

**Messianic Series Volume One**

**THE GOD OF ISRAEL**

**אל אלהים יהוה**

By

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*To the memory of*

**WILLIAM H. STEELE**

*the first Treasurer of the Biblical Research Society*

*an honored servant of the Lord is*

*this volume*

*affectionately dedicated*

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## Preface

THE present book constitutes the first volume of the "Messianic Series" of the Biblical Research Society. The names of this set are: *The God of Israel*, *Messiah: His Nature and Person*, *Messiah: His Redemptive Career*, *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*, *Messiah: His Historical Appearance*, *Messiah: His Imminent Second Coming*, and *Messiah: His Final Call to Israel*. Four of these volumes have appeared and have enjoyed wide circulation. The last three are yet to be produced (1945). Much work has been accomplished on the fifth of the series, which, when completed, will contain probably around a thousand pages in the unabridged edition. Each of these books deals with one special phase of truth which is essential to the understanding of God, His nature, His relation to the material universe, His relation to man, and the unfolding of His eternal plan which began prior to the creation of the world, which is unfolding through the centuries, and which will continue to do so throughout the ages of the ages. The series is so related that it is difficult for one to see these vital truths adequately unless the entire series is studied.

The first volume, *The God of Israel*, consisted of certain chapters of my book, *The Eternal God Revealing Himself to Suffering Israel and to Lost Humanity*. These chapters were lifted from the larger book and made into a booklet of 48 pages and to it was given the title indicated above. God has used this message to the blessing of many souls throughout the world. Many through its message have been won to a saving knowledge of God our Saviour. Throughout the years, however, I have realized that this pamphlet presented only a partial view of the truth with reference to the God of Israel. I have therefore been waiting patiently for the time when I could re-study the whole subject and could give the vital facts and truths concerning Him who entered into covenant relationship with the Chosen People, the Jews. Finally, the time came—when I returned in the late fall of 1944—for me to make this revision. After much investigation and hard study I have been enabled, by the grace of God, to produce the present volume. Practically everything has been re-written, there being very few lines of the original pamphlet appearing intact in the present volume.

The first chapter of this book is taken almost in toto from my book, *What Men Must Believe*. A certain portion of the original was deleted and the remainder was shortened because of a lack of space in the present book. Each of these chapters paves the way for understanding the next one. It is therefore necessary that the reader, starting at the beginning, study each chapter until he has completed the book.

On account of the lack of space it is impossible to discuss the subject of the God of Israel in an adequate manner, in a volume of this size. The facts and the truths that have here been presented are sufficient, however, to enable the reader to formulate a definite idea of the Almighty and of His relation to the world and to man in general—but to the believer in a particular and special manner.

In presenting this volume to the public, I wish to acknowledge gratefully benefits that I have received from the study of certain recognized standard works. I also wish to acknowledge help rendered by the office staff of the Society in assisting me to produce the volume in record time.

My prayer goes forth with the book that it may be used by the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob in bringing the truth of His Holy Word to countless numbers of people.

Los Angeles, California.  
May 8, 1945.

*David L. Cooper*

## CHAPTER I

### THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

From times immemorial men have believed in the existence of a Supreme Being whom we call God. This conviction is common to all races under all conditions. In our modern, scientific world the question is being asked today, Whence the idea of God? Various answers are given. Some tell us that it is innate in the human mind. Others insist that it is the result of the processes of reasoning. Another class of thinkers says that it is the result of a supernatural revelation of the Deity. What is the truth about the entire situation? As a general statement regarding these hypotheses, I would say that there is truth in each—especially in the first and third. But we must investigate more fully to ascertain the facts as far as possible. Yet are we capable of understanding the facts and implications based thereupon?

#### I. BASIC FACTS REGARDING MAN'S NATURE

What is meant by innate knowledge? Innate or intuitive knowledge is that which is derived from the nature of man's soul due to the fact that he is a sentient, rational, moral being. Our very being recognizes certain fundamental facts and principles as true. There is no need of any proof to convince us of the reality of such things. Our intuitive knowledge falls naturally into three classes. In the first place, we note our sense perceptions. We experience pain. We may not be able to understand everything connected with it, but we recognize the fact that there is pain. We see an object. By our innate knowledge we are convinced of the reality of that which appears before us. Again, we may be mistaken in regard to the true nature of what is seen. Nevertheless, we recognize intuitively the reality of said object.

In the next place, we have intuitions of our intellectual nature. In this category fall those cognition's which we call axiomatic truths. For instance, the child recognizes that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line and that the whole is equal to the sum of its parts. By innate knowledge we recognize that every effect must have an adequate cause. We have no need to be taught these simple fundamental truths but recognize them from infancy.

In the third place, there are great moral principles that the mind instinctively and innately recognizes. From childhood we perceive the distinction between right and wrong, though often seen only faintly, the necessity of one's being virtuous, the

responsibility for character and conduct, and deserved punishment for wrongdoing. There is that faculty in our inner being, which is aware of these great ethical, fundamental principles.

The recognition and the acceptance of these great intuitive principles are experiences common to all men, regardless of the state of their civilization and education. By some individuals these axiomatic truths are perceived more clearly than by others. They vary with each case. Recognizing these fundamental facts about ourselves and accepting them as the basis of all our reasoning processes, we approach our subject by asking the question, Whence the idea of God?

## II. WHENCE THE IDEA OF GOD?

Is the knowledge of God innate in the human mind? In other words, does a child, as its mind begins to unfold and it observes the things around about it, instinctively and intuitively recognize the existence of a Being above and beyond the external world, which it sees? If all children, of all races, of all times, thus possess this ability to perceive the existence of the Almighty and His perfection's, we are bound to conclude that the recognition of God is the result of innate knowledge or of the constitution of our being. When we approach the question this way, we must be careful lest we be led into error. If universality is made the criterion of innate knowledge, we must bear in mind that we are speaking only of those things that are recognized intuitively—known by the very constitution of our nature. Universality of belief on any one point does not prove its correctness, for there was a time when men in general believed that the world was flat. Their mistaken idea in regard to it did not convert this error into truth.

Is the belief in the existence of God an intuitive truth? The answer is that, if it is universal and necessary, it is. If men are so constituted that they recognize His existence by the things that are made, and if disbelief in His existence is impossible, then His existence is truly established by innate knowledge. A glance at the literature that has come to us from all nations of the past reveals the fact that belief in God's existence is the universal experience of mankind. It is true that certain individuals under pressure have at times disavowed such belief; but, when the pressure was removed and the individual was left free to exercise his own intellectual and moral powers, the involuntary expression of his innermost soul has usually been that there is a Supreme Being, upon whom we are all dependent and to whom we are accountable.

Being convinced by the evidence that the idea of God is native to the human mind as is evident by the universality of religion throughout the world during all ages, we shall now turn to the sacred and infallible Word of God<sup>1</sup> to hear its testimony on this point.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness; 19 because that which is known of God is manifest in them: for God manifested it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: 21 because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasoning's, and their senseless heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves: 25 for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. (Rom. 1:18-25).

According to verse 18 of this quotation the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold down the truth by their ungodly lives and thus retard its progress among men.

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<sup>1</sup> Here it is assumed that the Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God. That the Bible is the Word of God may be seen from the fact that it is an inexhaustible storehouse of knowledge. The greatest minds of the centuries have grappled with its profound teachings and have confessed that it certainly flowed from an infinite mind. Editors note: The proof of this proposition, however, is found in Chapter 2 of Dr. Cooper's Volume, *What Men Must Believe*.

As proof that they are hindering the onward march of the truth of God, the apostle here declares, "... that which is known of God is manifest in them: for God manifested it unto them." This language is very exact. "That which is known of God," or literally, "that known of God," declared the apostle, is manifested in these men who by their ungodly and unrighteous lives hinder or suppress the truth. According to this verse there is a certain amount of knowledge regarding God that is revealed in men. Note the expression, "is manifest in them." This clause is an echo of innate or intuitive knowledge. Man's constitution is such that he is capable of recognizing the existence of God. Men do have that innate ability or knowledge to recognize the Supreme Being; for what is known of God, is manifested unto them. The Almighty by His providence and by His works has brought home to the hearts of all men, which are so constituted as to receive the knowledge of Himself, the truth of His existence. In further explaining what he meant by this statement, the apostle declared, "For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, *even* his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse." There cannot be, therefore, according to the Scriptures, any real atheists. Those only who have abnormal, distorted, or biased minds can possibly deny God's existence. Such is man's natural constitution declares the apostle.

Men in the very beginning of the human race were monotheists—believers in the one true and living God. As time passed, however, they refused to glorify Him as their Creator and became selfish and unthankful. When they took this attitude, they became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless hearts became darkened. Being unable, under these conditions, to see things as they are, they professed themselves to be wise; but in doing so they became fools. They then plunged into idolatry, changing "the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."

The latest discoveries by the archaeologists prove that man originally held the monotheistic faith<sup>2</sup> and that later he introduced polytheism. Thus the scriptural statement here is supported by actual, historical facts.

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<sup>2</sup> The discoveries of the late Prof. Langdon of Oxford led him irresistibly to this conclusion.



According to Romans 1:28-32, when men refused to have God in their knowledge, He gave them up to a reprobate mind to do those things which are improper. Men plunged to the very depths of sin and degradation. Nevertheless, it is said of them that "knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them" (Rom. 1:32). We see this innate knowledge of God in Romans 2:14,15: "for when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them." From these scriptures it becomes immediately apparent that according to divine revelation man's constitution was so created that he could recognize the existence and the perfections of God by observing the things which are made. In this connection we do well to notice the statement of King David found in Psalm 19:1-6.

- 19** The heavens declare the glory of God;  
and the firmament showeth his handiwork.
- 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.
- 3 There is no speech nor language; Their voice is not heard.
- 4 Their line is gone out through all the earth,  
And their words to the end of the world.  
In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,
- 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and rejoiceth  
as a strong man to run his course.
- 6 His going forth is from the end of the heavens,  
And his circuit unto the ends of it;  
And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

In this passage the heavens are personified and are represented as recounting or proclaiming the glory of God the Almighty. In the second line of the first couplet the expanse or firmament likewise is personified and is spoken of as making known the works of God's hands. Thus the very heavens throughout their vast expanse, together with the firmament around our earth, are constantly (as the participle form of the verbs used in both instances in these sentences indicates) declaring the glory of God and making known the works of His hands. The master workman is known by his accomplishments and deeds. Only a mastermind could produce Homer's *Iliad*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Only an Alexander the Great could conquer the known world of his time. Men are truly

known by their deeds and accomplishments. Only an all-wise, omnipotent God could create the heavens and the earth.

In Psalm 8 we have these words; "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (vss. 3,4). In the first part of this quotation the heavens are spoken of as being the work of God's fingers. He is represented as a master craftsman who actually did the work himself, with his own hands and fingers. The workman who handles an article always leaves his fingerprints upon that which he has made. Of course, by various processes these can be removed. As the inspired psalmist looked into the heavens with spiritual insight, he saw that only God could leave such marks of identification. This language therefore has the same message that Psalm 19 delivers.

Returning to this passage, we note that in verse 2 the days of the past are thought of as persons who have their day and pass away. The day upon which God began His creative activity in bringing the universe into existence is represented as a witness who stood and observed the Almighty as he labored. Before this eyewitness died, he passed on the testimony regarding what he had seen to the next day, which, in turn, gave its testimony before passing to the succeeding day. According to this verse there has been passed down from the first day of creation to the present the testimony of God's creative activity. Not only are the days represented as bringing to us the evidence regarding the Almighty's work, but the first night likewise is represented as having been present when He began His activity. Like the day, it passed on its testimony to its successor who, in turn, passed on its message to succeeding generations. Thus the line of testimony has come down through the ages to us to the present day.

In verse 3 the psalmist declared that both the day and the night in passing on their testimony did not use human speech nor language; nevertheless their witness has been silently passed from generation to generation. Not only is there an unbroken succession of faithful witnesses passing on accurately what they heard from the original eyewitnesses, but also there is a line of evidence that has gone to the very ends of the earth. This fact is given in verse 4; "Their line is gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world." When we realize that the psalmist was speaking of testimony, we see that the word "line" here can refer to nothing else but said testimony. The word used in the original frequently signifies a measuring line, that which makes the unknown known.

This declaration has gone into every corner of the globe in order that all men of every race might be able to see and understand that there is a God whose presence is veiled behind the material universe. According to the latter part of verse 4, God has set a tabernacle for the sun in the heavens. Of course, this is pictorial language; nevertheless it represents reality. In speaking of the sun, the psalmist compares it to a bridegroom coming out of his chamber who is eager to run a certain course, which is "from the end of the heavens, And his circuit unto the ends of it." Since the sun is not visible to us at night (neither was the psalmist at the North Pole so that he could see the midnight sun, nor are we), this period of darkness is spoken of as the tabernacle in which the sun spends night. But early in the morning he comes forth from this tabernacle and rejoices that there is a circuitous journey for him to travel during the day. The word rendered "circuit" literally means what our English word states. This same term is used with reference to the return to the year in Exodus 34:22 and is rendered "at the year's end." The year is thought of as making one complete circle or circuit in this given time. When David spoke of the sun and of its running in its circuit, he was speaking scientifically. Modern astronomy reveals the fact that not only does our earth revolve on its axis and travel around the sun in a circuit, but that our sun with its system of satellites is likewise moving in a circuit. I call attention to this remarkable language, which states a scientific truth uttered by a man who lived a thousand years before the beginning of the Common Era. From what source did he get this astronomical knowledge? There is but one answer—from the God concerning whose work he was speaking on this occasion. There is no wonder therefore that the Psalmist David, upon receiving the revelation concerning the movement of our solar system, was led to exclaim that the heavens and the firmament declare and show the glory of God. This evidence of the existence of the Almighty may be seen by every man and woman of every generation, of every clime, and of every nation throughout the world. They are therefore without excuse.

Notwithstanding the clear evidence of the existence of the Creator, the majority of humanity does not see His glory and recognize His presence. Even in Israel, throughout her checkered history, there have been many who have been unable to discern the evidence of His existence and power. In the Hebrew Scriptures we see evidence of this fact. Moses and the prophets constantly warned Israel and pleaded with her not to go into idolatry but to worship the God who created the heavens and the earth. For instance, Isaiah the prophet, in that matchless oration found in chapter 40, spoke of Jehovah, the God of Israel, as the one who had measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, meted out the heavens with a span, comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in balances (Isa. 40:12). Here the Lord is represented as an

architect and a master builder, who has created the earth and the heavens according to a definite, specific plan. At the same time He was the master chemist who compounded all the elements out of which He built the universe.

This great statesman-prophet, in this chapter—one of the greatest polemics against idolatry—has given us one of the sublimest orations that ever fell from mortal lips. Of course, he spoke, inspired by the Spirit of God, as the subject matter of his message demonstrates. In this majestic discourse Isaiah set forth in the most forceful manner and cogent reasoning the existence of God, His having created the universe, His control of the heavenly bodies, His coming again to earth, and His delivering those in Israel who wait for him. As we shall see upon looking at the passage, the prophet was borne forward to our day and time and urged us who know God to deliver a special message to Israel in view of the impending world crises. Because it was intended in a special way for us today—not for the people of former generations—we must look at this message very carefully. (This passage has been judged by some literary critics as being the finest specimen of oratory and literature in existence today. No person can lay claim to being well-educated, in the broadest sense of the term, who does not understand and comprehend, in a limited way at least, the message of this marvelous chapter. Because of its magnitude and grandeur, I herewith give the entire text and trust that the reader will pardon my bringing into the discussion some seemingly extraneous material. This chapter is a single literary unit. One must therefore glance at it in its entirety in order to see the force of that portion which deals with God's existence.)

**40** Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins.

3 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. 4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the uneven shall be made level, and rough places plain: 5 and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

6 The voice of one saying, Cry. And one said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. 7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the breath of Jehovah bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. 8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever.

9 O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up on a high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God! 10 Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come as a mighty one, and his arm will rule for him: Behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and will gently lead those that have their young.

12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? 13 Who hath directed the Spirit of Jehovah, or being his counselor hath taught him? 14 With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding? 15 Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. 16 And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. 17 All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing, and vanity.

18 To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? 19 The image, a workman hath cast *it*, and the goldsmith overlayeth it with gold, and casteth *for it* silver chains. 20 He that is too impoverished for *such* an oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a skillful workman to set up a graven image, that shall not be moved. 21 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 *It is* he that sitteth above the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; 23 that bringeth princes to nothing; that maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. 24 Yea, they have not been planted; yea, they have not been sown; yea, their stock hath not taken root in the earth: moreover he bloweth upon them, and they wither, and the whirlwind taketh them away as stubble. 25 To whom then will ye liken me, that I should be equal *to him*? saith the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and for that he is strong in power, not one is lacking.

27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from Jehovah, and the justice *due* to me is passed away from my God? 28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? The everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the

earth, fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of his understanding. 29 He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; 31 but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.

In verses 1 and 2 of this chapter the prophet addressed certain ones who are worshippers of God, urging them to "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people." The ones who are called "my people" are the Jewish race as we see from verse 2. God recognized those to whom He addressed the message as being His people also and Himself as being their God. Upon the basis of this relationship He urged these to give a special message to His people, Israel.

There are three distinct elements in this message: (1) Israel's "warfare is accomplished," (2) "her iniquity is pardoned," and (3) "she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins."

From this message we see that Israel will need comfort. She is therefore seen in this vision to be in dire need and distress. But of what time did the prophet speak? The answer to this question is found in the statement, to be delivered to her, that her warfare is accomplished. When her warfare is actually over, she will not need any comfort; for she will be enjoying the blessings of God. But since the messengers in their attempt to comfort her are to tell her that her warfare is accomplished, we can come to but one conclusion; namely, that the time here foreseen is the very end of this age when Israel is suffering untold horrors and needs comfort; but that the time yet remaining through which she must endure tribulation and suffering is so very short, in comparison with the long centuries of unparalleled persecutions which she has endured, so that the messengers can say that her warfare is accomplished, that it is practically over. These facts lead me to believe that the prophet was urging the people of God in this time of Israel's major crises to comfort her with this threefold message. These instructions imply that those who are to bring this comforting message to Israel will understand the prophetic word and the signs of the time and will be able to tell Israel that her sufferings, practically speaking, are over. In the light of the prophetic word, I am able to say with absolute confidence—and without any speculation or guessing—that the time yet remaining during which Israel will suffer is very short. We are indeed in the last days. The message of these verses and the three following, when analyzed in the light of the setting, is seen to be a prediction that there will be those

who proclaim to Israel the coming of Jehovah, whose advent will be seen by all nations because He will appear in all his glory.

On the other hand, in verses 6-8, we have a glimpse of those who do not heed the admonition to proclaim this prophetic message to Israel. When we analyze carefully what they say as recorded in verses 6 and 7, we see that they are unwilling to proclaim the coming of Jehovah to His people. They are against the teaching and preaching of prophecy. This is seen in the words, "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the breath of Jehovah bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass." In other words, those who are here referred to refuse to give the message, claiming that the seasons come and go, one after another. The inference suggested by this statement is that they will continue to come and go and that there is no necessity of proclaiming to Israel the coming of the Lord.

In verses 9-11 those who do heed the admonition to give this message of comfort are urged to proclaim with no uncertain sound that the Lord is coming, and that He will come, not as He did nineteen hundred years ago, in humility and gentleness, but that He will return as a mighty warrior, having His reward and His recompense with Him. At the same time, however, He will be as gentle as a shepherd and will take care of His own.

In verses 12-17, the prophet soared to ethereal heights in his majestic description of this Mighty God whose coming is to be announced. This one is the Creator of the universe; He is the great architect; He is the great chemist; He is the great builder; He is the omniscient one; He is the all-powerful one. In comparison with Him the nations are but as a drop of water in a bucket. They are no more than the small dust of the balance. He is so very great that the cedars of Lebanon are not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient to make an appropriate offering to Him. In fact, there is nothing in the world that can be considered as an offering worthy of His majesty, splendor, and glory.

Notwithstanding the fact that Israel had the knowledge of God, many of them were turning to idols and making images. This, to the prophet, seemed a ridiculous and senseless thing on the part of intelligent men.

Then, looking toward the heavens, the orator shouted that He "that sitteth above the circle of the earth" was so very great that the inhabitants of the world "are as grasshoppers" in His sight. Isaiah, like Job and Solomon, knew that the earth was round and that viewed from the heavens it appears as a circle. From whence did

these men of God get this knowledge? They spoke contrary to the generally received ideas of their times. There is but one answer: God gave them their messages. This great God whose coming is to be announced to Israel, is the one who stretched out the heavens as a curtain and spread them out as a tent to dwell in. He is the one who created all the stars—as innumerable as they are. Because of His power not one of them is lacking. He knows them and calls them all by name. He controls the princes and the kings of this earth, who seem to act as if they were permanently located in their position, whereas He is the one who roots them up out of their security and complacency.

In the concluding paragraph, verses 27-31, Israel is seen to be lamenting her condition, thinking that the justice due to her has passed away, and that God has forgotten her. The prophet therefore reminded his audience that the Everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not faint; neither is He weary; there is no such thing as searching out His understanding. On the contrary, He is interested in the humblest, most insignificant man or woman in Israel. He is ready to help those who will wait for Him—His coming in fulfillment of the prophecy in this chapter.

"He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint" (vss. 29-31).

Here is the promise of divine assistance and help for those "that wait for Jehovah." We must give this message to the Hebrews now in order that the honest hearts among them may know of His (Messiah's) second coming, may turn to Him, and wait for Him to make this appearance. This promise therefore presupposes that those among God's people who now have the truth will give this prophetic message to Israel in order that the truth seekers may turn to God and wait for Him in the person of Messiah to appear, which thing He will do in His own good time and will bring the longed—for deliverance to His sorely tried people.

The Prophet Isaiah assumed that every honest truth seeker who desires facts can look into the heavens above and at the things upon the earth and can recognize that the one who created the universe is the one who is controlling the nations—is working in history. It is this one who will come again and deliver Israel and restore the faithful to favor with the Almighty.



### III. BELIEF IN GOD A NECESSARY CONVICTION

Having seen that belief in God is universal, we now wish to ascertain if possible whether this conviction is simply a matter of coincidence or whether it is an absolute necessity. In other words, is it possible for man to avoid or to eradicate the idea of God's existence from his being? Put differently, is it possible for man to discard the conviction regarding God's existence? Thus far it has been impossible to get a satisfactory explanation of this conviction upon any basis other than that it is a part of his constitution. To put the question another way, is it possible for a sane man to disbelieve the existence of God? Many answer this question in the affirmative, calling attention to the fact that there are not a few atheists. In view of this situation, let us look more closely at the evidence and facts.

All fair-minded, scientific men must admit from the evidence which we have that belief in God is a universal fact. Can we say that this conviction is a *necessary* belief? It is, if it is based upon the very constitution of man's nature. If it is grounded in his being, it will be impossible for him, in his sane, sober moments, to discard this belief.

There are certain truths which are of such a nature that it is impossible to gainsay them. For instance, no one in a normal state of mind can deny that two and two make four. There are, however, different kinds of necessary truths. For example, there is the type of first principles the opposite of which is unthinkable. The principle of the law of causation falls into this category. There must be an adequate cause for every effect. The whole is greater than any of its parts. The opposite of these propositions is inconceivable.

In the next place, there are truths involved in certain physical phenomena and others pertaining only to mental or spiritual data. Although these exist in two separate realms and differ one from the other in producing conviction, nevertheless each is real in its own sphere. To the normal mind which is unhampered by preconceived ideas, the material or physical world is a reality, the existence of which cannot be denied. At the same time no fair-minded person can logically and reasonably deny the existence of mind and psychological phenomena. To be more specific taking a sober, rational, and logical view of myself, I cannot deny the reality of my body. Nor can I dispute the existence of my mind. The impossibility of denying either of these is apparent. Though the evidence in each case is different, conviction regarding both is produced and is unshakable.

In the third place, there is a class of truths which cannot be denied without doing violence to the laws of our mental make-up. In this realm lie moral and spiritual facts. In instances where denial is possible, external influence or false reasoning has been brought to bear to produce such abnormal convictions. To draw an illustration from the physical realm, one would say that a plumb bob may, by a person, be held from a vertical line. When, however, it is released, it will return to the normal position. By reason of some preconceived and fanciful theory or teaching, one's mind may be pulled aside from the vertical line of truth and facts. For many physical reasons a person may deny the existence of God and also man's moral nature. While he is under the influence of such unfounded theories, he may honestly and conscientiously believe all of those positions which are involved in the theory. When, however, the false conception is brushed aside by the stark experiences of life with its stubborn facts, especially in the face of death and eternity, men forget, as a rule, the theories and philosophizings of the learned and begin to face facts as they are—often after it is too late, after they have by willful rejection of light and truth wrecked their moral and spiritual make-up. On this point I wish to quote Dr. Charles Hodge: "Whatever arouses the moral nature, whether it be danger, or suffering, or the approach of death, banishes unbelief in a moment. Men pass from skepticism to faith, in many cases, instantaneously; not of course by a process of argument, but by the existence of a state of consciousness with which skepticism is irreconcilable, and in the process of which it cannot exist. This fact is illustrated continually, not only in the case of the uneducated and superstitious, but even in the case of men of the highest culture. We see by everyday experience—and the statements of the Scriptures prove conclusively—that the moral law is indelibly written in man's very nature. This fact implies that there is a Lawgiver who thus constituted man as he is, who will enforce these great moral principles, and to whom man is responsible. As long therefore as man, in his normal condition, recognizes himself as a moral being, he must admit the existence of God to whom he is personally responsible for his life and actions. To this extent, and in this sense, therefore, it is to be admitted that the knowledge of God is innate and intuitive; that men no more need to be taught that there is a God, than they need to be taught that there is such a thing as sin. But as men are ignorant of the nature and extent of sin, while aware of its existence, until instructed by the Word of God, and enlightened by His Spirit; so they greatly need the same sources of instruction to give them and adequate knowledge of the nature of God, and their relation to Him."

There are, however, men who deny this innate knowledge of God and who attribute a belief in His existence to the reasoning faculty of man. Such philosophers tell us that men, who have reached a high plane of education, culture,

and science, by the inductive method in their examining nature and its phenomena, are the only ones who rationally come to the conclusion that a Supreme Being exists. A case analogous to this one, they claim is that which pertains to the law of gravitation. This power has been in existence in the physical realm since the creation, but was never understood properly until Newton recognized and stated the fundamental principles involved. This case is not analogous; because, as has been seen, it has been, from time immemorial to the present day the universal experience of the educated and uneducated, the cultured and uncultured alike, to believe in the existence of God.

Other thinkers endeavor to place the subject under discussion upon a different basis. To this class of philosophers, it seems evident that children and illiterate men, as they move in their limited spheres, stumble upon the idea of God from their various experiences. Such an hypothesis is the only reasonable foundation upon which they can base a conclusion relative to the different phenomena with which they come in contact. On this point I again quote Dr. Hodge; "Thus the existence of God is so obviously manifested, by everything within and around us, the belief in that existence is so natural, so suited to what we see and what we need, that it comes to be generally adopted. We are surrounded by facts which indicate design; by facts which demand a cause. We have a sense of the Infinite which is vague and void, until filled with God. We have a knowledge of ourselves as spiritual beings, which suggests the idea of God, who is Spirit. We have the consciousness of moral qualities, of the distinction between good and evil, and this makes us think of God as a Being of moral perfection." While the things just mentioned are true, none of them gives man his idea of God. As has already been seen, man's moral nature and the very constitution of his being inevitably lead him, with few exceptions, to the theistic faith. But these matters of daily experience, to which the author just quoted refers, only heighten and deepen and at the same time broaden and clarify man's intuitive, innate idea of God's existence.

I wish to summarize this phase of the subject by another quotation from Dr. Hodge: "The truth is, that all the faculties and feelings of our minds and bodies have their appropriate objects; and the possession of the faculty supposes the existence of those objects. The senses suppose the existence and reality of the objects of the sense. The eye, in its very structure, supposes that there is such an element as light; the sense of hearing would be unaccountable and inconceivable without sound; and the sense of touch would be inconceivable were there no tangible objects. The same is true of our social affections; they necessitate the assumption that there are relations suited to their exercises. Our moral nature supposes that the distinction between right and wrong is not chimerical or

imaginary. In like manner our religious feelings, our sense of dependence, our consciousness of responsibility, our aspirations after fellowship with some being higher than ourselves, and higher than anything which the world or nature contains, necessitate the belief in the existence of God."

One has called our attention to the fact that the evidence points in the direction that Adam, when he was created, believed in the external world and at the same time in the existence of God. His religious nature, unbiased and unstained by sin and rebellion, apprehended the existence of God as truly as his sense perceived the external world.

There is still another class of theologians who attribute the idea of God to an original, supernatural revelation which the Lord made to primitive man. It is true beyond a doubt that there was such a revelation. Enoch was a true prophet (Jude 1:14). Abraham had the revelation of God and obeyed His voice, keeping His charge, commandments, and laws (Gen. 26:5). In this connection let us remember that he lived approximately four hundred years before Moses. Nevertheless there was a divine revelation in his day which he obeyed. (For further light on this most interesting phase of our study, see chapter 1, *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*. As has already been shown, the knowledge of God is perceived by man's intuitive powers; but in the light of the revelation which the Lord made of Himself and of His will from the very beginning, this knowledge was clarified and enriched.

#### IV. POSITIVE PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Notwithstanding the fact that by his innate powers man recognizes the existence of the Supreme Being, there are those who deny the possibility of proving His existence. As we have already seen, the Apostle Paul stated that the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived by the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity. From this declaration we must conclude that it is possible for us to prove the existence of the Almighty. There are usually four lines of reasoning employed by theologians and philosophers in establishing this theses: the *ontological*, *cosmological*, *teleological*, and *anthropological* arguments. A misunderstanding however has arisen in regard to them. No one of these alone can prove the existence of the Supreme Being. The cosmological argument does prove the existence of an adequate cause operative in the universe. The teleological proof emphasizes the intelligence of this adequate cause, whereas the anthropological line of reasoning shows it to be a moral creature. Since the ontological argument is inconclusive and is lacking in

convincing power, I shall omit a discussion of it and shall proceed to the evidence drawn from the cosmological proof.

### A. *The Cosmological Argument*

The cosmological argument has by some been considered equivalent to the law of causation which may roughly be stated thus: All changes and phenomena are the result of some adequate cause. One sees that this statement, when viewed properly, is inadequate, for it is simply an assertion that every caused event must be the result of a prior cause. A more exact statement of the argument is that everything begun, whether it be material substance or phenomenon, is the result of a cause sufficient to produce it. The material heavens and earth as we view them today most obviously had a beginning and owe their existence to a cause sufficient to produce them as they now are. Modern science has greatly enlarged our conception of the vastness of the physical universe, the enormity of which staggers our finite minds. Evidently then the cause which produced it as it is today must be infinitely greater than the universe itself.

The fair-minded man must concede the cogency of the argument thus stated. Some, of course, will grant all that has been said. They reply however with the assertion that the phenomena to which I have just called attention does not account for the coming into existence of the material universe, but only to the change or changes which have brought it to its present condition. The force of this objection I unhesitatingly grant.

All science of today is built upon the law of causality, which asserts that there is an adequate cause for every result. If we should push the law of causation beyond its natural bounds, we would be forced to admit that there was a cause which brought the Eternal God into existence—but we will not be illogical and force this argument beyond its proper limits, seeing that truth and facts will not justify such conclusions. The evidence in the material universe does not require us to assume anything other than resident forces latent in nature to produce the results which we see on every hand—if we close our eyes to mind, psychic phenomena, and evidences of plan, purpose, and design. According to Flint, in *Theism*, "The Cosmological argument alone proves only force, and no mere force is God." In harmony with this conclusion is one from Diman, in *Theistic Argument*, who asserts, "The cosmological argument alone cannot decide whether the force that causes change is permanent self-existent mind, or permanent self-existent matter." Existence of mind in the universe is the only answer to the question. Whenever we

begin to discuss this phase of the subject, we immediately move away from the cosmological argument to that of teleology.

One replies that he concedes the existence of a cause which has produced the present phenomena, but insists that it is impossible for us to affirm that this cause was not in turn the result of a prior cause. Moreover, if this argument is granted—and no one from the basis of the cosmological argument can affirm anything more than that—one must admit that there might have been an indefinite series of causes which have been operating throughout the ages of the past eternity. If this position is taken, it is impossible from the cosmological argument to arrive at the conclusion that there was at the end of this long series of causes an uncaused Cause.

The skeptic may admit the law of causality in the universe but, at the same time, refuse to grant that this cause was anything more than a finite one. Our argument does not require the admission of a cause greater than one that was necessary to produce the phenomena or changes observed.

What does the cosmological argument prove? It simply brings us to the conclusion that there was a cause sufficiently great to produce the changes observable in the material substance of the universe and the phenomena as we observe them today. Further than this it cannot carry us. But this contribution to our knowledge in connection with other facts, as we shall presently see, lays a firm foundation upon which the theist can stand and enables him to see facts as they really are. In other words, the cosmological argument is a bedrock fact upon which the truth seeker may take his stand as he enters into a further investigation of additional evidence bearing upon the subject of God's existence.

### *B. The Teleological Argument*

The teleological argument is not, as some have supposed, properly reasoning from design to a designer. That design argues a designer is an identical proposition. When one observes order, beneficial arrangement, and allocation of goods and objects in any system or place, one immediately and logically infers the existence and operation of an intelligent cause as that which produced the phenomena observed. The one using the teleological argument, observing the order, collocation, and distribution of things in the cosmic order, sees in such a system the proof of the existence of an intelligence who possesses volition and power sufficient to produce or to account for the phenomena which he observes. For instance, I wish to call attention to the science of chemistry as an illustration of

correlation to definite ends; the relation of inanimate creation to animate; order and gradation in organic creation; the existence and interrelation of the so-called laws of nature; and finally the great cosmic order.

From the very beginning of the human race to the present time men have been impressed with the soundness of this argument to prove the existence of a personal intelligent Being whom we call God. Some would, however, try to invalidate the force of the evidence by asserting that in many instances there are order and system apart from intelligent purpose<sup>3</sup>. I concede that there may, by *bare chance*, appear to be some order and beneficent allocation of things. Nevertheless, we must, when we understand our own nature and constitution, deny the force of this suggestion. The law of chance\* prohibits our accepting for one moment the proposition that accident and coincidence could produce the enormous amount of evidence of order and intelligence observable throughout the universe. But, one claims that this order and distribution of good and blessing are due to physical forces and law. In reply I wish to call attention to the fact that law always implies a lawmaker who is able to carry out the so-called law.

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<sup>3</sup> Pantheism, generally speaking, conceives of God's being the totality of all existence. Nature is impersonal and comes to consciousness only in man. It is illogical in many respects. One must shut his eyes to many facts in order to accept it as a philosophical explanation of the universe. It does not come within the scope of this work to refute it.

\* For the validity of the proof derived from the law of chance consult any textbook on higher arithmetic or algebra. "It is only within narrow, limits that seemingly purposeful arrangements are produced by chance. And therefore, as the signs of purpose increase, the presumption in favor of accidental origin diminishes."—Momerie, *Christianity and Evolution*. There are twenty-six letters in our alphabet. In *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language*, 1939, sec. ed., there are 600,000 words defined. These twenty-six letters of our alphabet were used in spelling these 600,000 words and the terms defining each. In addition to the dictionary proper there are certain sections giving much valuable information. According to the law of chance it is utterly unthinkable that this volume came into existence by blind chance or impersonal resident forces within. In the same manner the useful combinations, arrangements, allocation of things throughout the universe absolutely and unequivocally preclude the possibility of our attributing these things to blind chance.

The teleological argument cannot prove the existence of God. It does, however, as we have already seen, give positive evidence of the existence of a power possessing intelligence and will. As to whether or not this power is a person or such a being as the pantheist imagines, this argument alone does not and cannot establish.

