to separation and divorce. The former was rather lax in its interpretation. On the other hand, the school of Shammai was very strict in this matter. Matthew 19:1-12 records the verdict of the Lord Jesus concerning this question. According to verse 9, there is but one scriptural cause for divorce. Additional teaching regarding divorce appears in Matthew 5:31, 32; Luke 16:18; and Romans 7:1-4:

"31 And it has been said, Whoever divorces his wife, let him give to her a certificate of divorce. 32 But I am telling you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the matter of fornication, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries her who has been divorced commits adultery" (Matt. 5:31,32).

"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" (Luke 16:18).

1 Or are ye ignorant, brethren (for I speak to men who know the law), that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth? 2 For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. 3 So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made

dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, *even* to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7:1-4).

II. JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN

(Matthew 19:13-15)

Realizing the blessedness of a godly person's praying for others, certain ones brought little children to Jesus that He might pray for them. Some, not realizing the value of prayer, began to hinder those bringing the children. Jesus reprimanded them for this attitude, because "the supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (James 5:16). Grave are the responsibilities of parents to care for the spiritual life of their children. Moses pointed out this parental responsibility in Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

4 Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: 5 and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; 7 and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates.

Those parents who are not meeting the spiritual needs of their children will be held accountable to God for their dereliction of duty. Whenever chastisement for misdemeanor and wrongdoing is necessary, the parents should in love administer it.

13 Withhold not correction from the child;

For if thou beat him with the rod, he will not die.

14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod,

And shalt deliver his soul from Sheol (Prov. 23:13, 14).

III. THE PERILS OF RICHES

(Matthew 19:16-20:16)

A rich young man who had lived a clean life asked Jesus what good thing he should do in order to obtain eternal life. Seeing the difficulty of the young man, the Lord went to the heart of his case and asked about his keeping the commandments. According to the young man, he had been very punctilious in the observance of all the commandments. Then he wished to know if he lacked anything. Knowing the deceitfulness of riches, Jesus informed him that, if he would be perfect, he should sell everything that he had, should give the proceeds to the poor, and should follow Him. Jesus did not require everyone who came to Him to sell all that he had and to give to the poor. But He did instruct this young man to do so—if he would be perfect. Evidently there was a reason. He loved his riches. They were a millstone, as it were, about his neck that would drown him in perdition. In instructing him, Jesus was trying to help him. In like manner, if anything which one has or longs for should take precedence over his spiritual life and relation with God, the Lord would tell him to give up all these hindrances and to come and follow Him, with the assurance of receiving eternal riches.

The instructions to the rich young man caused Peter great concern. In his impulsiveness, he said immediately that he had left all and followed Jesus. Then he wished to know what he and the rest of the apostles who had made such sacrifices would have as rewards. Jesus told them exactly what they would have at the present time and in the future. "Jesus said to them, In solemn truth I am telling you that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man will sit upon the throne of His glory, you also will sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28).

But God hates a dickering, bargaining spirit, such as the one which Peter manifested on this occasion. The spirit in which one serves the Lord and makes sacrifices will be one of the factors determining the rewards which he will receive. To illustrate this point, Jesus gave the parable of the laborers who were sent into the vineyard to work (Matt. 20:1-16). At the beginning of the day, the landlord hired some laborers for a shilling a day. He went to the market place about the third hour and found men unemployed

whom he told to go into the vineyard and promised to give them whatever was right. He did likewise at the sixth and ninth hours. Finally, about the eleventh hour, he went and found others unemployed, whom he invited to go into his vineyard, promising to give them whatever was right. Those men who were invited at the eleventh hour went into the vineyard to work, trusting the goodness of the proprietor to do what was right. At the end of the day, therefore, they received as much as those who had borne the burden and the heat of the entire day, and who murmured against the house-holder, although he gave them what he had contracted to give them.

Various portions of the Scriptures show that three factors enter into the awarding of rewards: the quality of service rendered (Matt. 25:14-30); the quantity of service accomplished (Luke 19:11-28); and the spirit in which one serves (Matt. 20:1-16).

CHAPTER XXIX

JOURNEY FROM JERICHO TO JERUSALEM

ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

(Matthew 20:17-34)

17 And when Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve aside privately; and on the road He said to them, 18 Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death. 19 And they will deliver Him to the heathen to mock, to flog, and to crucify; but on the third day He will be raised.

20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons, bowing down, and asking something from Him. 21 Then He said to her, What do you want? She said to Him, Command that these my two sons may sit, one at Thy right *hand* and one at Thy left *hand*, in Thy kingdom. 22 Replying, Jesus said, You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup which I am about to drink? They said to Him, We are able. 23 He said to them, My cup you shall drink, but to sit at My right *hand* and at My left *hand* is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it has been prepared by My Father. 24 When the ten heard this, they became angry toward the two brothers. 25 And Jesus called them and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 26 But it shall not be thus among you, but whoever among you wants to be great, let him be your servant; 27 and whoever among you wants to be first, let him be your servant, 28 even as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.

29 And as they were going out of Jericho, a large multitude followed Him. 30 And, lo, sitting beside the road and hearing that Jesus was passing by, two blind men cried out, saying, Lord, have mercy on us, Thou Son of David. 31 And the multitude rebuked them that they should be silent; but they cried out the more, saying, Lord, have mercy on us, Thou Son of David. 32 And Jesus stopped, called them, and said, What do you will that I do for you? 33 They said to Him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. 34 Being moved with pity, Jesus touched their eyes, and immediately their sight was restored, and they followed Him.

I. PREDICTIONS REGARDING THE CRUCIFIXION

(Matthew 20:17-19)

Immediately after Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God, Jesus began to foretell His coming death at Jerusalem; but He assured the apostles that He would rise on the third day (Matt. 16:21; 17:22,23; 20:17-19). At various times during the last six months of His life, He called attention to this seeming catastrophe. Being blinded by human theories, the apostles were not able to comprehend these predictions.

II. SELFISH AMBITION

(Matthew 20:20-28)

Believing that Jesus would establish an earthly political kingdom at that time, the mother of James and John, together with her two sons, came to Jesus and asked a special favor; namely, that one of her sons should sit on the right hand of Jesus and the other on the left in His kingdom. Needless to say, this request was denied. Selfishness usually disqualifies a person for loyal, true, loving service. The one who wishes to be greatest must become the servant of all.

III. THE TWO JERICHO

(Matthew 20:19-34)

According to Matthew 20:19-34, when Jesus, on His way to Jerusalem, went out of Jericho, two blind men sitting by the road cried out that He should heal them, and He did. According to Luke 18:35-43, the healing occurred while He was drawing near to Jericho. Here only one blind man is mentioned.

An examination of both passages shows that the two evangelists were talking about the same event. One mentions two blind men, whereas the other speaks of only one. According to Matthew, moreover, Jesus and those with Him were going out of Jericho,

whereas Luke states that they were drawing near Jericho. This contradiction is only apparent, and not real.

Archaeologists have unearthed the Roman Jericho, about four miles from ancient Jericho of Joshua's day. The road from the Jordan up to Jerusalem ran by or through both of these Jerichos. Thus an event that occurred when Jesus and the multitudes were on the road, having left the first Jericho and approaching the second, could be said to have occurred when He was going out of Jericho and also when He was drawing near to the other Jericho. Archaeologists have shown the accuracy of both accounts. Matthew says that there were two blind men, whereas Luke speaks of one. There were two; but, as in all instances where there are two or more men, there is one that has leadership and takes the initiative. Although Luke speaks about the more aggressive one who took the initiative, he does not deny that a second one was healed. Thus there is perfect harmony existing between the two records.

CHAPTER XXX

THE LAST WEEK OF THE EARTHLY MINISTRY OF JESUS

ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

(Matthew 21:1-27:66)

21 And when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, **2** saying to *them*, Go to the village which is opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tied and a colt with her; untie them and lead them to me. **3** And if any one shall say anything to you, say, Their Lord has need of them; and immediately he will send them. **4** Now this has come to pass in order that the word might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying,

5 Speak to the daughter of Zion,
Behold, your king comes to you,
Meek, and riding upon an ass,
And upon a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.¹

6 And the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them, **7** and brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments on them; and He sat upon them. **8** And a very great crowd spread their garments on the road; but others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. **9** And the multitudes going before Him, and those following Him, kept crying out, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed *is* the one coming in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. **10** And when He entered into Jerusalem, all the city was shaken, saying, Who is this? **11** And the multitudes kept saying, This is the prophet, Jesus, who is of Nazareth of Galilee.

12 And Jesus entered into the temple and cast out all those that sold and bought in the temple, and the tables of the money-changers He turned over, and the seats of those that sold the doves; **13** and He said to them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but

¹ Zechariah 9:9.

you are making it a den of thieves. 14 And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. 15 When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things which He did, and the young children shouting in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, they became indignant; 16 and said to Him, Dost Thou hear what these are saying? And Jesus said to them, Yes, but did you never read that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast ordained praise?² 17 And leaving them, He went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

18 In the morning as He was entering into the city, He became hungry. 19 And when He saw a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it, except leaves only; and He said to it, Nevermore shall there be fruit from you. And immediately the fig tree was withered. 20 When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, How quickly the fig tree has withered away. 21 Replying, Jesus said to them, In solemn truth I am telling you, If you have faith and do not doubt, not only that which was done to the fig tree will you do, but you will also say to this mountain, Be taken up and cast into the sea, and it shall be done; 22 and all things whatsoever you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.

23 After He had entered into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him as He was teaching, saying, By what authority art Thou doing these things? And who gave Thee this authority? 24 But Jesus, replying, said to them, I also shall ask you one question, which if you tell me, I also shall tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? But they kept reasoning within themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, He will say to us, Why, therefore, did you not believe him? 26 And if we shall say, From men, we are afraid of the multitude, for all hold John as a prophet. 27 Replying to Jesus, they said, We do not know. And He said to them, I shall not tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 28 What do you think? A man had two sons. Going to the first, he said, Son, go work today in the vineyard. 29 In reply he said, Yes, sir I go; but he did not go. 30 Going to the second one, he said likewise. But replying, he said, I will not; but later, having remorse, he went. 31 Which of the two did the will of the father? They answered, The latter. Jesus said to them, In solemn truth I am telling you that the taxcollectors and the harlots are preceding you into the kingdom of God. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the taxcollectors and the harlots believed him; and you, when you saw, neither repented later to believe him.

² Psalm 8:2.

33 Hear another parable. There was a man, a householder, who planted a vineyard and placed a hedge round about it, and hewed out a wine vat in it, and built a watchtower, and turned it over to workmen, and went abroad. 34 When the season of fruits drew near, he sent his servants to the workmen to receive his fruits. 35 And the workmen seized his servants—one they beat, another they killed, and another they stoned. 36 Again he sent other servants more numerous than the first, and they did to them likewise. 37 Later he sent to them his son, saying, They will respect my son. 38 But the workmen, when they saw the son, said within themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him and take his inheritance; 39 and, seizing him, they cast him out of the vineyard and killed *him*. 40 When, therefore, the master of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those workmen? 41 They say to Him, he will ruthlessly destroy those evil men, and he will turn over the vineyard to other workmen, who will deliver to him the fruits in their season. 42 Jesus said to them, Did you never read in the Scriptures,

The stone which the builders rejected,
The same has become the head of the corner;
This is from the Lord,
And it is a marvel in our eyes? ³

43 On account of this, I am telling you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and will be given to a nation yielding its fruits. 44 And the one falling upon this stone will be broken to pieces; but, upon whomsoever it falls, it will grind him to powder. 45 And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they knew that He was speaking concerning them; 46 and they kept seeking to seize Him, but they were afraid of the multitudes, since they held Him as a prophet.

22 And replying, Jesus again spoke to them in parables, saying, 2 The kingdom of heaven is like to a king who made marriage festivities for his son. 3 And he sent his servants to call those who had been invited to the festivities, but they did not want to come. 4 Again he sent other servants, saying, Tell those who have been invited, Behold, my dinner is prepared, my oxen and grain-fed cattle have been slaughtered, and all things are ready; come to the marriage festivities. 5 But they, not being interested, went away: one to his own field, another to his store;

³ Psalm 118:22,23

6 but the rest seized his servants, and mistreated them, and killed them. 7 And the king became indignant, and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, The marriage feast is ready, but those who have been invited were not worthy. 9 Go, therefore, to the parting of the ways, and as many as you find, call to the marriage festivities. 10 And those servants went out into the roads and gathered together all whom they found, both evil and good, and the *place of the* wedding feast was filled with those who were reclining. 11 And the king entered to see those who were reclining and saw there a man not clothed with a wedding garment; 12 and he said to him, Friend, how did you come here, not having a wedding garment? But he was silent. 13 Then the king said to his servants, Bind his feet and hands, and cast him into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

15 Then the Pharisees went out and took counsel in order that they might ensnare Him with a word. 16 And they sent their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that Thou art true and that Thou teachest the way of God in truth and dost not care for the person of anyone, for Thou dost not regard the person of man. 17 Tell us, therefore, what do you think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not? 18 But Jesus, knowing their evil *design*, said, Why are you trying to tempt me, you hypocrites? 19 Show me a coin of tribute *money*. And they brought to Him a denarius. 20 And He said to them, Whose image and inscription is this? 21 They said, Caesar's. Then He said to them, Give, therefore, to Caesar the things of Caesar; and the things of God, to God. 22 When they heard this, they marveled and, leaving Him, went away.

23 On that day the Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, 24 saying, Teacher, Moses said, If anyone die, not having children, his brother shall marry his wife and shall raise up seed to his brother.⁴ 25 Now there were with us seven brothers; and the first married and died; but, having no seed, he left his wife to his brother; 26 likewise also the second, and the third—unto the seventh. 27 Last of all, the woman died. 28 In the resurrection, therefore, of which of the seven will she be the wife, for all had her? 29 Replying, Jesus said to them, You go astray, since you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven. 31 Concerning the resurrection of the dead, did you never read the word spoken to you by God, saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God

⁴ Deuteronomy 25:5.

of Jacob? He is not *the* God of the dead, but of the living. 33 When the multitudes heard this, they were amazed at His teaching.

34 When the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they were gathered together in one place. 35 And one of them, a lawyer, trying Him, asked, 36 Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 And He said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul and all your mind.⁵ 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 A second like it is, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.⁶ 40 On these two commandments the entire law and the prophets hang.

41 When the Pharisees were come together, Jesus asked them, 42 saying, What do you think concerning the Messiah? Whose Son is He? They said unto Him, *The Son* of David. 43 He said to them, How, therefore, does David in the Spirit call Him Lord, saying,

44 The Lord Said to my Lord,
Remain seated at My right hand,
Until I make Thy enemies the footstool of Thy feet? ⁷

45 If, therefore, David calls Him Lord, how is He His Son? 46 And no one was able to reply one word to Him; neither did anyone attempt from that day to ask Him any more questions.

23 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2 saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat. 3 All things, therefore, whatsoever they say to you, do and observe; but do not act according to their works; for they say, but they do not. 4 They bind heavy burdens and lay them upon the shoulders of men, but they are not willing to move these with their finger. 5 All their works they do in order to be seen by men; for they enlarge their phylacteries; and they make large the border *of their garments*, 6 and they love the first places in the banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 and the salutations in the market places, and to be called by men, Rabbi. 8 But you must not be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, and all of you are brethren. 9 Call no *man* your father upon the earth, for one is your

⁵ Deuteronomy 6:5.

⁶ Leviticus 19:18.

⁷ Psalm 110:1.

Father, even He who is in heaven. 10 Be not called masters, because one is your master, *even* the Messiah. 11 The greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

13 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you are locking the kingdom of heaven in the presence of men; for you are not entering; neither do you allow them to enter who are entering.

14 [omitted]

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you encompass the sea and the desert to make one proselyte; and, whenever one becomes *such*, you make him a son of Gehenna by twofold.

16 Woe unto you, blind guides, who say, Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated. 17 Morons and blind, for which is greater, the gold or the temple which sanctifies the gold? 18 And whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing, but whoever swears by the gift which is upon the altar is obligated. 19 Blind ones, for which is greater, the gift or the altar which sanctifies the gift? 20 Therefore the one swearing by the altar swears by it and by all that is upon it, 21 and the one who swears by the temple swears by it and by Him who dwells therein; 22 and the one who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.

23 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you tithe mint, and anise, and cummin, and you pass by the weightier things of the law—*even* justice, and mercy, and faith; but these things you ought to have done and not to have left the other undone. 24 Blind guides, who strain out gnats, but swallow camels!

25 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but within they are full of extortion and graft. 26 O blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup in order that the outside also may be clean.

27 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you are like whited sepulchres, which on the outside appear beautiful, but within are full of bones of dead *men*, and of all uncleanness. 28 Likewise you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

29 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you build the tombs of the prophets, and adorn the sepulchres of the righteous, 30 and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers in the blood of the prophets. 31 So you witness to yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 And you have filled up

the measure of your fathers. 33 Snakes, generation of vipers! How will you escape from the condemnation of Gehenna? 34 Therefore, lo, I shall send to you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; *some* of them you will kill and crucify; and *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35 in order that there may come upon you all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous to the blood of Zachariah, the son of Barachiah, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. 36 In solemn truth I am telling you, all these things will come upon this generation.

37 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that kills the prophets and stones them that are sent to her, how often I willed to gather together your children, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you willed not. 38 Behold, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I am telling you that by no means will you see me from now on until you say, Blessed is the one coming in the name of the Lord.⁸

24 When Jesus had come out from the temple, He went on His way, and His disciples came to show Him the buildings of the temple. 2 And replying, He said to them, Do you not see all these things? In solemn truth I tell you that stone will not remain upon stone that will not be thrown down.

3 When He was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will* be the sign of Thy coming and of the consummation of the age? 4 And replying, Jesus said to them, See that no one lead you astray. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, I am the Messiah, and will lead many astray. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you be not troubled, for it is necessary that *these things* be, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in different places; 8 but all these things are the first birth pain. 9 Then they will deliver you to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. 10 And then many will be caused to stumble, and will deliver up one another, and will hate one another; 11 and many false prophets will arise and will lead many astray; 12 and, on account of the increase of lawlessness, the love of the many shall become cold. 13 But the one enduring to the end, this one will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world for a testimony to all the nations, and then will the end come.

⁸ Psalm 118:26.

15 When, therefore, you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the Prophet, standing in the holy place, let the one reading understand; 16 then those who are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains; 17 the one who is on the housetop, let him not come down to take the things out of the house; 18 and the one who is in the field, let him not return to take his cloak. 19 Woe to those who are expectant mothers and to those who are nursing children in those days! 20 But pray that your flight may not be during the winter nor on a sabbath; 21 for there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the foundation of the world until now, nor ever will be. 22 And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would be saved; but, on account of the elect, those days will be shortened. 23 Then if anyone says to you, Behold, here is the Messiah, or, here, do not believe. 24 For false messiahs and false prophets will arise, and they will give great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 25 Behold, I have told you in advance. 26 If, therefore, they say to you, Behold, he is in the desert, do not go out; Behold, in the inner chambers, do not believe. 27 For just as the lightning comes out of the east and flashes to the west, thus will the coming of the Son of man be. 28 Wherever the carcass is, there will be gathered the vultures.

29 But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give her light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 And then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then will all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming upon the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, 31 and He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the extremities of the heavens unto their extremities.

32 But from the fig tree learn her parable. Whenever her branch has become tender and it puts forth its leaves, know that the summer is near. 33 Thus, also, you, whenever you see all these things, know that He is near, *even* at the doors. 34 In solemn truth I am telling you that this generation will not pass away until all these things are accomplished. 35 The heaven and the earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. 36 But concerning that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of the heavens, nor the Son—except the Father only. 37 For as *were* the days of Noah, thus will be the coming of the Son of man. 38 For as they were in those days which were before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark, 39 and they knew not until the flood came and took them all away, thus will the coming of the Son of man be. 40 Then will be two men in the field; one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding at a mill: one will be taken,

and one will be left. 42 Watch, therefore, because you do not know on what day your Lord comes. 43 But know this, that, if the householder had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have suffered his house to be broken in. 44 Wherefore you also be ready, because, in an hour when you think not, the Son of man comes.

45 Who, therefore, is the faithful and wise servant whom the lord will set over his household to give to them their food in due time? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his lord, coming, will find thus acting. 47 In solemn truth I tell you that he will place him over all his goods. 48 But if that evil servant says in his heart, My master delays, 49 and begins to smite his fellow servants, and eats and drinks with the drunken, 50 the lord of that servant will come in a day when he does not expect and in an hour when he knows not, 51 and he will cut him asunder, and he will give him his portion with the hypocrites. There will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

25 Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who, taking their own lamps, went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were foolish; and five, wise. 3 For the foolish ones, taking their lamps, did not take oil with them. 4 But the wise took oil in vessels with their lamps. 5 Since the bridegroom tarried, all began nodding and kept on sleeping. 6 In the middle of the night, the cry was made, Behold, the bridegroom! Go out to meet *him*. 7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the wise, Give us of your oil, because our lamps are going out. 9 Then the wise ones replied, saying, No, by no means, lest there not be enough for us and for you. Go rather to those selling, and buy for yourselves. 10 While they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those being ready entered with him into the marriage festivities, and the door was locked. 11 Later the rest of the virgins came, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 And replying, he said, In solemn truth I am telling you, I do not know you. 13 Watch, therefore, because you do not know the day nor the hour.

14 For *it is* just as a man who, going abroad, called his own servants and delivered to them his goods. 15 To one he gave five talents; to another two; and to another, one—to each according to his own ability—and he went abroad. 16 Immediately he who received the five talents went and traded with them and gained five others. 17 Likewise the one receiving the two gained two others. 18 But he who received one went away, and dug in the earth, and hid the silver of his master. 19 And after much time the lord of those servants came and had a reckoning with them. 20 And the one receiving five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, you delivered to me five talents; behold, I have gained five other talents. 21 And his Lord said to him, Well *done*, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I

shall place you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. 22 Then came the one receiving two talents and said, Lord, you delivered to me two talents; behold, I have gained two other talents. 23 Then his Lord said to him, Well *done*, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I shall appoint you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. 24 Then came the one who had received only one talent and said, Lord, I knew that you are an austere man, reaping where you have not sowed, and gathering whence you have not scattered; 25 and, since I was afraid, I went and hid your talent in the earth. Behold, you have your own. 26 Then his lord, replying, said to him, Evil and wicked servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed and gather whence I have not scattered. 27 Did it not behoove you to put my money to the bankers that, upon coming, I might have mine own with interest? 28 Take, therefore, from him the one talent, and give to him who has the ten talents. 29 For to everyone having there will be given, and he will have in abundance, but the one who does not have, even what he has shall be taken from him. 30 The unprofitable servant, cast into the outer darkness. There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

31 When the Son of man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit upon the throne of His glory; 32 and there will be gathered before Him all the nations; and He will separate them from one another, just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will place the sheep on His right *hand*, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right *hand*, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; sick, and you visited Me; and I was in prison, and you came to me. 37 Then the righteous will reply to Him, saying, Lord, when did we see Thee hungry and feed Thee? or thirsty, and give Thee, *something* to drink? 38 When did we see Thee a stranger, and take Thee in? or naked, and clothe Thee? 39 When did we see Thee sick or in prison and come to Thee? 40 And replying, the King will say to them, In solemn truth I tell you, inasmuch as you did it to one of these of My brethren, the least ones, you did it to Me. 41 Then He will also say to those on the left *hand*, Depart from Me, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry, and you did not give Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you did not give Me *something* to drink; 43 I was a stranger, and you did not take Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me. 44 Then they will reply, saying, Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to Thee? 45 Then He will reply to them, saying,

In solemn truth I am telling you, Inasmuch as you did not do it to one of these, the least, you did not do *it* to Me. 46 And they will go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous, into everlasting life.

26 And it came to pass, when Jesus had completed all these words, He said to His disciples, 2 You know that after two days the passover comes, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified.

