

The Biography
of the King
Gospel of Matthew

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*"Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness, and
Princes shall rule in judgment."*

Isaiah 32:1

PREFACE

We are coming to our readers with the 2nd Edition of The Biography of the King. The 1st Edition was hailed with great delight. The Gospel by Matthew gives us a systematic biography of Jesus Christ as the King of Israel, and a description of His Kingdom in mystery. The following lessons, therefore, are submitted for the edification and comfort of God's great grace family. We trust they will prove as profitable as the 1st Edition. Faithfully yours for God's glory.

The Publishers

REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest:** Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20th century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation – abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

Note: *Definitions of references pulled from WikipediA, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.*

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INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Levi (*“the joined one”*) son of **Alphaeus** (*“chief”*) is the writer of the first of the 4 biographies of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He was a tax gatherer, the most hated of all classes among the Jews, not only because of their extortion and false accusations, but for the reason that they were hirelings of the Roman oppressor; the nation to whom Israel were at this time in bondage because of their rebellion against Jehovah.

The Lord chose this humble, lowly instrument, to portray the Exalted One, the King. Levi's name was changed to **Matthew** (*“Gift of Jehovah”*). This name change was a sign to Israel; in fact, Matthew himself was a sign to the nation of Israel. They rejected the King, Jehovah's Gift, and so they have remained under the dominion of the **TAX-GATHERER**, unto this day. But this does not make the Word of God of none effect; it will not fail of its fulfillment though Israel rejected their Messiah. “God will yet set His *“King upon His holy hill of Zion”*, though *“the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing”* and *“the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed”* [Psa.2:6, Psa.2:1-2]. Yea, *“a king shall reign in righteousness”* [Isa.32:1] and Israel shall be His people; *“for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it”* [Isa.1:20]. Thus Matthew has the honor of presenting Christ as the God-appointed Messiah and King.

DIVISIONS IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The book of Matthew is divided into 5 divisions.

Division 1, The Birth of the King	Mat.1-2
Division 2, The Introduction of the King and the Kingdom	Mat.3-7
Division 3, The Ministry of the King	Mat.8-12
Division 4, The Rejection of the King	Mat.13-25
Division 5, The Death and Resurrection of the King	Mat.26-28

DIV. 1, THE BIRTH OF THE KING [MAT. 1-2]

Matthew presents the most systematic as well as consistent book in the Bible when we have secured its key. He continually sets before us the Messiah, the King of the Jews as come unto His own people and their rejection of Him.

The purpose and extent of its teaching we see at the outset. It is *“the book of the generations of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham”* [Mat.1:1]. The Holy Spirit who inspired Matthew, endeavors to set before us at once the connection of Christ with 2 of the most important promises of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah:

- One given to David as the King [2Sa.7:8-16], and
- one given to Abraham as to His Seed [Gen.15:18].

Christ was the fulfillment of both promises. As Son of David, He is the King of Israel. As Son of Abraham, though not necessarily King, He is the promised Seed through whom all the families

of the earth are blessed upon the simple condition of faith. Hence, the promise is not absolutely made void by Israel's unbelief. In fact it has found a higher fulfillment (though not manifest at the present) in Christianity, which later will be fully in evidence.

GENEALOGY OF THE KING

Matthew identifies the King for us, points Him out as eligible to the throne by giving us His genealogy. He begins with Abraham, the father of the Israelitish nation and the basic head of blessing, and ends with Joseph the last of the chosen line. The genealogy is divided into 3 sections each separated and emphasized as "*fourteen generations*." The fact that some links in the chain are missing, in order that there may be this exact number, marks it as doubly important. The number 14 (a double 7) stamped upon it 3 times, is the number of Divine Completeness. It emphatically proclaims that the ruin in Israel has reached the limit; the number 2 (the number of witness) is combined with 7 (the number of perfection).

The 1st part of the genealogy embraces both heads of promise. It begins with Abraham and ends with David.

The 2nd part begins with Solomon, favored son of David, after which there is a general history of decline; while the giving up of the nation of Israel as the acknowledged people of Jehovah ends the section.

The 3rd part has in it only one significant name, **Zerubbabel** (meaning "*melted by Babylon*"), implying that Israel are scattered in the refining pot of God's judgment. Of this time we have no inspired history. All is in ruin and hopeless, save for God's intervention; but this is the very opportunity for which God waits. Therefore, when the tide in Israel's affairs was at its lowest ebb, Jesus was born—the Resurrection and the life—thus justifying the numerical symbolism of the 3rd part, the resurrection number.

The fact that the ruin is hopeless, save for God, is that Joseph, the last of the line before Christ, is shown to be Jeconiah's son, of whom it had been prophesied "*that none of his seed should prosper, sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah*" [Jer.22:30]. Thus, the direct legal line is smitten with a curse; a witness again of the hopelessness of expectation of good from the fleshly birth. Therefore, God must come in and fulfill His promise to his servant David in another way, that he may not make void His Word concerning Jeconiah's seed. The Lord is never defeated. He has another line of David's seed through whom He will bring in the promised King, for Mary too is a descendant of David. Joseph, the legal heir to the throne, becomes her husband by Divine Constraint, and thus transfers to her child, "*the seed of the woman*," his own legal rights to the throne. Hence, Christ is King of the Jews by natural, as well as supernatural birth, by law as well as grace. After the genealogy of the people, He was the heir of David through Joseph; but according to God's Word, independent of man's reckoning, He was the heir of David through His mother, Mary.

5 CHOSEN WOMEN

While the genealogy reveals the complete ruin of man, it also serves as a most effective background for the grace and power of God. The grace and power of God needs such a setting for its fullest display which is surely manifested in the birth of Christ. We believe, had we eyes to see it, that every one of the names in this genealogy of Jesus Christ would manifest, in some measure, God's sovereignty in grace, even as the names of the women, herein mentioned, prove. There are only 5 of these; the number 5 having a most wonderful signification in this place. It is the number expressive of responsibility according to capacity; also of God in

governmental ways, as witness the 2 tables of The Law with their 5 precepts upon each. More than this, it symbolizes the weak united with the strong, man joined to God; as illustrated by our 4 fingers, the number of human weakness connected with the 1 thumb, the number of God. **Immanuel** (“*God with us*”) is the full expression of the latter.

The history of these 5 women is of such character that, judging by the standard of man, we would not expect to find them among the noted line which gave birth to the royal Son of David, King of the Jews. And yet this history expresses God’s character—He is glorified in weakness and He delights to blow upon the pride of man, which He has surely done in the matter of these women being in the ancestry of the King of the Jews.

For the latter nation is the fullest expression of the self-righteous moral man. Of these women 4 may be Gentiles; 3 certainly are; while 2 are Canaanites, the people under the curse. What light this sheds upon the ways of God! What a revelation of His grace in the midst of law, that they with all their apparent weakness and shame should find a place in the genealogy of God’s King. Not only are 3 of these women under a cloud, because of their heritage of shame by birth; but 3 of them are marked by their own sin. Tamar, the first in the line, actually finds her place here through her sin, which teaches that salvation is for sinners. For it is thus that we all find our title to Christ—our sin gives us a Divine Right to His favor and name. He is not ashamed of such, as **Tamar**’s name, implying “*prosperity*,” is the witness.

The 2nd woman, **Rahab**, the harlot of Old Testament fame, signifies “*breadth*.” She emphasizes the fact that increase was her portion, as joined to the princely family of the house of Judah. A wife of Salmon, and mother of Boaz, she takes her place in the genealogy of the Lord and teaches us by her history this sure principle: that salvation is by faith.

Ruth (meaning “*satisfied*”) is in contrast with Tamar and Rahab as to character and reputation. She is a most vivid illustration of the fact that salvation is by grace in opposition to law: for she was a Moabite; and the sentence of The Law shut her out absolutely from the congregation of the Lord: it is written, “*an Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter the congregation of the Lord forever*” [Deu.23:3]. Therefore, she is legally excluded from the people of God. Yet grace is sovereign in her case also. It rises above The Law and she and her children come into the congregation of the Lord; for, had The Law in her case been rigidly enforced, David himself, 3rd in succession, would have been excluded and later his great anti-type, Christ, the Savior-King would also have been excluded from the congregation.

The 4th woman is not mentioned by her name, but as “**her of Uriah**,” she finds her way into the genealogy of the King of the Jews. Her history is thus briefly, but concisely told, and when seen under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, is wonderful. She teaches to all generations, whether in the case of individuals or nations, “*that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*” [Rom.11:29] thus emphasizing the fact that God’s salvation is eternal. We do not come into possession of salvation by our good conduct, hence cannot lose it by our misconduct, though we may lose its joy and power and our future reward by our lapse and failure.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the 5th woman mentioned in the genealogy. She was also under reproach; for in her case was fulfilled the Scripture, “*A virgin shall conceive and bear a son*,” which according to the natural man was shameful. Nevertheless, it teaches to us who have ears to hear, that in God’s plan of salvation man and his thoughts are altogether out of the reckoning. God is supreme. He sets the natural man aside and brings in another source of life, the Seed of the woman, the Second Man, the Last Adam. He comes into the world in weakness, but manifests strength; in yieldedness, but manifests the energy of the overcomer. He comes into the world in dishonor; He leaves it in honor and glory. He is the promised One who shall bruise the serpent’s head and bring the ruined race back to God.

Therefore, in Matthew 1, the biography of the King, we have the genealogy of His perfect lineal claim, hence legal right to the Messianic throne of David. That is, He entered by the door—the Scripturally appointed way—into the sheep-fold and Israel is without excuse [Joh.10]. We are also shown at the outset His primary work: “*He shall save His people from their sins*” [Mat.1:21]. Immediately then would follow the results for which the Jews waited, namely deliverance from their enemies, by their reception of **Immanuel** (“*God with us*”).

JOSEPH ON THE STAGE

It is Joseph who is prominent in Matthew, and not Mary, even as in the genealogy. We are told of his conflict with himself and his convictions and the visit of the angel who addresses him as “*son of David*” and dispels his doubts as to Mary and encourages his marriage to her. He is assured of the Divine Sonship of that which is begotten in the womb of the virgin. The name of the Child that is to be born is declared to him, as well as the work which He is to perform; the name Jesus (or Joshua) is no mere name; but indicative of His great work. He is the Alpha and the Omega of redemption.

Joseph awakens from sleep and does as the angel bids him. He takes the virgin with child of the Holy Spirit as his wife, and thus God’s ordained will to give Mary and her Son, who is also the Son of God, a name of honor even in the natural, is fulfilled. The child is born in due time, and David, not only in spirit, but in fact may now call Him Lord [Psa.110:1].

THE WISE MEN [MAT.2]

Matthew 2 shows us the child of destiny, the promised son, actually on the scene. He was born in Bethlehem; for it was thus written [Mic.5:2] that the typical “*house of bread*” should first behold the “*true Bread from heaven*” [Joh.6:32]. He is sought as King of the Jews by the Gentiles, “*the Wise men of the East*,” prophetically representative of all the nations of the world worshipping at the feet of the King of the Jews. These are in contrast to the shepherds who herald “The Man” of Luke’s record, but in harmony with Matthew’s aspect of Christ. They view “The Star” of prophecy which had arisen out of Jacob and they bow down before the “*Scepter of Israel*” [Num.24:17]. This brings out the enmity of the old serpent the devil, who hates his Conqueror, the Seed of the woman, and would slay Him if God did not intervene. The King of the Jews, the promised Messiah of Israel, has come; and the announcement is made to His own people by strangers. The prophets had declared that He was coming. The scribes were able to put their fingers on the very place where it was written that He should be born. Daniel had told of the exact time of His birth [Dan.9:25]. But when He did come, the people were ignorant of the fact. The Magi come from far away to herald the news of His birth.

Those wise men were students of the stars, hence were not restricted (or narrowed) in their outlook. Eyes that search the skies are not in danger of short-sightedness. They know something of the vast expanse of space. The marvels of creation exhibited in the firmament set them to thinking. They saw such order, design, and action in those Eastern skies, upon which they probably gazed through many a long night, that they are sent searching for the Creative Mind back of these wonders.

- Who put those gleaming constellations there?
- Who framed and fitted them into their place and kept them in their courses running true to the heavenly time?

- Where was the One who dotted those heavens with worlds upon worlds, many millions of them?

These were some of the questions that they were no doubt asking. They knew that the little gods of wood and stone which were made and worshipped by their ancestors never compassed such infinitude; hence, they cried to the true and living God to reveal Himself. This He did in a marvelous manner. He sent a star to guide them to the land of Palestine where they found the Creator:

"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." [Mat.2:11]

Observe this fact that they did not worship her.

Also another item, which shows that they were Divinely Taught, is that their faith was not daunted by the fact that the Creator was found in such weakness and poverty. God prepared them. The heavens guided them and they found by following the star, the Creator of the stars.

They knew that the star that appeared suddenly in the heavens was one which they had never seen there before and that it was a sign to them of Him for whom they were searching. And they followed on and they were not disappointed. They let nothing hinder them; but leaving family, friends and country they began the quest for God. They were looking for Him who is born "*King of the Jews*," hence, where is a more fitting place to find Him than in the capital city of Judea, Jerusalem. They had commenced to reason when they got to Palestine and forgot to look to their star for guidance; therefore, they are out of the way for a time. All is quiet at Jerusalem. There is no great demonstration, or sign of the unusual. No one appears aware of the birth of the King. The city is not in gala dress. What can it signify? Are they mistaken? Is it not the King of the Jews for whom they have been sent searching? These no doubt are some of the puzzling questions which engross them.

They finally conclude to ask some of the great men of the city, the merchants, the council men, the religious leaders; but none can answer their questions. Herod, the usurper of the place of the King hears of the strange quest of these visitors. They are summoned into his presence and interrogated; but he can tell them nothing as to Him who is born King of the Jews. Rather he enquires of them. He is interested. His own throne is in question. He gets busy and begins a search for the King, not that he might worship when he finds Him, but rather that he might kill Him.

The wise men are disappointed. They made a great mistake— surely Jerusalem was the city where they would find the King. Just because folk are religious is not always a sign of spirituality. These wise men for a moment ceased to be wise. They had lost sight of the star. But now as they remount their camels and sadly turn their backs upon Jerusalem with its hypocrisy and religious show, lo, the star is again visible. They rejoice with exceeding great joy and press on in the way it guides. They are soon rewarded, for they find the One they are seeking; but, oh, how far removed from what and where they expected.

We are not told of their feelings, nor the shock they no doubt received when the star stood still over the humble home in Bethlehem. It was entirely different from what their minds had conceived or their hearts envisioned. It is natural to associate royalty with pomp and splendor. It must have staggered their faith somewhat to find the object of their search, the King who was destined to rule all creation, He who had created all things, housed in a humble home in Bethlehem. No great steps of white marble leading up to massive brass gates and paneled doors of rarest timbers met their gaze; no lofty palatial halls with great domes and walls of

tapestries and paintings of the masters; no artistic furnishings, soft velvety rugs and downy cushions; no watchful armored servants running here and there waiting upon that royal Babe. No silver cradle held that precious Bundle of Life; a manger had held him. A stable where lambs and sheep were fed was His birth place, so fitting for the ordained Sacrifice, but unfitting for the King of the Jews. The wise men did not, apparently, notice the inconsistency. They knew that they had found the One for whom they were searching and were satisfied.

The gifts which these first visitors present to the King prove them **wise men** indeed. They are divinely taught for in their very offerings they proclaim His worth and sacrifice. The gold bespeaks His Deity; the frankincense, His fragrant humanity, a sweet savor to God in every hour of His life; and the myrrh, bespeaks His death. It speaks of suffering and sacrifice and was one of the spices used in burial services.

ANOTHER SEARCHER

Herod is stirred by the visit of the Magi. He is the king of the Jews and the birth of another King presages no good omen to him, or his house; hence, he seeks to kill the Babe of destiny. The kings of the East were instructed to bring him word of His whereabouts when they find Him; but God orders otherwise. He tells them to return to their homes by another way.

JOSEPH FLEES TO EGYPT

"And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." [Mat.1:13]

How manifest is God's care of His Son; yet there is no display of power. The angels, which come at the bidding of Jehovah to instruct Joseph, do not encircle the Child with fiery chariots and heavenly hosts. Everything marks the fact that He has come to take no exceptional place in this world from the common lot of men. He has stooped to conquer and the lowest place is His choice from the cradle to the grave. He is least among men in His humiliation; but this is simply the preparation for His exaltation. He shall be greatest of all, King of kings and Lord of lords.

The Word of God has pointed out the way that the royal Visitor shall travel from His birth to His death; therefore, He must go down into Egypt to fulfill prophecy. *"out of Egypt have I called my son"* [Hos.11:1]. At first sight the Scripture in Hosea may not appear a prophecy of Christ, but simply a rebuke to Israel; yet, it is so given here as referring to the Son of God. We understand it also when we have learned that the nation of Israel was typical of Christ. They were called to be the servant of Jehovah, the light of the world and a blessing to all men...in all of which they represented Christ. Though they failed to fittingly portray (perform) all this, yet they were the figure of Him who did. Note Isaiah 49:1:

"Jehovah hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath He made mention of my name...and said unto me, thou art my servant O Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

We would infer that this is not the nations speaking, for a voice answers saying, *"I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with Jehovah and my work with my God."* Further, observe the claim,

"And now saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb to be his Servant to bring Jacob again to Him; though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord and my God shall be my strength." [Isa.49:4-5]

Typically, Egypt speaks of the bondage of sin in our natural state, out of which a Divine Voice must call us. However, as we know, this had no application to Christ, for He had no affinity to sin. Egypt sheltered but did not ensnare or enslave Him. He had no natural tendencies to evil from which He needed deliverance. The Voice that called Him out, only called Him to another fulfillment of the prophetic Word. *"And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth,"* because it was written [Jdg.13:5, Isa.11:1] that *"He shall be called a Nazarene"* [Mat.2:23]. Nazarene was a name actually given to Christ and generally spoken in scorn. He was supposed to have been born there where the greater part of His youth was spent. Nazareth was not held in good repute. It had no history, no memories—no good thing had as yet come out of it [Joh.1:46]. The best of all humanity was now come out from there. It had the unique honor of having the most honorable of all the sons of men as guest for some years.

Nazareth means "*branch*" and is identical with Isaiah's prophecy concerning the Messiah:

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow out of His roots."
[Isa.11:1]

The stem of Jesse, David's Seed, must be cut down, and revive again and eclipse all its former grandeur and glory through the Branch. For Christ is that "*Righteous Branch*" [Jer.23:5] as well as "*the man whose name is The Branch and he shall build the temple of the Lord*" [Zec.6:12].

So here is the scriptural key to Matthew's Gospel, the King is on the scene, David's Son and Lord, disguised in lowly garb, nevertheless a King, conqueror over His own spirit first; then manifesting His mastery over every circumstance which comes His way and rising supreme over Satan and all the evil he has introduced into this scene. He is Victor. Nothing daunts and nothing defeats Him. We behold the King, the Messiah of Old Testament fame. Observe the frequent quotations from the prophetic Scripture witnessing to Him. Such phrases as, "*It might be fulfilled,*" "*It is written,*" and "*This is that spoken by the prophets,*" all emphasize the fact that the record of Matthew is the link which binds the Old Testament and the New Testament together.

So ends the first division of the book. The King is born; the royal Son of David and the eternal Son of God is on the earth. His sufferings must precede His glory, but He demonstrates the fact at every step of His way, that He is a King.

DIV.2, THE INTRODUCTION OF THE KING AND THE KINGDOM [MAT.3-7]

Matthew now presents the King and His Kingdom. His Kingdom is announced by its herald, John the Baptist; then suddenly the King is set before us, a man full-grown and ready for His showing unto Israel. The heaven opens more wonderfully even than at His birth to announce Him as the object of its delight, the Son of the Father, and to publicly anoint Him as the King of the Jews.

But the forerunner comes first, as was intimated, with the proclamation that the long-expected Kingdom is at hand. He speaks of repentance as the preparation for its setting up. It is "*the kingdom of heaven*" [Mat.3:2] and therefore it must be in harmony with the God of heaven. God must rule.

John's theme was not a new thing to Israel. They were in expectation of such a kingdom. It had been declared by all the prophets, especially Daniel, as the earthly kingdom of the Messiah, which should be manifested when He should appear. But the instruction relative to the necessary requirements for entrance into this kingdom was new, and not pleasant to their ears.

John came to a nation of legalists. He came as the true voice of **The Law and The Prophets**. The spirit of the Old Testament was living and vital in him. He came while the sound of the Master's feet was close behind him; for at last, the long-desired Kingdom was "*at hand*." He came with eagerness to tell the good news while yet the promise held a warning note. He was crying in the wilderness, typical of the dry and barren land where Israel abode spiritually. There the cry, "*Repent*," was in its place.

John came as it was predicted of him. His was the voice of the herald before Jehovah Himself, urging the people to prepare His way, by taking their rightful place before the Messiah, thus justifying the fact of His coming [Isa.40:3]. John came in the "*way of righteousness*," as the Lord later testified of him [Mat.21:32], and thus could only stand apart and mourn for the condition of things. He is uncompromising, the fit expression of The Law to which he points. Although he is the son of a priest, yet we never find him in a priestly office; nor is he ever seen in the temple, or even in Jerusalem. His clothing, the camel's hair and leather girdle, speaks of the desert. His food of locusts and wild honey is consistent with his message of mourning and repentance. His baptism confirms his teaching. He dips the disciples into repentance in Jordan, the river of death; baptized into death is the lesson. They thus confess their sins and acknowledge the death that is their due, because of sin; therefore, they take their place before God as hopeless and helpless.

John's whole endeavor is to bring men to repentance, even as The Law for which he stands. To this end he baptized "*with water*," laying stress upon the "*water*," in order to deliver them from any idea that there was efficacy in the water, apart from its significance as to repentance. Water is only water and therefore can only produce a material change, never a spiritual one. Nor does God even ordain it to effect any transformation in this regard. There was no virtue in the water then any more than there is now. Baptism with John, as with Paul, is simply death and burial; John points out the need of the death of the sinner; Paul points out that it has been accomplished.

The Baptist then turns to speak of the Other, the One coming after him and His baptism. He takes the lowliest place in His presence, the place of a servant to Christ. He himself, as the expression of The Law, is as nothing. He admits that he is no real help to the people except to show their need of this Other, who is even at the door. Christ will baptize into the Holy Ghost, into life and victory and power, whereas John can only baptize into water, into judgment, into death.

After His resurrection, Jesus speaks in the same manner, using the identical language:

"John truly baptized into water, but ye shall be baptized into the Holy Spirit not many days hence." [Act.1:5]

Here is the very same contrast of water with Spirit, and the same word **baptism**, applied to each ministry. We know from the record of Pentecost, that the Spirit did not connect Himself in any way with water, nor were the disciples baptized with water on that day. It is also positively ascertained by Scripture that they were all born again before Pentecost and that this baptism (into the Spirit) therefore was not their new birth, but had to do with another experience altogether.

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him." [Mat.3:13]

This is the first of the 5 great scenes in the earthly life of Christ. The other 4 are ☩ His temptation in the wilderness, • His transfiguration on the mountain, Ž His agony in Gethsemane and • His death on the cross. There is definite purpose and meaning in the dipping of Jesus in Jordan, yet from what we have learned of its character, it is the last thing that we would imagine possible—that the Lord should be baptized by John into repentance, for He had nothing of which

to repent. John thinks so too, for he is startled; even forbidding the humbling of Jesus in this manner:

"But John forbid him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him." [Mat.3:14-15]

It is clear that Christ's baptism is the entrance to His public ministry. Prior to this, with the exception of His birth and the one incident of His youth at the age of 12 years which Luke records [Luk.2:42-52], the Scriptures are silent as regards His life. This was all designed and controlled by God; for Christ is here viewed as the Passover Lamb which was taken on the 10th day of the 1st month and kept up until the 14th day, before being killed. Yet the whole year was changed as is recorded, "*This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you*" [Exo.12:2]. Why then were the first 10 days of this momentous month unnoticed?

Matthew connects the Old and New Testaments; therefore, we are in the midst of typical teaching. The number 10 is symbolic language; it is the number of responsibility; therefore, those 10 days of silence figure the whole of Christ's life before that significant day that He stood upon the banks of the Jordan. They testify to those 30 years of silence, yet of responsibility, when He was living in the light with God and proving Himself the unblemished Lamb of sacrifice by actually fulfilling every jot and tittle of The Law. We read here of the Father's approval—giving public witness to Him as His Beloved Son in whom He is well pleased, and accepting Him as the real Passover Lamb.

As the typical lamb was kept up for 4 days, 4 being the number of testing, so Christ was in the public gaze for 4 years after His Father approved Him, to be tested by the world, the flesh, and the devil. Hence, He is immediately led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness for the express purpose of being "*tempted by the devil*." His life afterwards? How different it is from that quiet life at Nazareth in which he had lived so long in fellowship with God. There He was fulfilling His own individual responsibility, which was absolutely necessary in order that He should be able to give Himself for others. This was in private; God alone could be the competent witness of the inward excellency of His Son.

It is plain then, that it is as the unblemished Lamb that Jesus is presenting Himself here. He, the Holy, the Last Adam, offers Himself to God as the substitute in death for the sinful first Adam. Not that He took sin into union with Himself; this was impossible. His holiness repulsed sin; but here He took the place of self-judgment as Israel's substitute. He went down into the waters of Jordan, where Israel had been adjudged by God as deserving to go, being convicted by The Law which they claimed to keep. He went down, in figure, into the place of death, the Divine Penalty for Sin. He justified God in His verdict against the transgressor. He there surrendered Himself openly and absolutely to the will of His Father. We are not surprised that this opens heaven and calls forth the Divine Approval of the Father upon such devotion. The Spirit, as a Dove, rests upon this holy Man, the distinct sign of the reward and seal of God upon His perfection. He becomes not simply in title, but in fact, the Christ—The Anointed. As Aaron of old received the typical anointing without blood before his entrance into office, so Christ is now accepted and set apart for priestly ministry, as well as priestly sacrifice; for here is Priest and Sacrifice in One. His perfection is as necessary in the one case as in the other. The white linen garments seen upon Aaron on the Day of Atonement, and not the garments of glory and beauty, are here in evidence. That is, it was Christ's own intrinsic holiness that prevailed in that awful crisis day when Aaron's glorious Antitype offered Himself, the only acceptable Sacrifice unto God.

The perfection which the Father proclaims, the Spirit seals. He finds at last a place to rest, a human heart in sympathy and harmony with His own infinite love, where He may lodge. His appearance as a dove manifests the character of the Man upon whom He abides. The dove was one of the sacrificial birds, the symbol of Christ, in the very attitude in which we find Him here. Thus Father, Son, and Spirit are all 3 for the first time, openly manifested together in the work of redemption.

The dove, or pigeon (the 2 are almost identical), was in fact the only bird named as the bird of sacrifice. As the **BIRD** speaks of heaven, from whence this sealed Man came, so then heaven, not earth, has provided the Sacrifice by which heaven is to be appeased and opened to man. That the **2nd Man** is from heaven is the important teaching here symbolized. The **1st Man** is earthly; and by the fact that he sinned he cannot provide the unblemished offering which Divine Justice demands. Therefore, God Himself must provide a sacrifice, as Abraham announced to Isaac long ago [Gen.22:8]. He who required has fulfilled His own requirement. This is the message of love which the Gospel proclaims. Thus, the closing words of the chapter, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,*" introduces Christ to us as the King of Israel, anointed, but not yet crowned; for His Priesthood must prepare the way for His Kingship.

A KING INDEED [MAT. 4]

Matthew 4 corresponds most wonderfully with Numbers, the 4th book of the Pentateuch. It is the story of the wilderness and follows the priestly anointing in the book of Leviticus. Thus, the first 5 chapters in Matthew are a miniature expression of the first 5 books of Moses:

- In Matthew 1, we have Christ's beginning, the Genesis of Matthew,
- His Exodus out of Egypt in Matthew 2,
- His priestly inauguration in Matthew 2,
- His wilderness journey in Matthew 2;
- while Matthew 5:2 introduces the Deuteronomic character of Christ's ministry, the 2nd giving of The Law...the very meaning of Deuteronomy. In fact, in the 5 divisions into which the book of Matthew easily falls, we also have a Pentateuch. Who dares say, in the face of such unmistakable evidence, that the Bible is not the inspired Word of God?

"Then was Jesus led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." [Mat.4:1]

As we have noted, the Lord had fulfilled His own responsibility as Man before God in the 30 years of His private life at Nazareth. Now, He comes forth from that retirement to take His public place as Mediator for others and thereby assumes their responsibility before God. He has been anointed and publicly acknowledged as the chosen One for this office. Therefore, He is now to be tested (by the world, the flesh, and the devil) as to His fitness for the service assigned to Him. He must be worthy of the honor conferred upon Him. He must prove Himself Master of everything. Satan is given the first opportunity to defeat this apparently defenseless Man. He has no hedge whatsoever round about Him. He comes into the poverty of the creature, absolutely at the mercy, as it were, of the adversary. We are impressed with the manifest weakness of this Glorious Wrestler. He is stripped for the contest. He was led into the wilderness, that He might be tempted. He is absolutely yielded to and controlled by the Spirit of God.

In a scene of absolute desolation, yea more of awful danger, in the midst of wild beasts, a contrast to the garden of Eden in which the first Adam fell, without one single comfort, no human friend, no shelter and no food; this heavenly Man is tested as to whether He is the Son of God. Circumstances were all against His claim. He was alone. The fast was not only from physical food; but also the fellowship of heaven was lacking. It was a fast indeed.

When His fast was ended He “*hungered*.”

“And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.” [Mat.4:2]

There was a limit to the fast, 40 being the number of trial and probation. It was a preparation to meet Satan. If the Son of God had met him immediately following His anointing with the Spirit, before He was tried by the poverty, danger, and need of the wilderness, it would appear as though He was protected by His Father, hedged about as it were. But no, there was a due time for the devil to appear—the supreme moment, “*He hungered*.” This was Satan’s opportunity and he takes advantage of it; for though Jesus was the Son of God, He emptied Himself of His power and wealth that He might come into the poverty of the creature, the conditions of frail humanity, and these in their utmost straightness. The 1st Adam failed in a garden where everything spoke of God’s love and care for the creature whom He had made. The garden was especially prepared and furnished for him. He also had a companion, a help, meet for him, to comfort and cheer his solitude. Real want there was none. Only one thing was denied him and in that very denial there was hidden a blessing. The weakness of the creature was owned. He was dependent upon God for His care and sustenance; but this was only a witness to the tender arms of love that were around him, on which he had but to lean hard to feel their strength.

But the Last Adam, the 2nd Man, is not so sheltered. He is apparently neglected and unloved. The garden is gone. In its place is a barren waste, a desert where even nature itself refuses to yield its substance to feed its Creator. For 40 days He fasts, and then, with the hunger of those days of abstinence upon Him, the tempter comes with the same insinuation of God’s wisdom (though a different interrogation) that he found effectual in the case of the 1st Adam.

THE 1ST TEMPTATION

“If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” [Mat.4:3-4]

That is, prove that you are the Son of God; let your power be manifested in this time of need. Why should the Beloved of the Father be hungry and desolate when it is in His power to remedy His condition? He need not wait for circumstances to change. He can easily adjust them Himself. The need is real; the hunger sinless; why then not put forth His power and make the stones of the ground to minister to His necessity? Satan becomes very solicitous for this Man of whom already he is afraid. He would see His credentials as to Sonship. The suggestion is so simple and plausible, the reason of it so obvious, the inclination to minister, with what power we have, to our own necessities; this to any of us naturally would appear to be no evil suggestion at all—no temptation whatsoever. But, the Lord’s answer serves to show us that we have a deep crafty enemy with whom we have no power to cope except by the Word of God which the Last Adam uses in all 3 of these temptations.

We need to observe closely this battle, for such it is, that we may learn how to wield the sword dexterously; for the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. The battlefield may appear to be narrow, the points of attack few, the weapon employed weak; but, herein lies one of the excellencies of Scripture: That its principles, though simple, are yet freighted with Divine Wisdom, and weighty with Divine Power to meet our every need. The Lord makes use of this

one weapon with which He is equipped to defeat the adversary, while the Spirit gives it edge; therefore, it is sufficient. How marvelous that, as a Man, the Lord takes the creature's place in absolute subjection to the authority of God. The verse of Scripture which He quotes, "*that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD,*" is part of a passage which makes this doubly evident. It shows that God directly designed the path of trial and testing in the wilderness to teach His people His wonderful solicitude for them.

"And He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger; and then fed thee with manna which thou knewest not and neither did thy father know, that He might make thee to know that man liveth not by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth man live." [Deu.8:3]

Christ had proved this Word of God sufficient for these 40 days. His life had been sustained and nourished by the Truth. He had lived by it and though He was now hungry, yet He was alive and well and able to wield the sword of God's Word.

Notice, it is as man He speaks, and it is of man these things are written. He did not come in the glory of the Godhead to walk and talk with men; but He came in weakness, in the path of humiliation, to learn obedience by the things which He suffered. He came as man to work out redemption for men; thus, He cannot put forth Divine Power to deliver Himself. Appetite may crave; need may clamor. He feels these desires as other men. If this were not so, His humiliation would not be complete; but this is the difference between the New Man and the old man. Jesus feels the need, but this is no impelling motive to Him; He has but one incentive in life—to do the will of God. He has taken upon Him the form of man for this purpose alone. Shall He now fail and do His own will? Nay! Nay! He will do nothing of Himself. He waits His Father's command. He lives by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. He demonstrates that the Word is practicable. It can be lived in the world by the spiritual man. Satan finds it impossible to move Him to take Himself out of His Father's hands; but yet he is not baffled. He has another scheme. He will try Him as to His soulish nature.

THE 2ND TEMPTATION

"Then the Devil taketh Him up into the Holy City and sitteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." [Mat.4:5-6]

Notice the devil's power. The city and temple were the figure of God's dwelling place—Christ and His people being the Antitype. Hence, Satan puts Him in the place that belongs to Him as the Last Adam: The pinnacle, or highest place, in God's tabernacle—King of the universe of God. Then he commands Him to cast Himself down from this exalted place, which is exactly what Jesus would have done, spiritually as well as literally, had He obeyed this archenemy. The devil assured Him, bringing the leverage of God's Word to bear upon this, that He cannot be hurt; "*He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*" This implies that He compels His Father to prove His Sonship—let God come to His defense and witness by His power to His assertion, that He is the Son of God. Give God the opportunity to prove your boast and establish your claim as His Son before the universe.

But the Last Adam is not moved. He conquers again by the Word of God, and we see in this victory that the man who lives by the Word of God will be wise as to the use and misuse of Scripture. Satan omits part of the passage "*in all Thy ways*" [Psa.91:11], from which he quotes, and those very words guard them against the abuse that he would make of them. The "*ways*" of Him, who in the same psalm says of Jehovah, "*In Him I will trust,*" will be God's ways, and He will assuredly wait upon Him for the fulfillment of His own Word and not impatiently grasp for its

fulfillment before the due time. This no doubt is Satan's effort now, for since the Man refuses to move without the Word of God, here now is the Word to move Him to act. The 91st Psalm surely refers to the Messiah; therefore, it seems that simple confidence in God would cause Him to claim and act upon it. But Jesus does not yield. He answers;

"Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." [Mat.4:7]

Thus, to tempt the Lord is to try Him by our thoughts, by our impatience that cannot wait His due time, nor take the lowly path, the hidden way; and take, by force if necessary, what we desire. But the Conquering Man, He to whom all things belong, moved on in weakness, leaving His case in His Father's hands, waiting His own time for vindication and proof of His Sonship. Yet here was the proof—He could not be tempted to desire anything outside of His Father's will.

THE 3RD TEMPTATION

"The devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. And saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." [Mat.4:8-9]

Satan changes his tactics completely in this 3rd test (3 being the number of manifestation), where he assails the spirit of the Last Adam; for He was tempted in all points even as the first Adam. The devil shows himself more openly than before; but this time he does not say, *"If Thou be the Son of God."* He suddenly appears to realize the fact that he cannot tempt Him on this line. Jesus has already resisted both his attacks. He will not endeavor to prove by His own power, that He is the Son of God and neither will He move His Father to prove it; therefore, the devil now virtually says, "I will prove it. I do not deny that you are the Divine One, who is going to rule all nations with a rod of iron. I am sure you are what you claim, and I will give you all these kingdoms. But there is one condition; acknowledge me as sovereign; fall down and worship me, admit my authority to give them to you; in other words worship me as your God."

This is the most blasphemous temptation. It is an insult to the Divine Glory veiled in frail humanity. Satan is playing a desperate game and he ventures boldly to win; but he has met his Master at last. He had wrested from man the sovereignty of the earth and for 4,000 years he has triumphed in undisputed sway; but here is his Conqueror—the Man who is going to chain him in hell for 1,000 years and afterwards cast him into the lake of fire.

The Lord answers, as He does the 2 preceding challenges, by the Word of God, though with an indignation that was not manifest before. The enemy has shown himself and can now be called by his proper name, rebuked, and bidden to depart,

"Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." [Mat.4:10]

Instead of yielding, Jesus now asserts His authority as the Son of God, who, though clothed with frail humanity, is yet the Seed of the woman, the destined Man, who is to bruise the serpent's head. He cannot be moved from His allegiance to God and He will have nothing out of His Father's will, nor from the hand of the enemy. He has met Satan as a man—the Second Man, and, although there is no display of Deity, no outburst of Divine Judgment or Power, yet not only is He not defeated, but He overcomes the devil at every point, and solely by the written Word of God. Its sufficiency as a Divine Weapon is tested to the uttermost; and this is an encouragement for us. We need nothing but faith to make it effectual; for Christ is seen here as the perfect example of faith.

"Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." [Mat.4:11]

The devil now leaves Him—victor indeed—calm, undaunted, invincible in spirit, though no doubt weak and well-nigh fainting in body. But oh, the angels came to minister with tender hands to His needs and we are confident that they brought the choicest refreshments that heaven afforded, the nectar more rare than Jupiter sips, to the Man who refused to doubt His Father's love and faithfulness amidst all the opposing circumstances which environed Him.

Oh, this was victory indeed, the greatest of the ages past—the beginning of Satan's eternal defeat. His sharpest arrows were aimed at this Holy Man, but they were rendered powerless before they ever reached His breastplate of righteousness, by the shield of faith which He carried. He never let the shield down even for an instant. He stood and withstood: and finally He was alone, the honors all His own. And yet not alone, for the Father sent holy company, heavenly friends to comfort and minister unto His wants. He won the laurel crown that day—the crown of the Champion of the human race—the Redeemer of mankind. And now He is ready to introduce His Kingdom.

"Now when Jesus knew that John was delivered up, he departed into Galilee." [Mat.4:12]

The King is now ready for His presentation to Israel, but it is upon the basis of grace alone. As was noted, John figures the Covenant of Law. It had its day in the purpose and plan of God and was sent before the Covenant of Grace, even as John was the forerunner of Jesus: but now he is off the scene and Jesus alone has the stage. He is the prominent figure in the setting of the Covenant of Grace; all blessings, with which Grace is replete, cluster around and spring from Him.

The King is now ready for His introduction to Israel as their Messiah; for we must constantly bear in mind that this Gospel Record is a Jewish book. It speaks emphatically of the Kingdom which has been promised to the chosen nation—Israel. This kingdom, which John announced, Jesus now proclaims by His preaching

"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." [Mat.4:17]

The Jewish people were in expectation of their Messiah. The prophets had spoken again and again of such a future glorious reign of righteousness, peace, and joy upon the earth, with Israel's personal Messiah as its Source and Head; and their own nation as its centre and channel of blessing to all other nations. Now, the due time is at hand: the King is on the scene to set up the Kingdom.