There are those who call our attention to the fact that, should it be granted that there is a personal intelligence behind the physical universe, the evidence does not prove his unity nor his eternity; for there could be system, organization, and coordination by mutual agreement of various intelligent beings. Nor does the evidence prove the eternal nature of this Intelligence the existence of which is gathered from the general idea of teleology which is seen everywhere; for, as far as this line of reasoning goes, there could be such a being as the imaginary demiurge of the Gnostic Systems. From the teleological argument, therefore since our minds are finite, we cannot draw the conclusion that this Intelligence is infinite and eternal.

The value of the teleological argument has been summed up in the following words of Dr. A. H. Strong: "It proves from certain useful collocations and instances of order which have clearly had a beginning, or in other words, from the present harmony of the universe, that there exists an intelligence and will adequate to its contrivance. But whether this intelligence and will are personal or impersonal, creator or only fashioner, one or many, finite or infinite, eternal or owing its being to another, necessary or free, this argument cannot assure us.

"In it, however, we take a step forward. The causative power which we have proved by the cosmological argument has now become an intelligent and voluntary power."

### *C. The Anthropological Argument*

We have already seen from the cosmological argument that we must accept the proposition that there is a cause in the universe adequate to produce the various changes and phenomena which we observe at the present time. More than this we could not draw from that line of reasoning. We did, however, step forward in our investigation by examining the teleological argument. From it we have seen that there is evidence that proves conclusively the existence of a power in the universe which is both intelligent and volitional. Whether or not this power or being is personal or impersonal, this line of reasoning is unable to settle. At this stage of our investigation we make another step forward by investigating the



anthropological argument. In the world as we know it today, there are various forms of life, all of which—even microscopic ones—give evidence of a certain amount of intelligence and determination. Thus we know life, as it exists today, from the one-cell animal of the amoeba up to man. Each type of life is limited in its intelligence and volitional capacity. In this discussion, however, it is necessary for us to divide all living beings into two sections: those below the human plane and man who alone lives on the high level of communion and fellowship with the Almighty.

Scientific observation of all animal life—from the amoeba up to the highest form of the anthropoid ape—gives evidence of a certain amount of intelligence and of determination. Animals are guided by instincts and will but are devoid of the capacities, capabilities, and powers that are characteristic of the human family.

Animals do not give any evidence of capabilities for advancement. The sphere of each species is very much limited. The single individual possesses the characteristics of the species in the beginning of life as much as at the close. There is, therefore, no progress and advancement made either by the individual or by the species.

When we come, however, to the consideration of the human family, we see that man possesses intelligence, sensibility, will, and conscience. He is capable, as he has demonstrated time and again, of great and wonderful advancement—within certain limits. From what source did he derive the characteristics which differentiate him from the lower forms of life? There can be but one answer, which is that his intellectual and moral nature must have had as its author a moral and intellectual Being. This fact becomes evident from the general proposition that something cannot be taken from nothing. Man's intellectual and spiritual capacities are unlike that of any other creature. He as a moral and intellectual being had a beginning upon the earth. Material and unconscious forces cannot be considered as sufficient to produce his reason, conscience, and free will. Since he possesses these characteristics, obviously the Cause bestowing these endowments upon him must of necessity have been a self-conscious and moral Being. But these characteristics are those of personality. The reason, therefore, for man's possessing these qualities is that there exists in the universe an intelligent personal Being.

Man's moral nature demands in explanation of its being the existence of a holy lawgiver and judge. The correctness of this statement becomes obvious when we remember that our consciences recognize the existence of a moral law which has supreme authority over us. Whenever we violate this moral law of our beings, we

experience compunctions of conscience and fear of judgment. This moral law is not self-imposed; neither are the threats of judgment self-executed. These facts argue for the existence of a holy will which has imposed these laws upon our nature and a chastening power that will execute the threats of our moral being.

Man's emotional and volitional nature argues for the existence of a Being who himself constitutes the worthy object of man's affection and whose existence calls forth the best and highest in the human soul. A being possessing power, knowledge, wisdom, holiness, righteousness, and goodness can meet the demands of the human heart. Belief in the existence of such a Being does call forth the noblest, the highest, and the best in man. If such a Being does not exist, a false conception works in man, but the truth cannot. Such a thought as this is preposterous. The facts as they exist therefore demand unequivocally the existence of a moral and intellectual Being, who possesses the characteristics which are common to man in a holy, undefiled state, but in an infinitely greater degree.

By the anthropological argument we are brought to the conviction that a personal God does exist. This argument, however, does not and cannot prove that He is eternal. Neither does it demonstrate that He is infinite in all His being and perfections. This is evident from the fact that we are reasoning from the finite. Moreover, from the cold facts of nature, the love, mercy, and goodness of this personal Being, of whose existence we are now convinced, are not revealed. Dr. Strong sums up this argument in the following words: "The value of the argument is, that it assures us of the existence of a personal Being, who rules us in righteousness, and who is the proper object of supreme affection and service. But whether this Being is the original creator of all things, or merely the author of our own existence, whether he is infinite or finite, whether he is a being of simple righteousness or also of mercy, this argument cannot assure us."

After having examined carefully the ontological argument and having pointed out its defects, Dr. Strong summarized the value of the arguments which we have been considering in the following words; "But the existence of a Being indefinitely great, personal Cause, Contriver, and Lawgiver, has been proved by the preceding argument; for the law of parsimony requires us to apply the conclusion of the first three arguments to the one Being, and not to many. To one Being we may ascribe the infinity and perfection, the idea of which lies at the basis of the Ontological Argument—ascribe them, not because they are demonstrably His, but because our mental constitution will not allow us to think otherwise. Thus clothing Him with all perfection which the human mind can conceive, and these in illimitable fullness, we have one whom we may justly call God."

In our investigation thus far we have been led to the conclusion by the three lines of reasoning that there is standing behind the universe a Power adequate to produce the changes and the phenomena which we see today, that this Power possesses intelligence and volition, and that this Being is a personal one who possesses in an infinite degree the attributes of intelligence, volition, and a moral character.

I would like to sum up the results thus far of our examination by giving another quotation from Dr. Strong: "The three forms of proof already mentioned—the Cosmological, the Teleological, and the Anthropological Arguments—may be likened to the three arches of a bridge over a wide and rushing river. The bridge has only two defects, but these defects are very serious. The first is that one cannot get on to the bridge; the end toward the hither bank is wholly lacking; the bridge of logical argument cannot be entered upon except by assuming the validity of logical processes; this assumption takes for granted at the outset the existence of a God who has made our faculties to act correctly; we get on to the bridge, not by logical process, but only by a leap of intuition, and by assuming at the very beginning the very thing which we set out to prove. The second defect of the so-called bridge of argument is that when one has once gotten on, he can never get off. The connection with the further bank is also lacking. All the premises from which we argue being finite, we are warranted in drawing only a finite conclusion. Argument cannot reach the Infinite, and only an infinite Being is worthy to be called God. We can get off from our logical bridge, not by logical process, but only by another and final leap of intuition, and by once more assuming the existence of the infinite Being whom we have so vainly sought to reach by mere argument. The process seems to be referred to in Job 11:7: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?"

Dr. Strong has correctly told us that we can enter this logical bridge by assuming the validity of the logical processes and by assuming also the existence of God who made our faculties to act correctly. In making these initial presuppositions we are both scientific and logical. To illustrate, may I call attention to the fact that in geometry we often assume a certain proposition to be true. Starting out with such an hypotheses, we build upon it propositions which we have already proved and finally and logically reach the conclusion sought, which is the very thing assumed. Such a procedure is recognized as sound and logical. In this way we establish the correctness of the proposition assumed in the beginning. This method is adopted in all scientific research. This is nothing other than the trial-and error method. When we, led by our intuitive knowledge, assume the existence of God and the reliability of our mental processes, and reach the logical bridge, presented by Dr. Strong, we see that the data justify and establish the fact of the existence of a personal God.

We get from this logical bridge to the farther bank in the same way. There we stand on bedrock facts and rejoice in the eternal God and His existence.

In keeping with what Dr. Strong has said I wish to quote Fisher, in *Supernatural Origin of Christianity*: "What then is the purport and force of the several arguments for the existence of God? We reply that these proofs are the different modes in which faith expresses itself and seeks confirmation. In them faith, or the object of faith, is more exactly conceived and defined, and in them is found a corroboration, not arbitrary but substantial and valuable, of that faith which springs from the soul itself. Such proofs, therefore, are neither on the one hand sufficient to create and sustain faith, nor are they on the other hand to be set aside as of no value." Another has affirmed that these arguments are not a bridge, but are simply the guy-wires upon which a great suspension bridge of intuition hangs, by means of which we pass over the gulf separating God from man."

We have thus far seen that belief in a Supreme Being on the part of man is to be numbered among the fundamental postulates and axiomatic truths which are inherent in man's nature and which only await the occasion of experience to cause these general conceptions to unfold into the blossom of a trusting, relying faith. Thus the three lines of reasoning which we have just examined in the briefest manner possible confirm and establish man's intuitive knowledge of God and His existence.

God has, in His wisdom and goodness, left certain chasms, figuratively speaking, unbridged, which man by faith alone must cross. He must live by faith and serve his Maker in the spirit of Abraham who is the father of all the faithful. The moral quality of man's service and loyalty to God would be destroyed if there had not been left a margin for the exercise of his faith. From the very nature of his constitution and his relation to his Maker, he sees that the Almighty has shown His wisdom and mercy by withholding overwhelming proof that would force or coerce the will to a firm belief in His existence and man's utter dependence upon Him.

As long as man is in the flesh and limited by his restricted horizon, he will be unable to understand adequately the subject of the existence of the Almighty. He does not have to comprehend the subject. In fact, it is impossible for the finite to comprehend the Infinite. A person does not have to understand even the simplest rules of the culinary art in order to enjoy a good meal. By faith he accepts the food which is prepared for him and enjoys it. Of course, if he has a knowledge of food chemistry and understands dietary laws, he can choose those foods and such combinations as are agreeable to his nature and thus avoid sicknesses which often

produce ill-health for many. In the same manner men can by faith accept the God of nature and the bountiful provision which He has made for their welfare both in time and throughout all eternity.

If the reader will continue the study of the message of this book with an open mind in order to find out the will of this one Eternal God concerning whose existence I have been speaking in this chapter and will seek to know His will with a view to conforming his life and conduct thereto, I shall feel myself amply repaid for my efforts to present the basic facts of revelation set forth in this treatise.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PLURALITY OF THE DIVINE PERSONALITIES

UPON opening the Bible one is immediately confronted in the Hebrew text (Gen. 1:1) with the word "God" in the plural number; hence it is proper to begin this study with:

#### I. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLURAL NOUN **אֱלֹהִים**, 'elohim

In the first statement of the Tenach (Old, Testament):

**בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:** "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," the word which is translated "God" is **אֱלֹהִים**, and is in the plural number, as is well known to all Hebrew scholars. All Hebrew nouns ending with **—ים**, *im*, are masculine and are in the plural number. As an example note the word, **כְּרֻבִים**, which means more than one, the singular being **כְּרוּב**, *cherub* (see Psa. 18:10 (11)). Another illustration is **שָׂרָפִים** which is the plural of **שָׂרָף** *saraph*.

For conclusive proof that **אֱלֹהִים** is in the plural number, and means more than one, look, dear reader, at the first commandment found in Exodus 20:3.

**לֹא־יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל־פָּנַי:** "Not shall there be to you other gods before me" (Author's literal Tr.). The word **אֱלֹהִים** here is correctly translated "gods," meaning many gods, and is modified by **אֲחֵרִים** which means "strange" or "other" and is likewise in the plural number.

An instance may be cited which is found in Deut.13:2(3). **נִלְכָּה אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים:** **אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעְתֶּם וְנַעֲבָדָם:** saying, "Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them." Here the words translated "other gods" are the same as occurred in the first commandment (see Ex. 18:11 and Judg. 10:13). All translators, both Jewish and Gentile, correctly translate **אֱלֹהִים** "gods" in these and in all other passages where it refers to idols. Hundreds of instances could be adduced, but these are sufficient to make the point clear.

If, when this word refers to heathen gods, it is to be translated grammatically and correctly in the plural number, why should the grammar be ignored and the word

be translated as if it were a singular noun when it refers to Israel's God, since the facts are that it is a plural noun and means more than one? <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The writer is aware of the argument that the plural noun **אלהים** is the plural of "excellency, majesty." He admits frankly, that in the Semitic world such usage was common when subjects addressed their king or at times spoke concerning him; but in the passages examined in this section, and in numerous other passages, there is nothing in the context of any of them which warrants a departure from the strict grammatical interpretation of the words and the substitution of an interpretation invented to support a theological bias.

Proof for the "plural of Majesty" is sought for, in such passages as Judg. 11: 24: "Wilt not thou possess that which **כמוש** (Chemosh) thy God giveth thee to possess?" **כמוש** is in the singular number and is the name of the God of Moab, and in apposition with it is **אלהיך** "thy Gods." From this passage it is argued that since **אלהיך** is in apposition with **כמוש** and since it is in the plural number, it is the plural of majesty, which conforms to the Semitic usage with reference to rulers. Therefore it is contended that **אלהינו אלהיך אלהים** etc., simply mean "God, thy God, our God," and are not to be taken in their primary, ordinary, literal meaning, the supposition being that when applied to the God of Israel they are the plural of majesty. In reply to this argument it is sufficient to note the fact that **כמוש** was not the name of one idol only, but it was the name of innumerable idols throughout the kingdom. Hence **כמוש** though in the singular form is a collective noun which embraced every idol of the realm. Hence **אלהיך** "thy gods" conforms strictly to the correct grammatical usage of the language and means "thy gods." The same explanation holds good with reference to Dagon in I Sam. 5:7 and like passages.

## II. SIGNIFICANCE OF PLURAL VERBS USED WITH אֱלֹהִים, 'elohim

In addition to the proof which is furnished by the plural noun אֱלֹהִים, the use of the verb in the plural number, used in connection with אֱלֹהִים, indicates that there is a plurality of Divine Personalities.<sup>2</sup> In Gen. 20 there is recorded a conversation which took place between Abimelech and Abraham, in which conversation Abraham (v. 13) said: וַיְהִי כִּאֲשֶׁר הִתְעוּ אֹתִי אֱלֹהִים מִבֵּית אָבִי: "And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house." The word הִתְעוּ, *hith'u*, is in the plural number and has as its subject אֱלֹהִים. From the use of this plural verb the one legitimate inference that may be drawn is that Abraham recognized that there is a plurality of Divine Personalities.

Again, this same fact is presented in Gen. 35:7, in which passage one reads that Jacob built an altar to the Lord, and called the name of the place: אֵל בֵּית-אֵל: "For there the Gods revealed themselves unto him when he fled from the face of his brother" (Author's Tr.). The verb נִגְלוּ, *niglu*, is in the plural number and has for its subject הָאֱלֹהִים. There were more than one of the Divine Persons who revealed themselves to Jacob as indicated by the plural noun and the plural verb.

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<sup>2</sup> Personality is not to be confounded with corporeality. One is as much of a personality after death as he is before. Angels who have not human bodies are personalities. Likewise, God is רוּחַ "spirit" without a material body yet He is a personality.



### III. THE WORD "GOD" APPLIED TO TWO DIVINE PERSONALITIES

The plurality of Divine Personalities is again seen by the fact that in several Scriptures there appears to be a distinction between "God" and "God." A typical case of this distinction is found in Psa. 45:6,7 (7,8). The inspired Psalmist in verse 6, addressing God, said: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: A sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom." From this statement it is clearly seen that the Psalmist is addressing the Eternal, Omnipotent God, for such is the signification of אֱלֹהִים "God." Continuing the conversation with God in verse 7 (8), the Psalmist furthermore, says: **עַל־כֵּן מָשַׁחְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן שִׁשְׁוֹן מִתְחַבֵּיךָ** "Therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The statement in Ex. 4:16 **וְדַבַּרְיָהוּא לְךָ אֱלֹהֵעַם וְהָיָה הוּא יְהִי־לְךָ לִפְהָ וְאַתָּה תִּהְיֶה־לּוֹ לֵאלֹהִים** "And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God," is considered by some to be overwhelming proof that אֱלֹהִים, though plural in form, is singular in meaning. In support of this contention the question is asked, "How can אֱלֹהִים be plural when Moses was to be to Aaron **לֵאלֹהִים**?" This question is quite proper and seems to bear directly upon the question under consideration.

In replying to this argument it is sufficient to call attention to the fact that a comparison or parable has one point of contact with the truth to be taught, and no attempt should be made to make it fit in all points. The function of a comparison may be illustrated by two circles which are tangent the one to the other; hence there is but one point of contact. Thus it is with all comparisons; those illustrations are used whose outstanding characteristic will illustrate the matter in hand.

The context of this passage points definitely to what the point of contact is between the illustration and the lesson to be taught. Verse 15 states that Moses should speak to Aaron and that the former should put his words in the latter's mouth. Verse 16 adds that he, Aaron, should speak to the people in behalf of Moses and that he (Aaron) should be a mouth for him (Moses). These data show that Aaron was to be the spokesman **נִבִּיא** for Moses. A spokesman or prophet in Israel was a representative of God, hence, since the message Aaron was to deliver the people was to be given him by Moses, he sustained the relationship of prophet to Moses; since God is the correlative term of prophet it was but natural that God should say that Moses should be to Aaron as God. This conclusion is furthermore confirmed by the fact that Moses being invested with the power of God to perform miracles and to deliver the chosen people was God's representative on earth. These facts being true, to speak of the reciprocal relationship between Moses and Aaron in these words "he shall be to thee for a mouth and thou shalt be to him for God," was the only natural, normal comparison to be used. Therefore this passage has no bearing upon the meaning of אֱלֹהִים. The same explanation is to be given for Ex. 7:1 and all similar passages.

From this Psalm it is evident that the inspired Psalmist in verse 6 addressed God, who, according to the Targum, is the Messiah; hence אֱלֹהִים in verse 6 is in the second person; and in speaking to God the Messiah, the Psalmist speaks of "God, thy God" in the third person, who is the God of the Messiah; but since the Messiah is none other than God in human form, as will appear later on in this book, it is clear from this passage that there are at least two Divine Personalities who are eternal and omnipotent. Again, at least two Divine Personalities appear in Hosea's prophecy. In Hosea 1: 2, 4, 6 the Lord speaks to Israel. Continuing His message to her in verse 7, the Lord says, וְאֶת־בֵּית יְהוּדָה אֲרַחֵם וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּים בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם "I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them (Israel) by the Lord their God." If one man should promise another that he would do a certain work by a third person, it would be quite evident that the one who does the work is different from the one through whom he does it. Such is the case with this prediction. Hence the Lord who speaks is different from the Lord who actually delivers Israel. As another illustration of the distinction between the Divine Personalities, note Psalms 110:1: נָא יְהוָה לֹאֲדֹנִי שֵׁב לִימִינִי עַד־אֲשִׁית אִיבֶיךָ הָדָם לְרֵגְלֶיךָ: "Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This Psalm is likewise understood in rabbinical writings to be a messianic prediction. This statement being true, the Lord speaks to the Psalmist's Lord a certain revelation. אֲדֹנִי 'adoni, is here used with reference to the Messiah; hence He is divine. (See Chapter XIII of *the Eternal God Revealing Himself* for discussion of Psalms 110). Therefore from this passage it is also manifest that there are at least two Divine Personalities.

#### IV. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLURAL NOUN אֲדֹנָי 'adonai

The word אֲדֹנָי is the plural construct form of the word אֲדֹנִי with the suffix ׀, which is the personal pronoun "my" first person, singular number, possessive case, and which is attached to a plural or dual noun. Hence this sacred name, which occurs hundreds of times in the Tenach and is applied to God only, is in the plural number. This fact likewise corroborates the position that there are more than one Divine Personality.

## V. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLURAL PRONOUNS

A fifth group of facts pointing toward the conclusion of a plurality of Divine Personalities is the use of the plural pronouns in a number of passages which refer to God.

A. The first example where this usage is found is in Gen. 1:26 which gives a conversation introduced by the words, וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים "God said": נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ "Let us make man in our image, and according to our likeness." From this quotation one is forced to the irresistible conclusion that the speaker, who is God, and the one to whom He was speaking, are of the same divine essence or nature, for he uses the words דְּמוּת צֶלֶם *demuth tselem*, "image and likeness" in the singular number and attaches the plural personal pronoun "our" to these singular nouns. This fact in and of itself shows that the speaker and the ones addressed are of the same image and substance. Hence since the speaker is God, the eternal God, the ones spoken to are none less than the eternal God.

B. A second use of the plural personal pronoun is found in Gen. 3:22, in which God says after man's disobedience וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים הֵן הָאָדָם הָיָה כְּאֶחָד מֵאֵמוֹ "Behold, the man is become as one of us." Again, it is evident that the speaker, the self-existing God, speaks to another who is of the same nature as Himself, by the use of the expression כְּאֶחָד מֵאֵמוֹ "as one of us." Such language as this God could not use in speaking to a created being. The language unquestionably implies the equality of the speaker and the ones addressed.

C. This same usage is seen in the account of the destruction of the Tower of Babel recorded in Gen. 11. In verse 7 God said הֵבֵה נִרְדָּה וְנִבְלָה שָׁם שְׂפָתָם "Come, let us go down, and there confound their language." The explanation of the two passages just discussed is the only satisfying interpretation of this passage.

Solomon, to whom God gave special wisdom (I Kings 3:12), urged young people in the days of their youth to וִזְכֹּר אֶת-בּוֹרְאֶיךָ "remember now thy creators" (Author's Tr., Eccl. 12:1). To the Hebrew student it is very plain that בּוֹרְאֶיךָ *bor'eka*, is in the plural number, as is indicated by the accompanying vowel which joins the personal pronoun "thy" to the participle "creators." Again, in Psa. 149:2 יִשְׂמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֹשָׂיו "Let Israel rejoice in his Makers." The personal pronoun יִי "his" shows that the participle is in the plural number and refers to Israel's God.

The facts noted in this paragraph confirm the interpretation of the significance of the pronouns in paragraphs A, B, and C.

## VI. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLURAL ADJECTIVE

In Deut. 4: 7 appears the following statement:

**כִּי מִי־גוֹי גָדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־לּוֹ אֱלֹהִים קְרֹבִים אֵלָיו כִּי־הָיָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּכָל־קְרָאֵנוּ אֵלָיו:**

"For what great nation is there, that hath a god so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is whensoever we call upon him?" In the translation of the Jewish Pub. Soc. **אֱלֹהִים** is translated as though it were a singular noun and capitalized, which fact shows that the translator understood that it referred to the God of Israel. Isaac Leeser translates it "gods." In the Revised Version it is translated by the expression "a god." These facts show a diversity of opinion as to whom Moses had in mind. This question, however, does not affect the grammar of the original text. The question is, "Is **אֱלֹהִים** singular or plural?" That it is plural is clearly seen from the adjective **קְרֹבִים**, *kerovim*, which is in the plural number and which modifies it. The singular of this adjective is **קָרֹב**, *karov*.

Another instance of the adjective in the plural number modifying **אֱלֹהִים** appears in Josh. 24:19,20:

**וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל־הָעָם לֹא תוּכְלוּ לַעֲבֹד אֶת־יְהוָה כִּי־אֱלֹהִים קְדֹשִׁים הוּא אֱלֹהֵי קַנּוּא הוּא לֹא־יִשָּׂא לַפֶּשַׁעְכֶּם וּלְחַטְאוֹתֵיכֶם: כִּי תַעֲזֹבוּ אֶת־יְהוָה וַעֲבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהֵי נָכָר וְשָׁב וְהָרַע לָכֶם וְכָלָה אֶתְכֶם אַחֲרֵי אֲשֶׁר־הֵיטִיב לָכֶם:**

"And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgression nor your sins. If ye forsake the Lord, and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you evil, and consume you, after that he hath done you good." **אֱלֹהִים** is here modified by **קְדֹשִׁים**, *kedoshim*, which is in the plural number **קְדוֹשׁ** is singular. Therefore **אֱלֹהִים** is in the plural number since there must be agreement between the adjective and the noun which it modifies.

## VII. אֱלֹהִים TRANSLATED "JUDGES"

Another fact which proves that אֱלֹהִים is plural is that in Ex. 21:6; 22:8,9,28 of the translation by Isaac Leeser it is rendered "judges." In the version of the Jewish Pub. Soc. in the text it is translated "God" with this marginal note, "that is, the judges." In the American Revised Version (marginal note) it is likewise translated "the judges." Whenever certain ones came for grievance to the judges, who were God's official representatives in Israel, Moses said that they were coming to God. Hence in a secondary sense the word might properly be rendered "judges." The point, however, here is that it is recognized by these translators as being in the plural.

## VIII. THE MEANING OF אֱלֹהִים, יְהוָה, אֵל, 'el, 'elohim, yahweh

The data which have been presented under the preceding divisions of this chapter prove conclusively that there is a plurality of personalities in the Divine Being. Evidence corroborating this conclusion may be seen in a quotation from Joshua 22:21-29.

21 Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh answered, and spake unto the heads of the thousands of Israel, 22 The Mighty One, God, Jehovah, the Mighty One, God, Jehovah; he knoweth; and Israel he shall know: if it be in rebellion, or if in trespass against Jehovah (save thou us not this day), 23 that we have built us an altar to turn away from following Jehovah; or if to offer thereon burnt-offering or meal-offering, or if to offer sacrifices of peace-offerings thereon, let Jehovah himself require it; 24 and if we have not *rather* out of carefulness done this, *and* of purpose, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with Jehovah, the God of Israel? 25 for Jehovah hath made the Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no portion in Jehovah: so might your children make our children cease from fearing Jehovah. 26 Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt-offering, nor for sacrifice: 27 but it shall be a witness between us and you, and between our generations after us, that we may do the service of Jehovah before him with our burnt-offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace-offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no portion in Jehovah. 28 Therefore said we, It shall be, when they so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we shall say, Behold the pattern, of the altar of Jehovah, which our fathers made, not for burnt-offering, nor for sacrifice; but it is a witness between us and you. 29 Far be it from us that we should rebel against

Jehovah, and turn away this day from following Jehovah, to build an altar for burnt-offering, for meal-offering, or for sacrifice, besides the altar of Jehovah our God that is before his tabernacle.

The occasion which called forth these words was as follows. At the completion of the wars of conquest the men of the two and one-half tribes of Israel who settled on the east side of Jordan bade farewell to their comrades-in-arms (the warriors of the nine and one-half tribes who settled on the west side of the river) and started on their way home. Upon their reaching the Plains of Jericho, they erected an altar "by the Jordan, a great altar to look upon" (Josh. 22:10). Their purpose in building it was that it might serve as a memorial to which they in future generations could point as evidence in affirming that they were of the same stock as were their brethren on the west side of Jordan. When the news concerning the erecting of this altar reached the Israelites, who had just settled down in their own homes, they flew to arms and pursued their brethren, overtaking them in the Plains of the Jordan. Immediately they accused them of attempting to set up an altar for the purpose of worshiping God—contrary to the instructions given by Moses. In reply those accused stated the case as given in the quotation above. From the context it is clear that the accusers thought of this altar as a place of idolatrous worship. This idea is reflected in the answer to this false charge.

In making their defense, the heads of the thousands of Israel declared: "God, Gods, Jehovah—God, Gods, Jehovah—he knoweth; and Israel he shall know: if it be in rebellion, or if in trespass against Jehovah (save thou us not this day), that we have built us an altar to turn away from following Jehovah ... (lit. trans.). Let the reader note that the word for *God*, which is אֱל, 'el, is in the singular number. In apposition with it is אֱלֹהִים, 'elohim, which literally means *Gods*. Also in apposition with these words is יְהוָה, *Yahweh*, which means the *Eternal One*, or the *Uncaused Cause* of all things, and which is translated *Jehovah*. The use of אֱל, *God*, in the singular indicates the unity of the Divine Being. The employment of אֱלֹהִים, *Gods*, in the plural, which is in apposition with אֱל, 'el, *God*, is equivalent to an affirmation of a plurality of personalities in the Almighty. The word *Jehovah*, being in apposition with these terms, is used for the purpose of identifying those to whom the speakers refer by the use of the word *Gods* in the plural as being the God of Israel. (The force of this last statement will appear more fully in Chapter III.)

The fact that the three terms, just mentioned, were used on this occasion is not accidental. For instance, there would have been no point in the use of the word אֵל, 'el, and then repeating it. Neither would there have been sense in employing the term אֱלֹהִים, 'elohim, and then repeating it. Moreover, this was not in accordance with Hebrew custom. For instance, in the priestly blessing the word *Jehovah* appears in three parallel petitions (Num. 6:24-26). This same triple use of a term is seen in the cries of the seraphim, "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts ..." as they worshiped the Lord (Isa. 6:3). As we notice the terms יְהוָה, אֱלֹהִים, אֵל, God, Gods, Jehovah, we see three distinct forms. Evidently there was a reason for the employment of these different words. When we recognize that the first one is a noun in the singular number and means *God*, that the second is in the plural and signifies *Gods*, and that the third is the memorial name of the Almighty, which He revealed to Israel at Sinai, we may be absolutely certain that the biblical writers who use these terms employed them in order to express the exact thought conveyed by them when literally understood. There is nothing in this context to indicate a departure from their ordinary, usual significance. In such circumstances we are bound, therefore, to accept the literal meaning of each, if we wish to be logical and to arrive at the exact thought of the original speakers. Honest men, in ordinary life, who try to make themselves understood, as these men evidently did, employ words with their ordinary connotations. We have every reason to believe that these words are equivalent, as stated above, to an affirmation that the Divine Being is one in a definite sense of the term, that He is at the same time a plurality of personalities in a different sense; and that this Being is the one who entered into covenant relationship with Israel at Sinai, and who revealed His memorial name to the nation as Jehovah. The full significance\* of this statement will become more apparent in the next chapter on the unity of God.

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\* Some translators render the words under discussion in this manner: "God of gods, Jehovah, God of gods, Jehovah ..." The following phrases are examples of this construction: "God of gods" in Dan. 11:36, "the God of thy father" in Genesis 49:25, "the God of Israel" in Ps. 68:35, "God of truth" in Ps. 31:5, and "the God of Jacob" in Ps 146:5. From a grammatical standpoint, to translate אֵל אֱלֹהִים, 'el 'elohim, as God of gods is correct, but there is nothing in the context to lead one to adopt this rendering. There are, however, weighty considerations that favor the translation given in the text above.

In Psalm 50:1 we have the same idiom, word for word. It is rendered in the Revised Version as follows: "The Mighty One, God, Jehovah, hath spoken, And called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof." In the use of the word **אֵל**, *God*, in the singular, the unity of the Supreme Being is asserted; whereas the plurality of personalities subsisting in the one divine essence is set forth by the use of the word **אֱלֹהִים**, *God*. Thus this uni-plural, sovereign Being is identified as Jehovah **יְהוָה**, "the God of Israel."

In the light of the indisputable facts which have been presented in this chapter, we come to the conclusion that there is a plurality of personalities in the one God.

As we have already seen, **אֵל**, *'el*, is in the singular number and denotes one in the absolute sense of the term, but **אֱלֹהִים** is in the plural number and signifies more than two—three or more. The reason for this assertion is that the Hebrew had the dual number which, as all know, indicates two. It is true that the dual form in Hebrew, as in Greek, gradually disappeared and the plural number was used to take its place. Nevertheless, in the early stages of the language, when the dual was in use, it would have become a fixed form in referring to the Deity, if the early patriarchs had considered God as a dual being. The fact of their using the plural number indicated their understanding that there were at least three personalities in the Divine Being.

Another case in point is found in Deuteronomy 10:17:

**כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים הָאֵל הַגָּדֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֲשֶׁר  
לֹא-יִשָּׂא פָנִים וְלֹא יִקַּח שֹׁחַד:**

"For Jehovah your God, he is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, the mighty, and the terrible, who regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward." Literally rendered, the sentence reads as follows: "For Jehovah your Gods is the Gods of the gods, the Lords of the lords, the God—great, mighty, and terrible—who regards not persons, nor taketh reward." Here Jehovah, the true God, speaks of Himself as being the *Gods* of Israel. He also designates Himself as "the Gods of the gods, and the Lords of the lords." These expressions echo the plurality of divine personalities of the one Sovereign Being. But to avoid the error of polytheism, He asserts their unity by using the word **אֵל**, *God*, in the singular number. Then He differentiates Himself from idols by asserting His absoluteness in greatness, power, and terribleness—He is the almighty sovereign.



That I have put the normal construction upon Joshua 22:22, Psalm 50:1, and Deuteronomy 10:17 becomes apparent in the light that comes to us from Genesis 33:20: "And he erected then in altar, and called it '*el-elohe-Israel* [אל אלהי ישראל]." This expression rendered literally is "God, the Gods of Israel." To translate the second word of this expression in the genitive relation does not make sense. If one should do so, it would read as follows "God of the Gods of Israel." But to render the first word, which is in the singular number, *God of*; and the third, *Israel*, is to recognize a normal Hebraic idiom, which makes good sense. Hence the rendering, "God, the Gods of Israel," is in keeping with the genius of the language and makes the text intelligible to all who wish facts and truth. Here again we see that the forms of the words used confirm the conclusions reached regarding God's being a unity and at the same time a plurality of personalities.

#### IX. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF אֱלֹהִים, '*elohim*, WHEN USED AS A SINGULAR NOUN

In the preceding sections of this chapter we have seen data which prove conclusively, without a shade of a doubt, that אֱלֹהִים '*elohim*, is a plural noun and is rendered literally Gods. Every standard Hebrew lexicon which I have consulted shows this as a noun in the plural number, masculine gender. All standard Hebrew grammars tell us that **ים**— *im*, is the regular ending of a noun in the masculine gender and plural number. About this statement there can be absolutely no question. Since this word has the plural ending and is listed by all lexicographers and grammarians as a noun in the plural number, we must accept this connotation in every instance unless there are facts in the context showing a departure from the ordinary, usual literal meaning. In this connection let me call attention again to what I term the Golden Rule of Interpretation which is: "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."

Every context must be consulted in order to get the full significance of a given term. For instance, in Exodus 21:5,6, the word הָאֱלֹהִים, *ha'elohim*, appears, but from the context we see that it refers to the judges, the representatives of God. Again, in Psalm 97:7 this same word occurs in the sentence: "Worship him, all ye אֱלֹהִים, gods." Here it refers to the angels who are called upon to worship the Supreme Being; but in Exodus 20:3, we have these words: "Thou shalt have no other אֱלֹהִים, gods, before me." Here our word signifies foreign gods or idols. This

interpretation is demanded by the facts of the context. Such examples could be multiplied greatly, but these are sufficient to show that the word Elohim has various connotations and that each context must be examined closely to determine its meaning in a given case.

We are to assume, however, that it has its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning in every case where the evidence does not point to a secondary or derived meaning. Whenever, therefore, there is no contrary evidence, we are to understand our word as referring to the plurality of persons subsisting in the one divine nature.

To clarify the matter further, let us look at Genesis, chapter 1. In this stately narration, we see Elohim occurring thirty-two times. When we glance at the ending, we know that this is a noun in the plural number, masculine gender, and that it refers to the Eternal Creator. When we notice, in verse 26, that **אֱלֹהִים**, *'elohim*, said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ...," we know that this word can have only a plural connotation. A conversation was held among the Elohim in regard to making man. Someone spoke, addressing others, and urged that they, the speaker and the ones addressed, should make man in their own image. The one talking and those addressed had only one image and one likeness. This fact precludes our understanding that this proposal was spoken to created beings. Angels cannot create anything. The word **בָּרָא**, *bara'* which means *to create*, that is, to bring into existence that which had neither form nor substance, occurs fifty-odd times in the Hebrew Scriptures. Every time it appears in the active voice, God is the subject, because He and He alone can perform the act of creating. In view of this fact we may be absolutely certain that the speaker in this instance was not talking to created beings, but to other divine personalities, who have the power to create. Furthermore, we know that the Almighty has one image, being uncreated; the angels, being created, have a nature and image essentially different from God. But those engaging in this conference are in the same image and likeness—in the absolute sense of the term. There is but one likeness and one image. They therefore are of the same nature and essence. Since this conversation was held prior to the creation of man, and since those engaged in the conference are of one nature and substance, we see that these facts corroborate the position that the word Elohim is in the plural number. No other construction can be placed upon it in this context.