3 Then were gathered the chief priests and the elders of the people into the court of the high priest, who was named Caiaphas. 4 And they were taking counsel that they might take Jesus by strategy and kill Him; 5 but they were saying, Not during the feast, in order that there might not be a riot among the people.

6 When Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, 7 a woman came to Him having an alabaster cruse of precious ointment and poured it upon His head while He was reclining. 8 The disciples, seeing this, became indignant, saying, For what purpose was this loss? 9 For this could have been sold for much and given to the poor. 10 Since Jesus knew it, He said to them, Why trouble the woman? She has wrought a good work upon Me, 11 for you have the poor with you always, but you do not have Me always, 12 for in pouring this ointment upon My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. 13 In solemn truth I tell you, Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be spoken of for a memorial of her.

14 Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 15 What are you willing to give me, and I will deliver Him to you? And they gave to him thirty pieces of silver. 16 And from then he kept seeking an opportune time that he might deliver Him.

17 On the first *day of the feast* of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where dost Thou wish that we prepare for Thee to eat the passover? 18 And He said, Go into the city to a certain one and say to him, The Teacher says, My time is near; with you I shall observe the Passover with My disciples. 19 And the disciples did as Jesus commanded them, and they made the passover ready.

20 When it was evening, He reclined with the twelve *disciples*. 21 And while they were eating, He said, In solemn truth I am telling you, one of you will betray Me. 22 And being exceedingly sorrowful, they began to say to Him, one by one, It is not I; is it, Lord? 23 And replying, He said, The one dipping his hand with Me in the dish, this one will betray Me. 24 The Son of man goes, just as it has been written concerning Him, but woe to that man through

whom the Son of man is betrayed; good were it for that man if he had never been born. 25 Judas, who betrayed him, replying, said, It is not I, Rabbi; is it? He said to him, You said *it*.

26 After they had eaten, Jesus took a loaf, blessed, broke, and gave it to the disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is My body. 27 And taking the cup and giving thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, All of you drink of it, 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins. 29 And I am telling you, I shall not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it with you in the kingdom of My Father.

30 And after they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 31 Then Jesus said to them, All of you will be offended in Me on this night, for it is written, I shall smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered;⁹ 32 but, after I am raised, I shall go before you into Galilee. 33 Peter, replying, said to Him, Though all will be caused to stumble in Thee, yet never will I be caused to stumble. 34 To Him Jesus said, In solemn truth I am telling you that on this night, before the cock crows three times, you will deny Me. 35 Then Peter said to Him, If it behooves me to die with Thee, under no condition will I deny Thee. Likewise said all the disciples.

36 Then Jesus came with them into a place called Gethsemane, and He said to the disciples, Sit here until, going there, I shall pray. 37 And taking Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to be sorrowful and to be depressed. 38 Then He said to them, My soul is very sorrowful, even to death, but stay here, and watch with Me. 39 And going forward a little, He fell upon His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou *wilt*. 40 And He came to the disciples, and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, Thus were you not able to watch with Me for one hour? 41 Watch and pray, in order that you enter not into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. 42 Again the second time He went forward and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is not possible that this pass away *from Me* except I drink the same, let Thy will be done. 43 And coming again He found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy with sleep. 44 And leaving them again. He went and prayed the third time, saying the same words again. 45 Then He came to the disciples and said to them, Sleep on now, and take your rest. Behold, the hour has arrived, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Arise; let us go. Behold, the one who is betraying Me is near at hand.

⁹ Zechariah 13:7.

47 While He was yet speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great company with short swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. 48 And he who betrayed Him gave them a sign, saying, Whom I shall kiss, this is He; take Him. 49 And immediately, coming forward to Jesus, he said, Hail, Rabbi, and affectionately¹⁰ kissed Him. 50 And Jesus said to him, Friend, *do what* you are here to do. Then coming up to Him, they laid their hands upon Jesus and took Him. 51 And, behold, one of them with Jesus, stretching forth his hand, drew his sword out and smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. 52 Then Jesus said, Return your sword into its place, for all who take the sword will perish with the sword. 53 Or do you think that I am not able to call upon My Father, and He will dispatch to Me now more than twelve legions of angels? 54 How then are the Scriptures to be fulfilled which say that this must come to pass? 55 In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, Have you come as against a thief to take Me with swords and staves? Daily I was sitting in the temple teaching, but you did not seize Me. 56 All of this has come to pass in order that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left Him and fled.

57 When they had taken Jesus, they led Him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. 58 And Peter followed Him from a distance into the court of the high priest; and, entering within, he sat down with the attendants to see the end. 59 And the chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept seeking false testimony against Jesus in order that they might kill Him, 60 but they found *none*, although many false witnesses came. Finally two came forward 61 and said, This one said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and within three days to build it. 62 Then the high priest arose and said to Him, Art Thou answering nothing? What do these testify against Thee? 63 But Jesus remained silent, and the high priest said to Him, I charge Thee under oath, by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou art the Messiah, the Son of God. 64 Jesus said to him, You said *it* [Yes].¹¹ Nevertheless I am telling you that from now on you will see the Son of man sitting at the right *hand* of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven. 65 Then the high priest tore his garments, saying, He has blasphemed. What further need have we of witnesses? Behold, you now have heard the blasphemy. 66 What do you think? And they replied and said, He deserves death. 67 Then they spit in His face and struck Him; and others slapped Him, 68 saying, Prophecy to us, Messiah: who is the one striking Thee?

¹⁰ Outwardly Judas kissed Jesus affectionately, but in reality hypocritically.

¹¹ The Greek idiom *you said* is equal to an affirmation, *yes*.

69 And Peter sat without in the court, and a certain maiden came to him, saying, And you were with Jesus the Galilean. 70 But he denied in the presence of all, saying, I do not know what you are saying. 71 And when he had gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him and said to those that were there, This one was with Jesus the Nazarene. 72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. 73 After a little time those who were standing *around* came and said to Peter, Truly you are also one of them, for your speech makes you known. 74 Then he began to curse and to swear, saying, I do not know the man, and immediately the cock crew. 75 Then Peter remembered the word of Jesus *who* had said, Before a cock crows, you will deny me three times, and he went out and wept bitterly.

27 When it was morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people held a conference against Jesus, that they might kill Him. 2 And when they had bound Him, they led *Him* away and delivered *Him* to Pilate the governor.

3 Then, when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that he was condemned, being filled with remorse, he returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, I sinned in betraying innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? You will see to *that yourself*. 5 When he had thrown down the silver in the temple, he departed, went away, and hanged himself. 6 The chief priests took the silver and said, It is not lawful to put these *pieces of silver* into the temple treasury, since they are the price of blood. 7 Having taken counsel, they purchased with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. 8 For this reason that field is called the field of blood till this day. 9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the Prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the One whose value had been fixed, on whom *some* of the children of Israel had set a price, 10 and they gave the same for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me.¹²

11 And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked Him, saying, Art Thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said, You said *it* [Yes]. 12 And, while charges were being made by the chief priests and elders *against Him*, He replied nothing. 13 Then Pilate said to Him, Dost Thou not hear how great things they are testifying against Thee? 14 But He did not reply to him, not even to one word, so that the governor marveled exceedingly. 15 At the feast the governor was accustomed to release one prisoner to the multitude, whom they wished. 16 At that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. 17 Now when they were gathered together,

¹² Zechariah 11:12,13.

Pilate said to them, Whom do you wish that I release to you? Barabbas or Jesus who is called Messiah? 18 For he knew that they had delivered Him because of envy. 19 And when he was sitting upon the judgment seat, his wife sent to him saying, Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him. 20 But the chief priests and the elders had persuaded the multitude that they should ask for Barabbas and that they should destroy Jesus. 21 The governor replied and said to them, Which one of the two do you wish that I release to you? Then they said, Barabbas. 22 And Pilate said to them, What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Messiah? They all answered, Let Him be crucified. 23 And he said, What evil has He done? And they kept crying out the more, saying, Let Him be crucified. 24 When Pilate saw that he availed nothing, but rather that a riot was developing, he took water and washed his hands in the presence of the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this *man*; you yourselves will look to *that*. 25 Then all the people replied and said, His blood *be* upon us and upon our children. 26 Then he released Barabbas to them; but, having scourged Jesus, he delivered Him that He might be crucified.

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered about Him an entire cohort. 28 And they undressed Him and put a red cloak on Him; 29 and they platted a wreath of thorns, and placed it upon His head, and *put* a stick in His right *hand*. Then, bowing the knee before Him, they mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! 30 And they spat upon Him, and took the stick, and kept striking Him on His head. 31 And when they had mocked Him, they removed the cloak from Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to crucify *Him*.

32 As they went forth, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, and they forced this one that he should carry His cross.

33 When they came to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, 34 they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall; and, when He had tasted it, He did not desire to drink it. 35 And when they had crucified Him, they divided His garments *by* casting lots. 36 And they sat and kept watching Him there. 37 And they placed above His head the accusation against Him written, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. 38 Then were crucified with Him two robbers, one on the right *hand* and one on the left. 39 And those who were passing by kept on blaspheming Him, wagging their heads and saying, 40 Thou, the one destroying the temple and in three days building it, save Thyself if Thou art the Son of God, and come down from the cross. 41 Likewise also the chief priests mocked Him, with the scribes and elders, and kept saying, 42 He saved others, but Himself He cannot save. He is the King of Israel. Let Him now come down from the cross, and we shall believe on Him. 43 He has trusted in God. Let Him

deliver Him now if He is pleased with Him, for He said, I am the Son of God. 44 The robbers who were crucified with Him said the same thing as they kept on reviling Him.

45 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?¹³ That is, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? 47 And some of those who were standing there, when they heard, said, This one is calling for Elijah. 48 And immediately one of them ran, took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, put it on a stick, and was trying to make Him drink. 49 And the rest said, Let be; let us see if Elijah comes to save Him. 50 Jesus again cried out with a loud voice and gave up His spirit. 51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook; and the rocks were rent; 52 and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and, coming forth out of the tombs after His Resurrection, they entered into the holy city and appeared to many. 54 And the centurion and those with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were occurring, became exceedingly afraid, saying, Truly this one was *the* Son of God. 55 And there were many women watching from a distance who had followed Jesus from Galilee to minister unto Him, 56 among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Josep, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

57 When it was evening, a rich man of Arimathsea, named Joseph, came, who also himself was a disciple of Jesus. 58 This one came to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered that it be given. 59 Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and laid it in a new tomb that belonged to him, and that he had hewn in a rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre and went away. 61 And Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the grave.

62 And 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 still alive, After three days I shall arise. 64 Order, therefore, that the grave be made sure until the third day, lest the disciples come, and steal Him, and say to the people, He has been raised from the dead, and the last error will be worse than the first. 65 Pilate said to them, You have a guard. Go; make it as secure as you know *how*. 66 And they went and made the grave secure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them.

¹³ Psalm 22:1.

The four records of the gospel give a detailed account of many and important events that occurred during the last week of the ministry of Jesus. The person who wishes to get a full picture of these mighty events should procure a New Testament and read each of the full accounts in these records. Since there are so very many details, one can only point out a few of the most important.

I. JESUS' PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM ON SUNDAY MORNING (Matthew 21:1-11)

During the last week of the earthly life of Jesus (Matt. 21:1-11), He engaged in His public ministry largely in Jerusalem, but He spent the nights at Bethany. As to the day of the week when He arrived at Bethphage (Matt. 21:1), one cannot say dogmatically. On Sunday morning two of His disciples brought an ass, with its colt, on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem in fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. He was attended by a great throng of people, some preceding and others following Him. All were jubilantly shouting their praises in anticipation of His doing great things for them. Doubtless many thought that He would set up the Messianic kingdom at that time.

He, therefore, spoke the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return, the record of which is found in Luke 19:11-27. Notwithstanding the plain teaching of this parable, the multitudes were swayed by a great wave of enthusiasm and extraordinary expectation. They recognized Jesus as the son of David, the Messiah of Israel, and applied to Him Psalm 118:25,26. In quoting these verses, they were asking Him, as the Son of David, to save them and to bring the long desired deliverance from foreign domination.

Arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem on this occasion is usually spoken of as "the triumphal entry." If it was, the triumph was very short lived. Opposition was stirred immediately upon His approaching the Temple. Finally He was arrested and executed as a malefactor, as an insurrectionist, a rebel.

Though Jesus rode into Jerusalem, as foretold, did He offer Himself to the Jewish people as their King? This question must be answered in the negative. This fact is shown by the parable of the nobleman in Luke 19:11-27. As previously stated, Jesus spoke this parable because He was near Jerusalem, and because the multitudes thought that the kingdom was immediately to appear. In substance, therefore, He said that a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return; but, before making his departure, he called ten of his servants and gave to them his goods, namely, ten pounds, each servant receiving a pound. They were instructed to trade with this money during their master's absence. Having gone to the far country and having received authority to reign over the land, the nobleman came back and had a reckoning with his servants, giving to each one according to his faithfulness in the discharge of the duties of handling his master's money.

Obviously the nobleman here is Jesus himself. The far country to which He goes to receive a kingdom is heaven. The servants are believers in Christ. The time of His absence is the Christian Dispensation, which has been running for practically two thousand years. When He is invested with power, as foretold in Daniel 7:13,14, He will return to this earth and establish His kingdom of glory, reigning from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

13 I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:13,14).

In the light of this parable it is clear that, when Jesus went up to Jerusalem, He did not offer an earthly kingdom to the Jewish people.

What did He offer to them? According to Zechariah 9:9, He arrived in Jerusalem having salvation, the salvation of the soul. Thus it is clear that He came to establish a spiritual kingdom here upon earth; and Acts, chapter 2, reveals that this spiritual kingdom was established on the first Pentecost after the Resurrection of Christ. Those

who accepted the atonement which He made by the shedding of His blood received and enjoyed the salvation which He brought to them, as foretold by the Prophets.

According to Matthew 21:14-17, Jesus found in the Temple a large crowd of people who were sick and afflicted. There were also in the Temple many children, who burst forth shouting, "Hosanna to the son of David!" The chief priests and the scribes objected to this demonstration of enthusiasm. To justify this outburst of praise on the part of the children, Jesus quoted from Psalm 8, asking, "Did you never read that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast ordained praise?" (Matt. 21:16).

How long Jesus and His followers remained in the Temple that day is not indicated, but sometime in the afternoon He and the apostles went back to Bethany on the Mount of Olives, where Jesus lodged each night during this last week.

II. EVENTS OF MONDAY AND TUESDAY

(Matthew 21:12-23:39)

A. *Cursing of the Fig Tree*

On Monday morning Jesus returned to Jerusalem. As He and the apostles were walking along the road, He saw a fig tree which had leaves, but no fruit. He, therefore, pronounced a curse upon it, that no one should ever eat fruit of it. Immediately it began to wither. The next day it seemed to be completely dead. The fact that leaves were on the tree would lead everyone to believe that there were also figs. But this tree had no fruit. Jesus, consequently, brought a blasting curse upon it.

This tree was a literal one (Mark 11:12-14). Why then was it placed under a curse? Clearly, the reason was to teach an object lesson regarding fruit-bearing. The cursing of the fig tree reminds one immediately of Isaiah, chapter 5. In this passage appears the parable of the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts, which is the house of Israel and the house of Judah. At the season of the harvest, instead of having luscious, juicy fruit, this vineyard bore wild, bitter grapes. Six curses were, therefore, pronounced upon it. (For a discussion of the cursing of the fig tree, see my booklet "Is the Fig Tree Cursed Forever?")

B. Cleansing of the Temple

The cleansing of the temple occurred on Monday morning, as shown in Mark 11:15-18. At the beginning of the personal ministry of Jesus (John 2:13), He went to Jerusalem and cleansed the Temple, driving out the cattle, which were for sale in the temple enclosure, and turning over the tables of the money-changers. This event occurred three years prior to the time of this second cleansing, when He again cast out those who were making merchandise of the truth of God.

According to Isaiah, God wants His Temple to be the house of prayer for all nations: "Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Psa. 56:7). Though His Temple has never been such thus far, it will be in the great Kingdom Age.

C. Clash with the Jerusalem Authorities

Naturally the Jerusalem authorities were enraged by the boldness of Jesus in entering the city and cleansing the Temple, casting out those who were allowed to sell animals for sacrifices. The rift that had developed between Him and the religious authorities shortly after He had started His public ministry became wider and wider as the months passed. Their feeling of estrangement and embitterment probably was heightened by the fact that He had never studied in their theological seminary and scholastically was not one of them, but was standing aloof from all parties and sects. They believed that He was an uneducated bigot who was assuming rights and prerogatives over them. To many He became the archenemy. Frankly, if you and I had been in their places, we probably would have acted as they did.

Upon His arrival in the Temple on Monday morning, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him and challenged His authority, saying: "By what authority art Thou doing these things? And who gave Thee this authority?" (Matt 21:23). Jesus replied by saying, "24 ... I also shall ask you one question, which if you tell me, I also shall tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? But they kept reasoning within themselves, saying: If

we shall say, From heaven, He will say to us, Why, therefore, did you not believe him? 26 And if we shall say, From men, we are afraid of the multitude, for all hold John as a prophet. 27 Replying to Jesus, they said, We do not know. And He said to them, I shall not tell you by what authority I am doing these things" (Matt. 21:24-27).

1. ANSWER OF JESUS TO HIS CRITICS

Jesus replied by giving three parables: that of the two sons, that of the vineyard, and that of the marriage feast and the slighted invitation. The parable of the two sons is very clear.

The second of these parables is that of a vineyard and the wicked husbandmen (Matt. 21:33-46). This parable is based upon Psalm 80:8-16 and Isaiah, chapter 5. In this passage Jesus goes to the heart of the national problem, revealing the two focal points of Jewish history, the first and the second coming of Messiah.

The parable is as follows: A householder planted a vineyard and provided all things necessary. Then he turned it over to husbandmen who were to keep it and deliver the fruit to the owner at the proper time. When the season of fruit drew near, he sent a delegation of his servants to receive the fruit. The husbandmen beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Then he sent a second delegation. The wicked husbandmen did to them as they had done to the others. Finally the householder sent his son, thinking that the husbandmen would respect him. When they saw the son coming, they instantly decided to kill him and take the vineyard.

Having thus stated the case, Jesus asked His critics what they thought the householder would do to those wicked men. They replied that he would destroy them and let the vineyard out to other husbandmen who would be faithful and true. In thus stating the case, they were correct.

Then Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22,23, as seen above in Matthew 21:42: "The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner ..." From the context of Psalm 118 it is clear that the word *stone* is not used literally, but symbolically. An examination of each passage in which this word is thus used shows obviously that it signifies the Messiah of Israel. According to these verses, the builders, the leaders of the nation, at first reject the cornerstone, but later see the truth relative to it and place it

in its proper position—as head of the corner. Since this stone represents the Messiah, it is clear that at His first coming He is rejected by the leaders. Later they see the truth relative to Him and place Him in His proper position in the nation, acknowledging that He, the long rejected Messiah, is the only and rightful King of Israel. When they thus accept Him and plead for Him to return, He will do so and will establish a reign of righteousness upon the earth.

When the leaders of Israel reject the Messiah, the Lord takes the Kingdom of God from the people of Israel and gives it to another nation bringing forth the fruit thereof. The Kingdom of God during the period from Sinai to the cross was co-extensive with the nation of Israel. King David touches on this point in I Chronicles 28:5: "... he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of Jehovah over Israel." According to this statement, the throne of David over Israel is identified as the throne of Jehovah. Hence the kingdom of Israel was the kingdom of Jehovah. All the spiritual values of life at that time were centered in the nation of Israel, the Kingdom of God. According to the prediction of Jesus Christ, when the Chosen People reject Him, God takes the Kingdom from Israel and bestows it upon another nation bringing forth the fruit thereof. To what nation is the Kingdom of God given when it is taken from Israel? As may be seen from the context, this statement of Jesus is an example of paronomasia, a play on words. As the facts just presented prove, the Kingdom of God was given to the nation of Israel. According to this prediction, it is to be taken from Israel and given to another group that is spoken of as a nation. The people thus spoken of as a nation, to whom the Kingdom is given, are believers from all nations, both Jews and Gentiles. In the New Testament these people are known as the Church, or the body of Christ.

Terrific and appalling is the prediction concerning the fate awaiting those who fall upon this stone and those upon whom it will fall: "and the one falling upon this stone shall be broken in pieces; but, upon whomsoever it falls, it shall grind him to powder" (Matt. 21:44). The leaders of Israel rejected this stone, Messiah, at His first coming. In so doing, they fell upon it. As punishment for this crime, those falling upon it were broken to pieces in the catastrophe of A.D. 70. This same rejected stone, at His Second Coming, will fall upon those who, notwithstanding the light and advantages they enjoy,

still reject Him. The stone will scatter them as dust. This prediction is without doubt an echo of the image vision of Daniel 2:1-45.

The parable of the marriage feast made by the king for his son (Matt. 22:1-14) was a warning to the leaders of that time. The king in the parable is obviously God the Father. The son for whom the marriage festivities are made is none other than the Son of God. The invited guests are the Jewish people who had been invited by Moses and the Prophets. The servants calling the invited guests to the marriage festivities are John the Baptist and the apostles who proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom to Israel during the personal ministry of Jesus. In the regular translation the word rendered *dinner* in verse 4 should properly be translated *breakfast*.

By the Resurrection of Christ, the breakfast had been made ready for the invited guests. The king sent out the second deputation of announcers, pleading with the invited guests to come and partake. As a group, they were uninterested and turned to their merchandising and other secular activities. Enraged by this slighting of the royal invitation, the king sent "his armies and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city" (Matt. 22:7). The prophecy of this parable was literally fulfilled in A.D. 70 by the destruction of the Jewish state and Jerusalem under the sledge hammer blows of Titus, the Roman general.

After destroying those who had spurned the invitation to the wedding breakfast, the king sent forth his messengers into the highways and byways to invite people of all races and tribes to come and partake of the supper, which was observed at the close of the day of the wedding festivities. When the king came to the marriage supper, he saw a man without a wedding garment and ordered him cast into outer darkness because he had not availed himself of the one provided for him.

Undoubtedly it was obvious to the Jerusalem authorities that Jesus spoke these three parables against them because of their attitude and action.

2. COUNTER ATTACKS BY THE JERUSALEM AUTHORITIES

The Jerusalem authorities struck back, figuratively speaking. The Pharisees took counsel as to how they might ensnare Him in His talk (Matt. 22:15-22). They also tried to involve Him with the Roman authorities by asking Him whether or not it was lawful to pay tribute to Caesar. He replied that they should pay tribute to whom tribute is due. Thus their attempt failed utterly.

Then the Sadducees, who did not believe in life after death or in angels, tried to involve Him in the discussion of a theological question concerning the Resurrection. He answered their questions by showing that they did not know the power of God or the Scriptures (Matt. 22:23-33). Finally a lawyer of the Pharisees tried to ensnare Him by asking which commandment of the law was the greatest. The answer that Jesus gave to this question was overwhelmingly successful and defeated the efforts of His opponents.

At this point Jesus took the offensive in the controversy by referring to Psalm 110:1,2. He called attention to the fact that David spoke of one of his descendants as being his Lord. Then Jesus asked His opponents how David's Son could be David's Lord. Unable to answer, they withdrew, leaving Him alone. The only way that one of David's descendants could be David's Lord would be for him to be of a higher order of being than his father. Since it is recognized in this passage that this descendant is greater than David, it is therefore to be assumed that he is of an order higher than man. But to whom specifically does this passage refer? It has been recognized by many scholars as a Messianic prediction. This fact is apparent from the data of the context and other passages related to it. This descendant of David can be none other than Messiah, who is God in human form, having entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. This passage becomes clear in the light of such predictions as Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." The information in this passage shows how this descendant of David is of a higher order than His father David. According to it, He is Immanuel, God in human form. No wonder David called Him his Lord.

D. Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees

Jesus concluded His public ministry in the Temple by delivering a scathing rebuke of His opponents, the Pharisees and the scribes. According to John 11:57, before the feast of the Passover, the chief priests and the Pharisees had commanded that any man who knew where Jesus was should reveal His whereabouts so that they might take Him. Jesus was aware of their intentions. For the last three days—Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday—He and they, as just seen, had clashed in verbal battles. He was victorious in each instance. He concluded His ministry by delivering the message found in Matthew 23:1-39. If this passage were the only one extant concerning what He said about the scribes and Pharisees, it might be concluded that He denounced all scribes and all Pharisees as men of like character. But there were notable exceptions to the rule. For instance, Nicodemus, who was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, was a friend of Jesus and a sincere man. Likewise Joseph of Arimathea was an honest truth-seeker. Notwithstanding the wide variance between Jesus and the Pharisees as a group, some of them at times entertained Him. In Luke 14:1ff., for instance, Jesus accepted an invitation to dine with an outstanding Pharisee. On another occasion, while He was in Galilee, He was entertained by a Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50). Thus, as one reads Matthew, chapter 23, he must bear in mind that Jesus' denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees on this occasion was not the condemnation of the entire group, but of only those who proved to be insincere, hypercritical.

Jesus recognized the positions of authority which the scribes and the Pharisees held. Since they were the exponents of the law and of the messages of the Prophets, Jesus instructed the multitudes to obey them implicitly, but not to do as they were doing.

Jesus pronounced seven woes upon the scribes and Pharisees. Some Bible students have pointed out that He was very caustic in His denunciation of them. He was no more severe in His criticism of the scribes and Pharisees than some of the prophets were in their denunciation of Israel. Moses was unsparing in his remarks at various times. When Israel came to Mount Sinai, for instance, the people made a golden calf and worshipped it. Aaron, the high priest, spoke to Moses and said that Israel was set on evil. By this statement he meant that they were determined to do evil and wicked

things (Ex. 32:22). They were so very rebellious at times that Moses on one occasion, when he was to bring forth water from the rock, shouted, "Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock?" (Num. 20:10). This natural outburst of anger kept him out of the Promised Land. In the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy, chapter 32), the great lawgiver delineated very vividly the sinful, rebellious life that the people would live from his day and forward until the great Kingdom Age. The inspired writer of the Book of Judges states that every man of that period in Israel did that which was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6; 21:25). Also the writers of the historical books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles constantly call attention to the sinful condition of the nation and to how God had to punish it. Isaiah the Prophet, in chapter 1, said that the body politic was sick from head to foot. In chapter 5, he pronounced one woe after another against the nation of Israel. Jeremiah the Prophet spoke of the nation and condemned the people, declaring that the Lord would make Jerusalem like Shiloh because of the sins of the people. Also at a later date he compared the Kingdom of Judah to two baskets of figs. The fruit of the first basket was comparatively good, but that of the second was so very bad that it could not be eaten. Ezekiel compared Jerusalem to Sodom and Gomorrah (Ezekiel, chapter 16). Then in chapter 23 he called Jerusalem and Samaria Oholah and Oholibah, two lewd, adulterous women. Malachi wished that someone with courage and moral stamina would close the doors of the Temple so that the worship could not be continued, because of the corruption of the people (Mal.1:10). Then he claimed that the whole nation was depraved and accursed because it had dealt corruptly with God.

This little glance at the history of Israel and the messages of the prophets shows that they frequently denounced the whole nation, as well as individuals. Many prophets of God were persecuted for speaking faithfully the Word of God. When all the facts are taken into consideration, one sees that the prophets and the historians were as outspoken against Israel's sins as Jesus of Nazareth was in His denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, as recorded in Matthew, chapter 23.

This scathing denunciation of the religious leaders is found in Matthew 23:1-36— with the closing lamentation over Jerusalem in Matthew 23:37-39, in which Jesus addressed them as, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that kills the prophets, and stones them

that are sent to her." Throughout the history of Israel, God sent His prophets to Jerusalem, the capital of the nation; but official Jerusalem, the leaders of the nation, killed and stoned them because of their denunciation of sin in high places.

In this final exclamation Jesus declared that their house, their Temple—possibly their "Beth Din," the supreme court—would be left to them desolate; and He assured them that they would never see His face again until they change their attitude and say, as foretold in Psalm 118:26, "Blessed is the one coming in the name of the Lord." According to various predictions of the prophets, the people of Israel will be brought to the point that they will see the mistake of the centuries, will rectify it by genuine repentance, and will call upon God for mercy and for deliverance. When the nation acts thus, the Messiah will come and bring the longed for deliverance and will solve the Jewish problem once and for all.

E. The Olivet Discourse

The Olivet Discourse is the most important prophecy that the Lord Jesus made. He delivered it on the Mount of Olives on Tuesday, the last day of His public ministry, after He had finished His service in the Temple. It is recorded in Matthew, chapters 24 and 25; Mark, chapter 13; Luke, chapter 21. These three accounts must be studied together if one is to get an accurate and full picture of the great prophetic outline of the centuries. This message of Matthew, chapters 24 and 25, brings together in the compass of a few words many of the great outstanding prophecies found throughout the messages of the Prophets.

1. A PREDICTION OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE AND QUESTIONS GROWING THEREFROM

In Matthew 24:1-3 is a prediction concerning the Temple. As Jesus and the disciples were leaving the Temple on their way to Bethany, they called His attention to the large stones that had been used in its reconstruction. He replied by making the definite prediction that one stone would not remain upon another that would not be thrown down.

When they reached the summit of the Mount of Olives and Jesus had sat down, Peter, James, John, and Andrew (Mark 13:3), wishing more information concerning this

prediction, asked Him two questions, as recorded in verse 3, "When will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Thy coming and of the consummation of the age?" Jesus answered both questions. Matthew, however, devotes his entire time to Jesus' answer to the second question, which is a double one (Matt. 24:4-31). Luke gives the answer to the first one (Luke 21:20-24).

2. THE PRESENT AGE

In Matthew 24:4-6, Jesus speaks of certain events which will occur during His absence—the present Dispensation. In the first place, He warns them against false messiahs who will lead many astray by their claims of being the true Messiah, of whom the prophets have spoken. In the second place, He informs them that there will be wars and rumors of wars throughout this age. When one breaks out, therefore, they are not to be afraid or to attach any prophetic significance to it, because wars characterize the age. The causes of wars are here. So long as these causes remain, there will be wars. Hence the breaking out of a war does not indicate the end of the age, about which the disciples had just asked. Thus these three verses set forth the present age, beginning with the time that Jesus spoke and continuing until His Second Coming.

3. THE SIGN OF THE SECOND COMING AND THE END OF THE AGE

Jesus concludes this point by saying that, when a war breaks out, the end is not yet, "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in different places [Luke adds, 'and pestilences']; 8 but all these things are the first birth pain." The conjunction *for* in verse 7 shows that the sentence thus introduced is explanatory, either of the last clause in the preceding sentence, or of the entire sentence itself. It cannot be the explanation of the entire sentence, since Jesus has just shown that there would be wars and rumors of wars throughout the period of His absence. Some expositors think, therefore, that the clause "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars" is explained by the sentence "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." But this explanation will not satisfy the demands of the context, for Jesus declares that the rising of a nation against nation and the rising of kingdom against kingdom, accompanied by famines, pestilences, and

earthquakes, are the beginning of travail, or the first birth pain. If these risings of nation against nation are explanatory of wars and rumors of wars, the first birth pain has been continuing throughout the entire Christian Dispensation. This interpretation is immediately seen to be erroneous. Jesus is answering the question concerning *the* sign of His coming and of the consummation of the age. The wars and rumors of wars throughout the centuries could not be indicative of His coming and of the end of the age. This explanation, therefore, is unacceptable.

Verse 6 closes with the statement "The end is not yet." When a war—a local affair—breaks out, such a conflict has no prophetic significance, for the end of the age is not yet. The reason is that, before the end of the age, nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom in a titanic struggle which will be attended by famines, pestilences, and great earthquakes in different places of the world. What is the meaning of the idiom "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom"? A careful examination of the context of II Chronicles 15:1-8 shows that this peculiar idiom indicates a war that breaks out in one section of the world and spreads from one nation to another until it involves the nations that are within the view of the prophet using the idiom.

In the days of Asa, King of Judah, the Spirit of God came upon Azariah, who delivered the following message to the king and the nation:

2 ... Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Jehovah is with you, while ye are with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. 3 Now for a long season Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law: 4 but when in their distress they turned unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. 5 And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the lands. 6 And they were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city; for God did vex them with all adversity. 7 But be ye strong, and let not your hands be slack; for your work shall be rewarded (II Chr. 15:2b-7).

This message was spoken directly to the king and to the people of his kingdom, "all Judah and Benjamin." Azariah laid down the general proposition that Jehovah is with

His people when they are faithful to Him. He also pointed out that for a long season Israel had been without the true God, and a teaching priest, and the law. Then in their distress they had turned to and found Jehovah. In those days of moral and spiritual declension, declared the prophet, "... there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the lands, 6 And they were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city; for God did vex them with all adversity" (II Chr. 15:5,6). Note the expression, "There was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in." What is meant by going out and coming in? Since the message was delivered to the king and the people of Judah, the southern kingdom, the going out and coming in can mean but one thing, namely, their going out of the kingdom of Judah into an adjoining country, and the coming in of a citizen of a neighboring nation by crossing the border into Judah. If an inhabitant of Judah, for instance, wished to cross the border into Israel in order to avoid the horrors of war, he did not escape, because there was war in Israel also. Thus it is clear from the facts of the context that before the prophet's mind appeared a vision of the kingdom of Judah and the nations bordering thereon. Great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the land of Judah and adjoining nations. These nations were "broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city." The conflict concerning which the prophet was speaking started by the rising up of one of these nations seen in the vision against another; then another came into the conflict. The struggle thus spread until it affected all the territory before the mind of the prophet when he made this historical statement.

In Isaiah 19:1-4 this same idiom appears. The prophet foretells a civil war that breaks out in Egypt and affects the entire country. It starts by Egyptian rising against Egyptian, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom, and spreads until it affects all the territory before the mind of the prophet when he is making the prediction. If these two examples of this idiom are studied carefully, it is seen that a war in each instance is spoken of that breaks out in one nation and spreads to another, then to another and another until it involves all the territory that is before the mind of the prophet when he uses the idiom.

When using this idiom in the Olivet Discourse, Jesus had a world outlook. This idiom, therefore, refers to a war which starts by one nation's rising against another and spreads until it engulfs the whole world. In substance, He says: "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but pay no attention to them, because they have no prophetic significance; but, when you see a war break out which involves all nations, and which is attended by famines, pestilences, and great earthquakes in divers places, such a titanic struggle is your sign—your infallible, unmistakable sign—of My coming and of the end of the age."

There have been wars and rumors of wars throughout the entire period of time since the Lord Jesus left this earth; but in 1914-18 the world saw for the first time nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom—a world war. Furthermore it was accompanied by famines, pestilences (the devastating influenza epidemic, for example), and an unprecedented number of earthquakes. These four things—a world war, famines, pestilences, and great earthquakes—coming together, constitute the first birth pang, the pain warning the world that the time of travail, the Tribulation, is near at hand (Matt. 24:7,8).

The world has also had a second birth pain in the form of World War II. There may be a third birth pain, taking the same form as the first two. As to how many warning pains will come upon the world before the real labor pains set in, God only knows. But the distress of the period of travail will surely come in due season.

4. THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Matthew 24:9-28 gives a brief description of the great Tribulation, with which the Christian Era closes. This period of distress is known by different names in the writings of the prophets. Jeremiah calls it the time of Jacob's trouble; Moses speaks of it as the time of Israel's calamity. Again, in a number of places the prophets speak of it as the day of wrath and, sometimes, the day of Jehovah. Practically all the prophets spoke of this time of distress. It is also described in various psalms. It is of the utmost importance that one understand what is meant by this day of Jehovah, or the time of Jacob's trouble. Isaiah the Prophet gives a wonderful description of this period of wrath in the following passage:

10 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty. 11 The lofty looks of man shall be brought low, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.

12 For there shall be a day of Jehovah of hosts upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up; and it shall be brought low; 13 and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, 14 and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, 15 and upon every lofty tower, and upon every fortified wall, 16 and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant imagery. 17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day. 18 And the idols shall utterly pass away. 19 And men shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth. 20 In that day men shall cast away their idols of silver, and their idols of gold, which have been made for them to worship, to the moles and to the bats; 21 to go into the caverns of the rocks, and into the clefts of the ragged rocks, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth. 22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of? (Isa. 2:10-22).

Zephaniah also spoke of the same time:

14 The great day of Jehovah is near, it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of Jehovah; the mighty man crieth there bitterly. 15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 a day of the trumpet and alarm, against the fortified cities, and against the high battlements. 17 And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against Jehovah; and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung. 18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of Jehovah's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he will make an end, yea, a terrible end, of all them that dwell in the land (Zeph. 1:14-18).

From these two passages it is very clear that the day of Jehovah, or the time of Jacob's trouble, is the period that God pours out His judgments upon Israel and upon the entire world.

In the New Testament this period of judgment is described fully in Revelation, chapters 6 through 19 inclusive. It is a period of seven years. The chronological order of events that will occur during the Tribulation is set forth symbolically by the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls, described in chapters 6, 8 and 9, and 16. The events set forth in the first five seal judgments are what men bring about, but the sixth seal symbolizes divine intervention, an upheaval throughout our solar system—at least. People who will be living at that time will recognize that they are in the day of Jehovah, the day of His wrath:

12 And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; 13 and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. 14 And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they say to the mountains, and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand? (Rev. 6:12-17)

From a careful study of Revelation it is learned that this judgment occurs in the first part of the Tribulation. People living then will realize and confess that they are in the day of Jehovah, the day of His wrath. It will be a reality which no one can misunderstand.

The first half of this period of seven years of Tribulation is covered by Matthew 24:9-14; the second half, by verses 15-28. It is a time that will try men's souls. At that time the gospel of the kingdom will be preached to all the world for a testimony unto all the nations (verse 14). Paul wrote to Timothy on the same subject.

3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, *himself* man, Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony *to be borne* in its own times; ... (I Tim. 2:3-6).

This passage shows clearly that God wants all men to be saved, that a ransom for man's redemption has been given for all, and that the testimony is "to be borne in its own times." This testimony is undoubtedly the proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God (there is but one gospel, Galatians 1:8,9), which, as Paul declared, will be preached in its own times—in the first half of the Tribulation. For a full and glowing account of the proclamation of the truth to all nations and the world-wide revival, read carefully Revelation, chapter 7.¹

Matthew 24:15-28 describes the second half of this period of judgment. As the Tribulation advances, the devastating strokes of judgment become more severe and unbearable. At that time Almighty God will sweep the bulk of the people off the face of the earth.

5. THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

In Matthew 24:29-31 is a prediction concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ from glory at the very end of the Tribulation. At that time all families of the earth will mourn because of Him, whom they will see coming in power and great glory. He will send forth His angels to gather His elect—those who turn to Him during the Tribulation and put their trust in Him, and who survive to the end of that period. They will be gathered out of the world. Then the final stroke of judgment will fall at the personal return of Jesus.

¹ Also read my booklet *Sowing and Reaping a Bumper Crop*, which presents the scriptural teaching of God's plowing, harrowing, and leveling, figuratively speaking, the earth in preparation for the world-wide seed-sowing which will be done in the Tribulation, and which will result in the salvation of more than half the people of the earth.

6. THE LAW OF RECURRENCE

The Olivet Discourse is an example of the law of recurrence. This law involves the recording of an event and the repetition of the account with added details. This principle may be illustrated by the artist who "blocks out the portrait" of a person at the first sitting and adds details at subsequent sittings. Matthew 24:1-31 gives a cursory survey of the period beginning with the time that Jesus spoke this message and continuing through the centuries to His Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation. He, of course, gives only the high-lights of the period. In Matthew 24:32-25:46 He adds details to the picture that He has already drawn. These details pertain to the very end of this age and to the Tribulation.

7. THE RAPTURE OF BELIEVERS

a. The Budding of the Fig Tree

32 But from the fig tree learn her parable. Whenever her branch has become tender and it puts forth its leaves, know that the summer is near. 33 Thus, also, you, whenever you see all these things, know that He is near, even at the doors. 34 In solemn truth I am telling you that this generation will not pass away until all these things are accomplished (Matt. 24:32-34).

According to the Lord Jesus, when anyone sees the fig tree beginning to bud and to put forth its leaves, he can know that summer is near. No one can question his logic. In a similar manner, asserted Jesus, those who see "all these things" can reason that He is near, even at the doors. What is meant by "all these things"? There is but one answer: the things enumerated in verse 7 and designated in verse 8 as "all these things"—"7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in different places; 8 but all these things are the first birth pain" (Matt. 24:7,8). The expression "all these things" of verse 33 is the same term as "all these things" of verses 7 and 8. Since in both passages Jesus is talking about the sign of His coming and of the end of the age, one is forced to believe that "all these things" of both passages refer to the same events. Since moreover, "all these things" of verses 7 and 8 refer to World War I and attending circumstances, "all these things" of

verse 33 refer also to the same world war and accompanying events—the sign of the end of the age. The disciples had asked for the sign of the end of the age. Now Jesus says, "... whenever you² see all these things, know that He is near, *even* at the doors" (Matt. 24:33).

Thus, in Matthew 24:32, Jesus turns His discussion from His Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation back to the time of the sign—the outbreak of World War I, 1914-18, with its accompanying famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. This sign shows that His coming is at hand, but how soon? The answer is in verse 34: "In solemn truth I am telling you that this generation will not pass away, until all these things are accomplished," the generation rising when the sign occurs and is old enough to recognize its significance—the generation in the teen age during the war of 1914-18. Within the lifetime of this generation the whole prophetic program which Jesus has outlined in the Olivet Discourse will be carried out.

If one is willing to take the language of Jesus at its face value, and if language can be relied upon as an accurate medium of one person's conveying thoughts to another, we must accept the conclusion reached in the paragraph above. The only point that may be questioned is the identification of the war with its attending circumstances mentioned in the prophecy of Jesus as having found its fulfillment in the great war of 1914-18, which, by general consent, is called World War I in contradistinction to World War II of 1939-45. From the language of Jesus one naturally concludes that He was talking about the first world conflict that occurs and of its being the sign of the end of the age.

The force of this position becomes apparent when we note the fact that there have already been two world wars and that there may be a third one—at least, many of the scientists and statesmen of the world are now discussing the possibility of World War III. So far as we know, there may be more.

² Who is referred to by the pronoun *you*? Obviously Christ was speaking to His disciples who would be living at the time of the end of the age, World War I; for He says, "Whenever you see all these things [namely, a world war, accompanied by famines, pestilences, and earthquakes] ..." He, therefore, was talking to the generation that would be living at the time of the occurrence of the sign and old enough to understand the prophecy and to identify current events as the fulfillment of this prediction.

Since there is a series of world wars, how can we identify World War I as the one mentioned by Jesus? The following illustration, which I have often used, will help one to see the facts. Assume that I live in a rural district on a given highway. You wish to visit me, but do not know where my place is. As you motor along, you meet a man from whom you inquire concerning my home. He assures you that he can give you the information that you need. Pointing to the telephone line along the highway, he calls attention to the fact that the wires are fastened directly to the telephone poles. He insists that you watch this telephone line as you continue traveling until you see a pole with a crossarm. Opposite this telephone pole, he asserts, is my gate. You thank him for the information and drive ahead. Finally, after traveling several miles, you see a telephone pole that has a crossarm. You notice that the next one ahead has a crossarm, and the next likewise. Opposite which one of those posts do you expect to find my gate? I have asked literally hundreds of people this question. Without an exception they all have answered, "Opposite the first one." When Jesus, therefore, called attention to a world war as the sign of His coming and of the end of the age, the disciples naturally thought of the first world war as being the one He meant.

Since, however, there may still exist in the minds of some a doubt on this point, my exhortation to them is that they keep an open mind, that they continue to study the question, and that they ask the Lord to open their eyes to the truth on this point (Ps. 119:18). Let us avoid all speculations and guessing. God does not fulfill His prophecies according to the speculations of men, but as they are written.

Of which coming is Jesus speaking—His coming for His saints or His coming with His saints? He will come for His saints before the Tribulation begins, as I Thessalonians 1:9,10 and 4:13-5:11 clearly show. He will come with His saints at the end of the Tribulation. At the time of which Jesus is here speaking, men and women will be eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, buying and selling. Various passages of Scripture show that such will not be the condition of the world and of the human family at the very end of the Tribulation, because the devastating, thorough going judgments will wreck the physical earth, as well as civilization. Since in Matthew 24:32-44, Jesus says that at His coming mankind will be following the normal pursuits of life, He must be

referring to His coming for His saints before the Tribulation—in other words, at the time of the Rapture.

b. Attitudes toward the Rapture—True and False

There are two contrary attitudes which will be taken with reference to the Lord's return for His saints. They are set forth in the parable of the faithful and wise servant and the unfaithful servant. The wise servant realizes that he does not know just when his Lord is coming; he, therefore, is faithful in every duty devolving upon him. The unfaithful servant, believing that his Lord tarries, becomes intolerant toward his fellow servants (Matt. 24:45-51).

In the parable of the ten virgins, Matthew 25:1-13, Jesus again illustrates and contrasts two attitudes toward His coming for His saints. The wise virgins, realizing that they do not know when the Bridegroom will come, take oil in their lamps and an additional supply in vessels in the event He should delay His coming. The foolish virgins virtually set a date for His coming by taking oil in their lamps only and not having an additional supply. Thus is contrasted the right attitude with a wrong one.

In Matthew 25:14-30, one sees that the returning Lord rewards His servants for their faithfulness. In this passage appears the parable of the talents, the gist of which is as follows: A certain nobleman was going abroad; but, before doing so, he called his servants and delivered to them his goods. To one he gave five talents, according to his ability; to another, two talents; and to another, one. Having apportioned his goods to his servants, he went to a far country, and after a long time he returned. Upon his return he called his servants and had a reckoning with them. The one to whom five talents were given brought five other talents. The master said, "Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things; enter into the joy of your Lord." Then the one who had received two talents came bringing two additional ones. To this second servant the master said the same thing. Then the servant to whom one talent had been given was called. He brought his master's money and said that he had buried it and kept it safely. Since he had been unfaithful, the nobleman demanded that he give back the one talent and that he be cast into outer darkness.

The nobleman of this parable is Christ, who went into a far country, heaven. He has been gone a long time approximately two thousand years. The first two servants to whom He distributes His talents are the believers, the born-again ones. They are to take their talents—opportunities of service and capabilities—and improve their time. When the Lord comes back, He will have a reckoning with His servants and will give them their rewards according to their works.

This parable must not be confused with the parable of the pounds, described in Luke 19:11-27. The outlook there is entirely different from the one here. At the same time there are principles involved that obtain in both cases. The facts must be carefully differentiated. The main point of the parable of the talents is that God expects His servants to be faithful in the discharge of their duties and in the use of their capabilities and properties. The parable also shows clearly that God expects 100 per cent faithfulness and loyalty on the part of His servants. They will be rewarded when they appear before the judgment seat of Christ, as is set forth in II Corinthians 5:10: For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."

8. THE JUDGMENT OF THE LIVING NATIONS

In the Olivet Discourse Jesus moves forward from the time of the Rapture of the Church, as described in Matthew 24:32-25:30, to the very end of the Tribulation when He will come in glory and all nations will be gathered before Him—the living nations, those that survive the judgments of the Great Tribulation (Matt. 25:31-46). During the Tribulation, the Scriptures reveal, the extremely wicked and immoral people will be swept from the face of the earth by the judgments of God. Those who survive the Tribulation and are brought into the judgment of this passage consist of good, moral people living up to the light which they have and those who are not biased against Christ and His people.