"And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." [Mat.4:13-16]

Galilee, the portion of Israel's land which bore a decided reproach [Joh.7:52], was, in general, the sphere of the Lord's ministry, while **Capernaum** as its center and the witness of His greatest miracles, was now true to its name, "*the city of consolation*." It had been divinely marked out by Isaiah the prophet, long before, as Matthew reminds us. Galilee, as "*the land of Zabulon and Nephthalim*" on the one hand, but now the "*Galilee of the Gentiles*," tells us plainly of the ruin which is manifest. **Zabulon**¹ ("*the dweller*") had fulfilled Jacob's prophecy, and "*dwelling at the haven of the sea*" [Gen.49:13] was the type of Israel as a whole, the chosen nation, giving up dwelling alone, to mingle in fellowship in commerce with all the other nations. Now it could truly be said, it was "by

¹ Zabulon is the Greek form of the word Zebulun.

the way of the sea,” as though Zabulon was swallowed up in its waters, which was indeed the case; while **Naphtali** (“*the wrestler*”) had ceased to struggle and was apparently satisfied to dwell in darkness which was but “*the shadow of death.*” But this is the very place for the light to “*spring up,*” so hither to Zabulon came a true Dweller, One in whom God had come to dwell with man; and to the land of Naphtali came more than a wrestler, He came a glorious Conqueror as He had just proved.

“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
[Mat.4:17]

Jesus takes up John’s word as to the coming Kingdom, for Israel must “*repent.*” They must own that they have failed, as regards the Covenant of Law; and that God was under no obligation whatever toward them, except to fulfill His promise to Abraham. With this also comes the call for disciples, those who will share with Him in the toil and service necessary to the introduction of His Kingdom and later will share His honors and His triumph.

Peter and Andrew, James and John answer His call immediately [Mat.4:18-22]. They marveled no doubt at His condescension in choosing such poor unlearned men for His aides in such an exalted undertaking. But it is the way of the Lord. He does not choose the wise or the wealthy of this world to accomplish His will. They would take the glory to themselves as having done something. God does not need natural qualifications to further His purposes. The one qualification that is absolutely imperative in those associated with Him is dependence. He can get along with poor material and few gifts if we will only let Him be the Master. He will furnish all the wisdom and power if we but yield to Him. He calls His men. He yet chooses them for office, as He ever did. He has not abdicated the claim to do this in favor of anyone. He is Lord, and Master, and Guide in all His people’s service. Furthermore, His call requires prompt, unhesitating obedience.

The offer of the Kingdom on God’s part was in truth and reality. He was not mocking them. It was actually “*at hand.*” Christ shows His credentials for the office. His Father signs His ordination papers with mighty miracles which witness is beyond question and cannot be disputed [Mat.4:23-25]. He gives powerful evidence that He is the Sent One, the long-expected Messiah of Israel. He heals on every hand, lavishly blessing, delivering from Satan’s power both right and left, apparently without regard to personal faith at all. This was according to prophecies which went before as regarded Him. As the nation’s Deliverer, He brings national deliverance; and, not until national criticism and national rejection appear, does the Lord ask for personal faith and confession of Himself before He will perform His works of blessing.

As we go on from Matthew 10, we notice that the miracles become steadily fewer, though at times He lets the streams flow out in power to the most undeserving, for who can absolutely restrain or shut up the out-gushing of grace from the heart of Love.

Great multitudes flock after Jesus from all the surrounding country: From Galilee itself, from Decapolis, the 10 (a significant number) colonial cities of Rome; from Jerusalem also, (the city of prestige, vaunting itself for privileges, which being misused were now bringing ruin upon all connected with it). They all came out to see the great prophet from Nazareth. They came to see if He was the Saviour-King, the Restorer of the breach, the One in whom they would be blessed and therefore a blessing. “*The world has gone after Him*” [Joh.12:19], said His enemies at a later time; and so it seemed for a while; but when the highly spiritual requirements of His Kingdom became known, the nation refused the King.

In Matthew 5 to 7 we have the constitution of the Kingdom and its laws unfolded. The character of those who shall possess the kingdom is first dwelt upon. Notice that it is "*the earth*" which these "*meek*" shall inherit. The **SERMON ON THE MOUNT** was not given to Christians. It is simply The Law of Moses intensely spiritualized by One who understands its every requirement, and who knew what the holy law of God demanded. No honest heart who truly listens to the Sermon on the Mount will ever claim righteousness by the keeping of it. When the times of "*the restoration of all things*" come [Act.3:21], when all men are under the sway and rule of God, then these requirements of Christ's Kingdom will be enforced in the earth. The assembly (church) gospel is that to which we should hearken today, not the gospel of the Kingdom. But until Christ died as our Substitute, bearing in His own body the guilt of our sins because of God's broken law, the gospel of grace was not possible. We have a different calling and are on a far different footing than were Israel under The Law. To preach this sermon to the unsaved, unless for the purpose of showing them the demands of The Law and thus convicting them of their lack of this righteousness, is to wrongfully divide the Word of God. Only Christians, who know experimentally their deliverance from The Law, can enter by the power of the Holy Spirit into the precepts contained in these wonderful utterances of the Messiah of Israel.

Yet this does not imply that there is no application to ourselves in this sermon by the King; but, we have received a fuller revelation which completes or unfolds this partial one, even as the higher blessings transcend the lower. God is ever the same. His principles do not change. He has blessed The Church with "*all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*" [Eph.1:3]. Therefore, to take from Israel what is distinctly her own is but to impoverish her without enriching ourselves. We have the better part, the higher destiny; let us go on to learn of it and thus rightfully divide the Word of God.

"And seeing the multitude He went up into a mountain; and when He was set down His disciples came unto Him and He opened His mouth and taught them, saying." [Mat.5:1-2]

The Lord "*went up.*" This is significant of His office. He is the King on His throne, as it were, the Lawgiver revealing the righteousness of His Kingdom. He begins with blessing; blessing upon the **HEIRS** of promise. There are 9 of these **BEATITUDES**, as they are called. The first 4 are distinguished from the others by the fact that they show the heart set upon the kingdom itself; therefore, governed by the unseen, while yet in the midst of that in the world which is its moral opposite. The next 3 show the positive energy and activity of such a heart in unceasing conflict with that which opposes it.

First, and therefore of chief importance here, we have,

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." [Mat.5:3]

This is in contrast with natural poverty, yet like it, in respect to its own sphere. This poverty of spirit is but the negative side of faith, the "*having nothing,*" as Paul expresses it; but not yet "*possessing all things*" [2Co.6:10]. While it is not the perfect experience, still there is power in it as deliverance from this world of show and vanity. The soul's bonds are loosed, it can move and make progress; therefore, such are blessed by the assurance from the Lord Himself, that "*theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." [Mat.5:4]

The 2nd blessing is for those who "*mourn,*" not because of personal sin, but because like the Lord Himself, they judge the ruin that is everywhere manifest; therefore, the world is a wilderness for

them. They are alone; they long for the coming of the Kingdom of God. And “*they shall be comforted*,” is the promise of Love. Their tears shall be wiped away with God’s own handkerchief; “*and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain*” [Rev.21:4]; for the former things will all pass away.

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” [Mat.5:5]

Then the next blessing follows; these meek “*shall inherit the earth*,” for we must not forget that the King is occupied with the heirs of His Kingdom. These are the “*meek*” to whom He here refers; yet this is a characteristic of His people of every age. Amid the lusts and strife of earth, they are quiet. They have ceased from their own works and have entered into the haven of rest. They have taken the Shepherd’s yoke upon them and have learned of Him; therefore, they have become meek and lowly in heart. In this knowledge there is the present blessing, “*Ye shall find rest to your souls*,” as well as future reward [Mat.11:29].

The time when the meek “*shall inherit the earth*,” is the day of the Kingdom to which we are here continually looking forward. This will indeed be a wonderful time in the history of this world, where strife and greed for gain has held sway for ages and the survival of the fittest has been the rule, to behold the meek at the head of affairs. The tables will indeed be turned when righteousness shall reign.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” [Mat.5:6]

Not merely for their own individual supply do they hunger and thirst, but craving for righteousness to be manifested in the earth. And “*they shall be filled*,” for “*a King shall reign in righteousness*” [Isa.32:1]. It is still the Kingdom aspect toward which we are looking. The King will come and put down all present “*rule, authority and power*” [1Co.15:24], and “*satisfy the longing soul, and fill the hungry soul with goodness*” [Psa.107:9].

The next 3 **BEATITUDES** relate to that in which the children of God show forth distinctly their Divine Origin.

*“Blessed are the **merciful**: for they shall obtain mercy.*

*Blessed are the **pure in heart**: for they shall see God.*

*Blessed are the **peacemakers**: for they shall be called the children of God.” [Mat.5:7-9]*

The merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, all manifest the character of God as Light and Love. It is directly said of the “*peacemakers*,” that they “*shall be called the children of God*.” They are recognized in their relation to Him; and the pure in heart shall see God. Christ Himself was the full expression of these positive elements. He combined and manifested them all. As the pure in heart, He was in a world of corruption which was opposed to Him, where He showed Himself merciful to His murderers; constituting Himself the Peacemaker, having “*made peace by the blood of His cross*” [Col.1:20]. His Kingdom is founded in peace; therefore, its heirs must be in harmony.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.” [Mat.5:10-11]

The last 2 **BEATITUDES** connected with character are followed by promises of encouragement to those of the above folk, who are suffering from the consequent opposition of the world. For the world is in opposition to God, as the cross has proved; therefore, its enmity is revealed against

all those who resemble Him or remind them of Him. It may be disguised as at the present time; and also those who exhibit it may be unconscious of what they are doing (because of the deceitfulness of the human heart); but the animus is there nevertheless as we continually prove when we move on in the perfect will of God.

The persecution to which the Lord alludes, may be of 2 kinds, namely for righteousness sake and for His sake. In the first case (for righteousness sake), it is in consequence of the character we exhibit; and, it is noticeable that the persecution entailed is represented as less violent and radical than that for His sake—accordingly the blessing pronounced is also greater. The explanation of this is that with righteous conduct there is often linked no open testimony to call forth or stir up the persecution; and if the blameless character makes no claim whatever upon the beholder, it may not only be admitted, but approved and admired. But there is quite another turn when this righteous character opposes itself against the unrighteous, and interferes with his pleasure or profit; then there is a change indeed; the persecution is soon manifested. But suffering for Christ's sake is suffering as Christ and has a corresponding reward, "*Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.*" The reference to a "*reward in heaven*" may appear somewhat puzzling where we admit that He is talking to His Jewish people and of the Kingdom on earth. But these Millennial blessings being postponed because of their unbelief, belong to a remnant of the nation of Israel in the future, who will be brought to God in a time of tribulation such as never has been known, many of whom will be persecuted unto death. But, they will be raised from the dead and receive glorified bodies 1,000 years before the rest of the house of Israel will receive glorified bodies. John saw

"The souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." [Rev.20:4b]

But besides this and apart from martyrdom, there will also be a preserved remnant who, passing through this time of trial, will have special blessing and a peculiar protection:

"And to the woman was given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times and half a time from the face of the serpent." [Rev.12:14]

Such treatment at the world's hands only manifests the place, privilege, and responsibility before the Lord of those who suffer this 2-fold rejection.

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." [Mat.5:13]

First, "*ye are the salt of the earth.*" Salt is that which resists corruption; there being in it also a permeating quality which diffuses itself unmistakably with whatever it is mixed. It influences everything, being the suited image of aggressive personality. Mere passivity is in fact inconsistent with righteousness. We are either for or against the world. We cannot be neutral; "*for if salt have lost its savor wherewith shall it be salted?*" [Mat.5:13b]. If it has lost the one quality that made it effectual, it is of no use whatever; therefore, our witness of Christ, whether in word or deed, is always effective. Our presence is really felt, our influence clearly recognized; for the world is permeated and seasoned with the testimony of Christ; hence preserved from utter corruption. This leads on to the next thing which is the place of such testimony.

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." [Mat.5:14-15]

Then because He adds, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*" [Mat.5:16]; many confuse the light with the good works, which is unfortunate.

These are entirely distinct, yet dependent upon one another. For instance, there can be no testimony for Christ without light, yet at the same time, if there be light there must be some testimony; the lips must speak. But we must put first things first. *"The life which is the light of men"* [Joh.1:4], will bring forth good works that will glorify the Father. Christ Himself is the Light that is come into the world, and if men love darkness it is because their deeds are evil, as He Himself assures. We let our light shine when we confess Him boldly without fear or favor. The lamp is not to be hidden under the bushel of commerce, that is, for business reasons of gain or self-interest; but it is to be set up on high, that the whole house may get the benefit of that light, and then there will be **GOOD WORKS**, indeed.

Israel, the Kingdom people, will occupy the purpose of God, the high place, the holy city Jerusalem which is situated upon the hill of Zion. They are the true heirs to which He here refers. Their light will shine, undimmed in luster, throughout the world during the Millennial Age; and to this even the physical things in nature will respond for the sun will shine 7 times brighter than now.

THE PROPHET OF THE NEW AGE (2ND PART OF SERMON)

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill."
[Mat.5:17]

We have now before us a new and distinct section of the **SERMON ON THE MOUNT**. Christ here emphasizes His place as the Greater than Moses the lawgiver of the Old Testament fame. He confirms, expounds, and reveals the spirituality of The Law, while at the same time, He adds to and amplifies it. Furthermore, He does not hesitate to put His own interpretation upon that which was spoken by them of old time: *"for the law made nothing perfect"* [Heb.7:19a], and though Moses, for the hardness of their hearts, may concede some points, Christ, because of the greater light now shining, emphasizes the fulfillment of every jot and tittle of The Law. Therefore, at the outset He affirms in the most positive manner, the authority of The Law. But here we must consider to what this applies; for many and grave mistakes in theology have arisen from failure at this point. **THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS** was the recognized name for the Old Testament Scriptures as a whole. They related especially to the past dispensation. **THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS** were until John; since that time the Kingdom of God is preached. Thus it could be said that they had now passed away, for as the sole and governing truth, they as John, had fulfilled their course. They were only the preparation for something better and higher; though necessarily bearing witness to, and establishing that which they anticipated. For no truth can, in the fullest sense, vanish away, though it may, as in the present instance, be superseded by a fuller revelation.

Christ insists that He did not come to destroy The Law and the prophets; rather, He came to substantiate and fulfill them. He was the embodiment of that of which they were but the shadow; therefore, they are perpetuated and eternalized in Him who was *"the Word made flesh"* [Joh.1:14]. The Lord is talking to Jews and in their relation to Himself as the Lawgiver of His own Kingdom. He is assuring them that He is not doing away with the righteousness which The Law demanded, rather he insists upon a greater righteousness than that of which the scribes and Pharisees boasted. The Pharisees were extremely zealous for the external. Jesus proceeds to develop the inward righteousness which He required, as in contrast to theirs which was outward. He emphasized the 2nd table of The Law rather than the 1st, because man's conscience is accessible on this side. The old creation is rarely concerned with its attitude toward God, while sometimes very sensitive about their conduct toward their fellow man. He shows the bearing of The Law upon the heart of man, as well as upon his hand. Therefore, He takes the 6th Commandment first, to illustrate the righteousness which He proclaims. Not only is the man guilty who kills his brother, according to the new Lawgiver's standard; but he who is simply angry with his brother. And, though he does him no injury whatever, yet he is liable to judgment; while

causeless cursing and railing, of which all men are more or less prone, will not be tolerated during His righteous reign, he assures them.

This was intended to impress the hearers, which no doubt it did, as to the impossibility of any mere human righteousness being acceptable to God. The very best gifts that they could offer were defiled with their sinful hands. Jesus is teaching that The Law is spiritual, and in this manner it applies to us today. How can we enjoy fellowship with God when we have injured our brother and never have made any amends for the evil? We little realize how much we lose of the joy of salvation because of an unjudged condition of soul. The people Jesus was addressing were going on with The Law, not understanding its requirements, nor their own inability to fulfill its demands. He exhorts them, saying,

"Agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison." [Mat.5:25]

They did not know that Moses in whom they trusted was their greatest adversary. He brought them to judgment unless they agreed with him quickly, acknowledging their bankrupt condition and availing themselves of the Mercy Seat which covered the tables of The Law in The Ark. There was absolutely no hope for them in Moses. *"Do not think that I will accuse you,"* He said at another time. *"There is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom you trust"* [Joh.5:45]. Then, He proceeds to the 7th precept of The Law to enforce the above lesson, that out of the heart of man comes the positive transgression.

"But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." [Mat.5:22]

For what was in the heart to do, even though the external trespass was not committed, was what made the offender. The opportunity or courage to carry out the desire might be lacking, this altered not the guilt; the sin was in the heart. He then proceeds to further develop the teaching upon this line.

"And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." [Mat.5:29-30]

"If the right eye offends, pluck it out," He urges; as also the hand which causes the trouble is to be cut off. Oh, this is bringing up the standard indeed. Moses could, and did lower it, because they were unable to bear it; but not so the new Lawgiver. Hear The Law then if you are going to keep it! It demands an absolute obedience even unto death. Say one would pluck out the sinning right eye, later, the one remaining might offend, and it too would have to go; then the right foot and also the left foot, might bring a man into sin, therefore each must be cut off. Hands likewise would follow and shortly there would be nothing left of the sinner except the tongue to express his awful inward condition. Well, having amputated this organ, there would still remain the incorrigible heart, which could only be stilled of its lusting, by death. What is the lesson? That which the Scriptures constantly affirm and man is loath to believe—the total and eternal depravity of the old Adam. Have we ears? Let us hear.

The King now takes up the question of marriage, and insists on the positive obedience to the letter of The Law, with but one exception, that of fornication, as a plea for divorce [Mat.5:32-33]. Men have taken this as their standard for the Christian upon the subject of divorce; but this is not its force here. The Lawgiver is expounding The Law to the Jew and the consequent result which it entails upon the offender. Israel herself is here personified as the wife who has

committed fornication. Moses allowed divorce on lesser ground; but not so this greater Lawgiver. He could only divorce His people because of their faithlessness to Him.

He further shows the cause of this departure in heart of Israel from Jehovah. She had made vows, promised, as many wives do, to love and obey her Husband; but because of the weakness of the flesh had been unable to perform those vows. Therefore, the Lord now urges the people to make no more vows; for these only express self-sufficiency and self-control of which they had indeed proved their woeful lack.

"But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."
[Mat.5:34, 37]

"Swear not at all," He exhorts. But let your words be "Yea, yea; Nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Those who cannot make one hair white or black, that is change their natural condition one iota, should not make resolutions. Rather, they should own up the weakness of the flesh and depend upon the Omnipotence of Jehovah; this is the teaching that He is enforcing as to His Kingdom. But its principles are in force for us today also; the safe place is lying low at Jesus' feet. God has sworn to Israel, as well as to us, that He Himself has undertaken the case of man, and His oath is sufficient. We have only to abide in His love and depend upon His faithfulness.

The Lord proceeds with His **SERMON** which is indeed a masterpiece as to diction and exposition. Whence knows this Man letters? Asks the Jew. Ah! He attended the Highest School in the universe, studied at the court of heaven, the Father Himself being His Teacher, and He became learned in more than all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Hear the Master,

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also." [Mat.5:38-39]

He now contrasts The Law with Grace and emphasizes the difference between them. He is still teaching the principles which will rule in His Kingdom. All men will then dwell in peace and harmony, gracious, long-suffering, and merciful. But today, while we may have the spirit of such nonresistance of evil, yet the actual practice of these admonitions is not possible because of the evil in the world. Yet we are not to be overcome of the evil, but to overcome it with good. We are not only to yield, but to show readiness to do more. We are under a heavenly government which is abundantly able to provide for any loss that we may sustain because of our "giving up our own rights", as people express it. Therefore, we need not advocate our own cause or take up arms to defend ourselves. The Lord Himself will attend to this matter for us.

We are partakers of such an abundant portion that we are exhorted to abundantly "give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away" [Mat.5:42].

While all this needs wisdom in exercise, such giving will be forthcoming in the love, Divine, Discerning Love, upon which we may draw. To this the Lord now proceeds,

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." [Mat.5:44]

So says the New Lawgiver, the Prophet of the Grace Dispensation. Hard work indeed and impossible to the flesh; but He who commands has in Himself the enabling, for God manifests every day such love to His creatures, though men take His benefits as a matter of course. He blesses them that curse Him, does good to them that hate Him; and He has set before us, in the

person of His Son the most wonderful example of His infinite compassion. He took this place as lover of his enemies, and poured out not only His heart's love upon them, but His heart's blood as well. He actually fulfilled, as a man, that which seems impossible for even God. His love is our enabling and will also be Israel's enabling when their day has dawned. He adds,

"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." [Mat.5:45]

The Son encourages His disciples to apprehend and accept the place of sonship, thereby manifesting the character in harmony with such profession. For those whose Father is in heaven, nothing can be permitted but heavenly perfection; and the fact that this is repeated in the last verse, "*Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*" [Mat.5:48], proves that the emphasis is upon the heavenly life, the new birth, which alone qualifies and enables us to act like our Father in loving the unthankful and the evil.

OUR LIFE UNDER GOD'S EYE (3RD PART OF SERMON) [MAT.6-7]

"Take heed that you do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." [Mat.6:1]

In this 3rd section, the Lawgiver emphasizes the **righteous acts** of the heirs of His Kingdom. In Verse 1, the word translated **alms** should be "*righteousness*" (the Revised Version). In the following verses, the word **alms** is correct. The Lord is "laying down the law" in more ways than one, we might say. Observe the frequent occurrence of the word **Father** in this 3rd part (3 being the number of manifestation), which fully justifies its symbolic meaning; for it brings us into His presence where we live and act in full view of His all-searching gaze.

In Verses 1-18 we have these righteous acts expressed in 3 different ways; Ēalms-giving ,
• prayer, and Ž fasting. These embrace all the duties, or privileges rather, of our religious life in its every aspect: Manward, Godward, and selfward.

He commences with the righteousness toward our fellowman—**ALMSGIVING**; for it is more manifest and most popular. The natural man judges according to our acts manward. Their estimate of our religious status is according to the giving of our substance to benefit mankind. As to whether it is according to the mind or will of God, they do not consider of any significance whatever. But this is of supreme importance, as the Great Prophet of the New Testament instructs. The motive for giving is the supreme test. Is it to be seen of men? God looks upon the heart, not on the alms we give. If we sound a trumpet, "*as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets,*" that is, "blow about our good works," etc., that we may be popular and praised of men; He assures us, we shall have the reward that we desired; but this is all that we shall have.

While on the other hand, if we do good, that is give alms and make no boast whatever, but "*give as unto the Lord and not unto men the Father which seeth in secret shall reward*" us openly [Mat.6:4]. Who can measure this recompense? The next expression of the righteousness demanded by the new Lawgiver is that of prayer—our privilege Godward. **PRAYER** emphasizes the need of the creature. It is utterly inconsistent with any expression of pride or self-will. And yet these 2 incompatible things are here joined together. We can hardly imagine it possible that anyone should pray to God, in order to be seen of men, "*as the hypocrites do,*" says the Lord. Yet he does not so characterize His people though they too in public utterance may be conscious of, and therefore influenced by, the presence of men, because they have not yet learned the way of mastery of their self-life. It is certainly a wonderful victory when we are enabled to pray as though we were alone with God even when we are in the meeting house. But this only comes through the enduement of the Holy Spirit.

THE PATTERN PRAYER

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen." [Mat.6:9-13]

The Lord now follows His instruction on this subject with a model or pattern prayer. The Divine Principles of the dependent life are herein embodied. It contains the whole essence of prayer for all time and for all people. It deserves a careful study in detail. It is in 2 parts:

- The 1st part refers to God and His glory;
- the 2nd part to man and his needs; thus teaching us that in Divinely Indicted Prayer the Father's interests are paramount.

This is a family prayer. It commences with calling on God as "*Our Father*," and therefore the basis of it is relationship. The believer is a child of God through the new birth; hence, to such, God is more than simply the Creator, who brought a universe into being by His Word, and established laws for its government. He is more than a Sovereign, more than a Lawmaker, determining the future by His immutable Word. He is the Father of a great family for whom this very universe with its great laws exists. He is therefore the responsible party, which the very act of prayer assures. He has the affections of a Father toward all those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, at the outset, we learn that prayer is the petition of a child to an all-wise, all-loving and all-powerful Father, God; the cry to One who hears and answers prayer. This Father is in heaven. He is a "heavenly," and hence, a "spiritual" Father in contrast to our father in the flesh. He is the Father of a new creation, having no fellowship with the flesh, the old Adam, neither under any obligation to hear its cry. This ends the salutation.

"*Hallowed be thy name*," is the first thing in order as to the petition proper. That is, praise is the first principle of prayer; not just repeating the above phrase as a parrot; but the very essence of prayer is a **praiseful spirit**, the heart bubbling up with worship and adoration to our Father and God.

"*Thy Kingdom come*," is the first real petition. It betokens a **longing spirit**, desiring the coming of Christ who will Himself introduce His Kingdom. The world can never have the latter, regardless of all the dreams concerning the coming League of Nations, without the personal Christ Himself. He must be present to superintend the affairs of God's government. He is the very life of the Kingdom, as well as the life of the world.

"*Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*," will then follow as a matter of course. God will then, for the first time since the fall, have His perfect way in the earth. His creatures will delight to do His will when His Kingdom is come, but it will be as **NEW CREATURES**, born of God through Jesus Christ. This petition assures of an **obedient spirit**. It is the outflow of a heart that is itself surrendered to all of the will of God. Such obedience is the essence of the prayer that prevails. We desire to witness the sovereignty of God in the earth. We cry for a perfect obedience even the obedience that prevails in heaven, every high thing brought down under the sway of God's government, yielding to His authority. This will commence to be fulfilled in the Millennium when a king shall reign in righteousness, but will not be consummated in all the earth until the Eternal Day has dawned. We are enjoying our Millennium today when Christ the King is reigning on the throne of our hearts and the will of God is being done in us and by us. This ends the 1st section of the prayer. The petitions following are of a personal character.

“Give us this day our daily bread,” is the beginning of our side of the great prayer. It speaks of a **dependent spirit**, a hand-to-mouth experience which the flesh always abominates, but which is unspeakable delight to the spiritual child; for it brings God upon the scene. It is from His hand to our mouth, as one has aptly expressed it. The bread is simply the statement of a “daily” need. It means we are to bring everything to the notice of our heavenly Father, all the needs, little as well as big needs. He is able for all of them, as faith gladly owns.

“Forgive us our debts (sins), as we forgive our debtors (everyone that is indebted to us).” This expresses a **gracious spirit**. A life of faith, emphasized by dependence upon God, is entirely inconsistent with an unforgiving spirit. When we are conscious of our frail needy condition, an earthen vessel, fragile and cumbered with infirmity, we are only too willing to forgive anyone who asks us, though he may have injured us deeply. But we cannot voice our forgiveness until he asks us, and neither can God, for His grace is only manifested to those who request forgiveness. When folks justify themselves in their willfulness, the Lord just lets them alone, and we do likewise. But when any one asks forgiveness, we are to show grace and quickly respond, assuring them that they are forgiven, even as God has forgiven us.

“And lead us not into temptation,” tells of a **trustful spirit**. It is the only negative petition. Its very essence is a sense of frailty, coupled with a realization of the danger which surrounds our pathway because of our knowledge of the enmity of Satan. The temptations here refer primarily to the afflictions and persecutions which are the portion of the just and which God allows; for they work good to them who are exercised thereby. But we are not to pray for them as this betokens sufficiency and strength, not weakness and need. *“But deliver us from evil,”* is the positive side to the foregoing. We want not only a negative keeping out of, but a positive deliverance from the evil. This evil is not only from without, but from within. Satan is a most powerful enemy, and he can most woefully afflict us; but the evil that is within us (in our flesh dwells no good thing) is more to be dreaded; for only through this can Satan have any advantage over us. Therefore, our faith must take sides with God against it before we will have positive victory.

“For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever, Amen,” emphasizes the whole purpose of prayer. It acknowledges the sovereignty of the Creator over the creature which He has made, for He is sovereign in authority, in power, in glory. Thus, this sublime pattern of prayer ends with God in His place on the throne and man in his place in the dust.

Then He adds the following as part of the above; *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you”* which emphasizes the **tender, gracious spirit** which is the very essence of the Christ Himself. The Lord is certainly not teaching here that sins are only remitted from time to time in answer to prayer; though some would so argue who are ignorant of their security and settled acceptance in Christ, which the Gospel of grace proclaims. But when we realize that it is the Father’s forgiveness, of which Christ is speaking, the interpretation is plain. When it is a question of God and His creatures then it is the blood alone which atones for all sin and all those are forever shielded from wrath, who are sheltered by its power; but thus they are brought under the government of their Father. They are in His family and He takes notice of the children’s conduct, because they are such, and He loves them. A cutting off of His fellowship and a chastening for restoration are the consequences of the children’s trespasses of which they do not repent, as it plainly evident when one does not forgive his brother. For a hard unforgiving spirit is not in harmony with God whose nature is love, and therefore cannot enjoy communion with Him.

Then, we have the 3rd application of these righteous acts of the heirs of the Kingdom: the selfward aspect, that of **fasting**.

"Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." [Mat.6:16]

The Lord again connects the negative with the positive exhortation. "*When you fast, be not as the hypocrites*", He exhorts. For fasting with the nation had become an empty form, made to accredit self instead of denying it. It made the man prominent instead of setting him aside altogether. But Christ rebukes all asceticism and formalism in His teaching here. Fasting is to be in the presence of God, in the sanctuary, before "*thy Father which is in secret*;" but thy reward shall not be in secret but "*openly*." fasting is not simply a refusal of food: it has a much wider application. It applies to the whole of our 3-fold being, spirit, soul and body; and is therefore a wholesale denial of self, with all its desires. But Christ is not here giving directions as to the practice of fasting; for this we must go elsewhere; but He is insisting upon the relation of the heirs of His Kingdom, to the Father and His government.

OUR HEAVENLY LIFE BEFORE MEN (4TH PART OF SERMON)

We now have come to another distinct portion of the **SERMON** which we are studying. We have had the part unfolded which applies to the life lived in the sanctuary, the Leviticus part, and now we pass out to meet the temptations of the world. It is interesting to note, that this is the 4th book of Moses, that of Numbers; for as the children of Israel carried their sanctuary with them, in their journey through the wilderness, so do we, and thus we are empowered to fulfill all these admonitions. We need this enabling power whether we apply these words to a Jewish remnant in view of Millennial blessings, or to The Church of our day, for the allurements of the world and the love of money exert the same influence in every age and over all people.

The Great Lawgiver's exhortation as regards money is plain and specific; no one needs to have any doubt regarding this subject. He says,

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal." [Mat.6:19]

All earthly treasures are for ourselves, He assures. As heaven is our home and this is simply a country through which we are passing we are certainly fools if we lay up our treasures here, in a place which we have to leave and where nothing is stable or eternal.

"For where your treasure is (note the positive statement) 'there will your heart be also.'" [Mat.6:21]

We are not allowed to deceive ourselves with the easy assurance that our hearts are not engaged with what we are accumulating, for He says that our heart is where our treasure is. If we are not interested in it, as some will insist, why then bother to accumulate it? It is only a crazy man who would waste time and energy in piling up a heap of rubbish, just for the pleasure of seeing it burn; and yet believers are continually doing that very thing. Today, we have the privilege of changing worthless paper into good security and yet how slow we are to avail ourselves of the opportunity. This treasure in heaven has seductive influence: it will keep the spirit in undisturbed serenity, safe from all alarms and the feet running in the way of the heart. This alone enables for singleness of heart. To the one whose heart is in heaven; there is no confusion of mind, no distraction of vision, no unsteadiness of aim, no uncertainty of path.

"The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." [Mat.6:22 Greek]

The eye is not the light, but the “*lamp of the body*,” as the Greek reads. It is the receptacle of light. The light comes from elsewhere, for the eye does not create the light, but only receives it; therefore, to apply the illustration we would say that the light comes from the Word, as lit up by the Holy Spirit. However, there must be spiritual reception, as well as capacity of reception, which is found in the heart and its condition. When the heart is occupied with things above, the eye is single and transparent. God, who is Light, is clearly visible to faith and in His light we see light. Then the effect of this is manifest, the whole body is full of light, hands and feet both move at His bidding; work and walk are clearly in His will. But if the eye be evil, the very light may be the means of blinding men to the truth and how great the resulting darkness, only God can tell.

Now, He goes further on this line and personifies money as an idol and sets it over, as a rival, against God.

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” [Mat.6:24]

Separate interests distract and divide the heart. “*God and mammon*” (the treasures on earth) each claim the man in ways which are incompatible with one another. The service for God of such a one, manifest on every hand, is but a form. He who serves mammon cannot serve God. He who is a friend of the world is an enemy of God and he who cleaves to God will despise all that the world has to offer and vice versa.

But someone may say, There are necessities which demand our attention and from which we cannot escape. What are we to do in these cases? Well the Great Lawgiver has forgotten nothing. He passed this way Himself; therefore, He knows all the distractions and duties from which one would gladly escape, if it were possible. Furthermore, He knows of a Remedy for all the cares of the way—a Sanctuary which ever stands open, one returning place which faith may always find—the knowledge of a Father’s love and oversight, of which even the least of His creatures preach continually. He feeds the sparrows and are we not of far more value? Why the life that we possess is a treasure so great, that the food that we eat or the raiment which we wear is as nothing. Our very weakness ought to teach us that we need the Father to look after us, for with all our anxiety we cannot add 1 cubit to our stature; and, if we are dependent for our natural growth on the will and power of the Creator, why not leave all things to Him, little as well as big?

“Consider the lilies of the field” [Mat.6:28], He urges, as an example for our weak and wavering faith. They do not endeavor to grow, nor try to clothe themselves with beauty, and yet they are arrayed with glory and splendor greater than that of Solomon. What a rebuke to all the carnal endeavors and self-effort of man! Then He asks, *“Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” [Mat.6:30]*...we who are to abide forever.

Then He appeals to them as to whether the fact of the Father’s presence with them counts for anything or not. The Gentiles who know not God seek after food and raiment and the Father knows that we, as well as they, have need of these things. He will attend to our earthly necessities if we will set our hearts on His heavenly things. What a glorious change; we take an interest in His things, He assumes the care of ours. Seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness, He adds all these earthly necessities to us.

Finally He gives the remedy for the exclusion of almost all care, for the greater part of it is borrowed. How very much of the burden which we carry, really belongs to tomorrow and why should we steal it and worry today? Each day will have its own sufficient evil for which there is sufficient grace but we have no promise of grace for borrowed trouble and thus have to bear it alone. We really have not the Lord before our eyes when we are troubling and calculating about

the future, laying up money for a rainy day, insuring our lives that we may have proper burials, making provisions for our old age, etc.; this is all plainly unbelief.

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." [Mat.6:34]

This expresses the faith life, of which the history of the children of Israel in the wilderness is a most wonderful and instructive illustration. They were absolutely shut up to God's care and provision for them, no food, no physicians, no dry goods, nor wet goods could be found there; but God was all and in all.

SCRIPTURAL JUDGMENT (5TH PART OF SERMON)

"Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." [Mat.7:1-2]

With the above quotation we have the introduction to the 5th section of the **SERMON**. And in keeping with its numerical signification the lessons are all of Divine Government thus corresponding with the 5th book of Moses, that of Deuteronomy. At the outset we are informed that we are subjects, not rulers today in the Kingdom of God; therefore, we are warned to keep off the judgment seat. This is the Lord's seat, and if personal feeling or interests are not dominating, we will always own His Lordship and allow Him to exercise His own prerogative as Judge; for when we are seeking our own things, we are totally unable to judge righteous judgment, for we are then judges in our own case and this no law of the land will permit, and no sober, sane mind tolerate.

"*Judge not, that ye be not judged,*" is a favorite Scripture of the old man. He likes to throw it in the face of all those who are seeking the good of the people and endeavoring to undeceive them. "We are not to judge," they argue, "whether the doctrine is right or wrong." "We are not to judge," they insist, "whether the preachers are true or false"; but this is not the teaching of the Great Teacher. No indeed; the Scriptures are unmistakably plain in this regard. We are not to judge harshly, or as we intimated, in our own behalf as seeing only our own side of things: for the judgment we mete to others, the rule by which we measure, whether of Law or Grace, is the rule which the Judge will use in His dealing with us. Our old creation is not fit to judge; it always beholds the mote in my brother's eye, though never considering the beam in my own eye. Man is always on the lookout, seeing their brother's mistakes and failings, too busy to note their own much greater ones. There may be big failures (as God judges) in their own experience, but they pass over them while indulging in all manner of criticism and harsh judgment regarding some little, trivial offense of their brother's; but, the Lord is Judge, and He will reward according to every man's deserving. He sees all things, the beam as well as the mote, and His judgment will be just, we may rest assured of this fact.

How good for us when we **JUDGE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT**, the first necessity of which is to judge the whole old creation, according to the verdict rendered by God. He judged him according to The Law, which convicted, condemned, and then executed him on the cross. And when we thus reckon, we cast out the beam out of our own eye and begin to see clearly that the trouble was with us, more than with our brother. It is then, when our judgment is tempered with mercy, we realize the weakness and frailty of men; and that when we are judging others we are really judging ourselves. As the apostle Paul assures in his arraignment of the whole human race, we all do the same things [Rom.2].

But there is the other danger the opposite extreme; to be lax and tolerant of evil. Because of the one-sidedness of our character we are prone to swing the pendulum too far in the other

direction and fail to judge where it is necessary; therefore, the following words of the wise Law-Giver.

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and rend you." [Mat.7:6]

We fail to discern who are "swine" and who are "dogs," because of the lack of spirituality among us. Christendom has woefully failed in this respect and is **RENT AND TORN** in consequence. Unregenerate men are admitted to the fellowship of The Church. In the beginning of this age we have a sample, in the case of Ananias and Saphira, of the spiritual judgment which befell these self-joiners, these unholy ones, dogs and swine as Christ styles them. But now, the holy things the treasures of truth are spread out before them and they trample them under their feet by their unbelief. The Glad Tidings which makes men free is held merely as a theory or as a doctrine of their church and consequently discord and division are the result of this neglect of true spiritual judgment. There is no excuse for the failure. The Lord is always ready and willing to supply all the necessary wisdom and discernment to all the members of His body, The Church, at any time, as the next words indicate.

SCRIPTURAL PRAYER

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you." [Mat.7:7]

Men write essays (yes, of books there is no end,) on the subject of prayer; how to pray, when to pray, for what to pray, etc. We are taught in some of these learned digests that there is a secret in prevailing prayer, and we must learn the secret: but the Great Prophet of the new dispensation does not so teach. He tells us the **SECRET OF THE EFFECTUAL PRAYER IS TO ASK AND BELIEVE**. The way to learn to pray is to get down and pray. One may have a most beautiful theory about prayer, but this will never bring the answer to a need. The simplicity of prayer, as taught by Jesus, is wonderful. If anyone has a need he is encouraged to come and ask; and further, he is advised to become insistent upon getting the answer. Discouragement or vacillation has no place in the effectual prayer. The first request must be followed with persevering seeking, and finally a knocking may be necessary; but the answer to the prayer of faith is sure. God is more faithful and more kind than an earthly father and the earthly father does not give a stone for bread nor a serpent for a fish. The emphasis is upon the definite answer to prayer. We get what we ask, sometimes not just when we ask, but maybe later, after we seek awhile and our faith is perfected. When we, like Jacob, cling to Him in our weakness, and refuse to let Him go except He gives the answer.

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." [Mat.7:12]

Here the Lord reveals the Father as the ready and bountiful Giver, whose storehouse of mercy cannot be exhausted. There is no limit put upon our asking, except the limit of our little faith, though He does guard the door of Grace with the sole condition that the gift requested be good. But otherwise what a door of infinite possibilities is opened unto us. What a royal invitation to enter in and enjoy the riches of the Father's house. The connection of the above [Mat.7:7-11] with the following practical admonition [Mat.7:12] is easily seen. If we realize the bounty of God, of which He has been speaking, we will practice the same lavish giving toward others; we will not only give to them as they have given to us, but the measure of our conduct will be according to God's grace to us. "*Our heart is enlarged*" toward all men, even as Paul's who exclaimed, "*Ye are not straightened in us,*" or there is no narrowness in our love to you, but ye are narrow in your own feelings [2Co.6:11-12]. Our character will be formed by constantly beholding, and living in the enjoyment of the riches of God's grace; therefore, the practical conduct in harmony therewith will follow. He further adds, "*This is the law and the prophets*" [Mat.7:12b] He is saying by this last phrase

that the Dispensation of Grace, which He is now introducing, is in harmony with all that preceded. God is the same and His ways as His principles are unchanged. He is always aiming at the same results and while the means may vary with each step of progress, yet the end is that with which He is concerned. The righteousness which The Law demanded from man, grace bestows upon him and God is satisfied.