But in certain other contexts this same word Elohim has a singular connotation. This fact, however, is not attributable to the form of the word, but to the facts of

the context in which it appears. As an example of this usage, let us turn to Exodus 3:1-12:

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.

According to verse 2, מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה, "the angel of Jehovah," appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. As we shall see in Chapter IV, this "angel of Jehovah" is called יְהוָה, Jehovah, himself. Upon seeing this unusual sight, Moses approached the spot but was forbidden to draw any nearer. This prohibition was uttered by Jehovah. This Jehovah is none other than the angel of Jehovah of verse 2. In verse 4 we see that this angel of Jehovah who is here called אֱלֹהִים, 'elohim, Gods, spoke "out of the midst of the bush" to Moses. This same speaker declared, according to verse 6, "I am אֱלֹהֵי 'elohe, the Gods of thy father, the Gods of Abraham, the Gods of Isaac, and the Gods of Jacob." Moreover, Jehovah declared, according to verse 7, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people that

are in Egypt ... and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians. ..." In verse 10 this same angel of Jehovah, in His talking to Moses, declared that He would send him to Pharaoh. According to verse 12, He promised to be with him and bring forth the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage.

Moses inquired concerning the name of this angel, who is called both **יְהוָה**, Jehovah, and **אֱלֹהִים**, *'elohim*. The divine answer was, **אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה** "I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (vs. 14). From all the facts of this passage, it becomes abundantly evident that one of the divine personalities appeared to Moses on this occasion. This one, as we have already seen, was called "the angel of Jehovah," Jehovah, and Elohim. Since there is but one divine personality mentioned in this passage, although three different names are applied to Him, one may come to the conclusion that **אֱלֹהִים**, *'elohim*, though in the plural number, here has a singular connotation. Thus the facts of the immediate context show clearly that Elohim in this instance cannot have the plural signification, but is addressed to the one divine personality.

Upon what principle can we account for the use of this plural noun and its being applied to a single individual? The explanation probably is to be found in the expression of Genesis 1:27, which we have already studied in Section V. Those engaging in the conversation recognized that they had a single image and likeness. In other words, there was in each of these personalities all that which is connoted by the term, the Divine Being. Expressed differently, I would say that in each of these the fullness of deity dwelt.

Let us notice another passage in which the word Elohim, though plural in form, has the singular connotation. In Psalm 45 we see the fourfold portrait of King Messiah. In verse 2 He, by the psalmist who sees Him in vision, is recognized as a man and is addressed as such. But in verses 3-5 the same inspired writer, in vision beholding Messiah, sees Him as the Mighty One, who alone can cope with the world situation. Being transported to the end of this age—when wickedness and sin will prevail and those living righteous, true, godly, non-resisting lives will be persecuted—the psalmist urges this Mighty One to buckle on His armor and go into action against the forces and powers of wickedness. In verse 5 He is seen in action as He conquers the entire world. Then, in verses 6-8 the picture is changed. Here the psalmist beholds Messiah seated upon His throne of glory and wielding a scepter of equity and righteousness over the peoples of earth. Again, he addresses

Him as he did while standing before the two former portraits mentioned above. This time he speaks to Him in this manner:

כִּסְאֲךָ אֱלֹהִים עוֹלָם וָעֶד שֶׁבֶט מִיֶּשֶׁר שֶׁבֶט מַלְכוּתְךָ:

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: A sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom." The suffix **ֶךָ**, *aka* (thy), attached to the word throne in the Hebrew is in the singular number. Nevertheless, King Messiah is here addressed as Elohim. Since this plural noun is applied to a single individual—King Messiah—it is evident that, though it is plural in form, in this connection it has a singular connotation.

In verse 7 the psalmist continues to address King Messiah, uttering these words: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness: Therefore, **אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֶיךָ**, O God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Here again King Messiah is addressed by the use of the **אֱלֹהִים**, *'elohim*, and is told that His God **אֱלֹהֶיךָ**, *thy God* (direct discourse), has anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. The term Elohim is applied to King Messiah who is told that His God had anointed Him. When one remembers that the psalmist, in vision, addresses King Messiah as the fairest of men—fairer than the children of men (vs. 2); when one also remembers that the psalmist again addresses the same one as the Mighty Warrior, from whose person there shine forth glory and majesty, who goes forth to conquer the world and becomes victor; and when one studies carefully verses 6-8, in which Messiah is twice addressed as **אֱלֹהִים**, *'elohim*, one can see that Elohim, though plural in form, in this context has a singular connotation.

In view of the fact that **אֱלֹהִים**, *'elohim* (Gods), has, as I have just shown, a singular connotation in certain contexts, one may ask if it may not have this same special meaning in every case. My answer is a most emphatic denial. In the preceding sections of this chapter I have presented eight classes of facts which prove conclusively that Elohim is a plural noun carrying a plural meaning. Moreover, I have shown that it connotes a plurality of the persons or beings that are under consideration in a given context. In its original, primary, usual meaning it refers to the divine personalities known in the Hebrew Scriptures as **יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי**, *'elohe Yisrael*, the Gods of Israel. We are to understand that it has this connotation in every place where it appears unless the facts of the context indicate otherwise. In certain contexts the facts show that it refers to angels; in others, to

judges who officiate as God's representatives at the sanctuary; and in other connections it designates idols. The facts, and only the facts of a given context, can decide the specific meaning in any case.

But in certain contexts the facts prove, as I have shown above, that it has also a singular connotation. One cannot guess about a given case but must let the facts of each context indicate the meaning of the writer.

As I shall show in the next chapter, Israel's Great Confession disproves the supposition now under consideration. According to it Moses declared,

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

"Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity" (Deut. 6:4, lit. trans.). אֱלֹהֵינוּ, *'elohēnu*, as we shall see, is plural and literally means "our Gods." But the statement affirms that, though there is a plurality of divine personalities constituting the Supreme Being, they are in a real and unique sense a unity. So long, therefore, as words have definite meanings and language a set syntax, this Great Confession of Israel cannot be twisted to mean anything different from what it states plainly in the accurate translation given above—if it is studied and analyzed in accordance with scientific principles. For this and other reasons, that time does not permit my giving, I assert that Elohim primarily and usually refers to the three divine personalities constituting the Supreme Being. One cannot therefore read a singular meaning into this word unless the facts of a certain context indicate a departure from the literal meaning and demand a secondary or a metaphorical definition.

In order to illustrate the fact that one cannot employ a secondary or a metaphorical use of a word indiscriminately wherever it occurs but must consult the facts of the context, let me call attention to the Greek word *psallo*, which primarily, according to Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, means *to pluck off, pull out*. Out of this idea came the following: *to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang*. The next step in the evolution of the word was *to touch* or *strike the cord, to twang the strings* of a musical instrument so that they gently vibrate. Soon it came to mean *to play on a stringed instrument, to play the harp*. In the course of time it came to express the idea *to sing to the music of the harp*. Finally, in the New Testament it signified *to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song*.

According to this lexicon the primary meaning of our word is *to pluck off*, or *pull out*. The fundamental idea of plucking or twitching a string runs through the history of the term. Even under the metaphorical meaning of the word—to sing God's praises—lies the fundamental idea of plucking a string or cord. In this case the vocal cords are the ones that are twitched and caused to vibrate in praising the Lord.

For one to ignore the context of a given passage and to force the metaphorical meaning of singing praises to God upon the term everywhere it occurs is to violate the fundamental principles of grammar, logic, and exegesis. The facts of each context must guide one in ascertaining which of the several shades of meaning is intended in each case. In the same manner one cannot take the metaphorical meaning of the word *'elohim* when it is applied to one of the divine personalities in a given context and force this meaning on it regardless of the context.

As another illustration of the principle under discussion I wish to call attention to the word *messiah*, which is a good Hebrew term.

If one will look at Leviticus 4:3,5,16, one will see that the word *messiah*, or "anointed," modifies the word *priest*. This fact shows that the priest was called the anointed of God—or *messiah*.

The same term is applied to the prophets, some of whom at least were inducted into office by the anointing ceremony. In Psalm 105:15 we have this language:

"... Touch not mine anointed ones,  
And do my prophets no harm."

Here the appellation "anointed ones" corresponds to "my prophets" in this parallel structure. This fact shows that the prophet were likewise called anointed ones.

Saul, the first king of Israel, was called God's "anointed." He was a "messiah" because he was inducted into office by the anointing ceremony. When the Lord wanted David anointed as king to supersede Saul, He had Jesse to bring his sons to Samuel the prophet. When the first one appeared before this man of God, he looking at the outward appearance, said, "Surely Jehovah's anointed is before him" (I Sam. 16:6). God informed the prophet that Eliab, who was then before him, was not the one. After Jesse had caused all his sons to pass before Samuel except the youngest, Samuel revealed the fact that none of those could be the anointed of the Lord. Finally, when David was brought, the Lord spoke to Samuel saying, "Arise,

anoint him; for this is he." When the ceremony was performed, the Spirit of God came mightily upon David and from that time onward he was known as the Lord's "anointed."

Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, is likewise called the Lord's messiah, as we see in Lamentations 4:20. Cyrus, the heathen king of the Medo-Persian empire, also is called the Lord's messiah.

In I Samuel 2:10 we see a reference in Hannah's prophetic message concerning the Lord's anointed or messiah. An examination of the context shows that this statement refers to Israel's Messiah of the future. The same interpretation is to be placed upon Psalm 2:2. An examination of Daniel 9:25,26 makes clear the position that the Messiah mentioned in this prophecy is none other than Israel's future Redeemer, for whose coming the nation has looked through the centuries.

From the facts just stated, one can see that the word messiah (anointed) has various shades of meaning. Its significance in a given case must be determined entirely by the facts of the immediate context and whatever information can be gathered from related passages. It would therefore be illogical for a person to take any one special meaning of the word messiah and force it on every passage where the term occurs. Usually whenever we speak of the Messiah we are thinking of Israel's Redeemer and the Saviour of the world. But we must not force this meaning upon every occurrence of the word. The facts of each context are, as stated repeatedly, to determine the special meaning which any word has in a given context. The same principle is true with reference to our understanding of the word Elohim, since it has, as we have seen, a number of meanings. Whenever the data of a given context show that this plural noun is used with a singular connotation, we must recognize this fact and interpret the passage accordingly.

In submitting the facts of this chapter, may I say that it is impossible to impress too strongly upon the mind of the reader that Elohim (Gods), like words in all languages, has various connotations. In order to determine its particular meaning in a given case, one must examine all the data of the connection and must let facts and facts alone—not speculation and not tradition—point the index finger to the exact meaning. Whenever a person follows this rule with one desire in mind, namely, to know what is truth, he will arrive at the correct idea as to what was meant by the sacred writer.



A final caution, which I must reiterate, is that the reader must get all the facts of a given context before arriving at the conclusion as to the meaning of the Hebrew term **אֱלֹהִים**, *'elohim*, or any other word in a given language.

Summarizing what we have learned in this chapter regarding Elohim, may I say that its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning is *Gods*. In certain contexts, as indicated by the facts of the text, it refers sometimes to angels; at others, to judges; and in still other connections it signifies idols. Whenever there are no facts in a given context indicating a derived or secondary meaning, one must understand this word to be used in the usual, primary, literal sense of *Gods*, a plurality of personalities.

Moreover, we have learned that, although its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning is *Gods*—the plural number—there are certain contexts where the facts show that it is not used in this original, literal sense, but that it is employed to refer to only one of the divine personalities, who, as we shall presently see, constitute the supreme Being.

But we must continue in the next chapter our investigation of this most important subject in order to learn the scriptural teaching concerning the unity of these divine personalities.

## CHAPTER III

### THE UNITY OF THE DIVINE PERSONALITIES

THOUGH there are more personalities than one in the Divine Being, they form a unity of which the Scriptures constantly speak. David, the great king of Israel, in his memorable prayer (II Sam. 7:22) declares the unity of God:

**עַל־כֵּן גָדֹלָתְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים כִּי־אֵין כָּמוֹךָ וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים זוֹלָתְךָ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַעְנוּ בְּאָזְנוֹנוּ:**

"Wherefore thou art great, O Jehovah God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears." Isaiah, who had to contend with insidious idolatry which had crept into the nation, repeatedly affirmed that God is one as is seen in the following passages:

**מִי־פָעַל וַעֲשָׂה קִרְא הַדְּרוֹת מֵרֵאשִׁי אֲנִי יְהוָה רִאשׁוֹן וְאַתָּה־אֲחֵרִים אֲנִי־הוּא:**

"Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, the first, and with the last, I am He" (Isa. 41:4).

**אַתֶּם עֲדֵי נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְעַבְדִּי אֲשֶׁר בָּחַרְתִּי לְמַעַן תִּדְעוּ וְתֵאֱמִינוּ לִי וְתִבְיִנוּ כִּי־אֲנִי הוּא  
לִפְנֵי לֹא־נוֹצָר אֵל וְאַחֲרַי לֹא־יִהְיֶה: אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה וְאֵין מִבִּלְעָדִי מוֹשִׁיעַ:**

"Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am He: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no savior" (43:10, 11).

**כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגֹאֲלוֹ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: אֲנִי רִאשׁוֹן וְאֲנִי אַחֲרֹון וּמִבְּלַעַדִּי אֵין אֱלֹהִים:**

"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."\* (44:6).

## I. UNITY SEEN IN THE GREAT CONFESSION

In harmony with the statements just quoted is the Great Confession of Israel found in Deut. 6:4, which is

**שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:**  
"Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity."

Before we can begin an analysis of this most important exhortation, we shall do well to see the historical and theological background which made its enunciation imperative at that time. Israel, as we learn from the writings of Moses, had been delivered from Egyptian bondage. At the time of Moses' uttering this Great Confession, the nation was poised on the east side of the Jordan, awaiting the moment to be led across into the Promised Land. By this time Moses had, through the Holy Spirit, been enabled to write the revelation which God had given him and to put it before Israel. The Book of Deuteronomy, as all Bible students know, constitutes his final orations, which he delivered just before his decease. Having spoken these messages orally, he committed them to writing and deposited them with the other portions of the Word which he had already written. The Oracles of God which give the account of the creation of the universe and of beasts, birds, and finally of man, together with the history of the human race up to his day—particularly that of the Hebrews—were put in the language of the Hebrews.

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\* The same teaching concerning God i.e., that there is none beside Him, is set forth in numerous passages a few of which are as follows: Num. 15:41; Isa. 43:3, 11; 45:5; 44:6; Deut. 4:35, 39; 32:39; Ex. 20:23; Hosea 13: 4; 2 Sam. 7: 22; I Kings 8: 23.

(See *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled* for a full discussion of this point.) When Moses delivered "this law," which probably indicates the Book of Deuteronomy, to the priests and to the elders of Israel, he commanded them saying, "At the end of every seven years, in the set time of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before Jehovah thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing" (Deut. 31:10,11). After the conquest of Jericho and Ai, the Israelites advanced into the central section of the mountainous region of the country—to Shechem, the modern Nablus. In obedience to the command of Moses, Joshua had an altar built upon which burnt offerings and peace offerings were made to Jehovah. This altar was covered with plaster (Deut. 27:1-8) and upon it Joshua wrote the law of Moses. Then he read all the words of the law to the people.

It is most highly probable that Israel, for the first time, as a people had an authentic record of the past. It is true that in Abraham's day there were commandments, statutes, and laws which Abraham had and which God had given (Gen. 26:5). Nevertheless, it is highly improbable that Israel, when she was in Egypt, had a definite, clear knowledge of God. In fact, we learn from Ezekiel 20:7 that Israel worshiped idols in Egypt. During her wilderness wanderings, as it appears from Amos 5:25-27, she engaged in certain types of idolatrous worship—withstanding the presence of Moses and Aaron. This interpretation of these verses, however has been questioned by some. But from all the data which we have, it is evident that Israel was strongly inclined toward idolatry even when Moses delivered his final orations to her.

Moses knew, furthermore, that, when Israel read or heard the law read every seven years as commanded, she might misinterpret the evidence found in the Scriptures as justification for idolatry—polytheism. He therefore, under these conditions, enunciated her Great Confession and emphasized it in such a way as to make it stand out above all utterances in the law: **שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:** *Shema', Israel, Yahweh 'elohēnu Yahweh 'echad.*

It is now fitting that we should look at those passages which Israel might misunderstand and interpret as justification for polytheism. In the first place, let us note the use of Elohim, which as we have already seen is in the plural number. An undiscerning, carnal man could easily misinterpret the spirituality of God and His unity and see justification for idolatry in this word, especially so since Elohim, as we have already seen, was the regular term that was also applied to idols. Hence the uninformed man in Israel could say that the nation of the Hebrews should in fact worship different gods and at the same time think that he had scriptural

justification for so doing. Moses, therefore, in his giving this Great Confession to Israel, doubtless had this possibility in mind and was attempting to warn against such a misconception regarding the Almighty.

There was another fact that might have been misinterpreted and have caused Israel to engage in idolatry. That was the theophany mentioned in Genesis, chapter 3. In this passage we are informed that, when Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, Jehovah was in the habit of appearing on the scene and holding sweet communion and fellowship with them. From the record we learn that after they had disobeyed the one prohibition laid upon them, they heard Him walking as He was coming to them in the cool of the day. Their eyes then were opened and they realized their condition, both spiritual and physical. They therefore hid themselves from His presence. Nevertheless, He came and conversed with them.

We read of another of His appearances. In the record of this visit (Gen.16:1-14), He is called **מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה** "the angel of Jehovah" (vss. 7,9,10,11). According to verse 13 Hagar, to whom this angel appeared, "called the name of Jehovah that spake unto her, Thou art **אֵל**, 'el, a God that seeth: for she said, Have I even here looked after him that seeth me?" This one who is called the angel of Jehovah is also designated as Jehovah himself and as a God who sees. It is therefore clear from this passage that Jehovah did appear to Hagar—doubtless in a manner similar to the way in which He had appeared to Adam and Eve.

We see still another theophany in Genesis, chapters 18 and 19. To Abraham as he sat in his tent door under the oaks of Mamre, there appeared three men. Two of these, according to 19:1, were angels; but the other was Jehovah himself, who talked most intimately with Abraham concerning the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah on account of their wickedness. We are told that, after the flight of Lot with his wife and daughters from Sodom, "Then Jehovah, **יְהוָה**, rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven; 25 and he overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground" (Gen. 19:24,25). Let us notice that there are two divine personalities appearing in this record. One was upon earth, conversing with Abraham; the other, in heaven. The one upon earth rained down fire from the one in heaven upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. According to this record there are two personalities who are called by the name Jehovah.

We see yet another theophany in Genesis, chapter 22. According to verse 11, the angel of Jehovah called to Abraham out of heaven. The latter responded. Then the

angel of Jehovah commanded him to withhold his hand from offering his son Isaac upon the altar as he was attempting to do in obedience to the command of the Lord. A second time did the angel of Jehovah call to Abraham out of heaven and added, "By myself have I sworn, saith **יְהוָה**, 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 sea-shore; 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" (Gen. 22:15-18). The angel of Jehovah upon this occasion did not come to the earth but spoke from the heavens to Abraham. He declared that he had sworn by Himself, and at that time he called himself Jehovah. In this incident we see a most marvelous manifestation of Jehovah and His conversation with Abraham.

We observe another unusual occurrence of like nature in Genesis 32:22-32. When Jacob was returning from Syria with his family and his goods to the Land of Promise, he wrestled with a stranger who appeared to him before he crossed the river Jabbok. As the sequel to the story indicates, this one was none other than **אֱלֹהִים**, God, who appeared to him as a man and wrestled with him during the night. Jacob realized that this one was the Lord; for he declared, "I have seen **אֱלֹהִים**, God, face to face, and my life is preserved" (vs. 30).

Not only do we have these remarkable approaches of the Deity to man mentioned in the Books of Moses, but we have references to the Spirit of God. In Genesis 1:2, we read that **רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים**, "the Spirit of God," was brooding upon the face of the waters. In Exodus 31:3 we likewise learn of the Spirit of God and of His endowing Bezalel with skill and cunning in order to do the work assigned him in the construction of the Tabernacle. Again we read of the same Spirit in Numbers, chapter 11.

From these records, at which we have just looked, we see Jehovah in heaven and Jehovah upon the earth, and likewise the Spirit of God. When the ancient Hebrews heard these oracles of God read, there was always a possibility that the less spiritually discerning ones among them, as stated above, might see in these records justification for idolatry and might attempt to worship each of these under the forms of idols. Moses, knowing the tendency on the part of his brethren to paganism, warned them against it, declaring that, at the time Jehovah delivered the law at Horeb, they did not see any form whatsoever (Deut. 4:15-19). He therefore followed this exhortation with the Great Confession of Israel.

Israel's past history demanded a clear, strong statement concerning this fundamental of fundamentals of her faith. Moses' knowledge by inspiration of what she would do in the future likewise made it imperative that he emblazon it, figuratively speaking, upon the skies before her eyes.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:  
וְאַהֲבָתָ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ  
וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ :

"Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity; and thou shalt love Jehovah thy Gods with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength" (Deut. 6:4,5; lit. trans.).

In beginning an analysis of this confession notice **אֱלֹהֵינוּ** 'elohēnu. According to all Hebrew grammarians this word is the construct form of **אֱלֹהִים** (gods) to which the personal possessive **נוּ**.. "our" in the plural number is added. To show that this form is in the plural and means "our Gods," only a few illustrations will be necessary. First, dear reader, examine Josh. 24:23:

וַעֲתָה הִסִּירוּ אֶת-אֱלֹהֵי הַנֹּכַר אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְהָטוּ אֶת-לִבְבְּכֶם אֶל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

"Now therefore put away, said he, the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto Jehovah, the God of Israel."

Note the similarity of these expressions: **אֶת-אֱלֹהֵי הַנֹּכַר** and **אֶל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**: The former **אֱלֹהֵי הַנֹּכַר** is correctly translated "foreign gods," but the latter is translated "Jehovah, The God of Israel," though to be faithful to the text one must translate **אֱלֹהֵי** of both expressions in the same way, namely, "Gods of," the former being the gods of the foreigners, whereas the latter is the Gods of Israel. A perfect illustration of **אֱלֹהֵינוּ**, "our Gods," which is, as stated above, the construct form of a plural masculine noun with the plural suffix "our," is found in Deut. 5:3 in the word **אֲבוֹתֵינוּ**, "our fathers." The singular of this word is **אָב**, 'ab, and the plural construct is **אֲבוֹתֵי**, 'avothē, which form with suffix is **אֲבוֹתֵינוּ** 'avothēnu. Obviously this word like **אֱלֹהֵינוּ** is a plural noun with the suffix "our."

In Isa. 53 appear several examples of this same grammatical construction in verses 4 and 5. **אֲכֵן חָלֵינוּ הוּא נָשָׂא וּמַכָּאֲבֵינוּ סָבָלָם וְאַנְחָנוּ חָשַׁבְנָהוּ נִגְוַע מִכָּה אֱלֹהִים וּמַעֲנָה: וְהוּא מִחֻלָּל מִפְּשָׁעֵנוּ מִדָּפָא מַעֲוֹנֹתֵינוּ מוֹסֵר שְׁלוֹמָנוּ עָלָיו וּבְחִבְרָתוֹ: נִרְפָּא־לָנוּ:** "But our diseases did He bear Himself, and our pains He carried while we indeed esteemed Him, stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. Yet He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and through His bruises was healing granted to us (Author's Tr.).

The words **עֲוֹנֹתֵינוּ פְּשָׁעֵנוּ מַכָּאֲבֵינוּ חָלֵינוּ** are translated "our iniquities," "our transgressions," "our pains," and "our diseases." When one reads the entire chapter he can see clearly that the servant of the Lord, namely, "my righteous servant" **צִדִּיק עַבְדִּי**, is suffering and is smitten of God because of the "diseases, pains, transgressions, and iniquities" of those to whom Isaiah refers as "us" i.e., the Hebrew nation. From these examples and hundreds of others which might be given, it is very clear that **אֱלֹהֵינוּ** is in the plural construct form and means "our Gods."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In connection with this study it is well to call attention to the fact that the word **אלהים**, "your gods" appears in Josh. 3:3; 23:3; I Sam. 6:5; I Kgs. 18:25. (King James Tr.). In the first two passages it is translated "your God" because it applies to the God of Israel, but in the two latter passages the same identical word is translated "your gods" because it applies to heathen deities. A faithful translation of these words demands that they be translated the same in each instance.

In Deut. 6:5 appears the expression **אלהיך**, "thy God" but in Gen. 31:32 the same expression is used by Jacob in his conversation with Laban in the former's speaking to the latter concerning the teraphim which Rachel had stolen and is translated "thy gods." The fact is that the word is plural with a singular suffix added and should be translated as the plural in both instances.

In Judg. 3:7 appears the expression **אלהיהם** and is translated "their God" because it refers to the God of Israel, but in the preceding verse the same word which applies to heathen gods is translated "their gods." The word is plural in both instances and should be thus translated.



The next point in this confession to note is **אֶחָד** 'echad. This word is a numeral adjective meaning "one" and is derived from the verb **הִתְאָחַד** which verb occurs only once in the Tenach (Ezek. 21:21). From this context one sees that God predicted the coming of a foreign invasion against Jerusalem, and Ezekiel was commanded to smite his hands together and to prophesy. In verse 21 it occurs in the hithpa'el form, as seen above, and means "to unite self, to gather one's strength or forces (of the sword)." From these facts he sees that it primarily means, not one in the absolute sense of the term, but one in the sense of a unity.

While the fundamental idea is that of a compound unity or the oneness of different elements or integral parts, it came to be used to express one in the absolute sense as the numeral one, which fact is seen by numerous examples throughout the Tenach. This fact being true, it becomes necessary to study the context wherever it occurs in order to ascertain which idea is conveyed in each particular case. To fail to observe this precaution and to read the idea of oneness in the absolute sense of the word into every example where it occurs is to ignore logic, to smash grammar, and to outlaw ordinary intelligence and common sense.

As an illustration in which the inherent fundamental idea of a compound unity stands forth in bold relief, let the reader note the language of Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, etc. In verse 5 Moses said **וַיְהי־עֶרֶב וַיְהי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד**: "And there was evening and there was morning, day one." This statement brings together two contrasting ideas—light and darkness—into a compound unity, which idea is normally expressed by **אֶחָד**. In verse 8 the same language occurs except the day was "day two"; the same thing is true with reference to verse 13 with the exception that the work just enumerated was done on the third day. In each instance **עֶרֶב בֹּקֶר** "evening" and "morning" together made a unity, **אֶחָד**. The union of evening and morning, in the first instance, constituted the first unit of time—day one; the union of evening and morning, in the second instance, constituted the second unit of time—day two. The same facts are true of each succeeding day. Next, note Genesis 2:24: Here God said **עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזֹב־אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד**: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." In this passage one sees two individuals, man and woman, and yet God said that they constitute a unity—a unity made by joining two opposites into a real oneness.

That **אֶחָד** fundamentally carries the idea of a compound unity is seen in "Genesis 27:44, **וַיֵּשְׁבֶת עִמּוֹ יָמִים אֶחָדִים עַד אֲשֶׁר־תָּשׁוּב חֲמַת אָחִיךָ** "And tarry with him a

few days, until thy brother's fury turn away." The word translated "few" is **אַחַדִּים** which is the plural form of **אֶחָד**, '*echad*'. Here the period of time elapsing until Esau's wrath subsided is considered as a unity consisting of integral parts, the idea of unity being expressed by the fundamental inherent idea of **אַחַדִּים**. It is put in the plural form to agree grammatically with the word **יָמִים** "days." The same usage appears again in 29:20 where seven years of time are thought of as a very short period, the unity of the period being expressed by the inherent idea of the same word, whereas it, like the illustration just mentioned, is in the plural number agreeing with "days" which is in the plural. Therefore these two examples show clearly that **אֶחָד** '*echad*', primarily means a compound unity.

Another illustration of this usage is found in Ezra 2:64. **כָּל־הָקָהָל כָּאֶחָד** "And the whole assembly was as one" (Author's Tr.). Here forty-two thousand, three hundred and sixty people, each an individual and integral part of the gathering, were **כָּאֶחָד** "as one"—a unity. Another example where the fundamental idea of the word stands forth clearly is found in Gen. 11:1. **וַיְהִי כָל־הָאָרֶץ שְׂפָה אֶחָת וּדְבָרִים אֶחָדִים** "And the whole earth was of one language and of one kind of words"; (literally translated) "one lip and oneness of words." Here the idea is that each person in the world spoke the same language and used the same words. There were many different people, and at the same time numerous words used by these various individuals, and yet all taken together constituted a unity **אֶחָת**, (feminine form of word) of language. Hence in this passage the original inherent idea shines forth vividly. Another striking example of this primitive idea is found in Ezek. 37:17. **וְקָרַב אֹתָם אֶחָד אֶל־אֶחָד לְךָ לְעֵץ אֶחָד וְהָיוּ לְאַחַדִּים בְּיָדְךָ** "And joining them one to the other unto thee as one stick; and they shall become one in thy hand" (Isaac Leeser Tr.). From the context one sees that Ezekiel performed a symbolic act, namely, he took two separate sticks, one representing Judah, and the other representing Israel, and was commanded to join them into one bundle. Thus the two separate sticks being joined together are spoken of as a unity **אֶחָד** of sticks, that is, a union of the two separate sticks. This symbolic act symbolizes the fact that at some future time the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah will be joined and will constitute a single united kingdom.

Another most forceful illustration of this unity is found in Jer. 32:39 **וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב אֶחָד וְדֶרֶךְ אֶחָד לִירְאָה אוֹתִי כָל־הַיָּמִים לְטוֹב לָהֶם וּלְבָנֵיהֶם אַחֲרֵיהֶם** "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them." Under the new covenant all Israel are

promised "one heart" **לֵב אֶחָד**, that is, all will see, think, and feel alike: hence **לֵב אֶחָד** "unity of heart."

Since **אֱלֹהֵינוּ** 'elohēnu, can mean nothing but "our Gods," and since **אֶחָד** has as its primary meaning that of "unity," one is forced to the irresistible conclusion that the real meaning of Israel's Great Confession is that the Divine Personalities, who are referred to by the plural noun **אֱלֹהֵינוּ**, as has been shown above, constitute a real unity **אֶחָד**, just as man and woman form a unity **אֶחָד**. These Divine Personalities are one in essence, being, and nature, unity and co-operation in the highest degree existing between them. Such, fundamentally, is the real meaning of this fundamental dogma of Israel.

Proof which corroborates this interpretation of Israel's Great Confession is found in the fact that when the nation lapsed into idolatry and her inspired prophets endeavored to win her back to God, they emphasized the truth that there is but one God. In all of their utterances concerning the proposition that there is but one God, they never did use their great confession. *If it means what it is usually understood to mean, namely, that God is one in the absolute sense of the term, then it is unthinkable that the prophets never did use it in their fight against Idolatry. Therefore, they understood it to refer to God's unity and not to His being One in the absolute sense.*

At the time that Moses gave this great confession he forewarned Israel concerning other gods as is seen in Deut. 4:35, **אַתָּה הָרָאָתָ לְדַעַת כִּי יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים אֵין** "Thou hast been shown in order that thou mayest know that **יהוה** is the Gods; there is not any beside Him" (Author's Tr. here and in following one). Again, in Deut. 4:39, **וְיָדַעְתָּ הַיּוֹם וְהַשָּׁבָת אֶל־לִבְבְּךָ כִּי יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים בְּשָׁמַיִם** "And thou shalt know this day and shalt lay it to thine heart that **יהוה** is the Gods in the Heavens from above and upon the earth from beneath; there is none other."

The flood tide of idolatry seemed to reach its height in Israel in the days of Isaiah, the prophet, who was a contemporary of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. In his combating this error he constantly used the arguments based upon the Scriptures quoted in the last paragraph. Thus in Isa. 44:6 **כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל** "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 are no gods" (Author's Tr.). Verse 7, **וּמִי־כַמוֹנִי**

"And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I established the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and that shall come to pass, let them declare." Verse 8 **וְאַתֶּם עֲדֵי הַיֵּשׁ אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדִי וְאִין צוּר** "And ye are my witnesses. Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no Rock; I know not any." Again, one sees Isaiah using a similar statement (Isa. 45:5) which, likewise, is based upon Deut. 4:35,39, namely, **אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאִין עוֹד זֹלָתִי** "I am יהוה and there is none else; besides me there are no gods." Isa. 45:6,7, **לִמְעַן יֵדְעוּ מִמְּזֶרֶח-שָׁמֶשׁ וּמִמַּעֲרֹבָה כִּי-אֵפֶס בְּלַעֲדִי אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאִין עוֹד:** "In order that they may know from the rising of the sun and from the West, that there is none beside me; I am יהוה and there is none else; forming the light and creating darkness; making peace and creating evil; I am יהוה who doeth all these things." Again, in vs. 21, 22 one reads as follows: **הַגִּידוּ וְהַגִּישׁוּ אֵף יוֹעֲצוּ יַחְדָּו מִי הַשְׁמִיעַ זֹאת מִקֶּדֶם מֵאִז הַגִּידָה הָלוֹא אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאִין-עוֹד אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדִי אֶל-צִדִּיק וּמוֹשִׁיעַ** "Declare and bring forth, yet let them take counsel together; who hath shown this from ancient times? Who hath declared it from old? Is it not I, and there are still no gods beside me: a God righteous and one who delivers; there is not any beside me. Turn unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else" (Author's Tr., 45: 21, 22). Once more, note the argument in Isaiah 64:4 (3). **וַיַּעֲזֹלֶם** "And from of old, men have not heard nor have they perceived with their ears, and eye hath not seen Gods beside thee, who work for the one waiting for him." As a last quotation from Isaiah note Chapter 26:13. **יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּעָלוֹנוּ אֲדֹנִים זֹלָתָהּ לְבַד-בָּהּ נִזְכִּיר** "Oh Lord, our Gods, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy name" (Author's Tr.).

Hosea, whose ministry preceded that of Isaiah by some thirty-odd years, combated idolatry as did his successors. In Hos. 13:4 one reads **וְאֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ** "And I am the Lord thy Gods from the land of Egypt; and you shall not know gods besides me, there is no savior besides me" (Author's Tr.).

From the above quotations it is clear how the prophets met the problem of idolatry and what statements of the Torah they used to teach the lesson that there is but one true and living God. Since they nowhere used the language of the Great Confession

in their hard fight for monotheism (the teaching that there is but one God), it is quite evident that they, *who were guided and aided by the Lord, and to whom the Word of the Lord came, understood that it had no bearing on the issue*. The prophets knew how to use the Word of God, as one sees from many illustrations which appear in their writings. Hence one must conclude that a forced meaning has been placed upon it, and that evidently the plain and obvious meaning of the words conveys the correct teaching, which is, as stated above, that the divine personalities revealed to Israel at Sinai constitute a unity though a plurality.