In this connection let it be emphasized that those appearing in this judgment are the living nations. Not one word is said about a resurrection of the dead. The basis of this judgment is the attitude which those being judged take toward Christ and His brethren

during the Tribulation—brethren in the flesh, the Jewish people, and brethren in a spiritual sense, the Tribulation saints: those who are sympathetic and helpful to His brethren are represented as sheep put on the right hand by the shepherd, whereas those who are callous toward human suffering and are antagonistic toward Christ and His people are represented as goats that are put on the left hand. Those on the right hand, the sheep, are allowed to enter the Kingdom. Those on the left hand, the goats, are banished from the presence of God and the glory of His might.

Some people have a misunderstanding of this prediction concerning the judgment of the living nations. Some expositors think that the people here referred to are the nations upon earth at the present time, such as the United States of America, Great Britain, France, and other nations. They see in this prediction that these nations will go through the Tribulation, retaining their national identity and appearing in this judgment of which Christ speaks—although the number of people will be greatly reduced by the judgments of the Tribulation. This interpretation assumes that the nations will be separated according to present-day nationalities. This view cannot be true in the light of Jeremiah 30:11: "For I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to save thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished." According to this passage the nation of Israel will go through the Tribulation retaining its national identity. All the other nations, where Israel has been scattered, declared Jeremiah, will lose their identity.

Since the separation of the people in this judgment is not along national lines, upon what principles are they divided? A glance at the entire passage shows that they as individuals are separated upon the basis of their attitude and actions toward Christ's brethren. Those who have been friendly and helpful to His brethren will be put upon the right hand and allowed to enter the Kingdom of Glory. Those who have been non-cooperative and hostile toward them will be put on the left hand and banished into outer darkness. From these facts it is clear that the basis of this judgment will be that of meritorious conduct and good works or a lack of them. Will people be saved because of their good works and clean lives while others will be condemned because of lack of

them? The Scriptures make it clear that people are not saved by works of any kind, but by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Light is thrown upon this subject in Psalms 15 and 24:1-6

15

- 1 Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle?
Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
- 2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,
And speaketh truth in his heart;
- 3 He that slandereth not with his tongue,
Nor doeth evil to his friend,
Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor;
- 4 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised,
But who honoreth them that fear Jehovah;
He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not;
- 5 He that putteth not out his money to interest,
Nor taketh reward against the innocent.
He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

24

- 1 The earth is Jehovah's, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
- 2 For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.
- 3 Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
- 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood,
And hath not sworn deceitfully.

- 5 He shall receive a blessing from Jehovah,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
- 6 This is the generation of them that seek after him,
That seek thy face, *even Jacob*. [Selah]

When these psalms are studied in the light of related passages, it is abundantly evident that David, the author of these psalms, discusses in them the question as to who will be allowed to enter the glorious kingdom of Messiah. "Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" When these psalms are read along with the prediction of Christ's judgment of the living nations (Matt. 25:31-46), it is clear that David and Christ are talking about the same future events. David tells who will be allowed to enter, speaking of them in terms of their clean lives and upright conduct. Christ speaks of the same group in terms of their moral lives and good works. In Psalm 24:5 David gives the statement which is the key that unlocks the entire situation: "He shall receive a blessing from Jehovah, And righteousness from the God of his salvation." These good, moral people who are living up to all the light that they have, and who survive the Tribulation, will have proved by their attitude and actions that they will receive the full light of the truth when it is presented to them. The eyes of the Lord are running to and fro throughout the whole earth to find people who have the courage of their convictions, and who will act accordingly (II Chr. 16:9). God will see that the truth is given to them. Each "shall receive a blessing from Jehovah, And righteousness from the God of his salvation." Therefore, these people who are put on the right hand, being truth lovers, will accept the truth and Messiah and be saved. Thus they will enter the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

The gospel will be fully proclaimed by saved Israel at the beginning of the Kingdom Age, and those still living will accept³ Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and will live upon the earth throughout the Millennium.

At the close of this golden era all the lost will be raised and will appear before the Son of man and hear their awful doom (Rev. 20:11-15).

III. JESUS' INACTIVITY FOR TWO DAYS, WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY

This chapter, thus far, has presented the outstanding events occurring on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday of the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry. As already seen, the Lord delivered the Olivet Discourse late Tuesday afternoon.

1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had completed all these words, He said to His disciples,
2 You know that after two days the passover comes, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified (Matt. 26:1,2).

According to this passage, two days after Jesus had completed the Olivet Discourse, the Passover was to begin. Since He delivered His message on Tuesday, the second day later was Thursday. The same information appears in Mark 14:1,2. So far as the Gospel of Matthew goes, there is no account of anything which He did during Wednesday or Thursday, until the time of the Passover proper. Though none of the evangelists except John tell anything about these two days, one may be certain that Jesus spent the major part of this time in prayer to God.

³ Psalm 24:1-6, quoted above, throws light upon this most important phase of truth.

In verses 1 and 2 the declaration is made that the earth and all therein belong to Jehovah. They will be His on three counts: first, by original creation; second, by redemption at the cross; and third, by conquest at His Second Coming.

In verse 3 the question is asked as to who will ascend into the hill of Jehovah—Jerusalem glorified in the Kingdom Age—and stand approved in God's presence. This question is answered in verse 4. Those who will be allowed to enter the Kingdom are the good moral people of that time who will be living up to the light that they have.

According to verse 5, these people will receive a special blessing from Jehovah, even righteousness of the God of their salvation. They will, therefore, be saved, not by their own works, but by faith. They will hear the truth, believe, and accept it, and receive Christ the Messiah who will give to them His righteousness. They will, therefore, be saved by grace through faith.

IV. THURSDAY EVENING THE DAY OF THE PASSOVER

A. Origin of the Passover

In Israel's religious calendar, the Passover is one of the most important of the set feasts which are described in Leviticus, chapter 23. The occasion and the account of the institution of the Passover feast are found in Exodus, chapters 12 and 13. Psalm 81:1-5 is the poetical version of its origin.

On the fourteenth day of the first month, Nisan, between the evenings—between 3 and 6 P.M.—the Passover was to be slain and was to be eaten that evening. None of it was to be left until the next day. The Passover proper began at sundown on the fourteenth of the month and ended at sundown the next day. Following the day of the Passover was the feast of unleavened bread, which lasted to the evening of the twenty-first day (Ex. 12:18,19).

The blood of the Passover lamb was sprinkled upon the doorposts and the lintels of every Israelitish house. That night Jehovah passed over the land of Egypt, giving assurance to the people of Israel that He would pass over their houses and would not suffer the destroyer to smite their firstborn (Ex. 12:23). The Lord gave Moses the assurance that the blood sprinkled upon the doorposts and lintels would be a token upon every house where the Israelites lived: "... and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and there shall no plague be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (Ex. 12:13). Why did the destroying angel pass over the Israelitish homes on which the blood had been sprinkled and slay the firstborn in the houses of the Egyptians? The answer is simple. God said that He would respect the blood behind which the Israelites screened themselves. The protection lay not in the good characters, ethical standards, and spiritual values which Israel had, but solely in the blood of the lamb which had been slain in their behalf.

It was God's will that Israel should observe this Passover feast every year at the appointed time. Since the blood of no animal could meet the moral and spiritual qualifications that are involved in the welfare of a soul, it is quite evident that the Passover ceremonies and blood were only emblematic of that which is efficacious in a moral, ethical, and spiritual sense. This truth is seen by an examination of the prophecy

regarding the servant of Jehovah (Isa. 52:13-53:12) who offers Himself in sacrifice to atone for the sins of mankind.

B. Examination of Passages Regarding the Passover

Since in some quarters the Scriptures have been interpreted as teaching that Jesus partook of the Passover a day ahead of the regular time, it is necessary to look at all events and data to determine the facts. A misunderstanding has arisen because of a failure to comprehend the different meanings which the word Passover has in the New Testament. In Matthew 26:1,2, it refers to the Passover as one of Israel's festivals, set feasts. In the parallel account, Mark 14:1,2, the Passover festival and the festival of unleavened bread are blended together and are referred to as the feast. In Mark 14:12, the Passover refers to the paschal lamb: "And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Passover, his disciples say unto him ..." But in Matthew 26:17 the Passover means the paschal supper: "Where dost Thou wish that we prepare for Thee to eat the passover?" In Mark 14:14 it means the Passover supper: "The Teacher saith, Where is my guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?" In Luke 22:1,2 Passover refers to the eight days of the feast of Passover and unleavened bread: "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover." But in verse 11 of this chapter, Passover refers to the Passover supper. The same usage occurs in verses 13 and 15. In John 2:13,23 the Passover refers to the Passover season or festival. The same usage occurs in John 6:4. In the passage "Now the passover of the Jews was at hand: and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the passover, to purify themselves" (John 11:55), the Passover undoubtedly refers to the Passover festival. The same meaning is given to this expression in John 12:1 and 13:1.

One should now examine carefully Christ's observance of the Passover as recorded in John, chapter 13. When the time came to observe the Passover supper, Jesus reclined with His disciples. During supper He arose, girded Himself, and began to wash the disciples' feet (verses 4,5). Jesus foretold that one of those reclining with Him would betray Him. Each one asked if it was he. Jesus replied, "He it is, for whom I shall dip the

sop and give it him" (v. 26). Then Jesus gave the sop to Judas, saying, "What thou doest, do quickly" (v. 27). No one present knew why Jesus made this statement. Some thought that He indicated that Judas, since he carried the purse of the group, was to give something to the poor or to buy something for the feast. When Judas received the sop, "he went out straightway, and it was night" (v. 30).

Some Bible students think that Jesus partook of the supper described in John, chapter 13, before the Passover had occurred, and that the command to Judas in verse 27 was for him to go out quickly and buy something for the regular Passover feast to be observed. Those taking this position assume that the word feast here refers to the paschal supper—a mere guess. Since the word Passover can refer to the paschal lamb, the paschal supper, or the paschal festival, and since, in all other instances in John's record, it refers to the paschal festival, the logical assumption is that it has the same significance here unless there is evidence to the contrary. Light is thrown upon this passage from II Chronicles, chapter 30, which records the observance of the Passover in the days of Hezekiah. Verse 22 reads: "... So they did eat throughout the feast for the seven days, offering sacrifices of peace-offerings ..." On this occasion the people of Israel observed the feast of Passover, which is also called the feast of unleavened bread, for seven days. For this reason, obviously, John said that some of the disciples thought Judas was to buy something for the feast, which was the feast of Passover and unleavened bread. John, chapter 13, therefore, must be interpreted in the light of the usual meaning that John, as well as the synoptic writers at times, attached to the word Passover.

After observing what John called the supper, Jesus was arrested, was tried three times before the Jews, and the next day was delivered to Pilate by the members of the Jewish supreme court—the Sanhedrin. John 18:28 reads: "They lead Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover." Here again these same Bible students assume that the word *Passover* refers to the paschal supper and not to the paschal festival which continued for eight days—the meaning which it always has in John's inspired record. The interpretation of the words *feast* in

John 13:29 and *Passover* in John 18:28 as meaning the paschal supper is mere guesswork, and the conclusion drawn from this interpretation that it occurred a day before the usual observance is illogical, since the evidence shows clearly that Jesus partook of the supper at the regular time.

C. The Day of Preparation

The day on which Jesus was crucified is recognized as the Preparation. He died about 3 o'clock in the afternoon: "And when even was now come, because it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath ..." (Mark 15:42). The day of Preparation on which Jesus was crucified is called the day before the Sabbath, that is, Friday. Matthew 27:33-56 gives an account of the Crucifixion of Jesus. According to verses 57 and 58, Joseph of Arimathsea obtained the body of Jesus and placed it in the tomb. Matthew states in verse 62 that "on the morrow, which is the day after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate ..." Mark also says that the Preparation was the day before the Sabbath. Both assert that Jesus was executed on the day of the Preparation before the Sabbath. Matthew's statement is that on the morrow after the Preparation the Jewish authorities wanted Pilate to have the tomb of Jesus sealed so that no one could take the body away. They, therefore, made this request on the Sabbath. Concerning the Crucifixion, Luke said that "it was the day of the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew on" (Luke 23:54). Jesus, therefore, was crucified on the day of Preparation, which was the day before the Sabbath. But He partook of the supper on the day before the Preparation, namely, on Thursday evening, and was crucified on Friday. The Apostle John declares that Jesus was put on trial before Pilate on "the Preparation of the passover" (John 19:14). He was executed that day. "The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away" (John 19:31).

In the light of all the facts, one is inevitably driven to the conclusion that Jesus partook of the Passover at the regular time, and that He was executed on the day of the Preparation, which was the day before the Sabbath. His body was laid in the tomb that afternoon, remained in it on the Sabbath, and was raised on the first day of the week.

D. The Observance of the Passover

At the regular time for the observance of the Passover supper, Jesus met with His disciples in the home of a friend, which had been prepared for the ceremony, and observed it with them. All four evangelists give an account of their observance of the Passover supper. After Jesus had told His disciples that He had looked forward to eating the Passover with them on that occasion, He stated that He would never partake of it again until it would be fulfilled in the kingdom of God: that is, He will partake of the Passover when the kingdom of God will have been established upon earth and the will of God is being done on earth as it is done in heaven. According to Zechariah, chapter 14, the feast of tabernacles will also be observed during the great Kingdom Age. Ezekiel likewise foretells the renewal of certain sacrifices and ceremonies in the Millennium. It will be exactly as foretold.

E. The Institution of the Lord's Supper

Matthew 26:20-25 is an account of Christ's observing the Passover supper with His disciples. But verses 26-29 give an account of His instituting what is usually called the Lord's Supper. Judas was present as they observed the Passover, but he left before it was finished, as John 13:27-30 shows. After Judas had left, and after the supper had been finished, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. Luke in his record, chapter 22:14-23, makes the facts stand out very clearly. In verses 14-18 he gives the account of the observance of the Passover supper. Then in verses 19 and 20 he gives the record of the institution of the Lord's Supper. But he is careful to state that Jesus gave the disciples the loaf and likewise the cup after the supper. Since Judas left during the Passover supper, and since the Lord's Supper was instituted after the Passover had

been completed, we may be certain that Judas was not present when the Lord's Supper was instituted.

F. Prayer in the Garden

After Jesus had instituted the Lord's Supper, He had a quiet talk with His apostles while they were still in the upper room (John 13:31-14:31). On the way to the Garden of Gethsemane, He continued talking with them (John, chapters 15 and 16).

Before reaching the Kidron Valley and the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed fervently His great high-priestly, intercessory prayer, recorded in John, chapter 17. When one comes to this matchless prayer, he is on the holiest ground of the Scriptures.

V. EVENTS OF FRIDAY

Events began to move very rapidly after Jesus had arrived in the Garden.

A. The Arrest of Jesus

In all probability it was after midnight, Thursday night, when Judas with a band of soldiers from the high priest came to arrest Jesus (Matt. 26:47-56). All four evangelists give an account of the arrest. When Jesus was seized, the disciples fled. But Peter followed the Lord afar off.

B. The Trial Before Annas

Jesus was led from the Garden to the palace of Annas, the ex-high priest. One should remember that at this time the Romans controlled Palestine. They appointed whom they wished to the high priesthood and demoted or removed them at will. According to John's record, chapter 18:12,13, Jesus was led directly to the palace of Annas, where He had a preliminary trial. It occurred, therefore, before morning.

C. The Trial Before Caiaphas

From the court of Annas, Jesus was led by the soldiers to the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest (John 18:14-27). Certain of the rulers were with the high priest when Jesus was put through a gruelling ordeal. This session, also, was held at night.

D. The Trial Before Caiaphas and the Whole Sanhedrin

The trial before the Sanhedrin is found in Matthew 26:57-75 and Luke 22:54-65. Either John does not give an account of the first trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin or he blends the two into a single picture (John 18:28-19:6).

E. The Second Trial Before Caiaphas and the Whole Court

Since Jewish law forbade trying a man for his life at a night session of the court, a second trial before the Sanhedrin was conducted after the break of day, as all four records of the Gospel show (Matthew 27:1,2; Mark 15:1-5; Luke 22:66-71; John 18:28-32).

F. The Trial Before Pilate

All the evangelists state that the Sanhedrin delivered Christ over to Pilate to be tried and condemned. But Luke gives additional information regarding Pilate's actions. Hearing that Jesus had taught in Galilee, Pilate immediately sent Him to Herod, the ruler of that province, who was at that time in Jerusalem. By so doing, Pilate thought that he would get rid of Jesus (Luke 23:5-12). To Herod's questions Jesus replied nothing. Herod, therefore, sent Him back to Pilate. Since the trial before Pilate was interrupted by his sending Jesus to Herod, some speak of Christ's being tried twice before Pilate and once before Herod. It is largely a matter of terminology. All four evangelists speak of Christ's trial before Pilate (Matt. 27:11-31; Mark 15:2-20; Luke 23:3-7,13-25; John 18:28-19:16).

VI. THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

From a purely human standpoint, the Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth is the tragedy of all tragedies (Matthew 27:32-56, Mark 15:21-41, Luke 23:26-49, John 19:17-37). While one stands gazing appalled at the cross, he beholds behind the scene the real actors in this drama; and, from this correct point of view, he gets an impression of this greatest of all events entirely different from the popular idea.

A vision of the crucified Jesus loomed before King David:

- 1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my groaning?
- 2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou answerest not;
And in the night season, and am not silent.
- 3 But thou art holy,
O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.
- 4 Our fathers trusted in thee:
They trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
- 5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered:
They trusted in thee, and were not put to shame.
- 6 But I am a worm, and no man;
A reproach of men, and despised of the people.
- 7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn:
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*,
- 8 Commit *thyself* unto Jehovah; let him deliver him:
Let him rescue him, seeing he delighteth in him.
- 9 But thou art he that took me out of the womb;
Thou didst make me trust *when I was* upon my mother's breasts.
- 10 I was cast upon thee from the womb;
Thou art my God since my mother bare me.

- 11 Be not far from me; for trouble is near;
For there is none to help.
- 12 Many bulls have compassed me;
Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.
- 13 They gape upon me with their mouth,
As a ravening and a roaring lion.
- 14 I am poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint:
My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me.
- 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd;
And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;
And thou hast brought me into the dust of death.
- 16 For dogs have compassed me:
A company of evil-doers have inclosed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.
- 17 I may count all my bones;
They look and stare upon me.
- 18 They part my garments among them,
And upon my vesture do they cast lots.
- 19 But be not thou far off, O Jehovah:
O thou my succor, haste thee to help me.
- 20 Deliver my soul from the sword,
My darling from the power of the dog.
- 21 Save me from the lion's mouth;
Yea, from the horns of the wild-oxen thou hast answered me (Ps. 22:1-21).

Stepping by faith behind the scene, one sees here who is directing this drama of dramas. According to Isaiah 53:10, God the Father makes "his [Messiah's] soul an

offering for sin. ..." In this tragedy "the pleasure of Jehovah" prospers in His hand. This entire unparalleled event is an expression of the love of God for lost humanity.

At the same time, viewed from another angle, the Crucifixion of the Messiah was the work of an inveterate, diabolical hatred of all that is good, true, pure, and holy on the part of the archenemy of God and man—Satan. But in every detail, God the Father is overruling and directing all things for the advancement of His cause among men.

VII. THE BURIAL OF JESUS

Behind this greatest of all tragedies was God, who allows everyone to make his own free choices and to carry out his impulses and desires, yet overrules all things and directs all movements of history. He had foretold through Isaiah that the Messiah would be with a rich man in His dying: "And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth" (Isa. 53:9). This prediction was fulfilled when a courageous ruler of Israel, Joseph of Arimathaea, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. It was granted to him. He and Nicodemus, another ruler of Israel, according to the customary mode of burial, interred the body in Joseph's new tomb. Though they probably did not realize the fact, they were doing exactly what had been foretold through Isaiah nearly eight hundred years before.

The account of the burial is found in Matthew 27:57-66, Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23:50-56, and John 19:38-42.

VIII. LENGTH OF TIME FROM THE BURIAL TO THE RESURRECTION

There has been no little discussion regarding the length of time that the body of Jesus lay in the tomb; but, when the facts are noted carefully, all differences vanish. On various occasions Jesus foretold His Crucifixion and Resurrection. Sometimes, as in Matthew 16:21; 17:22,23; and 20:17-19, He said that He would rise on the third day. At other times, as in Mark 8:31; 9:31; and 10:34, He said that He would rise from the dead

after three days. On one special occasion He declared that, as Jonah was in the belly of the sea monster three days and three nights, so should the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt. 12:39,40). It is clear, however, from the contexts of these passages that these various expressions refer to the length of time that His body would be in the tomb.

The exact time that the body of Jesus was in the tomb is set forth in Luke 23:50-24:36. He was crucified on the day of the Preparation and was buried the same day. "And it was the day of the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew on" (Luke 23:54). The Sabbath followed the day of the Preparation on which Jesus was crucified. Verse 56 shows that certain women prepared spices and ointments and on the Sabbath rested according to the commandment. Thus it is clear from this passage that Jesus was crucified on the day of the Preparation, which was immediately before the Sabbath. The day before the Sabbath is Friday. Jesus was crucified, therefore, on Friday and buried late in the afternoon, "as the sabbath drew on." According to Luke 24:1, on the first day of the week at early dawn some women came to the tomb and found it empty. The first day of the week followed the Sabbath day. From these facts one sees that Jesus' body was put in the tomb late on Friday afternoon, that it remained there throughout the Sabbath, and that it was raised before dawn on Sunday morning. Thus our Lord's body was in the tomb one full day, the Sabbath; a few hours on Friday; and several hours on Sunday—the first day of the week. It was in the tomb then one full day and parts of two others. These facts are in perfect accord with the statement that He would rise on the third day. He literally rose on the third day: but, as was customary among the Jews, He spoke rather loosely of His rising after three days. Since the expressions "on the third day" and "after three days" refer to the same time, and since His body was in the tomb only one day and parts of two others, the term "after three days" is not to be taken absolutely literally, but in harmony with all the facts and the expression "on the third day." Also the expression "three days and three nights," which is taken from the Book of Jonah, refers to the same length of time that the body of Jesus was in the tomb. The expression "three days and three nights" is just another term to indicate three days or on the third day.

IX. THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

A. *Prophetic Interpretation*

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is a prediction concerning the Crucifixion of the Messiah. In Isaiah 53:10 a marvelous statement appears: "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand." In my volume *The Eternal God Revealing Himself to Suffering Israel and to Lost Humanity*, I have proved beyond a peradventure that the servant who is presented in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is none other than the Messiah. I have shown, moreover, that the interpretation which claims that the suffering servant in this passage is either the nation of Israel or the remnant of the nation is unfounded and without support in fact. One may be sure, therefore, that Isaiah is speaking of an individual, the Messiah.

A similar prophecy appears in Zechariah 13:7: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones." God here is in command of this entire scene. He calls upon the sword to awake against His shepherd and against the man who is His equal. (The word translated *fellow* in the Hebrew means the one who is equal to others of the same class. God here speaks of this man as His equal.) In this passage, *sword* is either a personification or a term used to address the one who wields it. In vision then the prophet sees the Lord God Almighty in charge of the entire situation. He issues a command that His shepherd, even the man who is His equal, be smitten by the sword. Whoever wields the sword must carry out this command. In Matthew 26:31 Jesus quotes this passage, not literally, but giving the sense of it: "... All of you will be offended in me on this night: for it is written, I shall smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered." The Lord Jesus Christ knew the import of Zechariah's prophecy and interpreted it in His own words. He realized that it was God who had planned that He should be slain.

When Jesus was observing the Passover supper, He foretold the treachery of Judas. In commenting upon the betrayal, He said, "The Son of man goes, just as it has been written concerning Him, but woe to that man through whom the Son of man is

betrayed ..." (Matt. 26:24). Several times, in discussing different points, Jesus told His disciples that certain events would occur because the Scriptures could not be broken, but must be fulfilled. It is clear from His utterances that His suffering and dying for the human family was foreordained by God.

B. Peter's Interpretation

Guided by the Spirit, the Apostle Peter also attributed the Crucifixion of Christ to the planning of God and His executing His purpose of the ages. In Acts, chapter 2, appears an account of the first sermon preached by the Apostle Peter after the Resurrection of Christ. On this occasion he spoke to a vast throng of people in Jerusalem concerning the Lord Jesus and God's plan regarding Him:

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; 23 him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it (Acts 2:22-24).