THE WAY OF SALVATION

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." [Mat.7:13-14]

He solemnly exhorts them to **ENTER INTO LIFE THROUGH THE STRAIT GATE**. Some have found this very difficult of interpretation; but it simply further emphasizes what He has been teaching—the grace way. It is the strait gate; no halfway keeping of The Law will *"go in thereat."* The *"gate"* calls for righteousness, therefore, it is *"strait,"* the *"way"* calls for absolute holiness therefore it is *"narrow,"* but grace enables for all the requirements. The further information regarding the *"wide (broad) gate"* which leads to destruction, teaches that the multitude of *"ways"* of self-effort or Law are in contrast to the one *"way"* of Grace. He informs us that there are but 2 religions (ways) of salvation in the world, regardless of the multitude of sects and divisions; the one is **THE WAY OF LAW**, the other is **THE WAY OF GRACE**; the one is to *"do,"* the other is to *"take."* We would suppose all men would choose the way of Grace in preference to the way of Law; but alas the opposite is the case as we learn here. The way of self-effort leads to destruction; it is a *"broad"* way. It includes the Jew as well as the Catholic, the Mormon, the Russelite, the Seventh Day Adventist, the Mohammedan, etc. The mass of humanity are treading this broad road. It appeals to the reason, the logic of the natural man. It is the *"way"* which Proverbs tells us *"seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"* [Pro.14:12]. It is a religious way, as a little consideration will show, for no one expects, no matter however careless he may be, the way of vice to lead to heaven.

But the real question is of **FINDING THE WAY OF LIFE**. It appears to be hidden, and so it is, from the wise and prudent, but not shut; they only mistake the way of destruction for the way of life, for *"few there be that find it."* The many miss the way, not because the terms are hard, but because they themselves are, as they think, good, moral and upright, and do not need the grace of God which has provided the way of life, which is Christ Himself.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." [Rom.10:3-4]

The gate of life is strait because there is one absolute condition; self-righteousness must come down; we must come through as a penitent, a suppliant, depending upon the merits of another, for Christ is the only and all-sufficient Savior. Yet the crowds will not come to Him *"that they may have life"* [Joh.10:10]; and Grace can make no other terms with man; for he has been proved by The Law and found wanting.

The warning which follows regarding the *"false prophets"* plainly connects with the foregoing and is certainly suggestive and timely for today when these ravaging wolves are abounding. And, the special danger regarding them is that they are dressed in *"sheep's clothing,"* that is, their outward appearance and conduct are irreproachable. They look like sheep and act like sheep; but they have the wolf nature, cruel, carnal, blood-thirsty. Notice that they are called *"false prophets"*; therefore, they are religious men, preachers, teachers, ministers of righteousness apparently, Satan's emissaries sent out to defeat the purposes of God. He is too cunning and devilish to send out vicious, irreligious men to commend his doctrines and lead the people astray. Why he

himself is transformed into an angel of light; therefore, it is no marvel that *“his ministers also are transformed as the ministers of righteousness”* [2Co.11:14-15]. But we are expected to discern these evil workers and not be caught in their net of lies; their fruit is the sign of their nature: whether sheep or wolf.

“Ye shall know them by their fruits, Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?” [Mat.7:16]

They soon prove the source of their life; are they feeding and caring for the sheep, or are they living off the sheep, fleecing instead of feeding them? Have they got the life, and the fruit of the life that lives for others? We are therefore responsible to observe them. Figs and grapes are for food; they are not gathered off a thistle or thorn-bush (type of the old creation, which is barren and unfruitful); but grow on the fig tree and grape vine (type of the new creation, which brings forth food for God and man). The old Adam is the corrupt tree that cannot bring forth good fruit; while Christ is the good tree that cannot bring forth bad fruit. The one tree is the opposite of the other. They are to be distinguished absolutely. The one tree (Adam) was hewn down because it was not only useless, but positively injurious. John the Baptist, type of the Covenant of Law tells us the same truth. *“And now also the axe is laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire”* [Mat.3:10]. The Law is the axe which cut down the old man. He was found guilty and condemned to die. But Christ stepped into his shoes and was cut down upon the cross; therefore, the **BAD TREE** (Adam) died in this Substitute. The **GOOD TREE** (Christ) arose out of the ruins of the old and will never be hewn down. His fruit is perfect and cannot be marred or defiled. *“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”*

Then He continues and emphasizes His warning from this same subject, teaching its importance, which we, in the end of the age, realize. For there is indeed reason today that we have our senses exercised to discern and therefore become able to judge between the false and the true, the evil and the good, the truth and the error; for the barren professor and his works abound on every hand.

“Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.” [Mat.7:21]

Men who are still of the old creation call Jesus “Lord,” but not in spirit or truth, for Paul assures us *“that no one can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost”* [1Co.12:3], and this necessitates a new birth whereby we are enabled to do the will of our heavenly Father. Many people say prayers and call Jesus “Lord” with their lips while their heart is still in rebellion against God and therefore not in harmony with His will. Many today are apparently serving Him in this condition; but in that coming day of manifestation empty profession will not suffice. Even prophesying, the casting out of demons, performing miracles are not the evidence of the new creation, for some of the preachers of reformation may perform these apparent great works. Men may quit drinking, stealing, and other wicked practices, at their solicitation, rebuke, or coercion; they may clean up their back tracks, quit their meanness, and afterwards live a good moral life as the world judges; but Jesus called such, *“whited sepulchers,”* for their changed habits are not the result of a changed nature. Therefore, good works are not a decisive proof of true discipleship; for true discipleship necessitates heart subjection, otherwise the works will be lawlessness, or “will-worship” as Paul terms them [Col.2:23]. A yielded life which says “Yes” to all the will of God is the sure sign of a true disciple of Jesus. Such Christians are real “yes” men.

WHO IS WISE? [MAT. 7:24-27]

The True Preacher of righteousness now ends His great Sermon with 2 contrasted illustrations:

- The one exhibits the dependent spirit who finds a stable, steadfast anchorage,

"Wherefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock." [Mat.7:24]

- while the other depicts the independent soul who believes himself sufficient.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand." [Mat.7:26]

He pictures them both as the builder of a house—that which stands for his affections and rest, yea, more, as viewed here, the place of shelter from the deluge, a refuge from the storm. It is the foundation which He emphasizes, for this is of paramount importance in building; get this firm and stable and the rest is easy. If the foundation is weak and tottering, no matter how solidly the house is built, it will all fall with the foundation. Christ Himself is the Rock that abides the tempest shock; all else whatever its nature, however otherwise substantial or suitable, is but "*sand*." He who builds upon the Christ of the Scriptures, the One who died, was buried and rose again, the Head of a new creation, his house will endure the storm. No other foundation can any man lay that will stand the judgment, for the old Adam building has already been condemned and pronounced a ruin; though while the weather is fair, the building on the sand may appear better, bigger and more attractive than the House on the Rock, but the man who trusts and leans upon it, while he may enjoy a passing triumph, may even mock and sneer at the other building, yet when the storm has passed there will be but one remaining. And, it will be too late then for some to remedy their foolishness, which the world called wisdom for they will fall with their house. Let us rejoice indeed if we are on the rock Christ Jesus, building upon Him alone. Thus the 2 heads of the human race are presented here, side by side, at the close of this matchless **SERMON ON THE MOUNT**. All the truth which it contains is based upon, so to speak, and springs from these 2 representative Men, Adam and Christ. The one has fallen; the other abides.

The multitudes were astonished at the doctrine, even as they are today, when these deep things are unfolded. They found His manner and words of authority such a contrast to that of the scribes with their unreality, externalism, and form, that they were amazed. It was the Voice of authority which carried conviction, the Voice of the One greater than Moses, who had now appeared, not only to take Moses' seat, but to take His own seat, which was indeed higher than that of the lawgiver of the old covenant.

The **SERMON** falls easily, even as the book of Matthew into 5 principle divisions, agreeing with the 5 books of Moses:

1. We have the Genesis in the first part of Matthew 5, the blessings upon the heirs of promise [Mat.5:1-7];
2. while the Exodus comes in the latter half of Matthew 5, the separation of the heirs from the world [Mat.5:18-48];
3. then the Leviticus section begins with Matthew 6, the sanctuary part [Mat.6:1-18];
4. the Numbers section continues in Matthew 6, the wilderness experience [Mat.6:19-34];
5. while the Deuteronomic character of the teaching is exhibited in Matthew 7, which ends the 2nd Division of the book of Matthew. The King has been introduced and His Kingdom announced: we are now to witness His work of faith and His labor of love.

DIV.3, THE MINISTRY OF THE KING [MAT.8-12]

"When He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And behold there came a leper and worshiped him, saying, Lord if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." [Mat.8:1-4]

The ministry of Christ as the King commences with His coming down from His seat upon the mountain, a hint of the humbling of Himself in His descent from heaven to serve the sinful and the diseased. We have here also another dispensational lesson, with which these Gospel Records abound. The healing of the leper by the touch of the King, who then sends him to witness to the priest of the cleansing, is figurative of Christ's testimony to the nation of Israel, whom He must first serve. Afterwards He heals the centurion's servant by His Word, not His touch, figuring the present Gentile Age when the King is absent. Later He enters Peter's house and finds his mother-in-law sick; He delivers her by a touch. She arises immediately, perfectly well. The touch assures us that He is again present, as when He returns to the nation of Israel, whom He dearly loves; while the healing of the sick of all kinds, with the reference to the mighty prophecy from Isaiah, tells us of that Great Day of deliverance which is yet to come to this ruined devastated earth and its inhabitants because of the obedience unto death of the Perfect Servant of Jehovah.

The cure of leprosy was unknown in Israel, even as is the case today; but Israel was taught that God alone could and did deliver from this condition [Lev.14]. Because of its incurable nature it is the fitting type of the eradicable evil of sin. And, it was fitting that the King should commence His ministry to men with the healing of the leper. It loudly witnesses that He refuses to take the Kingdom except as the Son of God; and this was the character in which He was first rejected by the leaders of the people.

As was said earlier, leprosy is incurable, and as such, it is a striking type of sin. It has 5 points of resemblance in its:

1. subtle invasion,
2. certain spread,
3. contagious character,
4. sundering of human relationships, and
5. exile from the congregation of the Lord.

Man was powerless in the presence of this malignant scourge, and the mere touch of a leper brought defilement in Israel.

The Law in Israel was very stringent regarding this dreaded malady. It showed no mercy whatever to the victims of its ravages. It held out no hope of their recovery except in the mercy of God. They were banished from the house of God and from the congregation of the upright and condemned to isolation from family and friends. They were shut up to certain death unless God intervened; hence they knew of their condition and they had to make themselves known as a leper by calling, "Unclean, unclean," at the approach of any one, so that none might come in contact with them. This was the effect of The Law upon a leper in Israel [Lev.13].

Do you not see the marvelous correspondence? Herein we are given a striking picture of the results of The Law upon the sinner. It manifests his condition; shows him up; points him out, not only to himself, but to others. The Law **MAKES THE OFFENSE TO ABOUND**, and *"by the law is the*

knowledge of sin" [Rom.3:20 and 5:20]; but, it offers no help for the sinner's woeful condition, nor any solution for his problem. It condemns him to banishment from the house and family of God. He is helpless and hopeless unless God has mercy on them. The Law has no mercy. It shuts man up to certain and eternal death: "*The wages of sin is death*" [Rom.6:23]. Therefore, there could not be found a more suitable case for the beginning of Christ's ministry as King than the unclean leper, who had come and worshipped Him, saying, "*Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.*" He acknowledged Christ's power to heal, but doubted His willingness and His mercy. How perfect a picture of the legal heart of Israel.

But the Lord would have none question His mercy. It is as great as His power. He does not merely speak; but goes further. He touches the leper; the only Man who dared or could break through the barrier of The Law and remove every taint of that which The Law could brand, but could not remedy. "*I will; be thou clean,*" we hear Him say, and lo, the leprosy departs instantly. The man is clean. But now Jesus sends Him to the priest, the representative of The Law, that he may also pronounce him clean; for only so could he be admitted back into the congregation of the Lord. The Law had condemned and shut him out; therefore, it must be satisfied and silenced by the One greater than Moses, who is about to take the leper's place. Christ healed him in view of the cross upon which He was to hang. The leper is counted dead. He died, as it were, in his Substitute; and the new Man who has arisen in his stead The Law pronounces clean, "There is no spot in him."

Then comes the healing of the centurion's servant, the Gentile, whose faith the King commended as being greater than that of Israel [Mat.7:5-13]. He is a most vivid contrast to the leper who doubted Christ's mercy. The centurion, on the contrary, magnified it. He doubted neither the King's power nor His willingness to heal. He had such confidence in His word and such a sense of his own unworthiness, that he will not even request Him to come into his house. "*Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed,*" he cries [Mat.7:8]. True humility believes God. So often when God's free unconditional promises are proclaimed, we hear someone say, "O that is too much to believe. I cannot take that. It is too much to say that I am as Christ. I am not worthy", etc. And generally, such saints think that they are very humble in talking in this manner, while the fact is just the opposite. This is simply the unbelief of the old man who refuses the grace of God. He argues, because of his own legal heart, that it is too much to expect that God should freely give to us all things, that He should "*Bless us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*" [Eph.1:3 ASV], irrespective of our worth. But it is in Christ's worth that we are accepted and it is humility on our part gladly to take God at His Word, and get the benefit of His mercy, even as this dear centurion. While he acknowledged that it is grace on Christ's part, and that he is unworthy of the smallest favor, yet faith so moves him that he promptly takes all that Christ wants to give. He sees Him as the King, the One in authority, whom all things serve. Let Him speak the Word only and everything must do His bidding. The centurion is also under authority, that is he affirms that he knows what it is to obey orders and he also knows what it is to give orders, to exact obedience from others; therefore, he assures the Lord that he believes that it is only necessary for Him to speak the word of command, and disease and pain must depart. He will not even ask Him to come into his house; the King's word is sufficient. No marvel that the Lord eulogizes such faith, the faith of the Gentile who did not have the light or the religious privileges of the chosen nation, Israel. It must have refreshed the heart of the Lord in contrast with the doubting, formal, religious Pharisee. In the centurion He saw an earnest of the gathered multitudes of every nation, tongue and kindred, whom He has delivered by His Word, from sin and its results, during this age. These, He says, who shall come from opposite quarters of the earth, shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the "*sons of the Kingdom,*" the claimants of that which they were now rejecting, would be cast into outer darkness; for God, the Light, would be withdrawn from them. Then they, Israel, would weep and wail in unavailing regret and anguish [Mat.8:11-12].

The 3rd healing in this account has also its figurative significance [Mat.8:14-15]. The Lord heals again by touch, as in the case of the leper. He enters the house of Peter's wife's mother, who is lying sick of a fever, and delivers, not by His Word, but by His presence. Natural relationships are again owned, is the lesson here. The Lord will again take His place in the house of Israel, when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. He will return to the sphere of His old relationship and bring healing to the nation of Israel, who is still beloved for the father's sake, even as Peter's mother-in-law was healed for the Apostle Peter's sake. The fever of restless longing, of covetousness and passion in Israel, will be stilled by His presence. He will touch their hand and the fever will leave them and they will arise in the power of a new life, to a new devotedness and minister unto Him. This meaning is further emphasized by that which follows.

"When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." [Mat.8:16-17]

"*When the evening was come*" is the end of the age typified. "*They brought to Him many that were possessed with devils*" showing that Israel's restoration will certainly be the beginning of a great day for man. Satan will be cast out. His tyranny over man will cease; man's shackles will be loosed; the captives set free when the Deliverer comes out of Zion. All this will come to pass because the saying of Isaiah will have been fulfilled, "*Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.*" Here is positive proof that healing is included in the atonement; for Isaiah 53, whence this is quoted, is the atonement chapter. The cross, which marks Christ as the Son of Man, will be the basis of all the blessing to the earth and remove the results of sin of whatever character. The blessing will not be limited to Israel, though the widest outflow and fullest deliverance from the curse, will come upon the land of Palestine. It is there that "*the wilderness will blossom as the rose*" [Isa.35:1 ASV].

In the above 3 healings, we have the King sketched for us in His predicted place, first as Son of God in the healing of the leper; then as Son of Abraham in the deliverance of the Gentile centurion's servant; and lastly as Son of David, Israel's Messiah in the lifting up and restoration to service of Peter's wife's mother. These 3 characters, in each of which He shows Himself Master, are His title to all that follows. Hence, we are not surprised to find that all things are in His hands. Circumstances bow to Him; men, as well as elements obey His Voice; the power of Satan is prostrate in His presence; sins are forgiven; and the lame rise up and walk. Such are the convincing evidences that this is indeed the promised Redeemer of men.

HIS SOVEREIGNTY DEMONSTRATED.

We have noted the basis of the sovereignty of Christ in the preceding part of His ministry; we are now to view the sovereignty itself. The first exhibition is given us in His dealings with men. Notice in this connection that He calls for no volunteers. He chooses the men of his cabinet.

"And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." [Mat.8:19-20]

The first one who offers to follow Him is rebuffed with these words, "*Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his Head.*" He tells the man that He has nothing to offer him; no wealth nor honors of earth. His cause is a losing one as far as earthly advantages are concerned; though He has heavenly honors and rewards to distribute. But He is assured that the man is not seeking these; for they are spiritually discerned and are given to men of the King's own choice, even as is the prerogative of earthly potentates. They are sovereign in this respect. They choose their men.

Then we are shown that He is Master in the life of those whom He calls. One of these disciples intimates that he must go and bury his father, a most necessary and filial act as man would judge; but instead the Master of His men says, *“Follow Me and let the dead bury their dead”* [Mat.8:22]. He will not allow the nearest fleshly claim to interfere or take precedence of His claim. Cruel, you say? No. He is Lord in the fullest sense over all those whom He chooses. He insists upon prompt and unhesitating obedience. Furthermore, His disciples are messengers of life and not of death. They are sent as Paul expressed it, “Not to baptize” the old man, but to preach the Good News concerning a new Man.

Now we are to view creation itself subject to its Creator and Master. As the multitudes gather about Him, the Commander issues orders *“to depart unto the other side...and when He entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him”* [Mat.8:18, 23]. Note the language. It is plainly evident and shortly it is manifested that He is the Master and able to bear all the responsibility as Leader and Captain. Mark tells us that *“they took Him as He was in the ship,”* intimating that he was weary, even unto exhaustion with the toil of the way. But Matthew gives us not even a hint of this except that we might infer it in the fact that He went away from the multitude; for he is sketching the Sovereign, while Mark’s picture is of the Servant, and each is consistent and perfect in every detail.

Even though He is the Creator, yet He is most marvelously disguised in a body of limitations and creature frailty. We here view Him in meekest surrender to circumstances, in a place of absolute weakness, yet maintaining His title as Sovereign, calm and unruffled in the midst of imminent danger. He is sleeping in perfect peace on a stormy sea until awakened by His terrified disciples, crying, *“Lord, save us; we perish”* [Mat.8:25]. He is amazed at their unbelief, *“Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?”* He cries. “Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the sea,” as though these elements were intelligent beings; because He is really rebuking and commanding Satan. He was the power that roused and stirred the elements, intending to drown the Lord of Life; but instead they are conquered by a greater power. *“There was a great calm”* [Mat.8:26]. Again we emphasize the fact that the Master of sea and land was on that ship, and when He speaks, all things obey. We do not marvel that *“the men marveled,”* and exclaimed in deepest awe, *“What manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”* [Mat.8:27]. O yes, there is another manner of man upon the scene. One to whom all other men must yield the scepter and acknowledge Him Lord and King.

The restless sea of **Galilee** (*“wheel”*) is a vivid representation of the world, through which we are passing, while our little barque is often tossed about and lashed with turbulent winds and waves. But the Master travels with us and speaks again and again His word of command, when we are not able to bear any more, because of our little faith. When the storms come how often it appears as though He was asleep; but this is only for the exercise of faith, not for its defeat. Often we too awaken Him with our cry or prayer of unbelief, though no waves can sink the vessel on which the Master sails, as He teaches here. If we could rest amidst the tempest, as He did, we would see far more of the *“works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep”* [Psa.107:24].

Now, they come to the other side, to the country of the **Gergesenes** (meaning *“reward at the end”*).

“And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.” [Mat.8:28]

No doubt these were Israelites of the tribe of **Gad** (*“a troop”*) and speak of the increase of faith which is needed now, for the enemy’s power was rampant here. Their way is blocked by 2 demon-filled men; we would call them maniacs. Mark and Luke give us more details regarding these; but Matthew is consistent as heretofore, in emphasizing Christ’s sovereignty in these various cases; therefore, he does not stress the details.

He tells us that they abode in tombs, in the ghastly horror of death, and their insane fury, before which men quailed, only makes more vivid the contrast of their surrender to the Master. The demons acknowledge His authority (if men do dispute it) and give Him His title "*Son of God*" (which men deny) and recognize Him as their future Judge. They are aware that there is a day of judgment and a place of torment into which they expect to be cast; but they plead that this time has not yet come. What marvelous intelligence of Him and the purposes of God concerning them.

The account of the swine which follows is certainly a positive witness, as the number 2 would indicate, of the reality of demon possession. The demons give utterance to the men, recognize the Lord with intelligence as to His Deity. They address Him and are addressed by Him, the men being only the houses in which they dwelt. They are the master in their habitations. What a picture of the unregenerate man, whom Satan rules, and to whom he is only a slave. The demons request that, if He cast them out (they acknowledge His Sovereignty), would He allow them to enter into a herd of swine, which are feeding nearby. He gives the desired permission; and thereupon, "*the whole herd of swine (2,000 strong) ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters*" [Mat.8:32]. We learn here the cause of mad dogs and their accompanying dread of water, the sign of the abyss, into which all demons ("*the legion*") will one day be cast by this very same Man.

We have no after picture here of the men, clothed and in their right mind, as is shown in Luke 8:26; for Matthew would concentrate our attention upon the deliverance itself, which shows Christ's Sovereignty over all the power of Satan and his kingdom of darkness and death. His mighty manifestation here meets with no hearty acclamations of delight, rather otherwise; for people were then, as now, more occupied with the loss of their swine than with the glory of the King. The shadow of His rejection begins to fall upon Him. The whole city, which has heard the news, comes out to meet Him and request the great Deliverer to depart out of their coasts [Mat.7:33-34]. They are far more afraid of Him, who comes with life and light, than of the awful power of Satan from which He would have set them free, if they had so desired. The Lord accepts their rejection of Him and leaves them alone. They do not need to ask Him the second time. He passes over and comes into His own city, a Conqueror indeed.

All the clashing elements have yielded to His influence. The power of the enemy has been routed. The strong man's captives are set free. Now we are to view the very innermost stronghold of the adversary entered and man's condition bared, his need met, his burden of guilt lifted and the paralysis, which is the outward result of sin, removed. For we must constantly bear in mind that all the visible material realities of these inspired narratives are but shadows of spiritual realities; therefore, the miracles are not only wonders; but they are signs of the unseen and eternal.

"And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." [Mat.9:2]

The Great Physician of humanity, seeing the faith of those who carried the man, diagnosed the case immediately, saying to the man, "*Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*" Ah, this was like waving a red flag in front of these wild "*bulls of Bashan*" [Psa.22:12]. Certain of them bellowed forth their rage, saying, "*This man blasphemeth*" [Mat.9:3]. The Master is calm, unruffled, serene: He, "*knowing their thoughts,*" for they had not told all, said, "*Why did you think evil in your hearts, for whether (it) is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee*" (note the order of blessing here) *or to say, Arise and walk?*" [Mat.9:5]. He has asked a hard question indeed; but He answers it Himself; for, says He, the healing of this man is proof to you, that "*the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins*" [Mat.9:6]. He is endeavoring to teach them the helplessness of the old creation; that the man's outward visible condition was only a sign of the palsied inward state, and that the latter was the cause of the former. He not

only wanted to cure the disease, but remove the cause. Therefore, the man not only arose, but walked off carrying his bed; for with pardon assured him, the load of his sins was lifted and this gave power to his paralyzed limbs to walk in the way of obedience to God.

But the opposers refuse to be convinced. They do not want the Man Jesus to reign over them. If they admit that He has authority to forgive sins, they are admitting that He is the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel; and this they will not do; even though they are forced to acknowledge that He can and does heal the sick. Yet how strange that the opposite conditions prevail today. Professing Christians all admit that Christ has authority to forgive sins; but doubt His power, or at least His willingness to heal the body. The one is, as Jesus says, the outward visible sign of the other. The Master is, as we have seen, entering the strong man's house and despoiling him of his goods, showing His power to annul him who hath the power of death, even the devil.

CALLING OF THE 12

"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him." [Mat.9:9]

In the case of each of the men whom the Master calls, we have some significant instruction. There was nothing haphazard nor indefinite in any of the Lord's words nor actions. They are all pregnant with meaning to the spiritual saint. In Matthew 4, we saw that He called **Peter and Andrew**, brothers, from their lowly work as fishermen. They were **CASTING A NET INTO THE SEA**, when they heard His voice. "*And they straightway left their nets,*" their old occupation, to engage in His service and become fishers of men [Mat.4:18-19].

Shortly after this episode, He speaks His word of command to **James and John**, sons of Zebedee. Two, the number of witness, is emphasized in both cases. These men were engaged in the irksome task of mending their old worn out nets when they were called to the gladsome service of launching a new net: for the Kingdom upon the basis of Law had woefully failed; The Law was weak through the flesh. It could not hold **THE FISH** in its meshes after they were caught. They would break through its every restraint and escape; therefore, the scribes and Pharisees, by their additions of The Law, set men to mending the net. They endeavored to make it firmer and stronger by their self-efforts hoping thereby, as they foolishly imagined, to remedy its weakness. For they thought the trouble was with The Law instead of with the flesh.

Now there is a change. The old net is ready to vanish away; for a new Man with a new net is upon the scene. And this Grace net will never need mending. Moreover it cannot break; but is able to stand any kind of a strain put upon it. So John and James have lost their old occupation. They are called from natural ways and means to the supernatural.

Then **Matthew** gets a call to share in the same glad service of love. He has been serving a hard taskmaster; the same Roman oppressor to whom his people were in bondage. Now there is a change of masters, Christ in place of Caesar; therefore, the hireling occupation (tax-gathering) gives place to the labor of love. One of the most hated men becomes a "*gift of Jehovah*" to Israel (for so is the meaning of his name).

Matthew, as do the other chosen disciples, rises immediately from his natural occupation without any excuse or delay, though he was busy when the master called. All these men appeared to deeply appreciate the honor of being called to His service; for they realized their own unworthiness to such a place. But His grace is thus more emphasized in His condescending to mean, that is, lowly things. He chose one of the most hated men of the nation, Matthew, the tax-gatherer, to write of the Exalted One, the King, which is surely the fullest expression of grace.

He had absolutely nothing to recommend himself to God except need. And he knew it. Blessed knowledge!

We learn from Luke, that Matthew made a feast for the King; but he himself does not tell us of this important item. He only tells us of the feast as though he had nothing whatever to do with it. But he tells us that *“many publicans and sinners”* sat down at the same table with the King. He invited other needy ones like himself to share in the same grace, and the Lord receiveth such and marvel of marvels, He *“eateth with them”* [Luk.15:2]. What a contrast to all earthly pomp and potentates. But of course this provokes a challenge again from the self-righteous Pharisees, the enemies of Grace, though they do not address themselves directly to Him, but to his disciples. *“Why,”* they dare to question, *“eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?”* [Mat.9:11]. Those people were not the fit associates of a clean man, is what they claim; therefore, their question is a direct rebuke of His grace. But the Master, as always, has the answer to all their murmurings. *“They that are whole, need not a physician; but they that are sick”* [Mat.9:12]. He thus assures them that He is the Physician that has come to heal sin-sick and body-sick men and if they are not in such a case, then they have no need of Him. He only goes where the need calls Him; for there he is wanted. The Pharisees were “whole,” in their own estimation; therefore, had no need of Him. Then he adds, as the explanation of His puzzling conduct. *“But go you and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice”* [Mat.9:13]; for He had so learned and was putting His knowledge into practice. God desires to show mercy to man, to give him something, rather than have man give something to Him. In fact man has nothing to give to God. He is bankrupt; but unfortunately he does not know this. He has to be taught his deep need by the Word of God and by his own experience. Then some never learn the lesson. The natural man always reasons that God must be placated by good conduct, and if this is impossible in every respect (as most of us will admit); yet we must do something, the best we can. We must make some sort of sacrifice for our shortcomings; if it be only that we weep a few tears or do a little penance, etc. In other words, make ourselves altogether uncomfortable and sad. We think it pleases God to meditate upon and talk about our sinful selves. But God does not want this at all. He wants to make us a feast where we may sit down at the same table with Him and not be one whit ashamed of our condition; for our condition He intends to remedy. He desires us to see His mercy and His grace in giving His Son to atone for all our shortcomings. Christ is the expression of God’s mercy to the underserving; therefore, if there were none of this character, God would be hindered from such an exhibition and the ocean of His grace would be damned up. We should rejoice that we needed grace and that Christ *“did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”* [Mat.9:13]. Thus, the chief sinner may have the chief place at the table of grace with the Chief Man of the ages.

But it is not only the Pharisees who take issue with the Master for His bounteous display of mercy; the disciples of John also question His ways. They find His teaching and conduct at variance with that of John. But there is a notable difference in their mode of approach: they come straight to Him instead of assailing His disciples with their criticism, as was the custom of the Pharisees. They are honest inquirers, not critics. While they address the Lord, yet the question relates to the disciples: *“Why do we and the Pharisees fast often while Thy disciples fast not?”* [Mat.9:14].

They could not understand the difference between Law and Grace. They saw John abstemious and rigid, hard on himself and everyone else, no feasting nor joy in his presence—the fit expression of The Law; and here is John’s successor teaching His disciples by word and precept, the opposite, as they think, of the teaching which they received. It was a problem indeed; and so it is yet, but Christ has the answer. Can the children of the bridal chamber clothe themselves in sackcloth and ashes at such a time, *“as long as the Bridegroom is with them?”* [Mat.9:15]. He implies that He is the Bridegroom, and they the invited guests; and that this is no time for mourning nor weeping, but a time of rejoicing. Yet He assures them that the time will come

when the Bridegroom will be taken from them, foretelling His rejection. In those days, He adds, fasting will then have its place. And so it has come to pass for the nation; they are fasting now.

"No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse." [Mat.9:16]

Furthermore, Jesus takes advantage of the opportunity to prepare them for the change of dispensations which is at hand. There is to be a complete and radical change, not the mere patching up of an old garment which was all The Law could do; but an entirely new garment is the plan of God. The garment of legal righteousness was found wanting. Men were naked, or as the prophet declared, clad in righteousness which was "*as filthy rags*" [Isa.64:6]. How foolish then to waste valuable time in patching them; for even the help with God's Law only made the rent worse; that is, The Law openly manifested the condition of man's righteousness. The righteousness of God, which Christ is here emphasizing, must not be confounded in any way with man's righteousness; they are in direct contrast. It must be either one or the other; no mixture of their principles either. To attempt such is to make bad, worse.

"Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." [Mat.9:17]

And more, the Master insists that the spirit of joy, ecstasy, victory, the "*new wine*," fullness of the Spirit, which follows the message of the free offer of the garments of salvation, necessitates a **NEW BOTTLE**. Men do not put new wine into old wine-skins; they are not suitable; and neither does the Lord. He does not pour His Holy Spirit upon the flesh, does not fill the old creation with the Spirit: but He puts "*new wine into new bottles*." The new creation is clad in garments of righteousness; therefore, is eligible to be filled with new wine. Behold He makes all things new, is the lesson.

At this point there is an interruption, but it is all the perfect will of God. Here are moving pictures upon God's screen of Truth at which we may all gaze with instruction. He is teaching us by these things. A certain ruler appears and worships Christ, saying,

"My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay Thy hand upon her and she shall live." [Mat.9:18]

Here we have a living witness to the truth of the words which have just been spoken. Israel is a corpse, even as the daughter of Jairus, which we learn from the other Gospel Records was the name of the ruler. The meaning of **Jairus'** name ("*enlightener*") was what the nation of Israel was called to be, "**THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**," but they failed to shine. The result is, as we are taught by the illustration, that they are dead as to their profession of being people of God. The dispensation is at an end; a new age was at hand and they needed a new life.

Therefore, it is plainly evident why the principle of Law must be set aside as the Master has declared. Law is not for the dead, but for the living. Dead men need life, not law. But "*if there had been a law given which could have given life, then verily righteousness should have been by the law*" [Gal.3:21]. Life and righteousness are here connected, just as they are in the Lord's sayings above, as to the new garment and new wine.

The Lord, accompanied by His disciples, was on His way to fulfill the request of the ruler, to give life to his daughter. He is halted by a woman, who was diseased for 12 years with an issue of blood. She came and touched the hem of His garment; for she said within herself, (spoke her faith in her heart), "*If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole*" [Mat.9:21].

Here is another moving picture upon the screen. Before the Life-Giver can touch the dead daughter, representative of Israel, or of any individual of the old creation, she must, by faith,

touch Him. She must take hold of His righteousness, figured by His garment, which she touched. The woman claims His righteousness and immediately her defiling issue of blood was stanching. It was slowly sapping her life away, figurative of the state, or liability to death, which is our portion as identified with the old Adam. Although there was a multitude thronging Him, as we learn from the other reporters of this scene (Mark and Luke), Jesus felt her touch. Mark and Luke give us more details of all these events, while Matthew, the biographer of the King, would concentrate our attention upon the Person and the signs, rather than the circumstances.

The Master of life and death again manifests His sovereignty. He turns and looks upon the woman, saying, "*Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole*" [Mat.9:22]. It is thus that He speaks today to every defiled, sin-sick soul who so touches Him. It is thus that He will speak to the nation of Israel when they press through all the reason and unbelief of the old creation, which has hitherto hindered them from taking hold of the garments of salvation which were freely offered to them in the Gift of Christ. Then Israel will be healed.

Now, there is no more delay. He is ready to enter into the ruler's house and say, "*Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.*" Although He is laughed to scorn by the unbelief of the people, whom He puts outside, He is not hindered. "*He took her by the hand, and the maid arose*" [Mat.9:24-25].

So Israel, though they are apparently dead, will arise in the power of another life when the Life-Giver enters their house, which He has temporarily abandoned for Gentile quarters, during the present age. The dead will then hear His voice, "*And they that hear shall live*" [Joh.5:25].

These 2 deliverances, the healing of the woman and the resurrection of the dead maiden, are closely connected with one another. They are both vivid illustrations of the Master's preceding discourse. They set forth the manner and method of salvation, commencing with the new dispensation which was even then dawning upon the world. In this salvation there are revealed 2 sides, God's and man's. In the first, man is passive and merely the recipient of grace, and to this the last miracle here witnesses. But there is also the other side, man's, to which the healing of the woman loudly testifies. She knows her condition, feels her need of the Savior and comes, though timidly, to Him for help. She pushes aside every obstacle. This side must first be in evidence; that is, our faith must reach out and touch Christ, before we are made alive. We thus appropriate His grace which is sufficient for every need and whereby we are not only clothed with His righteousness, but we rise up to walk in newness of life. Here ends the signs which manifest the King. He has indeed shown Himself, not merely a human King, the Son of David, but in very truth the Son of God. Therefore, his fame is heralded throughout the land.

Now we have another departure recorded. He went on from thence and 2 blind men followed. The King is going on, marking out, by even His geographical movings, the purposes and plans of God. There is no staying of His hand or counsel.

"And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it." [Mat.9:27-30]

The blind men appeal to Him as the Son of David. This is of special import when we realize that it is the first time He is so designated. Nor have we had Him owned as the King since the days of the **WISE MEN** who had come to worship Him. The Father himself had witnessed to Him as the Son of God; but none of Israel, so far recorded by Matthew, have yet so acknowledged Him, though the demons own it with fear. Men call Him Teacher and Lord, and He accepts the little honor they accord Him as His due. Of Himself He generally speaks of Himself as Son of man. This very title manifests Divine Grace; for He thus owns kinship with frail humanity.

But as yet He has not openly claimed to be the Messiah or the King. He is waiting for Israel to own His right and claim Him as the divinely Appointed One. He knows such acknowledgement must be preceded by a revelation from the Father, as later we hear Him refer to Peter's confession of Him as being the Father's revelation [Mat.16:17]. Therefore, the significance of Him now being addressed as Son of David by the blind men is the more apparent. The fact that they both receive their sight emphasizes their witness of Him as being true (2 being the number of competent testimony). But they are also a witness of the condition of Israel to whom He is sent—blindness is upon them. He must first open their eyes; but for such a miracle they must wait until they realize their condition, as even the blind men and cry mightily to Him, their King, for deliverance. There is no remedy otherwise. Blind they are and blind they, as well as all men, will be until they call upon Him. Here, as in the case of the leper, He heals by a touch and forbids them to make it known. This injunction cannot be, as at a later time, because of the national rejection; for as yet Israel's attitude was not openly hostile. But the reason He enjoined them to silence is taught us in some measure by the next case, for we have another miracle linked with this one as in the preceding instance. A man with a dumb demon is brought to Him.

"As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils." [Mat.9:32-34]

Here is a hard case indeed, telling of Israel's enslavement to Satan, the prince of this world. He was not only the cause of their blindness, but of their lack of recognition and of testimony to Christ as the Son of God. While they, even as the 2 blind men, might acknowledge Him as the Son of David, their King, yet this was not sufficient. He will not accept any testimony from Israel, is the teaching, until they acknowledge Him as the Son of God. They may call upon Him as Son of David with groans and tears, but not until the demon is actually cast out will the dumb speak and say, *"Lo this is our God; we have waited for him"* [Isa.25:9]. We've already read that the Lord will have removed the covering of blindness that is upon Israel; it is only then that they will acknowledge, not only His human, but His Divine Claim to the Messianic throne of David. But at this time, the miracle only provoked the already hostile heart of the Pharisees and caused them to blaspheme, by saying, *"He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils"* [Mat.9:34 RSV]. But as yet the common people heard Him gladly. The real attitude of the nation of Israel is not manifested. It remained yet to be seen if Israel, as a whole, would follow such leaders or not.

In the meantime, His compassions fail not. He refuses to acknowledge those leaders as representing the people. They are misleaders rather.

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." [Mat.9:35-36 RSV]

He goes up and down the whole land Himself, continually bearing witness to the Kingdom at hand. Thus, He is laying the responsibility upon the people, as to rejecting or accepting Him. We read that He went about all the cities and villages and carried his identification paper with Him, *"healing every disease and every infirmity."* Thus, the people are without excuse. Even his own labors, though great, appeared insufficient in comparison with the great need around Him. All Israel seemed to faint and were scattered—weak and demoralized, as man ever is without a leader. The fields with their harvest of souls beckon to Him. But the laborers, where are they? Laborers, observe He calls for, not loungers, as someone has noted. This means work and hard work too, no easy snap, as ministers have it today. But laborers are still few; though the harvest still is great. He bids His disciples to pray for such, supplicate the Lord to send (thrust forth) laborers into the needy fields. By the way, He does not ask them to pray for

managers or superintendents either. He Himself is the Head of His own enterprise. He has not relegated this honor to anyone. He only asks our cooperation, not our interference or instruction, as to the manner of running His affairs. But man has certainly misinterpreted His call for laborers and thereby has usurped the office and authority of the King Himself as is manifest in our midst today in religious circles as well as in national affairs.

THE KING AND HIS CO-MINISTERS

"And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." [Mat.10:1]

The present section presents the Master with His co-laborers. We find that the disciples were called upon to answer their own prayer for laborers. This is often the case. Many a missionary in the regions beyond has felt a great cry in his soul for the country to which later he was definitely called. Herein lies a principle with God in His dealings with us. I am personally acquainted with saints who realized in some measure the deep need of God's people, laboring in bondage and sorrow of heart. They were constrained to cry mightily to God for their deliverance, though never for one moment surmising that the Lord was even then preparing them to loose "*the bundles of the yoke*" [Isa.58:6 margin]. So the prophet Isaiah designates legality which is upon the people. Generally, we may know if we are called to serve in a special way, not so much by our great gift, but by the definiteness of our prayers and the giving of our substance in that direction. So it was in that case.