Another group of facts supports the conclusions to which one comes concerning the proposition that an erroneous interpretation has been forced upon this Great Confession. One of these facts is that **יָחִיד**, *yachid*, is used which primarily, as an adverb, means "only, altogether, surely" in numerous passages where everything is excluded, except the point at issue. Likewise, **רַק**, *rak*, is a synonym of **יָחִיד**. Another word which commonly was used to emphasize the idea of one to the exclusion of all others is that of **בְּלִי**, *bilti*. An excellent illustration of this usage is found in Ex. 22:20 (19) "He that sacrificeth unto **זֶבַח לֵאלֹהִים יָחִיד בְּלִי לַיהוָה** any gods save unto **יְהוָה** only shall be utterly destroyed." **אֵךְ**, *'ak*, also is used with this same significance. These words, just mentioned, are the usual ones to emphasize the idea that there is but one of the persons or things mentioned; hence one arrives at the conclusion that had Moses meant to teach by the Great Confession the doctrine that there is but one Divine Personality, he would have expressed himself differently and would have used one of the regular words, in its proper construction, that excludes from consideration all others except the true God whose existence and nature he proclaimed. Since he did not choose such a restrictive word, evidently he was not affirming God's oneness in the absolute sense.

## II. UNITY SEEN IN THE EXPRESSION "IN OUR IMAGE"

This unity is again seen in the quotation, already used, from Genesis 1:26 where it is said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." In the words "image" and "likeness" is reflected the same unity, which words are in the singular number, since the speaker and the one spoken to are of the same image and likeness. These words could not truthfully be spoken to a being inferior to or less than God, the speaker.

### III. UNITY SEEN IN EXPRESSION **אל אלהים**, 'ēl, 'elohim

From another angle the unity of the plurality of divine personalities may be seen in Genesis 33:20. Here appears a record of Jacob's erecting an altar at Bethel after his sojourn in Syria, which is stated in the following words: **וַיִּצְבֹּב שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא-לּוֹ אֵל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**: "And he erected there an altar, and called it El-Elohe-Israel." **אֵל** is in the singular number and means God, the Mighty One; **אֱלֹהֵי** 'elohē, is in the plural number, as noted above; hence the combination of the words, **אֵל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** affirms the unity and the plurality of God at the same time. Again, the unity of the plurality of God is seen in the Second Commandment (Ex. 20:5) **כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קָנָא פֶקֶד עֹוֹן אָבֹת עַל-שָׁלָשִׁים וְעַל-רִבְעִים לְשֹׁנָאִי**: "For I am thy Gods, **אֵל קָנָא** a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of fathers upon sons, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me" (Author's Tr.).

In **אֱלֹהֶיךָ**, 'elohēka, thy Gods, the Lord speaks of His plurality and at the same time of His unity in His use of the word **אֵל**, 'el. The plurality and the unity of God's nature again is seen in a wonderful statement made by the Israelites who settled on the East side of the Jordan and who were upbraided by their kinsmen on the West side for having set up a memorial altar, in the following quotation (Josh. 22:22): **אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה אֵל אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה הוּא יָדַע וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל הוּא יָדַע אִם-בְּמֶרֶד וְאִם-בְּמַעַל בַּיהוָה** "God, Gods, Jehovah, God, Gods, Jehovah, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or in treachery against the Lord" (Author's Lit. Tr.). **אֵל**, 'ēl declares God's unity, but **אֱלֹהִים**, 'elohim, which is in apposition with it, affirms the plurality of the Divine Being, while **יְהוָה**, Jehovah, identifies this unity of personalities as the covenant God of Israel (Ex. 6:2,3). In the "Ten Commandments" God says **כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קָנָא** "For I am Jehovah thy Gods, a jealous God." Here the plural and singular forms appear, the former emphasizing the plurality of divine personalities while the latter predicates their unity.

### IV. UNITY SEEN IN THE USE OF A SINGULAR VERB WITH A PLURAL NOUN

Another fact corroborating the unity of Divine Personalities is the use in the Hebrew of the singular verb with the plural noun **אֱלֹהִים**. Examples of this usage are seen throughout the entire Tenach. For many illustrations, however, see Genesis 1. **בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים** "In the beginning created Gods." The verb is in the singular number although the noun is plural. This peculiar combination is

equivalent to an affirmation of the divine unity while admitting the plurality of the Godhead. This quotation serves sufficiently to make the point clear.

## CONCLUSION

The question doubtless has arisen in the mind of the reader: Why, if Israel's confession is to be correctly translated, "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity," has Israel throughout the centuries understood it to mean that God is one in the absolute sense instead of a compound unity?

Prior to the days of Moses Maimonides, the unity of God was expressed by **אֶחָד** which, as has been proved beyond a doubt, has as its primary meaning that of a compound unity. Maimonides, who drafted the thirteen articles of faith, in the second one sets forth the unity of God, using the word **יְהִי**, which in the Tenach is never used to express God's unity. This word occurs in twelve passages which the reader may examine for himself, which investigation will prove conclusively that it carries the idea of absolute oneness. (Gen. 22:2,12,16; Amos 8:10; Jer. 6:26; Zech. 12:10; Prov. 4:3; Judg. 11:34; Psa. 22:20(21), 35:17; 25:16; and 68:6(7). From these facts it is evident that a new idea was injected into this confession by substituting **יְהִי** which in every passage carries the primary idea of oneness in the absolute sense for **אֶחָד** which primarily means a compound unity. Hence from the days of Maimonides on, an interpretation different from the ancient one was placed upon this most important passage.

Even though Maimonides did substitute **יְהִי** *yachid*, for the scriptural term *'echad*, his new phrasing of this article of faith does not prove his contention. I will give it as it appears as the second of the Thirteen Principles of the Faith found in *Daily Prayers* by Dr. A.T. H. Phillip : "I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, is a Unity, and that there is no unity in any manner like unto his, and that he alone is our God, who was, is, and will be." Let us assume that he meant by the word unity in this statement the oneness of God in the absolute numerical sense of the term. At the same time he declares that there is no unity like that of God. Since there are innumerable things that are simply one in the numerical sense, and since, as he states, there is no unity like God's, we must conclude that this unity is not a numerical one. With this understanding of Maimonides' article of faith, I agree that God is a unity in a unique sense. But at the same time, according to the Scriptures, there is a plurality of divine personalities subsisting in the one essence, which comprises this unique and unusual unity.

In the language of Jeremiah let the writer plead with every Hebrew reader, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer. 6:16). **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עֲמְדוּ עַל־דְּרָכַי וּרְאוּ וְשִׁאֲלוּ לַנְּתִיבוֹת עוֹלָם אִי־זֶה דֶּרֶךְ הַטּוֹב וּלְכוּ־בָהּ** **וּמִצְאוּ מְרֻצֵּעַ לְנַפְשְׁכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא גִלְדִּי:** Therefore let Israel now return to the original meaning of her Great Confession: "Hear, O Israel! Jehovah Our Gods, is Jehovah a Unity."

Some people have had difficulty concerning the doctrine of the plurality and unity of the divine Personalities. The great theologian, Dr. Theodore Christlieb, stated the problem tersely in the following words:

"The objections stirred by these might have been avoided by anticipation, had a firm hold been taken from the first of the truth indicated by the Hebrew form of the divine name ELOHIM (as will be more fully shown presently), that in God unity and plurality consist as correlatives which mutually require one another; that, as we have already indicated, it is the essential characteristic of the true doctrine of the divine nature, in contradistinction to Polytheism on the one hand, and an abstract Monotheism on the other, that both elements of true Being, unicity and multiplicity, do in God meet and interpenetrate one another in a perfectly unique and transcendental way."



## CHAPTER IV

### THE TRINITY OF THE DIVINE PERSONALITIES

HAVING seen in the preceding chapter that, though there is a plurality of divine personalities, they are one in nature and essence, let us now continue this investigation to ascertain, if possible, how many persons are mentioned in the Tenach.

#### I. THE SPIRIT OF GOD

In Genesis 1:1,2 appear the words **אֱלֹהִים** and **רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים**. The first word refers to a plurality of divine persons, and the second expression singles out one of these and states the special work which He did. In Job 26:13 appears the following statement: **בְּרוּחוֹ שָׁמַיִם שִׁפְרָה** "By His Spirit the heavens are garnished." In this passage the personality of the Spirit is clearly seen. The Spirit of God is not an influence emanating from God as heat goes forth from fire, or coldness from ice; but is one of the divine personalities active in creation. In Psa. 51:11(13) David in his pleading for mercy and restoration to God's favor prayed, **רוּחַ קֹדֶשׁ אַל-תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי** "And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." The Holy Spirit was dwelling in his heart "To revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isa. 57:15). Once more, the personality of the Spirit may be seen in Isa. 11:1,2, which is a passage concerning the **מְשִׁיחַ**, Messiah.

**וַיֵּצֵא הַטֵּר מִגִּזְעֵי יֵשׁוּעַ וַיִּצְרֵם מִשְׁרָשָׁיו יִפְרֶה: וְנָחָה עָלָיו רוּחַ יְהוָה רוּחַ חֵכְמָה וּבִינָה רוּחַ עֲצָה וּגְבוּרָה רוּחַ דַּעַת וַיִּרְאֵת יְהוָה:**

"And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit, and the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah." Here the prophet speaks of the Spirit of the Lord in terms of that which He does for and through the Messiah. Since to the Spirit are ascribed the very elements of personality—wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and fear—the only conclusion to which one can reasonably come is that the Spirit mentioned here is the Spirit of God, a divine personality. That the Spirit is God, hence omniscient and omnipresent is clearly set forth in Psa. 139:7, **אֵינָה אֵלֶּיךָ מְרוּחָךְ וְאֵינָה מִפְּנֵיךְ אֲבָרְתִּי:** "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence."

## II. THE SON OF GOD

Another one of these divine beings is addressed as "my son" by the Lord God of Israel. In Psa. 2 the writer, David, in order to support the prediction that God will enthrone King Messiah upon His holy hill of Zion, quoted a decree which the God of Israel spoke to one whom He addressed as His son, which decree is as follows:

אֲסַפֶּרָה אֶל חָק יְהוָה אֲמַר אֵלַי בְּנִי אַתָּה אֲנִי הַיּוֹם יִלְדָּתִיךָ:  
שְׁאַל מִמֶּנִּי וְאֶתְּנָה גּוֹיִם נַחֲלָתְךָ וְאַחֲזָתְךָ אֶפְסֵי-אָרֶץ:  
תִּרְעֵם בְּשִׁבְט בְּרֹזֶל כְּכֹלִי יוֹצֵר תִּנְפָצִים:

"I will tell of the decree, Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son: this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Hence this language was addressed not to an angel, but to the Son of God.

According to parallel passages the reign of Messiah is to be one of universal righteousness, justice, and peace (see Isa. 11 and parallel passages). Since He whom God calls "my Son" will administer such a universal righteous reign, it is evident that He is not an ordinary man who is a faithful servant of God, for no man (even though he be a son of God in the sense of his being faithful servant of God), regardless of his qualifications intellectually, morally and spiritually, can administer a kingdom in which absolute righteousness and justice is dealt out to everyone. The truthfulness of this statement is borne out by the stubborn facts of history. Therefore this one whom God terms "my Son" is the Son of God in a unique and peculiar sense, the Son of God par excellence. This conclusion is corroborated by other statements of this Psalm and parallel passages. As seen in certain scriptures, in the "end time" there will be a confederacy or a United States of the nations. The peoples of the world will oppose the worship of the God of the Hebrews and the Messiah of the Christians. The governments of the world will use all of their resources in order to enforce a resolution, which shall be adopted by a world congress, to blot out both Judaism and Christianity from the globe. Since man is "incurably religious" he will have a ready substitute to take their place which, doubtless, will be the worship of man, the beginnings of which spiritually-minded Bible students for a number of years have seen slowly but surely developing. The world consolidated politically and economically, headed up into one mighty, colossal organization and entrenched in its position by modern science and "a knowledge, falsely so-called" together with a philosophy and religion made

to order, constitutes a most formidable antagonist to Him whom God calls "my Son."

In addition to the outward, visible organization of world power, from other portions of the Tenach one learns that there is a supernatural world of evil, malignant spirits under the leadership of Satan, who inspires and instigates all opposition against God and the people of God. The truthfulness of this position is seen in the contest which Moses, the great law-giver, had with the magicians of Egypt (Ex., chaps. 7-13). These magicians actually at first duplicated the miracles of Moses, not by sleight-of-hand tricks, nor wisdom, but by Satanic power. For instance, their rods became serpents just as really as Moses' rod became a serpent. Again, in answer to Daniel's prayer an angel was dispatched by the Lord to him, who was delayed twenty-one days by "the prince of the kingdom of Persia," and was not permitted to continue his journey until Michael, one of the chief princes, came to his rescue (Dan. 10). From Psa. 106:34-38 one sees that all idolatry, which is in opposition to the worship of the true God, is inspired by demons. Again, from Isa. 24:21 it is evident that there is a host of evil spirits who are opposed to God: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will punish the hosts of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth." The leader of this host is undoubtedly "the anointed cherub" who was cast out of the presence of God, who is a most bitter enemy of God, and who raises up opposition to Him on every occasion.

The combined forces of Satan and his innumerable hosts of servile spirits, uniting with the forces and resources of the world confederacy, constitute the most amazing array of power against God with which no human being can possibly, under any conditions, cope successfully. Only the Omnipotent God can handle such a situation. Hence since he whom God calls "my son," at whose right hand the Eternal God goes forth (Psa. 110:5-7), does successfully overthrow and demolish such titanic opposition, he is none other than one of the divine persons referred to by אֱלֹהִים "Gods."\*

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\* In this connection it is well to consider a counter interpretation which is frequently placed upon this passage, namely, that the one addressed "Thou art my son" is any faithful servant of God. In reply to this position it is sufficient to note the fact that if the expression "my son" means any and all of the righteous servants of God, then there will be many sons who will have universal sway over the world. This conclusion, however, is contrary to the teaching, not only of Psa. 2, but of all of the Tenach. In verse 6, the expression "my king" refers to one, and it is to him that universal, absolute authority is given. There can be but one absolute monarch at any one time; therefore the interpretation under investigation conflicts with the teaching of the passage. Hence it is incorrect.

In this connection the question arises "If the one referred to by the expression 'my son' is God, why is He called God's Son?" This is indeed an intelligible question. The mention of "Son" suggests the correlative term "Father." Humanly speaking, a father is older than his son, but, as seen from the preceding argument, the Son of God is one of the divine personalities; hence the Son co-existed with the Father from all eternity (Mic. 5:2). This fact being true, in what sense is He a Son? The only interpretation, which to the writer appears to harmonize with all of the data and which does not conflict with any Scriptural teaching, is that the terms "Father" and "Son" are used, not to express the relationship existing between these two divine persons in the beginning, but are terms, adapted to man's understanding, to express the relationship existing between them from the time of the fulfillment and onward of the promise, "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." Therefore Isaiah, in this passage, looking forward toward the future said that the Eternal God would come to earth and be born in the form of a child. His birth is not according to natural generation, but, according to Isa. 7:14, "... behold, the virgin shall conceive and shall bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel," it is supernatural. All men have natural fathers and mothers, but the Everlasting God in being born of the virgin does not have an earthly father but is begotten by the miraculous power of one of these divine eternal persons; hence strictly speaking, He, the God-man, is the Son of God. The inspired writer in Prov. 30:4 had this same God-man in view when he asked the following question: **מִה־שְׁמוֹ וּמִה־שְׁם־בְּנוֹ כִּי תִדְעַ:** "What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou knowest?"

### III. THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH

In Gen. 16, there appears an account of the appearance of **מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה** "the angel of the Lord" to Hagar, the handmaid of Sarah, when she had been driven away by her mistress. In verse 7 this divine person is called **מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה** "angel of the Lord"; but in verse 13 Moses makes the following statement: "And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou art a God that seeth: for she said, Have I even here looked after him that seeth me?" Moses here says that Hagar called the name of the Lord who spoke with her "Thou art a God that seeth." It is clear from what Moses says that this angel of the Lord was none other than one of the divine beings. Again, in the eighteenth chapter one reads of another marvelous appearance of God. In verse 1 the statement is made, **וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵלֵי מַמְרֵא** "and the Lord appeared unto him (Abraham) by the oaks of Mamre"; in verse 2 one reads, "three men stood over against him." Abraham immediately ran from the tent door to meet

them and addressed them as **אֲדֹנָי** "Lord." This term, as is known to all Hebrew scholars, is one of the divine names. After the usual oriental hospitality had been extended to the visitors, Jehovah, **יְהוָה**, said, "I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son." Sarah in unbelief laughed at the idea, because of which conduct the Lord said unto Abraham, "Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old? Is anything too hard for Jehovah **יְהוָה** ? At the set time I will return unto thee, when the season cometh round, and Sarah shall have a son." From this quotation it is quite clear that the speaker was Jehovah, **יְהוָה**, who promised to return a year hence and to grant to Abraham and Sarah a son. **וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה** **אֶל-אַבְרָהָם לֵמָּה זֶה צָחָקָה שָׂרָה** "And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh?" Furthermore, He asked the question concerning Himself, "Is anything too hard for **יְהוָה** Jehovah?"

In the last verse of the chapter appears the statement, "And Jehovah, **יְהוָה**, went his way, as soon as he had left off communing with Abraham." From these facts is drawn the irresistible conclusion that one of these supernatural individuals who appeared in human form on this occasion was one of the self-existing divine personalities, one of the **אֱלֹהִים**, "Gods."

The fact of the appearance of one of the divine personalities for the purpose of communicating with Abraham His friend, shows the possibility of His assuming human form whenever the occasion arises. Again, in Ex. 3 the Angel of **יְהוָה**, Jehovah, appears to Moses in the wilderness in the burning bush. In verse 2 He is called **מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה** "the Angel of Jehovah," but in verse 4 this statement occurs: "And when Jehovah, **יְהוָה**, saw that he turned aside to see, **אֱלֹהִים** God called unto him out of the midst of the bush and said, Moses, Moses." In verse 2 the one appearing to Moses is called **מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה**, "angel of Jehovah," but in the latter statement He is called both **יְהוָה**, Jehovah, and **אֱלֹהִים**, God. This identification of the angel of the Lord with **יְהוָה**, Jehovah, and **אֱלֹהִים**, God, is confirmed by the fact that this angel of the Lord in speaking of His appearance to Moses said, "that they may believe that **יְהוָה**, Jehovah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee" (Ex. 4:5).

In Mal. 3:1,2: "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and **הָאֲדֹנָי**, 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." The prophet, in the first place, predicts that the messenger of the Lord shall

precede Him and prepare the way for Him; and, secondly, that He, **הָאֲדֹנָי**, the Lord, will suddenly come to His temple. The messenger who goes before the face of the Lord and prepares His way is undoubtedly Elijah the prophet who is mentioned in the last two verses of Malachi's prophecy. When Elijah prepares the way, the Lord comes suddenly to His temple. As to who is referred to by **הָאֲדֹנָי**, Lord, there is no doubt that he is speaking of one of the divine persons; but who is meant by the expression **מִלְאָךְ הַבְּרִית**, "angel of the covenant?" If the law of Hebrew parallelism obtains here, the answer is plain, namely, that the names "Lord" and "angel of the covenant" refer to the same personality. The flow of thought points definitely and positively to the conclusion that such is the case; hence only one individual is here spoken of. From the facts which have been learned from the passages in which the **מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה**, "angel of Jehovah" occurs, there is but one conclusion to be drawn, namely, that this "angel of the Lord" is one of the divine persons.

#### IV. THE LORD JEHOVAH

Frequently we read of the Lord, **אֲדֹנָי**. An examination of each context often shows clearly that this one is He who, throughout the Hebrew Bible, is known as the Father. From an examination of all the Scriptures, one concludes that He never did through historic times appear on earth by assuming human form and conversing with man. Frequently the designation "the Lord Jehovah" is the term that is applied to Him. Nevertheless there are many instances in which He is simply spoken of as the Lord or Jehovah.

#### V. THE WISDOM OF GOD

In the eighth chapter of the Book of Proverbs we read of wisdom. Verses 1-31 should be studied very carefully. To the casual reader it becomes abundantly evident that, in the first part of this chapter, wisdom is personified and is represented as a woman who goes out into the city to the public places where the crowds congregate and pass. She lifts up her voice and pleads with them to listen to her message and to accept it for their good.

This bold figure extends through the first thirteen verses. But when we reach verse 14, we see that this representation ceases and wisdom—which from this verse on is used in a different sense, in the masculine gender—begins to deliver his message. This transition of thought becomes apparent to the one who notes the fact that wisdom declares that he has might. In verse 15 he declares it is by him that kings

reign, and princes decree justice. Moreover, princes by the same authority rule, and nobles of the earth exercise their authority. When we read verses 14-16 in the light of relevant passages, we see that the one who really has might and power and by whom kings and governors rule is none other than one of the personalities of the Godhead. Verses 17-21 are in the same strain.

But when we read verses 22-31, we see that this one is an Eternal Being who was in association with Jehovah prior to the creation of the universe. According to verse 22, this one declares that "Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way, Before his works of old." The word rendered *possessed* also means *formed*. Our translators have chosen the former as the more probable meaning in this instance. With their opinion I concur. But the question may be asked: In what way did Jehovah possess this one, who calls himself wisdom, back in eternity prior to the creation? How does one person possess another? In answer let me say that we have the current idiom, "I have a friend," or, "I possess a good friend." The word possess or have indicates a personal relationship. Undoubtedly it has this significance in our passage. In verse 23 wisdom, continuing his speech, says that he was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, before the earth was. He was set in his station or position of authority and power throughout eternity in the past, which had no beginning. In making this statement, he is affirming that he had an eternal existence along with God. In verses 24-26 wisdom continues in the same strain of speaking of his eternal existence with Jehovah prior to the creation of the universe. Then in verse 27 he speaks of his having been present when Jehovah prepared or established the heavens; he was there when the Lord set a circle upon the face of the deep. According to verse 28 wisdom was in association with God when the latter made firm the skies above, and when the fountains of the deep became strong. Verse 28 is talking about the events that occurred on the second day of reconstruction as set forth in Genesis, chapter 1. The events of this same chapter, occurring on the third day, are described in verse 29. In all the activity of those six days of reconstruction, wisdom was with God, as a master workman, and was the daily delight of the Almighty. When He created man, having made the earth habitable, wisdom was delighted with the sons of men. From all these statements it is clear that Proverbs 8:14-31 is talking about the existence of wisdom as a divine personality in association with God and co-operating with Him, not only in eternity prior to the creation of the world, but also in His reconstruction of the earth after the disastrous catastrophe recorded in Genesis 1:2.

As has been noted above, wisdom is personified and represented as a woman appealing to men and women to do right and to follow her ways. This is seen in verses 1-13. This description is blended with that of wisdom who is seen in the

passage from verses 14 through 31. The blending of these two descriptions might be compared to a stereopticon lantern, which throws a picture upon the screen and which fades the first scene into a second one. As the observer looks at the first picture, it begins to fade and at the same time the dim outlines of another one starts to appear upon the screen. By the time the first one is gone, the second is in full view. Thus it is with this chapter. The picture of wisdom, represented as a woman, fades by the time we come to verse 14 and then wisdom, one of the divine personalities, is thrown upon the screen. Finally we behold Him as He was in association with God in eternity prior to the creation of the world. He also co-operated with Him during the reconstruction period of Genesis, chapter 1.

## VI. THE WORD OF GOD

In Genesis 15:1 we are told that "the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision." When he had this vision, he was in full possession of his mental faculties and could understand what was transpiring. Abram's experience on this occasion was different from that which the prophets usually had and which we call divine inspiration. His spiritual state was doubtless similar to that which Zechariah had and described in the following statement: "And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep" (Zech. 4:1).

An examination of the records of the different visions which the prophet had shows that he received them in succession on a certain night (see Zechariah, chapters 1-6). Concerning his receiving the fifth one (chap. 4), he declared that the angel who talked with him waked him. He was not literally asleep, for he had been receiving the earlier revelations. He therefore must have been awake and in full possession of all his mental faculties. Nevertheless, the spiritual experience which he had lifted him above that of his normal, wakeful, sane moments. The vision which was granted him lifted him as far above his normal, daily, intellectual life as the wakeful hours and mental activity of a person are above those of a period of sleep. Thus the vision in waking the prophet heightened his intellectual and spiritual faculties and lifted him to spiritual heights—far above temporal things—so that he could see and comprehend spiritual and eternal realities.

While Abram was in this condition of exaltation, the Word of Jehovah came to him and spoke a message of encouragement and hope. The circumstances related in connection with this experience are of such a personal nature that one is led to see in this particular case the appearance of one of the divine personalities, who is called "the Word of Jehovah."



Why is this one called the Word of Jehovah? Doubtless because of the fact that, as human words convey ideas of the speaker to others, so this one in His coming to different individuals conveyed the idea of God. It is therefore most appropriate that He should be called "the Word of Jehovah."

In Psalm 33:4-6 we have this language:

- 4 For the word of Jehovah is right;  
And all his work is *done* in faithfulness.
- 5 He loveth righteousness and justice:  
The earth is full of the lovingkindness of Jehovah.
- 6 By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made,  
And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

The psalmist calls upon the righteous to render praise and thanksgiving to God because "the word of Jehovah is right; And all his work is *done* in faithfulness." In verse 4 the line, "For the word of Jehovah is right," is parallel with the second line, "And all his work is *done* in faithfulness." The antecedent of "his" in the second line is "the word of Jehovah" in the first. Instantly we see that "the word of Jehovah" has a personal connotation. He accomplishes work, which He does in faithfulness.

In verse 6 we see by the first line that the heavens were made by "the word of Jehovah," and that all their hosts were brought into existence by the breath of His mouth. This verse being true Hebrew parallelism, "the word of Jehovah" is the one who created the heavens by the breath of His mouth and made all the hosts of them. From this statement we see that the term, word of Jehovah, is used in a personal manner. The one thus designated is the one who has created all things. Nevertheless, He is called "the word of Jehovah."

In verse 5 we read, "He loveth righteousness and justice: The earth is full of the lovingkindness of Jehovah." The antecedent of the "He" is "the word of Jehovah" in the preceding verse. He, the word of Jehovah, loves righteousness and justice. Evidences of His loving-kindness are to be seen throughout the world.

When we note the significance of all these facts, we come to the conclusion that the expression, "the word of Jehovah," is a term used to refer to one of the divine personalities — the one who brought the material universe into existence.

In Psalm 147:15 we have this language:

"He sendeth out his commandment upon earth;  
His word runneth very swiftly."

In this passage we have God's dispatching His "commandment" to some mission in the earth. Parallel with this thought is the one that His "word" runneth very swiftly. The "commandment" of the first line is parallel to the "word" of the second. Bible scholars have seen in this verse a reference to the same divine person mentioned in Psalm 33:4-6, who, as we have just seen, is one of the divine personalities that created the universe. From the passage under consideration we see that God the Father sent forth this one who is the Word of God and who travels very swiftly and accomplishes His mission.

Once again we have language similar to this in Isaiah 9:8: "The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel." Here we have the same term in the Hebrew translated "word." The Lord Jehovah sends Him forth on a mission to Israel which He performs. The characteristics of personality seem to stand out prominently in this passage.

Once again, we have another passage which seems to connote personality in the Word of God: "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater; 11 so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:10,11).

In this passage we learn that God has a purpose in sending the showers and that they accomplish what is intended. In the same manner, declares the Lord, His Word that goeth out of His mouth shall accomplish that to which He sends it. The prophet speaks of the Word's going forth from God, accomplishing His work and then returning. In this passage likewise scholars have seen the features of personality of the Word.

Once more, we see a usage similar to this but much more graphic. In Ezekiel 1:3 we read that "the word of Jehovah came expressly unto Ezekiel." Then in the next verse we read a description of the appearance of the glory of Jehovah who appeared, seated upon a portable throne. This one had the appearance of a man, and He gave Ezekiel his call and commission. Since the prophet tells us that the word of Jehovah came to him expressly and then begins to describe the coming of

this one enthroned above the cherubim, who delivered the word of God to him and gave him his call and commission, we come to the conclusion that Ezekiel spoke of this one as the "Word of God." From this conclusion there can be no escape—if we are willing to let the language speak its own message and note the trend of thought.

Why is this one called the "word" of God and at the same time the "glory of the God of Israel" (Ezek. 9:3)? Words are the symbols of ideas. By them thoughts are conveyed. Evidently this divine personality conveys to man the thought of God and the message of God. He therefore because of this fact is doubtless called "the Word of Jehovah."

#### VII. TWO DIVINE PERSONALITIES IN THE ONE PASSAGE DESIGNATED AS "JEHOVAH"

Genesis, chapters 18 and 19, constitute a most marvelous revelation. I therefore ask the reader to turn to these chapters and study them carefully. Assuming that he has done this, I shall now call attention to the salient points in the narrative.

In Genesis 18:1 occurs the statement that Jehovah appeared to Abraham when he was by the oaks of Mamre. Following this sentence is one to the effect that he looked up and saw three men who stood over against him. Abraham greeted them and prepared a special meal for their entertainment (vss. 3-8). After the feast Jehovah, who was one of the three visitors coming to Abraham, conversed with the patriarch and promised that at the same time the next year Sarah, Abraham's wife, would become the proud mother of a child of promise. Sarah doubted and was reprimanded for her unbelief (vss. 9-15).

From verses 16-21 we learn that the two men, who are in 19:1 called angels, left Abraham and Jehovah and went towards Sodom, but Jehovah and Abraham remained behind. At this time the Lord disclosed to Abraham His intention to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. This revelation was made to him upon the basis of his being a friend of God and because God purposed to use him in the unfolding of His plan to bless the world. This disclosure was a challenge to his faith and constituted an invitation for him to intercede in behalf of Lot and his family, who were residing in the doomed city (vss. 22-33). Since ten righteous people could not be found in Sodom, the Lord was compelled to destroy the cities of the Plain.

In 19:1-22 we have an account of the angels' reaching Sodom and being received by Lot. The Sodomites, learning of their coming, made an onslaught on the house of Lot. By the angels' smiting the mob with blindness, Lot and his household were

protected. Early the next morning the angels prevailed upon him, his wife, and his two daughters to flee from the doomed city, which thing they did, going to Zoar.

That same morning when the sun had arisen, the Lord rained down fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. The account of this stroke of divine judgment is expressed in the following scriptural language:

"Then Jehovah rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven; 25 and he overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground" (Gen. 19:24,25). According to this passage Jehovah, who had been talking with Abraham personally, rained down fire and brimstone out of heaven from Jehovah, who was in glory. The language will yield no other meaning. Thus there are two divine personalities in this passage, designated as Jehovah. From all the facts of this context, it is clear that one of these assumed the form of a man, appeared in company with two angels who likewise assumed human forms, conversed with Abraham, and was entertained by him. This Jehovah who was still upon earth called down fire and brimstone from Jehovah in heaven and by so doing destroyed the cities of the Plain.

In other passages of scripture we see two divine personalities who are designated as Jehovah. As an example of this, one should read Zechariah 2:8,9. Jehovah of hosts is talking and concludes His statement by saying that **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁלָחָנִי**, "Jehovah of hosts hath sent me." Thus it becomes quite evident that, according to this passage, Jehovah of hosts sent Jehovah of hosts. Though they are both called by the same name, they are two distinct personalities, but, of course, they are of the same divine substance and essence. A glance at Isaiah, chapter 50, shows a like circumstance. If one will read the first nine verses of this chapter, one will see that the speaker who, in these verses, uses the personal pronouns I, my and me, is Jehovah himself, as verse 1 indicates. Nevertheless this Jehovah declares, in verses 4 and 5, what **אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה**, "the Lord Jehovah," had done for Him and, in verses 7 and 9, what He will yet do for Him.

An examination of this chapter shows that the prophet was carried forward from his own day—the latter half of the eighth century B.C.E.—to a time subsequent to that when the Jehovah of this chapter, who is the speaker, has come to earth and has called His people. They do not answer Him but simply ignore Him. Furthermore a continued examination of the passage—especially verses 4-9, which are spoken, not from a standpoint subsequent to His coming to earth, but from that

of the time of His visit—shows that He declares what the Lord Jehovah has done for Him and what He will yet do for Him as He works out the redemption of the human family and makes possible the salvation of mankind.

The Hebrew, like the Greek, anciently had a dual number which signified two. In the early stages of the language this form figured more prominently than in later Hebrew. Usually this form of the noun was employed when a pair of objects was mentioned. When for instance, a Hebrew wished to speak of a person's hands he put the noun in the dual number. The same thing was true with reference to eyes and feet. By the use of this form the writer indicated that there were but two. If there had been only two personalities in the Divine Being and the prophets had wished to emphasize that fact, they could have put the word for God in the dual number. But not one time did they resort to any such method. On the contrary, as we have already seen, they used a word, אֵל, 'el, for God in the singular and אֱלֹהִים, 'elohim, in the plural number, which facts show that there were at least three personalities constituting the Divine Being.

Frequently, however, Moses and the prophets used אֵל, El, God, in referring to the Divine Being, which is in the singular number and means only one. Occasionally they used אֱלֹהִי, Eloah, God. Beyond controversy this also is in the singular number. If the Divine Being were simply a single personality, the sacred writers could have used either of these words in the singular to convey that idea. In Joshua 22:22, however, appear both the singular and plural forms, which combination amounts to an affirmation regarding the unity of the divine personalities constituting the one God:

אֵל אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה אֵל אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה

"God, Gods, Jehovah, God, Gods, Jehovah . . ." (lit trans.).

The noun in the singular number doubtless stressed the unity of God, whereas the one in the plural laid emphasis upon the plurality of the Almighty. In the original the plural word for God is used with a verb in the plural number in Genesis 20:13 and 35:7. Evidently, since the Scriptures are infallibly inspired, there was a very definite reason why the noun for God, Elohim, is used here with a plural verb. These are some facts that we must consider in our attempt to find the scriptural truth with reference to the nature of the Eternal God.

## VIII. THE TRINITY OF DIVINE PERSONALITIES

Isaiah, as well as Moses and all the prophets of Israel, was a Trinitarian. As proof of this fact all one has to do is to read and study carefully Isaiah 63:7-14.

חֲסִדֵי יְהוָה | אֲזַכִּיר תְּהִלַּת יְהוָה פֶּעַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר-גָּמְלָנוּ יְהוָה וְרַב-טוֹב לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֲשֶׁר-גָּמְלָם בְּרַחֲמָיו וּכְרַב חֲסִדָּיו: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶד-עַמִּי הֵמָּה בָּנִים לֹא יִשְׁקְרוּ וַיְהִי לָהֶם  
לְמוֹשִׁיעַ: בְּכָל-צָרָתָם | לֹא צָר וּמִלְאָד פָּנָיו הוֹשִׁיעֵם בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ וּבְחַמְלָתוֹ הוּא גָּאֹלָם  
וַיִּנְשָׁלֵם וַיִּנְשָׂאֵם כָּל-יָמֵי עוֹלָם: וְהֵמָּה מָרוּ וַעֲצָבוּ אֶת-רוּחַ קֹדֶשׁוֹ וַיִּהְפֹּךְ לָהֶם לְאוֹיֵב  
הוּא נֶלְחָם-בָּם: וַיִּזְכֹּר יְמֵי-עוֹלָם מִשָּׁה עָמָּה אֵינָה | הַמַּעַלָּם מִיָּמַי אֵת רָעָה צָאֲנוּ אֵינָה  
הַשָּׁם בְּקֶרְבּוֹ אֶת-רוּחַ קֹדֶשׁוֹ: מוֹלִיךְ לַיָּמִין מִשָּׁה זְרוּעַ תִּפְאָרְתוֹ בּוֹקֵעַ מִיָּם מִפְּנִיָּהֶם  
לַעֲשׂוֹת לּוֹ שֵׁם עוֹלָם: מוֹלִיכֵם בְּתַהֲמוֹת פָּסוּס בַּמִּדְבָּר לֹא יִפְשְׁלוּ: כִּבְהֵמָה בִּבְקָעָה  
תִּרְדַּד רוּחַ יְהוָה תְּנִיחָנוּ כִּן נִהְגָּת עִמָּךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת לָךְ שֵׁם תִּפְאָרְתָּ:

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 hath 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.