One should note carefully how the Apostle stated the case of Jesus and His Crucifixion. A man approved of God by miraculous works which He had performed, Jesus had been "delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ..." The expression "delivered up" is clearly a reference to His being delivered over to the Romans to be crucified. His being delivered up to be crucified was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Peter thus declares that God had a plan which involved the Crucifixion of Messiah. It was, therefore, decreed that Jesus should be crucified. The Apostle affirmed, moreover, that those among the Jews in the audience who had clamored for the Crucifixion had by the hand of lawless men crucified and slain Him. To accomplish the death of Jesus, they had to turn Him over to the Romans, who at that time had the authority to execute the death sentence upon anyone of the nation. It is clear that Peter did not accuse the Jewish people of being "Christ killers," as they have

frequently been called. But he was very particular and expressive. God foreordained that the Messiah should suffer. The Jews who participated in the execution, or in bringing it about, did so on their own initiative and are responsible to God for what they did. The Romans, the men without law, are likewise held responsible for what they did. The individuals who justify and exonerate those who actually demanded the Crucifixion of Jesus are also held by the Lord as being responsible for their actions and attitude with regard to this tragedy of tragedies.

Peter, in his second recorded message, declared:

17 And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. 18 But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled (Acts 3:17,18).

This utterance shows that those who participated in the execution of Jesus did not realize that, in demanding and clamoring for the Crucifixion, they were simply calling for the carrying out of those things which, through various prophets, God had foretold should be done. Thus again Peter traces the execution of Jesus back to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. When Peter preached the sermon recorded in Acts, chapter 3, he and the Apostle John were arrested and kept in prison overnight. The next morning they were brought before the Jewish court and commanded not to preach any more, in the name of Jesus, the resurrection from the dead. Peter told the court that he had to speak forth that which he had seen and that which he knew to be true. After scourging these two apostles, the authorities released them from confinement. They returned to the company of believers and held a prayer meeting. In their prayer they saw a partial fulfillment of Psalm 2:1-3 in the action that had been taken against Jesus by the civil authorities. Quoting part of the Psalm, they continued their prayer by saying:

27 for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, 28 to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel foreordained to come to pass (Acts 4:27,28).

According to this statement, what Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the Jewish Sanhedrin did against Jesus was the carrying out of whatsoever God's hand and counsel had foreordained to come to pass. This passage also shows who was responsible for the Crucifixion of Jesus. In writing to the Hebrew Christians in Asia Minor, the Apostle Peter gave the spiritual interpretation of the tragedy of the cross:

17 For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil-doing. 18 Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; 19 in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, 20 that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: 21 which also after a true likeness doth now save you, *even* baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Peter 3:17-21).

In foreordaining before the foundation of the world the Crucifixion of Christ and the shedding of His precious blood that cleanses from all sin, God had the eternal good of man at heart and was opening up a new and a living way whereby mankind might approach God and obtain eternal salvation through His sacrifice and offering.

C. Paul's Interpretation

The inspired Apostle Paul put this same interpretation upon the tragedy of the cross. In Acts 17:1-3 is an account of his preaching in the synagogue of Thessalonica, where he reasoned for three Sabbaths with the Jews concerning the Scriptures, "opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ." According to this statement and many others, God had foreordained that Messiah should suffer and die for the redemption of humanity—for all who will believe and accept His free grace.

In a speech before King Herod Agrippa, Paul declared:

22 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; 23

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).

Paul, this great protagonist of the faith, claimed that he was testifying to both the small and the great, saying nothing but what the Prophets and Moses had said would come to pass; namely, "how that Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people [of Israel] and to the Gentiles."

These various quotations from the Apostles Peter and Paul show clearly how they presented the gospel message. They did not accuse the Jewish nation of being Christ killers, but simply showed that God through His love for lost humanity planned before the foundation of the world this scheme of redemption for mankind. In His love and omniscience, He provided a means of escape from eternal banishment "from the glory of His might."

D. God Using Blinded Men to Accomplish His Purposes

Someone has truly said that God uses a dirty man to do a dirty job. But God also uses good men and women to perform honorable, good, upright works. The Lord endowed man with a free will, the power of choice. Though He does use influences in trying to get men to accept the right and to choose to do that which is best for them, yet He never forces or coerces the will. He stops short of stepping over the threshold of their personality and of forcing them in any way whatsoever. Whosoever will may come. Any man who wills to do the will of God, shall know of the teaching, declared Jesus, whether He was speaking of Himself or whether He was speaking the message of God (John 7:17).

Judas was a thief from the very beginning. Jesus knew that He would have to be betrayed and chose a man of the character of Judas to do the diabolic work of a traitor. Moreover those leaders of Israel who were not hungering and thirsting after God and doing the will of God, but who had their own set ideas and were determined to hold on to them regardless of all circumstances, God used to help carry out His eternal plan and

purpose of redeeming the human family through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God. He also used the Romans to help carry out the eternal plan.

Through the realization that God planned and overruled all things in the life of Jesus for the good of mankind, that He used blinded, wicked men to accomplish His purpose, and that He is working everything for the good of man, one can see the tragedy of the cross in the correct light and praise God for it.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE RESURRECTION

ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

(Matthew 28:1-15)

28 Late on the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the grave. 2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended out of heaven, and came, and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. 3 His appearance was as lightning; and his clothing, white as snow. 4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became as dead men. 5 The angel replied and said to the women, Stop fearing, for I know that you are seeking Jesus, who has been crucified. 6 He is not here, for He has been raised, just as He said. Come; see the place where He was lying; 7 and go quickly; and tell His disciples that He has been raised from the dead and, behold, He goes before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Lo, I have told you. 8 Then, going quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, they ran to announce the news to His disciples. 9 And, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! Then they came and took hold of His feet and worshipped Him. 10 At that time Jesus said to them, Stop fearing. Go tell My brethren that they go away into Galilee, and there they will see Me.

11 Now while they were going, behold, certain of the guard went into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had occurred. 12 And while they were gathered together with the elders, they held a conference and gave large sums of money to the soldiers, 13 saying, Say that His disciples during the night came and stole Him while we were sleeping. 14 And if this matter is reported to the governor, we shall persuade him and shall relieve you of the responsibility. 15. Then they took the silver and did as they were instructed, and this story has been circulated among the Jews until the present day.

I. RESURRECTION FORETOLD IN OLD TESTAMENT

Buried deep in the human heart is the dominating hope of a life beyond this one. This anticipation is found among all peoples, regardless of their state and condition. If there is no existence beyond this life, man's sojourn here is a dismal failure. But, praise God, there is a hope set forth in the Scriptures of truth.

In Psalm 16:8-11, King David foresaw the Resurrection of the Messiah:

- 8 I have set Jehovah always before me:
Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
- 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth:
My flesh also shall dwell in safety.
- 10 For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol;
Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.
- 11 Thou wilt show me the path of life:
In thy presence is fulness of joy;
In thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Psalm 22:1-21 foreshadows the suffering Redeemer of humanity pouring out His life for the salvation of mankind. With His expiring breath He prays, "Save me from the lion's mouth"; then His faith rises to sublime heights, and He exclaims, "Yea, from the horns of the wild-oxen thou hast answered me." With these words, He expires. They sound a note of triumph and of victory. He sees that He will come forth from the grave and will be triumphant over death.

In the second part of this great drama, verses 22-31, the sufferer, who in the first part passes out of this life, comes back in full vigor and power, becoming master of the world situation. In this Psalm is a prediction that the Messiah will triumph over death and will come forth, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Isaiah likewise foresaw the Resurrection of the executed Messiah:

10 Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities (Isa. 53:10,11).

After death He rises and prolongs His days, forever and ever. Thus is expressed the hope of eternal existence of the Messiah after death.

II. PARALLEL ACCOUNTS OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE CRUCIFIED MESSIAH

In the text quoted above, Matthew 28:1-15, is a straightforward statement—simple, yet sublime—of the Resurrection of the Messiah on the first day of the week. Parallel accounts are found in Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-12, and in John 20:1-10.

In I Corinthians 15:1-8 the Apostle Paul gives an account of a number of appearances of the risen Christ to competent, faithful, loyal witnesses who have passed on their testimony regarding the Resurrection of the Messiah. This chapter is a classic on the theme of life after death and immortal glory. It is a most cogent discussion of the various aspects of the Resurrection and of the Lord's return for His saints, when they will be raptured out of the world and taken instantly into glory with Himself.

III. THE TESTIMONY OF EYEWITNESSES

1 That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life 2 (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal *life*, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); 3 that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: 4 and these things we write, that our joy may be made full (I John 1:1-4).

This statement of the Apostle John is a scientific one. Speaking not only for himself, but also for all the apostolic company who had experiences like his own, he states that the apostles who saw Jesus after His Resurrection had the testimony of three of their physical senses: namely, the testimony of their ears, their hearing; the testimony of their eyes, their seeing; and the testimony of their sense of touch, their handling the Word of life, the risen Messiah. During the earthly personal life of the Lord Jesus, the apostles who were associated with Him heard Him in private conversation and in public discourse. Hence they were familiar with His voice and style of speech and delivery. They saw Him under all circumstances with their own eyes; and, being associated with Him so very closely, they at various times touched His body. After His Resurrection they heard with their own ears His familiar voice. They could not be deceived in this way. They likewise saw with their own eyes and recognized that the one who appeared unto them was the very one with whom they had been intimately associated for three and a fraction years. To prove that He was not a phantom, or that what they were experiencing was not something subjective, they handled His body and thus knew that He was not a phantom, but that He himself, who had gone down into death, had come back to life, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel.

The apostles, therefore, with absolute and unshakable confidence gave forth their testimony concerning the Resurrection of Jesus.

IV. LIFE AND IMMORTALITY NOW DEMONSTRATED

Since the prophets had foretold the Resurrection of the Messiah, and since He had come and had fulfilled the ministry as preannounced by the prophets—had been slain, buried, and raised from the dead—the Apostle Paul in triumph wrote to the church at Rome:

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; *even* Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 1:1-4).

According to Paul's testimony, Jesus was demonstrated to be the Son of God with power according to the Holy Spirit by the Resurrection from the Dead. Many prophets had performed miracles in various realms. Some had even raised people from the dead; they, however, had died and those whom they had raised had died again. But Jesus of Nazareth was once put to death in the flesh; was made alive in the spirit; triumphed over the powers of evil; came forth from the dead a victor over death, Sheol, and the grave; and was declared by His Resurrection to be the Son of God.

In perfect alignment with this Scripture is Paul's statement in II Timothy 1:8-11:

Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God; 9 who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, 10 but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 11 whereunto I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher.

Since the Messiah has not yet triumphed over the powers of the evil one in the full sense of the various prophecies, the promise that the Psalmist held out will yet be realized fully for those who believe.

For Jehovah is righteous; he loveth righteousness:

The upright shall behold his face (Ps. 11:7).

As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness;

I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with *beholding* thy form (Ps. 17:15).

Those who believe in Jesus as the Son of God and Saviour of the world can look forward with absolute confidence and perfect assurance to the life of bliss and happiness forever and ever in association with God and with their loved ones who have died in Christ. They will see Him in His partial glory in His Millennial Kingdom; then in the eternal order, they will behold Him in His full glory (Revelation, chapters 21 and 22).

CHAPTER XXXII

SALVATION OFFERED TO ALL NATIONS

ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

(Matthew 28:16-20)

16 And the eleven disciples went into Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. 17 And when they saw Him, they worshipped, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and talked to them, saying, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto Me. 19 Go, 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 that I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you all the days, *even* unto the consummation of the age.

Various statements in the writings of Moses and the Prophets foretold that God would turn from the people of Israel on account of their disobedience and would gather people from all nations to become His elect people for the present time (Deut. 32:20,21; Isaiah 65:1; Mal. 1:10,11). There are other statements in the Word of God to this effect, but these are sufficient. That the Lord has put Israel, figuratively speaking, on the sidetrack and is now gathering out from among the nations a people for His name is evident to everyone who studies Jewish history, especially the overthrow of the nation and its dispersion among the peoples of earth which occurred in A.D. 70. At that time the nation collapsed, Jerusalem was destroyed, the Temple was burned, and from that day until the present the people have been dispersed throughout the world. Without a doubt the present dispensation is the period concerning which Hosea the Prophet spoke:

4 For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim: 5 afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall come with fear unto Jehovah and to his goodness in the latter days (Hos. 3:4,5).

From A.D. 70 to the present day Israel has been without a king, prince, sacrifice, pillar, ephod, or teraphim. But according to this prediction, the nation of Israel will return and seek Jehovah their God and David their King, Messiah.

I. GOD GATHERING OUT A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME NOW

When Messiah was rejected by His people Israel, in fulfillment of Psalm 110:1,2 and other passages of like import, He left earth and ascended to the right hand of the throne of God, where He has remained ever since. But before making His departure, He met with His disciples, as one sees in Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus instructed the apostles to go into all the world and to make disciples of all nations. At His last appearance to them before His Ascension, He told them how they should proceed: namely, to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit to guide them into all the truth; to begin their ministry in Jerusalem; then to fan out into Judea; next to go northward into Samaria; and from there to branch out unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:6-11). The heralds of the gospel of Jesus Christ did exactly as the Lord had instructed them. By A.D. 63 the Apostle Paul could declare that the gospel had been preached in all creation under heaven (Col.1:23).

James stated the object of the preaching of the gospel to all nations in his speech at the Jerusalem conference (Acts, chapter 15). After Peter and Paul had delivered their messages, James arose and said: "13 ... Brethren, hearken unto me: 14 Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

- 16 After these things I will return,
And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen;
And I will build again the ruins thereof,
And I will set it up:
17 That the residue of men may seek after the Lord,
And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called,
18 Saith the Lord who maketh these things known from of old." (Acts 15:13-18)

At the present time God is visiting the Gentiles, taking out from among them a people for His name. In reference to those now being called, Jesus said: "... many will come from the east and the west, and will recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 8:11).

God is now giving all nations an opportunity to hear and accept the truth and thereby be eternally saved. His sending the gospel to all nations may be compared to a person's passing a magnet over some steel filings, sawdust, and dirt. Only the filings will respond to the pull of the magnet. The gospel of good news is a magnet to which honest, sincere hearts will respond. Those being drawn now by the magnetic pull of the love of God through the gospel constitute His body, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXPRESSION *Son of Man*

An extended controversy has raged concerning the expression *Son of Man* as used by the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone spoke of Himself as the Son of Man. In the Gospel Records this title occurs eighty-two times. The Jews did not know what He meant by it (John 12:34). They understood the significance of the word *Messiah*, which generally connotes the idea of the future redeemer and ruler of Israel. In a few passages, however, for example Isaiah 9:6,7, the Messiah establishes His reign of righteousness in Israel and eventually extends His kingdom to the ends of the earth.

In Psalm 8:4 the *son of man* is parallel with the word *man*. In the Book of Ezekiel the same expression is applied about ninety times to the prophet himself. Various

explanations have been advanced as to the meaning of the term in such passages, but they throw little or no light upon Jesus' use of it.

Daniel 7:13, 14 probably furnishes the background for the use of the term by Jesus:

13 I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Here the one likened unto a Son of Man is given universal and everlasting rule and authority over the kingdom of God, which embraces all men. Daniel's prophecy seems to have been constantly in the mind of Jesus throughout His ministry, especially when He, the risen Christ, appeared to the disciples and gave them the great commission, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto Me" (Matt. 28:18). He, the God-man, according to this statement, is given power and authority throughout the universe—as Daniel 7:13,14 seems to indicate.

III. MESSIAH AWAITING ISRAEL'S PLEA FOR HIM TO RETURN

God does not force anyone's will. He awaits one's response to His pleading and love. This fundamental principle of His dealings with His people is set forth in Isaiah 30:18,19,

18 And therefore will Jehovah wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: For Jehovah is a God of justice; blessed are all they that wait for him. 19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; thou shalt weep no more; he will surely be gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear, he will answer thee.

In an impersonation of the Messiah, Hosea the Prophet foretold that the nation of Israel would commit a horrible crime against Messiah when He would appear upon earth. As chastisement for this sin, Messiah, comparing Himself to a lion and a young lioness, foretold that He would tear the nation limb from limb and return to His place until the people of Israel acknowledge their offense and seek Him earnestly.

14 For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry off, and there shall be none to deliver. 15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly.

6 Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him. 3 And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth (Hos. 5:14-6:3).

When they do seek His face earnestly and acknowledge their national sin, He will return, deliver the Chosen People, and restore them to favor with God and man. The confession which the nation will make at that time, when it sees its appallingly tragic mistake, is found in Isaiah 53:1-9. A second version of Israel's confession is found in Isaiah 63:7-64:12:

53 Who hath believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? 2 For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who *among them* considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke *was due*? 9 And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth (Isa. 53:1-9).

63:7-64:12

7 I will make mention of the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah, and the praises of Jehovah, according to all that Jehovah hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. 8 For he said, Surely, they are my people, children that will not deal falsely: so he was their Saviour. 9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

10 But they rebelled, and grieved his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, *and* himself fought against them. 11 Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, *saying*, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them? 12 that caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses? that divided the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name? 13 that led them through the depths, as a horse in the wilderness, so that they stumbled not? 14 As the cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah caused them to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

15 Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where are thy zeal and thy mighty acts? the yearning of thy heart and thy compassions are restrained toward me. 16 For thou art our Father, though Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us: thou, O Jehovah, art our Father; our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name. 17 O Jehovah, why dost thou make us to err from thy ways, and hardenest our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance. 18 Thy holy people possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary. 19 We are become as they over whom thou never barest rule, as they that were not called by thy name.

64 Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might quake at thy presence, 2 as when fire kindleth the brushwood, *and* the fire causeth the waters to boil; to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence! 3 When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains quaked at thy presence. 4 For from of old men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a God besides thee, who worketh for him that waiteth for him. 5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou wast wroth, and we sinned: In them *have we been* of long time; and shall we be saved? 6 For we are all become as one that is unclean, and all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment: and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. 7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us by means of our iniquities.

8 But now, O Jehovah, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. 9 Be not wroth very sore, O Jehovah, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, look, we beseech thee, we are all thy people. 10 Thy holy cities are become a wilderness, Zion is become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. 11 Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned with fire; and all our pleasant places are laid waste. 12 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Jehovah? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore? (Isa. 63:7-64:12)

Isaiah was not the first to foretell Israel's oral confession of the national sin; for Moses, the great lawgiver, prophesied that the last generation of Israel scattered among the nations "shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass which they trespassed against me, and also that, because they walked contrary unto me, 41 I also walked contrary unto them, and brought them into the land of their enemies: if then their uncircumcised heart be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; 42 then will I remember my covenant with Jacob; and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land" (Lev. 26:40-42). This passage shows that the last generation of Israel scattered abroad among the nations will confess their iniquity and the iniquity which their fathers committed while they were still in the land, and on account of which

God spued them out of the land and scattered them among the nations. When, therefore, they repudiate this national sin, God will remember His covenant which He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and will remember the land; that is, He will restore His people to their own land and solve the Jewish problem once and for all.

IV. MESSIAH SOLVING THE JEWISH PROBLEM

Being God in human form, having entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, and having been glorified by the Resurrection from the dead, the Lord Jesus can and will solve all problems confronting the Jewish nation through the centuries.

A. Individually

The keynote of the gospel is the individual. To the weary multitude Jesus calls in pleading tones:

28 Come to Me, all you who are laboring and who are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. 29 At once take My yoke upon you and start learning of Me, because I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is indeed light (Matt. 11:28-30).

He will give rest to the troubled soul. On this point Ezekiel declares:

24 For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. 25 And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep mine ordinances, and do them (Ezek. 36:24-27).

B. Nationally

The inspired Apostle Peter, in his second recorded address in Jerusalem, called upon the entire nation of Israel to repent and turn to Jesus Christ whom the people had rejected:

Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; 20 and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even* Jesus: 21 whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old. 22 Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. 23 And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. 24 Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days (Acts 3:19-24).

Whenever the people of Israel repent of the national sin of rejecting Christ and turn to Him in faith, He will come, fulfilling all things foretold by the prophets. He will introduce the great Kingdom Era, when the glory of God will encircle the earth as the waters cover the sea.

V. MESSIAH SOLVING THE WORLD PROBLEM

According to Revelation 19:1-20:5, when Messiah Jesus returns to this earth, He will bind Satan and all his servile spirits and incarcerate them in the pit of the abyss so that they cannot cause any trouble for a thousand years. Thus He will fulfill the prediction of Isaiah 24:21-23:

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. 22 And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison; and after many days shall

they be visited. 23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed; for Jehovah of hosts will reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem; and before his elders shall be glory.

When Israel calls for Messiah to return, He will come as He has promised and will end all wars. All the efforts of men to outlaw war have failed and will continue to fail. To stop wars is a God sized task—beyond human power to accomplish. When Israel calls upon Messiah, He will return as a triumphant warrior, whose coming is set forth by Moses:

- 39 See now that I, even I, am he,
And there is no god with me:
I kill, and I make alive;
I wound, and I heal;
And there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
- 40 For I lift up my hand to heaven,
And say, As I live for ever,
- 41 If I whet my glittering sword,
And my hand take hold on judgment;
I will render vengeance to mine adversaries,
And will recompense them that hate me.
- 42 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,
And my sword shall devour flesh;
With the blood of the slain and the captives,
From the head of the leaders of the enemy.
- 43 Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people:
For he will avenge the blood of his servants,
And will render vengeance to his adversaries,
And will make expiation for his land, for his people (Deut. 32:39-43).

When Messiah comes in fulfillment of this prediction, He will mount the throne of David and reign over a warless, peaceful earth.

1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. 4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Isa. 2:1-4).

King Messiah will be the ruler of the world. Israel will be the head of the nations as promised through Moses. Jerusalem will be the capital of the world. All nations will flow to it constantly, to worship God, seeking to know more of His holy will for themselves. Truly earth's golden era is out in the future, as assured by the infallibly inspired Word of God.

VI. MESSIAH SOLVING THE PERSONAL PROBLEM OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Each normal individual, Jew and Gentile alike, who has not been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, realizes in the depth of his soul that he is in a state of alienation from God, and that there must be a reconciliation between him and the Almighty before he departs this life if he is to enjoy peace and fellowship with God and saved loved ones forever. God has made all provisions necessary for such reconciliation:

18 But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18,19).

According to this statement, God has committed the ministry of reconciliation to men who are to proclaim it to the world. The Lord Jesus committed this ministry to men who were infallibly inspired by the Holy Spirit:

18 And Jesus came and talked to them, saying, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto Me. 19 Go, 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 that I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the age (Matt. 28:18-20).

Each one who accepts the Lord Jesus as Saviour is called upon in this passage to take a forthright, bold, courageous stand for Him, being fully assured that "Jesus never fails."

BOOK FOUR

THE MOSAIC DOCTRINE OF BLOOD ATONEMENT EXAMINED SCRIPTURALLY AND PHILOSOPHICALLY

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK FOUR

The four chapters of Book Four of this volume are Chapters V, VI, VII, and IX of my book *Man: His Creation, Fall, Redemption and Glorification*, revised and enlarged edition, 1950. This material I first prepared and delivered in a two-hour lecture. Every time I gave it, many friends insisted that I put it in writing for permanent use.

Since it is a lecture, its style is naturally less formal than that of the rest of the book.

In these four chapters, in referring to Israel, I use modern phraseology, speaking of the nation of Israel in the feminine gender—*she, her, hers*; whereas in the rest of the book I use the phraseology of the Biblical writers who spoke of Israel in the masculine gender—*he, Him, and his*.

CHAPTER XXXIII

MAN'S POST-FALL STATUS IN THE MORAL KINGDOM

As we have already seen, man, by the exercise of the God-given faculty of freedom of choice, transgressed God's positive command, and sin entered the world. With it came death. Man was thus separated from God. The fellowship was broken. Should I speak in governmental terms, I would say that diplomatic relations were broken off. But this language is very inadequate to express what was done the day that man transgressed. I therefore shall make a further statement regarding it.