Judging from the natural, those co-laborers are the very last ones that the King should have chosen for His associates. They are deficient from every point of view and can add nothing to His Kingdom. But here is where His principle of choosing the weak things of the world to confound the mighty begins to be manifest. These very deficiencies work good for them and give all the glory to God. Thereby they are rendered the more dependent upon the power and all-sufficiency of Christ. It is certainly manifest to us, who read the history of those poor Galilean fishermen, that they did a greater work, in some respects, than have ever been accomplished since by education, organization, or magnetism. The reason is not far to seek. Their weak and helpless condition gave the Holy Spirit the opportunity to mold and fashion them for the work to which they were called.

There are 12 Kingdom apostles, as they have come to be known. This is a significant number; therefore, it has lessons for us. It speaks of God as the Supreme One—**GOD IS ALL AND IN ALL**. Those 12 chosen men are to rule over the restored Kingdom of Israel in the regeneration, when God's rule is manifested on the earth. Then later their names will be found in the foundations of the heavenly city, the emphatic expression of God's sovereignty in the whole universe.

Those first chosen laborers are sent out 2 by 2, in their preparatory testimony to Israel. Apparently their natural desire in this regard is considered. Simon (**Peter**, "*a stone*") and his brother **Andrew** ("*the manly*"), a hint of the Divine and human as the perfect witness, are called first. The sons of **Zebedee** ("*the gifted of God*") John and James, follow; afterwards **Philip** ("*lover of the race*") with Bartholomew, supposed to be **Nathanael** ("*Given of God*"), whom Philip brought to Jesus [Joh.1:45]. **Thomas** ("*twin*") is joined to **Matthew** ("*gift of Jehovah*") though he styles himself "the tax gatherer." **James the Less**, as he is called by men, though his name means "*supplanter*," being the Greek form of Jacob, goes out with **Lebbaeus** ("*the Laver*"). Finally **Simon** ("*hearkener*"), called the Canaanite, name of ill-favor, is linked with Judas Iscariot, name of ill-savor. The meaning of Judas Iscariot's name is most significant: **Judas** ("*praise*") **Iscariot** ("*the man of murder*"). That is, he was called to praise the Lord; but instead he betrays Him and thus becomes His murderer even as the nation of whom he is the representative.

They constitute the first workmen of the new order of things. They were chosen by the Master, the King and the Superintendent of His own interests. He carefully instructs them as to their respective fields of labor, their duties, and their conduct while on their journey in His service. He does not leave anything to their choice or expediency. The plan of operations, while simple, is all mapped out by Jesus. The directions are ample; they cover every phase of ministry. Their sphere of service is limited to the “lost sheep” of the house of Israel. Note that they are sheep, wandering away from the fold. They are absolutely forbidden to go to the Samaritans or the Gentiles. Remember, they are Kingdom Apostles, and as such are sent to this highly favored nation. They were to proclaim the near-coming of His Kingdom and their preaching was to be accompanied with mighty manifestations as signs to the people. The Master assures them that sickness and death would yield to their command, leprosy would be cleansed, and all the power of Satan would be defeated. He Himself had just demonstrated the above victory; therefore, He is sending them out in the very same power which was His enabling.

The grace which they had received they were to show forth to others. They were to take no supply with them for future needs, thus emphasizing the fact, that they were not only called to work miracles, but their everyday life was to be one continual miracle—the supply according to the demand. Later, after the nation has rejected Him, He refers to this very experience (in Luk.22:35) and appeals to them as to whether they lacked anything at that time. Their answer was, “*We lacked nothing.*” But He does not give them the same directions at this later time. Why? Because, in the first instance, the Lord is sending His servants with a glad message to Israel, who were presumably their friends. Therefore, they were supposed to take care of them. In this case, the nation has rejected the Kingdom, thereby showing their enmity to the King. Therefore, the King’s messengers need not expect any better treatment than the Master received. At another time, Jesus tells them, “*The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you*” [Joh.15:20].

But this rejection of the King has not yet been manifested. He is still giving them the privilege of accepting the Kingdom upon His terms; therefore, His messengers are going in the way of peace and goodwill. **PEACE** was to descend upon every house which opened its doors to receive them; but the very **DUST** of the house or city, which refused them an entrance, was to be shaken off as a witness against such. Sodom and Gomorrah, the wicked cities of antiquity, would fare better in the day of judgment than these wicked rejecters of Christ; though as compared to the Sodomites, they were the moral opposites. They were clean men, as the world speaks; but to dare to reject God’s Son and claim a righteousness apart from Him, as the nation of Israel was doing, is the sin for which there is no forgiveness. But in the midst of it all, they were to be as defenseless as sheep in the company of wolves. In the natural, they had no hope, therefore, they had to be “*wise (wary) as serpents, and harmless (inoffensive) as doves*” [Mat.10:16]. Thus, counsel and warning go hand in hand. The Lord does not hide from His associates the fact that they, as Himself, are in an enemy’s country. He foretells of their rejection and encourages them in view of it. While men would deliver them to the religious as well as the civil courts, they were not to be surprised, nor dependent upon their own resources in view of acquittal. The wisdom of God would be at their disposal; for the cause of Christ would necessitate that the Father come to their help, not only with words, but “*in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*” [1Co.2:4]. Though the hatred of men would be so intense as to break through all natural ties, and change the deepest affection into bitter enmity, yet they were not to be overcome by the persecution and affliction. They were laborers, called to endurance, even to the possibility of their brother, their father, their child, their dearest earthly friend turning against them, because of their attitude toward the Master.

“But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.” [Mat.10:23]

Yes, they would be hated of all men for His name's sake, but they must endure, and deliverance would come at the end. Fleeing from one city to another, they would not have gone over all the cities of Israel "*till the Son of man be come*" was the promise. The last words emphasize the fact, which is very apparent in the Record of Matthew, that these Divinely Chosen 12 are but an earnest of a later, larger company in the end of the age, who will take up this work of testimony to the King where it was broken off by the judgment upon Jerusalem and the dispersion of Israel. They will witness, in the face of the most bitter opposition, to the soon-coming of the King. Their testimony will continue until the actual coming of the Son of Man from heaven and the deliverance of the elect faithful remnant of that day.

The Lord's words were not of course understood by those to whom He was speaking. They have been a cause of great discussion and perplexity to searchers of the Word ever since. But when we compare these latter exhortations and their attendant encouragement, with the detailed and distinct prophecy of the coming of the Son of Man in Matthew 24, we are not at all confused. The meaning is plain. In Matthew 24:13, we are again told, "*But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.*" Amidst the special trouble and awful tribulation of those days, the coming of the Lord with all His holy angels or messengers, is promised as the only way out. This present parenthetical period (of the calling out of a people for His name from among the Gentiles) comes in between the first testimony to Israel, which ended in their dispersion and blindness, and the last testimony which will end in their redemption. This present period, the Church Age, was unknown in the past dispensation; therefore, the character of the Lord's words conforms to this fact. The Church was not yet in view and could not appear while the testimony to Israel was in progress. There was a period of transition from national hopes to another purpose, which the Lord had planned for this age. In the end, when this has been consummated, there will be the turning back to national hopes again. We will learn more of this later in our study.

The Master insists that the disciples realize their identification with Himself. They will then not expect any better treatment than He received; therefore, they will not be disappointed. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, what then will they call the men of his household? **Beelzebub** ("*Lord of the dwelling*") was the name which they gave to Satan, as ruling and reigning over man as "the master of the house." Now they blasphemously give this name to the lawful Master of men. He has not only a Divine Right as the Creator, but an added claim on Israel as their Messiah and King. But there is nothing to fear from such raving, He assures them. All would one day be manifested in the light.

"Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." [Mat.10:26-28]

Therefore, He encourages them to proclaim "*upon the housetops,*" to cry aloud and spare not, all that was revealed to them in secret. For, though men might kill the body, this was all that they could do. Their power ended at the grave. But God's power does not end there. He can go further than kill the body. He can "*destroy both body and soul in hell.*" Note that He does not use the word kill, but destroy, when speaking of punishment after death, thus proving that there is no annihilation of the wicked. Then as further encouragement, He emphasizes their relation to God as their Father because of their association with Himself.

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." [Mat.10:29-31]

“Not a sparrow,” He assures them, the very least of all creatures of the very least value, falls “*on the ground*,” without their Father’s notice. They are surely of more value than many sparrows. Yea, they are precious to the Father. He has numbered the very hairs of their heads—blessed assurance of the tender love and care which is their portion. He is teaching His disciples that the responsibility is not upon them. The success or failure of their enterprise is dependent upon the Father; therefore, they have but to obey orders and leave the results of their labor to Him.

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.” [Mat.10:32-33]

But they are to confess Him “*before men*,” as their Lord and Master. They must acknowledge His Divine Right on earth if they desire His witness of them before His “*Father which is in heaven*.” He is encouraging them in view of future days when His rejection will be complete, when it will mean some danger and disgrace to witness for Him before His enemies. But oh, the reward—to be acknowledged before the Father in heaven—this is more than compensation. His grace is the enabling while His Spirit is the power. If they denied Him in the presence of men, to escape their ridicule, persecution, or calumny, He would perforce be obliged to deny them in the presence of His Father. Therefore, we would infer from the above, that the measure of His acknowledgement of His people in heaven is dependent upon their testimony of Him on earth.

Further, we learn that such confession of Christ is the test of true discipleship. This means much more than merely assenting to His Lordship. It means a work done in the heart by the Spirit of God and we cast in our lot with Him for weal or woe. We give him the preeminent place in our lives even though such fealty may cause discord and friction in the family; for, while the Prince of peace has already come into the world, there is no peace to that man who refuses to surrender and own His authority. We must throw down our weapons and “stick up our hands,” as the highwayman insists. We must own that Christ is King and we are His subjects, before we may enjoy the peace which He has made by His cross. But instead of taking from us, as the robber (except our sins and sickness), He adds to our portion. He gives instead of taking.

“For I am come to set a man at variance against His father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.” [Mat.10:35-38]

The yielding of one individual in the family generally introduces variance. It brings to the surface all the opposition of the heart to Christ. Rebellion is made manifest; hence, true disciples must choose Him in the face of such expressed enmity. Their father, mother, son, or daughter, the inmates of a man’s house, were not to be considered in comparison with Him. No one was fit to be His disciple who did not take up his cross and follow Him. Here He intimates for the first time the shameful death which was before Him, and intimates to them that they must share His sorrow and defeat; that they too will bear a cross. O yes indeed, the world will put it on the followers of the humbled, holy Christ. He acknowledges that the world is against Him; but He puts forth no power to subdue it, nor even to shelter His loved ones from its vindictive hatred. Rather He predicts for them the same treatment and claims from them, in the face of such persecution, the most devoted allegiance to Himself. He is to be the one supreme and compelling motive-power of their service, drawn onward and after Him by the constraint of love, not duty. Thus they become “*worthy of*” Him, the Great Example of the constraining power of love. He so loved that He gave Himself. Thus He teaches the glory of His self-abasement and self-effacement: for there is a recompense as He goes on to declare. “*He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it*” [Mat.10:39].

Herein is the path to exaltation and honor. It is following Jesus all the way. This is in no spirit of asceticism; but the law of love governing all the way. With these sacrificing ones, He fully identifies Himself: *"He is not ashamed to call them brethren"* [Heb.2:11]. He that receives them, receives Him, and therefore vice versa; he that rejects them is rejecting Him. There is no getting around, nor toning down, these positive statements. They are either yea, yea, or nay, nay, even unto this day; for He extends the principle beyond the time of the apostles by His next words.

"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." [Mat.10:41]

Observe the identification here. It is wonderful—the one receiving a prophet or a righteous man shares in the reward of the latter. He is blessed equally with him. He is emphasizing by these statements, that we are responsible to recognize the men whom He has called to office. They are in the place by His authority, therefore, to refuse their instruction is to rebel against Him. The very least kindness for His sake, a cup of cold water given to such *"little ones,"* as He calls them, is not without reward [Mat.10:42].

Thus He ends His directions and instructions to those mighty men of valor, the 12 apostles. They were the first sovereignly called to follow the King, His chosen confidential friends. They were to follow their leader in the path He had marked out for them, in dependence upon their Father, doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil, not only negatively good but positively against evil. This is practical Christianity.

THE MASTER'S WITNESS OF JOHN

In the next section we have a most beautiful illustration of the words which Christ has just uttered as to His testimony for those who witnessed for Him. John the Baptist, who was shut up in prison, sent 2 of his disciples to ask Him, *"Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"* [Mat.11:3]. John had heard of the mighty signs and wonders that were following Christ's ministry but yet some doubts were assailing his mind as regarded the Master. No doubt he had expectations, even as the nation of Israel, concerning the Messiah which were not being fulfilled by the One of whom he had borne witness. It was commonly supposed that the Kingdom would be manifested in power, that the King would put down all other rule and authority, while here was the opposite condition. The messenger, who was sent to prepare the way of the promised Messiah, was languishing in prison in the power of the Roman oppressor and usurper of the throne of David. Therefore, we can enter into sympathy with John as to his question; for he is looking at the things seen.

John had proclaimed Jesus as *"the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"* [Joh.1:29]. Had John not known that this meant suffering and death, not only to the Lamb, but to his disciples also? It seems as though he did not understand. He was shut up, he the mighty, zealous, untiring prophet, abstemious and hard on himself, and he wondered, even as you and I sometimes wonder if it be all in vain. But the Lord knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust. He has chosen to be glorified in weak, earthen vessels.

The Master had not been really explicit as regards His Messiahship. In fact, He is rather reserved on the subject, because of the carnal views of His Kingdom which were held by the people. Therefore, John is in trouble. He cannot understand this weak, humble way that the King is going. The cross is the stumbling-block which even true disciples cannot quite get over when it becomes a reality to them; that is when the cross is on their shoulders. But John comes to the right source for the explanation of all his doubts.

The Lord answers him by the Word of God, which is the answer to all questioning. He refers him to the prophet Isaiah [Isa.35:5-6] where we are given a pen-picture of the results of Christ's work to humanity and the earth. The signs and wonders, to which John's disciples were witnesses—the blind eyes opened, the deaf ears unstopped, the lame walking, the lepers cleansed; and more, the dead raised—these were prophecies concerning the Messiah. These were actually being fulfilled by the lowly Nazarene, whose followers were among the despised of the earth, and whose great forerunner was even then in prison. Truly our God does blow upon the flesh and pours contempt upon all our pride. Jesus adds, as a gentle admonition to John and to all of us, "*blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me,*" [Mat.11:6] not offended by the reproach of the cross; the rejection by the world and the shameful death which was meted out to Him. Here was a hint to John of the passing away of the glory from Israel, whose builders were already beginning to reject the Stone whom God has exalted as Head over all His building. The Master has spoken of this. John could not escape; but he, as the individual, has the promise of the blessing even though the nation is rejected for their unbelief.

"And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." [Mat.11:7-10]

Now, behold the tables are turned and the Master bears witness to the servant. John had weakened slightly under the awful pressure of circumstances and questioned as to his own witness of the Messiah; but now Jesus comes forward in his defense. What was it, He asks, that had drawn the multitude out into the wilderness? Was it not an unheard of thing that men should go out to the desert just to look upon an apparently wild, fanatical fellow, poor and unknown? What was the attraction? What had so moved the multitudes? Was it just a mere reed shaken by the wind? That is, He is asking, was it his weakness and poverty that they went to see? Or, as He further enquires, did they go to see an honored man, a rich man, "*a man clothed in soft raiment?*" Nay, a desert is no place for such. They dwell in kings' courts. Therefore, the Master argues that it was neither the poverty nor the wealth of the man, neither his weakness nor his strength, but the mighty magnetism of the Spirit of God that drew the people to John. He performed no mighty miracle, gave the people no sign whatever that he was from God. But he spoke the truth. He was a prophet yea, as the Master further states "*more than a prophet,*" he was the advance agent of the Great King from the glory. He was sent ahead to blaze the way of the coming one, as was promised by the prophet Malachi. Among all that were born of woman there was none greater, is the Master's eulogy of John the Baptizer [Mat.11:11]. There is one exception, "*He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*" This latter statement has given rise to some discussion, yet it is not difficult. He is speaking of Himself. He does not intend to convey the impression that John was not in the kingdom of heaven, but that he was not the least there, hence cannot be the greatest. Christ has been abased to the lowest place. He voluntarily chose to become the least among the people of God, who constitute the kingdom of heaven; therefore, He is the Greatest. The teaching is: "**He that abases himself the lowest, shall be exalted the highest**".

The multitudes went out to hear the great prophet, yet they did not as a nation repent and acknowledge that His testimony against them was true. They refuse to bow to His judgment of their condition; but there were some then, even as now, who, regardless of the scribes and Pharisees, were entering into the kingdom of heaven. Those were the "violent" who were seizing hold by force. That is, they had to press through the crowd that was obstructing the way of those desiring to enter, and like the woman with the issue of blood, let nothing hinder them. We would remark here, that the kingdom of heaven is still seized by the "violent" or strenuous. The weakling is still overcome by the opposition, especially of the religious Pharisee. The sinner

gets under conviction. Immediately he is met by difficulties. The oppressors are there to mock and discourage; but the sinner persists and takes hold of the kingdom of heaven by faith. Later he sees that it is his glad and happy privilege to take the Lord as his Physician; but there is the opposition to jeer and blasphemy. Then he hears of the endowment of power from on high and he is convinced that he is eligible for the Gift of the Spirit; but here also, he is met again by the obstructers. And so it goes on. Every advance is through difficulties. Every step in the light is opposed by Satan, whose emissaries in this way are rather the professed people of God, than the worldling. The worldling might also oppose, but his influence would not count for much.

The Lord's next words, "*For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John*" show that Israel is without excuse [Mat.11:13]. The Kingdom of heaven, which John announced as being "*at hand*," was not a new thing to Israel. It had been the theme of all their prophets, while even the books of Moses, called "The Law," foretold of this kingdom. It was actually "*at hand*." Even the announced forerunner of its King, Elijah, the messenger who was to prepare the way before Him [Mal.3:1] was present in the person of John: "*if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come*" [Mat.11:14]. Therefore, Elijah had come and gone. His day could be said to have passed away. But still there is hope for them. The King of this Kingdom is yet upon the scene and the responsibility is upon the individual, if the nation of Israel does reject Him. "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*" [Mat.11:15].

The King goes on to upbraid that foolish generation for their unbelief of the words of the messengers of the expected Kingdom. He accuses them of the utmost indifference to the Divine Appeal.

"But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil."
[Mat.11:16-18]

They acted like little children in the midst of the serious business affairs of the world around them, idling away their time and mocking at the realities of life. Its problems, its sin, and its sorrow, were as nothing to them. They insisted that John dance to their music, that is, amuse them in the manner of their choice. They did not enjoy his abstemious way. His temperance displeased them; while the Master with His disciples, who came after John, suited them no better. They wanted them to beat their breasts and mourn. The fact, which the Master desires to emphasize, is plainly evident. There is no pleasing them. Whatever was said and done, they wanted the opposite. John came to them fasting. He ate little, drank nothing, that is no wine, the customary drink of the Jew; but this did not please them. They wanted him to be different. He was too temperate, too austere to please them. The critics got busy as always and commenced to hammer. Then the Lord came eating and drinking; that is, He ate like other men with no asceticism or austerity of manner; but they wanted Him to fast. Their heart was out of tune with God; therefore, His ways did not harmonize with their thoughts. They judged Him wrong, instead of themselves.

Thus they turned their very mercies into occasions of judgment. Now the Judge Himself is heard stating that Tyre and Sidon would have repented long ago had they been blessed with the light and privileges of Israel's cities, Chorazin and Bethsaida. While Sodom, that wicked city, would have remained if it had been so highly favored as Capernaum, the especial city of His ministry. It had come near to heaven because He, heaven's choice Gift was present; hence its judgment would be accordingly. The height from whence it fell determined the depth to which it sank—down to hell, the abode of death and despair. It had opportunities which were not appreciated; therefore, we learn that the sure principle of God's judgment against man is according to the

light and privilege which has been his portion. *“To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin”* [Jam.4:17]. Therefore, beware.

Then the Master and King turns from all the disappointing circumstances which surround Him, and from the nation whose ways He emphatically disapproves, and loudly voices His approval of His Father's perfect ways.

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” [Mat.11:25-27]

He thanks His Father for the justice of His attitude toward *“the wise and prudent”* of this world; that He has hidden from them the blessings of which He, the Son, was the Repository. Notice that it is not from mere men that these things are hidden, but from inflated men, wise in their own conceits, who therefore judge God and justify themselves. In such condition, it is impossible for God and man to come together. Christ who is present to bridge the gulf is a mystery; for according to such men there is no gulf to bridge. These are sufficient of themselves and will not take the true place of man—in the dust—before God. They will not acknowledge that man is a fallen creature needing redemption; therefore, God is not received in His true place, as the Redeemer. Jesus Himself declares that all blessings are in His hands; yet He also positively states that all men are dependent upon the Father for such recognition of Him. He is teaching this most necessary lesson, that God is supreme in the matter of salvation. He alone knows the Son and the Son alone knows the Father. Therefore, man is shut up to the grace of God. He needs a revelation, first of his great need of redemption and afterward of his Great Redeemer.

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” [Mat.11:28-30]

Then He turns from the nation as such and appeals to the individual—to the needy ones, wherever they may be, those who have found the yoke of The Law galling to their necks, and the bondage it entailed as too heavy to be borne. He appeals to the weak, the weary, the heavy-laden and calls them to come away from the unbelieving self-righteous nation out from their fruitless, wearying labor, unto Himself, who alone can give rest. He promises them rest. He is practically outside Israel, for His very language sets them aside. They have not acknowledged that they are of the above character, rather the opposite; so the invitation is not for them. Thus, He is viewed here as much more than King of the Jews. He is presented as the Son of the Father, declaring not Law or reward to the deserving, but showing Grace to the undeserving. Nevertheless He is a King. Only in absolute submission to Him can absolute rest be found, while on the other hand there is no rest to the rebellious.

Then too we are taught that there are degrees of rest in Him. He gives rest (when we come to Him) from our heavy burden of guilt and wearisome endeavors to attain to righteousness. Later we learn that only in a perfectly yielded life is there found that perfect rest, “the peace of an infinite calm” of which we sing. In seeking and following our own will no practical rest is found. *“Take my yoke upon you.”* His yoke is grace. It is easy and its burden of love is light. This is in contrast with the yoke of Law which is galling, and its bondage heavy and irksome.

And He sets Himself in advance as the pattern of the yielded life, wherein alone is rest. *“Learn of me,”* He says; *“for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”* Here is God's choice for a Ruler of His people. The more we exemplify this character in our attitude toward the Lord, the more we are learning of Him, who though Maker and Lord of all, was found among men as

one that serveth. This was His Father's will for Him. **HE LEARNED OBEDIENCE**, moment by moment, by obeying; though such obedience caused Him untold agony and shame. Wonderful Example! Well may we learn from such a Teacher, and submitting ourselves to His gentle tender yoke, find rest from all the unrest of our own rebellious will. There may be restraint in His yoke; but it is the loving restraint of Grace, not Law.

In Matthew 11 we find 3 classes addressed. It is interesting to note the difference in the Master's words and attitude toward each.

1. First we have the **HONEST ENQUIRERS**, John's disciples, those who are not critical, faultfinding or rebellious, but who simply want to know. They desire to do the will of God; therefore, they come to know the truth. The Master is patient with such, long-suffering and tender, as we read later in Matthew 12: "*The smoking flax, he will not quench*" [Isa.42:3]. They have some light. They want more and they get it.
2. The second class are not as the above. They do not desire the will of God; but are determined in their willful course. Nothing will move them from this attitude of rebellion and unbelief. To these He is not gentle or kind, except that truth is kind. He speaks harshly in words of judgment to the cities wherein His mighty works were done. He could not please **THAT GENERATION**. God Himself, as He proves, was unable to please them. They found fault with all His ways; therefore, He finds fault with their ways. He calls down judgment and woe upon them and their places of abode.
3. The third class are those who are neither honest enquirers nor critical fault finders. They are too poor, weak and burdened to be classed with either of the above. They **KNOW LITTLE AND EXPECT NOTHING**. To these His sweetest words were spoken; for grace can only be shown to the undeserving. He calls such to Himself for the satisfaction which they have never found. They have tried to keep The Law; but as is natural, they have failed and are disappointed, disillusioned, and hopeless. To such His words are sweet as honey dew; as welcome as "*the small rain upon the mown grass*" [Psa.72:6 RV].

THE SABBATH QUESTION [MAT. 12]

The closing verses of Matthew 11, the chapter which we have been considering, connect right on to Matthew 12, where we are given to see the basis of Christ's invitation to the needy. Here we have the closing events of the present section: Christ's ministry to the Jews. He has been offering the Kingdom to them, manifesting His credentials as King by mighty signs and wonders, which proof called for their allegiance; but they refused to own His scepter. He bows to their ultimatum and takes the place of rejection which they give Him. Though He goes on apparently offering them the Kingdom, yet even now in the purpose of God the nation of Israel is set aside, until such time as they repent and call upon the Lord.

"At that time Jesus went through the corn fields and His disciples were hungry and began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat. And when the Pharisees saw it they said unto Him, Behold Thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath." [Mat.12:1-2]

The Pharisees are still busy with their criticism. Now it is the question of the Sabbath which stirs up their envious heart into open hostility. They watch His every action, weigh His every word to find something against this Holy Man. This discussion of the Sabbath is very interesting. The Pharisees were extremely sensitive regarding this day. They, as well as the majority of Christians, considered the keeping of the Sabbath as part of the 10 Commandments; but this is not the truth. The Sabbath is not strictly one of these commands. When the 10 Commandments were spoken to Israel [Exo.20] the exhortation was, "*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*" [Exo.20:8].

This implies that mention was made of it previously, which is exactly the case. Just 1 month after Israel left Egypt, the people murmured against Moses and Aaron because of the scarcity of food; but the Lord saw their need and rained down manna from heaven. This was in this connection that the Sabbath was first mentioned. The people were instructed to gather twice as much manna on the 6th day. None was to be gathered on the 7th day, because it was announced as *“the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord;”* yet the 10 Commandments were not spoken to Israel until 30 days later. The 2 tables of stone, on which they were written, were not actually in their possession (as their part of the covenant which the Lord made with them) until 40 days later [Exo.31:18 and 34:27].

We are thus instructed that the Sabbath was given as an expression of God's grace. It was not given as an obligation, but as a privilege. It was a memorial of God's rest; as we read, *“it is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed”* [Exo.31:17]. Israel entered into God's rest when they left Egypt; for they ceased from all physical toil and bondage and were dependent upon the Lord for even their physical needs. Those wonderful natural experiences are all typical of spiritual realities into which we may enter. Some of the language in this portion of Scripture appears to contradict the above, like the following,

“Every one that defileth it (the Sabbath) shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doeth any work therein that soul shall be cut off from among his people...he shall surely be put to death.” [Exo.31:14-15]

But when we understand the significance of the type, the truth of the above interpretation is simply made more expressive. These words only emphasize the penalty for self-effort, or salvation by works. They are simply cautions against neglecting God's way of salvation which is Christ. To endeavor to work to save ourselves, when God says to rest in Christ's finished work on Calvary, is to defile the Sabbath. It is equivalent to saying that this is not sufficient, when God says it is sufficient. In other words, it is disturbing God's rest and calling Him a liar.

But someone may ask, “What then is the essential relation of The Law to the Sabbath?” Ah, this is an important question. It is exactly what Jesus is here teaching the Pharisees, had they ears to hear. The Law was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator, so the exhortation as to the Sabbath stands in the middle of the 10 Commandments. It stands there as a mediation like the necessary hub to the spokes in a wheel. The spokes are dependent upon the hub; for there is no strength in the spokes except as they are set in and reach out from the center, the hub. Therefore, if it were possible to do all the commandments, while neglecting the Sabbath, such observance would not be acceptable. For true worship and obedience to God center in the memorial of His rest, from which also all duties to man radiate. How could a man kill his fellow one day, or bear false witness against him and expect to keep the next day holy? Why it is only in the measure that we rest in Christ, cease from our own works, that we are keeping the Sabbath day holy. This alone is the power of enabling as to our duties Godward and manward. It joins our life on to God. Christ the Mediator stands between God and man. He is the mighty Hub that holds them together. He is Lord of the Sabbath; for no one can find rest outside of Him.

Hence, we find Him answering the criticism of the Pharisees by citing them to David's action and those with him, when they were hungry. He reminds them that He entered into the house of God and ate the showbread—which was not lawful for him to eat—*“but only for the priests”* [Mat.12:4, Lev.24:9]. It was not any doubtful point of theology or any human addition to the Scriptures to which He cites them, but a direct infringement of the Levitical statute. How then could the Lord justify David in this transgression? Was it on the basis of his hunger that he was excused? If so then every needy man could set God's Law aside in like manner, and be thus exonerated.

Here is deep water; yet it is not muddy or boggy, but clear and plain under the illumination of the Holy Spirit. David stands at this point in his career as type of Christ at this very time. When David took the showbread, he was the anointed king of Israel. God rejected Saul; yet David is fleeing from the wrath of Saul, while upon him as King depended all Israel's relation to God. He was the connecting link. The priesthood had woefully failed, as was evident, and The Ark was in banishment, as was the case all the days of Saul. The faithful priest, Samuel, according to the prophetic word to Eli, was raised up of God, to walk before His anointed king David, continually [1Sa.2:35].

Therefore, David being in rejection here assumes mighty proportions. The whole relationship with God is disarranged. The sanctity of the consecrated things was departed. In figure they had served their purpose; for they were but shadows of a substance which even then had loomed into view. The bread therefore was as common, though it was that day sanctified in the vessel. In type, the kingdom was set aside, because the king, David, was in rejection. Hence, we realize the force of Christ's reminder to them of David's apparent failure. He is telling them that they are rejecting Him, even as Israel rejected David. Therefore, the figurative things are of no value or sacredness whatever. How could the Sabbath, the shadow, remain when they refused the substance, **THE LORD OF THE SABBATH**?

David showed himself lord of the showbread. He is seen here as greater than the showbread, even as Christ is Lord of all these figurative things. They all pointed to, and made way for Him. As David took the showbread—which was representative of Christ, dead and risen, the life of His people—and gave to his fellows, so those disciples of the rejected King, taking and eating of the corn on the Sabbath are showing forth the same truth. They are saying that Christ is their life; that they are identified with, and are resting in Him. They break The Law, as it were, that their hunger might be satisfied. Thus, they find that Christ came to give life, not to take it, to satisfy the hungry, to rest the weary.

Then the Lord takes another illustration from their own records to prove further that The Law was often broken in one instance that it might be observed in another. The priestly service of sacrifice for example, did not cease upon the Sabbath. In fact the morning and evening sacrifices were increased [Num.28:8-10]. That whole typical system of sacrifices antedated The Law by several thousand years; for it was instituted in the garden of Eden after sin had entered into Paradise. Later, joined with the legal system which was given to Israel, it continually witnessed to God's grace and to a salvation by blood. While Israel was rejoicing in their own self-efforts (little make-shift endeavors at the fulfilling of the legal system) being ignorant of its absolute requirements, the sacrificial system went right along preventing The Law from actually putting them to death. God saw the blood and passed over them.

We learn from these illustrations, that Jesus is teaching that Grace was always given precedence over The Law, in the mind of God. Grace was always reigning even when The Law was in the house; for The Law was only a servant of Grace. Like Hagar, she was the bondmaid, to remain in the house of Abraham, for a season and serve Sarah the mistress. God would never have had any fellowship with this sinful race in any age except upon the ground of the shed blood. But this was and is yet a secret to the majority. They insist that Christ is desecrating the Sabbath by blessing men, while He shows them that they are profaning the One greater than the temple by their rejection of Him, the Lamb of God, the ordained Sacrifice. *"But if ye had known,"* He plaintively cries [Mat.12:7]. Ah that is it. If they had only known that here was the One who had in His hands the whole adjustment of their case, which according to The Law, was hopelessly against them. He was declaring mercy, which God delights to manifest; but they refused His compassion. God to them, as to every natural heart, was a God of requirement, rather than a God of grace, a God of exaction rather than of bounteous giving; therefore, sacrifice on their part, that is their doing, overshadowed mercy on His part. So they condemned the

Guiltless and killed the Just. Therefore, there is no keeping of a Sabbath for them. To reject Him is to reject mercy and rest.

THEIR HATRED CLIMAXES

Jesus further emphasizes His words and affirms His work as Lord of the Sabbath in the healing of the withered hand on that day.

"Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other. Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him." [Mat. 12:13-14]

He is guilty Himself here, and not His disciples; but ere He can heal the man, He is challenged. With direct purpose to accuse Him, the Pharisees ask, "*Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days?*" [Mat. 12:10]. He answers by asking them whether any man of them would not lift his sheep out of a pit into which he had fallen, on the Sabbath? Is not a man of greater value than a sheep? [Mat. 12:11-12] The inference is that they are all fallen in a pit and He would lift them out even as quickly as He would heal the withered arm. They are silenced by His words. Then He further stops their mouths by His deed. "*Stretch forth thy hand,*" He cries. The man obeys and it is restored, as sound as the other. This only infuriates them the more. They would restrain the love and compassion of God, if it were possible.

They now go out and hold a counsel to put Him to death. This is the first time that they have gone to such lengths. He, knowing all things, withdraws from the need which confronts Him on every hand; but the people will not be denied. They follow Him and the flow of mercy is not stopped; but He charges them not to make Him known. He accepts His rejection, hence will not let the miracles, which He still continues to perform, advertise Him any further. He is through, as it were, showing Himself to Israel. He is yielding to the will of His Father. He sees His path of rejection with its consequent suffering and death. He follows on without one word of complaint of murmuring, even as it was written of Him.

"Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust." [Mat. 12:18-21]

The above citation applies not only to the future time of blessing, but also to this present period of absolute grace shown to the Gentiles. A people are gathered out of them while Jehovah deals in chastisement with His ancient people, the Jews. This Church Age was hidden in the Old Testament Scriptures. While Gentile blessing was prophesied, yet it was always noted as in connection with Israel's blessing, never independent of them as is the case today. There is no change of dispensation expressed in the above Scripture. Nevertheless it suits well with God's present attitude to all men—"the bruised reed"—the contrite heart, broken and tender, He will not break. "*The smoking flax,*" the smallest spark of conviction, He will not quench, nor discourage. It is the character of grace that He is emphasizing here.

Still the enemy is on the move to defeat the Captain of our salvation. The believing element among the people, bring to Him a man, possessed with a demon, blind and dumb.

"Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?" [Mat. 12:22-23]

Note that demons are the cause of the above infirmities; hence we have authority to cast them out, even as our Lord demonstrated in the present instance. The man was perfectly restored and the multitude was astonished and cried out, "*Is not this the son of David?*" Yet, as the question implies, they are only partly convinced. And the Pharisees hasten quickly to extinguish the spark of conviction that has blazed for a moment. They could not deny the power which was clearly manifested; therefore, as they will not submit and own that Jesus is of God, they are driven to the only other alternative—imputing it to Satan. Yet they dare not say this to the Master, but He, reading their hearts, answered again according to His Divine Wisdom.

"And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?" [Mat. 12:25-26]

If Satan cast out Satan, he has certainly changed his tactics and lost his cunning; for thereby, his kingdom is divided and perforce cannot stand. The Pharisees confessed that the power of Satan was broken and he was cast out, but they denied that the work was of God; therefore, they confounded good with evil and made Satan the author of both. But the Master will not let such an assertion pass unchallenged. He asserts those principles are unchanged and unchanging. The one is absolutely distinct from the other. He faces them with the fact that Satan's stronghold has been entered by a stronger Personality and his power demolished. Therefore, they are responsible to accept Him, who has accomplished this feat, as come from God. These mighty works are evidence that the Kingdom of God has come nigh to them. There can be no neutrality in their attitude—they are either for or against the King. They were called upon to decide the question as to whether those works of power are of God or of Satan. To attribute them to Satan was to deny Christ, the God-sent Deliverer of Israel; for which awful blasphemy there was no forgiveness. This was sinning against God, whose Spirit was the enabling of Jesus, the Man. For speaking against Him as the Son of Man, there was forgiveness; for the lowly place, which He had taken as this character, hid His glory; but those mighty works had to be owned as of God. They were no more in ignorance of His identity. They knew that the Anointed of God was before them, but this knowledge only made manifest the hatred of their hearts in their rejection of Him. For this there was no forgiveness, no "*neither in this world (age), neither in the world (age) to come*" [Mat. 12:32].

This sin against the Holy Spirit, which has been a much discussed topic in these last days, refers especially to Israel's attitude to their Messiah. For national refusal of His claim, there was no forgiveness in that age, which was then present, neither in the next age which was yet future when He was speaking. But in the next age, the glad Millennial Age, to which we are rapidly hastening, their national rejection of Christ will be forgiven and they will be reinstated to all the glory and blessing which was their portion as Abraham's seed; for they, as a nation, will accept Christ when He comes the 2nd time.

Then in Matthew 12:33-37, He affirms that His rejection was but the fruit of the stock from which they came. The tree was bad; consequently the fruit was of like character. They needed another life, a life as He had manifested, a good life and He emphasizes again the distinction between good and evil, God and Satan. He came from God who was good, therefore, His fruit was good. They were from Satan who was corrupt, therefore, their fruit was corrupt. This generation had proved its evil condition. The tree was known by its fruit; therefore, from a viper's brood no good thing could be expected. They had spoken out of the fullness of their heart. A good man brings forth good things out of the treasures which he possesses in his heart; but the treasures of the evil are only evil. Thus a little word is the index of the heart. In the day of judgment of all such idle words, or words of unbelief, men will have to give account. By his words a man is justified or condemned, as the case may be: for "*with the heart a man believeth unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*" [Rom. 10:10].

The King is informing the nation that the end has come. It is useless to ask Him now for signs. He had given mighty signs already; but an evil and adulterous generation could not be changed morally by signs. One sign He would yet give them, "*the sign of the prophet Jonah*," who had lain in the belly of the great fish, for 3 days and 3 nights [Mat.12:39]. Jonah, who was as though raised from the dead, had been a sign to the Ninevites who repented at his preaching. But the Son of Man, who will in reality be in the grave 3 days and 3 nights, rejected and cast out by the world, will preach in vain by His resurrection. They, more hardened than the people of Nineveh, will not even then repent. The Ninevites would rise up in the judgment and condemn them, so much the more as the Son of Man was greater than Jonah. The Queen of the south also would rise up in judgment; for she came from the end of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Here in their midst was the Much Greater whom they would not hear.

The prophet Jonah was a double sign to Israel, first, of Christ as dead and risen; and then of themselves. They, like the disobedient servant Jonah, were cast out into the midst of the nations (the sea), where they have been submerged for almost 3,000 years; as the 10 tribes were scattered some 700 years before Christ came. But one of these days, the world like the fish, will empty them out on dry land (Palestine) and they, as Jonah, will preach repentance to the Gentiles and thereby nations will be saved.

But now the Lord continues His words of rebuke for their unbelief. He predicts the end of that boasting, self-righteous generation, who rejected their Messiah. They were cleansed from idolatry; but it was only as if the evil spirit had gone out for a moment of his own volition, not cast out. Therefore, he would return and with 7 other spirits more evil than himself dwell therein; hence, the last state of Israel will be worse than the first. Later, He gives them some of the details of that awful time, as is recorded in Matthew 24.