This block of Scripture is the introductory portion, a retrospect, of the petition which the nation of Israel will make in the year 1945-plus. The entire prayer is to be found in Isaiah 63:7-64:12.

In this petition the prophet was carried forward by the Spirit of God to the time of Jacob's trouble, the Great Tribulation, and saw his brethren in deep contrition,

implored deliverance by Almighty God. As their leader in spiritual matters, he burst forth into this petition, which is likewise a prophecy of that which shall surely be.

He began his supplication by stating that he would make mention of the lovingkindness of the Lord and of His praises along with His great goodness, which He has in the past bestowed upon Israel. It is impossible for anyone to magnify the Lord Jehovah in the manner and to the extent that is worthy of His great heart. As an example of God's tender mercies to Israel, the prophet was led to speak of the salvation and deliverance which was wrought for her at the time of her deliverance from Egyptian bondage. In his doing so, he mentioned specifically the three divine personalities, as we see in the following verses which I shall re-quote. "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" (Isaiah 63:8-10).

In verse 8 the Lord Jehovah acknowledges that Israel is His own peculiar people, "children that will not deal falsely." Because of this fact—the covenant relationship into which God entered with Israel at Sinai, and which covenant in turn was based upon the one into which He entered with Abraham—"he was their Saviour." His great love for His covenant people led Him to plan and devise a means of redemption and deliverance for them from the galling, bitter bondage and oppression to which they were subjected in Egypt. Thus in a real sense He became their Saviour. Moreover "in all their affliction he was afflicted." Humanly speaking, the heart of God was grieved when He saw the injustice, cruelty, tyranny, and oppression to which His beloved people were being subjected. His heart is sympathetic to all human suffering. He does not willingly afflict the children of men. Whenever He permits any suffering to come upon His people, He is forced to do so on account of their attitude, actions, and sins. Whenever anyone therefore is suffering, as he believes, unjustly, he would do well to search his own heart and take an inventory of his life, asking the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to enable him to see where the difficulties lie. In all probability the Lord God will show to such a one the cause for which he is suffering.

The prophet, continuing the narration, declared, that "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." The expression, "the angel of his presence," is

indeed unique and striking. Concerning this one the prophet declared that he saved them, that is, the angel of His presence saved Israel. Not only did He do that, but He also, in loving kindness and pity, bore them and carried them all the days of old. Who is this one? Light is thrown upon this passage by Exodus 23:20 and 21. "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee by the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. 21 Take ye heed before him, and hearken unto his voice; provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgression: **כִּי שְׁמִי בְקִרְבּוֹ**, for my name is in him." According to this promise God sent an angel before Israel throughout her wilderness wanderings. This one was to keep her in the way and to bring her into the place which He had prepared for her. Moreover the Lord warned Israel that she must hearken diligently unto His voice and not provoke Him, stating that "he will not pardon your transgression: for my name is in him." Let us note that this one had the right and authority to pardon sin but would not do so if Israel committed transgressions. The entire exhortation is strengthened by this statement, "for my name is in him." The word name in this clause is indeed unique and is not to be understood in an ordinary sense. As the Hebrews anciently employed this term, it signified the nature of God. For instance in Psalm 9:10 this language appears: "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee." Certainly in this passage the word name stands for God himself. Again we see the same usage in Psalm 91:14: "I will set him on high, because he has known **שְׁמִי**, my name."

Further light concerning this angel is given in Exodus, chapter 33. In verse 2 the Lord reiterated the promise that He would send an angel before Moses to prepare the way. According to verse 12 he told the Lord that, though he had been instructed to take the people up, the Lord had not made known whom He would send with him. Previous to this time the Lord had assured him that he had found favor in His sight. Then Moses asked the Lord that he might be shown the ways of the Almighty to the end that he might know Him—know Him in an experimental way and continue to find favor in His sight. In reply the Lord assured him saying,

"My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest." Here the Lord promised that His actual presence would go with Moses and Israel in their journey to the Promised Land. Continuing his conversation with the Lord, Moses requested Him not to carry them up if His presence should not go with them. He was convinced that the Lord's presence with them in their journey was proof that he had found favor in the sight of the Almighty.



Thereupon the Lord again assured him that He would not only go along with him, but that He would also show him His glory. This promise is found in the following statement: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee." The Lord fulfilled His promise by putting Moses in the cleft of a rock, passing by, and proclaiming His name (Ex. 34:1-7). In proclaiming His name, Jehovah declared His attributes in the following words:

**וַיַּעֲבֹר יְהוָה | עַל-פָּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה | יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים רַחוּם וְתוֹנִן אֶרֶץ אֲפִים וְרַב-חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת:  
נֹצֵר חֶסֶד לְאֲלֹפִים נִשְׂא עֹון וְפֹשַׁע וְתַטָּאָה וְנִקָּה לֹא יִנָּקֶה פֶקֶד | עֹון אָבוֹת עַל-בָּנִים  
וְעַל-בְּנֵי בָנִים עַל-שְׁלֹשִׁים וְעַל-רַבְעִים:**

"And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness and truth; 7 keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation" (Ex. 34:6,7). From the entire narrative found in Exodus 33:1—34:9, one sees that the angel whom the Lord Jehovah promised would accompany Israel was none other than one of the divine personalities. He was one of those appearing in the form of an angel to Abraham. Concerning Him, God declared that He was His very presence.

It is indeed interesting and informative to study in the five Books of Moses the appearances and the activity of this angel who saved Israel, delivered her from Egyptian bondage, and bore her throughout her wilderness wandering. At the conclusion of the forty-year period of her stay in the wilderness, Moses delivered his final orations which appear in the form of the Book of Deuteronomy. In 4:37,38 we have a statement relative to this angel whom God called "his presence."

**וְתַחַת כִּי אָהַב אֶת-אֲבוֹתָיָךְ וַיִּבְחַר בְּזַרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו וַיּוֹצֵאֲךָ בְּפָנָיו בְּכַחוֹ הַגָּדֹל מִמִּצְרָיִם:  
לְהוֹרִישׁ גּוֹיִם גְּדֹלִים וְעֲצָמִים מִמֶּךָ מִפְּנֶיךָ לְהַבְיֵאֲךָ לְתַת־לָךְ אֶת-אֶרֶצָם נַחֲלָה כִּיּוֹם  
הַזֶּה:**

"And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out with his presence, with his great power, out of Egypt; 38 to drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as at this day."\*

**\*9** Hear, O Israel: thou art to pass over the Jordan this day, to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, 2 a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the sons of Anak? 3 Know therefore this day, that Jehovah thy God is he who goeth over before thee as a devouring fire; he will destroy them, and he will bring them down before thee: so shalt thou drive them out, and make them to perish quickly, as Jehovah hath spoken unto thee. 4 Speak not thou in thy heart, after that Jehovah thy God hath thrust them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness Jehovah hath brought me in to possess this land; whereas for the wickedness of these nations Jehovah doth drive them out from before thee. 5 Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thy heart, dost thou go in to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations Jehovah thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may establish the word which Jehovah swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

6 Know therefore, that Jehovah thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people. 7 Remember, forget thou not, how thou provokedst Jehovah thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou wentest forth out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against Jehovah. 8 Also in Horeb ye provoked Jehovah to wrath, and Jehovah was angry with you to destroy you . (Deut. 9:1-8)

6 For thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God: Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth. 7 Jehovah did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all peoples: 8 but because Jehovah loveth you, and because he would keep the oath which he swore unto your fathers, hath Jehovah brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that Jehovah thy God, he is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and lovingkindness with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations, 10 and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. 11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command thee this day, to do them. (Deut. 7:6-11)

With the information that we have gleaned from the chapters at which we have been looking, we can understand more fully the significance of the expression מַלְאָךְ פָּנָיו, "angel of his presence," in Isaiah 63:9. The language of this verse is of such a definite character that we are forced to the conclusion that this personality is not an ordinary angel upon whom God looks—one of those that stand before the Lord of the whole earth. This passage can mean only one thing; namely, that in the face of this angel is seen the very personality of the Almighty shining forth. There is, of course, reflected in his countenance the love, pity, and compassion of the Eternal God, as well as the sterner qualities of His nature.

Notwithstanding the mighty miracles and wonders which the Lord wrought in behalf of Israel in delivering her from Egyptian bondage and in His bringing her into the Land of Promise, the people "rebelled, and grieved his רֹחַ קֹדֶשׁ, holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, *and* himself fought against them" (Isa. 63:10). The language, "they rebelled, and grieved his holy Spirit," is so very definite and personal that we cannot avoid the conclusion that this is one of the divine personalities. In Nehemiah 9:20 we are told that God gave His good Spirit to instruct Israel and withheld not manna from her. Concerning the fact that God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, came and dwelt in Israel when the Lord God through the angel of His presence delivered her, Haggai made this statement: "For I [Jehovah] am with you, saith Jehovah of hosts, *according* to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, and my Spirit abode among you: fear ye not" (Haggai 2:4,5).

Turning back to our original passage, Isaiah 63:8-10, we see God who becomes the Saviour of Israel (vs. 8). In verse 9 the angel of His presence saved her in that He carried out the actual plan of the Almighty. Then in verse 10 we note the Holy Spirit whom she grieved and against whom she rebelled. Thus in these three verses we see three divine personalities. Isaiah was therefore a thoroughgoing Trinitarian—the same as was Moses.

In verses 11-14 we see a changed attitude in the nation of Israel. Here she is deeply penitent because of her disobedience and of her having grieved the Holy Spirit. Verse 11, which begins this section, starts with the temporal adverb *then*. This word points definitely to a certain time. In the Revised Version we have this reading in the text: "Then he remembered the days of old, Moses *and* his people." As a marginal rendering, we have these words: "Then his people remembered the ancient days of Moses, etc." Grammatically both of these translations are correct. That one which accords with the facts of the context and harmonizes with related

passages is to be selected. When we remember that Isaiah 63:7-64:12 is a prophecy and at the same time a prayer which Israel will utter in the closing days of this age—as all the facts indicate—we are led to prefer the marginal reading. Then—at the time foreseen in the passage—His people (Jehovah's people) remember the ancient days of Moses. Such is the import of the prophecy, even though in the translation the past tense is employed. This verse becomes clear when we recall that Isaiah was carried forward in vision into the future and saw Israel praying as set forth in this section. In their distress and perplexity, when they realize that all human efforts will be of no avail, their minds will revert to the deliverance wrought for them by the triune Godhead when He brought them out of Egypt and settled them in the Land of Promise, the country vouchsafed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for a perpetual inheritance. They will therefore ask the various questions which are found in verses 11-13.

The first of these questions is this: "Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock?" The one concerning whom this query is made undoubtedly is the Lord Jehovah concerning whom it is said in verse 8 that He became their Saviour. The second question to be asked is: "Where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them?" The Holy Spirit of this question clearly is the Holy Spirit mentioned in verse 10.

The next question in the series is: "Where is he that caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses?" (vs. 12). As stated above, the Lord Jehovah, the Father, is still the one who is represented as acting or supervising the deliverance from Egypt. It is He who "caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses. But who or what is meant by "his glorious arm?" "The arm of Jehovah" sometimes refers to His strength or power. At other times it indicates Messiah. The facts in each context must determine its particular significance in a given case. For instance, in Isaiah 51:9 we have this language: **עוֹרֵי עוֹרֵי לְבָשִׁי-עֹז זְרוּעַ יְהוָה עוֹרֵי** **בְּיָמֵי קֶדֶם דְּרוֹת עוֹלָמִים הָלֹא אֶת־הִיא הִמְחַצֶּבֶת רַהַב מְחוֹלֶלֶת תַּנִּין:** "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Jehovah; awake as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times. Is it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the monster?"

In verses 9-11 the facts show that this one who is called the "arm of Jehovah" is the one who combated Rahab and other monsters in primeval times. When this verse is read in the light of Job, chapters 40 and 41, one sees that leviathan and other sea monsters are used symbolically to refer to the first great rebel who revolted against God; namely, the anointed cherub who is now known as Satan, the devil. This

anointed cherub was the highest type of being whom the Almighty could create. When he rebelled against God, there was no one who could deal with him except Deity himself—as one can see in chapter 9 of my volume, *What Men Must Believe*.

According to Isaiah 51:10 this same arm of Jehovah is the one who dried up the sea, opened up the great waters of the deep, and allowed Israel to pass out of Egyptian bondage through the Red Sea into the wilderness. As we have already seen, the "angel of Jehovah" is the one who accompanied Israel and delivered her from her bondage. This "angel of Jehovah," as we know, was none other than Jehovah himself. From the facts of the context of Isaiah 51:9, we see that the expression, "the arm of Jehovah," is here a designation of Messiah.

In Isaiah 53:1 we have this language: "Who hath believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed?" In this passage the same words, which are translated, "the arm of Jehovah," occur as in Isaiah 51:9. An examination of the context of this verse shows that this "arm of Jehovah" is an individual—the Messiah<sup>1</sup> of Israel—who suffers in behalf of the nation.

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<sup>1</sup> In the latter section of Isaiah, chapters 40-66, we read of "the servant of Jehovah." Usually the term, "my servant," appears. The prophet uses this expression with three connotations: (1) It embraces the entire nation of Israel; (2) it includes only the faithful remnant of the nation; and (3) it indicates King Messiah, the ideal Israelite. The facts of the context must determine its significance in each case. For example, in Isa. 42:18-22, this expression occurs. An examination of these verses shows that it signifies the entire nation of the Hebrews. But in Isa. 41:8-16 the same expression occurs (vs. 8), but the facts of this context show that it has a limited signification here. For this Israel is gathered back from the four corners of the globe to the land of the fathers and is reinstated into fellowship with the Almighty. This fact, together, with all that is said in this particular paragraph, shows that the servant here has the restricted meaning of the remnant of the Hebrews. On the other hand, the same expression, my servant, occurs in 42:1-4. An examination of the facts of this passage shows that his servant has as his objective the introduction of a new world order, spiritually, socially, and politically. In other words, He establishes a reign of righteousness and justice on the earth in accordance with the principles of truth. This is not a man-size job; it is a God-size job. Only Deity can perform this task. In view of these facts we must understand the servant of this passage to refer to King Messiah who is God in human form. (I establish this thesis beyond a peradventure in my book: *Messiah: His Nature and Person*.) When one studies the facts as they appear in Isa. 52:13—53:12, one sees that the data demand that we understand the servant of this passage to be none other than King Messiah. (For a full discussion of this point see my book, *The Eternal God Revealing Himself to Suffering Israel and Lost Humanity*.)

From Isaiah 40:10,11 we see that the "arm of Jehovah" signifies Jehovah himself:

"Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come as a mighty one, and his arm will rule for him: Behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and will gently lead those that have their young."

The Book of Isaiah, with the exceptions of chapters 36-39, is written in poetical form, the fundamental principle of which is Hebrew parallelism. A statement is made by the choice of certain words and then is repeated or modified by another statement expressed in different language. In the first part of verse 10 the declaration is made, "Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come as a mighty one." This same thought is repeated in these words "And his arm will rule for him." The "Lord Jehovah" in the first statement is "his arm" in the second. This second sentence becomes a comment upon the first. Thus we see here a prediction that this one who is designated as the arm of Jehovah will come as a warrior, a mighty hero, and will set up a reign of righteousness on the earth in behalf of the Lord Jehovah. From this passage we learn that the expression, the arm of Jehovah, is used to signify the Messiah.

Again, in Isaiah 52:10, appears this same arm of Jehovah. But in order for a person to understand it properly, he must examine the context, especially verses 7-10. The prophet saw a messenger bringing good tidings to Zion—tidings of peace and of salvation. The watchmen of Zion hear the glad message and burst forth into singing. They are convinced of the truthfulness of what is announced to them and are persuaded that they shall see "eye to eye when Jehovah returneth to Zion" (vs. 8). The implication of this statement is that Jehovah will have come to Zion, but will have left it prior to the time here foreseen by the prophet; but in this revelation he sees Jehovah returning to Zion to establish His reign. In view of this disclosure the prophet calls upon the waste places of Jerusalem and vicinity to break forth into singing. Of course, he is speaking of the people who can sing and rejoice.

This is evident from the next statement, found in verse 9, "For Jehovah hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem." In the next verse follows the prediction: "Jehovah hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God." Thus this holy arm of Jehovah in this connection can refer only to Jehovah alone, who will return to Zion and take up His reign there.

From these examples it is very clear that Isaiah used the expression, "the arm of

Jehovah," to refer to Israel's personal Messiah who will some day come and establish His reign of righteousness in Jerusalem and will reign from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

At the same time we must recognize the fact that Isaiah also used the expression, "his own arm," in the impersonal sense of Messiah's own strength. For example, in Isaiah 59:16 we have this statement: "Therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it upheld him." An examination of this passage shows that the prophet in Isaiah 59:16-60:3 was speaking of the personal return of Messiah in glory when He will come as a great warrior to deliver Israel. At that time He will use His own strength and power. Such is the significance of our expression in this instance.

The same significance is to be seen in Isaiah 63:1-6. In this passage we have another vision of Messiah's coming to deliver His own beloved people Israel from the throes of persecution and warfare. He enters battle against her foes and his "own arm" brings salvation to Him, while His wrath upholds Him.

Having studied the two different usages of the expressions, "the arm of Jehovah" and "his own arm," we are now to return to the passage under consideration and determine its significance in Isaiah 63:12, in the sentence, "*Where is he* that caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses?" We have already seen that the "angel of his presence" mentioned in verse 9 was none other than the angel of Jehovah who is recognized as Jehovah himself, and yet he is distinct from the one mentioned as being Israel's Saviour in verse 8. We must also remember that Jehovah made His Holy Spirit to dwell in the midst of Israel and that later she rebelled against Him and grieved Him. Thus the Holy Spirit is recognized as God and as being separate and distinct from the Lord Jehovah. In view of all these facts it seems very clear that the one referred to as "his glorious arm" can be none other than this angel of His presence, the angel of Jehovah. This interpretation accords with the personal usage of our term as we have already seen in various passages of Isaiah.

Israel at this future time, as foreseen by the prophet, will likewise ask, "*Where is he* that divided the waters before them [Israel], to make himself an everlasting name?" (vs. 12). This query refers to Jehovah God, Israel's Saviour, who planned her redemption. Of course, the reference is to His opening up the waters of the Red Sea for Israel to pass through. The next question pertains to the same event, for the people will ask, "Where is he that led them through the depths, as a horse in the

wilderness, so that they stumbled not?" (vs. 13). The Lord Jehovah here again is represented as the one who was leading them as they passed through the sea.

These questions are followed by the assertion: "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" (vs. 14). After the wilderness wanderings, Israel came down from the high tablelands of Moab into the valley of the Jordan, crossed the river, and settled down in the Land of Promise. Their being led down into the valley and over into Canaan is compared, in this verse, to cattle's being led down into a cool valley beside the water in order to rest from the heat of the day. Thus the Spirit of God is said to have brought Israel down into her valley of rest by bringing her into the land. The Spirit here is none other than the Holy Spirit. The verse ends with a reference to Jehovah the Father in the language, "So didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name."

We may summarize the facts which we have learned from Isaiah 63:7-14. The prophet was carried forward, as we have already seen, to a time yet future and led the remnant of Israel in prayer, confession, and intercession (Isa. 63:7-64:12). In 63:8-10 he looked back to the deliverance wrought for their ancestors at the time of the Exodus and attributed it to the Lord Jehovah (vs. 8), to the **מַלְאָךְ פָּנָיו**, "angel of his presence"—Messiah in His prenatal state (vs. 9), and to **רוּחַ קֹדֶשׁוֹ**, "his holy Spirit" (vs. 10).

At the time yet in the future which is here foreseen by the prophet, the people of Israel will be in dire need and distress and will ask the questions concerning the whereabouts of the Lord Jehovah who wrought their salvation from Egypt during the days of Moses. They will also inquire about the glorious "arm of Jehovah" who saved them and bore them along through the wilderness on their journey to Canaan. Moreover, they will ask about the Spirit of Jehovah who gave their ancestors rest when they entered the Land of Promise.

They will look up to heaven and pray for the three divine personalities constituting the Trinity to bring deliverance to them. They likewise will plead for Jehovah, "the angel of his presence"—the Messiah of Israel to rend the heavens and come down to earth as He did at the time of His giving the law at Sinai. Moreover, they will confess their national sin and plead for His return. (Here read Isaiah 64:1-12.)

In the light of all the facts of this context we can see most clearly the *three* divine personalities constituting the one true and living God.



## IX. THE RECOGNITION OF JEHOVAH, THE WORD OF JEHOVAH, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT BY THE ANCIENT SYNAGOGUE

In our investigation thus far we have seen that Moses and the prophets were Trinitarians. They believed in the three divine personalities who subsist in the one divine essence. This conclusion is inescapable—for the one who is willing to take the Holy Scriptures at their face value.

The ancient synagogue, as the heading of this section indicates, believed in the Lord Jehovah אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה the Word of Jehovah, and רִיחַ-קֹדֶשׁ the Holy Spirit. This fact is reflected in the Targums, the recognized Aramaic translations of the Hebrew text of the Scriptures. The two principal Targums are those of Onkelos on the Pentateuch and of Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the prophets, although there are others of various sections of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Scholars are disagreed as to the dates of these translations. Some try to place them after the Talmudic Period—after the third century of the current era. Certain ones tell us that they did not assume the present form in which they appear until the Middle Ages. Most of the arguments for assigning a late date to them are purely subjective. Reasoning from silence figures largely in the determination of these late dates. As is well known, this type of argument is very fallacious and cannot with confidence be relied upon.

What do the historical facts indicate? We know that up to the time of the Babylonian captivity the Jews spoke their native tongue, the Hebrew. When, however, they were deported to Babylon, they adopted the language of their conquerors—the Chaldean, or Aramaic—which from that time until the second or third century of the present era was the lingua franca of all southwestern Asia, including Palestine. Certain portions of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel are in Aramaic. For this reason these books were not translated into Aramaic. This is just what one, who knows the historical facts, would expect. That the Jews were speaking this language is evident from the Aramaic documents that have been recovered from the Elephantine district of Upper Egypt in which a large Jewish population flourished during the Persian Period. Aramaic was the language of this section of the world throughout the Persian and Greek periods. After the conquests of Alexander, the Greek language began to supplant the Aramaic. In the first century of the present era, Palestine was a bi-lingual country, the two tongues being Aramaic and Greek.

We see the first indications of the Targums, or translations of the original into the Aramaic, in Nehemiah 8:8: "And they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading." An examination of this context shows that the sacred historian was recording the reading of the law to the returned exiles in Jerusalem after Nehemiah had arrived from the Persian capital. The people in daily life were no longer speaking the Hebrew but the Aramaic. Nevertheless in the services of the synagogue the Hebrew was used. Those who were reading the Word of God on this occasion naturally, since it was in their mother tongue, the Hebrew language, and doubtless many others of the older generation, understood the reading; but the younger generation, which arose during the Exile, spoke and understood only the Aramaic. For them it was therefore necessary that that which was read in the original should be translated into the tongue spoken by the masses. From this early beginning we can get an intimation of the character of the translation; namely, that it was a kind of paraphrase or explanation of the original.

The synagogue arose in the time of the Exile, became an authorized institution in Jewry, and has remained so until this day. At religious services the original was read; but during the time when the Aramaic was spoken by the great masses, a translation had to be made immediately for the benefit of the hearers. According to the rules, which were based upon custom, a verse from the law was read and was immediately rendered into Aramaic; but three verses of the prophets were read and then were rendered into the current language. These translations made in the synagogue were of course oral at first and doubtless from usage became stereotyped, more or less. In the course of time they were put into the permanent form of writing. Whether or not Onkelos was the one who translated the Targum of the Pentateuch, one cannot say positively. Neither can one be dogmatic with reference to Jonathan Ben Uzziel and his being the author of the Palestinian Targum. The authorship of these translations is not a vital question in this investigation. Only the time, or an approximation of it, is in this connection vital.

After the Greek had supplanted the Aramaic as the language of the people in general, there would be no occasion for the rise of these Aramaic Targums. Since the Greek had largely supplanted the Aramaic in popular usage no later than the second century of the present era, we are logical in concluding that these Targums were made and were in current use in the synagogues before or by the close of the second century of our era. It is quite likely that the same reason which led to the codification of the Talmud was the cause for committing the Targums to the permanent form of writing. The Jewish state had been destroyed, and Israel had been scattered to the four winds. This new situation demanded the reduction of

both the traditional laws and the Aramaic translation of the Scriptures to be crystalized in writing. With confidence therefore we may believe that the Targums in their present form—with very few exceptions—date back before or at least to the first and second century of the present era. Upon this hypothesis we may conclude that these Targums reflect the ideas and the theological conceptions of the Synagogue in the centuries immediately preceding the present era. We may with confidence, then, come to the Targums and see reflected therein quite accurately the teachings of the great masters in Israel. Especially can we draw this conclusion with regard to the two Targums about which we have been studying, since they are the ones that appear along with the Hebrew text in Bibles edited by the rabbis. This fact gives official sanction, in a general way at least, to these Targums. With these indisputable facts in mind, let us now turn to them to see what we can learn concerning the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

We shall begin with Genesis 19:24 which reads in the American Revised Version as follows: "Then **יְהוָה**, Jehovah, rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from **יְהוָה**, Jehovah, out of heaven. ..." Jonathan Ben Uzziel renders the original text of this passage as follows: "And the Word of the Lord caused to descend upon the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord from heaven."\* Here we see that the Jehovah who was upon earth and who caused the fire to come down out of heaven from Jehovah is called "the Word of Jehovah." The translator then used the term, the Word of Jehovah, in referring to the one in the sacred text called Jehovah. Thus one of the personalities of the one true God of whom we have been reading and studying in the Scriptures is here by the translator designated as the Word of Jehovah.

In Genesis 1:27 we read: "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. ..." This same Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel renders the verse thus: "And the Word of Jehovah created man in his likeness, in the likeness of Jehovah, Jehovah created, male and female created he them." Here we see that our translator calls one of the divine personalities by the designation of "the Word of Jehovah."

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\* The translations from the Targums which I am giving are those made by Rev C. W. H. Pauli and may be found in his booklet, *The Great Mystery: or How Can Three Be One?*

This same Jerusalem Targum or paraphrase renders Exodus 3:14 as follows: "And the Word of the Lord [Jehovah] said unto Moses: I am he who said unto the world, Be! And it was: And who in the future shall say to it, Be! and it shall be. And he said: Thus thou shalt say to the children of Israel: I AM hath sent me unto you."

Here again the one who is called the "angel of Jehovah" and also Jehovah himself, who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, is called in this translation "the Word of Jehovah." Here, as in the passages just mentioned, one of the divine personalities is called the Word of Jehovah.

Once again we see another illustration of this interpretation in the case of the patriarch Jacob. Onkelos in his paraphrase rendered Genesis 28:20,21 as follows: "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If the Word of Jehovah will be my support, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Word of Jehovah be my God." From this quotation we see that Onkelos understood that one of the divine beings is called the Word of Jehovah.

Who was the lawgiver? We shall let the Jerusalem Targum of Jonathan on Exodus 20:1 tell us: "And the Word of the Lord spake all these glorious words [Ten Commandments]." In the original we are told that God spoke these words. Then in the translation we are told that the Word of Jehovah spoke them. From this it is clear that our translator conceived of one of the divine beings as the Word of Jehovah.

Abraham had faith in the same one as did Jacob according to the Targum of Onkelos on Genesis 15:6: "Abraham believed in the Word of Jehovah, and He counted it to him for righteousness." In the Targum of Genesis 22:7 Isaac is said to have asked, "Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" To this Abraham replied, according to the Jerusalem Targum, "The Word of the Lord will provide me a lamb; and if not, then thou, my son, shall be the burnt-offering."

While we are considering the patriarch Abraham, let us ask in whose name did he pray? According to the Jerusalem Targum on Genesis 22:14, "Abraham worshipped and prayed in the name of the Word of the Lord, and said, Thou art the Lord who doth see, but Thou canst not be seen." He doubtless inculcated the same doctrine in Hagar, his handmaiden, who, according to Jerusalem Targum of Genesis 16:13 said, "Hagar praised, and prayed in the name of the Word of the Lord, who had revealed Himself unto her: she said, Blessed art Thou, O God, who liveth to all eternity who has seen my affliction."

Whom did Moses, the great lawgiver, worship? According to Jonathan Ben Uzziel in the Jerusalem Targum on Numbers 10:35,36, "It came to pass when the ark was lifted up Moses stood with his hands lifted up in prayer, and said; Stand up now, O Word of the Lord in the strength of thy might, and let the enemies of thy people be

scattered, and those that hate Thee, flee from before Thee. And when the ark came to rest, Moses lifted up his hands in prayer and said: Return now, O Word of the Lord from the might of Thine anger and come to us in Thy mercies, which are so good, and bless the ten thousand, and multiply the thousands of the children of Israel." According to the Targum of Onkelos on Exodus 14:31, the children of Israel held the same faith as did Moses; for in translating the sentence, "They believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses," Onkelos rendered this passage, "and they believed in the Word of the Lord, and in the prophecy of Moses, His servant."

Moses charged the Israelites that they should fear the Lord their God, should serve Him, and should swear by His name. The Jerusalem Targum renders Deuteronomy 6:13, "Ye shall fear before the presence of the Lord your God and before Him ye shall worship, and by the name of the Word of the Lord ye shall swear in truth." Israel was strictly charged to swear by none other than by the Lord her God. Yet according to this Targum she was to swear by the name of the Word of the Lord. This translation then assumes that the one who is called the Word of Jehovah, and who is differentiated from Jehovah, is divine. The matter of swearing by the Lord appears again in Joshua 2:12, which by Jonathan is rendered, "Now therefore swear unto Me by the Word of Lord, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token." According to the same authority on Joshua 9:19, "But all the Princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the Word of the Lord, the God of Israel; and now, therefore, we dare not injure them." Quotations could be multiplied very greatly which show that the translators of the Targums in differentiating Jehovah from Jehovah often called one the Word of Jehovah and at the same time attributed the divine nature to Him who was thus designated. These examples are sufficient to establish the point under investigation.

I shall now call attention to only two examples illustrative of the position taken by the translators of the Targum in regard to the Holy Spirit who in the original Scriptures is recognized as a divine personality subsisting in the one divine essence. In Genesis 6:3 we are told that Jehovah said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever. ..." In Jonathan's Targum on this verse we read, "Have I not given my Holy Spirit in them, in order that they should do good works, but behold, they have corrupted their works?" Once more, Jonathan Ben Uzziel rendered the question, "Who has directed the Spirit of Jehovah or being his counsellor, has taught him?" in this manner: "Who has directed the Holy Spirit?" From these two quotations it is clear that the expression, the Spirit of the Lord, in the original is

understood as a reference to the Holy Spirit, to whom, as noted above, all the attributes of deity in the Scriptures are ascribed.

In the Targums we find references to *Metatron*, to whom divine attributes are ascribed. This one is especially mentioned in the Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 38 B, in connection with the words of Exodus 24:1: "*And he (God) said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord*, it is asked: 'Why does not God say: "Come up unto *Me*"?' The answer is this: 'It was Metatron, whose name is equal to that of God, to whom he was bidden to come up.' Logically, there is no difference here between God and Metatron. One must remember the significance attached to names by the Jews to realize the importance of this passage; the name was equivalent to its bearer (see further on this point below). In the passage just quoted, *Metatron* is said to bear the 'Tetragrammaton,' i.e., the four consonants יהוה which represent the unpronounceable name of God; another instance of the practical identity between God and *Metatron*"—Oesterley and Box in *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*. From various references to Metatron in the Talmud and Midrashic literature, we see that this name was applied to one of the divine beings. In certain passages He is represented as a mediator between God and Israel. In others He is thought of as the consoler of God—as if the Almighty needed comfort.

Personal, divine attributes are likewise, in certain passages of rabbinic literature, ascribed to the Shekinah of glory. But it is not necessary to enter into an investigation of these passages. From the quotations which I have noted, it becomes clear that the official ancient interpretation of the synagogue was that דְּבַר־יְהוָה, the Word of Jehovah, and רוּחַ קֹדֶשׁ the Holy Spirit, were divine personalities and were distinguished from the one who is called יְהוָה Jehovah. From all the facts which we have learned thus far, we see that Moses and the prophets were Trinitarians, and the great leaders of Israel in pre-Christian times were likewise Trinitarians. In view of these facts, then, we can assert with all confidence that Christians who worship the Holy Trinity—the three divine personalities subsisting in the one divine essence—are simply worshiping the same אֱלֹהִים, God, who revealed Himself to Abraham and entered into a covenant with him, and who reaffirmed His covenant with his seed at Sinai. We Christians are worshiping the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

For a full and scholarly discussion of rabbinical teaching regarding the Memra of Jehovah, the Holy Spirit, the Metatron, and the Shekinah, see *Judische Theologie auf Grund des Talmud und verwandter Schriften*.—von Dr. Ferdinand Weber.

Although the Holy Trinity is taught both in Tenach and in the Targums—the official interpretation of the ancient synagogue—this teaching is set forth more clearly in the Christian Scriptures, the New Testament.

#### X. LOGICAL CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE EVIDENCE COLLECTED

From the Scriptures we have learned that there is a plurality of divine personalities, but that they constitute one Divine Being. Throughout the Scriptures we see three distinct personalities mentioned. From the context of the various appearances of these different ones we see that the characteristics of Deity are attributed to them. Thus we come to the conclusion that there are three divine personalities constituting the one true and living God.

There are not three Gods, but only one. But there are three personalities or distinctions subsisting in this one Divine Being. Although we use the words, "person" and "personal," in referring to the Holy Trinity, we are not using these words with exactly the same connotation which they usually have in regular parlance. On this point the late Dr. E. Y. Mullins summed up the scriptural position in the following words:

"It is to be noted that when we employ the terms 'person' and 'personal' in connection with the Trinity, we do not mean precisely what we have in mind when we apply the term to men. With men a person is a separate and distinct individual, having no essential connection with other individuals. In reference to the Trinity we mean by personalities inner distinctions in the Godhead. These distinctions, however, are qualified by the most intimate relations of unity. They express the meaning of a single divine life, not of three separate and externally related divine lives. There are not three Gods, but one. A divine person is not less than a human person, but more. The divine life is richer and more complete than the human."

Dr. A. H. Strong expressed the same idea in the following words:

"The necessary qualification is that, while three persons among men have only a *specific* unity of nature or essence—that is, have the same *species* of nature or essence—the persons of the Godhead have a numerical unity of nature or essence—that is, have the same nature or essence. The undivided essence of the Godhead belongs equally to each of the persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each possessing all the substance and all the attributes of Deity. The plurality of the Godhead is therefore not a plurality of essence, but a plurality of hypostatical, or

personal, distinctions. God is not three and one, but three in one. The one indivisible essence has three modes of subsistence."

In these two quotations, which set forth the situation in clear, intelligible terminology, we see that there is only one divine substance or essence, but that there are three distinctions or personalities. That which constitutes personality, according to our knowledge, may scripturally be predicated of each of these divine distinctions. Of course personality in the Divine Being exists in the highest possible conception of that term. From the fact that man was made in the image and likeness of God, we may conclude that man's own personality is at least a dim reflection of the personalities subsisting in the Godhead.

If there were not such personalities in the Divine Being, we would have great difficulty in understanding the matter of self-consciousness. The term, thinker, demands an object of thought. Since, in eternity prior to the creation of the world, there was nothing external to God, so far as the Scriptures reveal to us, reason would indicate that, as God is an intelligent thinking Being, there evidently was an object of thought. The scriptural doctrine of the distinctions in the divine nature meets this philosophical demand.