God is the source of all life. He is the Absolute One. All things and beings derive their existence, power, light, and life from Him. When the fellowship between Him and man was broken by his deliberate sin, he was cut off from the light and life of the Eternal One. His present condition will result in his being cut off from God's life and light eternally—unless something is done whereby he may be restored to fellowship with God, and the divine life again flows into his very being. The situation in which man found himself after his rebellion is set forth in the following discussion.

I. THE DOMINION OF SATAN, THE MINISTER OF DEATH

We have already seen that the anointed cherub was the generalissimo of the hosts of the Almighty and was placed on the highest level of all the creatures of God. Since he remained in his own principality and did not leave his proper habitation (although he went over to the negative side of the will of God), he retained a certain amount of his original authority and was allowed under God's government to function in the realm of evil and wrath, in the capacity for which he was then fitted. By his fall his nature was wrecked, and he became wholly possessed of the wrath of God, hating with a venom everything that is holy and divine. Since he was instrumental in bringing sin into the world, which brought about death, he still retained the right and prerogative over death. Since, however, God is the Sovereign Ruler, and Satan is under Him and can do only

that which He permits, in his executing the death penalty, he is only doing that which the decrees of the Almighty demand.

That we may see Satan's position now in the government of God, let us again turn to Hebrews 2:14,15: "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he [Christ] also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." From this quotation we see that the devil has the power of death—he is, under God, the minister of death. It is therefore his prerogative and duty to execute the death penalty on all upon whom the decree falls. He is therefore not the death angel by special appointment, nor for particular cases; but is the minister of death by reason of the high position which he occupies under God in His great moral government.

II. THE WORLD'S LYING IN DARKNESS

"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one" (I John 5:19). From the Fall to the present time darkness, spiritual darkness, has enveloped the globe. Men and women who do not know God are groping their way in this darkness, not knowing where they are going and not realizing the predicament in which they really are.

III. THE HUMAN PROCESSION CROSSING THE ARENA OF LIFE

From the transgression of Adam to the death of Christ upon the tree, there crossed the stage of human life and activity a constant procession of myriads of human beings who passed from this life through the portal of death. As this stream of humanity flowed along, the intelligent beings throughout God's kingdom, in all probability, continually kept looking on and stood in amazement at what happened to these multitudes after they passed out through this exit. Confirmation of this supposition is found in I Peter 1:10-12: "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." From Luke 16:19-31 we learn that there is a place which in the Greek language is called Hades, but which in the Hebrew is known as Sheol. When we study this subject as it is presented in the Scriptures, we see that this place is in the center of the earth. This fact is apparent to everyone who studies Psalm 16:8-11, which foretells that Messiah upon His death goes down to Sheol:

- 8 I have set Jehovah always before me:
Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
- 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth:
My flesh also shall dwell in safety.
- 10 For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol;
Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.
- 11 Thou wilt show me the path of life:
In thy presence is fulness of joy;
In thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

It is also apparent to one who compares this passage with Matthew 12:39,40, in which verses the Lord Jesus declared 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." Since He went to Sheol upon death, and since, as He stated, He would be in the center, or heart, of the earth, it is apparent that Sheol, or Hades, is in the center of the earth.

From Luke 16:19-31 we see that there were two apartments of Hades, separated by an impassable gulf. To one of these, Paradise, Abraham and the saved went; to the other, Tartarus, the rich man went, and all the lost still go.

The angelic hosts, as they steadily looked on the passing out of humanity at the portal of death, saw that there was a separation immediately after the people passed through this exit. We may envisage the situation as follows: Some were turned to the right and went to that place to which Abraham and all the saved were assigned; the rest were turned to the left and descended to that place to which the rich man and other lost souls were directed.

Why this separation? Why this discrimination? Why the ease and blessedness of those who were turned to the right, whereas there were misery and torment to those who were turned to the left? For example, Abraham—though his life had been exemplary in many particulars—on certain occasions had stepped down on a much lower level of ethics and morals. For instance, when he went down into Egypt, he coached his wife to tell a half-truth with the object of deception in mind. In order that Pharaoh might not kill him and take her, who was a beautiful woman, to be his wife, Abraham instructed her to declare that she was his sister. It is true that she was his half-sister, but it is also a fact that she was his wife. He wished her to withhold a certain element of the truth and to state that which was a half-truth in such a connection as to make a wrong impression. In the light of all the facts this man persuaded his wife to tell a deliberate lie. As another example, let us look at David, Israel's ideal king—a man after God's own heart. On one occasion he too stepped down from the high plane upon which he, as a ruler, lived to a very much lower level. He took Bathsheba, the wife of one of his faithful soldiers, who was fighting his battles against the Ammonites, as his own wife. When it became apparent that Bathsheba had become an expectant mother by the king, David attempted to cover up his crime by having Uriah brought from the battlefield to Jerusalem in order that he might be with his wife at that time. Thus David tried to cover up his adultery. Uriah's high sense of honor and integrity, coupled with his patriotism, would not allow him to go to his own home and enjoy fellowship and association with his wife. He therefore refrained. This plot of deceitful strategy having

failed in its purpose, the king gave instructions to Joab, his generalissimo at the front, to put Uriah in the most dangerous place of the battle and to order a retreat for his men without Uriah's knowing it. He would therefore be left in the hottest of the fray and would be exposed to the greatest danger. Joab carried out the instructions to the letter. The result was that Uriah was killed. Thus David plotted the murder of one of his innocent, heroic soldiers. He then took Bathsheba to be his own wife and attempted to waive the matter by the light remark that the battle was no respecter of persons, and that it takes one as well as another.

One sin unrepented of calls for another. If the two are not forsaken in genuine repentance, they call for a third, and for a fourth, and so on. Thus sin weaves a web around the one who does not repent of and forsake his wrongs. But we praise God that later the king did repent. Finally David passed off the stage of life through the portal of death and was led to the right hand to go to be with those who were in a blest, happy, restful condition in Sheol. In the heathen world there was, for example, Socrates, a great man, one of Greece's greatest teachers and philosophers. So far as we know, he lived an exemplary life. There is not the least hint that he ever stooped to the low level of lying, adultery, murder, and hypocrisy. On the contrary, he, by his intellectual faculties, tried to solve the great problems that have been the subject of philosophy through the centuries. By his intellect and his own human efforts he was seeking to find the invisible God. He too crossed the stage of life, passed out by the portal of death; but doubtless, not knowing the true God, he was turned to the left and went to the place of the lost. Other Greek and Roman philosophers and moralists, whose lives were on the very highest plane on which pagans ever lived, also sought—in their own way by reasoning and not by faith as they should have—for the true and the living God, refusing to get down on the low level of sensuality, sin, and immorality. Upon their passing out of life, they no doubt likewise were turned to the left and went to the dismal chasm of the lost. Why this difference? Why the discrimination?

Those who were turned to the right, and who went to be with Abraham after this life, were men and women of faith. For instance, Abraham believed God. When the Almighty promised that He would make his seed as numerous as the stars of the heavens,

Abraham simply believed that promise and was counted as a righteous man. Thus stands the record in Genesis 15:6: "And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness." All those whose names appear in the roster of faith, as found in Hebrews, chapter 11, were men and women of faith. Of course there were myriads of others who also believed God. When life with them ended, they passed away and were admitted into the place of blessedness. But what did their faith do? Was it a determining factor as to where they would go after death? From the stand-point of merit and of conduct, faith could not compensate for that which was lacking in their lives. Why should exemption from the general fate that awaits the bulk of humanity be granted to these, and why should they be accorded the blessedness of being associated in bliss with others?

IV. BLOOD SACRIFICES

When Adam and Eve sinned against God in Eden, they realized the great change that had come upon them. Their entire nature was corrupted by the Fall. As soon as they partook of the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened and they knew evil from good and were aware of the fact that they were naked. Then they attempted to hide themselves from God and to hide their nakedness with aprons made of fig leaves. The Lord appeared and stripped them of their improvised clothing—a symbol of man's efforts to hide his sin and failures. The Lord slew beasts, thus shedding animal blood, and made clothes for Adam and Eve from the skins. Evidently there was design and purpose in the Lord's doing this. His motive becomes apparent in the light of the sacrifices which He commanded. At the time that God took the skins of animals to clothe Adam and Eve, He most probably instituted the blood sacrifices as a covering for their sin, for we see their son Abel offering an animal sacrifice, which was commanded by God: "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his

countenance fell. 6 And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door; and unto thee shall be its desire; but do thou rule over it. 8 And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him" (Gen. 4:3-8).

The Lord rejected Cain's offering but accepted that of Abel. Why the difference? The answer: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous. God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb.11:4). Obviously the Lord commanded the sacrifices and stipulated what should be brought. This conclusion is demanded by the fact that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Abel's offering was acceptable because he offered it by faith; Cain's was rejected because he rejected God's will and substituted his own judgment in its place—a vegetable offering instead of a blood sacrifice. The curse therefore fell upon him: "And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth" (Gen. 4:11,12). Being embittered by the disfavor of God and jealous of his brother, Cain slew Abel. When these two passed off the stage of activity, Abel was turned to the right whereas Cain was turned to the left.

Though the record, being brief and touching only the salient points of those primitive times, gives us no information concerning the offering of the sacrifices from the days of Abel to the times of Noah, we have every reason to believe that God commanded that they should be offered by all those who called "upon the name of Jehovah" (Gen. 4:26). The fact that Noah offered sacrifices* immediately upon his emerging from the ark after

* 18 And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: 19 every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, whatsoever moveth upon the earth, after their families, went forth out of the ark.

20 And Noah builded an altar unto Jehovah, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. 21 And Jehovah smelled the sweet savor; and Jehovah said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done. 22 While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease (Gen. 8:18-22).

the subsiding of the Flood and the further fact that the Lord accepted them point to the conclusion that the offering of blood sacrifices to the Lord in worship was the normal procedure of the children of God in those days. These truths are apparent to anyone who realizes that Noah was a servant of God and a preacher of righteousness.

In the Genesis account, from the days of Noah to the Exodus of Israel from Egyptian bondage, there are occasional references to offerings and sacrifices made to the Lord. In the law of Moses, given directly by God to Israel at Sinai, are instructions for the offering of an elaborate system of blood sacrifices. Throughout the Patriarchal Period there were various ones who made offerings and sacrifices to the Lord. Many of these—not all, of course—likewise, when they passed out of life, went to the place of rest. Moreover, when Israel left the land of Egypt, every family slew a lamb as a passover offering and sprinkled the blood upon the doorposts and lintels of their house—unless it was too small. In that case two of such small families went together and observed the passover. That night, when the death angel passed over the land of Egypt, the first-born in every house of the Egyptians was slain, whereas not a single person of the first-born of the children of Israel, who were screened behind the blood, was slain. Why the difference?

At Sinai God commanded Israel to offer animal sacrifices to atone for sin: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life" (Lev. 17:11). So we see that God commanded the blood sacrifices as an atonement for sin; and those who offered the blood sacrifices were doing it by faith, looking forward to the time that God would provide a sacrifice that could adequately atone for sin. From Sinai and onward, literally tens and hundreds of thousands of bullocks, goats, and sheep, together with turtle-doves and pigeons, had been offered as sacrifices to Jehovah, the God of the universe. Myriads of people who thus engaged in these continual offerings and sacrifices, when they passed out of life, were accorded a place among the blest, whereas many of those who had engaged in these offerings and sacrifices were turned to the left and were sent into misery with the lost, which fact

shows that the mere offering of animals as sacrifices was not sufficient to accord one a place with the blessed.

From these facts we see that, from the fall of Adam through the centuries until the first coming of the Messiah, blood sacrifices were commanded by the Lord to atone for sin. Viewing these sacrifices in the light of the New Testament revelation, we see that they were typical of the sacrifice of the "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

In many of the nations there were people who made sacrifices of animals to their various idols and bowed down to stocks and stones.¹ Nevertheless, when they passed out of this life, they were turned to the left and went down among the condemned. Why was this? What is the cause of the discrimination?

In what possible way could animal sacrifices affect spiritual and eternal realities? Man was placed on one level by his Maker. Animals with mere brute instincts were placed on a much lower level than man with his intellectual and spiritual endowments. It becomes immediately evident that in no way can the animal sacrifices bring about the cancellation of man's sins and make a proper adjustment between him and God, against whom he has sinned. In no way can the blood of bulls and goats deal adequately with the sin problem. Such passages as Jeremiah 7:21-26 show that, although the sacrifices were commanded by the Lord at Sinai, obedience to the will of God was placed in a higher category than the mere observance of the ritualistic requirements. Such sacrifices could not adequately deal with the sin problem. Again we see in Hosea 6:6 that God desires goodness rather than sacrifice: "For I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings." If either one of these things—goodness, or offerings and sacrifices—had to be omitted, God every time would say omit the offerings and sacrifices, but would by all means insist on His people's showing goodness and mercy. This bit of instruction proves that obedience and the showing of mercy are on a higher plane than that of observing some ritualistic service. This fact also proves, that sacrifices and offerings were not sufficient

¹ Idolatry is a perversion of the original worship ordered by God.

to deal with the question of sin.

A luminous ray of light upon this most important, yet difficult, question of blood atonement may be gathered from the facts connected with God's command to Abraham to offer up Isaac, his only son, as a sacrifice (Gen. 22:1-19):

22 And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. **2** And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. **3** And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. **4** On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. **5** And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you. **6** And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together. **7** And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? **8** And Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. **10** And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. **11** And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. **12** And he said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. **13** And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, behind *him* a ram caught in the thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son. **14** And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of Jehovah it shall be provided. **15** And the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven, **16** and said, By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, **17** that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his

enemies; 18 and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. 19 So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

Without a doubt the Lord tested Abraham's faith. At the same time He was making a most wonderful revelation to him. The unthinkable command to offer as a sacrifice his son, in whom his seed was to be called—an order that eventually would make null and void the system of animal sacrifices inaugurated in Eden by God—is of such a nature that it instantly strikes one with its revealing character. The rescinding of the command by God, who does not change, likewise heightens the profound impression made by the command. The fact that the ram, which Abraham offered in lieu of Isaac, had been caught in the thicket at that very place and at that crucial moment can be interpreted only as an act of divine providence. These facts—viewed in the light of the Scripture which states that Abraham accounted "that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him [Isaac] back" (Heb. 11:19)—were clearly designed to make a new and startling revelation to Abraham.

As we contemplate this subject, we must constantly bear in mind the warning which the Lord made to Adam: "The day that thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt surely die" (lit. trans.). Expressed in the words of another verse of Scripture, the thought is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Every man must die for his sins—unless some provision is made in his behalf whereby there is a cancellation of the same. But we have already seen that it is irrational to suppose that the blood of animal sacrifices can make atonement for the sins of men, who were created on a much higher plane than were the dumb beasts, there being no moral or spiritual quality in such sacrifices. God indicated this fact by commanding Abraham to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice. In thus demanding a human sacrifice, He, by actions, which speak louder than words, showed that animal sacrifices, or the blood of animals, can never atone for man's sin, although they had been authorized by divine decree, which facts prove the provisional and temporary nature of the same.

In ordering Abraham therefore to sacrifice Isaac, God confirmed the position that it took the shedding of man's blood²—and not that of animals—to atone for man's sins; because it was upon man that the death sentence rested. In God's staying Abraham's hand and thus preventing the patriarch's carrying out the command, He indicated the fact that the blood of a man born by natural generation—notwithstanding the fact that there was a miraculous element in Isaac's birth—could not effect atonement; and in His promising under those conditions that He would provide a lamb for the sacrifice, which would be efficacious in atoning for sin, He gave a guarantee that He would at the proper time provide the man whose blood could and would make atonement for the sins of the entire world. As we shall see, the promise of the coming of this one who could make the perfect sacrifice, and whose blood can cancel sin, is expressed in a very definite manner.

In Genesis 22:8 Abraham says to Isaac, "God will provide himself the lamb." This language is the figure of paronomasia, or a play on words. Isaac had asked about a literal lamb for the sacrifice. In the language which Isaac was using, Abraham declared that God would provide the lamb, meaning of course the human sacrifice that would be acceptable to God, and that would accomplish atonement. Since Isaac was miraculously born, and since God commanded him offered as a sacrifice, Abraham no doubt thought, until God stayed his hand, that the blood of Isaac would adequately atone for his own sin. The ram which was providentially caught in the thicket (Gen. 22:13), and which Abraham sacrificed, was of course of a temporary and provisional nature and could in no wise atone for sin.

The fact that Abraham, who was a prophet (Ps. 105:9-15), did not protest against his being required to offer his son is mute evidence that he probably realized more fully than we have ever conceived the necessity for the sacrifice of a human being, whose blood could cancel sin and guilt. This probability is also heightened by the fact that he recognized, the miraculous element that entered into the birth of his own son. Isaac's acquiescence in the whole matter points in the same direction, that he too realized that

² Obviously the people who offered human sacrifices to atone for the sins of their souls instinctively recognized the inadequacy of animal blood to effect atonement for sins.

animal blood could not make adequate atonement for the sin of man, but that it would take the shedding of man's blood. At the same time it is highly improbable that Abraham understood fully all the miraculous elements involved in the case of the one, the God-man, whose blood and sacrifice could atone for the sins of humanity. But even his partial comprehension of it enabled him to obey the divine command.

As we have already seen, God's ordering the sacrificing of Isaac, a miraculously-born son—not virgin-born—and His countermanding this order at the very moment when it was about to be put into execution pointed forward to one in the future who would, by virtue of His true nature, be able to make perfect and complete atonement. By analogy we can clearly see this truth. All the sacrifices, from Eden and onward, pointed forward to an all-sufficient sacrifice. The inadequacy and the typical character of animal sacrifices were shown by the fact that the same sacrifices were offered yearly. Had they been sufficient, there would not have been a need for repeating them every year. But since they were ordered to be made to atone for sin, it is clear that they made expiation only in a typical ceremonial sense, and that they pointed forward to an offering that would make complete atonement, or satisfaction, for sin.

God's ordering the sacrificing of Isaac and then countermanding the command in like manner naturally looked forward to the sacrifice of one whose birth involved the miraculous element in a higher and greater way than that of Isaac. This truth is seen by the fact that the sacrifice of Isaac was rejected because of its being insufficient to accomplish the purpose of sacrifices—the permanent removal of sin. His blood was inadequate in that he inherited from Abraham the sin-nature and death, which made it impossible for his blood to be efficacious as an atonement for sin. But in its being ordered by the Lord and in its being inadequate, there was implied the promise that God would at the right time send the one who could make the proper atonement—since He accomplishes and perfects all His works. This hope is seen in the promise, "God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering" (Gen. 22:8).

There is therefore, figuratively speaking, a blending of the picture of Abraham's attempt to offer Isaac with the offering of the "lamb" which God promised to provide. Such a blending of pictures of persons or events, often far removed in point of time and

space, is characteristic of the Scriptures. Isaac's being offered therefore was typical and prophetic of the offering of Him alone whose sacrifice and blood can remove all sin.

Thus far in this particular investigation I have been looking at only the facts and truths that are imbedded in the Books of Moses. When we turn to the statement of the Lord Jesus, "Abraham rejoiced that he should see my day; and he saw it, and was glad," (John 8:56, marginal reading), we find perfect confirmation of the interpretation of the facts connected with the offering of Isaac.

From the statement of our Lord we properly infer that God promised Abraham to show him the day of Christ. The day of Christ embraces His life when He was on earth nineteen hundred years ago, with at least the general outline of His activities and principal events, and the thousand years of His glorious reign when He returns. It may also include the entire Christian Dispensation, which separates His first coming from His second advent.

According to the Lord Jesus Abraham rejoiced in anticipation of seeing His day. When the promise made to him was fulfilled, he was glad. It is logical to believe that, in seeing the day of Christ, Abraham was shown the most important event—the one upon which the redemption of mankind rests. It is, therefore, highly probable that the glorious tragedy of Calvary was shown to Abraham, when he demonstrated his faith by obeying God in attempting to offer Isaac, his only son, as a sacrifice to God. In his doing this, he typically set forth God's offering up His only begotten Son as the one and only sacrifice that can atone for sin and save the soul.

When the revelation was made through David, which is contained in Psalm 40:6-10,³

3

- 6 Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in:
Mine ears hast thou opened:
Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.
- 7 Then said I, Lo, I am come;
In the roll of the book it is written of me:
- 8 I delight to do thy will, O my God;
Yea, thy law is within my heart.
- 9 I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness in the great assembly;
Lo, I will not refrain my lips,
- 10 O Jehovah, thou knowest.
I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart;
I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation;
I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great assembly (Ps. 40:6-10).

and which was made earlier than the prophecies of Jeremiah 7:21-26 and Hosea 6:6, mentioned before, regarding the nonprofitableness of animal sacrifices, doubtless David and others at first wondered why these animal sacrifices should ever have been commanded. Moreover, in this passage they saw that those sacrifices had simply been authorized for the time being, and that, instead of their meeting the demands of God's holiness with reference to sin and wrongdoing, they could not appease the divine wrath. At the same time, in this quotation, however, they could see that one in whose heart God's righteousness is hidden volunteers to come to earth and to do the will of God with reference to sin, to fulfill the purpose for which sacrifices and offerings had been commanded. These facts show the provisional and temporary character of those offerings. Finally, when the revelation, found in Isaiah 52:13—53:12 quoted (next page), was made relative to "the servant of Jehovah" who offers His soul a sacrifice for sin and for transgression, thinking men realized that this suffering in some way would deal adequately with the problem of sin.

That we may see the beauty, force, and power of this most graphic and soul-satisfying revelation, I shall give my own translation interspersed with explanatory notes.

AUTHORS TRANSLATION OF ISAIAH 52:13—53:12 WITH INTERSPERSED EXPLANATORY NOTES

(The words in roman type are the translation of the original Hebrew, whereas those in italics are the interspersed explanatory notes of the author,—gathered from the teachings of related passages of scripture—which are thus placed in order to clarify the text for the reader.)

Behold, my Servant, *King Messiah* מִשְׁחָה shall deal wisely *during His life; notwithstanding His purity and innocence He shall be put to death, but shall rise from the dead, and be lifted up when He accepts the invitation of God to sit at His right hand according to Ps. 110:1,2 and shall be very high. Like as many were confounded at Thee because of the horrifying appearance of thy mutilated body* (His visage was so marred more than the sons of men), so shall He startle many nations *by His appearing in glory*

as King of kings and Lord of lords; kings who have renounced Him and thrown off His authority in the World Conference (Ps. 2) shall shut their mouths at Him and together with princes render divine worship (Isa. 49:7); for that which had not been told them, by those who had the Word of God and who should have proclaimed it to the world, shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they understand clearly.*

Who *among us Hebrews* hath believed our message *which was told to us by faithful competent witnesses*? And to whom has the arm of the Lord, *who is the Messiah*, been revealed? For He, *the Messiah*, grew up before Him, *i.e., God*, as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground, *which figures of speech indicate the low spiritual condition of the people among whom Messiah grew up*; He had no form nor comeliness, *i.e., He did not have the appearance and bearing of an earthly king*; and when we saw Him, He had no beauty that we desired Him *as our Messiah*. He was despised *with the greatest possible contempt and lacked men of influence and power among those who followed Him*; a man of sorrows *because of the lost spiritual condition of the world, and especially the dearth of spiritual life among the Hebrews*, and acquainted with sickness, *both spiritual and physical*; and like one from whom men hide their faces *in disgust* He was despised, and we considered Him as nothing, *yea as a dreamer and a poor fanatical peasant whose opinions amounted to nothing.*

But finally after the lapse of many weary centuries of suffering and persecution in the worst of which we now are, and which is called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7),¹ we, having turned to God in our distress and having been brought to the point where we

- * 2 Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples meditate a vain thing?
- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against Jehovah, and against his anointed, *saying*,
- 3 Let us break their bonds asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.