While the rejected King is still speaking, we have a most significant occurrence recorded: His mother and His brethren came, desiring to speak with Him. We read in Mark's record that even His friends thought that He was beside Himself [Mar.3:21], which no doubt gave rise to fear that He would go too far in His mistaken zeal and the Jews would harm Him. Hence, His family came to get Him away from the mob which were thronging Him. Alarm for His personal safety brought them, though Matthew gives us no hint of this. He rather would connect the conduct of His family (in their unbelief as to His Deity, while acknowledging and claiming Him as one with them after the flesh) with that of the whole nation. The nation of Israel would have accepted Him after He had wrought His mighty signs and wonders, if He had not reproved their evil deeds and shown up the filthy rags of their self-righteousness. He manifested in the constitution of His Kingdom (the Sermon on the Mount), the absolute holiness of its requirements. That necessitated the death of the old creation and this stirred their rage. He rejected them after the flesh. They rejected Him after the Spirit. As Son of David they would accept Him. As Son of God they refused Him. Hence His action and words here are pregnant with meaning. "*Who is my mother and who are my brethren?*" He cries [Mat.12:48]. Then stretching out His hand over His disciples, He said, "*Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother*" [Mat.12:49-50]. No claim of the flesh was allowed or acknowledged. His Father is in heaven and Jesus claims kinship with all those who do His Father's will. That implies a new birth, a heavenly life; for these only desire, or are able to do, the will of God. Therefore, He rejects them as the old creation; for they have rejected Him as the New Creation. Then we read, "*He went out of the house*," Israel's house, and He is still out. Their house is left unto them desolate, is that to which this points [Mat.23:38].

DIV. 4, THE REJECTION OF THE KING [MAT. 13-25]

"The same day went Jesus out of the house and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered unto Him, so that He went into a ship and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And He spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow." [Mat.13:1-2]

In the preceding division, we have a view of Him as the rejected King. He came unto His own people with the offer of the Kingdom and they would not have it from His hands. Matthew 12 ends with His separation from Israel as a nation, as figured by His mother and brethren coming to speak to Him. He does not receive them, but announces Himself as the blood relation of everyone that does the will of His Father. Thus, Israel is judicially set aside for this dispensation, as indicated by the action of the rejected King in their midst. Israel is the house from whence Jesus went out. The sea-side figures the world.

In Matthew 13, Jesus presents 7 parables. They are not to Israel alone, but are spoken to the world, to all men. These parables are:

1. The Sower,
2. the Tares,
3. The Mustard Seed,
4. the Leaven,
5. the Hid Treasure,
6. the Goodly Pearl and
7. the Dragnet.

They are really one whole system of truth viewed in different relations and aspects. They set forth the condition of things in this world during this age, the consequent result of Israel's rejection of their Messiah. We must remember that the universal extension and visible appearing of Christ's Kingdom upon the earth, depended, and still depends, upon the acceptance of Christ by God's ancient people. Then the setting up in Palestine of the Israelitish nation in righteousness, power, and glory, with their Messiah in their midst, will come.

As a nation, Israel has been judicially dropped; we saw this by the action of the King at the close of Matthew 12. Now He gives us a 7-fold view of the present things upon the earth, insofar as the "kingdom of heaven" is concerned. It is the earth side of the Kingdom, the things seen, which is here pictured. Of the true heavenly Church, the body of Christ, there is nothing distinctively unfolded here. This was a mystery hidden until the Apostle Paul was brought upon the scene. It is the religious character and course of things upon the earth, while the rightful King is absent, which is given us in these parables. The manifested earthly kingdom has been postponed until Christ's 2nd Advent because of Israel's rejection, yet there were the few who believed and clung to Him as the promised Messiah. They met all the conditions of the kingdom. For those loyal subjects, "the kingdom of heaven" was set up, though not openly manifested, when Christ ascended to heaven. There are many more loyal subjects today and they constitute the nucleus of the rule of God upon the earth, in the mystery form, as is herein declared.

There are 3 facts regarding this rule of an absent King which it is necessary to consider:

☒ It is not universal during this age.

- It was not intended to be, and does not include all the people of the world.

Ž It is mixed in character. Many are in its outward fold who are not loyal to the government of their absent King. These, however, according to their profession, are permitted to remain in the “kingdom of heaven.” This mixed, unmanifested condition of Christ’s Kingdom will continue until the end of this age. Then the King will appear and separate the true believers from the false professors and set up the visible earthly kingdom of God in power and glory.

These parables are indeed very mines of truth regarding the affairs of Christ during this age; but as the treasures in a mine have to be dug out, so likewise here. It is the diligent who “*shall be made faithful*” [Pro.13:4]. The Sower sets forth the fact that Jesus and His disciples were from that time forward going to turn to the patient toil of sowing the seed, scattering the Word of God. This necessary foundation work continues until this day. The true disciple of the Lord still “*goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed*” [Psa.126:6]. But not all who hear accept the message, as is plainly evident in this aspect of the kingdom. The seed sown is really only fruitful in 1 person out of 4; for side by side with the good we see the existence of evil. The greedy fowls are here and the ground is stony, with many thorns and briars to defeat the growth of the good Seed.

The first 4 parables are separated from the other 3 in that they are spoken publicly; for they concern the world, though the interpretation of one of them is to the disciples alone. The first parable, the Sower, is interpreted by the Lord immediately after He answers the question of His disciples, as to why He spoke in parables. He tells them that He so speaks that those only who have ears to hear may understand. Men are dependent upon God for spiritual understanding. Their ears must be unstopped by the Spirit of God ere they can discern the meaning hidden in these parables. “*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him*” [1Co.2:14].

THE SOWER

“And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” [Mat.13:3-9]

“*Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower*” [Mat.13:18], He says to the disciples; therefore, we may understand it. The seed received by the wayside, represents the hard, unreceptive heart, hardened by the constant traffic of the world, so taken up with the things seen, that the seed sown cannot find lodgment, though it is said to have been sown in the heart. This is a solemn thing. It had made its appeal to the conscience; for notice, it is the Word which tests the soil. The soil was not plowed up by conviction. No faith was there to absorb the Word and mix it into the soil. Paul later tells the Hebrews that the Word preached did not profit some who heard, not being mixed with faith. The “*fowls*” of the air, whom the Lord immediately interprets as Satan, pick up the seed because it was just lying loosely on the surface.

- Therefore, in this **1st Failure** of the good seed, Satan is the manifested opposer. This is not to be wondered at; for we know that the whole world lieth in the lap of the wicked one. He does not want his kingdom of darkness to be overthrown by light; therefore, he takes away the Word that is not grasped quickly by faith.
- In the **2nd Failure** of the seed sown, we see the flesh rather than Satan, as the opposer. Stony ground is the soil, though with a slight layer of earth over it, in which the seed

makes rapid progress in growth for a short while. But it is only superficial. There is no depth of earth, no deep conviction, only a momentary desire aroused in the heart which promises largely at the beginning, "*Forthwith it sprang up because it had no deepness (depth) of earth*" [Mat.13:5]. By and by the sun, growing hotter and hotter, scorched it and it withered away. The sentiments are engaged. The heart is warm and enthusiastic. It may even apparently make rapid progress in learning the truth; but the conscience has not been touched. The cost has not been counted; therefore, when affliction or persecution arises because of the Word, immediately the person is stumbled.

This is an exhibition of the flesh at its very best, capable of coming so near to the Kingdom of God and yet falling short, thereby manifesting all the more its hopeless condition. There is plainly evident here the unbroken spirit, the stony ground, which never yields to the judgment of God against itself; therefore, gives no lodgment to the Word. We see, in the hearers pictured here, "*that which is born of the flesh is flesh*" and only flesh [Joh.3:6].

- There is a **3rd Failure** in which the seed sown does not accomplish any visible result. Here it is the world that opposes, rather than the flesh or Satan. There is also this difference in this case: The seed is not said to be taken away, or withered, but simply it is not fruitful. It was sown among thorns, that is, upon or in hearts which are filled with the cares of this present life or with a desire for the deceitful riches of this world. Poverty and riches are both viewed in this instance as unfavorable to spiritual fruit; but it may be in some cases the snare of riches that is retarding the poor man, while the care of his money may hinder the rich.

Therefore, it is only 1 out of 4 in which the good seed becomes really productive. There is not a full harvest. It is not equal to the planting, as is always the case in the natural. Even in that which is fruitful, there are **3 grades of yieldedness**, "*some a hundredfold, some • sixtyfold, some 30 thirtyfold*" which clearly indicate different ranks of believers. The world, the flesh, and the devil are the unchanging, untiring foes of all that is of God. They are always on the alert to retard the people of God in their labor and their growth.

In the 1st parable, then, we see that the beginning of the Kingdom consists in sowing The Seed, the Word; for it is a kingdom of the Truth. Jesus said unto Pilate, when questioned as to His Kingship, "*Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*" [Joh.18:37]. Its subjects are disciples, though the fact that this kingdom is in the hands of men, affects this very materially; for we see in the latter parables both true and false disciples. Its sphere is **profession** which in due time is **tested by its fruit**. The King insists in the next parable that there be no haste in this respect. Let all come to maturity, as He pictures by a field of growing wheat, where only the harvest can properly decide the issue.

THE TARES AND THE WHEAT

This second parable gives us further light upon the mysteries of the Kingdom; for here the existence of evil is plainly stated as in process of development with the good. It is the work of the enemy with a counterfeit seed which he comes and sows in the field, the world, side by side with the true Seed. And it was done in the dark while the men, who were in charge, were asleep. Therefore, it developed into the kingdom of darkness and error, in contrast with the Kingdom of light and truth.

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” [Mat.13:24-30]

This mixed condition of things continues right down unto the end of the age. The Lord expressly states that He will instruct His reapers in the time of harvest to separate the tares from the wheat. This parable absolutely forbids the thought of the world’s conversion before the coming of the Lord. For the wheat and tares not only grow; but they ripen, side-by-side with the wheat. So that instead of the peace and safety and the golden age, which wonderful condition men dream they will usher in, there will be the waxing worse and the sudden destruction of the last days [2Ti.3:13, 1Th.5:3]. It will only be after the prophesied awful suffering of The Tribulation that the Millennium glory will shine forth.

The King commands that, for the present time, the tares and the wheat be allowed to grow together. This refers to the outward, visible religious system called Christendom. It has no bearing whatever upon the true Church of Christ, which is His body. We must go to the epistles of Paul for Church truth, where we find that a most real separation from unbelievers, even though they be professed Christians, is positively enjoined. But we are admonished to use no weapons for deliverance from such save the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

THE MUSTARD SEED

This parable, as the 2 which have preceded, gives us the growth of a living thing: but with this difference in this present instance—the growth is out of proportion to the seed. It appears to go beyond the limits of nature. No one would ever expect such an immense tree from the tiny seed which marked its beginning. But this is the teaching—its growth is supernatural. When we understand the parable, the application is remarkable.

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.” [Mat.13:31-32]

In the Scriptures, a **tree** generally refers to a kingdom. Ezekiel the prophet compares the Assyrian power to a great cedar, “*Therefore its height was exalted above all the trees of the field and its boughs were multiplied...All the fowls of heaven made their nests in its boughs and all the beasts of the field bring forth their young; and under his shadow dwelt all great nations*” [Eze.31:5-6]. Daniel also, in somewhat similar language, gives a description of the Babylonish kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar’s day. He says, “*The tree which thou sawest which grew and was strong; whose height reached unto heaven and its sight thereof to all the earth...under which the beasts of the field dwelt and upon whose branches the fowls of the air had their habitation; it is thou, O king*” [Dan.9:20-22].

The resemblances to the tree of the parable, in both these cases, surely cannot be doubted. They all figure earthly power and pomp; but in the latter case, it is an outdoing of nature, a going beyond what could have been expected in the natural. A small shrub grows into a **great tree**, which affords shelter in its branches to the birds of heaven; but, if we look at this as Divine Increase, why is it not more glorious, more sublime? The mention of the **fowls** gives us the answer; for in the 1st parable, they are viewed as carrying away the good seed, which the Lord there interprets as the work of the wicked one. Therefore, we see that Satan as well as God had somewhat an interest, as well as a hand in, the development of this mysterious tree.

The previous parable gave us the mixed inward condition of the kingdom of heaven during this period of the King's rejection, while in the present parable we have its outward visible form. From a very small beginning, that little despised band in Jerusalem (120 people waiting for the advent of the Holy Spirit), the kingdom of heaven has extended itself throughout the world. It has developed from a tiny seed and has become a great tree; but notice that it is compared to a mustard tree, a tree of instability and weakness. It is not rooted and grounded and is easily crushed and broken. Such is the outward aspect of that which claims to be of God in the world. It simply teaches us that Christianity has become assimilated to the principles of the world, and therefore is a fixture, though an insecure one, on the earth. Though it is great in the sight of men, it is weakness personified in the sight of God.

In the beginning the Christians were identified with Christ in His rejection. The world was their enemy; they were persecuted, afflicted, tormented, obliged to hide away in dens and underground places and worship the Lord in secret, meeting at night for fear of the enemies of the Lord. But now, what a change! The world loves them. They have become respectable, well-known and honored—at home in the world that crucified the Lord of glory whose followers they claim to be. They are ruling now, reigning as kings without Paul; that is, reigning when they should be strangers and pilgrims in this evil age. Paul and his associates refuse to reign until Christ is King. Hallelujah!

But even though apparently the world and The Church are one, yet the religious and national interests can never become so perfectly amalgamated that the tree will assume the mighty dimensions of imperial rule. Though the harlot sits in the saddle, holding the reins and guiding the beast, yet she is diverse from him. She has corrupted, rather than cleaned up the world, and for her reward she is elevated as the mistress over it. She says of herself, *"I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow"* [Rev.18:7]. She has lost her character of separation and become a part of that which hates God. The children of the wicked one, "the fowls of the air," are wise in their generation. They realize their affinity with her, for they roost under her wing and have become a part of that unnatural tree. Therefore, we assume that the Kingdom in mystery owns the sway of Caesar and has become independent of the true King.

THE LEAVEN

The 4th parable connects with the above, and foreshadows the inner corruption of the kingdom as in our midst.

"Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." [Mat.13:33]

In the Scriptures, **leaven** always figures evil; therefore, we are safe in so interpreting it in this instance also. In Leviticus, the book of the offerings—the priest's guide book, we read, *"No meat-offering which ye shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven; for ye shall burn no leaven...in any offering of the Lord"* [Lev.2:11]. Therefore, we see that this parable falls right in line with the 3 previous parables, illustrative of the Kingdom in mystery, in that it continues the thought of evil and opposition to the Word of God which they exhibit in more or less degree.

The woman is here viewed as doing that which the Word of God forbids; she is putting leaven into the Meal Offering. This figures indeed a terrible condition; for the Meal Offering, as all the offerings, speaks of Christ. In this case it emphasizes Him as the food of His people, upon which they are to feed in communion with the Father. The interpretation is plain: The confessing Church, figured by **the woman**, has adulterated, yea more, she has corrupted the doctrine concerning the Bread of life, with her mixture.

The “*three measures of meal*” figure the fullness of the Godhead as dwelling in Christ, God manifest in the flesh. The **leaven** (error) has about leavened the whole lump; but it will not be completed until the mystery of Godliness, the hindering one, has been taken out of the way. Then the result of the leavened lump will appear, the mystery of iniquity will be manifested. Just as soon as the true Church has been removed, then the leaven of falsehood will have full sway in the lump and the masses will believe the lie, “*that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*” [2Th.2:12]. The evil will spread until there is naught but corruption.

With this the parables spoken to the multitude are ended. There were 4 of these. The number is significant of the world to which these parables apply; for they especially emphasize the visible things of the Kingdom, even though things seen may not be understood by the multitude. We must go inside with Jesus to discern them. The words of Asaph, the singer of Israel, are here more perfectly fulfilled:

“I will open my mouth in parables: I will utter dark sayings which have been from the beginning.” [Psa.78:2 Septuagint]

Jesus, or this later Asaph, was speaking of things more deeply hidden and wonderful than the former. We are more and more impressed with the wisdom of the Speaker when we consider that the 3 following parables present faith’s view of the Kingdom, the view that we get after we have left the multitude and are on the inside. It is marvelous as we contemplate the accuracy of the Scriptures even as to the slightest detail.

The explanation of the parable of the Wheat and the Tares adds further to the marvelous inspiration of the Speaker; for it signifies the fact that the condition of the Kingdom as herein manifested, will continue on, even past what we know as the Church Age. This mixed condition of religious affairs will still be in evidence after The Church, the body of Christ, has been taken to glory. The separation of the true from the false will only come when Christ appears.

“The Son of Man will send His forth His angels and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things which offend and them which do iniquity.” [Mat.13:41]

He will clean up the world Himself and get it ready for His coming. At the end of the Millennium,

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.” [Mat.13:43]

Observe the contrast between the Kingdom of the Son below and the Kingdom of the Father above. The Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings, shall arise upon the earth; therefore, His people shine as Himself; suns revolving around Him as the central Sun, sharers of His glory. But this goes beyond the present mystery form of the Kingdom, as does also the parable of the net, which we shall consider presently.

THE 3 FINAL PARABLES

THE HID TREASURE

“Again the Kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field which when a man hath found, he hideth and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field.” [Mat.13:44]

Now there is a decided change. There is no correspondence in this parable to those which have preceded. The Kingdom is here likened to a treasure, a hidden treasure in a field. The **field** is the world as the Lord has said, and we have convincing proof that the **treasure** is Israel; but

Israel as a new creation. They were given the promise of being the peculiar treasure unto the Lord on condition of obedience [Exo.19:5].

Then David tells us that “*the Lord hath chosen Jacob for Himself and Israel for His peculiar treasure*” [Psa.135:4]. But alas, when the Lord came to claim His treasure, it was lost among the nations; for God had scattered them some hundreds of years previously. He recognized the fact that the treasure was in the world; but He could not get hold of it. He must first sell all that He had, give up all His wealth of glory and power, and purchase His treasure at the cross. He redeemed the whole world, tasted death for every man, and thus bought the field wherein the treasure was hidden. Then He hides it again; that is there was another purpose in the plan of God which had to be fulfilled ere Christ could enjoy, as new creation, His people Israel. It is this purpose that the next parable, the Goodly Pearl emphasizes. The present age has come in, as a parenthesis between God’s past and His future dealings with His treasure Israel, who shall later be displayed as His possession in the world.

THE GOODLY PEARL

“Again the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls. Who when He hath found one pearl of great price went and sold all that he hath and bought it.” [Mat.13:45-46]

This parable resembles the former. In some respects they are closely connected; but they do not signify the same thing. They both speak of the Lord’s purchased people who are all precious to Him, but with quite a distinction between them. The one, the treasure, is hidden in **the field**—the world: while the others, the pearl and pearls are found in the depths of **the sea**—the nations. The sea would emphasize the fact that it was for the sake of the Bride (for she is the Pearl), that He stooped to the death of the cross. It is written of Christ, “*the waves and billows*” of God’s wrath were poured out upon Him [Psa.42:7]. Like Jonah, of whom He was the antitype in this respect, He cried, “*The waters compassed me about even to the soul; the depth closed round about; the weeds were wrapped about my head*” [Jon.2:5]. He was the Merchantman, seeking goodly pearls. Therefore, He came down into the sea, where He found 1 pearl of great price which He drew out of the sea (the old creation).

In this parable, notice that the sea is not bought to get the pearls, as the field was bought to get the treasure, because The Church and the Bride are heavenly jewels. Their inheritance is in heaven. They are taken out of the element or condition in which they are found and translated to another. Furthermore, pearls are found in shells, a hard rough exterior, which must be put off, before their beauty can be seen. Pearls are the only jewels known that are the work of a living organism, a fact of wonderful significance. A grain of sand enters the side of the oyster which causes discomfort and annoyance. It is a foreign substance to that of the organism; therefore, because it cannot get rid of the grain of sand, it begins to coat it over with the same substance which lines the interior of the shell (**NACRE**, or mother of pearl). It continues with this work until the substance ceases to annoy, because the irritation vanishes. It becomes even as the living organism.

Thus, what appeared to be injury to the oyster, results finally in the formation of beautiful gems, sought for in deep waters throughout the world. They become clothed with beauty, put upon them by the one that they hurt; even as The Church composed of many members, the choice ones, objects of Divine Favor, are clothed with the comeliness of Him whom they crucified. The beauty of Christ is put over upon the very least of these. There are degrees of beauty and grades of worth among pearls as well as saints. The most rare ones are those that are perfectly spherical, with no roughness anywhere, a hint of the completely rounded character which God desires and must have in His Church, but more especially in the Bride. She is the One Pearl of

great price that is found among the many pearls which He gathers from the sea. The **Gentiles** in Scripture are often figured by the sea.

The beauty of a pearl is entirely dependent upon the coatings which the oyster puts upon it, not at all upon the size or shape of the piece of sand. Therefore, to read the parable aright, we learn that The Church is dependent upon the living Christ for her beauty. He will apply grace after grace upon each part of that body as each allows Him to have His way until finally the beauty of each is indescribable. He will adorn all in The Church with His own comeliness as each one yields to Him.

But now let us notice some points that are generally overlooked. The majority of teachers of these 7 parables of Matthew 13, apply the Pearl to the whole Church—but we are perforce obliged to differ somewhat with them. Observe that the Merchantman went down into the sea “*seeking goodly pearls*,” not one pearl alone. Christ is that Man in question, the seeker of the beautiful gems. Did He with His eagle eye find only one Pearl? No, He found **MANY PEARLS**. We read in Revelation 2 and 3 of “*seven churches*.” Several of these companies mentioned remain unto the coming of the Lord. There is Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Each company of these is a pearl. They have been gathered out of the sea (Gentiles), but they differ in beauty and worth. One of these pearls is the Pearl of great price—Philadelphia saints (Smyrna saints will be part of that company, being of the same worth). Her worth cannot be computed in figures. She is the most precious part of The Church, the Choice One of the Merchant Man. She will be taken away by the Seeker of pearls before the pearls of lesser value are taken.

In the day of rewards, when all the churches have been gathered home, the beauty of The Bride will be manifested as greater than that of others. She will have a more heavenly sheen upon her, because she let the Bridegroom beautify her. She will be like Him and in His beauty will shine. The sun-glory will be upon her. The Pearl of great price will outshine the pearls. Israel will have her place as the treasure in the world; we need not envy her; we have the better part, as the Pearl of great price, which like Mary's part, shall not be taken away from us.

THE DRAGNET

*“Again the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind.”
[Mat.13:47]*

With this parable we have another turn; though it was spoken in the house to the disciples, yet it only connects with them in outlining another purpose in the plan of God. And a later purpose than either of the other 2; that is after The Church has been caught away to be with the Lord and Israel have been found in the world and reinstated in their own land, there yet remains another event to follow—the Gospel must go out to the Gentiles. A new gathering begins when the net is cast into **the sea** (the nations). It gathers of every kind that is found there, both good and bad. There is no escaping the net. They hear unto life or unto death. “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned*” [Mar.16:16].

It is the everlasting Gospel which shall be preached at this time [Rev.14:6]. The terms of it show at once that it is quite a different message from that which is proclaimed today. “*Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come*” [Rev.14:7] is not Paul's Gospel. It is not primarily a message of grace but rather of judgment because of their previous attitude to the offer of grace. But there is an escaping of the judgment by repentance, as the terms indicate. We see the result of this proclamation in the separation of the sheep from the goats when the Lord appears [Mat.25]. In the harvest of the wheat fields of the Church Age as depicted in the parable of the tares and wheat, we have no such separation of the wicked from among the righteous, but the

wheat is viewed as gathered out, in bundles or ranks, from among the tares and taken to heaven before the dragnet (judgment message) is cast into the sea. The fish that are gathered therein are seen later as the sheep and goats, which are judicially separated from one another. The wicked depart into everlasting fire, while the righteous are left for blessing in the visible Kingdom of the Son of Man on the earth, which He turns over to the Father.

The 7 striking parables end with the parable of the dragnet. They describe the results of the presence of the Gospel in the world during this age. They embody the Truth of the Kingdom in its mystery or hidden form. It begins with the sowing of the seed of the Word and ends with the harvest. In a nutshell, the result is the mingled tares and wheat, good fish and the other sort, in the sphere of Christian profession. In other words, it is Christendom, a mingled condition of true believers and false professors. It is defiled by all manner of religious errors, foreign to the Truth as well as religious doings which are not in God's order whatever. Nevertheless, the Lord sees the real children of the true Kingdom of heaven with whom He is in fellowship. He views the nation of Israel hidden for the present age, but shortly to "shine forth in the glory of the sun" in the world. Furthermore, He views His Body and His Bride in this conglomeration of Truth and error, called Christendom.

PARABLE OF THE HOUSEHOLDER

Now, the Lord speaks another parable, but it is of an entirely different character from the 7 which have preceded. He enquires of His disciples as to whether they have understood all these things. They answer quickly in the affirmative, though their later actions and queries preclude such possibility, because there are depths to these parables that only Paul's writings can plumb. Nevertheless, Jesus does not contradict them. He continues with this saying,

"Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." [Mat.13:52]

He had been prophesying new things connecting them with the old. Israel were expecting the Kingdom of heaven upon the earth. That was an old thing to them; but the consequent other purposes were new things; therefore, His words of instruction to them. They were to be as the "instructed" scribe, teaching others the Truths of the Old Testament, the types and shadows, bringing them forth and adjusting them to the teaching of the New Testament; for God's plan is in perfect agreement. The new revelation given to the Apostle Paul and other writers but enfolds or substantiates the old revelation. The Bible is a perfect library of 66 books, and there is no discrepancy anywhere. It is like unto a great cupboard or treasure house wherein the teacher or scribe may enter at any time and bring forth food or riches to nourish and enrich the poor and hungry of this age.

JESUS REJECTED

Jesus now leaves that place and enters into His own country. This is significant. It implies that His rejection by the nation being almost complete, He therefore rejects the nation. He henceforth walks in a path of separation from a world that is at enmity with Him: but in which grace still operates and finds some poor creatures who are willing to receive His blessing and thus become identified with Him as His instruments.

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are

they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” [Mat.13:53-58]

He comes therefore to Nazareth, His home town, as we would say, where though they are perforce obliged to own His mighty works and wisdom, yet they would not acknowledge His Divine Right to them. *“Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?”* They are astonished; for they know His mother and His kindred and they suggest no such possibilities. This very fact, which caused them to marvel, His words and works being so far beyond the natural, was the very proof of His Divine Claim. But no, they will not allow this; rather they will discredit what is plainly manifest before their eyes, rather than receive a carpenter’s son as their Messiah. They insist that Divine Power shall not be displayed without human credentials and earthly pomp and greatness, even as the case today.

Thus, the very fact which was His glory—that He was not a creature of circumstance, deriving no power or honor from man—was the very cause of His rejection. He thus set man aside, He would owe him nothing. He came to serve men, for which He took the lowest place, hence became independent of all that man can give Him. And it is written *“They were offended in Him”*]. They judged Him according to the world’s judgment because they had not judged the world. But so it ever is; a prophet may be in honor anywhere but in his own country: therefore, Nazareth shuts itself out from the blessing which He was ready and longing to bestow. He could do no mighty works there *“because of their unbelief.”*

ANTICHRIST PREFIGURED [MAT. 14]

“At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus.” [Mat.14:1]

The following account of Herod and his treatment of John seems to have been slipped into this chapter by mistake. It is so entirely different from that which has preceded; but when we see the typical application, the significance of it at this place is made clear, and the marvels of the Book of inspiration are thereby exceedingly enhanced. Herod at this point figures the Antichrist; while Herodias most vividly portrays the apostatized Romish church. She, as her prototype, left her lawful husband and joined herself to *“the kings of the earth with whom she has committed fornication”* [Rev.17:2].

John the Baptist, type of the 2 witnesses of the last days, denounced Herodias’ licentious conduct, for which she vows vengeance; but Herod is afraid to kill John on account of the people; for they esteem him a prophet. Yet Herodias finally triumphs. Her daughter, a type of apostatized Protestantism, puts forth all her arts to inveigle the king. He is so well-pleased with her dancing that he promises her with an oath, to give her whatsoever she desires. Therefore she, being incited by her mother, asks for the head of the prophet. The king, ashamed to deny her request on account of his oath, beheads John; for his honor before his friends must be maintained.

This is all most wonderfully suggestive of coming events which have truly cast their shadow before. Protestantism has already shown her woeful incompetency to hold the Truth. She is following fast in the steps of her mother, the old Harlot of Bible fame. She will be, at the end, through her subtlety, the means in the hands of Rome of destroying the Spirit-filled witnesses of whom another John has prophesied [Rev.11]. The Antichrist, according to the type, will not be as incensed against them as will be the false woman of destiny. He will have more of a fear of their denunciations; but she will have none. Her wrath will be terrible, even as Jezebel’s hate was against Elijah when he destroyed the false prophets [1Ki.19]. But she will be unable to gain her end until the confederacy of churches, in some measure, has the head of the revived Roman

Empire in their power. Rome, the Harlot, will insist that they put the prophets to death; but her victory will be short-lived. After 3 days, they will be raised from the dead and taken up to heaven in the sight of all the people. Of this the type is silent. The evil is here triumphant to the end; for the disciples came, took up the body of John and buried it; but they are comforted—“*they went and told Jesus*” [Mat.14:12].

The Lord accepts the news of the Baptist’s death as the further evidence of His own rejection at that time. This also, as we have noted, is a type of His rejection at the end of the age. State and church combined will reject Him then even as here. The prince and the people are at one in their hatred of the true King and His witnesses. He withdraws into a desert place apart to comfort His disciples; but the multitudes follow Him and He cannot turn away from the need which confronts Him. The wilderness thus becomes a house of bread and the king shows that His grace and power are sufficient for every need and circumstance. This is typical also of the wilderness in which the woman with eagle’s wings will be fed and protected from Satan [Rev.12:14]. He heals all the sick and suffering. When night draws on apace, the disciples insist that He send the multitude away to get something to eat.

Alas, their eyes are also veiled. They do not realize that the King is there and there is no limit to His power to meet the need of man. He puts the responsibility to feed the multitude upon them—“*Give ye them to eat,*” He cries [Mat.14:16]. He expects their faith to take hold of the supply in Himself; but they are slow to avail themselves of the riches of His grace. So are we. Their eyes are on the insufficiency of their provision instead of the vastness of God’s provision. They only see “*five loaves and two fishes*” (a little hint of the weakness of the creature place in which this Divine Man tabernacled), and not the miracle working Son of God in their midst. Therefore, they are bewildered by the command to feed the multitude. What can they do with this pitiful morsel among so many? But He does not despise the little means at His disposal, nor does He set it aside and work independently of it. He could have performed a greater miracle if He had so desired, but no, He minifies the miracle, as we might say, rather than set aside that which has been provided for their need. They are to find the little, as they thought, sufficient to feed the multitude, when taken from His hand.

Now this is all deep and most wonderfully instructive. We have a perfect type of Christ Himself in the provision which the apostles thought too little for the multitude. Like Israel, when they looked upon the manna, they did not think much of Him. He appeared poor and insignificant. They esteemed Him not. He was the Bread from heaven, God and Man united in one (of which the **5 loaves** speak), the Giver, as well as the Sustainer of life. The **2 fishes** figure Him as the sacrificed One, whose life had first to be given ere He could give life unto the world. For, as was noted, the supply must be taken from His hands. Though we have the provision in our hands, yet He must bless that which we have and multiply it to the good of others.

The people are bidden to sit down before they are given to eat. This figures the fact that man must first cease from his own works before he is able to appropriate Christ for his need. And then, out from the little which the apostles had—even out from that despised, rejected Man in their midst—there is enough to satisfy every hungry, needy soul. There is plenty for all, yea, far more than enough; for they took up of the fragments that were left, “*twelve baskets full.*” The significance of this is, that after this age, when all the hungry have been fed, there will be plenty for the 12 tribes of Israel and for the whole world. There is no exhausting of the wonderful provision of Calvary. Christ is enough for all, is the lesson for us; and yet the responsibility is left with man to feed the multitude. It is ours to bring the food to the people and to tell of the great supply that is stored up for man in the 5 loaves and 2 fishes. The rejected humbled Man of Calvary is sufficient for everyone.

GRACE STILL FLOWING

Immediately after the miracle of the loaves and the fishes, Jesus constrains His disciples to get aboard a ship and go before Him to the other side; but He Himself, after sending the multitude away, goes up into a mountain alone to pray [Mat.14:22-23]. This is simply significant of His present place and service. Israel were left to the consequences of their own unbelief. Since Calvary, figured by the miracle of the loaves and fishes, He has been up in the presence of God praying for His own people. They are in the midst of the sea, tossed about by the waves. The **wind** is contrary to their progress; for Satan is the prince of the power of the air, and he directs the course of this world.

The **ship** no doubt represents the Jewish remnant rather than The Church; for Matthew's Record pertains especially to Israel and her King. The Church is seldom in mind here. The Lord left a Jewish remnant as His witness upon the earth. There will be another Jewish remnant as witnesses, when He returns; therefore, the 2 Advents are seen as though closely connected. The apostles were entirely occupied with the national hope of their Messiah, which is proved by their question to the Lord prior to His ascension, "*Wilt Thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?*" [Act.1:6]. For many years after Pentecost, the Christian Jews still thronged the temple and were zealous of The Law. To them the shadows and types had not yet given way to the reality of the Substance. It was Paul who really spoke the decisive word which separated the disciples from Judaism, as we learn from his letter to the Hebrews.

This very fact is herewith figured by **Peter stepping out of the ship** to go to Jesus. He represents the path of every true disciple during this age. The apostles had to leave the national ship finally and walk out alone. Each one individually had to step out, looking away unto Jesus, "*The author and the finisher of the faith*" [Heb.12:2]. Faith lives in the realm of the invisible and is built up and strengthened by the difficulties and obstructions which beset the pathway; even as in the natural, the muscles of our body are developed by exercise. The way of the disciple, the learner, is out. He is ever leaving some ship; for Jewish principles are still ruling, even in Christendom. The ship which was left by the disciples, led by the stalwart old soldier Paul, has come back again as is plainly manifested. There is always a going out from some old ship making the path of the true disciple in this world, the isolated pilgrim path which has ever characterized it. This is what calls for overcoming, as the Lord names it, emphasizing the call to the individual, "*He that hath an ear, let him hear*" (used multiple times in Rev.2 & 3). The whole of the Church of Jesus Christ will not hear. The greater number will go on to certain ruin, more irretrievable than that of the Jewish ship.

Nevertheless, there is comfort in the fact that someone will hear; someone will see Jesus upon the water and will step out to meet Him. For though all the disciples in the ship see the Figure walking on the water; yet to the many He is not real. They count Him an apparition, a vision; and they fear instead of being drawn to Him. But there is one who hears, and recognizing the voice of the Master requests an invitation to come to Him. He is not disappointed. He hears the word **come** [Mat.14:29]. Observe who it is that gets the invitation—the one who invites it. Peter wanted to walk with Jesus, even if it was upon the tempestuous ocean. He wanted fellowship with Christ, even the fellowship of His sufferings; therefore, He is given the opportunity for which he prayed. He steps out in faith upon the boisterous sea and walks calmly upon its raging bosom, while He is gazing at the Figure before him. Alas, at once his eyes are taken off the Lord and rest upon the billowy waves, and he is overwhelmed with his imminent danger. He realized that his life is in jeopardy and he calls loudly to Jesus. "*Lord save me*" [Mat.14:30]. Immediately that strong Hand, which never failed any trusting soul in any age, is stretched out to meet his need, both small and great.

Notice that Peter gets no reproof from the Lord for his failure (though no doubt his fearful companions in the ship had plenty to say by way of justifying themselves for their failure to step out); but His *"Wherefore didst thou doubt?"* tells us that the rebuke is only to Peter's unbelief [Mat.14:31]. The disciples who refrained from such a rash venture were the real failures, not Peter. He actually proved the power of Christ's Word and walked some distance. After he failed, he learned the power of Christ's Hand to hold him up. He is supported in the path into which he had been called, not taken out of it; though for the moment, it proved too much for his faith; but he found God's grace sufficient.

Now they walk together, Peter and his Lord. And those who remained in the safe place, as they thought, had to see and acknowledge that Christ is indeed the Son of God. Peter had the honor of recognizing and proving Him first; then of walking and talking with Him in a path which the others never trod. Oh, who would not venture out for such communion, such fellowship, able to sing with truth, "I walk and I talk with the King"?

Then the wind ceased and there was a great calm upon the sea. This indeed fittingly describes the state of the world when Christ returns to Israel, accompanied by His people, those soldiers like Peter, who dare all to have first place with the King. He will put down all the tumult and restlessness of the nations. The angry winds will cease their blowing, for all Satan's power will be actually annulled. He will bind and shut him up in the bottomless pit and Christ will be triumphant over all.

Then *"they came into the land of Gennesaret"* [Mat.14:34]. **Gennesaret** (*"the place of harps"*) hints of the music, with its attendant harmony, which will pervade the whole world because Christ is received by His ancient people. The Greek word is **CHINNEROTH**, meaning *"Garden of the Prince."* Then will come the haling of all the country around; for sorrow and signing will have passed away.

How marvelous is the Word of God. How infinite the wisdom that acted out in Christ's daily life the wonderful purposes of God for the coming age. The first advent of Christ was but a preparation for the second. The age in which He lived and the miracles which He wrought were but an earnest of the possibilities, yea more, the actualities of the coming age with its attendant miracles. *"And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole"* [Mat.14:36].

THE REBELLION OF TRADITIONS [MAT. 15]

"Then came to Jesus, Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread." [Mat.15:1]

Matthew 15 appears to be a continuation of Matthew 12 with Chapters 13 and 14 coming in between, apparently as a parenthesis. We have a further exhibition of the blindness on the part of the leaders of Israel as to spiritual things. This is indeed the sad condition of the natural man. He cannot understand himself or God's way of blessing for him. The one ignorance includes the other; for if he were acquainted with his own heart, he would realize his need of God and flee to Him for refuge from himself. It is out of the heart, which expresses the life, that all evil comes; therefore, dealing with the external will not change the inward condition. God's way of holiness begins on the inside and is the result of regeneration not reformation. It does not consist of a washing, wiping, or cutting off, but it is the outflow of the Holy Spirit figured by the ointment [Exo.30:32], a fragrant compound which was never to be counterfeited nor duplicated by man's efforts or skill.

The religious leaders, headquarters for all the opposition to the gracious Lord, now raise the question as to the tradition of the elders. They ask, *"Why do thy disciples transgress"* such authority?

They were more concerned for the breach of the elder's tradition than they were for the violation of the Word of God. Moreover, their query carries with it an implied accusation against Him, for was He not the Teacher of those disciples? This was a direct challenge which He could not allow to pass unnoticed. He answers by asking them a question,

"Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" [Mat.15:3b]

That is, why do you obey your traditions in preference to the positive commands of God? Then He proceeds to explain His statement. He takes up the one commandment, the 4th, which God has emphasized in a special manner by adding a promise of blessing for its observance and a signal punishment for its disobedience. Then He shows how their traditions opened the way for its absolute violation. A man had but to say of his property, it was **Corban** ("a gift to God"), thereby being excused from ministering to the need of his father or mother. If he had means to help them, which duty he wanted to shirk, he could dedicate his property to the Lord, which is the meaning of the word Corban, and yet hold it. But thereby he put it out of his own reach as well as the reach of others. This vow was binding for the time specified according to the elder's tradition, even though its fulfillment contained a breach of The Law, as Christ's words indicate.

"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." [Mat.15:7-9]

Thus the elders, who presumed to make themselves lords over God's heritage, were hereby convicted out of their own mouths and the deluded people, who heeded their words, involved in hopeless condemnation. The maintenance of the absolute supremacy of the Word of God above all the laws or traditions of men is the only, yet all-sufficient safeguard from all error. The "*teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*," is in itself rebellion against the authority of God. When men's words are counted of more value than God's Word, then His throne is in danger, if such a thing were possible.

The Lord now calls together the multitude. He wants to emphasize and make public what seems to us so simple and plain.

"And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Then came his disciples, and said unto him, knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." [Mat.15:10-14]

Nevertheless, the majority of Christians are in ignorance concerning, "*not that which entereth into a man defileth the man, but that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man*." Man is the source of defilement to the truth of which even nature itself is the witness. The Pharisees resent such plain speaking, though it commends itself to the conscience of every man who desires the truth. The disciples in alarm come to the Master with the report of the leaders' resentment. He at once condemns their principles in the most positive language. They were no plants of His Father's husbandry, He assures His disciples; therefore, they would be rooted up. They were blind leaders of blind followers and both together would fall into the ditch.