Moreover, the idea of love presupposes a lover and the one loved. Love denotes personal relations. If love is one of the immanent attributes of the Divine Being, and both Scripture and reason point positively in this direction, we are led to conclude that the idea of God's eternal love demands an eternal object of His love. Love always flows out in self-communication to another. Since there is but one God, as the Scriptures universally teach, there must be these distinctions or personalities subsisting in the divine essence in order that love might be recognized as an eternal attribute of the Deity.

The doctrine of the Trinity satisfies this rational demand and renders it plausible. In order for us to see the force of this position more clearly, I wish to quote a paragraph from page 135 of my book, *What Men Must Believe*:

"But for the sake of investigation, let us *assume* that God is one personality and not a trinity subsisting in the same divine substance or essence, although we have already learned that, in the eternity which preceded the creation of the world, *Elohim*, Gods, the Trinity alone existed. Being such a one, He possessed certain attributes or perfections. These of course were essential to His nature and were not conditioned upon anything. Love could not have been one of these attributes, while He was in this state, because there could be no such thing as love without an object



to love. This principle we see from an examination of our own natures. We are logical in making this analogy since man was made in the image and after the likeness of God. In looking at myself I know that I cannot love one who does not exist. To show this fact most clearly let me call attention to a certain incident. During World War I there was a certain unbeliever who had an only son, and who was criticizing certain other young men for not enthusiastically entering the armed forces. In his discussion of the question he avowed with emphasis that, if he had two sons, he certainly would want one of them to go to war while the other one stayed at home and assisted him in his business. He dubbed as unpatriotic any man who would not insist upon one of his sons going to the front. In answer to his statement his wife, who was a Christian, asked him which of the sons he would want to go to war, if he had two—his own son or the one whom he did not have. Upon being pressed for an answer, he confessed that he would want his real son, in whom his life was wrapped up—as all those acquainted with the family knew—to remain with him and assist in his business and to enter the career which he had planned for him. But he would want the other son, who had no existence, to go and fight. I am simply calling attention to this circumstance to demonstrate that a person cannot love one who does not exist. It is psychologically impossible. Hence this man was willing for his imaginary son to go but would never consent for his own son of flesh and blood to give up the career which he had planned for him in order to fight for his country."

Another fact demands the acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity, which lies in the realm of morals and ethics. If the code of morals and ethics set forth in the Scriptures is simply an arbitrary set of regulations which God imposed upon man in his relations with his fellowman, there is no substantial basis upon which such a system rests. On the other hand, if the biblical code of ethics is grounded upon the very nature of Deity and the relations that exist among the persons of the Holy Trinity, there is indeed an eternal foundation for such a system. In this case the highest spiritual values obtain. To conceive of the Deity as one Absolute Being without distinctions or personalities is to reduce God to a merely intellectual being without any richness and wealth of moral nature. The Trinitarian conception of God alone furnishes an adequate basis for the highest ethics and morals.

Again, we see the reasonableness of the doctrine of the Trinity when we consider man's personality and his individuality. Personality implies relationship. We remain simply individuals as long as we stand aloof from others, but our lives are enriched and ennobled only as we come in contact with others. From the standpoint of personality therefore we conclude that the Trinitarian view of God explains personality in the highest sense of the term. This doctrine therefore

furnishes the only rational basis for the existence of personality such as we are logically driven to believe God possesses.

Lastly, when we accept the Trinitarian view, we have a logical basis for understanding the object which the Almighty had in view in creation. That which is highest and noblest in our individual lives and social relations finds its prototype in the personalities and the relations existing in the Holy Trinity. Everything in nature and revelation points in the direction of the future when men's highest hopes will be realized. The relations existing here will be perfected after this life—in the great future that lies beyond the horizon of earthly existence. The Trinitarian conception affords a logical basis for our hopes to be realized then. In that eternal tomorrow all the social instincts of men will be met and satisfied, because that eternal sacred social order is grounded in the Trinitarian nature of God.

Having presented the salient facts regarding the Holy Trinity as they appear upon the pages of the Hebrew Scriptures, I wish to close this chapter with a quotation from my own writings, and a short statement from a very eminent Hebrew scholar.

"The reasonableness of the scriptural teaching regarding the triune nature of the Eternal God may be seen in the light of the following facts. The amoeba is a one-cell animal—the simplest form of life. On the other hand, man is the highest type of creature upon this earth. His anatomy is complexity itself in comparison with the amoeba. His intellectual and spiritual life is immeasurably higher than the infinitesimally small degree of intellect of this little germ—if indeed it has any. Between these two extremes of life there is an ascending scale of forms of creatures—each a little higher than the one on the next round of the ladder of existence below it. It is utterly impossible for the amoeba to understand even the simplest things about men—if indeed it has sufficient intellect to have a single thought. This little animal is on the lowest round of this ascending ladder of existence. But man who is on a round infinitely higher than the highest type of animal can look down and see the various forms of creatures below him. Since he sees this ascending scale of life below, and since he can look up the ladder and see, by faith, the Eternal God on the topmost round—infinately above him so that his mind staggers with amazement in contemplation of Him—he comes to the conclusion that it is impossible for his finite mind to formulate, even in the most limited degree, an adequate conception of God and the nature of His being. As far as man is concerned, God may be, in the constitution of His being, infinitely more complex above him than he is above the amoeba in its complexity." —*What Men Must Believe*, pp. 138,139.

"I am well aware that in the purest and most philosophical presentation of the Christian doctrine of Trinity no infraction of the Divine Unity is intended. It will be needful for the Jewish theologians to consider anew the interpretation of the *Trinity*."— Claude Montefiore.

## CHAPTER V

### ELOHIM, THE DIVINE PERSONALITIES, WORKING OUT MAN'S REDEMPTION

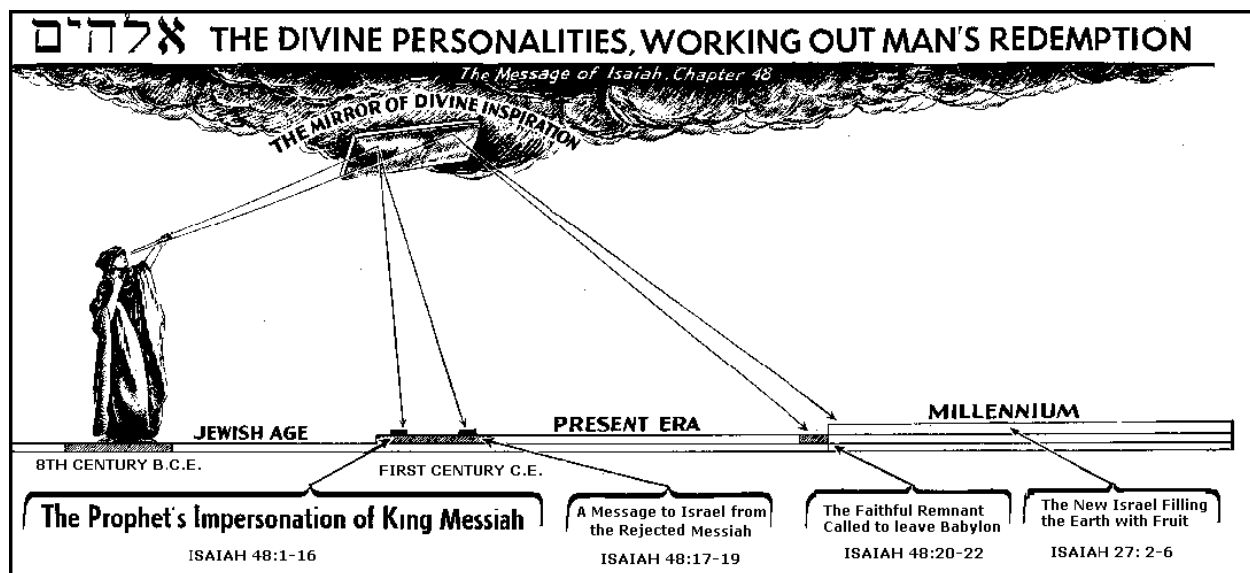
**Isa 48:1-22** Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah; who swear by the name of Jehovah, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness 2 for they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; Jehovah of hosts is his name: 3 I have declared the former things from of old; yea, they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them: suddenly I did them, and they came to pass. 4 Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; 5 therefore I have declared it to thee from of old; before it came to pass I showed it thee; lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them. 6 Thou hast heard it; behold all this; and ye, will ye not declare it? I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, which thou hast not known. 7 They are created now, and not from of old; and before this day thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them. 8 Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from of old thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou didst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb. 9 For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. 10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not as silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. 11 For mine own sake, for mine own sake, will I do it; for how should *my name* be profaned? and my glory will I not give to another.

12 Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called: I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. 13 Yea, my hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spread out the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together. 14 Assemble yourselves, all ye, and hear; who among them hath declared these things? He whom Jehovah loveth shall perform his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm *shall be on* the Chaldeans. 15 I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him; I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous. 16 Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; from the beginning I have not spoken in secret; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord Jehovah hath sent me, and his Spirit.

17 Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am Jehovah thy God, who teacheth thee to profit, who leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest

go. 18 Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: 19 thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the grains thereof: his name would not be cut off nor destroyed from before me.

20 Go ye forth from Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans; with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth: say ye, Jehovah hath redeemed his servant Jacob. 21 And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts; he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them; he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out. 22 There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked. (Isa., chap. 48).



The passage which we now have for consideration is one of the most profound portions in the Word of God. It therefore demands our closest scrutiny and most earnest consideration. In order to see its message, we must be scientific in our spirit and view honestly and conscientiously each bit of material that is set forth in this marvelous revelation. Let us, as we investigate this passage, have but one thought in mind—to get the exact meaning which the inspired writer had in view. We want truth and not error; we want facts and not fiction.

There are several principles which we must recognize before approaching the body of the text. In the first place let us note the fact that in Isaiah, chapters 40-48, the prophet foresaw the Babylonian captivity of Israel. We should, however, remember

that Isaiah lived and ministered in the latter half of the eighth century, B.C., according to the accepted chronology, and that the Babylonian captivity did not begin until about 605 B.C.—one hundred years after Isaiah had completed his ministry. By prophetic insight he foresaw that Cyrus the Persian would capture Babylon and would issue a decree for the Jews to return to their homeland and to rebuild their city and Temple (Isa. 44:27,28; 45:13). In chapters 41-45 the restoration of the Jews from Babylon loomed very large upon the political horizon. But when we come to chapters 46-48, Babylon and the Chaldeans are still in view. At this point, figuratively speaking, the prophet lifted his eyes and looked into the distant future, saw Babylon as the dominating metropolis of the world in the end time, and foretold its complete and sudden destruction. Proof of this assertion is to be found in Isaiah 47:5, 8, and 9. When Babylon suffers the fate that she can no longer be called the mistress of kingdoms, the prediction will be fulfilled. When she is overthrown according to the forecast of verse 9, two things occur to her "in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood; in their full measure shall they come upon thee, in the multitude of thy sorceries, and the great abundance of thine enchantments." Note the fact that her overthrow occurs in a moment on a given day. The retribution will be "in full measure." Did such a calamity overtake Babylon when Cyrus captured it? The answer is a most emphatic negative. The authority was simply taken over by the Medes and Persians, and Babylon continued to wield a mighty influence over the world! Even when Alexander the Great conquered the Medo-Persian Empire, he made Babylon his capital; and it was indeed the mistress of kingdoms. An examination of the history of Babylon shows that this prophecy has never been fulfilled.

According to Isaiah's prediction in chapters 13 and 14 Babylon will be overthrown suddenly in one day during the period which is known as "the day of Jehovah's wrath," the great Tribulation Period which is out before us. The prediction found in Jeremiah, chapters 50 and 51, foretells the complete and sudden overthrow of Babylon in the day of Jehovah. A careful study of these two predictions shows that it has never been overthrown in any such manner as foretold. Thus all these prophecies relating to the sudden and total destruction of Babylon await complete fulfillment.

The facts are, as they are recorded in history, that Babylon, after it had been taken over by the Medes and Persians, continued in a dominant position in the ancient world. When Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire, he made it his capital. It continued into the present era. During these centuries it gradually declined until it ceased to be a factor in the world. As to the exact time when its sun sank below the historical horizon, one cannot be dogmatic. But of this fact we

may be certain—it has never been destroyed in fulfillment of the oracles of Isaiah and Jeremiah. Since the Scriptures cannot be broken, we confidently expect these predictions to be fulfilled when the time arrives foreseen by the prophets.

As suggested above, Isaiah, chapters 46, 47, and 48 constitute one single sermon in which the complete and sudden overthrow of Babylon looms large upon the prophetic horizon. (I ask the reader to peruse very carefully the three chapters referred to as a unit and note what is said concerning Babylon.)

When one reads Isaiah 48:1-16, one is impressed with the frequent recurrence of the personal pronouns, *I*, *my*, and *me*. The thoughtful reader instantly asks the question, "Of whom spoke the prophet this? of himself? or of another?" The well-versed Bible student knows that the prophets adopted two methods or forms into which they cast their oracles. Usually they appeared before their audiences as the ambassadors of the Almighty and introduced their messages with the formula, "Thus saith Jehovah," or "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah." In using these phrases, they disavowed authorship of their messages and attributed them to the inspiration which they received from the Almighty. The second method was that of impersonation. When they adopted this mode of expression, they did not employ the formula, "Thus saith Jehovah." They simply enacted the role of the one whom they impersonated—the Lord Jehovah, or Jehovah the Messiah. In doing this, they spoke and acted as if they were the one whom they were impersonating.

Whenever a prophet therefore uses the personal pronouns, *I*, *my*, and *me*, one must look at all the facts of the context to determine whether or not he is speaking of himself, his experiences and actions, or, whether he is impersonating one of the personalities of the Deity. We are to assume that he is speaking of himself unless in his speech he moves out into a circle of experiences which transcend that of mortal man. Whenever the prophets do this, they make it plain that they are thus impersonating one of the Deity.

What is the situation in Isaiah, chapter 48? In verse 3 the speaker declares that he was the author of all prophecy in the past, and that he suddenly fulfilled and carried out the predictions that he had made. Did Isaiah or any prophet ever do such a thing? The answer is an emphatic *no*. In verse 12 he calls upon Israel to hearken to him and declares that "I am he; I am the first, I also am the last." Here he claims to be the Absolute One. According to verse 13 he asserts that he is the creator of the universe. When we see such statements, we know that Isaiah was not speaking of his own experiences, but that he was thus impersonating the Creator of all things. Since we see that the prophet was not speaking of himself but of the

Creator, we must determine which one of the persons of the Holy Trinity he was impersonating. In Isaiah 42:1-4 we see that the prophet played the role of the Almighty; but in verses 14-18 of this same chapter, he enacted the part of the one who is sent to the earth to take the world situation in hand. When we recognize these facts and study this passage in the light of related predictions, we see that it is God the Father who sends God the Son, the Messiah of Israel. Study carefully Psalm 2, which passage was recognized by the ancient Synagogue as being a messianic prediction. The divine personality, in verses 6-9, relates what another of the Trinity said to Him: "Thou art my son; This day have I begotten thee." Obviously the Father here addresses the Son, to whom He in due course of time will turn over the government of all nations. The Son, the Messiah, then will take His great power and rule all peoples.

At this point of our investigation the question arises: What time or of what period of time was the prophet speaking in Isaiah, chapter 48? To answer this question, we must note the fact that in impersonating the Messiah, the prophet addressed Israel and urged her to give heed to the message. Moreover, the one whom he impersonated declared that the Lord God had sent him. When these two statements are seen in their proper relation, the one to the other, we know that this prediction foretells the time when the Creator of the world is sent from heaven to Israel by the Lord Jehovah to deliver a message to her. The language when allowed to speak for itself can be understood in no other manner. Is this visit then simply a theophany, like those of which we read in the Torah of Moses? Or is it a more permanent and prolonged one? When this passage is read in the light of related ones, we see that it assumes what is foretold in other places of Scripture; namely, that the Messiah, the creator of the universe, would enter the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth in fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14. **לֵכֵן יִתֵּן אֲדֹנָי הוּא לָכֶם אוֹת הִנֵּה הָעַלְמָה הָרָה** וְיִלְדֶּת בֶּן וְקָרְאת שְׁמוֹ עִמָּנוּ אֵל: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." In view of all these facts it becomes quite evident then that the prophet impersonated Messiah when He would leave heaven and enter the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth.

## I. THE PROPHET'S IMPERSONATION OF KING MESSIAH

The spiritually intelligent people in the prophet's audience, or those who read his prediction, would understand by this impersonation that he was setting forth Messiah's coming to earth for the benefit of mankind.



### *A. Israel Addressed*

In verses 1 and 2 Messiah calls upon the house of Jacob and the men of Israel to give heed to his message. He speaks of them as those who came forth from the waters of Judah. By this bold figure, which appears in Deuteronomy 33:28 and Psalm 68:26, he compares the descendants of Jacob to a stream of water. He likewise designates the Hebrew people as those who swear by the name of Jehovah and make mention of the God of Israel. At the same time he charges them with insincerity and lack of truth and righteousness. He makes the further revelation that they call themselves by the name of the holy city and lean, at least outwardly, upon the God of Israel; but their lives do not correspond with their profession. Moses and the prophets likewise spoke boldly against the Jewish people and condemned hypocrisy and unrighteousness at all times. Isaiah therefore says that the Messiah, when He comes, will likewise reprimand them for their lack of righteousness and godly living.

### *B. Messiah the Author of All Former Revelations*

According to verse 3 Messiah, when He comes to visit Israel, declares that He is the author of all the predictions which have been uttered by the prophets from the beginning of time. That no one might misunderstand His meaning, He declares that "yea, they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them." This language is equal to an affirmation that He, the Messiah, has existed from the beginning of time. Otherwise He could not have uttered these oracles. But what is assumed in this statement is asserted in verse 12 below, which passage we shall study presently.

Not only does the Messiah inform Israel that it is He who has spoken through the prophets in the past, but that He is the one who has fulfilled those predictions. This truth He asserts in the following words: "Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass." In other words, Messiah claims that not only did He give the oracles, but that He has fulfilled those that pertain to events prior to the time here foreseen—prior to His coming to earth in fulfillment of this passage.

### *C. The Reason for Prophecy*

The reason for God's making events known ahead of time is given in verses 4-6a in the following words: "Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; 5 therefore I have declared it to thee from of old; before it came to pass I showed it thee; lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath

done them, and my graven image and my molten image, hath commanded them. 6 Thou hast heard it; behold all this; and ye, will ye not declare it?"

Note the fact that Messiah declares His knowledge concerning Israel's being obstinate. In speaking of this characteristic, He declares to the Hebrew people that, "Thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow, brass; therefore I have declared it to thee from of old." This revelation was made far in advance of the events lest an obstinate people who do not want truth might say, "Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them."

It is a fact well known to Bible students that evil spirits can speak through those who yield themselves to them and can foretell certain things. However, their knowledge of the future is very limited indeed. There are authentic cases on record of various things foretold by spiritists that actually have proved to be correct. It was evident that it was by superhuman power that these revelations were made known, but we must understand that the evil spirits are limited in their knowledge and in their activity. Messiah declares, according to this prediction, that He foretold events far in advance of their occurrence in order that there could not be a possibility for a thinking Israelite's declaring that said event would transpire because his idol or image had made the revelation. The complete and accurate fulfillment of prophecies that have been made centuries ago proves the authenticity and the inspiration of the original predictions.

If one is interested in this phase of truth, one would do well to procure a copy of *The Wonders of Prophecy* by John Urquhart. In this volume the author quotes from the prophets and then shows how the predictions have been literally fulfilled centuries after they were spoken.

In Isaiah 48:6 we have this language: "Thou hast heard it; behold all this; and ye, will ye not declare it?" According to the verse Messiah calls Israel's attention to the fact that she has had the prophetic word on the sacred page before her eyes. She has seen it, she has heard it, and she has beheld it. He therefore asks her will she not declare it; that is, confess that these prophecies uttered centuries prior to that time have been fulfilled and are being fulfilled, even those relating to His appearing to them.

#### D. *The New Revelation and the New Creation*

In verse 6b we have this statement: "I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, which thou hast not known." The marginal reading in the Revised Version on this verse is, "I show thee new things from this time, etc."

Either translation is correct, since the Hebrew verb does not carry the time element. This must be determined by the context and the flow of thought. The drift of the argument here demands the marginal reading, "I show, etc." Messiah asserts that He uttered these things beforehand and that at the proper time He has suddenly performed them. Then He tells Israel that He is showing her new things "from this time"—that is, from the time when He appears in her midst. He makes new revelations to her. She, in fulfillment of this prophecy, has a right to expect Messiah to make new disclosures of truth to her. According to verse 7 the "new things" mentioned in verse 6 are said to be "created now"; that is, the new things are created when Messiah appears in Israel in fulfillment of this prediction. As to what these new things are, the passage does not tell. This information must be gathered from related scriptures. Moreover, Messiah informs Israel that "thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them." What are these new things which Messiah reveals when He comes, and which He creates from that time on—the things which the nation has not known, these hidden things? Possibly light may be thrown upon this question by a glance at Isaiah 61:1-3. In this passage we see that the prophet was again impersonating Messiah. In order that we might have the full picture before us, let us look at the prediction in both the original and the translation.

רוח אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה עָלַי יָעַן מָשַׁח יְהוָה אֹתִי לְבָשָׁר עֲנוּיִם שְׁלַחְנִי לְחִבּוֹשׁ לְנִשְׁפָּרִי־לֵב לְקָרָא  
 לְשִׁבּוּיִם דְּרוּר וְלְאַסּוּרִים פְּקַח־קוֹם: לְקָרָא שְׁנַת־רִצּוֹן לַיהוָה וַיּוֹם נָקָם לְאַלְהֵינוּ לְנַחֵם  
 כָּל־אַבְלִים: לְשׁוֹם | לְאַבְלֵי צִיּוֹן לְתֵת לָהֶם פָּאֵר תַּחַת אֶפֶר שָׁמֶן שִׁשּׁוֹן תַּחַת אֲבָל  
 מַעֲטָה תְהִלָּה תַּחַת רוּחַ כְּהָה וְקָרָא לָהֶם אֵילֵי הַצֶּדֶק מִטַּע יְהוָה לְהַתְּפָאֵר:

Isa 61:1-3 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.

That the prophet was impersonating Messiah is clear from his declaring that he does and will do things which neither he nor any other mortal could accomplish. He therefore is playing the role of Messiah who here claims that He is anointed with the Spirit of Jehovah, the Holy Spirit. The one who anoints Him is Jehovah himself. Thus we see the three persons of the Godhead. Messiah is anointed to engage in a personal ministry among the meek and humble of Israel. He proclaims

the gospel of God's grace, binds up the brokenhearted, and proclaims liberty to the captives. For those who accept His message, He does something which He compares to the mending of broken pottery—He makes them whole again. This is a spiritual work of grace in the heart that is accomplished by divine power. Furthermore, He gives liberty and freedom to those who accept Him. The power of bad habits and of sin in the life is broken, and those who experience the creative power of God in their souls are liberated. Such is the work which the Messiah, according to this passage, performs for those who accept Him.

He also proclaims "the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God." All prophetic students know that the expression, "the day of vengeance of our God," is a period of seven years that is designated by Jeremiah as "the time of Jacob's trouble." It is spoken of as "the day of Jehovah." But preceding it is an era which the prophet designates as "the year of Jehovah's favor." The first period is thus compared to a year, whereas the other is thought of as a day. Since the latter is a space of seven years, we are logical in concluding that an approximate proportion exists between this period of grace and that of the day of vengeance which obtains between a year and a day. The day of vengeance is a period of seven years; the year of Jehovah's favor, according to analogy, would proportionally be a greater period of time.

Messiah is not only anointed to proclaim the long era during which God extends His grace and mercy toward people and the period following it known as the day of vengeance, but He is also anointed to comfort all that mourn, especially those in Zion, and to appoint them to official positions in His kingdom. The mourning mentioned here is none other than Israel's turning to Him with all her heart in genuine repentance of all sins and wrongdoing. Thus those who mourn in Israel will be crowned with garlands, will be made plants of righteousness in order that the Lord himself may be glorified. According to all the prophetic scriptures, God will be glorified only through the nation of Israel whom He has chosen as a channel of world blessing.

In Isaiah 61:1-3 we see that the prophet in impersonating the Messiah on this occasion revealed His personal ministry as He proclaimed the truth to the meek and foretold certain periods of time subsequent to His visit to the earth on this occasion. Thus certain things pertaining to the future are revealed in this passage. But in Isaiah 48:6,7, the prophet, as he impersonates Messiah, declares that He will make new revelations concerning things of which Israel, prior to this time, has never heard. These new disclosures doubtless are in addition to those that are foretold in Isaiah 61:1-3. This further revelation supplements that which has

already been made known through the prophets. In other words, Messiah when He appears upon earth gives a fuller and more complete picture of these spiritual realities than the prophets made known. Israel therefore has a right to expect Messiah to make these additional revelations and to bring into being by His creative power things that have not existed prior to His coming.

#### *E. The Uncircumcised Condition of Israel's Heart*

"Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from of old time thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou didst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb" (Isa. 48:8). According to this verse Israel has not heard of the new things mentioned in verse 6b and the created things referred to in verse 7. The people therefore do not know them. Their ear is not opened to the truth, because the Lord knows they deal very treacherously and have been transgressors from the beginning. We have already seen in the preceding discussion that Messiah who is here speaking has from times immemorial, and all through the centuries, uttered prophecies and has brought them to pass suddenly when the time arrived for the fulfillment. But certain details concerning the things which He shows at the time of His appearance upon the earth and makes known have been kept in secret. As we have already seen, these things were partially known; but the details were withheld. The reason for concealing them is that the ear of the nation is not opened. The people themselves have been in the habit of dealing treacherously and have been called transgressors from birth. This indictment is in perfect alignment with that which Moses uttered, as we see in Deuteronomy 29:2-4:

2 And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that Jehovah did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; 3 the great trials which thine eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders: 4 but Jehovah hath not given you a heart to know, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

In this passage Moses asserted that God performed many and marvelous wonders in the land of Egypt at the time when He delivered Israel. These things were accomplished in the presence of the people, "but," declared the lawgiver, "Jehovah hath not given you a heart to know, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." The heart of man in its natural condition cannot see nor appreciate spiritual realities. Though those mighty wonders of God had been performed before the eyes of the Israelites, they were unable to see the import and the significance of them because their eyes were not open to see the facts in the case and neither were

their hearts receptive to the truth. Isaiah, in chapter 1, verses 2-17, declared that Israel—the whole nation—was in a sinful state. Jeremiah affirmed that the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; there is therefore no telling what the unregenerated man will do (Jer. 17:9).

God always gives truth to those who want it; but from those who do not desire it, He withholds it. Jeremiah cried to his contemporaries saying,

15 Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud; for Jehovah hath spoken. 16 Give glory to Jehovah your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. 17 But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret for *your* pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because Jehovah's flock is taken captive (Jer. 13:15-17).

From this passage we see that God calls upon people to hear and to give heed. He warned them against the danger of being proud. This call to give heed was an exhortation to them to receive the Word of God "before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness." The Lord pleads with people to be open to truth and to receive it; but, if they refuse to do this, He will send spiritual darkness upon them so that it will be utterly impossible for them to comprehend the truth.

If men choose their own ways in preference to God's will and Word, the Lord will choose their own delusions. This fact is set forth in the following quotation: "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. 66:3b,4). The same fundamental principle upon which God deals with men is set forth once more in Ezekiel 14:1-5.

**14** Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me. 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.

From this quotation we see that the elders of Israel came to the prophet of God to inquire of the Lord concerning certain matters. At the same time they were wedded to their idols and delighted in various things connected with pagan worship. Thus their coming and inquiring for the word of God was hypocritical. The Almighty therefore said: "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." Quotations like these could be taken from various prophets, but these will suffice to show the danger that there is in one's not opening one's heart, ears, and eyes to hear, see, and to receive the truth.

Messiah, therefore, when He comes in fulfillment of Isaiah, chapter 48, declares that the fuller revelation has not, up to that time, been given to the people because they would not receive the truth but have continued in their own way. Let us, friends, realize the gravity of these great and fundamental truths and facts and be open to conviction and be ready to receive anything and everything that God has said. At the same time we must not swallow down everything that man says. We should investigate with open minds to determine whether or not a message that is brought to us is correct. After examination, when we see the truth, we should accept it.

#### *F. Retribution Deferred*

"For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off" (Isa. 48:9). Let us continually bear in mind that in this exposition the prophet is impersonating God, the Creator of the universe, whom the Lord Jehovah sends to Israel. As we have seen, this is Messiah, who enters the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. Since He accuses the people as a nation of dealing treacherously and being transgressors from birth, it is evident that they do not receive the message which He delivers. He tells them new things and confirms His message by His works; yes, He creates something new at that time. Nevertheless, the people do not hearken to his message. This attitude stirs His righteous indignation, anger, and wrath to their depth. Yet, for His own sake, He declares that He will defer His anger. If He should deal with them according to the merits of the case, He would send His summary judgments upon them and exterminate them from the face of the globe. But He will not, so He declares, do

this thing for His own sake. This incident reminds one of the episode of the golden calf which Israel made at Sinai while Moses was in the mount, conversing with God. The Lord therefore told Moses to let Him alone in order that He might consume the people and make of him a mighty nation. Moses instantly began to implore the Lord to spare His people and to turn from His wrath. In his pleading, he asked the Almighty to remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that He would make their seed as multitudinous as the stars of heaven. The Lord heard the petition and spared the nation. This is such an important instance I wish to call attention to the historical narrative found in Exodus 32:7-14.

7 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, that thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: 8 they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 9 And Jehovah said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: 10 now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them and I will make of thee a great nation. 11 And Moses besought Jehovah his God, and said, Jehovah, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, that thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak saying, for evil did he bring them forth, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. 14 And Jehovah repented of the evil which he said he would do unto his people.

In commenting upon the Lord's sparing Israel, the psalmist declared:  
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).

From the facts we see that the Lord's anger was turned away and Israel was spared, not because of her own goodness, but because of the oath which He had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

For a similar reason—"for mine own sake"—declares the Messiah, "will I defer mine anger." If it were not for His own sake, the Lord would cut off Israel from



being a nation—would annihilate her from the face of the globe for not receiving His message when He comes in fulfillment of this prediction. But the Lord continues to remember His covenant which He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For His own sake and for that of the covenant, therefore, He restrains His anger and permits the Chosen People to continue to live.

### *G. Israel Chosen in the Furnace of Affliction*

"Behold, I have refined thee, but not as silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" (Isa. 48:10). A casual glance at Israel's history shows that God has purged the rebels from the nation at various times. For instance, the Hebrews left Mount Sinai and journeyed to Kadesh-barnea, the gateway from the wilderness of the south into the Promised Land. The Lord ordered them to march forward by faith into the land and take possession of their possessions. The people, giving heed to the distorted statements of the spies who had gone through the Land of Promise and who had reported adversely, refused to enter. Then on account of their unbelief the Lord did not permit them to do so but caused them to wander through the wilderness for forty years in order that all the rebellious ones might die off and that a new generation might arise to enter it. At various times one stroke of judgment after another fell upon the people. Thus the unbelievers in Israel were purged out. During the period of the Judges God permitted certain foreign nations to invade the land and to enslave the people. These measures were for the purpose of correction and for destroying the evil ones from among the people. Finally, in the last days of the monarchy in Israel the people became incurably wicked. There was but one thing which a holy God could do; namely, that of sending them into Babylonian captivity to purge and refine them. Thus the various crises, declares Messiah at His coming, have been for the purpose of cleansing and purifying the nation. But He states that in all of these past experiences He has not refined them "as silver." There are various methods of separating the wheat from the chaff, the good from the bad, and the goats from the sheep. All of Israel's former experiences have been sent upon her to purify and refine her, but she has never been caused to pass through any experience—up to the coming of Messiah in fulfillment of this prediction—that can be compared to being refined as silver or gold.

According to verse 10b of this passage Messiah declares, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." There is a time yet lying in the future when the Lord will put her in this furnace of affliction and purge out her dross. This period of cleansing is called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). Malachi spoke of this same time when God will purify the nation.

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. 2 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 fullers' soap: 3 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. 4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto Jehovah, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years. 5 And I will come near to you to judgment: and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against 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. 6 For I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed (Mal. 3:1-6).

#### *H. Messiah Acts for the Sake of His Own Glory*

"For mine own sake, for mine own sake, will I do it; for how should *my name* be profaned? and my glory will I not give to another" (48:11). For His own sake the Lord will purge Israel and cleanse her of all her dross. It is inconceivable that His name should continually be profaned because of the failures and he sins of His people. In this verse the prophet looks forward to the time beyond Israel's purging when all nations will accept the true and the living God and worship Him.

During the present time and throughout the past centuries much of the glory due to God has been given to idols, heathen gods; but in the Millennial Era, of which Messiah here speaks, glory and praise will be rendered to God alone. "And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one" (Zech. 14:9). Thus God's glory will not be given to another in the Kingdom Age.

#### *I. The Speaker of This Passage Reveals Himself as the Creator*

"Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called: I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. 13 Yea my hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spread out the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together" (48:12,13). As we have already seen in studying verse 3, the speaker declares to Israel that He has uttered all the prophecies from primitive days, up to the time when He, being sent by the Lord Jehovah speaks to the nation. This fact shows His pre-existence prior to His being sent on this mission. That thought is in perfect accord with verse 12. Here the speaker calls upon Israel to hearken to Him. The

basis for this exhortation is this fact: "I am he" This statement harks back to Deuteronomy 32:39 and is an affirmation of His absolute existence. He is the independent one—the one upon whom all material things, together with the inhabitants of the universe—depend. Moreover, He declares that He is both the first and the last—the one who has been in eternity in the past and who asserts that He will continue throughout all eternity in the future.

In addition to His affirmation concerning His eternal and absolute existence, the speaker reveals the fact that He laid the foundation of the earth and that He spread out the heavens. In other words, He claims to be the creator of the entire material universe. Although He is this, He, having been sent by the Lord Jehovah, comes and speaks to Israel—as one person does to another. This is the force of all the facts of this context—if the words are allowed to give their meaning without distortion, or modification.

Not only does the speaker declare His eternal existence and assert that He is the creator of the entire universe, but He also affirms that the material heavens and earth stand at attention when He commands—as soldiers to their superior officer. This bold figure is equivalent to an affirmation that all the earth and the heavenly bodies are moving at His command and are absolutely under His control. They have been His servants from the time of His creating them through the ages and will continue in obedience to His mighty behests.

### *J. The Convening of an Ideal Judicial World Tribunal*

"Assemble yourselves, all ye, and hear; who among them hath declared these things? He whom Jehovah loveth shall perform his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm *shall be on* the Chaldeans" (48:14). The speaker, in the most dramatic manner, calls upon the nations to assemble themselves and to listen to His message. Then He challenges them with this question: "Who among them hath declared these things?" In this graphic action the speaker asks the peoples of the world to inform Him of anyone who has foretold the things that are mentioned in this passage, beginning with verse 6 and running through verse 13. There is no one who has done this; no one can do it. Though the claim is made for the pagan idols that they are gods, they cannot reveal the future. Of course this ideal tribunal is silent and cannot answer the speaker a word.

Then He makes a further revelation: "He whom Jehovah loveth shall perform his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm *shall be on* the Chaldeans." The marginal reading of the first part of this quotation is: "Jehovah hath loved him: he shall...." Though both of these renderings are grammatically correct, that which is in the text is in

accordance with the facts of the context and is to be preferred above the marginal rendering.