¹ From a study of the prophetic word, it becomes evident that Israel will have at the end of the Tribulation Period—the seven years with which the present age closes—made the oral confession which is found in Isaiah 53:1-9.

truly say, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord," can see the great mistake which our forefathers made in rejecting the Messiah when He came and which our nation has made from that time to the present by refusing to listen to His claim to being our Messiah. Now we see the situation clearly, which is this: Surely our sicknesses both spiritual and physical He bore, and our griefs He as our scapegoat carried; but at that time we thought that He was plagued, smitten by God and afflicted because of His own sins and transgressions. The fact is that He was pierced, as the prophets by the Spirit foretold (Ps. 22:16; Zech. 12:10), because of our transgressions and was wounded because of our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace; i.e., the suffering which had to be borne in order that we might enjoy peace, was upon Him, and by the stripes, which He endured for us, healing is brought to us. We now confess that all of us, i.e., our entire Hebrew race, like sheep strayed away from God and His Word; everyone of us turned to his own way; and yet the Lord caused to meet on Him the iniquity of all of us like rays of light focused on a single spot. When He thus suffered for us, those who were in authority violently treated Him and He was afflicted, but He did not open his mouth in protest against such treatment; as a lamb to the slaughter is led and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, He did not open His mouth. Out of prison and away from trial He was taken. As to His generation, i.e., His contemporaries, that complained against such a miscarriage of justice, who of them clearly realized that He was cut off out of the land of the living because of the transgression of my people to whom the stroke of judgment was due, (or on account of the transgression of my people, the stroke of judgment fell on Him)? They in their plans made His grave with the wicked intending by so doing to heap ignominy and shame upon His name throughout all future generations; but by the overruling providence of God, who says, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther", and who "hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm" (Nahum 1:3), the wicked plan of His enemies was frustrated; hence with a rich man was He in His death because He had done no violence, neither was deceit in His mouth.

The prophet, having foretold the full and voluntary confession which the nation shall make when her blindness is removed, explains the great facts of the death of the Servant by saying that, in keeping with His eternal plan, the Lord was pleased to bruise

Him; He has put Him to grief; when His soul shall make a trespass offering for sin, *not His own but that of the world*, He shall see seed, *i.e., a spiritual seed, a host of redeemed men and women*; He shall prolong His days *after His death and resurrection*; and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand—a *reference to His making atonement for lost man, and to His regathering Israel into her own land and into fellowship with God*. He shall see of the travail of His soul, *i.e., results from His atoning suffering*, and be satisfied; by the knowledge of Himself, *both His knowledge of how to atone for man's sins and the knowledge of those who learn of Him and accept His sacrifice*, shall my righteous Servant, *who is the Lord our righteousness (Jer. 23:6)*, bring righteousness to the many, *i.e., His righteousness shall be accredited to those who accept His sacrifice*; and He shall bear, *as the scapegoat*, their iniquities. I will therefore divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, *when He returns with glory and power to rule the world in righteousness*; because He *voluntarily* poured out His soul unto death and was numbered with the transgressors, *though He was pure and holy*; yet He bore the sin of the many and, *in love*, made intercession for the transgressors *while He thus suffered*.³

The prophecy contained in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 found its fulfillment, so far as the Servant's making atonement for man is concerned, in Jesus of Nazareth, who sacrificed Himself in behalf of the redemption of the world. These facts will be brought out in Chapters XXXIV and XXXV.

³ Quoted from my volume, *The Eternal God Revealing Himself to Suffering Israel and to Lost Humanity*. I have taken the liberty to change some of the punctuation for the sake of clarity, and also a word or two.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN REDEMPTION

As we have seen, the fellowship between God and humanity was broken by the disobedience of the one man Adam. But by the light of the revelation that came through Moses and the prophets, from Adam to Christ, it was not absolutely clear—although disclosed in a general way—how God would act and what He could do to prevent the entire human family from going off into everlasting death—separation from God and the glory of His might forever and ever in the place of incarceration for the wicked. Since the human family in the person of Adam sinned, as we learn in Romans 5:12,13 ("Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:—13 for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law"), what could God do to retrieve the situation? How could He act in regard to the situation that had developed?

We must at this juncture of our investigation remember what we learned of God's moral government in Chapter III.* We have seen that, whatever the Lord did, He, being the omnipotent Sovereign that He is, would have to respect the principles of His moral government, all of which are of course in accordance with the basic attributes of His eternal existence—His righteousness, holiness, love, and truth.

Had He chosen to do so, He had the power to deal summarily and drastically with man and could have banished him into the regions of darkness to remain there forever. In His doing so, He would have prevented the perpetuation and the continuance of sin in the human family. Had He chosen to pursue this course, His actions would have been an admission of utter defeat. Such an idea is unthinkable. For God, who is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, would not originate a plan, a system, or a project that could be a failure. Humanly speaking, what then was left for Him to do under the circumstances?

* Chapter III of *Man: His Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Glorification*.

I. THE LOSS MUST BE RETRIEVED ON THE HUMAN LEVEL AND IN THE REALM OF THE WILL

Under God's moral government the losses sustained by man must and can be retrieved only on the human level and within the realm of the will. Since Adam and Eve on the human level frittered away their high position, the losses sustained must, under the divine moral government, be retrieved on the same plane. Justice to all and fair play under such an ethical régime as the one which God instituted demand that some being regain the lost position and restore the race. Since God banished man from His presence there must be a mediator, a being who can intercede to God for man: "For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, *himself* man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all ..." (I Tim. 2:5,6). Moreover, since it was in the realm of the will that Adam and Eve were defeated the regaining of their standing with God had to be in the same sphere.

II. COULD ONE OF ADAM'S DESCENDANTS REDEEM THE RACE?

Had the Lord created another Adam, He would have made a duplicate, a precise copy of the first man, who, as a human being was perfect. God would not create an imperfect creature Hence the man whom He would have created would have been exactly like the first Adam. Being like him, he would have yielded to temptation as Adam had done. Thus Satan would have tricked him as he did Adam. Conditions then would have been exactly as they were after Adam sinned. It is therefore inconceivable that God could retrieve the loss by the creation of another man.

III. COULD ONE OF ADAM'S DESCENDANTS REDEEM THE RACE?

After the Fall Adam begat sons and daughters in his likeness in the likeness of his fallen nature. Man's nature was contaminated by the poison of resistance against the divine will. Man has transmitted his fallen nature to all his descendants. The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). In harmony with

this statement is one by the Apostle Paul an exhortation to Titus that he urge Christians "... to speak evil of no man, not to be contentious, to be gentle, showing all meekness toward all men. 3 For we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy hateful, hating one another. 4 But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, 5 not by works *done* in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit ..." (Titus 3:2-5). The entire human family, Jew and Gentile alike, has inherited the fallen nature from its foreparents. Another vivid picture of the condition of the human heart is set forth in the following passage: "And you *did he make alive*, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, 2 wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; 3 among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest" (Eph. 2:1-3). Every man stands condemned at the bar of his own conscience. Having the fallen nature, he is utterly unable to keep the law of God in holiness and truth.

But is there such a thing as progress and advancement in human nature to the extent that there may be born someone who will be of such a character that he can withstand the temptations of Satan, can champion the cause of man, and become victorious against the forces of evil? We have heard much about man's steady progress upward and the development of a super race. If such a thing as this were possible, certainly there would have appeared some indications heralding the advent of such a superman—before this time. Admittedly every creature produces after its own kind. This is an unvarying law. Water cannot seek a level higher than that at which it stands, by and in virtue of its own power. Man cannot lift himself by his own bootstraps. No man, therefore, is able to redeem his brother, himself, or anyone else.

- 6 They that trust in their wealth,
And boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;
- 7 None *of them* can by any means redeem his brother,
Nor give to God a ransom for him
- 8 (For the redemption of their life is costly,
And it faileth for ever),
- 9 That he should still live away,
That he should not see corruption (Ps. 49:6-9).

IV. COULD A CELESTIAL CREATURE REDEEM THE RACE?

If one of the angels had offered to champion man's cause and to match swords with Satan, could not he have defeated this great enemy of God and humanity and accomplished man's deliverance? As has been seen under Chapter II,¹ the battle had to be fought on the human plane and in the realm of the will. Had it been possible under God's ethical regime for such a celestial being to champion man's cause, this one could not have won the fight; for Satan, his adversary, who is the wisest and most powerful of all creatures (Ezek. 28:11-19), would have tricked him. As further evidence of this truth, note the fact that Michael, the archangel—the highest and doubtless the wisest and most powerful of all the hosts of angels remaining faithful to God—would not match swords with Satan, but turned him over to the Lord: "But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9). Of course Michael had respect for the authority and dignity of Satan's position. At the same time we learn that this archangel turned the devil's case over to the strong Son of God to deal with him as He saw fit. From all the facts we conclude that no angelic being could have matched wits and swords with Satan in an attempt to bring him who had the power of death to nought (Heb. 2:14). Thus no angel could have accomplished man's redemption.

¹ Chapter II of *Man: His Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Glorification*.

If a seraph, a celestial being, had volunteered to come into the human realm and champion man's cause, he too would have been powerless to cope with Satan. Moreover, he could not have taken the keys of death and Hades away from Satan and released the righteous dead from Sheol.

Should a cherub, one of the highest order of the heavenly hosts, who was created on the same plane with the anointed cherub, but lower in order and rank, have volunteered to come into the human realm by virgin birth to champion man's cause—to die in his stead, to pay his death sentence—could he have done so? He could have come and might have obeyed perfectly the will of God. He also could have given the blood from his human body to redeem man, could have died in man's stead—passed out of this life through the portals of death, the same avenue through which man leaves it—and could have passed into Sheol. But there he would have remained, because he would not have had the power to take the keys of death and Hades from Satan, who is the minister of death. He therefore would have had to remain in Sheol and could not have delivered man from the death grip Satan had on man.

V. COULD GOD CREATE ANOTHER BEING POWERFUL ENOUGH TO REDEEM MAN?

In Ezekiel 28:12b we have these words: "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." What do these words mean? Concerning the anointed cherub, God declared that he sealed up the sum, or, as the marginal reading of the Revised Version states, "sealed up the pattern." God, figuratively speaking, had a pattern, according to which He created this anointed cherub. This pattern included the sum of all perfections which could be possessed by a created being. To strengthen the idea that, according to the pattern, this one possessed the totality of personality and perfections, the Lord used the figurative expression "sealed up." In the ancient world when documents were completed, they were closed with a seal, the signet therefore indicating completeness, the fullness of that which was written. Thus the plans and specifications, figuratively speaking, which constituted the sum, or pattern, according to which this

creature was brought into existence, comprehended all wisdom, power, beauty, and excellencies possible to a created being.

Had the Lord decided to create a being to champion man's cause and to accomplish his deliverance, He could not have brought into existence a creature higher than this anointed cherub who, possessing equal powers, would have checkmated him at every turn. The contest therefore between them would have been a stalemate.

Thus another created being could have died for man's redemption, but he would have had to descend into Sheol and snatch the keys of death and Hades from Satan in order to deliver those who were held as captives there and to bring life and immortality to light by the resurrection from the dead. This thing he would not have had the power to do. He too would have had to remain in Sheol, as Satan would have had the mastery over him by possessing the keys of death and Sheol.

In the light of these facts we can see that no created being whatsoever could accomplish man's redemption.

VI. THE GOD-MAN

Since another Adam created perfect by the hand of God would have failed, since no man born by natural generation could redeem his brother, since no celestial being could bring deliverance, since God could not create a being that could bring deliverance, and since man must be redeemed upon the human plane and in the realm of the will, there was, under God's great moral government, left open to Him only one avenue of redeeming the race: This was for some being to come to earth, to enter the human realm, who could absolutely meet the demands of the broken law, who could do the will of God perfectly with reference to the problem of sin, and who could withstand the connivings and onslaughts of the devil.² Such a one would of necessity have to enter the human realm, not by natural generation, but in such a manner that He would not be

² From these statements it is clear that no creature could cope with the situation that arose from Satan's rebellion, and that led to man's sin with the loss of his high position, for which he was created. Only one of the persons of the Godhead could solve the problem and retrieve the loss. But in order to do this, Deity would have to enter the human realm and champion the cause of man on the human plane. This He did, as we shall see in continuing our investigation.

tainted by the least trace of sin and be affected by it, so that He could fulfill the demands of the law of God perfectly. Since man begets his progeny in the likeness of his own fallen nature, the Redeemer of man cannot have a human father. But since He is to fight redemption's battle on the human level, He must be born of a woman. These facts indicate most positively that the only way for God to redeem the human family was by His bringing into the world a Saviour by miraculous conception—as opposed to natural generation—and by virgin birth. Is such a thing as this possible? In answering this question, I wish in the first place to call attention to the fact that there is such a thing as parthenogenesis³ among some of the lower forms of life. Could not the same God who created all life, and who is the author of parthenogenesis, also bring a being into the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth? Certainly God, who could create man originally and breathe into his nostrils the breath of lives⁴ in order that he might become a living soul, could bring a man into the world in such a miraculous manner. But should He thus have brought such a man—a sinless man capable of keeping the law perfectly—into being for the express purpose of redeeming the race, Satan—being the wisest and most powerful creature under God and being wholly possessed of wrath toward God and man—would have tricked such a one and would have wrecked his plan of redeeming the race. Because of this fact, it was necessary that one of the divine personalities—who alone could circumvent Satan in his diabolic maneuvers, and who could, under God's moral government, see that no foul measures were adopted by the devil to sabotage the divine plan to redeem the race—enter the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, champion man's cause, and accomplish his redemption and final glorification.

This is exactly what God announced to the serpent that He would cause to be done. In talking to the serpent the Lord said, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). In this passage we find an expression which does not appear anywhere else in the Hebrew Scriptures: "the seed of the woman." Genealogies

³ Natural parthenogenesis typically involves the development of eggs from virgin females without fertilization by spermatozoa.

⁴ "Jehovah God formed man ... and breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives" (Gen. 2:7, lit. trans.).

are always reckoned after the male and never after the female, but here is a departure from this ordinary usage. This fact marks this expression as unique and distinctive. In speaking of Him who is to conquer Satan, the Lord called Him the "seed of the woman." This one is to conquer the great enemy of man, the anointed cherub, who is, as we have seen, the most powerful and the highest of all God's creatures. What He is to do to Satan is compared to a crushing knockout blow administered upon the head of a victim. As we have seen above, the facts demand that a Redeemer of man should come, one who is on the human plane, but who does not inherit the weaknesses of the race that are passed on from generation to generation by human fathers. Since this one is such, the mighty conqueror and deliverer of the race, and since He is spoken of as "the seed of the woman," we may know that He has no human father. At the same time we know that He is perfectly human because He is "the seed of the woman."

In perfect alignment with this primeval promise and hope is the prediction made by Isaiah the prophet in the following forecast:

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign:⁵ behold, a virgin⁶ shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa.7:14).

⁵ The word translated "sign" in this passage has two connotations; (1) It sometimes refers to natural phenomena. For instance, the sabbath is said to be a sign between Israel and God. (2) In many other instances it is seen from the context in which this word appears that it connotes a miracle. For example, see Exod. 4:1-9, relating to God's calling Moses to lead the nation of Israel out of Egyptian bondage: "And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, Jehovah hath not appeared unto thee. 2 And Jehovah said unto him, What is that in thy hand? And he said, A rod. 3 And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. 4 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail (and he put forth his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand); 5 that they may believe that Jehovah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. 6 And Jehovah said furthermore unto him, Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as *white as snow*. 7 And he said, Put thy hand into thy bosom again. (And he put his hand into his bosom again; and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was turned again as his *other* flesh.) 8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. 9 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe even these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land." The facts of the context of Isa. 7:14 show conclusively that here it signifies a miracle.

⁶ The word rendered "virgin" is **עלמה** *'almah* and appears seven times in the Hebrew text. In the other six places where it occurs, it unquestionably refers to a young woman of marriageable age who is a virgin. A young married woman's giving birth to a child is not a miracle. But since the context of Isa. 7:14 indicates that the birth of this child is a miracle, we therefore conclude that "virgin" here means exactly what the word connotes in other places. For a full discussion of this point see my volume, *Messiah: His Nature and Person*.

Here we are told that God would perform a miracle which would consist of a virgin's conceiving and bearing a son.

In keeping with the idea of the miraculous conception and virgin birth of this child is the name which is given to Him—Immanuel, which means *God with us*, or *God is with us*. Thus we have in this marvelous prediction a prophecy that God would enter the human realm through miraculous conception and virgin birth and would live on the human plane.

In perfect keeping with this prediction is the one found in Isaiah 9:6,7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish, it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever." Note the fact in verse 6 that this child is born to the nation of Israel. This statement connotes a special relationship to the whole nation that no other child bears. It likewise immediately arouses our curiosity to see why He thus sustains such a unique relation to the whole Hebrew race. In verse 7 we learn that the government of Judah will rest upon the shoulders of this one, and that, when it does, He will be recognized as "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." In this passage is a prophecy that there will appear upon the historic scene the Miracle One who is able to counsel everyone, who is God the Hero, championing man's cause, who is the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace—the one who alone can establish peace in a war-weary world.

To some scientists the miraculous conception and virgin birth of Messiah are unthinkable. The principal reason for this attitude is found in their conceiving of the earth and all things therein as a closed system, in which law reigns supremely. According to this theory everything in this world is in some way related to other things by the law of cause and effect. To those holding this mechanistic, materialistic idea regarding all things, a miracle is impossible—not even Deity, the Creator, can break into their closed system.

While the true believer recognizes the fact that the material universe is governed and controlled by laws to which the Creator has subjected it, he believes that the Almighty can and does step into the natural order, so to speak, and for good and sufficient reasons performs what nature unaided could never accomplish. Such acts we designate as miracles. The omniscient, omnipotent creator, the author and enforcer of all nature's laws, including that of cause and effect, can perform whatever He in His wisdom knows is best for all and for the carrying forward of His eternal purposes. To the one who recognizes that the Creator is greater than His creation, and that He does all things well, miracles are both reasonable and possible. History confirms this position. We therefore can logically accept the scriptural teaching regarding the virgin birth of the Messiah, the Son of God.

The absolute necessity for the miraculous conception and the virgin birth of the Redeemer of man and the Messiah of Israel is made to stand out in bold relief by the fact that Deity had to become a man, as we have already seen—a sinless, perfect man—in order to champion man's cause and to defeat Satan.

There is only one way of becoming a member of the human race—by being born of a woman. God ordained no other way. Every human being—the species, *anthropos erectus*—has been born of a woman. A person's being born of a woman makes him a human being. This fact is a deduction from the following general proposition: A creature's being born of a female makes it a member of the species to which the mother belongs.⁷ This biological principle is clearly set forth in the biblical phrase, "after their kind," which occurs in various statements that both plants and animals reproduce "after their kind," after their species (Gen 1:12, 21, 24).

But, as we have seen, man begets his progeny in the likeness of his own fallen nature. The Redeemer therefore cannot have a human father who is a member of our race. The only door left open even to Deity himself of coming into the world as a man

⁷ The mule, which is a cross between the horse and the ass, is no exception to this principle. It cannot propagate its kind, because it is sterile. Hence this hybrid, though born of the female of the species, horse, cannot logically be recognized as being of that species. The facts connected with its birth and all others similar to it therefore have no bearing upon this general biological principle.

who could champion man's cause and redeem the race was for Him to create a germ, pure, perfect, and holy, in the womb of the woman whom He would choose. This seed would unfold and develop according to nature, being nourished by the mother. At the proper time He himself would unite with this being—"the holy thing which is begotten" (Luke 1:35)—thus becoming the one who would redeem man.

Such a procedure is most reasonable and logical to everyone who will look at all the facts involved. The God who created the universe, of which this earth with all its teeming life is but a very small part, certainly could create a germ of the species, *anthropos erectus*, in the womb of the one selected that it might unfold, and develop into the God-man who was able to redeem the race. It is universally acknowledged that man has the power in his own body to generate the germ which in conjunction with that of the woman produces his offspring. Cannot the great Creator produce a germ that can unfold into a human? Cannot He place that germ where it can be nourished and developed into the God-man? Every unbiased person will answer these questions in the affirmative.

The possibility and the plausibility of His doing this very thing become apparent to everyone who believes the Genesis account of the birth of Isaac, and who will dispassionately consider all the facts which I am presenting. Abraham, according to Moses, was ninety-nine years of age and Sarah, his wife, was eighty-nine. Hence they were both past the age of parenthood. Nevertheless, God performed a biological miracle upon their bodies which made possible the birth of Isaac. (See Genesis 21:1-7, and Romans 4:16-22.)⁸ This miracle is called an act of creation: "But now thus saith

⁸ 21 And Jehovah visited Sarah as he had said, and Jehovah did unto Sarah as he had spoken. 2 And Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. 3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. 4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 And Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. 6 And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh. Every one that heareth will laugh with me. 7 And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should give children suck? For I have borne him a son in his old age. (Genesis 21:1-7)

16 For this cause *it is* of faith, that *it may be* according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all 17 (as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were. 18 Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19 And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb; 20 yet, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. (Romans 4:16-22)

Jehovah that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine" (Isa. 43:1). If we believe the facts regarding the birth of Isaac, we are logically bound to accept the proposition regarding the possibility of the virgin birth of Messiah, the Son of God.

From the purely scientific view we can see the possibility of Deity's entering into the human realm by miraculous conception and virgin birth. We can, therefore, accept at face value those predictions which foretell His entry into the human realm to redeem lost humanity. (For a sane scholarly treatment of this subject see *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, by J. Gresham Machen. Also consult my volume, *Messiah: His Nature and Person*, for additional facts.)

We have already examined the prophecies of Genesis 3:15,16 and Isaiah 7:14, in which God promised that one of the persons of the Godhead, as the Redeemer of humanity, would enter the human realm by miraculous conception and virgin birth. These passages show that, while He is a man, He is more than a man—He is the God-man, and she (the mother) "shall call his name Immanuel," which means *God is with us*.

The problem that confronts one is not so much that God did become incarnate, but rather *how* He did it, without inheriting the sinful nature. The man in the street who interests himself in the matter and the student of the sciences, such as genetics, biology, and chemistry—these and others—want to know how. How could sinless Deity completely identify Himself with sinful mankind and yet become sinless man? God's Word declares that, following the fall of man, sin passed upon all men; and of course Mary, the mother of Jesus, herself, was not immune from sin and its results. She acknowledged herself as being a sinner by saying, "Blessed be God, my Saviour!" Only sinners need a Saviour. How could a sinless person come from such a source on the human side, even by virgin birth? How could Deity appear in sinless humanity when the avenue of the entrance into the human realm was itself tarnished by sin—not only by the Adamic sin, but by conscious sins? The answer to this question lies in the realms of biology, psychology, genetics, and chemistry, as well as in the realm of theology.

The virgin birth itself is a miracle; it is a unique manifestation. It has never occurred before nor since. But the second miracle is equally remarkable, one that also has never

happened before; namely, a sinless man issuing from a mother—a member of our fallen race. Although the problem is deeply embedded in genetics, I may state it simply thus: There had to be a true and essential blood descent from Mary in order for the Lord Jesus to possess two vitally important factors: one prophetic, the other redemptive. He had to be a true blood descendant in order to be the prophetic son of David, the victorious King Messiah; and He had to be a true blood descendant in order to be a real human being to redeem fallen human beings. One might ask, "If ought of the blood or being of Mary was inherent in the person of the Lord Jesus, would not sin be transmuted? On the other hand, would He *really* be *true* humanity—*true* son of David—if the blood and being of Mary were not inherent in Him?"

It is admitted and recognized that there are certain laws and principles in the purely physical realm. Many of these laws we have by scientific research discovered. We now know that the material universe is, generally speaking, under the dominance and control of the law of cause and effect. But let me hasten to add that this general statement does by no means exclude the possibility of interposition on the part of the Creator into the realm of His universe, whenever He sees fit thus to inject Himself—for purposes of a moral and spiritual nature.