Neither do the disciples understand because of the binding force of association and habits of thoughts. Peter, representing the others, as was his custom, asks for an explanation of this parable. The Lord reproves them for their spiritual dullness, yet endeavors to make them understand.

"Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man." [Mat.15:17-20]

He shows them that the evil is deeper than that which may be washed away with water. He further instructs them that they cannot reach the fountain of defilement by legislation or reformation. Yet the fact remains that evil is present and must be reckoned with. The evil must be faced and the condition acknowledged in order for deliverance. Then in the next incident recorded here we are shown from where deliverance is to come.

UNMERITED MERCY

"And Jesus going forth from thence withdraws into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon." [Mat.15:21]

It seems sometimes as though the Lord had reached the limit of His endurance of the blatant hypocrisy of the old creation, perfectly manifested in the self-righteous Pharisee, as is evidenced at this time. He leaves them and goes to find refreshment among the poor and needy. He sought the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, the abode of open sinners, the Canaanites, the descendants of Ham upon whom the Divine Curse fell. These were the exact opposites of the scribes and Pharisees. They had no righteousness of their own upon which to depend and no forefathers of which to boast, as did the Jews.

A woman of those coasts, just now coming out of them, spiritually as well as physically, was heard crying after the King. She called to Him with a loud voice.

"And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." [Mat.15:22-24]

It was her need that brought her to Him, even as was the case with all of us. But she appeals to Him by a title, "*thou Son of David*," to which He cannot respond. She had no claim upon Him as the heir of David. Her only claim was upon His mercy. Therefore, though His heart and hands are full of blessing, yet He cannot bless her upon any false ground. It would not be for her good nor for His glory. We have here the explanation of many a delayed or unanswered prayer, even when the need is real and we come to Him for help; but we do not come depending upon His mercy alone. This appears impossible to the natural heart. We argue that we must have some merit, or if we lack this, some other claim upon His favor. We cannot realize that **grace is free**. We endeavor to bring the fact to His consideration, that,

- We are better than others or at least as good as some of our friends who got the blessing of the Lord.
- Or, it may be we think our repentance has some claim on His mercy,
- or it is the fact of our parents being Christians, or our forefather's faith upon which ground we rest.
- Then again it may be our good resolutions, or consecration for the future, which is the claim we bring to get His favor.

At any rate, it is some other way than by the facing of the real fact of our ruined undone condition—that we are in the power of Satan and cannot get free without help. The Canaanite woman under the curse is our picture and the Son of David is afar off from such, which we do well to acknowledge. Jesus, the heir to David's throne, had to be humbled in the dust before either Jew or Gentile might have part with Him. But the woman continues her crying. She will not be denied, and the disciples beg Him to send her away, no doubt implying that He would grant her request. He answers by saying, *"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."* He is not speaking of all that was in His heart, nor of the purpose of God for the future, but of His mission at that time. Furthermore, He speaks as the Son of David, for so she had addressed Him, not as the Savior of the world. If the chosen seed of Abraham, the favored nation were lost sheep, what hope had the Canaanite woman except in His mercy alone?

She is not daunted by His rejection of her claim. Her heart is torn with anguish and somehow she recognizes the love and tenderness pent up in that compassionate Man. She will not let Him go except He bless her. Ah, she has the secret of the way to His heart. She comes and worships Him, dropping the Jewish title, to which she had no claim. She addresses Him as *"Lord,"* saying, *"Help me"* [Mat.15:25]. But even yet she has not owned to all her need. Hence, he answered, *"It is not meet (right) to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs"* [Mat.15:26]. This is harsh language on the surface. The world would call it cruel. But in the natural, the surgeon must wound to heal; he must cut, before he can bind up; so in the spiritual. We must take the medicine that the doctor gives if we desire to recover by his remedy. So it is in the case of the heavenly Physician. What if the pill is a little bitter! He does not sugarcoat it as the earthly physician does. In fact it is the opposite; the bitter comes first, the sweet comes afterward.

The woman takes the medicine He hands her. She has nothing to say in her defense, but fully assents to His verdict upon her claim.

"And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." [Mat.15:27-28]

She takes the place of a dog who is grateful to the master for the crumbs which are dropped, accidentally, or at his pleasure, from the table. The dog depends upon mercy alone. He has no claim of birth or honor or name to the master's favor. He must take what he gets and say "Thank you." So the woman admits the truth of what is said. She takes her true place, outside the commonwealth of Israel, without God, therefore, without hope in the world. She is now where grace can reach her. It is not grace if we can claim it by any means, or have title to it on any ground. She need have no fear now of being turned away. He has given her the sure way of access into the favor of God the one key that will never fail to unlock His treasure house of blessing. The words leap to His lips, *"O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt"*; and His heart of love is exposed to our gaze. Her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Here we see the steps by which the human heart is led into the sanctuary. The work that has been done in her is plainly manifest, and that which no work of the cleansing of the hands could ever have accomplished. The remedy for the vileness of the human heart is found in the revelation of the grace of God. The Pharisees could not understand these steps and neither are they any wiser now; therefore, they are the losers; and the poor Canaanite is enriched thereby. She gets a double blessing; one for herself and another for her daughter. The Pharisees did not even see this exhibition of His mercy to the poor Gentile. His disciples alone were witnesses. We hope they understood and profited by the knowledge of His grace, which is more than can be said of disciples at the present time.

The King then departs from these coasts and comes to Galilee.

"And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there." [Mat.15:29]

Here the multitude found Him, bringing all the lame, blind, dumb and maimed and cast them down at Jesus' feet. He could not be hidden. The news of His wonderful works followed Him. And so it is today, when the people hear of the healing of the body they come from everywhere. The day of dry, formal, theoretical preaching has passed. The multitudes are demanding reality. They want to see and hear, as on the day of Pentecost. Manifestation and demonstration are expected. And why not? Did not the Lord say, "These signs shall follow them that believe" [Mar.16:17]. What hinders? Unbelief, we may all answer. The Church had better rise up to her privileges. The day of miracles has not passed. Indeed the hour is almost here when "*the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings*" [Mal.4:2] for the whole wide world. We are in the dawn of that transcendently glorious day; for the dumb are speaking, the deaf are hearing, the lame are walking and God is glorified.

Then the King spreads a table in the wilderness for the benefit of the multitude that has come. All these incidents in the life of the Anointed of God are of wondrous significance. They feature greater happenings that are yet to come. After this day of grace to the Gentiles, figured by His Mercy to the Canaanite woman, the King will return to His own people, the Jews. Then will come, not only healing for the multitude, but life for the world. They will all sit down at the Master's feast, for He will spread a table and call them all to dine. The banquet will all be charged to His account. There will be enough and to spare for the whole wide world and they will glorify the God of Israel.

The number 7, which is mentioned twice in this connection, adds to the significance. In fact it is in perfect order here being the number of dispensational perfection. There were 7 loaves before the feast and 7 baskets of fragments after they had all been fed [Mat.15:32-38]. That is, God is not impoverished by the gift of His Son for the satisfaction of mankind; but rather He is enriched thereby. He has more, after they have all partaken, than He had before. The word used for [basket](#) in this place is different from the one used in the previous miracle [Mat.14:20]. Here it refers to a large market basket or hamper. Paul was let down from a window by a wall in such a basket [Act.9:25]. The other signifies a small hand basket. This difference wonderfully enhances the typical setting as well as emblazons the Word of God with reality and glory. Then "*he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.*" [Mat.15:39].

VARIOUS OPINIONS [MAT. 16]

"The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven." [Mat.16:1]

These united enemies, come now and demand of Him a sign. The unity of these otherwise opposing factions is pregnant with instruction. It emphasizes the hatred toward Jesus which animated their every move. It was the bond which cemented or rather glued them together for the time being. The desire for a sign was not in truth or reality; for He had given them many signs. Furthermore, He was the great sign to Israel, as Isaiah plainly states: "*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel*" [Isa.7:14]. He was the Sign of signs—the Son of God come in the guise of humanity; the supernatural requirement even as to the due time. Therefore, to answer their carnal demand for a sign would be to slight His own claim in this respect. This He would not do. Then He chides them for their blindness.

"He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern

the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.” [Mat.16:2-4]

They were so wise in external things that they could read the face of the sky, but could not discern the signs of the times. The spiritual condition of Israel, disrupted and partly dispersed, should have taught them, if they had spiritual sight. Therefore, His verdict of them: “*A wicked and adulterous generation*” was justified. He could only give to such the sign of Jonah, which we have seen before was a double sign; of Christ in one respect, of themselves in another. His death and resurrection would be a sign against them, that they had rejected His message, while the Ninevites received Jonah’s message and repented. On the other hand, their being cast out and swallowed up by the nations, even as the disobedient prophet by the fish, is a sign against them. Their judgment must follow their rejection of Him. It is inevitable. Then He left them. And when they had come to the other side, “*Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*” [Mat.16:6]. But they did not understand Him. They thought only of the natural fact, with which they connected His enigmatic saying, that “they have forgotten to take bread.” Here again we are amazed at the unbelief and carnality displayed by the chosen disciples. They can only see the natural; therefore, they judge Him and His remarks accordingly; while He is wholly occupied with the spiritual. Oh, the difference!

Jesus knowing their thoughts, asks, “*O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?*” [Mat.16:8]. They had seen Him multiply the loaves and fishes when there was a need. Could He not do so again? How can they imagine that He refers to the trivial matter of the leaven of natural bread? He has a much greater matter in mind, even the leaven of error. The leaven of ritualism (Pharisaic) and the leaven of rationalism (Sadducean) is what concerns Him. He knew its subtle and persuasive working. When it began to manifest itself there was no end to the influence it exerted; therefore, His warning. We who see the powerful result in the corruption displayed in the leavened mass of Christendom readily understand His admonition.

CHRIST HINTS OF HIS CHURCH

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” [Mat.16:13]

The place, as well as the above question, is most wonderfully suggestive; being doubly stamped with the names of the world rulers, Caesar and Herod, Phillip being of Herod’s house. Here was Israel’s land, where David’s throne should have had dominion if they had held the scepter in dependence upon God. But alas, Israel was even then in a sense, cast out, figuring the present age, when another purpose of God is being fulfilled. Although the scepter was still being held out to her in the Person of the King, yet here was the fact of His rejection figured. He was rejected not only by Israel, but also by the world, represented later by Pontius Pilate and Herod, the respective governors of the land of Palestine at that time. But is God defeated at this turn of events? Not at all; for out of this rebellious world He is going to gather and separate unto Himself another people to whom His grace shall super-abound. They are called unto a heavenly inheritance; sharing as sons, some as joint-heirs with the Son. But as we learn here, they reach this throne of exaltation by the same route of humbling. They fellowship Christ’s rejection and consequent suffering in the world, which is the necessary training for rulership over it. They must first reign, as Christ indicates, by renunciation. Later they shall reign by acquisition.

The question now raised by the Master is the deciding issue: “Who is Christ?” He uses the lowly term “*Son of man.*” It is the name by which He generally speaks of Himself; for it is the one which tells of His association with the sons of men, whom He had come into the world to bless.

It speaks of tenderness, intimacy, and fellowship and was well suited to awaken the attention of His auditors.

What do they think of Him who came in this humble guise? He came not with triumph of might or power—no chariot or horse to battle; not emblazoning His name in the sky; but writing it upon the hearts of those who welcomed, and acknowledged the truth of His words. He did not cover over the sin of humanity, but exposed the sin, dug down deep to the very bottom, as with the Canaanite woman in the preceding section, only to bind up and heal it forever. Hallelujah!

They answered: *“Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets”* [Mat.16:14]. While these citations are the judgment of His friends, yet they all point to the one fact—none of them really knew who He was. There is no real positivity about any of these answers; no living faith, even though recognizing that they are the utterance of those who desired to do Him honor. But they all come short of the truth. None have fathomed His personality. His disguise is perfect. God manifest in the flesh is entirely beyond their human comprehension. While they differ very materially as to the real identity of the Son of man, yet there is perfect agreement as to their unbelief. If His friends do not accept His claims, what is to be expected of His enemies? Surely the nation of Israel is not ready to be gathered together, yet God must have a people. What will He do? Ah, there is an election of grace as is plainly manifest here.

PETER’S CONFESSION

He now turns and asks His disciples, *“But whom say ye that I am?”* Peter answers for them all, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”* [Mat.16:15-16].

Here is the faith of the election, while Israel remains in unbelief. Furthermore, this faith is founded not only upon the Scriptures, but upon a personal revelation of Christ by the Father; for so the Lord here declares.

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” [Mat.16:17]

Thus Peter’s faith is a Divine Revelation; and he truly answers to his name, **Simon Barjonah** (*“the hearkening son of a dove”*). That is the very opposite of Israel, who as a nation had rejected Christ and are now about to be rejected by Him. Therefore, Jesus must do a new thing, provide a new place for those faithful few who have received Him. Hence, He announces a further purpose to Simon, a hidden purpose, which is emphasized in the new name which He gives Simon.

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter (a little stone), and upon this rock (Himself) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” [Mat.16:18]

The hearing one becomes a stone in a new spiritual building which is to be Christ’s own Assembly. He is to be the Builder. It is composed of a people called out; living stones, as Peter himself later informs us. These coming to Christ, the Living Stone, are built up a spiritual house in distinction from the material temple in which Israel boasted. Petra is not The Petros, though Rome insisted he is in contradiction of Peter’s own words in 1 Peter 2:4-5. We will all agree that the stone derives all its rock-like qualities from The Rock. It is, in a sense, taken out of The Rock upon which it is builded. Relationship to Christ is the whole question. And, as He is the Son of the living God and His Church a part of Him; the gates of hell and death must give way before the advance of His living people.

The real meaning of these words is that He is going to build His Church on resurrection ground. He refers to the future. Between the time of the building and the time in which He was speaking, there lies the awful gulf of woe, which He must bridge by His death. He now goes on to declare this more explicitly. Gethsemane, yea Calvary, is yet to come, ere He can lay one stone upon another, of His Building.

APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

"And I give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." [Mat.16:19]

He now leaves the subject of The Church and Peter's place in it; going on to speak of the Kingdom of heaven and Peter's place there. These 2 things are different; yet they are so closely connected that many confound them. We have already noted that the Kingdom of heaven in its mystery form, was to be established in the world, not by any act of Divine Power or Revelation; but by the simple sowing of the Word of God. It is therefore the Kingdom of the truth, a sphere of profession, which may, and does at the present time, include all who confess the name of Christ, though it be but outward and nominal, true or false; which only the day of manifestation will declare.

But these words spoken to Peter clearly prove that the Kingdom is administered by representative men in the absence of the King, for its keys are given into Peter's hands. As his confession of Christ was not that of himself alone, but that of all true disciples who thus were built up as living stones in The Church; so here too the application must be to all official disciples. The keys of the Kingdom are in the hands of His servants, though Peter uses them first, as representing them all. He opens the door of the Kingdom to the Jew on the day of Pentecost; and to the Gentile in the house of Cornelius some years later. But notice it was Paul and his associates who continued using the latter key, giving further access to the Gentiles. The key had to be used again and again, as is plainly evident. The administration of the Kingdom, which these keys represent, has not yet passed. Men are still opening the door admitting others into the Kingdom and will continue doing so until the King comes back again and takes out of it all things that offend.

We have also a further proof that Peter, at this juncture, is simply a representative man during these years of Christ's absence. These same words, giving authority to Peter, as to the "binding or loosing of men," is later given to the 2 or 3 gathered together in Christ's Name [Mat.18:18]. Peter is not alone in his faith. He is not the only living stone in this Building. Therefore, why say that he alone used the keys. In this case we will also be forced to admit that he alone had authority to loose from sin and sickness which we know is not the truth.

Peter at this stage in his career is a most suggestive character. He vividly portrays several different companies. For instance, he represents men of God in authority from the commencement of this age even until its close. Then, he figures the whole of the Spirit-filled power-endued disciples, the remnant of Israel, of which he was a part, who accepted Christ in the beginning. These were the nucleus of The Church; yet they went everywhere preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom; for the truth concerning The Church was yet a mystery to them. Paul had not yet appeared upon the scene with his later revelation; hence, they were ignorant of God's purpose for this age. This company, with Peter as representative, are only an earnest of a greater host of Israelitish disciples of the end of the age. These will open the door of the Kingdom to both Jew and Gentile with the very same Gospel key which Peter used; yet they also will form a part of The Church of Jesus Christ which is His Body. The Great Man of mystery will have been almost complete, as to His different ranks (spheres) at this time, for the visible

revelation of the Lord will be at hand. This is the meaning of these words as to His coming which some “standing there” were to behold, of whom we read later in Verse 28.

NECESSITY OF CHRIST’S DEATH

But the nation of Israel had rejected their King, and He accepted His rejection. All His words imply this state of affairs. He charges His disciples not to make Him known. Then,

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.” [Mat.16:21]

He is not only speaking of atonement, but also refers to His rejection by men, the human side of the cross as well as the Divine Side. This immediately stirs all the ire of Peter against the death which Christ well knew was the penalty for sin. Satan again, but now in Peter, denies that man must die; even though Christ also assures them that He would rise again. Peter rebukes his Lord saying, *“Pity thyself”* (see margin). *“This shall not be unto thee”* [Mat.16:22]. Yes, Peter is again the spokesman; but he speaks now as the old serpent, the devil and Satan. We can almost hear his words to Eve in the garden, *“Ye shall not surely die”* [Gen.3:4]. These words of Peter are simply the voice of the tempter, denying the need of atonement; therefore, the Lord quickly responds and manifests His disapproval of this apparent sympathy for Him. He shows from whom all sympathy for the flesh emanates. It comes from Satan. Jesus the holy sinless Man will have none of it. Human sympathy, when it would discourage or drive back from the will of God, becomes satanic, but it needs discernment to discover it. The disguise in which it tabernacles is generally so pleasing that we are easily fooled. We do not want to be hard on the flesh. But not so the Lord. Jesus rebukes the enemy, though disguised in Peter’s flesh.

“But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” [Mat.16:23]

Even the smell of the flesh, which is at enmity against God, is obnoxious to the Lord and He quickly makes it known. This scathing rebuke was hurled at one of the choicest disciples, the leader, the captain, and as some would dare claim, the foundation rock upon which The Church is built. Why here we are given a view of what kind of material was in this stone apart from The Rock who had chosen him and of whom he was a part; and, who had taken upon Himself to make good in Peter all that he was ordained to be. We are given a view of the great apostle, sunk down into a mere ordinary man, even as other men, with all their carnal thoughts. See him even as an instrument in the hands of Satan to tempt the Lord of glory, if it were possible. The devil would indeed have spared Christ and Peter also, the cross; because all the counsels of God hung upon it and it featured the wondrous display of His grace; though from man’s side it was indeed the awful climax of iniquity.

Peter had not yet learned the woeful depravity of his own soul, nor his own impotency and need; consequently, he is without any conception of the gulf there was yet between himself and the Master. The humbling place of the Master’s choice and the dignity of His Person were lost to Peter; though he loved Him dearly and sought His exaltation as the Messiah. The cross is a mystery and foolishness to the flesh. Human wisdom always mistakes the way and human affection bars the path of Divine Love. The very same man who a few moments before had been reveling in the Divine Revelation as to the identity of the Master, can now without any apparent consciousness of the change, with equal zeal and earnestness, heed and give voice to the adversary. What does it teach but the fact to which Scripture continually witnesses, that though saved and walking with God, we yet have another nature.

The Master not only declares His own path of humiliation, but announces it also as the path of His followers. He warns us all,

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." [Mat.16:24-25]

Thus are given to Peter, as well as to all of us, some plain, positive pointers as to discipleship. It does not seem possible that in the face of such language there is any doubt as to different ranks or glories. The Lord emphatically lays down the path for His followers. Peter was endeavoring, in his mistaken kindness, to get the Master to choose an easier route to honor and exaltation. He refuses, not only for Himself, but for Peter and for all of us. Therefore, if we go the way of the flesh, saving our lives, what will the outcome be? Where will this path of self-seeking and self-glorying lead us? Surely not into the lake of fire, for if we have had a revelation from heaven we are blessed, as was Peter; but just as truly, it will not lead us into the fullest reward. We will not save our lives; for so says the Captain of our salvation. Surely His words ought to count.

There are degrees on this path of rejection and consequent pain and humiliation. All do not lose their lives in the same measure; some commence in His rejection, but do not continue on this road. They waver and give in on some line. The uttermost suffering of Gethsemane, the crucifixion of the cross, the casting out of the city, outside the camp with the lonely Man of Golgotha; "this is too much," they argue. "Do not tell us we do have to do this way." But Jesus says we do. We are taking His Words. You get into the Father's perfect will and you will find, even as Paul, that you are counted by the world and treated by even religious people, who are not in this way, as the purgation's (the inward filth), as well as the refuse (the outward filth) of the world [1Co.4:13 Greek]. You say, "This is too much to say, too far to go." Nay, it was the path of the Galilean; it was the route of Paul. It is the way of all those who steadfastly seek the glory of God and the effacement of themselves. Take it or leave it. You have the choice; save or lose your life. Which shall it be?

Though men say differently, we are facing the very same opposition today as that which Christ faced. The Master holds out no hope of any change even unto the end of the age. The style of the world's opposition may change and has changed from what it was in His case; but the opposition is still there, because it is the result of unbelief as to Christ Himself, which is still present. As the religious leaders apparently followed Christ in the beginning because others did, so the world follows Him today, after a world fashion. Listen to the fashion which the preachers in so-called Christian pulpits follow and preach (we quote the word of one):

"Today there is only one folly and that is for one not to be modern. Not to be up to the minute in dress, habits, actions, or to be embarrassed in polite society because a dress does not happen to be of the latest style, because of unfamiliarity with a recent book, a late poem or the newest petty philosophy, this is the modern folly. This folly is akin to the folly of those who reject the cross."

Think of this in the place of preaching of the cross. As if the modern folly, as well as the old-fashioned folly, was not the folly of the natural man in rejecting the cross. But today The Church, including even the elect in some degree, bids for popularity and is glad for an alliance with the great and the wise of the world. This is why the spirit of discipleship is so rare. That is why, when present, it appears so strange because the preaching of the cross and the way of the cross are foolishness with men. The world, religious and otherwise, is all uniting in saying, "Lord, Lord," yet at the same time warning against taking His words too seriously. They endeavor to make even God's own true people believe that there is no such thing as overcoming the world,

as Jesus taught; that we cannot interpret His words too literally. They insist that we cannot accept them at their face value. Well, if this is true, there are no overcomers today, and God has gone out of business and His Word has lost its power. We may as well quit the race. What is the use of running if there is nothing to gain? Or, if we cannot win regardless of the manner of our running? But we are assured that the above is not so. **GOD IS STILL DOING BUSINESS IN THE SAME OLD WAY.** He has always had a people who were not merely professing, but possessing something, though others more carnal would endeavor to make them quit their claim and give up the fight of faith. The Bible is full of such characters, who witness for us today that there is such a thing as overcoming. Such overcomers have this witness even as Enoch, who, before his translation, “*had this testimony, that he pleased God*” [Heb.11:5]. This is the essential thing—to please God.

The Master closes His exhortation with a final appeal to consider the eternal value of things. He puts it in the form of 2 questions which have never been answered.

“For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul (life)? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul (life)?” [Mat.16:26]

These words have stamped themselves indelibly upon the hearts and minds of men. They are counted among the great sayings of men, who have left their impress upon the sands of time. Even though they have not been heeded by all the world, nevertheless they have not been forgotten. And we emphasize them. What is of more value than eternal things? The impossibility of finding even the equal of the gain, or loss, is the very answer. Immediately in this connection the Lord proceeds to speak, abruptly as it would seem, of His coming in the glory of the Father. Ah, there is a reason for this change of subject.

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” [Mat.16:27]

It is then, at His coming, that it will be manifested who have saved and who have lost their lives; each shall receive their reward. We need have no fear. We will all get justice at His court. The end of the discourse is with comfort,

“Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” [Mat.16:28]

These last words were fulfilled 6 days later when several of those disciples were given a vision of His coming and His Kingdom. While only a miniature picture it was nevertheless true as to the essential features. Peter was there, for he informs us in his 2nd epistle that he had not followed cunningly devised fables when he made known unto us “*the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty*” [2Pe.1:16]. And not only so, but he had another witness. His ear heard the Father’s Voice from heaven corroborating the evidence of his eye and endorsing the Son in these words, “*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*” [Mat.17:5].

But this vision which was given to a few of these specially favored disciples is only the earnest of that greater fulfillment, which is yet to come. Those first disciples, in Matthew’s Record particularly, point on to a future generation—witnesses of the end of the age of which the first were but the forerunners. Yet Peter and the others saw all the details of the Kingdom into which these latter will enter and enjoy without dying. They will behold the actual coming of the Son of Man. They will see Him taking possession and reigning over His Kingdom in its fullest extent. At the present time He is on His Father’s throne [Rev.3:21] waiting until His enemies are made the footstool of His feet; and we are reigning with Him in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ even as John on the isle of Patmos [Rev.1:9].

THE KINGDOM VISION [MAT. 17:1-21]

'And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.' [Mat.17:1-2]

This is one of the 4 great scenes in the life of the Lord. The fact that He took only 3 disciples into the mountain, speaks to us most emphatically of the ranks, or differing companies of believers. He did not take all the disciples with Him, but only those who were on terms of intimacy. They are the ones who enjoy the visions of coming glory even here on the way to glory. They will have an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We are not given the name of the "*high mountain*," for it was only a figure of the heavenlies where Christ's throne will be set in due time. The Lord Himself will have the special place and special glory there. His face will shine as the sun, even as that favored trio saw it. The day will have come for this dark world with the coming of His Kingdom. The night-watch will have ended when the Sun of Righteousness arises appareled with light. God who is Light will be truly manifested in that glorious day drawing near to an outcast earth and bathing it in His effulgence.

"And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him." [Mat.17:3]

The lawgiver and the prophet of the old dispensation are talking with Jesus. They have known Him for centuries. He was the theme of their discourse and their prophecy. If the Jews had received Moses' writings in truth, they would have received Him of whom Moses wrote. Elijah had witnessed of the Jew's departure from God. These men have a special relation to each other. They represent The Law and the prophets, which continually witnessed of the necessity of the death of Christ; and, they are now on the mount with the Son of Man. We read in another Gospel Record [Luke 9:31] that they were taking of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. One of those men died (Moses), and God buried him [Deu.34:6]; but as he is seen on the mount of transfiguration, he must have been raised from the dead. No doubt it is of this resurrection that we read in Jude 1:9, the devil disputing with Michael as to the body of Moses. Elias, or Elijah as the Hebrew gives, went up to heaven in a chariot of fire. He was one of the 2 men of whom we read in the Scriptures that were translated without dying. Therefore, we may plainly see their connection in this Kingdom scene. They most wonderfully figure the dead in Christ who will be raised from their graves and those who will be translated at the coming of the Lord.

But even those highly favored disciples, Peter, James, and John, failed to realize the significance of the vision. Peter, in like manner as the church which claims him as her foundation stone, would enshrine the saints as equal with the King and bring the Kingdom in, as a present thing, out of the due order of God. How like the fleshly enthusiasm which is so much manifest today—big talk, great doings, gigantic tabernacles, world peace, golden age—all the leading and the voice of the flesh is not at all in harmony with the revealed will of God. Hence, Peter is silenced immediately; the Father's Voice is heard interrupting the great apostle's little speech.

"While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." [Mat.17:5]

The flesh is not even allowed a hearing on this tableland of glory. God emphatically points to Christ who is the Centre and Circumference of this scene, as He will be in the Kingdom Age.

The disciples are overwhelmed with fear as the bright cloud overshadows them. The Shekinah glory cloud, which dwelt in The Tabernacle of old and led the children of Israel through the wilderness, could not be mistaken for any other. It was the very holiest of all, of which that former one was but the figure, into which they were now translated. They stood in the sacred presence of Jehovah where only the high priest ever dared to venture, and then only once a year enveloped with incense and carrying the atoning blood. Those men were not even priests, the sons of Aaron after the flesh. They were only common men of the people, with no covering incense nor blood of lambs or goats, no sacrifice in their hands. But Christ was there, the answer to all the shadows.

There was the wondrous mystery “*cloud*” which had not appeared in the temple since the captivity. It is no marvel that they fell down, veiling their faces in the dust. The Holy One of Israel, He whom none dared gaze upon and live, had condescended to draw near. Yea, they actually heard His Voice, that same Voice which inspired terror in their ancestor’s hearts when they heard it on the burning Mount Sinai. They prayed to Moses that they might not hear it anymore; for it was the fiery law which the Voice then proclaimed [Exo.20:19].

But here all is changed. The voice of Law is hushed. Sinai’s dreaded shaking mount has become a mount of grace. Those favored 3 are listening to a far different message. Although the same Voice is heard it is now in accents of love, pointing them to Him whom Peter had recently proclaimed, the Son of God. They were called to look unto Him for salvation, instead of The Law, to hear His words, and obey His Voice. He was the One gathering Centre, the Magnet which was to draw all men unto Himself. They actually heard these words from the Cloud, “*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*” Moses had to take a back seat. Christ is thus separated, positively separated, from all other men, be they ever so good and devoted to God. It was the command of the Father, that this Man was to be honored, obeyed, and followed as the Son of God. Moses and Elias, whom Peter desired to honor equally with the Son, were drawn hither by the same power of Him who had drawn them and opened heaven to them.

Moses was not able to do this, neither Elias; for though Elias could draw fire out of heaven, yet he himself had to be caught away thither by power from on high. There was only One who could make a way for man into the presence of God—the Christ, the Son of God, the One in whom the Father’s Name is revealed, the Object of the Father’s heart. In Him alone communion with God is found and established, and the throne of God becomes a throne of grace. God is brought down to man and thus man is brought up to God. He alone has made all this possible; therefore, He alone is to be heard and heeded. He is Head of all things, the Lord, the Sovereign, recognized by God as His Son. The disciples tremble at the majestic scene and are sore afraid; but He comes and touches them and all their fears are gone. He is the Mediator. He can touch God and yet touch man and say to him, “*Be not afraid.*” Finally, all else has disappeared. They lift their eyes, but they saw “*no man, save Jesus only*” [Mat.17:7-8]. He has His rightful place as the Lord and the King.

THE INTERPRETATION

In the above marvelous vision we are given a miniature view of the central features of the Kingdom of God as it will appear when introduced and established upon the earth. In this connection we would call attention to the fact that this Kingdom is simply man again in possession of his rightful place as having dominion over all the earth. He was made the head and given this authority in the day that he was created; but he did not hold this place in subjection to God. He was drawn away and enticed by an inferior, the serpent (though Satan was the real tempter, disguised). Thus, man gave away his headship. He no longer was the master over himself or others. He had yielded to the enemy of God; hence, he has been under the sway of

Satan ever since the fall. Satan is the god of this world; even over the beast creation and fowls—the devil made some of them wild.

In the vision we see the beginning of another state of affairs. While the reality has not appeared, yet Habakkuk the prophet exhorts us to “*wait for it; because it will surely come*” [Hab.2:3]. Another Man, Christ, has come upon the scene of the first man’s failure and wrested the spoils of conquest from Satan, who had usurped the rulership. He has recovered from Satan man’s lost inheritance, and is here pictured as being given dominion by the Father. All things are given into His hands. It is as though redemption was already an accomplished fact and man again in control of the situation, although the purchase price, the blood of Calvary, had not yet been paid. Those favored few on the top of the mount saw future things as well as do a favored few in these days. This is a prophetic picture; and it is true as to the essential details of the Millennium.

In the first place it is well to consider the fact, which is generally overlooked by the majority of Bible students, that the 1st man, Adam, to whom dominion was given, was not alone. He had a wife who shared his throne and honor. She jointly ruled with him. Therefore, to apply the figure to the reality we must have a correspondence. Therefore the Man, on the mount high and lifted up, with His glorified, dazzling face, shining as the sun, and His radiant glistening vesture receiving control of the Kingdom from His Father, cannot be alone either. He is undoubtedly representative, not only of Christ as the Head of a new creation, but of the mystical Christ, the Head with His body, The Church, joined to Him. It is this full-grown man who is going to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Christ must have His body as well as His Bride before He can enter upon His reign in the fullest sense. The Bride is only a very small part of the body, as is plainly evidenced by the figure (Eve being made from a rib), and is in the vision viewed as a part of the Man. Moses and Elias would fittingly represent the Old Testament saints, worthies of faith, who walked and talked with God. Those witnesses prophesied of the coming Kingdom and the redemption necessary for its accomplishment, hence are standing here, as part of the picture, at its fulfillment. Their faith was not in vain. They will be there in that Day of the Lord, the consummation of the ages.

Then, we have still another rank depicted for us by the apostles, Peter, James, and John, who were yet at this time in their mortal bodies. These no doubt figure a company of believers, who will constitute the feet of this full-grown Man upon the mount. We read on that great day of manifestation, “*His feet shall stand upon Mt. Olivet*” [Zec.14:4]. These latter saints will be the link between the heavenly and earthly Jerusalem. They will run on errands, as it were, to do the bidding of the Christ above, the Man of matchless destiny, Emperor of the 5th Great World Empire (5 being the number of God with man). Truly, we little realize the surpassing glory and exaltation to which the Christ has been called in one body, yet in different ranks (spheres).

The present age is indeed man’s day in more than one sense. During this age he is attaining to his best, both in the natural and in the spiritual, reaching the apex in every way. God will have a man, perfectly developed, majestic and worthy of Himself. He is in training during this age, learning to reign, by being reigned over, humbled that he may be exalted in due time when Christ takes His throne.

But the god of this world has a man in preparation also. He too will reign for a short season, 3½ years, as a counterfeit of Christ, the rightful world Emperor. This man will be a mighty specimen of the human race. He will signify the climax of man’s achievement and development. “*All the world wondered after the beast*” [Rev.13:3]. His greatness will be manifest. God will let Satan’s man have his day of manifestation upon the earth just before His Man is revealed from heaven. Before Him Satan’s man, with all his boasted pomp and power, will go down. It is at this point in the history that our vision corresponds. Israel will be restored to the place which has been given her in the purpose of God. They will be the foremost nation of the world. Christ will cast

out the demon of unbelief, which is diagnosed here as insanity, figured by His coming down from the mount and healing the lunatic child.

But after all, those 3 favored disciples apparently understand little of what is taught by this marvelous vision. The others who remained below are not prepared for its revelation, hence it is forbidden to be told them. So it is today. Some of us are taken up on the mountain apart from others where we behold wondrous things which we dare tell to very few, if any. They cannot take it in. Even the Apostle Paul said, it was not lawful to tell all the glorious things which his eyes beheld [2Co.12:4]. The carnal, or less favored ones, could not receive them. They would not only refuse his testimony, but actually persecute him and denounce his Divine Revelation as false. Such can only believe what they have seen themselves and are so lifted up with the little knowledge which they possess that even God Himself cannot give them any more light. Therefore, the Lord says, *"Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead"* [Mat.17:9].

As they are descending the mountain the disciples ask the Master concerning Elijah, who it was prophesied was to come and restore all things prior to the Messiah's coming. This prophecy they cannot reconcile with the fact which they have just been permitted to witness, that the Messiah is already here. Elijah too, they had just beheld, but in a far different connection. The very glory and light of the heavenly vision only emphasized by contrast, the gross darkness of the scene on earth. Christ answers their question with the statement that Elijah had already come, but was unrecognized, even as Himself, and men had treated him according to what was in their hearts. So too the Son of Man would presently suffer from them.

Then the disciples knew that He referred to John the Baptist who had come in the power and spirit of Elijah as we read. But these opposite things were difficult for them to reconcile—Messiah, upon whom all depended, yet rejected as well as His forerunner. They had seen the Kingdom and the glorified Messiah, its King; therefore, the Divine Purpose could not fail; but they could not imagine a victory through defeat or a crown by way of a cross. Israel rejecting the Messiah, and being in turn rejected and yet the promises fulfilled to her regardless of all; this was too much to receive. It was absolutely beyond reason to balance such contrary things. John was the Elias for his day *"if ye will receive it"* [Mat.11:14]. But the nation had no eyes to see, no heart to understand; therefore, Elijah in fulfillment of the prophecy has yet to come, as Christ also must come again to bring to Israel the blessing which has been promised them. Meanwhile, God is doing a new thing. He is perfecting the body of Christ and building a woman whom He is taking out of the body, to share the throne with Christ over Israel and the world.

Immediately upon their return from the mount, they are met by a distracted father who beseeches Christ that He will heal his son, who is a lunatic.

"And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour." [Mat.17:14-18]

This insane man represents the unbelieving mass of Israel who have gotten into diverse troubles because of their foolishness often falling *"into the fire and oft into the water,"* figuring tribulation. The disciples had been asked to cast out the demon and although they have received power from Christ; yet in this case they seem unable to use it. All this is a further evidence of the above interpretation. The glorified Messiah in His own Person must deliver Israel. In the beginning of this present age, the apostles had received power from on high, sufficient to cast out demons and heal all manner of sickness, but could not move Israel from her unbelief. Likewise at the

end. A remnant, mightily empowered and energized, will witness to the nation of Israel, showing their credentials by signs and wonders; nevertheless, they will fail to loose Israel until the Messiah appears. They will, as the lunatic, remain until that time without spiritual understanding. His words also prove this application, “*O faithless and perverse generation. How long shall I be with you? Bring him hither to me,*” He cries. The resource and power for Israel are found alone in Him.

Then the disciples enquire the cause of their failure. He explicitly states that it was because of their “*little faith*.”

“And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.” [Mat. 17:20]

The principle of the above promise always applies, when we are in the path of His appointment for us; but these words also have a most suggestive application to the nation of Israel (in Scripture, “*mountain*” often applies to kingdoms). Israel is the mountain of which He is especially speaking. He refers to their rejection and being cast out into the nations, the “*yonder place*.” He spoke **the word of faith** which caused their removal and He will not speak the word of deliverance until such time as they have indeed fasted and prayed [Mat. 17:21]. For the demon of unbelief, which has fastened itself upon them, goeth not out by coaxing, but by omnipotent power which will be constrained by their anguished cries to Jehovah. He, their King, will finally appear and deliver them.

RESPONSIBILITY OF DISCIPLES [MAT. 17:22-18:35]

After the above wondrous glimpse into the invisible things, while they yet abode in Galilee, the Lord again puts before His disciples the governing principles of His life—The Father’s will. This leads on to the cross, where He must go before His Kingdom will come.

“And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry (sorrowful).” [Mat. 17:23]

Though He emphasizes His resurrection also, they do not appear to understand Him; yet they were exceeding sorrowful. But we can understand the deep heart exercise of soul which possessed Him. Furthermore, we can trace the connection of His death with the incident that follows—the exaction of the tribute money. The world does not know the Son of God. “*All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made*” [Joh. 1:3]; but yet when He was passing through the world, as the Son of Man, He was not discerned. If the world had possessed this wisdom they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. It was culpable ignorance. They would not come unto the Light; for their deeds were evil, as He assures [Joh. 3:19]. Therefore, being rejected, He accepts their ultimatum without contention, and into this rejection calls His disciples to follow. They are identified with Him, as heirs of the rejected Kingdom, and this identification carries with it responsibility, as well as reward, as the sequel proves.

When they were come to Capernaum, the collector of the tribute money came to Peter, enquiring as to whether the Master paid tribute or not. Peter answers, Yes. He forgot the revelation he had recently received from the Father as to the identity of the Master; also the witness to His glory on the mount of transfiguration. He appears oblivious to the dishonor he is thus casting upon his Lord and the unbelief of his own heart that he manifests. Impulsive as always and desirous that the Lord may stand in favor with the rulers, he thus rashly speaks.

And when they were come into the house the Master does not wait for Peter's question, but manifests His Divine Knowledge by anticipating it.