The prediction, "He whom Jehovah loveth shall perform his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm *shall be on* the Chaldeans," is an example of Hebrew parallelism. The first member of this structure is, "He whom Jehovah loveth shall perform his pleasure on Babylon"; *the* second part is, "and his arm *shall be on* the Chaldeans." Who is the one, of this passage, whom Jehovah loves? The answer is that it is the one who is mentioned in the words "and his arm *shall be on* the Chaldeans." We have already learned who the "arm of Jehovah" is; namely, that He is the Messiah of Israel who is God appearing on earth in human form. The one therefore whom Jehovah loveth is none other than the Messiah. From the prediction found in these words we see that Messiah himself will perform all of God's pleasure upon Babylon and upon the Chaldeans.

As we have already seen, Babylon gradually declined through six or seven centuries and disappeared from the stage of action never suffered the sudden overthrow that is foretold in chapter 47 of our prophecy, as we have before seen; but it is scheduled to "stage a comeback" and to be the world metropolis of the end time. When it thus rises from the dust and becomes the dominant factor in world politics, commerce, and trade, Messiah will perform all God's pleasure upon it by overthrowing it completely in a moment, in one day. This conclusion we cannot avoid when we study the three chapters—46, 47, and 48—together; for they constitute a single literary unit within the Book of Isaiah.

When we see this prediction is presented before the ideal tribunal by Messiah, we can understand more clearly the force of the language. When Messiah comes, He declares that He is the one who will complete the task of the overthrow of Babylon.

#### K. *A Voice of Confirmation from Heaven*

"I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him; I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous" (48:15). In this verse the personal pronoun, *I*, occurs four times. The question immediately arising is this: Is the speaker in this verse the same one who has been talking throughout the passage? In other words, is the Messiah still talking? It is altogether possible that it is He. If we assume this position, we must ask who is referred to by the pronouns, *him*, *he*, and *his*. There is no antecedent in the immediate context to which these can refer, if we accept this interpretation. It is altogether possible that the speaker looks at the one who will be at the head of Babylon and will be controlling things. Such an interpretation is

altogether possible. If we accept this thought, we have Messiah saying that He will bring forward this one and cause his way to prosper. While this is a conceivable interpretation, it is hardly probable. Another suggestion which is by far more plausible is that verse 15 is parenthetical—just as verse 2 is. In the midst of Messiah's talking and speaking of Himself as the one whom Jehovah loves and who will perform all the latter's desire upon Babylon, Jehovah God in heaven breaks in and declares that He, the Almighty, is the one who has spoken and who has called "him" (Messiah) and has brought Him forward. Under such a condition He (Messiah) will make His own way prosperous. When all the facts are taken into consideration, it seems probable that this interpretation is in accord with all the data. Such an understanding in the general flow of thought is not uncommon in Moses and the prophets. We may therefore take verse 15 as a voice of confirmation from heaven, declaring Messiah's call and stating God's purpose to use Him in putting down Babylon in the end of the age. Such an interpretation concerning Babylon is in keeping with all the facts of these three chapters, which, as we have already seen, form a literary unit.

#### *L. The Three Personalities of the Trinity*

"Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; from the beginning I have not spoken in secret; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord Jehovah hath sent me, and his Spirit" (48:16). After the parenthesis of verse 15, Messiah, the speaker of this passage, calls upon this ideal tribunal to come near Him and to listen to what He has to say. His message is this: "From the beginning I have not spoken in secret; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord Jehovah hath sent me, and his Spirit." To what beginning does the speaker refer? In all probability to the beginning of the human race. God has spoken always openly and never in secret. The element explaining this assertion is "... from the time that it was." Since this is Hebrew parallelism, the last clause evidently is a repetition of the preceding statement. Messiah here declares that He has existed from the very beginning. From other passages we know that He existed throughout all eternity of the past. For instance, in Isaiah 9:6 He who by miraculous conception and virgin birth is born unto the Jewish nation will be given a number of titles. Among them will be this one—Everlasting Father. This name can mean only that He has been in existence throughout all eternity of the past and will continue throughout the ages of the ages.

Messiah, the creator of the universe, is still speaking here and affirms that the Lord Jehovah "hath sent me, and his Spirit." In this connection it is well for us to remember that Messiah is here sent to the entire nation and addresses it, as we have

seen in the first verse of this chapter. Moreover, as we have already noted, Messiah's visit to the nation cannot be classified as a theophany such as those of which we read in the Books of Moses. An examination of the various accounts of such divine manifestations shows that just for a brief visit the angel of Jehovah frequently appeared to certain servants of God, delivered His message, and then vanished. Not so at this time, for He comes and calls upon the entire nation and delivers a message to it. This visit is of a more permanent character, for He declares that the Lord Jehovah has sent Him on this mission. To appear, as He had done of old to one individual with a single message, would not fill out the proportion of this picture, which is here national in its scope. A prolonged visit, one of a more permanent character than that of a mere theophany, is demanded by the facts of this context.

Along with the Messiah God sends His Spirit. The latter here is as much a person as the Creator, whom God dispatches to the earth. He is the same one of whom we have already learned in our investigation of Isaiah 63:7-14—the Holy Spirit. From this verse we again see very clearly that there are three divine personalities. This evidence confirms the conclusions reached in the preceding chapters.

With this last statement Isaiah ceased to impersonate the Messiah. A new phase of the revelation being given starts with verse 17. This fact is most significant and demands close scrutiny in connection with the following paragraph, which begins in this manner: "Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel...." From the introduction of the formula at this place in the narrative we see that the prophet has ceased to play the role of Messiah and begins to represent himself as His ambassador. In order for us to see the force of the stopping of the impersonation at this point, we must note the plaintive wail, "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments!" (vs. 18-a). The rest of verse 18 and verse 19 should be studied carefully in this connection. Let us keep in sharp focus the fact that the message of verses 17-19 is delivered to the nation by Isaiah, the ambassador of Israel's rejected Messiah-Redeemer, only after he has ceased to play the role of Messiah. All the facts in the case demand the following interpretation: Isaiah's impersonation pictorially portrays to Israel Messiah, the Creator, and His appearance upon earth and His delivering His message to the nation. The people as a body do not hearken to His commandments. He disappears from the scene; that is, He leaves earth and returns to glory. After doing so, He sends a special ambassador to the nation to call attention to the fact that the people have committed the gravest error of their existence in not giving heed to Him. Thus from a study of this chapter every Hebrew can see that the prophet intended to inform the nation ahead of time that God the Creator, King Messiah, comes to

them; shows them new truths to which their attention has never been called; creates something new in the earth; and, because they as a nation refuse to receive His commandments and to accept Him, He vanishes from the earth, returning to heaven. Thus verses 1-16 of this chapter are a dramatic presentation of Messiah's first visit to His beloved people.

## II. SUBSEQUENT MESSAGE FROM THE REJECTED MESSIAH THROUGH ISAIAH, HIS AMBASSADOR

At this point of our investigation we must now look more closely at verses 17-19.

17 Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am Jehovah thy God, who teacheth thee to profit, who leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. 18 Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: 19 thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the grains thereof: his name would not be cut off nor destroyed from before me.

### *A. Messiah Teaches and Guides Israel for Her Profit*

As noted above, Isaiah, having completed his dramatic impersonation of Messiah, now presents himself before his audience as the ambassador of Messiah, Israel's Redeemer and Holy One. In Chapter III we analyzed Israel's Great Confession and found that its literal translation is: "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity." As we read the Scriptures, we frequently come across the word Jehovah. In many instances the facts of the context in which this name appears show us which of the three persons of the Godhead is meant. Sometimes, however, it refers to the Holy Trinity—the three divine personalities considered as the one Supreme Being. In verse 17 Isaiah tells which of these has sent him, namely, Israel's Redeemer and Holy One, the one who has just been rejected; for He charges the people with not having hearkened to His commandments (the direct discourse is *my* commandments). The commandments referred to are those which Messiah gives when, in fulfillment of the impersonation, He comes and delivers a message to His beloved people. The one who redeemed Israel from Egyptian bondage was "the angel of Jehovah," Jehovah himself. This one who is designated as Israel's Redeemer must be the same angel of Jehovah, the Messiah. Thus according to this dramatic presentation, after Messiah comes to this earth, delivers His message to the entire nation, and accomplishes the work of redemption, He returns to heaven and sends a message back to the nation of Israel by one of His ambassadors. The

special word is that He teaches her for her profit. When He spoke through the mouths of the prophets that have been from of old, He was doing it for Israel's good. The message that He delivers when He makes His personal appearance upon earth is likewise for her spiritual and eternal good. Moreover, the message which He sends to the nation after He returns to glory is designed for her national good—both through time and throughout all eternity.

The Messiah also informs her through the prophet as His ambassador that He leads her by the way in which she should go. He always does that which is best for her. Someone has said that God has several plans for each individual's life. These may be thought of as plan number one, number two, three, four, etc. If a person yields his life and walks with God by faith daily, the Lord will use him in the highest and holiest way possible. On the other hand, if he fails to yield himself to do the will of God and follows the Lord afar off, He will use him in a less honorable way—according to plan number two or three, or even four or five. The Lord never forces any man's will, but does under the circumstances the best for the individual that He can. It has been and will continue to be with Israel as it was with Jacob, the great ancestor of the Hebrew race. When his sons brought Joseph's coat, besprinkled with blood, he said: "It is my son's coat; an evil beast has devoured him ... and Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days ... but he refused to be comforted . . ." (Gen. 37:33-35). Later when his sons returned from Egypt where they had bought grain, they opened their sacks and found their money therein. Then the old patriarch lamented saying, "Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me" (Gen. 42:36). To Jacob in his bereavement everything appeared to be against him. The facts in the case were that God was overruling all things that came into his life and the lives of his family for their ultimate good and for the blessing of all men (Gen. 12:1-3; Isa. 49:5,6). That this is true is certain from Joseph's speech to his brothers after their father's death: "And as for you [Joseph's brethren], ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Gen. 50:20). To the same effect is the inspired psalmist's interpretation of these historical events.

17 He sent a man before them;  
Joseph was sold for a servant:  
18 His feet they hurt with fetters:  
He was laid in *chains of iron*,  
19 Until the time that his word came to pass,  
The word of Jehovah tried him.  
20 The king sent and loosed him;



Even the ruler of peoples, and let him go free.  
21 He made him lord of his house,  
And ruler of all his substance;  
22 To bind his princes at his pleasure,  
And teach his elders wisdom.  
23 Israel also came into Egypt;  
And Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.  
24 And he increased his people greatly,  
And made them stronger than their adversaries.  
25 He turned their heart to hate his people,  
To deal subtly with his servants.  
26 He sent Moses his servant  
And Aaron whom he had chosen.

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37 And he brought them forth with silver and gold;  
And there was not one feeble person among his tribes.

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44 And he gave them the lands of the nations;  
And they took the labor of the peoples in possession:  
45 That they might keep his statutes,  
And observe his laws.  
Praise ye Jehovah. (Ps. 105:17-26, 37, 44, 45.)

When we are experiencing sufferings, disappointments, and trials, we cannot see that they are all designed for our good. It is impossible under such conditions for us to see the pattern of events. When they are, however, passed and we can look back dispassionately upon such experiences and can study them in the light of the Word of God we can see that all things have been designed for our good. God does the very best He can for us under the circumstances. In all His dealings with us He must take into consideration our own wills, attitudes, and actions. Thus we limit Him by our imperfections, failures, and sins.

## *B. Israel's Rejection of Her Messiah Changes Her History*

In keeping with these general principles which we have just noted, Messiah sends back to Israel the message, after His visit to earth, that He is leading her in the path in which she should go. That the path in which He leads her after His epochal visit is not the first choice that He has for her is evident from the fact that He is forced to complain, "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea ..." (Isa. 48:18). Unfortunately Israel has never chosen God's first and best plan for her. As proof of this assertion I need only to call attention to the marvelous promise which the Lord made to her at Sinai, as recorded in Leviticus 26:1-13 and in parallel and related passages. An examination of these shows that, if she had only hearkened from the depths of her soul to the Lord when she entered the Land of Promise, He would never have laid upon her any of the diseases of Egypt. He would have given her rain in its season. The crops would have been abundant—so very much so that the people would have been unable to consume their supplies until another harvest would be gathered in and stored away. Moreover, according to His promise, if Israel had only been faithful to Him and had appeared before the Lord in the place where He chose to put His name—Jerusalem—the Almighty would have stood guard at her frontiers and would never have allowed one soldier of a hostile army to cross the borders. In other words, if Israel had only been faithful to the Lord, her land would have been a modern Utopia, Paradise regained. When she did not choose God's best but hindered His working in her behalf, He had to deal with her upon the basis of her spiritual and moral conditions. Thus she did not take His plan number one for her—the best possible.

If a person will study carefully the entire prophecy of Leviticus, chapter 26, which is duplicated with fuller details in Deuteronomy, chapter 28, he will see that Moses outlines the entire history of Israel from the Exodus until she—the last generation of the remnant scattered among the nations—confesses her sins, her iniquity, and the iniquity of her fathers which they (the fathers) committed while in the land, and on account of which transgression God spewed her out of her own country and scattered her among the nations. When she thus in true penitence repudiates her iniquity, God will then remember her and the promise which He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then He will restore her to her own soil. When one thus studies these outlines of Israel's history recorded by Moses, the great lawgiver, one sees that the nation has never accepted God's first and best plan. But we are thankful that, according to the prediction of her prophets, she will yet in the future choose His first and best plan and will yield to Him implicit obedience. When she does

this, she will be made the head of the nations and will no longer be the tail as she is at the present time (Deut. 28:13).

Moreover, the prophet as an ambassador of Israel's rejected Redeemer tells the nation—after Messiah has returned to glory—that, if she had only hearkened to His commandment, "then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the grains thereof ..." (Isa. 48:18,19). In this message to the nation he tells her that, if she had only obeyed Him and received His teaching when He came, He would have extended peace to her like a river and her righteousness would have been as the waves of the sea. In other words, Messiah, after His departure, sends back this message in which He informs her that, if she had only given heed to what He told her, her entire history would have been different. She would be enjoying peace, constant and permanent peace, in both the spiritual and physical realms. Moreover the promise made to Abraham concerning his seed's becoming like the sands of the sea would have been fulfilled. But since she does not hearken, according to this forecast, to the message of Messiah, she must suffer the consequences and penalties of her disobedience.

The final clause of verse 19 reads as follows: "His name would not be cut off nor destroyed from before me." The Hebrew is **לֹא-יִכָּרֵת וְלֹא-יִשָּׁמַד שְׁמוֹ מִלִּפְנֵי** and can be as correctly rendered: "His name shall not be cut off nor destroyed from before me." This rendering seems to accord with the facts of the context. Let us continually bear in mind that in verses 17-19 we have a message which Israel's Messiah, after He returns to glory, sends to His people who do not accept Him when He appears before them and delivers the great message found in verses 3-16 of this chapter. He tells them that, had they been obedient to Him, their peace would have flowed as a river and their righteousness would have been as the waves of the sea—the promise made to Abraham would have been fulfilled to them. But since they did not obey Him, these blessed results did not come into their lives. Although they do not accept Him when He appears, his (Israel's) name shall not be cut off nor destroyed from before the face of the Redeemer. In order to express the thought in good English, we could insert the word "yet" or "nevertheless" before this last clause. In that event it would read thus: "*Nevertheless* his name shall not be cut off nor destroyed from before me." This is in perfect harmony with the teaching of Moses and the prophets. God created Israel to be the channel of world-blessing. He is never forced by circumstances to change His designs and purposes. In making His plans, He takes into account the frailties of man and his lack of obedience to the divine will. Nevertheless He steers the course of history and will eventually bring events around when His will shall be done perfectly on earth as in

heaven. He has chosen Israel to be the channel of world-blessing. Regardless of her failures and shortcomings He will work out His plan in her national life and bring her to the point where she will become an empty channel through which His blessings and power will flow to the whole world. In other words, in this statement which we have under consideration, the Redeemer assures His ancient people that under no conditions will He cast them off. Jeremiah proclaimed the same doctrine in the following passage:

35 Thus saith Jehovah, who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who stirreth up the sea, so that the waves thereof roar; Jehovah of hosts is his name: 36 If these ordinances depart from before me, saith Jehovah, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith Jehovah: If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then will I also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith Jehovah (Jer. 31:35-37).

This scripture assures us that Israel shall never cease as a nation and that the seed of Jacob shall always remain before God.

A similar promise, made in regard to Israel's Messiah, is found in the following passage:

19 And the word of Jehovah came unto Jeremiah saying, 20 Thus saith Jehovah: If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, so that there shall not be day and night in their season; 21 then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he shall not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. 22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured; so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me (Jer. 33:19-22).

God will never cast aside His ancient people whom He has foreknown. He will lead them along the path over which they should travel, as He has done in the past, and will continue to do so until He finally leads them through the furnace of affliction in which all impurities will be purged from the nation. Then Israel will come forth as gold and silver, refined seven times. At that time Messiah will mount the throne of David and will reign over all nations.

### *C. Call to Israel to Flee from Babylon*

The oracle finally concludes with this message:

20 Go ye forth from Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans; with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth: say ye, Jehovah hath redeemed his servant Jacob. 21 And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts; he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them, he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out. 22 There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked (Isa. 48:20-22).

As has already been noted, Babylon is to be rebuilt in fulfillment of prophecy and to stand in the end of this age. It will be the dominant metropolis of the nations—the financial, the industrial, and the economic world-center. Suddenly, in a moment, in one day its overthrow will be accomplished. Before the Lord does this, however, He gives the call to His ancient people who will be residing in Babylon to leave the city, to flee from the land of the Chaldeans. This same note is sounded in Jeremiah, chapters 50 and 51. Those faithful believing Hebrews who accept the message of Moses and the prophets will at that time flee from that country.

Those urged to leave are also exhorted to proclaim their deliverance to the world. This thought is expressed in the following language: "With a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth: say ye, Jehovah hath redeemed his servant Jacob." When the time here foreseen arrives, Israel will have learned about her redemption which has been wrought for her by Jehovah, her creator, and with a ringing voice of joy and ecstasy will tell forth this message to the ends of the earth. She will have been given this message of redemption. She will believe it and will sound forth the glad tidings to all nations.

### *D. Miraculous Provisions for Returning Israel*

A further prediction is included in this revelation. It is expressed in these words: "And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts; he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them; he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out." This promise looks forward to the completion of Israel's regathering to her own homeland. As she returns, she passes through the desert—especially those who leave the East will have to pass through weary wastes as they journey to the land of their fathers. God will provide in a miraculous manner water for them. He did it for their ancestors when they journeyed through the wilderness at the time of the Exodus, and again He will do it for His faithful, loyal servants when they return to Him in fulfillment of this marvelous prediction.

### *E. No Peace for the Wicked*

This oracle finally concludes with these words: "There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked." This refrain occurs again in Isaiah 57:21. Finally the Book of Isaiah concludes with a prediction similar to this one but expressed in the most vivid, graphic language. But there are peace, joy, and happiness, in both time and eternity, for those who accept the redemption wrought by Israel's Redeemer.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SELF-EXISTING HOLY GOD, CREATOR AND PRESERVER OF ALL

In Chapter I we saw that the data throughout the material universe demand our believing that there is a personal God. In Chapters II, III, and IV we have seen the evidence that the God, of whose being we have already learned, exists in the form of a Holy Trinity. The statement, found in the Athanasian Creed, is accurate and correct: "The catholic (universal) faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the person: nor dividing the substance (essence). For there is one person of the Father: another of the Son: and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal." In Chapter V we saw the three divine personalities constituting the Godhead upon the stage, working out man's salvation. In the present chapter we shall now address ourselves to the study of God as the creator and controller of the universe.

As is well known, the Bible nowhere pretends to argue the existence of God. It assumes this knowledge on the part of all rational thinking beings. The evidence, as we have seen in Chapter I, is indisputable to the person who is open to the truth. Hence the Scriptures begin with this majestic statement: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." As noted before, the plural word God is used with a verb in the singular number. This idiomatic expression is an echo of the plurality of divine personalities subsisting in the one divine essence and is at the same time an indication of their unity.

#### I. THE SELF-EXISTENCE OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL

To Abraham, the friend of God, He revealed Himself as El Shaddai, God Almighty, but when the time arrived for Him to deliver His oppressed people from Egyptian bondage and slavery, He made a further revelation of Himself to Moses, the record of which is found in Exodus, chapter 3. In this account we see that "the angel of Jehovah" appeared to him in a flame of fire in the midst of a bush which was burning and which was not consumed. This angel, who is called Jehovah, saw that Moses turned aside to see this unusual sight. We are then told (vs. 4) that God called to him out of the bush. Thus we see that this angel of Jehovah, Jehovah himself, is designated as God, who declared that He was "... the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." He spoke to Moses

concerning the affliction of the children of Israel and His intention, in coming to earth (vs. 8), to deliver His people from their servitude and to bring them into the land which was flowing with milk and honey—the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Then Moses wanted to know who, he should tell his brethren, sent him. Moreover, he requested to know His name. In reply the Lord revealed to him this name: "I AM THAT I AM." This sentence is variously translated as "I AM BECAUSE I AM"; "I AM WHO I AM"; and, "I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE." Which of these renderings, the reader may ask, is the correct one? Grammatically, they are all correct. Which then is to be preferred? In reply, my answer is, "I do not know." Should I express a preference, it would be in favor of "I AM WHO I AM." Each of the renderings, however, has underlying it the same general conception and varies only a trifle from the meaning of the others.

Obviously, the fundamental thought is that the one who was speaking to Moses is the absolute, the self-existing, the unchangeable one, the Uncaused Cause of everything, the Creator of the universe, in whom we live, move, and have our continual being.

Continuing His instructions to Moses, the Lord commanded him to say to Israel, "I AM hath sent me unto you." This abbreviated name seems to sum up what is expressed in the longer form. When we look at it, we see that the fundamental idea of the name is that the one who bears it is the ever-present one, the one who inhabits eternity, whose name is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isa. 57:15).

In this passage eternity is thought of as a building in which the Almighty resides. Thus He is the ever-present, self-existing one—throughout the eternity of the past, during time, and into all the ceaseless ages of the future. The same thoughts are expressed in Psalm 139. The omniscience of God is set forth in the first six verses, and His omnipresence is presented in verses 7-12. God the Almighty is cognizant of all things, both in time and in eternity, and is present, filling all space—but not in the pantheistic conception of things. He is, as we have seen in Chapter I, a personal being, a spiritual personality. He is the creator of all things, the one who brought the human family into existence. When the elements out of which our physical bodies are constructed were in the lower parts of the earth, He framed our unformed substance and wrote all the days of our lives in His book. Each



individual is precious in His sight. His thoughts concerning us are more numerous than the sands beside the sea.

## II. THE GOD OF ISRAEL THE CREATOR AND CONTROLLER OF THE UNIVERSE

As suggested in the preceding section, this self-existing one is the creator of the universe and all things therein.

### *A. The Creator*

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In that part of eternity which antedates creation, the triune God existed. Although the Godhead alone was in the eternity of the past, He was perfectly happy, contented, and complacent—apart from all material creation. Holiness seems to be the dominant characteristic of His being. Love flowed out from each of the divine personalities in reciprocal relations. Each of these personalities or distinctions in the Divine Being was the object of the affection and love of the others. Likewise they were the intellectual objects of each other. Thus every personal attribute in each one was satisfied by the corresponding immanent perfections of the others. [For a discussion of the immanent attributes of the Almighty, see chap. iii of my volume, *What Men Must Believe*.] There was, consequently, no necessity for the creation of the universe. Nevertheless, according to their good will and pleasure, they did bring it into existence.

At the time decided upon, the eternal God spoke the universe into being. It was thus created. To create is to bring into being that which had neither form nor substance prior to this act. As the material universe was thus brought into existence by a fiat of the omnipotent Godhead, thus it shall pass away—into nothingness—by His unchangeable decree and power (Ps. 102:23-28).

### *B. The Controller*

In creating the universe, the Almighty had a plan and a purpose. He therefore selected a definite place for His throne, which from the standpoint of the earth, is in a northern position. (For proof of this position see Isa. 14:12-14; Ps. 75:6,7; and Ezek. 1:4-28.) From it His rule extends throughout all spheres. Under Him are an innumerable host of angels—of every rank and file—whom He has created in order that they might carry on a well-organized government throughout His vast

domains.\* (For proof that there is such a throne in the universe, see Ps. 103:19-22.)

### 1. IN THE MATERIAL SPHERE

The psalmist sets forth the facts relating to God's being the controller of the entire universe and of His activity among the nations of the world. Hear Him.

For I know that Jehovah is great,  
And that our Lord is above all gods.  
Whatsoever Jehovah pleased, that hath he done,  
In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps;  
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 treasures;  
Who smote the first-born of Egypt,  
Both of man and beast;  
Who sent signs and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt,  
Upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants;  
Who smote many nations,  
And slew mighty kings,  
Sihon king of the Amorites,  
And Og king of Bashan,  
And all the kingdoms of Canaan,  
And gave their land for a heritage,  
A heritage unto Israel his people.

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\* According to Ezek., chapter 28, the anointed cherub—the highest possible creature whom God could bring into existence—led a revolt against the Almighty, which proved abortive. The ringleader of the rebellion is known as Satan or the devil who has organized these hostile spirits into the kingdom of darkness. Though he and his cohorts are under the authority of God; yet, since the Lord created them with the power of choice, they still have a certain amount of freedom of action—within prescribed limitations. This fact accounts for the irregularities, abnormalities, and disturbances throughout the realm of nature and in the human sphere.

Thy name, O Jehovah, endureth for ever;  
Thy memorial name, O Jehovah, throughout all generations.  
For Jehovah will judge his people,  
And repent himself concerning his servants (Ps. 135:5-14).

The Prophet Amos, in a matchless passage, sets forth God as guiding the heavenly bodies—spinning forward in their orbits with exactness and precision—as controlling the earth, and as overruling in human affairs. Listen to his message.

4 For thus saith Jehovah unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live; 5 but seek not Beth-el, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beer-sheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Beth-el shall come to nought. 6 Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour, and there be none to quench it in Beth-el. Ye who turn justice to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth, 8 *seek him* that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea and poureth them out upon the face of the earth (Jehovah is his, name); 9 that bringeth sudden destruction upon the strong, so that destruction cometh upon the fortress (Amos 5:4-9).

Once more, read his description of God's control in the material universe.

5 For the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, *is* he that toucheth the land and it melteth, and all that dwell therein shall mourn; and it shall rise up wholly like the River and shall sink again, like the River of Egypt; 6 *it is* he that buildeth his chambers in the heavens, and hath founded his vault upon the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; Jehovah is his name. 7 Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir? 8 Behold, the eyes of the Lord Jehovah are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; save that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith Jehovah. 9 For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations, like as *grain* is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least kernel fall upon the earth (Amos 9:5-9).

In his message concerning Ninevah, the capital of the world empire of his day, Nahum, after referring to God's character and attitudes, spoke of His control of all nature in the following passage.

4 He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel; and the flower of Lebanon languisheth 5 The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt; and the earth is upheaved at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. 6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken assunder by him (Nahum 1:4-6).

These, and many other quotations from the Word of God, show that He is the absolute sovereign in the physical realm.

## 2. AMONG THE NATIONS

It is proper for us at this juncture to consider what the Scriptures say concerning God's control of the nations. A very luminous passage is found in Isaiah 10:5-12.

5 Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation! 6 I will send him against a profane nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. 7 Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few. 8 For he saith, Are not my princes all of them kings? 9 Is not Calno as Carchemish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus? 10 As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; 11 shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?

12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.

The Assyrian whom the prophet here addressed is none other than Sennacherib. In this quotation the prophet spoke of him as the rod of God's anger, the one in whose hand was His indignation. He also declared that He was sending the Assyrian with his army against a profane nation—Israel—in order that he might take the spoil and the prey and tread the country down like the mire of the streets. According to these statements this proud monarch with his mighty empire was simply being used of God to carry out His divine plan in punishing Israel for her sins. At the same time we see from this passage that Sennacherib would be unaware of the fact that he was being used of God to carry out the divine program. Moreover, according to this prediction, God would punish this cruel king after He accomplished His purpose with him.

Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, likewise spoke of God's overruling in the affairs of the nations. In vision he saw the time when God will assemble many nations against Jerusalem, that will say, "Let her be denied, and let our eyes see *our desire* upon Zion" (Micah 4:11b). Although God gathers them, they will think that they are carrying out their own plans and purposes and acting independently of divine providence. Nevertheless, according to the next verse, "... they know not the thoughts of Jehovah, neither understand they his counsel; for he hath gathered them as the sheaves to the threshing-floor" (Micah 4:12). Seeing these nations thus gathered against Jerusalem, Micah addressed the Hebrew people in the following language: "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many peoples: and I will devote their gain unto Jehovah, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth" (Micah 4:13).

In the same strain the Prophet Habakkuk gave us the following marvelous description of God's overruling providence in using Babylon, the world empire in his day, to punish His Chosen People.

5 Behold ye among the nations, and look, and wonder marvelously; for I am working a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you. 6 For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, that march through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling-places that are not theirs. 7 They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves. 8 Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves; and their horsemen press proudly on: yea, their horsemen come from far; they fly as an eagle that hasteth to devour. 9 They come all of them for violence; the set of their faces is forwards; and they gather captives as the sand. 10 Yea, he scoffeth at kings, and princes are a derision unto him; he derideth every stronghold; for he heapeth up dust, and taketh it. 11 Then shall he sweep by *as* a wind, and shall pass over, and be guilty, *even* he whose might is his god (Hab. 1:5-11).

According to verse 5 God calls upon the people of the nations of Nebuchadnezzar's day to look and "wonder marvelously"; for declared He, "I am working a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you."

Zephaniah, who engaged in his ministry in the days of Josiah, king of Judah, foretold the time when God will carry out His determination in gathering all nations and all the kingdoms of the world together in order that He might pour out upon them His indignation, even His fierce anger. Here is the prediction: "Therefore wait ye for me, saith Jehovah, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for

my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy" (Zeph. 3:8).

Jeremiah, whose ministry probably overlapped that of Zephaniah, presented God's control of the nations in a most dramatic manner. In chapter 25 he represented the kings of earth as being seated at a banquet table. The prophet was the cupbearer, who served on this occasion. Visualize him as he passed the cup of the wrath of God to each of the guests and made them drink it to the very dregs.

15 For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, unto me: Take this cup of the wine of wrath at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. 16 And they shall drink, and reel to and fro, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. 17 Then took I the cup at Jehovah's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom Jehovah had sent me: 18 *to wit*, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse, as it is this day; 19 Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people; 20 and all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Gaza, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod; 21 Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon; 22 and all the kings of Tyre, and all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the isle which is beyond the sea; 23 Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all that have the corners *of their hair* cut off; 24 and all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the wilderness; 25 and all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes; 26 and all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another; and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them (Jer. 25:15-26).

In this passage we see that Jeremiah makes these kings drink of the wine of the wrath of God. In connection with his services as cupbearer the prophet was to say: "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink ye, and be drunken, and spew, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you" (vs. 27). Moreover, he was instructed that, should any refuse to drink the cup, he was to say to him, "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Ye shall surely drink. For, lo, I begin to work evil at the city which is called by my name; and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished; for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith Jehovah of hosts" (vss. 28,29). After giving these instructions the prophet described a vision of the havoc that will be wrought at that time. The slain of Jehovah shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto

the other end. They shall not be buried, but their bodies will decompose and constitute fertilizer for the soil (vss. 32,33).

As a final passage dealing with God's control of the nations, I wish to call attention to the following statement: "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. 16 And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. 17 All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing, and vanity" (Isa. 40:15-17). From this passage we learn that in the hands of the Lord the nations are no more than the small dust of the balances. Yea, they are as nothing before Him—even less than nothing, and vanity. According to verses 23 and 24 He brings their princes to naught and makes the judges of the earth as vanity. The nations should ponder these great declarations which show God's unlimited power and His absolute control of the peoples of earth. Though He allows them certain liberties within prescribed limits—for they have been given the power of free choice—the Almighty overrules all their actions and makes even the wrath of men to praise Him (Ps. 76:10).

### III. THE CHARACTER OF GOD

In the preceding section we have learned something about God as the creator and controller of the universe—that He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. At the same time we see that He is overruling in the affairs of men and is providentially steering the course of history toward a grand consummation, when the glory of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. We now wish to learn something of His character.

#### *A. As Revealed at the Burning Bush and in the Ten Commandments*

When the Lord called Moses and commissioned him to deliver Israel, appearing to him in the burning bush, He declared that He had seen the distress of His people and that He was come down to deliver them. This act showed, stronger than words could express, the compassionate love that overflows the heart of God and His desire to care for His people. In the Ten Commandments, which give the fundamentals of all laws regulating man's relationship to his Maker and to his fellow-beings, are reflected the dominant characteristics or attributes of the Almighty. Each command and each prohibition throbs and pulsates with a compassionate love for His creatures, which flows out of a heart predominantly characterized by holiness.

In giving the second command, the Lord declared that He visits the "iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments (Ex. 20:5,6). It is to be noted that God in dealing with men does so upon the basis of their attitude toward Him—"them that hate me ... them that love me and keep my commandments." Furthermore, the expressions show in a general way, all things being equal, that men's attitudes and actions determine, to a great extent, God's treatment of them.

At the same time one learns from a careful study of each of these commandments that God is righteous and that He demands strict obedience. There is no such thing as sinning with impunity.

### *B. As Revealed to Moses in Jehovah's Proclaiming His Name*

In Exodus 23:20,21 we have the promise made to Israel that an angel would go before her to keep her in the way and to bring her into the place which God had prepared for her. But He warned the people that they should take heed to themselves and hearken to the voice of this angel: "Provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgression: for my name is in him." The word "name" here, as generally throughout the Old Testament when it is applied to God, indicates His nature. Hence this promise is an affirmation that God's nature would be in this angel messenger and that he would have both the power and the authority to forgive sins, but would not forgive Israel's transgressions—under the conditions then existing. The punishment for those who rebelled was not executed immediately, but eventually was administered as we see from Exodus 32:33: "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."

When the children of Israel made the golden calf (Ex., chap. 32), the Lord would have exterminated the race if Moses had not entered into the breach and interceded for them (Ex. 32:31,32; Ps. 106:23). Thereupon the Lord promised to spare the nation. He then instructed Moses to lead the people to the Promised Land, assuring him that His angel would go before him (vs. 34). According to 33:1 Moses was instructed to "go up hence, thou and the people that thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt...." According to verse 2 the Lord promised to send "an angel" before him. Humanly speaking, one would judge that, since Israel sinned in the matter of the golden calf, God would send an angel, a created being, to assist in guiding the people to the Land of Promise. In an interview Moses stated to the Lord, "... thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found favor in my sight" (vs. 12).



Then the Lord reassured him that he had found favor in His sight. "And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest (vs. 14). In order to be doubly assured of God's presence with him, Moses said, "If thy presence go not *with me*, carry us not up hence" (vs. 15). Moses insisted that the proof of his having found favor in the Lord's sight was seen in the further fact that the Lord himself would go with him. According to 33:17 the Lord again reassured him that He would personally accompany him. Moses then became emboldened to ask that he might see His glory. In reply the Lord promised to cause all His goodness to pass before him and to proclaim "the name of Jehovah"; for, said He "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.... Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live..." (vss. 19, 20).

What is meant by the "goodness" of Jehovah, which the Lord was going to cause to pass before Moses? In His causing it to pass before him, He at the same time would proclaim His name. In preparation for making His goodness pass before Moses, the Lord declared that mortals could not see His face, but that there was a place at hand where he was to stand while His glory—His goodness—passed by. This place was a cleft in the rock into which Moses was to step and there stand while Jehovah passed by. As He was approaching and as He passed by, the Lord covered Moses and thus protected Him from the glory of His face. After He passed, Moses was allowed to see His back.

The Lord also instructed him to hew two tables of stone like the first ones and to be ready the next morning to come up alone to the top of the mountain, at which time He would make His goodness pass before him. At the designated time Moses ascended the mountain and took his place in the cleft of the rock, and the Lord descended in a cloud and proclaimed the name of Jehovah. In doing this He gave a sevenfold statement of His character found in Exodus 34:6,7.