In addition to the physical cosmos there is manifestly a realm, invisible to the human eye, which is the counterpart or complement of the material order. This sphere is likewise governed by laws and principles workable in such an ethereal realm. Many of these are now discovered by those who have labored in this field. As science—true science, not wild-eyed speculation and guessing—labors in these fields, it continually brings forth new light on many things. The more we learn, the more we are convinced that the laws governing both the visible and invisible realms are essentially of like nature. This statement being true, we can reason quite accurately and logically from the well-known to that which is less-known.

In the realm of matter, for instance, elements are capable of classification. Their properties are known. They can be seen, tasted, handled, and smelt. Since that which is seen obeys certain known actions and reactions, which we call forces, it is also certain that these forces themselves, though unseen, possess characteristics and reactions: for

instance, magnetism, gravitation, and the like. Though unseen, these are definite forces, obeying specific laws. I am fully persuaded that love also, and prayer, are examples of definite forces. I am very confident that there are forces unseen. The study of psychology, especially extrasensory perception and psychokinesis, may possibly give added confirmation of this. Now I am convinced that back *before* the creation of man, in God's original glorious creation, all forces were good and none evil. Whence then came evil?

I am of the opinion that God warned Satan, who is called the anointed cherub in Ezekiel 28:11f, not to interfere with the laws and forces of the original creation; but he, through pride, introduced into the universe, by an unauthorized intrusion into and interference with those good forces, sin—and the force, or power of evil, was the tragic result. But how could this be? It seems quite logical that he combined two or more forces, or powers, which, in their pure state, contributed to the well-being of all of God's creatures. But by his manipulating and combining these forces, he produced a new power in the universe, which has proved to be a disruptive, destructive, and tragic element, and which in God's Word is called *sin*. The Apostle Paul declared that sin, a mighty power, existed before the Fall. Adam transgressed God's law. Then this power, sin, entered the world. As a result of its entrance into the human realm, death came unto all men. The graveyards bear silent testimony to the disastrous effects of this power called sin.

In a discussion with two physicians whom I interviewed on one of my conference tours, I illustrated my points by calling attention to several examples from the field of chemistry—how various primary elements are combined in different proportions, and how they result in different substances.

I said one could combine two good forces and could produce a new force with characteristics entirely opposite to or different from the two out of which it was produced. One could give interesting illustrations from chemistry. The chemical formula for water is we know, H₂O, that is, two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen in the molecule. Both hydrogen and oxygen are gaseous, but combined they become an entirely new thing with different characteristics, which is water—a liquid. If the atoms of

oxygen are increased to four and sulphur is added to the formula, the result is H₂SO₄—sulphuric acid. Let us take just one more fact from chemistry: Take that strange metal—which sizzles, sending forth sparks when plunged into water—known as sodium. Add to that the gas chlorine (which was used as a deadly weapon in the first world war); and when combined in chemical action, they become sodium chloride, common table salt.

In chemistry there is a force or agency which is known as a catalyst, though it is little understood. There are instances known to chemists when one can take two elements, or a combination of elements, and measure them or weigh them by every medium of measurement known to the chemist and try to effect a chemical action without any success whatsoever. But if one brings this other element to bear upon these two, which were immovable, it is discovered that the presence of this third element brings about the action chemically that was desired of the first two. Now, this is really the point: When one examines this third element, or catalyst as chemists call it, it is found that, in so far as they have been able to discover, this third element, surprisingly, has remained unaffected in the slightest degree. This new force or action, though little known or understood, produces this amazing chemical action between the first two elements which were found otherwise to be immovable; and at the same time it, the catalyst, may be recovered practically unchanged at the end of the reaction.

As I suggested before, there are the psychic and spiritual realms with their laws and forces. To these spheres belong, for instance, love, that, in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, is clearly set forth as a force, a power and is in conformity with the nature of the realm to which it belongs:

13 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And if I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. 4 Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; 6 rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; 7 beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 Love never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall be done away; whether

there be tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall be done away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; 10 but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known. 13 But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

The spirit of a person acts and reacts to these spiritual laws just as elements in the physical realm act and react to the laws and forces of the material world. This statement is very important to the proper understanding of this subject and must be kept in mind.

As we keep all of this scientific data in mind, let me restate the problem on which I feel sure I have seen new light. All Christians believe in the biological law (expressed in biblical language) that all types of life, both plant and animal, produce "after their kind." After the Fall, Adam begat sons and daughters "in his own likeness, after his image," that is, in the likeness of his fallen nature. Both the father and the mother contribute their nature to the offspring. This fact, all unbiased thinkers will concede. Chemically and biologically speaking, the father therefore contributes a certain element to his progeny; the mother, her part. Obviously, that which the father contributes is different from the maternal contribution. This fact is unquestionable. The union of these two elements produces offspring in the image of the fallen parents.

Here is the crux of the whole matter: If the part contributed by either of the parents is in one state, or condition, whereas that supplied by the other is in a different state, the result of the union of these elements will be different from what issues forth if the elements contributed by both parents are in the same condition—as we learned from the illustration in the chemical realm.

Keeping this fundamental principle in mind, now let us look at the scriptural statement regarding our Lord's birth. The angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would become the mother of the Messiah. To him the Virgin replied by asking, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" His answer was, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the, Son of God" (Luke 1:35). This passage

affirms that the Virgin Mary would be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit and thus become the mother of Jesus the Messiah. That which was contributed by the mother would naturally issue forth from her, being influenced by her natural, sinful nature. Had her first child, the Lord Jesus, been begotten by a human father, He would have been begotten in the likeness of His father's fallen nature. But He was not, for the Holy Spirit by an act of creation begat Him, thus introducing an entirely different element. Hence, "the holy thing begotten" was not affected by sin; for the sinful nature of a child, begotten and conceived by parents in the fallen state, is the result of the action and interaction of the sinful nature of both the mother and the father. Since the Lord Jesus, according to the prophetic announcement of Isaiah 7:14, and according to the historical accounts in the New Testament, was begotten by the Holy Spirit and was conceived by the Virgin Mary, there were no action and reaction of two sinful natures on the part of two earthly parents, to produce in Him a sinful nature. Thus the "holy thing" begotten in this manner was to be called the Son of God and was *unpersonal*, as the old Greek theologians expressed the thought, until the union of the divine nature with this "holy thing" begotten would be effected. Then the "holy thing" begotten would come to consciousness, would be born, and would become recognized as the Son of God—the Son of God in a special and unique sense in which such thoughts could not be applied to any mortal born by human generation. This logical and incontrovertible conclusion regarding the sinlessness of our Lord becomes crystal clear in the light of the scriptural statements and the facts of science, at which we have already looked. But let us take a final glance at the relentless, irrefutable logic afforded by one of the examples drawn from the field of chemistry. We must have two atoms of hydrogen, one of sulphur, and four of oxygen in order to have sulphuric acid—that deadly fatal poison. If any one of the constituent parts is lacking, the combination is not sulphuric acid. In a manner analogous to this illustration from chemistry, the absence of the taint of sin on the part of the Holy Spirit, who did the begetting of Messiah Jesus, made it absolutely impossible for Him to have the sinful nature. It was as the angel said: That which was begotten was holy; hence

free from the least taint of sin.*†

Messiah Jesus therefore stands upon the historic horizon as the spotless, sinless, perfect Man—the God-man—the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. He is the one Mediator between God and man. He is the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except by Him (John 14:6).

John the Baptist, son of Zacharias the priest, broke the silence of approximately four hundred years by announcing that the time was fulfilled and that the kingdom of God had drawn near. In his clarion call to the nation to repent, he declared that one was coming after him who would winnow the chaff from the wheat and thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor (Matt. 3:1-12). This language indicated that this mighty one would follow immediately. In the light of all the facts this prediction is evidently a reference to King Messiah. The people had a logical right to expect His appearance at that time. Paul in Galatians 4:4,5 echoes the same in the following words: "... but when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

A careful study of the life of Jesus of Nazareth reveals the fact that there was a single personality in Him. Also, as I have pointed out from time to time, there was overwhelming evidence of the union of the divine and human natures—nevertheless there was but one personality. Thus Jesus could say, "Before Abraham was born, I am" (John 8:58)—meaning that He existed before Abraham was born.

* While the analogies presented in this discussion point most clearly to a possible solution of the problems involved in the question regarding the origin and essential nature of sin as a force and power in the universe and in the additional question regarding the sinlessness of the Lord Jesus, I feel certain that there is further light for us which the Lord will enable us to see at the proper time. Let us all pray and labor for further light on these matters.

† The facts drawn from science, especially chemistry, and the arguments based upon them, I first used in a private conversation with two physicians. Then I introduced this material into a message on the sinlessness of Christ, which was broadcast over KGER, Los Angeles. It was published in the Biblical Research Monthly. Finally, I recast it into its didactic form as it here appears.

In John's record of the Gospel we have the statement, "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). Here we are told that the Word, which was eternal and divine and in perfect fellowship with God the Father, became flesh and dwelt among us. The process of becoming here referred to indicates the Word's assuming human form—by miraculous conception and virgin birth.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. 6 There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but *came* that he might bear witness of the light. 9 There was the true light, *even the light* which lighteth every man, coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 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. 15 John beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, This was he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me: for he was before me. 16 For of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him* (John 1:1-18).

The Word of God, the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. Though He—for the purpose of entering the world as a human being to work out man's redemption—voluntarily limited Himself during the incarnation, He was co-equal with the other two personalities of the Holy Trinity, each of them being given, in the Scriptures, the name Jehovah—the Self-

existing Uncaused Cause of all things. "Hear, O Israel! Jehovah, our Gods [Jehovah the Father, Jehovah the Son, and Jehovah the Holy Spirit], is Jehovah, a Unity" (lit. trans. Deut. 6:4). Though each of these is co-equal and co-eternal with the others, there is a relationship existing between two of them which is expressed by the human terms of Father and Son. This thought is found in the following quotation:

Who hath ascended up into heaven, and descended?

Who hath gathered the wind in his fists?

Who hath bound the waters in his garment?

Who hath established all the ends of the earth?

What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou knowest? (Prov. 30:4).

In Isaiah 9:6 we read,

For unto us a child is born,

unto us a Son is given;

and the government shall be upon his shoulder:

and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.

The Book of Isaiah—with the exception of the historical section, chapters 36:1 to 38:9 and 38:21 to 39:8—is put in poetical form, the fundamental principle of which is known as Hebrew parallelism, thought rhyme. The Child in the first line is the Son of the second. In the third line this one is *Ruler of Israel*; and in the fourth He is the *Prince of Peace*. This Child that is given is designated as the Son of Him who gives Him to the nation. According to lines 3 and 4 this future Ruler of the Jews is to be God, the Prince of Peace. When the ideas of the four lines are blended, the complete thought is that God promises to give His Son in the form of a child to mount the throne of David and to establish peace in Israel. He begins His universal reign as King of the Jews. According to verse 7 other nations are added to His empire until His reign becomes universal. "7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne

of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with Justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:7).

In perfect alignment with this teaching is that which is set forth in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." This is He who is called the only begotten Son and who is sent by the Father into the world. The same thought occurs in John 1:14: "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." Words to this same effect are found in I John 4:9, "God has sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him." This one personality of the Trinity is called "the Word" and also "the only begotten Son," which terms are used to refer to Him in His pre-incarnate state, and which, as already seen, connote eternal relationships existing between Him and the one who is called the Father. Since the Son is declared unequivocally to have been co-eternal, "in the beginning was the Word ..." (John 1:1), and co-equal with the Father, "who [Christ Jesus], existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Phil. 2:6), we see that the terms Father and Son connote a relationship similar to that of father and son in the human realm but radically different from it in other ways. These human terms of father and son are employed to convey to our limited understanding a faint idea of this divine relationship. Whenever therefore the Lord Jesus is called the Son of God, we are to understand that reference is made to this eternal relationship. Nevertheless since our Lord Jesus used the terms, Father and Son, continually in speaking of the relationship that existed between the Father on the one hand and Himself as the God-man, Christ Jesus, on the other, we are to understand that this usage is also an echo of His becoming incarnate.

The Word in the person of Jesus of Nazareth was the only one who was begotten by Deity into the human realm. From this special viewpoint He is called the only begotten of the Father.

In Matthew 1:18-25 we have the record of the virgin birth of Christ which reads as follows:

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us. 24 And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; 25 and knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name JESUS (Matt. 1:18-25).

Here Jesus is called Immanuel. He is also named Jesus, "for it is he that shall save his people from their sins."

In these Scriptures we see the fulfillment of what was announced by the Lord to the serpent originally (Gen. 3:15), was foretold by Isaiah the prophet (Isa. 7:14 and 9:6,7), and was recorded as a historical fact by Luke, who has proved to be a most reputable and accurate historian,³ and by Matthew, the apostle, an eye-witness of the Lord Jesus. Those features which characterize them as historians can be accounted for only upon the basis of their having been divinely inspired.

We have seen that, under God's moral government, man lost everything on the human level and in the realm of the will; that the only way the loss could be retrieved is by one who champions man's cause on the human plane and in the realm of the will;

³ See *Luke the Historian* by A. T. Robertson.

and that no ordinary man, born of natural generation, could accomplish man's restoration. On the contrary, according to the divine revelation, we see that man's redemption would be worked out by Deity, who enters the human realm by miraculous conception and virgin birth. We are now in a position to take another step forward in our investigation.

CHAPTER XXXV

JESUS THE CHAMPION OF FALLEN HUMANITY

Man's position, viewed from the fall of Adam to the death of Christ, seemed hopeless. Had things continued on until the end of time, as they had been prior to the death of Christ, there would have been no hope for man, he being under the sentence of eternal death—either in time or in eternity. When Israel was in Egyptian bondage, suffering under the heel of the oppressing Pharaoh and crying out to God for deliverance, the Lord looked upon her in her affliction, had pity upon her, and came and delivered her. In a similar manner, the Son of God looked upon the helpless, hopeless condition of humanity and volunteered to champion the cause of man and to rescue him from the death-grip of Satan. In Job, chapter 41, Satan is spoken of under the symbolism of Leviathan, the mighty monster of antiquity, that is called "the king over all the sons of pride" (verse 34). In Ephesians 2:2 he is called "the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience." This mighty one held the world in his grip.

As we have already seen, Satan still retained, after his rebellion, right and authority over all creatures who followed his path into the fields of disobedience and rebellion against the will of God. Through sin, which he introduced into the universe, he held the power of death over the human family with all that that word implies. Under God's moral government, the Lord Jesus, the second person of the Godhead, could not arbitrarily take this power of death out of his hands. God must be righteous in His dealings, under His established regime, with all concerned. When He created man, He gave him dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:28). We have abundantly seen that man lost his standing with God and his dominion over the earth. It was through the exercise of the God-given power of choice that he lost everything, including his dominion over the earth—through the strategy and deceit of the devil. The Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead, as we have seen above, became a perfect man in order that He might exercise the power of choice and might snatch from the devil the dominion, right,

and authority that he held over the human race. This entailed for the Son of God a lonesome, dreary journey through His earthly life, which we must now investigate.

We have seen how the Son of God entered the human realm by miraculous conception and virgin birth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He, like a normal child, grew and developed physically, mentally, and spiritually as is seen in the following quotation: "And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40). Herod attempted to destroy Him, the Christ child. But God the Father watched over Him and sent Him out of the zone of danger until the death of Herod. After our Lord's return to Nazareth from Egypt, we do not get another glimpse of Him until He was twelve years of age. At this time He accompanied His mother and Joseph, His foster father, to Jerusalem to observe the feast of the passover. In the Temple He showed unusual comprehension of truth and spiritual realities. He thus confounded the doctors of the law with the wisdom with which He spoke. After this episode He returned to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph and continued the normal development of His powers as we see in Luke 2:52: "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." At about the age of thirty He left Nazareth, went to John, and was baptized of him in the river Jordan. Unlike all who accepted baptism at John's hands, confessing their sins, Jesus had no sins to confess. The preacher instinctively and by spiritual insight recognized the purity and the holiness of the person who had come to receive baptism at his hands. He therefore recoiled and requested baptism of Jesus. "But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness ..." (Matt. 3:15). Then John baptized Him. As He was coming up out of the water, the heavens were rent asunder and a voice from heaven said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). Then the Spirit of God in the form of a dove alighted upon the Lord (Matt. 3:13-17).

After God's public acknowledgment of Jesus as His Son, Satan appeared upon the scene and tempted Him for a period of forty days. "And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness. 13 And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him" (Mark

1:12,13). At the completion of this period of testings, the devil came to Him with three major temptations. The account of these is found in Matthew 4:1-11:

4 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered. 3 And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5 Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee:

and,

On their hands they shall bear thee up,

Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God. 8 Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

An account is also found in Luke 4:1-13. The devil brought all the power of his cunning art to bear upon Him in order to get Him to sin—but to no avail. The Lord Jesus refused the short cuts to world-dominion and spurned every temptation that was placed before Him. Then the devil left Him for a season.

Six months prior to His execution, Christ foretold His tragic death. Satan, being present, made the suggestion through Peter that the Lord Jesus should not submit to such a fate. Turning to Peter and seeing Satan present as the one suggesting the thought, Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumblingblock unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men" (Matt. 16:23). At different times, even at the very end of the Lord's earthly life, Satan did his utmost to prevent our Lord from going to the cross voluntarily to champion the cause of man—to pour out His blood for man's redemption and to fight the battle of human freedom. But all Satan's

efforts were in vain. Christ, according to Isaiah 50:7, had set His face like a flint, and nothing could deflect Him from perfectly doing the will of God.

The purpose of Christ's coming into the world is most forcefully set forth in the following passage, which, on account of its fullness, spreads before us the scheme of redemption from beginning to end, and which I quote in concluding this chapter:

(Heb. 9:11-10:18) 11 But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth. Wherefore even the first *covenant* hath not been dedicated without blood. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to you-ward. Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood. And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.

It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered

to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation.

10 For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. Else would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those *sacrifices* there is a remembrance made of sins year by year. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith,
Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not,
But a body didst thou prepare for me;
In whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hadst no pleasure:
Then said I, Lo, I am come
(In the roll of the book it is written of me)
To do thy will, O God.

Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law), then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins: but he, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us; for after he hath said,

This is the covenant that I will make with them
After those days, saith the Lord:
I will put my laws on their heart,
And upon their mind also will I write them;
then saith he,

And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. (Heb. 9:11-10:18)

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE OFFICE AND THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. 8 And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; 11 of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you. 15 All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you (John 16:7-15).

Our Lord, in the Scripture quoted above, announced to the disciples that it was necessary for Him to return to heaven in order to carry on His mediatorial work there; but He promised them that He would not leave them alone—leave them orphans. They had enjoyed His care, counsel, and protection during His stay with them as He engaged in His personal ministry. But in this last quiet talk before His sufferings He assured them that He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who would come and remain with them as an abiding guest, dwelling in their hearts and working in and through them.

The special ministry of the Spirit today is set forth in the following statement: "And he [the Holy Spirit], when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment because the prince of this world hath been judged." This coming of the Spirit, as we see in Acts, chapter 2, was literally fulfilled ten days after the ascension, on the day of Pentecost.

In the power of the Spirit the apostles spoke the message of life and convicted the audience of sin. Never before had the consciousness of sin in all its hideousness been burned into their very hearts and souls as it was on this occasion by the Spirit-filled-and-guided apostles. They understood the reality of sin as they had never known it before. They were brought face to face with the facts with reference to Jesus of Nazareth and His being the Holy One of God who came to be the sin-bearer. All open-minded people in the audience saw the truth regarding His being the Holy and Righteous One. To disbelieve and to reject Him was to sin—to commit the sin of all sins, that is, to reject light and the only way of eternal salvation. Thus the people were convicted in respect to sin when the Spirit came.

The Holy Spirit in speaking through the apostles also convicted the multitude of righteousness. The Lord Jesus Christ had laid aside the glory—not His essential nature, which thing was an impossibility—that He had with the Father before the foundation of the world, and had entered the world, as we have already seen, by miraculous conception and virgin birth. He had identified Himself with the human family in order to solve the sin question and to liberate men from the clutches of Satan. Thus having accomplished His holy and righteous mission in the world, He was received up into the glory, which act was a demonstration of the righteousness of God in carrying out the plan of redemption and of the divine approval and acceptance of the atonement made by Jesus for man's sins. God's invitation therefore for Him to leave earth, to ascend to heaven, and to sit at His right hand was the proof and seal of the righteousness of God in sending the Lord Jesus to redeem all who would accept His full and free salvation.

The Holy Spirit also, according to our passage, would and did convict the world with reference to judgment. He brought to the apostles' minds the facts concerning the battle that our Lord had with Satan when He conquered him. The devil and his hosts came and did their utmost to prevent Christ's going to the cross. But as Jesus had set His face like a flint to do the will of God with reference to the sin question by dying in our stead, Satan marshaled all his host and launched the most formidable attack possible against Him at the time of the Crucifixion. As we have seen, the battle for human liberation was fought on the human plane and in the realm of the will. Jesus in an absolute and

decisive manner repelled every onslaught of the enemy. In every attempt Satan was hurled back in utter defeat. Hence judgment was decisive, and his defeat was overwhelming. The Holy Spirit, when He came on Pentecost and since then, has proclaimed that the prince of this world has been judged and defeated—has been brought to nought.

As the apostles guided by the Spirit proclaimed the word of life, their messages went like daggers to the hearts of their hearers. Luke describes the situation in the following sentence: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked* in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?" The Holy Spirit did convict the audience in respect to sin, righteousness, and judgment. Those who thus were brought under conviction cried out, asking what they should do. Peter by the Spirit commanded them to repent and to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. They who gladly received his word submitted to baptism in His name. There were brought together into a Christian community that day about three thousand souls, who constituted the nucleus of the Apostolic Church.

The Holy Spirit has remained from that day until this in the hearts of the true believers, those who have been regenerated, the born-again people. God calls sincere, earnest men into the ministry today. They are to study to show themselves approved unto God, workmen who need not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth. They are urged to be filled with the Spirit in order that they may proclaim the message of salvation in the power of God as the ministers of the Word did in the Apostolic Church. Whenever a God-called-and-equipped minister preaches in the power of the Spirit, men are won to the Lord Jesus and accept Him as their Saviour. Of such people it can truly be said that the gospel comes unto them, not "in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance" (I Thess. 1:5). The Holy Spirit therefore is still carrying on His work of convicting men through the faithful ministers of the Word.

*The word in the original means *to pierce violently; to stun*. These people were stunned by the realization that they had crucified the Messiah.

He is eager to bring conviction to the hearts of all those who are honest and who want truth. If a person does not want the truth of God, the Holy Spirit will not force Himself nor the claims of Christ upon him. On the other hand, to all honest, conscientious truth seekers the Holy Spirit working through the ministry of the Word will bring conviction. They will respond to the gospel message, put their trust in the Saviour, and allow the Spirit to perform His office of regenerating and cleansing the heart and of making them new creatures in Christ Jesus. How we need the truth preached today in the power of the Holy Spirit—possibly as never before.

With outstretched arms, as it were, the loving Saviour, the Messiah of Israel, the God-man, pleads with everyone: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt.11:28-30). The Holy Spirit and the bride (the Church) likewise invite each one to come and partake of the water of life: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

To those accepting the Saviour's invitation, I wish to call attention, in conclusion, to the fact that the Christian life is a warfare, a conflict, a race. I urge each one to emulate the example of one of the greatest heroes of faith that ever lived, the Apostle Paul.

3 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not irksome, but for you it is safe. Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision: for we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh: though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh: if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless. Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that

which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I *do*, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you: only, whereunto we have attained, by that same rule let us walk. (Philippians 3:1-16)

In the words of the Patriarch Jacob when he prayed in behalf of Joseph's sons (Gen. 48:15,16), I pray in behalf of everyone who reads this book: "The God before whom ... Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who hath fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel who hath redeemed me from all evil, bless" every reader of this book who is thirsting after God.