"And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free." [Mat.17:25b-26]

There was of necessity but one answer. "*Of strangers*," says Peter. The Lord replies, "*then are the children free*." Ah! What deep heart searching for Peter. Had he not confessed Him as the Son? And now in a sense he has denied Him. But the Master does not chide him, nor remind him of his failure. He only makes it manifest to Peter, that He, the Son is free; that the world is in debt to Him, not He to the world. Thus, He vindicates His liberty, His right to refuse all taxation upon the ground of Sonship with the Father; but at the same time He does not insist upon His right. He surrenders His liberty in this respect and conforms to The Law as an ordinary man, He says to Peter,

"Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee." [Mat.17:27]

He thus hides His glory while yet revealing it. In acknowledgment of the Divine Right of the King, He summons a fish to pay tribute for Him. This is a pointed rebuke for the unbelief of man, even Peter, who could demand it from Him the Lord of the Universe. There is absolutely no compromise here. He maintains His place as the Royal Son, and yet at the same time manifests His grace in abdicating His rights and thus stooping to the occasion.

But there is more in this little incident than even the above. As the Son over the house of God He can bring others into the freedom of sonship. This is what we are further instructed by His attitude toward Peter. He takes the responsibility of Peter's debt upon Himself. The fish served Peter also, "*for me and thee*," is the assurance. The Son is here viewed identified with the sons:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." [Heb.2:14-15]

He was free, but the children were bound; therefore, He becomes a partaker of their bondage and limitations for a season that He might set them free forever. "*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*" [Joh.8:36]. We, like the Son, owe the world nothing but a debt of love. Yet as our Captain and Leader, we wait the day of the manifestation of the Sons of God to be recognized; that is the day for which all creation waits [Rom.8:19]. In the meantime, we pay tribute. The Son set us the example, as though we were not what we really are. We are not expecting, neither demanding recognition, but surrendering our rights. We are willing to be rejected while the King is still a stranger in His Kingdom. At the present time, our path lies in the way of humiliation and unselfish serving, even as was the choice and glory of our Lord and Master.

FURTHER LESSONS [MAT. 18]

The Master, in the following scene, insists more emphatically than ever upon the necessity of the lowly spirit. He makes use of a little child to teach the lesson which was sorely needed, as was evidenced by the above question of His disciples. There had been a dispute among them, Mark 9 and Luke 9 inform us, as to which should be the greatest when the Master would leave them.

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." [Mat.18:1-4]

The forwardness of Peter and the Lord's words to him about the keys, as well as his identification with the Master in the tribute money, no doubt gave rise to envy among the other apostles, which culminated in heated disputation. Their question revealed their condition of soul, which condition, alas, is much prevalent today. Who will be greatest? This is the paramount issue. It is in the Kingdom of heaven, religious things of which they are concerned. They, as the Master teaches, would make it but as a kingdom of the Gentiles: A place for the gratification of all the principles of fleshly self-seeking and ambition. But He insists that the Kingdom of heaven is built upon the very opposite of this carnal foundation. It commences in sacrifice, is built up in service; and no selfish principle can enter there. The Lord calls a little child, places him in the midst of these carnal men, and says, with one of His characteristic affirmations, *"Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

The Lord takes advantage of their question to teach some deep and fundamental things to them, as well as to us. He says we must enter the Kingdom before we can be great in it. Surely He here refers to the spiritual change which at another time, He calls the new birth. Then we enter the Kingdom, not in greatness, but in weakness and need. As a little child in the natural, we are dependent upon the love and care of others in the spiritual. We receive grace from God and from his people; not rewards for doing great doings. Even at the end, it is still His grace to which we are indebted for reward. In this way the Kingdom of heaven is entered and our greatness in it is absolutely dependent upon the simplicity with which we maintain this character of a little child. To such a one no ambitious thought is possible. Our littleness is not despised in this Kingdom. In fact, it is the one necessary asset without which we cannot even get in, much less be of any account there. All its principles are just the opposite of all earthly kingdoms, even as its King is a direct contrast to all earthly potentates. That this condition of nothingness may not become a distress, even though sometimes severely tested, He gives a special word of encouragement. He wraps the little ones up in a bundle with Himself; for He became the very least; hence He is the greatest. Here we have the one absolute requirement to overcoming in His Kingdom and one from which no one is barred. We may all be little.

But He is not through yet. Those little ones are subject to others, weak and defenseless; hence He must be their defense. He grows almost vehement, as we might say, in his denunciations of all who would intimidate or injure one of the little children. It were better for the one hurting such *"that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea"* [Mat.18:6]. So does the Lord prize and care for the feeble ones. Let us not forget it, lest we be guilty because we imagine we are great. Then He adds,

"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." [Mat.18:7-9]

Offences will come; but it is woe to the world, yes woe to the man who is the cause of the trouble. He continues with His admonition, repeating what He had said in the Sermon on the Mount, referring to the 7th Commandment of The Law. It were better to cut off hand or foot, better to pluck out an eye, if it was the offending case, than to retain these and be cast into the lake of fire. We would be somewhat at a loss to explain the above, as relating to the disciples, if we did

not have the knowledge of the Truth as revealed to the Apostle Paul. We must always bear in mind that Christ is speaking as the King in this Record of Matthew, and is here teaching the responsibility of the heir of His Kingdom. He is emphasizing the fact that the spirit of envy, which was swaying them at this time, would have no place in His righteous reign. It emanates from the old creation, the seed of the serpent, who is going to be cast into everlasting fire; though the truth of the 2 creations was not yet revealed, as taught by Paul.

Then He reiterates more emphatically,

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." [Mat.18:10]

"Despise not one of these little ones," not simply believers as such, but little children; lowly, humble, dependent believers, whom others, strong, able, self-sufficient ones, would despise, esteeming such of little account. But the Lord takes the opposite view. He informs us that they have special care. He was one of them Himself, the very least of all. They have angelic ministration, or representation we might say, in the very presence of God. As to whether this statement is sufficient to establish the doctrine of guardian angels, we cannot say; but we do know that angels came to minister to the Lord Himself on several occasions [Mat.4:11, Luk.22:43]. And we read of ministering spirits, sent forth to serve the heirs of salvation [Heb.1:14]. It may be if we were more like the little children we would be visited more often and therefore have a more certain explanation. At any rate, we would infer that the way of access to the Father is open and His favor is toward those little ones in greater measure than toward the strong disciples. Then the Teacher continues.

"For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost." [Mat.18:11]

Here is the explanation as to the identity of the children. They are the ones of Israel who were poor and needy, knew their condition and freely acknowledged it; hence, freely received His grace. This is a sure sign of these little ones. They take His favor gladly and thank the Lord. The joy of the Shepherd over the salvation of the lost sheep is now declared.

"How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray." [Mat.18:12-13]

Here we have but a glimpse of that which in Luke is more vividly portrayed—the contrast between the Pharisees and the tax gatherers and sinners. The 99 in the case here, emphasize more the solicitude of the Shepherd for the 1 that is lost and His tenderness when He finds it, as if there was not another. He counts not the cost, goes over the mountains, though the worth of the 1 sheep can never compensate Him for the danger and sorrow of the way. He contends that the Shepherd rejoices more over the 1 that was lost and found than over the 99 others which went not astray and therefore never gave Him the opportunity to find them. So it is today. It is the Father's will that not one of these little ones, these humble, contrite ones, shall perish [Mat.18:14]. The Son of Man has come to do His Father's will; therefore, He will save them, double assurance of safety. It is only the obstinate refusal of man to acknowledge his desperate need that hinders his salvation. It is the will of God that all men *"be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* [1Ti.2:4].

He further instructs the disciples that they have a responsibility toward one another as brother with brother. The Church is viewed for the first time as a place of authority and exercising power with which it is endowed. Yet, at the same time they have the assurance, in conscious weakness

and dependence upon Him that He is in the midst of the 2 or 3 gathered to His Name. This pledges Him to meet all their need.

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." [Mat.18:15]

Judging from conduct manifested today, we should think that He had said, "Tell it to everyone else, but the brother who has trespassed against you." But the Lord is here outlining the principle of grace which must continually actuate us. Grace has been shown to us. The Shepherd went out to save the lost sheep not the good sheep; therefore, we must exemplify the same spirit in our dealings with others. Grace is the only corrective. The Law could not change the leopard's spots, nor the Ethiopian's skin in our case [Jer.13:23]; therefore, why put our brother under its power.

If we truly judge ourselves, we will first go to our brother before we tell anyone else. Then if he hears us we have gained our brother. This is the whole sum of the matter, to gain the brother, to win him and hold him in fellowship. *"Tell him his fault between thee and him alone."* Thus the erring one is to be restored. There need be no exposure to others, no publicity at all, the trouble settled in a few minutes between brothers. But now a days when this is done, the one who has wronged his brother instead of admitting the case, justifies himself. He gets hard and bitter, because he is told his fault and immediately turns and falsifies or at least exaggerates the whole affair. He will not listen to the 2 or 3 who would fain persuade him. He can generally find 2 or 3 others who are just as backslidden in their experiences as he is and they join hands against the authority of the church and refuse to hear anyone. Finally, they end by starting another church, so-called, in opposition and enmity against the one where the Lord has put them.

Grace would fain have saved them; but no, they will not hear. Grace is the only power over sin. *"Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law, but under grace"* [Rom.6:14]. Grace is not laxity, as many ignorantly call it, but sin's conqueror and positive antidote. Yet, sad to say, many who are themselves debtors to grace and claim to proclaim its blessings, use The Law, or endeavor to do so, in their treatment of their brother. In this they too plainly manifest that they only know grace as a beautiful theory by which they escape hell and gain eternal life. We cannot make our brother holy by the strength of The Law any more than we made ourselves holy by its power. Therefore, if we have done with our brother as the Lord here enjoins and he refuses all our overtures, will not listen to the Assembly, the supreme court as it were, but leaves its protection and authority, we are free from responsibility.

"Let him be unto thee as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer." [Mat.18:17 RV]

The man so lawless is to be treated as though he had lost his place in the body of Christ, of which every local assembly in the will of God is the figure. Of course we who know the Truth are aware that this is but a temporary loss. He will at some time repent and acknowledge his failure else he will be cut off or in some definite manner be chastened by the Lord. For He has given absolute authority to the body of people who are thus acting in dependence upon Him.

"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." [Mat.18:18]

The power of God is here seen as allying itself with human weakness. What a leverage against sickness also, as well as sin and everything that is of the enemy, we have in this verse. His disciples are thus acting for Him, whether in the Kingdom or The Church. They are an executive body, not making decrees, but carrying out those already laid down. The one thing needful to exercise this authority is the sense of weakness, which is the order of thought here.

"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." [Mat. 18:19]

This is the way they may count upon Him. Simple as A-B-C, and yet how difficult to avail ourselves of its magnitude. We think, as so many say, that He cannot intend it just as it reads. They would take away from its fullness. The grace of this boundless promise is too much to expect; hence, they must dwarf it according to the carnal reason of man. But here the check on the bank of heaven stands, signed with the King's Name, waiting the 2 (least possible number of fellowship) to cash it in. Let us not limit His promise. He adds,

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." [Mat. 18:20]

Observe the condition, "*gathered together*"—fellowship in the Spirit implied, gathered by the Spirit, to the One Living Head. He is their sufficient support and sanction. He then judges even as they judge and acts in harmony with them. The same thought of delegated discipline is expressed by the Apostle Paul in dealing with that wicked man in Corinth [1Co.5:3-5]. The sentence was as binding as though Paul was present himself. But again we emphasize the fact, which we have noted throughout this book, that the King is concerned with Kingdom affairs and is teaching here as to the authority which will be vested in representative men in His Kingdom. We have nothing as yet distinctly of The Church as the Body of Christ: for this we must go on to the epistles of Paul for our instruction.

A DEBTOR TO GRACE

We have now a final word relating to the responsibility of manifesting grace. The Lord speaks a solemn parable, which manifests the full extent of our privilege and applies the principle, which should mold our every action, in the most practical way. A question of Peter's is the occasion of the added teaching. The leading apostle has been impressed with the regulations laid down by the New Lawgiver, or rather Grace-Teacher, as to the manner of dealing with an offending brother. Therefore, he comes with his question.

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." [Mat. 18:20-21]

Seven being the perfect number, Peter of course, judged this was the limit. But the Lord's answer shows there is no such limit; for He says, "*until seventy times seven.*" Peter is occupied with man's side of the question, his own rights being the main issue. The Lord therefore, takes up this side of things and manifests to us, by His parable, what should continually sway and rule our every action toward others—His grace toward us. When God limits His favor and forgiveness to us, then we may limit our forgiveness to our brother. Amen!

The King likens His Kingdom to a human king; therefore, we are thus prepared for some points in it which are not necessarily Divine.

"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants." [Mat. 18:23]

This king has a reckoning with his servants; immediately there is brought to him one overwhelmed with debt—10,000 talents, which he is unable to pay. He is sentenced to be sold, as also his wife and his children and all that belong to him. Here we have a figure of the sinner's debt to God in which his family all share. His ruin is their ruin also. So helpless are we. So fettered and bound that we cannot redeem ourselves, though we sell all that we have to pay our debt. But the debtor in this case does not yet know how impossible is his plea for mercy; he

says, *"I will pay thee all,"* as many of us also have said. The king takes no notice of the agreement. He is aware the man cannot pay the awful debt, but his heart is moved with such compassion that *"he loosed him and forgave him the debt"* [Mat.18:27]. This is very plain to us. We can apply the parable to our own case, though the point that the Master would emphasize is yet to come.

"But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest." [Mat.18:28]

"But that same servant went out," from the presence of the gracious king who had forgiven him, and found one of his fellowservants who owed him 100 pence (just a small fraction of which has now been forgiven him), and with violence seized him by the throat saying, *"Pay me that thou owest."* He was demanding his rights. There was no question that this amount was due him; but the lesson which the Master is teaching is obvious. We are to shown the same grace to our debtors that God has shown to us. We owed Him far more than they owe us; yet in our case we are so nearsighted. We can clearly see the inconsistency in the man in the illustration; but we are not so simple in judging things in our own case.

Then follows an appeal from the poor man, like his own recent one, which should have softened the hard heart.

"And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt." [Mat.18:29-30]

He refuses to let him go, but casts him into prison till he pays the debt. It is the absolute grace manifested by the king to him that especially emphasizes, by contrast, the legal spirit he manifests to his fellow servant.

The lesson seems plain, yet the Master develops and enforces it because of its magnitude and importance. The grief of his companion is noted, who bring the news to their lord. He summons the guilty man and sets before him the enormity of his offense against his debtor. The king who forgave his debt is wrathful and delivers him up to the tormentors until he shall pay all his debt. The moral of the story is this; when we fail to show mercy, mercy fails to flow for us. With what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us. If our rule is of law, law will be meted out to us. The Master applies the lesson with emphasis.

"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses." [Mat.18:35]

When Divine Mercy fails to make any impression upon the heart that has received of its bounty, that is failure indeed. Grace that never subdues nor conquers our spirit has been received in vain. This government of grace is reigning over us today. We may take plentifully of its blessings, not only that our debt against God may be forgiven, but that we may forgive our brother's debt to us. Again we add, the responsibilities of the Kingdom, as it will be established upon the earth, are especially in view in this parable; nevertheless, the principles of this marvelous discourse on grace and its actings toward our fellowman are for the disciples of this present age.

RESPONSIBILITY OF JEHOVAH [MAT. 19]

"And the Pharisees came to him tempting Him and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" [Mat.19:2]

Here we have a new departure. The Master leaves **Capernaum** ("*city of consolation*"), which had failed to realize the meaning of her name because she rejected the only Consoler, the Messiah of Israel. By His action, Jesus manifests what He teaches in the present section, that Jehovah is justified in rejecting His professed people with whom He had been in covenant relationship, for the reason that they first left Him. The marriage relationship is taken as the basis for His teaching and it is the Pharisees who put the question to Him as to the relationship of the man and the woman.

They are still seeking to tempt Him, as the inspired writer says. Still endeavoring to entangle Him in His words that they might have wherewith to accuse Him, or at least make enemies for Him. This subject of marriage and divorce was even then a much discussed and variously interpreted question; therefore, His answer involved an important issue. But the Master is equal to the occasion. There is a much more weighty and far-reaching significance to His Word in this regard than what is on the surface. The disciples little understood, much less the Pharisees. And so it is today. The mass of Christians, as well as the world, have taken their stand upon His answer here and endeavor to make it an absolute **law against divorce**. **IT HAS NO FORCE WHATSOEVER IN THIS RESPECT**. Paul has given to The Church instructions concerning this subject; while to the world there is nothing said whatsoever. What does God care how many times the wicked marry and are divorced? It is nothing to Him. But to return to our subject.

The Lord is addressing Israel, His Kingdom people. While His answer to the Pharisees contains some fundamental principles of God's dealings with man, of which the marriage relationship is the figure, yet in this case He is applying them strictly to Israel. The importance of the subject with which He was concerned was as much greater than the divorce question as His mind was greater than that of the men who interrogated Him.

He goes to the garden of Eden, to the first man and woman, for the embodiment of His teaching. He says that He who made them in the beginning, "*made them male and female,*" distinctly two and yet one, as His next words indicate: "*they twain shall be one flesh*" [Mat.19:5]. That is, this unity of 2 distinct personalities is a most effective figure of Jehovah in covenant relationship with man. It was so in the beginning. Adam and Eve were but the figure of the Last Adam, Jehovah, in covenant relationship with His people. He was one with them; they were one with Him. The very title, Lord—Jehovah, used of Deity in Genesis 2 (where we have the story of the first man and his wife) conveys this very meaning—God in covenant relationship with man.

The Master therefore insists that God joined Himself to man in a union that was never to be dissolved. All He asked of them was to love and obey Him, as a good dutiful woman and He would be their Husband, Protector, and Friend. But they heeded the voice of the tempter instead; therefore, they failed in their allegiance to Him. This was the first departure.

Then later, concerning Israel (which is the special woman He refers to in this case), He brought them out of Egypt by His own mighty power and made Himself known to Moses by His Name Jehovah—covenant-keeping God [Exo.6:3]. All He required of Israel was to heed His Voice and keep His covenant; then He assures them that they should be a peculiar treasure unto Him [Exo.19:5]. Jehovah made all the promises, not asking them for any vows or resolutions. He chose them to love, cherish, protect, and defend, as a strong and able husband. In other words, He called Israel into this grace covenant which He made to Abraham the father of Israel. He was the only party to this covenant. His only requirement of Abraham was that he accept His favor and leave all the responsibility to Him as the wife toward her husband. In this relationship no divorce figures.

But again, herein is where men failed. They wanted to take the case into their own hands (Eve's failure toward Adam); therefore, the Covenant of Law was given to Israel, in which covenant

they constitute one party, Jehovah being the other party. Jehovah promises to love, protect, and defend them if they will obey Him as a dutiful wife; otherwise, He will have cause for divorce. Moses, that is The Law covenant which came in later, allowed a divorce; but the Teacher wants it distinctly understood that this was not Jehovah's original intention. Divorce had no place in His Grace Covenant to Israel; for therein it was understood that He was surety for their faithfulness. The responsibility was upon Him. Israel did not like this. They desired to do their part, which, on account of the hardness of their hearts, they were unable to do. They were untrue to their Lord and Husband; therefore, He put them away. He assures us that He had the right to do this because of their failure as to their marriage vows. The Lord invariably compares His people, who depart from him, to a harlot. He likens their departure to fornication [Eze.16]. His meaning therefore is evident in the following,

"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" [Mat.19:9]

Observe that there is no reference to the woman obtaining a divorce; for as the figure of Jehovah's people, she should never have a cause. He was ever faithful to her. Israel yielded to other lovers and depended upon the flesh instead of Jehovah's right Arm. When they were in need, they went down to Egypt for help, rather than to Him; all of which speaks of departure from Him as their Husband.

He further emphasizes this departure, calling it "*fornication*," as sufficient cause for divorce. He had fulfilled His part of the covenant as the Husband; but Israel failed in her obligation to Him as the wife. She did not even recognize Him when He came to visit her. She refused all His offers of love and rejected all His overtures of peace and advances toward fellowship. Hence, He has rejected her and taken another company, The Church, as His wife. Paul was master of ceremonies in this later betrothal [2Co.11:2]; but not until Israel, as the wife of Jehovah, had been cast off. She has missed the highest calling as the wife of the Lamb, and at the present time is the divorced wife of Jehovah.

His disciples are impressed with His answer, though, as the disciples of today, they merely see the natural significance, to which they attach great importance. If the marriage relationship is so binding, then it is not good for a man to marry, they argue. His answer,

"But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." [Mat.19:11-12]

"*All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given*," shows a loophole of escape. All men cannot remain without a wife; therefore, all men cannot put away their wives and then remain single. To some, as with the Apostle Paul, it is given to do so; others have a necessity in this regard; therefore, they cannot receive this as an absolute requirement. So the Apostle Paul instructs in harmony therewith: "*For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that*" [1Co.7:7].

Again, we desire to assert that the above is not the whole sum of the matter. There is more in this little dialogue than we would surmise. The words of the disciples must be contradicted; for they could not apply to Jehovah's attitude toward Israel. He did not consider it good not to marry, but the contrary. Immediately after His divorce from Israel, the Father sent out the Holy Spirit in search of a wife for His Son, Jehovah-Jesus, God in fellowship with man. He did not choose His Son to remain without a wife. It was not given to Him to do so. There was a necessity in His case, that He have a companion, a helpmeet for Him. The Father's will so ordered it and this was law to Jesus.

“For,” as he continues, connecting what He is about to say with the foregoing, “there are some eunuchs who are so born from their mother’s womb; and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of heaven’s sake.” Here is further light on the same subject. In the natural, a eunuch is a man who is incapable of reproduction—he cannot beget children. He is weak, helpless, unfruitful; therefore, in the spiritual the inference is obvious. We are all eunuchs, born in this helpless condition, incapable of spiritual reproduction; hence, we are dependent upon the energy and power of the Spirit. He quickens and makes the believer fruitful according to the will of God. The Last Adam Himself was a eunuch. Jesus was the only One who made Himself a eunuch, for He emptied Himself of His Deity, laid it down as it were, in becoming a Man. He took the place of weakness and need. By choice He became dependent upon His Father’s will and power for fruitfulness. He went down in absolute nothingness upon the cross, *“a worm and no man,”* even as is written of Him [Psa.22:6]. In resurrection, as joined to His wife, He becomes fruitful. *“He that is able to receive it, let Him receive it,”* He adds.

“Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.” [Mat.19:13-15]

His disciples, as many today, would turn away these little ones and rebuke them. But Jesus said, *“forbid them not.”* Representatively, these are the ones of whom He is talking. He is using them as an illustration and enforcing His teaching thereby. The sense of need, helplessness, and dependence, which characterize a little child, are the indispensable assets of the spiritual realm. He puts His hand upon these little ones and claims such for His Kingdom. Then He departs. Therefore, we infer there is a change now in His teaching. And so it is. We find the very opposite, a perfect contrast, we might say, illustrated in the following incident and its question.

THE GOOD YOUNG MAN

“And behold one came to Him and said, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” [Mat.19:16]

Many consider this a difficult portion in view of Paul’s writings on eternal life. The perplexity vanishes when we consider the context in its relation to, and connection with, other Scriptures, especially that which precedes it. We have here depicted the very opposite of those principles (littleness, meekness, humility) which obtain the Kingdom of heaven; for the young man, herein described, manifests sufficiency, arrogancy, and pride.

He does not come tempting Christ, nor is he finding fault. No indeed. On the contrary he comes as a sincere enquirer. He realizes that this Man is a prophet and may be able to help him further on in his search for eternal life. He feels or believes that Jesus is a good man, even as he himself is good and a seeker after truth and God. But here is where he erred exceedingly. The Master refuses any encomium as identified with sinful fallen humanity. This was all the young man saw in Him. Therefore the Master’s query,

“And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” [Mat.19:17]

He Himself was not good if He was only a moral, clean man, as the young fellow himself, is the meaning. Therefore, He is either God or He is not good. The young man is in a quandary. Nevertheless the Teacher answers his question of *“What good thing shall I do?”* The young fellow does not doubt that it is only some good thing that he lacks. He is assured that he is on the right road to heaven, for it is the popular way, self-effort, so why feel disturbed? Although he is all one could expect, yet he is not quite satisfied. He cannot find one thing wherein he has

failed; yet maybe this other good young man may show him something more to do. And so He does; but not in the way that he desired. The Lord meets him just where he is. There is not one word of the Gospel, nor of His grace; for the young man is not in need of either. He is sufficient, strong, and able in himself. Law has not yet done its office work upon him; for *“by the law is the knowledge of sin”* [Rom.3:20]. He has not the faintest knowledge of sin or of his need of a Savior. *“But if thou wilt enter into life,”* the Master continues, *“keep the commandments.”* “Ah, now we have you,” the legalist exclaims. No indeed, the meaning is very evident. If man is searching to do something, there is always something to do. The Law has employment for him. It is in contrast to God’s grace. It is either the one or the other. There was nothing new to be pointed out upon this path. The Law had long since defined everything. There was nothing further needed. If men could really and truly keep those 10 Commandments, they would inherit eternal life. It would not be a gift. They would have well-earned it. No doubt it was true that no one had ever found eternal life by The Law; hence, the uneasiness which prompted the above question. Nevertheless, The Law had properly defined all the requirements and had added, *“The man that doeth these things shall live in them”* [Lev.17:6]. But as Paul learned, and as all learn to whom The Law truly comes, *“the very commandment which promised life proved to be death to me.”* [Rom.7:10 RSV].

The young man has not yet received the ministration of death. He has no sentence of death in himself that he should not trust in himself, but in God that raiseth the dead [2Co.1:9]. He stands here in his sufficiency and pride, also in his attitude toward Jesus, as a most vivid picture of Israel. As joined to Jehovah by the Covenant of Law, they were *“rich and increased with goods, having need of nothing”* [Rev.3:17]. Yet the young man was not completely satisfied. He lacked, but knew not what he lacked.

The Lord tests him by the 2nd table of The Law—the human side of these Divine Requirements. These are all summed up in *“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”* [Mat.19:19]. But the young man thinks that he is blameless as touching the righteousness which is in The Law, as Paul said of himself later. He is apparently sincere in his convictions even as Israel was as to doing their part of the covenant. Jehovah was under responsibility to do His part and give him eternal life. Therefore, he answers the Master in quiet confidence,

“The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?” [Mat.19:20]

He confesses that there is a lack, or at least desires the verdict of this Good Prophet as to his condition. But he gets more than he wants. He gets a requirement that tests his profession to the uttermost and manifests its inconsistency. Although the young man was no doubt sincere, he does not know himself. The Law’s deep inward requirement had never come to him; therefore, the Teacher would face him with his own profession. Then the blow fell.

“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” [Mat.19:21]

This is indeed heart-searching. The Lord does not intend the above as a condition of eternal life; for that is a gift. He has come to do that we might have life. He speaks to the man according to the character of his profession. He has claimed to fulfill all the requirements of The Law; therefore, he was saying that he loved his neighbor as himself for love is the essence of The Law. The Master then tells him to prove his love, not by words, but by deeds. Ah, this is some test. His neighbor’s need was his need. This was too much. The young man cannot receive it. He goes away sorrowful. Here is the secret: *“He had great possessions,”* houses and lands, with gold in the bank, no doubt. *“Great possessions,”* expresses it [Mat.19:22]. Both morally and materially he was rich; therefore, God could do nothing for him.

What a marvelous, realistic figure he presents of self-righteous law-keeping Israel, who were really blind to their own condition. Jesus was ready to accept him as one of His intimate

followers, for so He invited him. Mark, being more emphatic in this connection, says, “*Jesus beholding him, loved him*” [Mar.10:21]. But alas, he was rich; and the Master adds, “*Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of heaven.*” Furthermore, He continues, “*I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*” [Mat.19:23-24]. These are impressive statements. They speak of impossibilities, beyond natural limitations. The camel is the suited figure of the rich. He carries a burden on his back—the things of this world which handicap him in going through the straight and narrow gate. But God, how good to know that He is able to do that which with man is impossible, can change the camel. Salvation is of the Lord, is again the lesson as well as assurance to the disciples, when they cry in dismay, “*Who then can be saved?*” [Mat.19:25].

God can change the nature of the beast and make him kin to heaven. He can bring down the high and mighty from their seats and deliver them from all their pride of wealth or of holiness. This is what will indeed happen to Israel. They will be brought low by the Almighty power of God though He will use men and the devil to humble them. Afterwards He will bring them into His Kingdom, and do that for them which they never were able to do for themselves. They endeavored to bring their riches—self-righteousness—in with them, and that was what kept them out of the Kingdom.

At this juncture Peter is heard from again. He is amazed at these things. He desires to know what are the compensations of a letting go of all that we are and have in the natural. Some would blame him for so desiring to know what he was going to get as reward, but not so the Master. He condescends to the inquiry and answers it without the least hint of rebuke. He assures Peter that those who follow Him, sharing His sorrowful time of rejection by Israel, would have special honor and glory assigned to them in the regeneration, the glorious theme of His reign over Israel.

“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” [Mat.19:28]

They were qualifying then by their judgment of the riches of the world, religious and temporal, for the seat of the judge over the world in the Millennium. The term “*regeneration*,” applied here to the Kingdom, presents an instructive parallel between the work of God accomplished in the individual and in the world at large. In the only other place where we find this word **regeneration** it is applied to the individual state: “*According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of REGENERATION and renewing of the Holy Spirit*” [Tiu.3:5].

The Lord continues, emphasizing His good pleasure in those who have left all to follow Him, assuring them that there is a reward for the overcomer. There is not one loss for which there will not be a corresponding gain.

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.” [Mat.19:29-30]

A “*hundredfold*” compensation is promised, added to the gift of everlasting life. Observe that these distinctive rewards are separated from eternal life, the common portion of believers, the fruit of Christ's atonement. While even our reward is of grace on God's part, yet it is also the fruit of our service through grace. The place of children and heirs of God, and members of Christ's body—these and such like things—are all the fruit of Christ's death alone and have nothing to do with our labor of love or work of faith. But there are other things which are just as manifestly rewards for faithful service and suffering with Christ. Take for instance these words, “*Joint heirs*

with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him" [Rom.8:17]. Is there not added compensation for the suffering? Sure, sure.

SERVICE OF LAW OR GRACE [MAT.20]

In the following parable, Jesus further emphasizes the fact that it is all of grace, even then, and is especially applicable to Israel. He presses the signification of it upon our attention in these words, which are given at the beginning and close. "*For many that are first shall be last and the last shall be first*" [Mat.19:30]. He again likens the Kingdom to a man that is a householder; and in its application we are bidden to remember that we must distinguish between the way of men and the way of God even though the one may be taken to illustrate the other. God certainly does not hire laborers after the manner of men though Israel had so judged, after the thoughts of their legal hearts.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man, an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard." [Mat.20:1]

The parable of the householder illustrates the legality of those who so misconstrue the Lord's gracious rewards to His faithful servants. That He does recompense such service, far, far beyond our feeble thoughts, there is no doubt; but this too is grace on His part. We do not earn it. It is our own as Sons of God. We are thus identified with Christ, sharers in all the glory and honor which He has purchased for man by His death upon the cross. God is not under obligation to us; but He is under obligation to His Son and to our faith which appropriates His grace.

No child of God therefore is a hireling. We see the repulsiveness of such an attitude by means of the parable. That is the purpose for which the Lord speaks it. The first laborers hired agreed to labor for a stipulated sum. Later in the day hiring is given up. Those who enter into the vineyard become gradually more and more dependent upon the goodness of the householder to give them whatever suits him. To those called in the 3rd hour, he simply says, "*whatsoever is right (just), that shall ye receive*" [Mat.20:7]. At the 6th and 9th hour it is still "*what is right (just)*", but at the 11th hour there is nothing promised at all. They are absolutely dependent upon the Master's good pleasure.

When the laborers are called at the end of the day, the last receive a whole day's wages. To those called in the intermediate stages, we are not told the amount paid; but we infer that they all receive the same. When the first ones come expecting an increased amount they are paid everyone a penny, but no more. Some may deduce from this the doctrine of an equality of reward for all, which is very consoling for the indifferent and the worldly. The indifferent and the worldly want to seek their own things and not the things of Jesus Christ, and yet want to share jointly with Him and His co-heirs. But this is not the teaching contained herein. The nation of Israel figures the laborers who were hired at the first. They were under the legal covenant—do and thou shalt live. They served God (as they thought); but it was as a matter of duty. God therefore was under obligation to reward them for their labor. But the Teacher is here making manifest their error. "*It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,*" as another teacher says [Rom.9:16]. He has a perfect right to do what He wills with His own; He judges justly. There is no manipulating of the scales of His balance. If it is justice we want we will surely get justice and if it is mercy we will as truly get mercy.

Observe that it is only the first that murmur against the householder. They alone protest, not that he has not paid them according to their bargain; but because he has not paid them more. The others are all satisfied. They have indeed no cause for complaint. They all have been over paid, as we might say; for this is the way of mercy. In the day of reward there will not be one legalist present to murmur against the amount of his recompense.

The Lord of the vineyard answers one of the complainers with these words,

"But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" [Mat.20:13-15]

He gave them exactly what he promised, no more and no less. They wanted wages, not grace; therefore, they received that for which they contracted. The householder's hands were tied. He cannot be merciful to those who claim title to recompense. They shut off God's mercy. *"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work"* [Rom.11:6]. Wages are measured by what man is and does, grace is measured by what God is and does; therefore, at the best that man measures, how far short he comes of the measure of what God is willing to freely give to those who freely take.

The more we think we deserve, the less we appreciate or want God's grace. The more we imagine we can claim in ourselves, the less we desire to claim His grace. The Jews were the first called, in distinction from the other nations, but they were on a legal basis as to their reward. They wanted wages according to their works and they got that for which they bargained. The Gentiles had no claim, they were obliged to take whatever God gave to them. They deserved nothing and yet obtained everything. Therefore the last, according to time as well as of merit, became the first; for they were absolutely shut up to God's mercy, an ocean divine, a fathomless, bottomless sea.

Then the Lord in closing adds, *"for many be called but few chosen"* [Mat.20:16], which words have been somewhat difficult to many. In the connection with what has preceded they are easily understood. The Lord is simply summing up in a few words what He has been teaching—that the old creation is rejected. He calls all to come to Him; but He cannot choose them for the reason that they do not come as poor and needy. They estimate themselves too highly. They have not the true judgment of themselves; therefore, Divine Grace is shut off. It cannot get possession of them. The hiring is disqualified for true spiritual service in the vineyard of the Lord.

STANDARD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

"And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death." [Mat.20:17-18]

In the preceding section, we have witnessed the imperfection of man's rule because of his insubordination to God's rule; but now we are to witness the contrary. Here we see another manner of Man, the Man who is qualifying for the rulership of the world by being ruled over. Observe this fact closely in the life of the King. He is always in loving subjection to His Father's throne above. Obedience is the one absolute requirement of His Kingdom. These unselfish, undying principles exemplified by the Master and Head of the New Creation, are not confined to Him alone. They are the principles which are to be embodied in His Kingdom and which will constitute its glory and renown in contrast with all the kingdoms of men which have preceded it.

Therefore, at the outset we are given to behold the life and power of such perfection in this lowly Man going up to Jerusalem. He deliberately chooses this way of victory in the perfect consciousness of what it is to cost Him. He takes the 12 apart and makes known to them all the way that He must go. He would have them realize that it was not some new unforeseen providence which had arisen because of man's rejection; but the very purpose for which He was born—to do the will of God. In the volume of the Book it was written of Him, *"I come to do thy will, O God"* [Heb.10:7, Psalms 40:7]. He knew all the bitterness of the cup which He must drink. Each

ingredient was clearly seen—the betrayal, the condemnation by the rulers of His own people (the Jews), and their giving Him over into the hands of the Gentiles; then the mockery, scourging, and death. Each item of His suffering was recognized and commented upon, as also the fact that He must rise.

Mark informs us that fear fell upon His disciples at this juncture. Luke says that they understood none of these things; but Matthew gives us no hint of their feelings. He concentrates our attention upon the Chief Speaker, the King and His words, sharply contrasting His words with the appeal of the mother of Zebedee's children which follows. We are thus taught how very little the chosen few grasped the announcement of the despised way of the cross. They are seeking their own things, their own glory. They would have the exaltation without the humiliation, the crown without the cross. They were turning away from that which is man's only hope of honor.

Nature is leading, as is plainly evident. The mother of these 2 choice disciples witnesses to us of the tendency of natural relationships to intrude into the things of God. It teaches us how jealous we should be for our new selves, lest our old selves get some of the glory. We see in the example which the Lord left us that He continually refused all control and leading of the flesh even when His own mother was the aggressor.

The Master asks of those sons of Zebedee, as well as of all self-seekers, "*are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of?*" [Mat.20:22]. Ah, here is the test. The bitterness, the wormwood and the gall must first be quaffed; then the sweet, delicious wine of the Kingdom. They answer quickly, "Yes," for as soon as it is presented as personal gain, they are ready. The Lord is aware of their frailty and the self-confidence of the flesh; but He also knows the purposes of His Father regarding them. They are a chosen company, wonderfully favored of God. Though her 2 sons may not sit on His right hand or on His left (for this is reserved in the Father's will for another company of which these were not a part) yet He adds, "*Ye shall indeed drink of my cup*" [Mat.20:23]. They too must quaff the bitter dregs of rejection and death and share in some measure in His cross and therefore in His exaltation and throne; but the place they request, is not His to give. How emphatically this speaks of ranks in The Church. Who is to occupy this choice place in glory which even those great apostles cannot have? We answer, "It is reserved for the Bride of the Lamb." Oh, yes, there are reserved seats in The Kingdom throne which are not even to be had for the asking. God is sovereign. The Son puts all the responsibility upon the Father as to these favored ones.

Always we view Him the perfect Servant: **His, not to question, why? His, but to do and die.** In exaltation and honor, as well as humiliation and death, the Father is Sovereign with Him. This was free-will abandonment of One who was perfect in wisdom and goodness, serving to the utmost, with never a desire beyond the Father's will. He, the Son of God in manhood, was the Perfect Creature in the creature's place which He had willingly embraced and has marvelously adorned. He commends to us, this dependent, surrendered life.

But the 10 disciples are indignant with the 2 who were seeking their own things and thus they manifest their kinship with them morally. The Lord is so patient with their carnality that we cannot but marvel at His grace. He teaches them that their thoughts of His Kingdom are entirely at variance with His thoughts and purposes. They would but make it like the kingdoms of the Gentiles. He cannot allow that, for in His dominion there will be no envy, no strife as to who will be greatest. The gratification of ambition, the lust for gain will not be tolerated there. The path of rulership in His Kingdom is paved with the labor of love. The greatest servant is the chief ruler. Therefore, whoever desired to be great among them must be at the service of all and the chief among them would be known by his service. Such labor of love was His credentials to office.

Christ's own ministry was greatest, hence He is Chief, and the place at His right and left hand are reserved for those who follow closely in this despised and lowly way. He assures them, "*Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.*" Then He unfolds the extent of this service, "*to give His life a ransom for many*" [Mat.20:28]. Serving all, this road led Him even unto the death of the cross; and He holds out no other way to those who would fully share His glory and place.

In Matthew 20:30-34, we see 2 blind men sitting by the wayside; they cried out to Jesus as He approached them. Their physical darkness was no handicap. They were inwardly enlightened to call upon Him. Although the multitude rebuked them, they would not be denied. This is all figurative of another day when a remnant from the Jews will wake up to their need and will meet the opposition of the apostate nation. But those blind men cried the more. They refused to be silenced and their voice was heard by Him, who never turns a deaf ear to such ones. He answered by opening their eyes. The light of day dawned for those sightless men. The first face they saw was that of the Lord, the King. Then they followed Him. The procession grew. How suggestive and real it all reads.

Two men are mentioned here, while Mark and Luke speak only of 1 blind man; but this is characteristic of Matthew, as we have noted previously. Two is the number of competent witness; and, in the case here, refers to the character of the King which at that time was prominent. It was the day of His public showing to Israel, an earnest of that future day when all the world shall see Him.