6 And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth; 7 keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation.

Let us notice particularly each of these items. The Lord is (1) merciful and gracious; (2) slow to anger; (3) abundant in loving-kindness and truth; (4) keeping loving-kindness for thousands; (5) forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; (6) that will by no means clear *the guilty*; and, (7) visiting the iniquity of the fathers

upon the children and upon the children's children, and upon the third and upon the fourth generation.

These statements express the essential nature of the Lord's character in His dealing with His creatures. Theologically speaking, these are His transitive attributes. In His passing by Moses and by His proclaiming these characteristics of Himself, the Lord caused His goodness to pass before Moses. He showed His essential nature by proclaiming His name. That the term "goodness" of Jehovah as used in this passage means His character in relation to His creatures is affirmed by the use of the same expression in Psalm 27:13,14.

13 *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.

In this passage King David declared that he would have fainted unless he had been sustained by the hope of seeing the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living, during his lifetime. How could he see the goodness of Jehovah? Only by Jehovah's appearing in person upon the earth. This interpretation is confirmed by verse 14 of this quotation. The king urged people to wait for Jehovah, that is, for Him to appear upon earth, at which time they would see Him in person, manifesting His goodness.

From various portions of scripture we learn that Jehovah is a God of truth, of love, and of holiness. These are His intrinsic or immanent perfections, which lie behind these transitive or relative attributes as they are related to man. (For a full discussion of these attributes see chap. iii of my book, *What Men Must Believe*.)

God, being the God of truth, cannot countenance falsehood or unreality. He is a God of love. His heart flows out to His creatures in a desire to bring the greatest blessing into the lives of everyone. At the same time He is a God of holiness, who demands purity and holiness of His people—holiness in the scriptural sense of the term. At the same time "he knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (Ps. 103:14). He is willing to uphold all who come to Him in the right and scriptural way.

#### IV. THE COVENANT GOD OF ISRAEL

The God of the universe, of whom we have been learning in this chapter, is the covenant God of Israel. When He delivered her from Egyptian bondage and led her to Mount Sinai, He entered into covenant relations with her, upon the basis of the fact that He alone is God and that the principles set forth in the Ten Commandments are basic in all human relations (Ex., chap. 20; Deut, chap. 5). After speaking the Ten Words, God delivered to Moses those laws, commandments, and statutes which constitute Exodus, chapters 21-23. The great lawgiver then appeared before the people and spoke these laws to them. They answered with one accord saying, "All the words which Jehovah hath spoken will we do" (Ex. 24:3). Then Moses wrote all these regulations of Jehovah in a book, which is called "the book of the covenant," and read it in the audience of the people. Again they affirmed that they would do all that God had said. At this time of the services the proper burnt offerings and peace offerings were made to the Lord. The blood from these offerings was used with which the people, the book, and the altar of sacrifice were dedicated to God. Thus by this special ceremony Israel as a nation entered into covenant relationship with God.

Throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, from this time onward, the Lord speaks of Himself as "the God of Israel." That Israel sustains a unique relationship to the Most High because of this covenant relation is set forth in Deuteronomy 32:8,9.

- 8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,  
When he separated the children of men,  
He set the bounds of the peoples  
9 According to the number of the children of Israel.  
For Jehovah's portion is his people;  
Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

Although the people of Israel have been disobedient throughout the centuries, as set forth by Moses and the prophets, the Lord will never break His covenant with them. He has chastened, and will continue to do so, the people because of their sins. But the prophets have foretold that the time will come when the remnant of the nation—after the wicked ones are destroyed out of their midst—will remember Him and enter wholeheartedly into an everlasting covenant with the Lord. Jeremiah, for instance, foretold that the Lord will enter into a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, and that this new covenant will be an everlasting one. (See Jer. 31:31f.)

## V. JEHOVAH TO BECOME THE GOD OF ALL FAMILIES OF EARTH

To Israel God declared through Amos, "You only have I known of all the families of earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2). Moses also looked forward into the future and saw a time when peoples other than Israel would become the servants of God. Hear him. "And I will move them to jealousy with those that are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation" (Deut. 32:21).

Isaiah the prophet foretold the time when all nations will worship the one true and living God: "So shall they fear the name of Jehovah from the west and his glory from the rising of the sun ..." (Isa. 59:19). Once again, the same prophet foretold the coming of the Gentiles and their being acceptable to God: "I am inquired of by them that ask 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). The same prophet saw in vision the time when Jerusalem will become the capital of the whole earth and all peoples and all nations will go there continually to worship Jehovah of hosts, the great King, and to be taught of Him.

Not only the prophets, but also the psalmists of Israel foretold the time when the God of Israel will become the God of all peoples of the earth. The passages referred to are sufficient to prove this position.

## VI. THE GOD OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Though God did in the past deal with Israel as a nation, at the same time He did not accept all in the nation because of the special covenant relationship. On the other hand, those who were wicked and who departed from Him were dealt with according to their sins and iniquities. Only the honest truth seekers in all ages can come and worship God acceptably. The call goes out in the following words:

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfied not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good and let your soul delight itself in fatness. 3 Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. (Isa. 55:1-3)

Men cannot be justified by their good deeds and their own righteous acts; for, in another place (64:6), Isaiah declared that men's righteousnesses in God's sight are as a polluted garment. They can come to Him upon the basis of free grace, and grace alone. They can take hold of the grace of God by faith and by faith only—not by works done in righteousness.

From times immemorial men have realized the need of a Redeemer, a *Goel*. Job felt this necessity. In fact, he declared, "Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, And he that voucheth for me is on high" (Job 16:19). He also believed that this one who vouches for him on high will some day stand upon the earth.

- 25 But as for me I know that my Redeemer liveth,  
And at last he will stand up upon the earth:  
26 And after my skin, *even* this *body*, is destroyed,  
Then without my flesh shall I see God;  
27 Whom I, even I, shall see, on my side,  
And mine eyes shall behold, and not as a stranger (Job 19:25-27).

Jeremiah looked forward to the days when King Messiah will be accepted by Israel and will mount the throne of David and reign as King: "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" (Jer. 23:5,6). This passage is a prediction of King Messiah as recognized by the ancient Synagogue and as interpreted by certain modern scholars. According to this prophecy both Judah and Israel will be saved because they will accept King Messiah who will be recognized by them as "Jehovah our righteousness." This is in perfect accord with Isaiah's statement: "In Jehovah shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory" (Isa. 45:25). In Jehovah, who is none other than King Messiah, can Israel, or anyone else as far as that is concerned, be justified. The paramount question with each individual should be, "Have I accepted Messiah as my Saviour and entered into peace with God?" Each one must act for himself. Today is the day of salvation. Tomorrow may be too late!

## CHAPTER VII

### ISRAEL GOD'S WITNESSES OF THE TRUTH TO ALL MEN

In the preceding chapters we have seen the proof that God exists—that He is the Uncaused Cause of all things, the one in whom we live, move, and have our being—that He is a triune being, and that He is the creator-controller of the universe. We have also learned something of His holy character. All of these revelations, and many more, God has made known to Israel in her sacred Tenach, the Old Testament. He created the Jewish nation in that He performed a biological miracle upon the bodies of Abraham and Sarah when they were past the age of parenthood and made possible the birth of Isaac (Gen., chap. 21; Isa. 43:1). With the Hebrew people at Mount Sinai God began to deposit His revelation.\*

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\* That there was a primitive revelation is evident from such passages as Genesis 26:5, which states that "Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Abraham as is well known, lived approximately four hundred years before Moses, the great Law giver. In the early years of the human race many of the patriarchs who were in the theocratic line were prophets of God.

Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God Most High reigned over a small kingdom which was doubtless coextensive with the visible kingdom of God as it existed in his day. Doubtless the laws of the realm and the regulations of the worship were of divine origin. (For a discussion of this primitive revelation, see my book, *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled.*)

From that time and onward for a thousand years He entrusted this sacred deposit of truth with Israel. With that purpose in view the Lord called Abraham and entered into a sevenfold covenant with him, the record of which is found in Genesis 12:1-3. In this statement God declared that He would bless all nations through him. In later pronouncements regarding His purpose, the Lord revealed that it would be, not only in Abraham, but also in his seed that all families of the earth would be blessed. All spiritual things which we have today have come to us through Abraham and his descendants. Truly we are their debtors.

The Lord, who sees the end from the beginning, never has to change His plans. Men attempt various projects, adopting certain principles and methods; but upon finding that they are not adequate for their Purpose, they often change their programs and adopt other schemes. Not so with the Lord. He has called Israel to be the missionary nation of the world to hold aloft the torch of divine revelation to all peoples and to bring them to a knowledge of the one true and living God.

In order that we may see and understand that God will yet use Israel in making His truth known to the world, let us look at the sermon that was delivered by Isaiah the prophet, found in chapter 42:1-43:13. This message concludes with a paragraph, the central thought of which is that Israel is God's witness concerning His existence and His truth. We cannot isolate this paragraph, consisting of 43:8-13, if we are to understand its message. This part of the discourse is so related to the entire sermon that it must be examined in the light of all that has gone before. We must therefore study the message in its entirety, even though we do it in a brief manner. (Let me say that I shall, in the fifth book of the "Messianic Series," the first of which set is the present volume, give the Hebrew text with my own translation and a full exposition of this passage.)

## I. AN ANALYSIS OF THE MESSAGE

A logical discourse, like the present one, must be divided into its component parts and the relation of each section to the others must be noted in order for us to appreciate the message in its entirety.

### *A. Messiah's First Appearance and the Beginning of His Redemptive Work*

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).

The word servant in the Book of Isaiah has three connotations. The meaning in a given case must be determined by the facts of the context. For instance, servant, in Isaiah 41:8, refers to the remnant of Israel which God will gather back at the conclusion of this age into the land of the fathers. (See Isa. 41:8-16.) But in Isaiah 42:18-22, as we shall presently see, the word servant refers to the entire nation of Israel, all twelve tribes. In the passage which we have under consideration, however, it has a different meaning. When these verses are studied diligently and the thought is carefully weighed, one comes to the conclusion that this servant can be none other than King Messiah, who is said by the prophets to be the one who will put down all wars and will establish a reign of peace and righteousness from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. This servant of our passage accomplishes such a task. He therefore is the Messiah of Israel.

In these verses we note the use of the personal pronouns, "I" and "my." Isaiah was the speaker who delivered the message. Could he by these pronouns have been referring to himself? Instantly we answer this question in the negative, for he could not accomplish what he here declares. These considerations lead us to the conclusion that the prophet in this passage was impersonating God. An examination of the prophetic word shows that frequently the prophets thus played the role of the Almighty and in doing so used the personal pronouns of the first person. The facts of each context are to determine whether or not a prophet in a given instance was speaking of himself or was impersonating another. In this case we know that he was representing God in His relation to Messiah, for He, as we learn from parallel passages, is the one who will establish justice in the earth.

According to verse 1 God points to the Messiah after He has put His Spirit upon Him and declares that He has come into the world to bring justice to the nations. In other words, when Messiah comes into the world, He has a program; namely, to stop all wars, to solve all economic problems, to institute a reign of peace, and to establish a regime of justice and righteousness among the nations.

With this noble objective in view, Messiah begins a preaching ministry. Unlike demagogues and self-seeking, time-serving politicians, He will not be a rabble-rouser. He will not resort to the places where the masses gather and agitate men, stirring them to action by fanciful promises and impossible hopes. Nevertheless, He will preach and set forth the truth of God for man's good and God's glory.



According to verse 3 He will not be a ruthless dictator who wades through rivers of blood to attain his goal. On the contrary, "a bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench...." He will be kind and considerate of those who, because of having been crushed by the ruthlessness of others, may be compared to a bruised reed and of those who, because of adverse circumstances in life, are disheartened and discouraged and can properly be represented by a dimly burning wick. His objective is to bring justice to all peoples in truth—in accordance with the holy and righteous principles of the truth.

According to this prediction when Messiah appears and launches His program, it will seem to men to be a failure. Such a small and insignificant beginning would discourage any ordinary individual. There will be no fanfare nor appeal to the masses in order to enlist their sympathies. Those standing on the sidelines, figuratively speaking, will see nothing great in the movement. Nevertheless, His truth marches on.

From verse 4 we understand that it is not His intention in a dramatic manner to establish the regime of righteousness and justice in the earth when He comes to begin His preaching and teaching ministry. On the contrary, we are told that "the isles [the nations] shall wait for his law." It is thus clear from this passage that, when Messiah appears upon earth to begin His redemptive work, He comes in the power of the Spirit of God, launches a preaching ministry, which to the uninformed and those lacking spiritual discernment appears to be a failure and a discouraging proposition. Yet, He never loses sight of His objective of establishing peace in the earth, but guides His movement on to a triumphant end, at which time He will establish justice in the earth and deliver His law to the nations. This presentation of the appearance of Messiah upon earth and of His launching His redemptive work is in perfect harmony with other predictions concerning this phase of His activity.

*B. A Message of Encouragement from Jehovah in Heaven  
to Messiah in His Darkest Hour*

5 Thus saith God Jehovah, he that created the heavens, and stretched them forth; he that spread abroad the earth and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein. 6 I Jehovah have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; 7 to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. 8 I am Jehovah, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise unto graven images (Isa. 42:5-8).

In this section of the discourse the prophet no longer impersonates God as he does in the first four verses. On the contrary, he presents himself to His audience as the ambassador of Jehovah God; for he here introduces his oracle with the regular formula, "Thus saith God Jehovah ...."

The message of this paragraph is one which God in heaven sends to Messiah when He is upon earth. From its contents we can see that it consists of words of encouragement: "I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles ...." The fact that this assuring message is given to Messiah shows that there is a need for it. Such words presuppose a very dark hour for Him. God declares that He calls Him in righteousness and that He will hold His hand and keep Him. Moreover, He gives assurance that He, the Messiah, is to be the covenant of the people of Israel, that is, the bond which will unite them with their God.

Though delivering Israel from her enemies and bringing her back into the bonds of the covenant are marvelous and wonderful accomplishments, yet Messiah will have a much larger task to accomplish, namely, to be a light to the nations of the world. At the beginning of the present conflict, according to certain statistics which I have seen, there were approximately eighteen million Jews in the world. In the course of the war in Europe several million Jews, according to reports, have perished. During the Tribulation the nation will be further reduced by the destruction of all the ungodly and irreligious. The godly portion of the nation will survive and constitute the remnant. To bring back this portion of the nation into fellowship with God and to establish it in the land of the fathers where it will become the head of the nations, instead of being the tail as at present (Deut. 28:13), is to accomplish a monumental achievement. But this is too light a task for King Messiah according to Isaiah 49:5,6. The Lord God therefore gives Him to be a light to the Gentiles "that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

Messiah will, according to Isaiah 42:7 and related passages, lift the curse from the earth, which brings about all diseases and disorders, and will correct present economical and political evils, which characterize all nations. In other words, He will introduce the reign of righteousness. He in reality will do what many of the statesmen are hoping to accomplish in the postwar world, namely, the establishment of a permanent and just peace.

There is a certain amount of honor and glory that is due to God as the creator of the universe and the one in whom man lives, moves, and has his being. This glory has

never been given to Him; but when this golden age of the future dawns, all praise and homage will be rendered to the true and living God, as we see in verse 8.

*C. An International Spiritual Awakening  
Centering Around the Hope of Messiah's Return*

9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them. 10 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. 11 Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up *their voice*, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit; let the inhabitants of Sela sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. 12 Let them give glory unto Jehovah, and declare his praise in the islands. 13 Jehovah will go forth as a mighty man; he will stir up his zeal like a man of war: he will cry, yea, he will shout aloud; he will do mightily against his enemies (Isa. 42:9-13).

According to verse 9 the prophet saw the Messiah as having accomplished the purposes of His first coming. He therefore, in prophetic vision, leaped out into the future, to the conclusion of the present age, and foretold the greatest spiritual awakening of all the centuries, calling upon the people of earth to sing unto God "a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth." In calling for this universal ascription of worship, the prophet urges upon heralds going from Palestine, his native land, to other nations and also upon the inhabitants of the lands visited thus to render this praise to the Almighty. In verse 10, looking toward the west, he speaks to those who leave Palestine by the way of the sea in their going to the nations of the occidental world with the glad tidings concerning the future things which Messiah will do and urges all to join in singing a new song—a song in anticipation of what is about to occur, when Messiah returns. Then in verse 11 he sees messengers leaving the homeland, going eastward to the wilderness and to the cities thereof—to Kedar and to Sela (Petra). Thus in verses 10 and 11 the prophet sees great bands of his own people leaving Palestine, going to the west and to the east and fanning out into all the earth with the glad news concerning the impending events. These heralds of the glad tidings are urged, together with the people to whom they minister, to "give glory unto Jehovah, and declare his praises in the islands"—the nations of the earth.

In their announcing the mighty impending new thing which will soon come to the world, they proclaim the coming of Jehovah to the earth as a mighty warrior who will stir up His zeal as a man of war and will "do mightily against his enemies." In other words, the message which these heralds from Palestine will deliver to the

nations will center around the doctrine that Jehovah will come as a great warrior, will exterminate His enemies will adjust all differences, will do away with all injustices, and will establish His reign of righteousness upon the earth. Who can establish, according to other predictions, this reign of righteousness? The answer is, none other than King Messiah.

Since these flaming evangels and the peoples to whom they minister are called to sing a new song in praise to God and since people cannot sing a new song in the sense and spirit of this exhortation unless they have had a new experience, we conclude that this passage presupposes a mighty spiritual awakening and turning to God on the part of countless hosts at this future time. That there will be such a spiritual awakening among the peoples of the of the earth is foretold in other passages. For example, see Isaiah 24:14-16.

#### *D. The Second Coming of Messiah*

14 I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: *now* will I cry out like a travailing woman; I will gasp and pant together. 15 I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and will dry up the pools. 16 And I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; in paths that they know not will I lead them; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight. These things will I do, and I will not forsake them. 17 They shall be turned back, they shall be utterly put to shame, that trust in graven images, that say unto molten images, Ye are our gods (Isa. 42:14-17).

An examination of this passage shows that the personal pronoun "I," together with the possessive "my" and the reflexive "myself " figures largely in this portion of the oracle. In the use of these personal pronouns, was the prophet speaking of himself? or was he speaking of another? A glance at the entire paragraph and its contents shows that he could not do what is here foretold. But who can and will do these very things? The answer is, No one except Messiah. When He comes in fulfillment of this prediction, He will appear as a warrior, will wreak the devastation here foretold, will lead the blind by a way that they know not, will provide for their necessities, and will defeat the efforts of the opposition.

### *E. Israel Under the Heel of Tyranny*

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 (Isa. 42:18-22).

In these verses we see the nation of Israel under the heel of tyranny throughout the entire world. Many have been the bitter pogroms through which she has passed during the centuries. She has been butchered, slaughtered, and plundered in different nations at various times. The atrocities that have been committed against innocent Jewish people during the present global conflict are beyond our powers of description. Nothing but heathen barbarism could have perpetrated such. According to some reports and estimates, between three and four million Jews have perished in Europe during these days of enslavement by Nazi Germany.

But Israel's sufferings will not cease with this war. We wish that there would never be another drop of Jewish blood spilled—nor that of the Gentiles—in any pogroms, rebellions, wars, and political upheavals. But solely upon the authority of God's holy and infallible Word, I must say that the darkest period of the world's history is still out before us. This time is known in the Scriptures as the day of God's wrath when He will pour out His indignation upon all peoples (Zeph. 1:14-2:3). It is called specifically the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). At that time Israel will suffer doubly for all her sins (Isa. 40:1,2).

According to the passage of scripture quoted at the beginning of this section (Isa. 42:18-22), Israel as a nation will be "robbed and plundered ... snared in holes, and ... hid in prison-houses" without any human hope of being delivered. This is, indeed, a dark picture.

### *F. A Call to the Honest Hearts in Israel to Give Heed to the Message*

23 Who is there among you that will give ear to this? that will hearken and hear for the time to come? 24 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. 25 Therefore he poured upon him

the fierceness of his anger, and the strength of battle; and it set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart (Isa. 42:23-25).

God never coerces any man, because He made him a free moral agent. He does, however, use circumstances and individuals in order to persuade men and women to do the right thing; but He always, in His providential dealings with them, stops short of forcing the will. The prophet, seeing Israel oppressed and downtrodden as set forth in the preceding paragraph, addresses the nation by asking, "Who is there among you that will give ear to this? That will hearken and hear for the time to come?" Thus in a pleading manner, God appeals to downtrodden Israel to listen to the message and to give heed in order that good might come to them in the future.

Then the prophet answers his question in verses 24 and 25 by saying that it is God who providentially brings Israel to her downtrodden condition. Moreover, he foretells that Israel will be brought into this condition because of her sin and her refusal to be obedient to His law. By implication we see that these judgments will be sent upon her to bring her to the point that she will cry out to Him for deliverance.

#### *G. Promise of Deliverance to the Remnant*

**43** But now thus saith 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. 2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. 3 For I am Jehovah thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour; I have given Egypt as thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in thy stead. 4 Since thou hast been precious in my sight, *and* honorable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men in thy stead, and peoples instead of thy life. 5 Fear not; for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; 6 I will say to the north, Give up: and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the end of the earth; 7 every one that is called by my name, and whom I have created for my glory, whom I have formed, yea, whom I have made (Isa. 43:1-7).

In this section of the sermon the prophet calls attention to the fact that God created Israel for a purpose. In effect the Lord says, "Notwithstanding your condition, Israel, now I will give this message to you. Now let him who will listen give heed. Turn to Me; I will be with you as you pass through the deep waters of trials, or as you pass through the fire of affliction. I will protect you." His reason for offering this assistance is that He has redeemed her—paid the ransom price for her

deliverance. Moreover, He delivers over to judgment Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba instead of Israel.

This paragraph concludes with the promise of the regathering of the nation from the four corners of the globe and its being placed in the land of the fathers. Of course only the faithful remnant is included in this prediction, because the promise is made only to "every one that is called by my name, and whom I have created for my glory, yea, whom I have made."

#### H. *A Call for an Ideal Tribunal*

8 Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. 9 Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the peoples be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? let them bring their witnesses, that they may be justified; or let them hear, and say it is truth. 10 Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. 11 I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no saviour. 12 I have declared, and I have saved, and I have showed; and there was no strange *god* among you; therefore ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and I am God. 13 Yea, since the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand; I will work, and who can hinder it? (Isa. 43:8-13).

In Isaiah 41:1-7 the prophet in a most dramatic manner called for a tribunal consisting of Israel and the nations, in the presence of whom he wished to set forth the truth regarding Jehovah the God of Israel, while the representatives of the nations presented the claims of their gods. In the present passage he reverts to the same thought and calls for another tribunal. He gives the order: "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears." This statement is an echo of the thought found in 42:18,19. In this latter passage the words include the entire Jewish nation, whereas in 43:8 it is applied only to the faithful remnant that, at the time of the call, is blind, does not see the truth though it has eyes; is deaf, does not hear though it has ears. They do not know the truth but have a heart for God and a desire to please Him. In other words, these people have not had an opportunity of receiving the truth, but at the time here foreseen they will have.

In verse 9a he calls upon the nations to attend this ideal tribunal and to bring their witnesses who can prophesy and foretell the course of history through the centuries as he (Isaiah) has just done in this sermon. Though he gives the call to the nations and their representatives to establish the proposition that idols are gods and have

the power to foretell history, he knows that they cannot accept the challenge and prove their position.

Isaiah, looking at his imaginary audience—consisting of both Jews and Gentiles—addresses the nations and asks them, "Who among them can declare this ...?" Declare what? The answer is, the course which history will take from the time Messiah appears first upon earth until He, having gone back to heaven, returns at the end of this age, when He will regather and re-establish Israel in her own land in fellowship with God. Isaiah knows that idols are nothing and that none of their devotees can make any predictions such as the one which he has set forth.

If, declared the prophet, the worshipers of idols cannot outline this future course of events, then let them produce their witnesses who can testify that certain ones of their group have foretold things in the past which have already come to pass. But there is no one in the audience who can step forward and accept the challenge, calling attention to any oracles of theirs that have been fulfilled. With urgency the prophet calls upon his audience to produce their witnesses that they might be justified. If they cannot bring forth such witnesses, then let them listen to his outline of Messiah's redemptive career as he has just presented it and let them say, "It is truth."

Since the nations are not able to name any witness who can testify concerning past prophecies that have been fulfilled, and since they cannot outline the future course of history, Isaiah turns to the honest hearts in Israel and declares, "Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." From this and verses 11-13 we see that this faithful remnant of Israel, the honest-hearted ones, are to be witnesses of the truth of God to the world.

With this analysis of the sermon we are now in a position to examine more minutely the significance of Israel's future testimony to the world concerning God and His truth.

## II. THE FAITHFUL REMNANT OF ISRAEL—JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Isaiah recognizes two classes in Israel: the apostates and the faithful remnant. In fact, he was the first of the prophets who laid emphasis upon the doctrine of the remnant. When he received his prophetic call, the Lord spoke of this remnant (Isa. 6:12,13).



In 65:13,14 the prophet sharply distinguishes between these two groups of which Jewry will consist in the end time and contrasts the conditions under which each will live during the Tribulation. When we recognize this sharp cleavage in the nation and are cognizant of the fact that God has never used the wicked as a channel of blessing—except only in an indirect manner—we may be certain that these regarding whom He asserts that they are His witnesses are the faithful remnant. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that in 43:5-7 the prophet has spoken of the regathering of the faithful remnant back into their land in fellowship with the Almighty. From these facts it is clear that in verses 10-13 Isaiah was speaking of the faithful remnant in Israel.

*A. To Know, Believe, and Understand that Jehovah Is the Supreme God*

Of Frederick the Great it is said that he asked for proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures in one word. His attention was called to the *Jew* as the evidence. The history of Israel has been such through the centuries that her preservation can be accounted for only upon the basis of her having, been supernaturally cared for by the Deity. In this sense, and in this sense only, can the whole nation of Israel be said to be God's witnesses.

But in Isaiah 43:10 the Lord declares to the remnant, "Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he ...." As stated before, the term *servant* in Isaiah has three connotations. An examination of this immediate context shows it here refers to the faithful remnant, which comes to know the Lord personally, to believe in Him, and to understand that He is the Supreme God. To know God is to come into a vital experimental knowledge of Him and to sustain personal relationships with Him—as one person does to another, a friend. Abraham knew God in this personal way. He was therefore called a friend of God. He walked with God by faith, who was as real to him, yes, more so, than his own personal friends. Thus he had an experimental knowledge of the Almighty. God has chosen this faithful remnant that it shall come into fellowship with Him and have this experimental knowledge of His friendship.

It is God's purpose that those constituting the remnant—the new Israel—shall know Him, not only in this personal manner, but that they shall believe Him—that is, trust Him for everything that pertains to life and godliness. When a person comes to know God in this manner and walks with Him by faith, trusting Him for everything, he will come to trust Him for the fulfillment of all His promises. Faith grows by exercise.

God also has chosen the new Israel to understand the proposition that "I [Jehovah] am he"—the Absolute One. What is it to believe that God is He? In Deuteronomy 32:39 we have the answer.

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.

To believe that God is He, therefore, is to be fully assured that Jehovah is the Absolute One, that there is no one besides Him; that He controls the material universe; that He directs the movements of the nations; and that He overrules in the life of the individual.

Moreover, God has chosen the new Israel that she might know of His eternal existence, which antedates time. There were no gods formed before Him. Gods, idols, are the product of man's hands. There were therefore no gods until men were created and departed from the true and the living God. Moreover, the time will come as we learn in Psalm 102, when the material earth will pass away. After that event, there will be no more gods made by men. Jehovah is the one who inhabits all eternity, and besides Him there is no god. Israel thus has been chosen to come to a realization of these marvelous, fundamental truths and to be witnesses of these facts.

#### *B. To Testify to the Unity and the Trinity of Jehovah*

As we have already seen in the preceding chapters, there is a plurality of personalities or distinctions in the one divine essence. At the same time they constitute a peculiar unity, no unity being like His as is set forth in Article II of the *Thirteen Principles of the Faith*, which were formulated by Moses Maimonides. At the same time there are the three distinctions or personalities subsisting in this one divine essence.

We have already learned the significance of Israel's Great Confession: **שְׁמַע** : **יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד**: "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity" (lit. trans.). When we examine certain passages throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, we find that one of these personalities is Jehovah the Father; another, Jehovah the Son; and the third one is Jehovah the Holy Spirit. In a certain context we can see from the facts that the word Jehovah refers to the Father; but observing

the facts of a different context, we learn that the term is applied to Jehovah the Son. But in certain other instances the same word is a designation of the Holy Spirit. In addition to these meanings, as we have already learned, the word Jehovah is applied to the Holy Trinity. In view of these facts we must determine from the data of each context which connotation is intended.

God has chosen the new Israel to know the facts concerning these three personalities or distinctions in the Divine Being and to understand the subject of the Holy Trinity in order that she might proclaim to the world the truth regarding each of them. Hence she is chosen of God to declare to the world, speaking in behalf of the Almighty, "I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no saviour." She is elected to proclaim to the world the truth that the self-existing one, Jehovah, the Holy Trinity, is the Absolute One; that besides Him there is none other, and that He is the only Saviour. To declare these essential truths, God has chosen the faithful remnant.

### *C. To Proclaim to the World the Redemptive Program*

In verse 12 God asserts, "I have declared, and I have saved, and I have showed ...." The word in the original rendered "declared" literally means, "I have made known." From the flow of thought of the context, when read in the light of related passages, we see that this making known refers to predictions uttered by the Lord, showing that He planned redemption for man. In fulfillment, then, of the predictions regarding the working out of the scheme of redemption, the Lord next declares, "I have saved ...." This clause indicates that God has worked out the plan of redemption and is offering it to men. In other words, the predictions concerning God's purchasing man's redemption have been fulfilled.

Finally, the Lord states, "I have showed." After He has worked out the plan of redemption, He shows or makes it known to the world. In other words, He tells the world what He has done for it and offers salvation full and free to all who will accept.

The next clause in the verse is, "... and there was no strange *god* among you." The words in the original are וְאֵין בְּכֶם זָר. The term, אֵין, *ēyn* is a substantive meaning *nothing*. In the construction appearing in this clause, the verb is to be supplied. The form is to be gathered from the context. Our translators inserted the copula *was*. When they did this, they were thinking that Isaiah was looking back to the historic past. The same construction appears in verse 11, אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה וְאֵין מִבְּלָעָדִי מוֹשִׁיעַ, which is translated: "I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no

saviour." They used the present form *is* in this instance; but when they translated the clause under consideration, they inserted the copula *was*. In verse 13 we have the same idiom appearing in the following quotation, **גַּם-מִיּוֹם אָנִי הוּא וְאֵין מִיָּדַי** **מִצִּיל אֶפְעַל וְמִי יִשְׁיבֶנָּה** a literal translation of which is, "Even from this day I am he; and there is no one delivering out of my hand; I will work and who can reverse it?"

We have seen from verse 10 that the servant here really knows, believes, and understands that Jehovah is the Absolute One. Only the new Israel will come to such an intimate experimental knowledge of God as is here set forth. But the time when she thus comes into this knowledge of God is yet future. From other passages we know that she will thus arrive at this position spiritually in the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7). Hence the context of our passage is looking out into the future. When we bear in mind this fact and remember that the clause which we have under consideration, **וְאֵין בְּכֶם זָר**, translated "and there was no strange *god* among you," is both preceded and followed by the same idiom—where it is rendered in the present tense—we feel constrained to render it "and there is no strange *god* among-you."

When the new Israel comes to know God, to believe Him, and to understand Him, there will be no strange god in her midst nor any false ideas relating to Him. Being in this condition, she will indeed be God's witnesses to His everlasting truth. Her testimony then will be weighty and effective.

Verse 13 is rendered "Yea, since the day was I am he ...." The marginal reading is, "Yea, from this day forth I am he ...." This latter translation is likewise grammatically, correct. It fits all the facts of the context. When the new Israel thus comes to this knowledge of God—from that day forward—she will be in a position to give forth a clear, ringing testimony to God's existence, His unity, His triune nature, and to His truth in general.

When the time here foreseen arrives, this new Israel will have been given all the essential facts of the truth. In the power of the Spirit she will then go forth and proclaim the whole redemptive career of King Messiah to the world. She will thus be used of God in bringing a blessing to all peoples. These future heralds of the truth will go forth, meeting all opposition and trusting God to fulfill the promise of protection and deliverance on all occasions. To them the Lord declares, "I will work, and who can hinder it?" or, "I will work, and who can reverse it?" There is no one in the universe who can thwart the purposes of God, who works all things according to the counsel of His will. Let us remember, however, that He is working

all things for the good of all concerned and that He never coerces anyone or forces his will.

"The eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (II Chron. 16:9). In the days of Abraham God's eyes ran to and fro throughout the earth to find someone whose heart was right toward Him, and whom He could trust. Of all the myriads of people in the world at that time, there was but one such man whom God could find—Abraham. Thus the Lord gave him a special call to leave his father's home and his native land to go to the land which He promised He would show him. Abraham, though living in a heathen, idolatrous environment—in his own home and in his home town—had an appreciation of spiritual realities. Hence by faith he left his home and started out to the land to which the Lord directed him. By his so doing he became the friend of God and the father of all the faithful.

As noted in the beginning of this chapter, it is God's plan to bless all nations in and through Abraham's literal descendants, the Jews. The eyes of the Lord are running to and fro throughout all Jewry to find men like Abraham whom He can trust and who will go all the way with Him. This fact throws out a challenge to every Hebrew. May those who read the message of this book consider these eternal verities concerning which I have spoken, weigh the evidence impartially, with only one desire; namely, to learn the truth and to conform their lives to the program that God has for them.

God sees and knows the deepest thoughts and intentions of the heart. He declares that He does "direct the path of the just" (Isa. 26:7). The one and only qualification that a person must possess is that he desire truth and facts above everything else. Of course he must be willing to take his stand upon the truth whenever he learns it. All such God will direct into the path of the just.

Having read and pondered over the momentous truths which have been presented in this volume, the one who wishes to know more about the scriptural teaching regarding Messiah should procure the second book of this series entitled *Messiah: His Nature and Person*. When he has thoroughly investigated the scriptural truth contained in this volume, he should then study *Messiah: His Redemptive Career*, which presents from certain blocks of scripture the entire redemptive career of King Messiah—from His first appearance upon the human stage until He has set justice and righteousness in the earth. Following this book, the reader should master the message of the fourth volume of the "Messianic Series" *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*, which shows the scriptural teaching concerning the time

when Messiah appears upon earth to begin His redemptive work. This fourth treatise is to be followed by *Messiah: His Historical Appearance*, a book which will when completed, present indisputable evidence from the Scriptures that Messiah has already appeared and has begun His redemptive work. The sixth of the set, when it appears, will interpret the prophetic scriptures which discuss present-day conditions, and which show us absolutely that we are in the end of this age and are facing the greatest crisis of the centuries. The seventh and the last of the series will present the penitential confession of the remnant of Israel, which it will make in the year 1945-plus.

Any Hebrew who wishes to know the truth of God's Word on the subjects discussed in the volumes mentioned above should write to me regarding the same.

In view of the fact that God created and called the nation of Israel to be the channel of world-blessing and of the further fact that out of present-day Jewry God will call the new Israel that will proclaim His truth to all nations, I must warn any and all who have anti-Semitism in their hearts that they should pray to the Lord to take this feeling out of their souls and give them a love for His ancient people. The promise and the threat contained in the following passage still stand: "I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3).

This volume goes forth with my prayer that God will soon bring this horrible global war to a close, will permit peace once more to return to the earth in order that the inhabitants thereof might have an opportunity to listen in peace to the message of God contained in His Holy Word.

May the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lead all of us into a clearer understanding of the truth of His Word.