THE KING'S TRIUMPHANT ENTRY [MAT.21]

"And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem and were come to Bethphage unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them unto me." [Mat.21:1-2]

We have noted again and again in these studies that Christ has long since been rejected. Nevertheless, He must be presented in Jerusalem at the due time as the promised Deliverer and King of the Jews. Therefore, in our present section, we are to view the Royal Procession. Viewed with the eye of man, a motley crowd it was—a poor, despised, unknown Man riding upon an ass, escorted by 12 Galilean fishermen, who acted no doubt as His bodyguards (as men would say), being the closest to Him. After them came the stragglers from every quarter—a great multitude followed Him in the way.

The procession began at **Jericho** ("*city of the curse*"), which was about to fall upon the head of the Blessed, the Son of God. He alone could prevail to lift it off the world. The city was judged in the day of Joshua, the figurative Savior. From thence, Rahab the harlot was snatched as a brand from the burning. Now it witnessed the grace of the true Savior, the Son of David.

As the cortege drew near to Jerusalem, they came to **Bethphage** ("*The house of unripe figs*") unto the mount of Olives, signifying the fact, which is very apparent, that the nation of Israel (the Jewish house) was not ready to receive Him. The time of ripe figs had not come. We later see the drying up of the fig tree, which is a most striking prophecy relative to the Jew. But before this came to pass, He sent 2 of His disciples (this number 2 again) to claim an ass and a colt for His use. The colt is the suitable accompanist of the Prince of Peace in contrast to the warhorse upon which He shall be riding when He comes again [Rev.19:11].

Surely the King did not ride upon the ass and the colt also; therefore, there must be some deep significance to the fact that they are mentioned here as though He rode upon both. Now we believe the teaching is plainly this: **Christ is not going to reign alone**. The first Adam was not given dominion without Eve; neither will the Last Adam sit upon His throne without His helpmeet.

But she could not be with Him at that first showing. He had not entered into that deep sleep of death out of which she must emerge; therefore, though the colt was there for her, yet she was not there. The present age is her day to ride the ass, the beast of humiliation.

The latter part of the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 will then be fulfilled for "*He is just, and having salvation,*" could not be said of Him at that time. Yet the crowds exhibit a temporary enthusiasm. True disciples render genuine homage to the King. Even the city is moved, though they merely question, "*Who is this?*" But the multitudes' great "*Hosannas to the Son of David,*" seem inconsistent when they answer, "*This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee*" [Mat.21:10-11]. The King is already uncrowned. He is but a prophet. Alas! This is the dependence which we may put upon the flesh. One day they crown us, the next day they crucify us.

But here is One who has no confidence in man's estimate of Him. He knows who He is and what He has come to do. His way is plain before Him. Jesus enters into the temple which was in fact the place of His throne, but now defiled and desecrated by the greed of men who had the place as leaders of the people. He had met the same condition of "buying and selling in the temple" when He commenced His ministry [Joh.2:15]. He then cast out the offenders and purged the temple. Now He repeats the cleansing. He establishes His authority there in the place which was professedly His own, in the heart of Judea, the city of Jerusalem. He denounces their attitude to His Father's house.

"And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." [Mat.21:13]

Even though He insists the temple should be a house of prayer, which they have made a den of thieves, the marvel and miracle of it is that they did not turn and rend that apparently defenseless Man. Instead, they turned and went out of the temple at His rebuke, making room for the poor and needy and the blind and lame who came unto Him and were healed.

Thus the authority of the King of the Jews is owned by man and the devil. Both must obey Him, yet they are hostile and rebellious. Although He has claimed and proved His title to David's throne, He cannot take it yet; for His people shall be willing in the day of His power [Psa.110:3]; and there are only a few of these loyal, willing ones now. The majority do not want this man to reign over them. Hence, there is no great triumph for Him. Only the children's voices are now heard in praise.

"And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" [Mat.21:15-16]

The loud hosannas of the multitude, which have subsided, are now taken up by the children. What has been hidden from the wise and prudent is revealed to babes, is the rebuke with which He silences the scribes and the Pharisees when they complain of the children's music. He asks them if they had never read the Scripture, "*Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou has perfected praise*" [Psa.8:2]. No doubt if they had been of the character of the little ones, they would have seen and understood the writing long ago. But it is hid from their eyes. For them the Kingdom cannot come.

The King goes out from them. His very attitude speaks of rejection. He goes to Bethany to spend the night with His friends, whose hearts were open and receptive to His words of grace. He was a real man and He sought comfort and understanding from those of His own kind. In the morning, as He returns to the city, He is hungry. No doubt He arose early leaving without breakfast. A fig tree by the wayside attracts His attention. He comes to it, if perchance He may

find some fruit to satisfy His hunger. Alas, He finds nothing thereon but leaves only. As the significant sequel, Mark informs us that it was not time for figs; but the leaves upon the tree promised fruit. The fig tree, contrary to the nature of other trees, bears fruit before leaves.

This is indeed all wonderfully suggestive of the Jewish nation who, in their profession (leaves), stood alone in allegiance to the Living and true God. Fruit was therefore to be expected from them if from any nation; but even here there was nothing but leaves. Like their prototype Cain, they had gone in the way of self-righteousness; therefore, Christ pronounces judgment upon the fig tree.

"Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig tree withered away." [Mat.21:19b]

Immediately the curse becomes effective; the fig tree withers away. That refers to the Jewish nation after the flesh. They will never bear any fruit for God, though the fig tree will revive again; for later, the Lord urges His disciples to learn a parable (a lesson of deep importance) from its resurrection.

"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." [Mat.24:31-33]

He intends us to understand, that the Jewish nation, restored to their own land of Palestine (but as the old creation, with its empty profession as the people of God), is a positive sign of the end. But they will have no fruit for the Husbandman even then, nothing but leaves, until such a time as they will be turned from their own way of self-righteousness. Adam and Eve's covering is the way of God's righteousness, a type of the durable garment of salvation purchased by Christ on the cross.

The disciples were amazed at the miracle of the withered fig tree, as well they might be. Today, disciples are amazed at the beginning of its rejuvenation. We are living in the days when we are seeing the leaves sprouting on the tender green branch. This is a positive sign of the King's return. We would not be surprised if the disciples, Jewish no doubt, should pray the mountain (kingdom) out of the way which hinders the fig tree's growth. This is the word of encouragement to such:

"Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done." [Mat.21:21]

We may also see in these words a veiled prophecy of Israel's disappearance, as a nation, into the sea (Gentiles); for they were only an obstacle in the way of faith then. The promise has also a personal application and it is entirely contrary to Scripture to limit it in any measure; for the Lord distinctly makes His last assurance as full as possible.

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." [Mat.21:22]

Nothing is impossible to faith.

THE KING'S AUTHORITY QUESTIONED

"And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" [Mat.21:23]

That was the morning after the day that He had driven the money-changers out of the temple. The multitude was scattered while the opposition was strengthened and increased by greater numbers; yet their enmity toward Him was kept in check by His dominating influence, as men would say. But we would say, it was because of the God-given authority of which He was conscious and of which He made them conscious. He knew who He was, and this very knowledge lent weight to His words and actions. They were awed and overcome by His omniscience as well as His omnipotence. He lay bare the very secrets of their hearts. All their hypocrisy and animus was revealed by His accusing words. He told them beforehand what they were about to do because of their hatred of God and His Messenger.

He also plainly informed them that though they kill Him, they will not get rid of Him. He is Master still, He assures them. He is the nation's rightful Ruler whether they acknowledge and accept Him or not. Quiet, simple, powerful, scriptural words, that burn or cut their way into the innermost depths of their hearts (though seared and hardened by defiant, willful unbelief), confound, if they do not convert them. So the inspired Record goes on, step by step to the end, which is now so near, when He is absolutely cast out, and their house, no longer His Father's house, is left desolate. But this leaves the door open to the usurper, the Gentile invader, the one who should *"come in his own name"* and be accepted by the nation of Israel.

"I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." [Joh.5:43]

As yet He stands in His own house which He has symbolically cleansed by driving out the wicked leaders, those making merchandise of the Truth, figurative of the true cleansing in the end of this age. For there will be a time, at the 2nd Coming of Christ, when the false prophet, with his miraculous image of the false Christ, will be cast out of the temple and Christ Himself will then be enthroned in Jerusalem, as well as in the hearts of the people forever. He is still teaching the people publicly, as was His custom, when the highest court of the religious leaders, the Sanhedrin, unite their forces and come and inquire of Him as to who had authorized His actions.

Observe the force of their question: *"By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?"* They only were those who could give authority and their words implied a denial of any such empowerment to this Man. But the King makes them to know that He does not need their establishment of His claims. He has ignored them and their authorization by going over their heads, as it were, and getting His credentials from a higher court, the Divine Court of Heaven. Hence He answers their question by asking another.

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." [Mat.21:24-27]

They had sent a special delegation to John, His forerunner, to investigate the claims of Christ, and the Baptist's eulogistic testimony was known to all; and *"he bare witness unto the truth,"* the Master said [Joh.5:33]. What then was the baptism of John? Was it simply the word of man or a command from heaven? Was John a prophet of God or was he not? These were His questions. They were truly in a box. The Mastermind had forced their hand, for if they admitted John's baptism as from heaven they must also acknowledge his verdict of Christ as Divine. Thus, they were competent to answer their own question. They see the trap He has put them in. Therefore, they profess ignorance, with all the humiliation it involved, rather than that the people would know of

their willful rebellion against God; for they feared the people. But their own court is thus found faulty.

Its weakness is apparent. They would not be competent to judge for the people if they cannot discern what is of God. The Master takes advantage of their own admitted failure. "*Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things,*" is His positive, powerful answer to their question. They had refused to acknowledge His Divine Rights, attested to by Divine Words and Works; therefore, He refuses to acknowledge their authority to question Him in any sense.

Then He further questions them in His desire to arouse their conscience. A man had 2 sons, He states. The one son, when commanded to "*Go work today in my vineyard,*" openly and defiantly refuses, yet later repents and goes. However, the other son expresses his ready obedience, but does not go. "Which one pleased their father?" He enquires. His words forced their answer, "*The first.*" Then He applies His parable to them so that there could be no mistake. "*Verily I say unto you, That the publicans (tax-gatherers) and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you*" [Mat.21:31]. He further adds that they, the rulers, had refused the message of John (who called Israel to repentance), while the people of open sinful life heard and yielded to the truth. Even the powerful witness of their regenerated lives and changed ways failed to convince the rulers. They did not want God's will.

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD

Yet this is not all. He further searches them out with the lantern of His words. He speaks another parable which leaves them without a shred of covering under which to hide the thoughts of their rebellious, wicked hearts.

The whole history of Israel is outlined as it were in His words at this point. They are told beforehand of the defeat and ruin which would follow their rejection and apparent triumph over Him. He takes the well-known figure of a vineyard to illustrate His story. It had repeatedly been cited by the prophets as a figure of the nation of Israel. The man, the householder, does not fully represent God; but he was an apt figure of Jehovah according to their warped and prejudiced conception of Him. They wanted a God who was in a far country, the farther the better; one who would leave all His goods in their hands to use as they wanted. This is allowed in the parable, though their responsibility toward the householder is also maintained. He had sent them servants, again and again during the ages to receive of the fruit of His property. The prophets were those messengers who came and presented and urged the claims of the Lord; but how had they treated those faithful ones? They had "*beat one, and killed another, and stoned another,*" is the Divine Commentary on their actions [Mat.21:35].

Now the Householder sent His Son. Here the glory of the Speaker is revealed to them; for surely, He has title to say, "*They will reverence (respect) My Son.*" But when the husbandmen saw the Son, instead of enquiring "Who art thou?" they said, "*This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance*" [Mat.21:37-38]. Ah, this was indeed wisdom from above. He pictures for them all that is in their hearts to do, as though it were already history. They were face-to-face with Him and those deep searching, piercing eyes were judging their every action. He was leaving them not one loophole of excuse upon the ground of ignorance. They knew what they were about to do and were doing it with their eyes open. They admitted their guilt and spoke their own sentence of rejection and death. But because of the hardness of their hearts they would not acknowledge His claims and receive Him as their Messiah.

Yet they would have been tolerant of a false claim, as they will later, while the True Claimant they reject. God demands holiness and a subject heart; therefore, His yoke is intolerable to the natural man. The natural man wants to profess that he knows God, but at the same time he

refuses to yield to His will. These 2 things are incompatible. “*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*” [Amo.3:3]. God will not come into harmony with the thoughts of man; hence, man must agree with God else he cannot walk with Him acceptably and harmoniously.

Jesus quietly assures them, by quoting from their own psalms, with which they were familiar, that He must die. Had they never read that it was written, “*The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner*” [Mat.21:42, Psa.118:22]. Their building would not stand; for the Lord’s marvelous doing was to be the reversal of their doing. The result of this, for the then present generation, would be the taking from them of the Kingdom and giving it to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. He does not here allude to The Church, which is nowhere called “a nation;” but refers to the Israel of the future, the new creation, even “*the righteous nation which keepeth the truth*” [Isa.26:2].

Then He continues, “*And whosoever shall fall on this stone,*” alluding to Himself, “*shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder*” [Mat.21:44]. To fall upon Christ in repentance and faith was to find salvation from judgment; but to refuse the refuge He affords was and is to court everlasting destruction. He alludes especially here to the judgment of the end of the age, when The Stone shall fall upon the feet of the image, the United 10-Horned Kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar’s vision, and shall effectually destroy and scatter all its boasted power. Judgment will then be complete and the Lord Jesus Christ, with His triumphant people, will be the manifested Ruler of the 5th World Empire. Then it can be truly said, “The kings are dead; long live The King,” The Lion of the tribe of Judah.

The Sanhedrin knew that He referred to them; but the people were stirred by His words and they feared the people; for they took Him for a prophet. Therefore, they could do nothing as yet. His time had not come. Then He spoke another parable to them, a continuation in prophecy, as we might say, with that which had preceded. In these inspired allegories we are shown some pen-pictures of Divine Purposes.

MARRIAGE OF THE KING’S SON [MAT. 22]

“And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.” [Mat.22:1-3]

The above is a most important parable. It contains some deep and fundamental principles which were the actual and constraining causes of creation. In the king who desired to make a marriage for his son we have a representation of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the eternal ages, we know not how far back, this desire was in His bosom, and He went about to execute a design whereby He might attain His purpose. Therefore, we have the first creation, the fall, redemption, and a new creation. He planned the whole scheme and then made a blue print, as the architect would say, of His whole counsel, in which the man and his wife were the central figures.

This counsel or will of God, we find outlined in the Scriptures. It is a marvelous coincidence, which proves our point, that the Bible commences with a wedding [Gen.2] and ends with a wedding [Rev.19]. The Last Adam must have His Helpmeet, His Eve, as well as the First Adam. All that is written in between, as well as the ages which separate these 2 great events, are but a preparation for the marriage of the King’s Son. Does this not fill us with awe and worship to contemplate the wisdom of Him who has ordained all things after the counsel of His own will? But to return to the parable.

In the first place there is no mention of the bride; but she is the principle figure and as there can be no wedding without her, we know she is implied. The call is sent first to the Jews. They were already the invited guests; but in due time the call became insistent. That was the message of the forerunner John, and the apostles before Calvary. The invitation is apparently disregarded. Those invited would not come. But that did not hinder the King. He proceeds with his preparations: *"my oxen and my fatlings are killed."* Here we have Calvary most perfectly expressed. Christ as the bullock and the lamb must be sacrificed before there could be any nuptial feast. Now the call is more positive, *"and all things are ready : come unto the marriage"* [Mat.22:4]. But the latter folk made light of the invitation. They did not consider it seriously. It was not of any importance to them. Their own interests were paramount. One went to his farm, another to his merchandise. They neglected the great salvation. But there were others, the smaller number, the remnant, which did worse. They not only mocked, but ill-treated and afflicted the King's servants, even slaying some of them.

We are surely not in any doubt as to the interpretation of the above. The attitude of Israel toward God's message of grace is plainly discernible as well as His judgment of them in that which follows. The King's wrath boils hot against those murderers who thus rudely disregard His offer of goodwill and fellowship. He sent His armies and destroyed both those men and their city in 71 A.D. under Titus the Roman general. But yet the King is not daunted nor discouraged. He has set out to make a marriage for His Son and nothing can stop Him or His purpose. It must be consummated. He has gone too far now to draw back in any measure.

As He intends to have a great feast He must perforce have guests; therefore, He sends out the invitation again, *"Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid (invite) to the marriage"* [Mat.22:9]. The King is not at all particular nor exclusive. His invitation surely reminds us of the **whosoever** of the Gospel. There is no difference as to the worthiness or unworthiness of the individual. The bad and the good are gathered regardless of their condition. Their acceptance of the invitation is the only requirement. Salvation is needed by the best and available for the worst. The King Himself provides the wedding clothes. Thus the seats at His banquet are all filled. The wedding is supplied with guests. It is all at His expense.

But this is not the end of the story; for we have here only a parable and the Teacher is now emphasizing man's responsibility, the other side of the question. At the present time, the Kingdom, as we have seen repeatedly in our study, is in a mystery form. This phase is a mixed condition, the false found with the true. That makes it difficult to interpret. Yet, when we consider that while the King is absent the administration of the Kingdom is in the hands of men, we need not be surprised at its condition. It will be cleansed of all that offends when the King comes and takes the government into His own charge. The gathering of the guests is of course seen upon earth. It is profession without actual possession to which He refers and in which there is confusion. There is no prophetic outline given us here as to final events. It is just the bare fact stated of what the end will reveal as to the class which the man without a wedding garment represents. The revelation of the King will reveal the hypocrisy which is hidden today. Only the robe of righteousness, procured because of the slain Bullock and Fatlings, will be allowed at that great nuptial feast. This is the best robe in the Father's house and is suitable for even the best seat at the banquet table—Judgment is inevitable. The King said unto his servants, *"Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness."* The rejecter of Christ is, of necessity, outside of all the light and rejoicing of the house of God. Then the awful sting of remorse follows, *"there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"* [Mat.22:13].

Yet, even so, in all of this, the Master emphasizes the sovereignty of God. He will not allow that it is in the power of man or of Satan to defeat His purposes. He simply affirms by His closing words, *"Many are called, but few are chosen"* [Mat.22:15], what Scripture constantly asserts, that, *"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world"* [Act.15:18]. God knew what He would do. He

simply let the devil and man have the stage of this world for a while and play their little parts. When they are about through, having reached the climax, He will surprise them by a sudden entrance upon the stage in the last act. Then, the setting of the drama, as well as its end, will change. Exit Satan and man. God will have the leading part. He will show Himself Sovereign over all.

At this point the Sanhedrin withdraw. They can stand no more. They hold another private conference as to how to proceed to entangle Him in His words; for He constantly had the best of the argument. Yet for all this they refuse to be convinced of His Divine Claims.

OPPOSERS UNITED

The Pharisees are still the aggressors, although they now have reinforcements. They send their disciples with the Herodians. They themselves were hidden; for it was not to be expected that they would be in unity with those, their former enemies. But the enemies are all united now to further question this unique, defenseless Man who continually puts them to shame. They were convinced they now would catch Him between the 2 opposing principles for which they stood. They wanted His decision, as it were; for they say,

"Teacher we know that Thou art true and teachest the way of God in truth, regarding not the person of any man. Tell us therefore what thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?" [Mat.22:17]

Now this was a most dangerous question. It involved much more than what is upon the surface.

- If His answer were "Yea" (which would have pleased the Herodians), it would have brought upon Him the scorn and derision of the multitude. They were humbled by and constantly fretted against the increased and unjust taxation. Furthermore, an affirmative attitude would be almost a repudiation of His claims of Messiahship; for, His claims of Messiahship carried with it positive assurances of bringing deliverance from all such bondage. The Messiah was to deliver them from all their enemies.
- On the other hand if His answer were "Nay" (which would have pleased the Pharisees), there was the opposite danger of arousing the ire of the Roman government and bringing upon Him the weight of its iron heel. He is as though in a net; but as usual, He finds a hole in it and slips out.

His reply is worthy of Himself. He assures them at the outset that their duplicity is fully known to Him, as well as the object they hope to gain. They were hypocrites and He makes no apology for so naming them. *"Show me the tribute money,"* He cries. They bring to Him the Roman coin upon which was Caesar's image. *"Whose is this image and superscription?"* He asks. *"Caesar's,"* they answer. *"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's"* is this heavenly Diplomat's rejoinder [Mat.22:18-21]. What unanswerable wisdom. Man was made in the image of God and belongs to Him.

The above is not simply the arbitrary ruling of Christ as to the rights and jurisdiction of the civil court over the spiritual. He has not this in mind at all. It was the dominion of the Gentile that was galling to the neck of the Jew, the yoke which was especially irksome to the Pharisees: but under which they never would have come had they owned Jehovah's yoke and given to Him His due. It was the refusal of His yoke which necessitated Gentile rule as then expressed by Caesar.

Israel had fellowshipped the world by soliciting their help in time of trouble; consequently, they were simply now reaping what that had sown. They were Gentile in heart and way; therefore, God had reckoned them where they belonged. He had done the same, though in a more marked way, to the 10 tribes that had been scattered among the Gentiles long before this. God had sent

them back from whence He had taken them; for they had proved their kinship with the nations. Let God's people give to God that which is His due, then there will be no question as to Caesar. They will not be brought into bondage to him. Jehovah's yoke is easy and His burden is light, but refuse His yoke, and you get that of Caesar's. The world will shortly feel this, to their sorrow, when the Antichrist appears.

So went the first attack to the confusion of the adversaries who were filled with amazement at the wisdom and foresight displayed in His answer. When they heard it they left Him and went their way. He was too much for them. They made room for the Sadducees, another religious sect among the Jews. These were the unbelievers in the resurrection. They had their question ready. It was in regard to the relationship of the man and his wife in the resurrection. They thought they had a difficult problem for Him, namely, the case of the woman who had married 7 brothers.

"Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her." [Mat.22:28]

The Lord answers their question promptly. He is never at a loss; but at the same time sharply rebukes the unbelief that inspired it. With His characteristic wisdom He not only replies to that which they ask, but also sets them right as to another question of their creed—that of the angels. He positively affirms the existence of angels, saying that in the resurrection the saints will be like them in this respect, *"they neither marry, nor are given in marriage."* They know not the power of God, He adds. Therefore, they can conceive of nothing else in heaven than a mere reproduction of earthly conditions. This was a display of ignorance of the Scriptures, for the truth of resurrection underlies the very simplest assurance of God's covenant-relationship with men [Mat.22:29-32].

To the Sadducees, the words spoken to Moses out of the burning bush, *"I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,"* could have no meaning [Exo.3:6]. Abraham was but a shadow that had passed away without even a hope of recall. What comfort or strength can there be found in the God of a nonentity? God who lives must be the God of the living. He has no affinity with death or dissolution. He is Eternal. It was The I Am, the God of this trinity of men, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had respect unto His people when they were afflicted in Egypt. It was the very same Living One who had sent Moses to be their deliverer. Sadduceeism had no place in that victory. It was a living God who was needed: and such a One in covenant with man means life, not death. Though death exists for a time, a life supreme is above it.

This was comforting language for the multitude; but hard on the Sadducees. This is a defeat for the Pharisees for they would rather their bitter opponents, the Sadducees, had worsted the Master than that He should be left in undisturbed possession of the situation. Therefore, when they hear that He has even silenced their enemies, they gather together again, not to own His Divine Wisdom, but alas, to tempt Him again. One of them, a lawyer, has something special under his vest, as Mark tells us; but Matthew takes no note of this, because he is occupied with the nation of Israel and their attitude toward Christ as a whole and not with the individual. The test question follows.

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" [Mat.22:36]

The Master answers, even as Paul later states, that *"love is the fulfilling of the law"* [Rom.13:10]. This must have been as an arrow in the heart of those professed law keepers who were hating, even then to the point of killing, both God and man, in the person of Christ. But He adds no word of reproach. He only emphasizes the immense importance of these 2 commandments: Love to God and love to man, not only in The Law, the books of Moses, but also in the prophets because they expressed the mind of God, and Christ Himself exemplified them. But now the Lord has the question of questions for them. It is a good opportunity for they are gathered together.

"What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David." [Mat.22:42]

Their read reply of "*The son of David*" is of course the truth. They knew He could not deny it; even the little children could have answered that question. He did not contradict them. It was the truth, but not the whole truth. He is going to give them the other half.

"He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" [Mat.22:43-45]

Jesus quotes from Psalm 110:1 with the statement, "*The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*" David is here speaking of the Messiah. He calls Him "*my Lord*," but he also speaks of another Lord who invites Him to sit down with Him upon His throne. It is of this present interval of Christ's rejection, to which David alludes. He is sitting upon the right hand of His Father as a Priest, making intercession for His people, waiting the due time to arise and terribly shake the earth. "*If David calls Him, Lord, how is He his son?*" They cannot answer Him. The argument is so complete and crushing that no one was able to answer Him a word. Furthermore, He has so mightily convinced them, though they refuse to yield, that neither "*from that day did any one dare to ask him any more questions*" [Mat.22:46]. Their bravado was gone. The record says they dared not ask Him. Well may we add, "*Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils*" [Isa.2:22].

Greatest Things

Man's greatest wisdom is to know
The Christ of God who loved him so,
And came with power to world of woe
To break the clinched chains of sin
And give him wondrous peace within.

Man's greatest joy is to possess
The peace of God and righteousness,
And Jesus' name 'fore men confess.
It makes the heart with rapture swell
Beyond the power of tongue to tell.

Man's greatest blessing is to have
A living hope beyond the grave,
Though foes assail and Satan rave,
To be assured when life is done,
That he shall reign above the sun.

JUDGMENT IS PRONOUNCED [MAT.23]

Now the King, rejected and despised by the leaders of the nation, turns and denounces them. He is absolutely fearless. He stands as a lamb in the midst of ravening wolves; but He speaks as a lion. He had been among them as a Shepherd, who would have taken His flock under His sheltering care; but the scribes and Pharisees, who had set themselves down in Moses' seat, hindered the flock. The leaders would not accept His protection; neither would they allow the multitude to do so. Therefore, Israel is doomed because of her leaders. They usurped the office of leaders who had an earnest zeal for The Law of God in opposition to the prevailing laxity, but degeneration had set in. They had fallen from the God-fearing spirit while still retaining the place with its consequent authority over the people. They were now mere barren professors, contradicting their profession with their lives; while the rule of the rabbi was even more despotic

and severe if this were possible. Men's shoulders were more and more weighted down with burdens too grievous to be borne.

Those leaders even went so far as to exalt their own ordinances and traditions above those of The Law; and their man-made decrees continued getting heavier and more oppressive every year. That of necessity increased their power over the people, for power and place were what they were constantly seeking. Their phylacteries, leather scrolls, or squares of parchment on which Scriptures appeared were carried around on the borders of their garments being so enlarged that their piety might appear conspicuous. They were apparently endeavoring to have The Law in the most literal way "*as frontlets between the eyes*" [Deu.6:8]. Also with this display there followed the desire for the chief seats at feasts and in synagogues and the greetings as "Rabbi, Rabbi" in the public places.

Now the true Rabbi, the only Master whose right it was to be so called, enjoins the people that such were not to be. He adds, for the benefit of His disciples, that none of them should be called Rabbi; for they were all brethren, equal one with the other. One alone was their Teacher (Master). There was to be no claim of authority, nor spiritual fatherhood, one over the other; for there was One Father, the Heavenly, over all. Lastly, they were not to assume the title of leader; for there must be but One Leader, Christ [Mat.23:1-10]. There is the hint of the Trinity in these 3 admonitions: The Teacher, the Father, and the Leader.

The above calls for the attention of all who own the Lordship of Christ in truth; but it also needs wisdom in its application. These terms, **TEACHER**, **FATHER**, **LEADER** are all applied in Scripture, in some sense, to disciples; therefore, He does not forbid their use in an absolute way. But even as it was in Israel in that day, so there are in Christendom today those who should have joyed to serve their brethren, but they claim the place of masters and dare to stand between the soul and God. In some places and sects they have taken the office and authority of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, ruling God out of the place which is His alone; claiming to be His vicar (representative) on earth. These also claim that they alone have the right to the Scriptures, that is, to interpret and teach them; that the laity, the common people, have not the necessary learning. And yet God's Word declares that it was the common people who heard Him gladly. They alone could understand Him. His words are hidden from the wise and prudent and, note this, "*revealed unto babes*" [Mat.11:25].

But there is also a ministry among brethren, which is really such, seeking no lordship and no authority for itself, pointing only to Christ as the One and only Lord. And yet, in this very abasement and giving of itself, it finds its reward: "*He who is greatest among you shall be your servant*" [Mat.23:11 RV], the opposite of all men's thoughts and actions. Christ opens heaven to us again in these words and shows us Himself; for He is the full expression of such glad love-service. He is Chief in service; therefore, is Greatest in glory and reward. Then again He repeats the one absolute principle which rules in God's dealings with man,

"And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."
[Mat.23:12]

The 2 creations are seen in these words. The whole bent of each is shown. The one exalts itself continually, hence must be put down; the other humbles itself, hence must be lifted up. We are all either manifesting one tendency or the other. The day will declare it.

8 WOES PRONOUNCED

After this the Lord turns and personally addresses His words to those false leaders who have duped the multitude. He smites them with 8 successive woes, each one growing in intensity, revealing the awful wrath and the certain judgment of God against them. This is not a mere

outburst of anger because of their willful blindness; but deliberate, measured utterances in which the truth of God is plainly stated.

1. The **1ST WOE** [Mat.23:13] deals with their opposition to the Kingdom of heaven. They had taken away the key of the door; thereby not only refusing to enter themselves; but hindering, as much as they were able, those who would. With their legal and traditional teaching, they had barred men's approach to God and His grace, so that few of the nation of Israel, with the exception of the outcasts (the tax gatherers and harlots) took advantage of the open door in their midst.
2. The **2ND WOE** [Mat.23:14] follows; it is in accord with the first one. When religious leaders refuse the light, and shut the door of knowledge in the face of others, they continue further in wickedness. They defraud the poor and needy under the guise of religion. Long prayers are some of the aids to their selfishness. Jesus calls them "*hypocrites*," and such they are.
3. The **3RD WOE** [Mat.23:15] follows in order. They had received the light, but refuse to walk therein, because, as the Master Himself expressed it, "*They love darkness rather than light*" [Joh.3:19]. While they had taken away the key of knowledge from the people, they had substituted another apparent entrance to the way of life. In perfect harmony therewith they were zealots for their own false teaching and eager to gain proselytes. The proselytes were more deluded and darkened than their predecessors, "*twofold more the child (sons) of hell than themselves*." The Lord did not handle them with kid gloves. We think He was very frank and out-spoken and believe that He spoke in the Spirit here as well as elsewhere.
4. The **4TH WOE** [Mat.23:16-22] upon those blind guides shows that, in the measure that the light in them became darkness, that measure (their judgment of religious things) was warped and out of proportion. For instance, they esteemed the gold on the temple and the gift on the altar more holy than either the temple or the altar. That false reasoning led to teaching men that they could swear vain oaths by the temple and altar and yet escape responsibility as to the fulfillment of the same. But the Lord affirms responsibility in every case. If they swear, they must perform their oaths regardless of their feelings.

The 3 following woes are somewhat different from the 4 preceding. Here we are given to see the inward state, the double life, as we would say, of those blind guides.

5. In the **5TH WOE** [Mat.23:23-24] He accuses them of going so far as to pay tithe of the smallest and most insignificant of herbs (anise, mint, and cumin); yet at the same time the weightier matters of God's demands (judgment, mercy, and truth) were neglected. These were the important matters, though they should perform the least. But this is ever the way with humanity when truth is given up—they "*strain at a gnat and swallow the camel*."
6. The **6TH WOE** [Mat.23:25-26] is pronounced against them because of their scrupulous cleansing of the outside of the cup and platter (referring to their outward moral life) while the inside is full of extortion and deceit.
7. The **7TH WOE** [Mat.23:27-28], in accordance with what goes before, speaks of the spiritual death which reigns within as the whitened sepulcher; the outside may be all that one could desire. They appear religious before men; but the Master opens the cover and shows them to us as God sees them. What a contrast!
8. The last, the **8TH WOE** [Mat.23:29-33], is a return to the thought expressed in the first 3 woes. Their opposition to God is again emphasized, though with a veil which might hide it not

only from themselves but also from others. They honored the prophets, whom their fathers killed, building memorials in their name. Thus, they refused to be in any sense identified with the deeds of their ancestors. But the Lord identifies them with the death of the prophets; for their present opposition to the truth proved them to be just as their fathers. They themselves were witnesses to this fact. They would not only fill up the measure of the iniquity which had gone before; but they would increase it yet more and more.

The Lord tells them that He, emphasizing His authority, would send them wise men, scribes, and prophets and the old history would be repeated. In the face of the record of the ages past, that was a definite warning. They would follow in the footsteps of their fathers, thus making themselves heirs of all the unbelief and consequent guilt in the blood shedding, which was crying out to God for vengeance, from Abel (the first one killed) to Zechariah. Zechariah was slain in the very face of God, at the altar, where he had no doubt run for refuge. The allusion to Abel here proves that they are the full expression of Cain, the self-righteous son of Adam, who killed his brother Abel (figure of Christ), because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous.

It is the seed of the devil, the blood of vipers [Mat.23:33], whom He is addressing here; those who were about to bruise the heel of the Seed of the woman, but in so doing He should bruise the head of the serpent [Gen.3:15]. It was at Calvary that Christ gave to Satan his deadly wound; while the people, who proved they were the serpent's offspring, gave the Seed of the woman a temporary bruising. They were cast out of their inheritance and will never come into real possession of it again except as a new creation—the offspring of the Seed of the woman.

Now, the loving tender compassionate heart, whose emotions have been pent up, as He was calling all the woes of judgment upon those wicked leaders, breaks out in a bitter lament over the city which He loved, though it had rejected Him, its rightful Ruler.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." [Mat.23:37-39]

Man had again listened to the old serpent instead of to God in the face of all His love and goodness to him. *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers her chickens (brood) under her wings, and ye would not."* They refused His sheltering care. So their house, no longer His house, is left to them desolate; for the desolater, the Antichrist, will enter and rule there. Their rejection of the true King leaves place for the *"abominations of desolation"*, of whom Daniel spoke and of whom we hear in the following chapter. Through that usurper, they will be disciplined and in judgment they will learn the preparation necessary to cry with broken and contrite hearts, *"Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord"* [Psa.118:26].

PROPHETIC OUTLINE OF THE END TIME [MAT.24-25]

"And Jesus went out and departed from the temple and His disciples came to Him for to show Him the buildings of the temple." [Mat.24:1]

In the present section under consideration, we have a most important as well as interesting prophetic study. Matthew, as consistent with the kingly phase of Christ's ministry, enters most fully into the subject. He presents Israel (the Jew) as the central figure upon the earth at that time; though part of The Church is also viewed, in veiled speech, as being still present [Mat.25]. This very fact is what makes this portion difficult of interpretation. We do not readily see how it is possible that God should be again dealing with His ancient people and with The Church at the

same time; but when we remember that all the dispensations overlap one another, our vision is enlarged.

All God's purposes toward His people begin to come to pass; but they occupy a period of time. For instance, Judah's captivity to Babylon was in 3 relays as it were. A period of time intervened between the first deportation and the last. So in the end of their captivity there were in evidence the same successive stages. The people did not all come back at one time. We note the same fact again after Calvary, although the Jews had rejected Christ, and He had rejected them, yet it was a gradual casting out. There was a beginning immediately; but the end did not come until 71 A.D., when the city of Jerusalem was demolished and the temple destroyed. In that period of rejection of the Jew, God was beginning His dealing with another people, The Church. The 2 purposes ran side by side for a time.

Therefore, because of these precedents, we conclude He will do the same again. His rejection of The Church, I say it advisedly, His rejection of the visible Church, will be gradual. He will be taking out from her, cohorts of people, ranks of believers, at different intervals, while at the same time He commences His relationship with Judah. Finally, when He is ready to spue the false woman (Christendom) out of His mouth, the Jews will be ready to be grafted into their own olive tree [Rom.11:24]. Now with these few remarks relative to the subject we will proceed.

The disciples, who come to the Lord and show Him the temple with its glory and beauty, are typical of the Jewish disciples in the end who will be in doubt as to the temple which will be at that time in evidence. They will wonder what the outcome of all its grandeur will be. Note that the then standing temple was built by Herod as the governor over Judea, which is a figure of the temple in the end time. The end-time temple will be built by the world to some extent; and, the world's king will have his image there. This will all be set up by the world's prophet—both of them the seed of the serpent.

The Master had stepped out of the temple as no longer owning it. Israel had made it, as He said, a robber's den; therefore (and He says it without one tinge of regret), there shall not remain one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. A temple built by the world He does not own; though its magnificence astonishes the carnal. In fact, this temple, which was in building 50 years and was not yet complete, was the glory and boast of the people; therefore, His words astonish and grieve them. They cannot understand His thoughts which were so different from those of other all other men, even as spiritual saints today are a mystery and a trial to the worldly minded and the babes.

But though the temple still charmed and drew them on, His words linger in their hearts. They are allured too, with their power and mystery. As He sits upon the Mount of Olives they come and enquire, "*When shall these things be?*" They also add 2 other questions which were as one in their mind,

"Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age (not world, as in the Authorized Version)?" [Mat.24:3b]

They are not referring to this Christian Age; for of this they were ignorant. It was the age in which they lived that closed at Calvary, to which they allude. The present Church Period is as a parenthesis between the 1st and 2nd Comings of Christ, wherein God is doing a new thing (yet the oldest thing in His purpose with man). He is gathering a people out of which He is building the Bride of the Lamb. This is a great mystery revealed to Paul, of which there is no hint here in this Olivet Discourse. It was hidden from His disciples. They were altogether occupied with the setting up of the Kingdom—that which concerned their own nation and interests.

But the Lord's reply to their questions is of great length and assures them that the time is longer than they imagine, though still leaving it largely indefinite [Mat.24:4-31]. The Gospel of the Kingdom was to be preached in all the world and then shall the end be; not the culmination of all things but simply the end of the time of which they are enquiring. Furthermore, all that He teaches here, as He sits upon the mount, has reference to the same time and is in answer to their 3 questions and different phases concerning them.

The very first words of His reply carry a warning against false Christs, of whom He says, "*many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many*" [Mat.24:5]. The false prophet and the usurping king of the revived Roman Empire, the 2 beasts [Rev.13] are especially in view; though there will be lesser stars, fallen ones in evidence. Satan's power and deception will no doubt be most marked at that period. There will indeed be the need of discernment to detect the true from the false Christ.

The following words of Jesus bear comfort, of which there will also be sore need, in the midst of such perplexities and trials on every hand. He assures of troubles from which there is no deliverance. "*Wars and rumors of wars*" will come [Mat.24:6-7]. But these are little things and are to cause no great anxiety, for the worst is later. The rumors will be followed by the reality. "*nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*" [Mat.24:7]. In other words, a world war, with its awful consequences—famine, pestilence, as well as earthquakes—will follow. Some may say, "Well, these consequences have always been common to the earth." But here they have a most significant character; for they are the answer to the disciples' questions. As coming all together, or shortly after one another, they are the beginning of sorrows, or travail pains of the end, as though all nature was pressing on to the new birth, the regeneration of the world. It is indeed the time of travail. Suffering will be the lot of all in a most aggravated form. We read of a woman, the true Israel of God, travailing in labor pains until she is delivered [Rev.12:2]. This also is a vision of the same day of judgment which ushers in the great day of Christ's return. All creation has groaned and travailed but that time will be the culmination of the groaning time of all creation. The sons of God are about to be revealed in glory; upon whose manifestation the whole creation is dependent for deliverance from bondage.

Then will come special trials, accumulated persecutions, piled up terrific afflictions from even friend and kinfolk. It will be the time of the climax of everything evil and hateful. Giant forms of rancor and rebellion will dominate the earth. The saints need expect nothing less than the worst. The treatment the world gave to the Master will be intensified to the servants; for the enmity against God will be increasing. Their suffering will test the reality of their profession. There will be no church-joiners then, no hangers on for the sake of gain. The name of being a disciple of Jesus Christ will be the synonym of shame, of reproach, of exile, especially as relating to the Jews. Many will be stumbled and betray one another. False prophets will find a hearing and a following in those days. They will reap a rich harvest: but their rejoicing will be short-lived. They will have only a brief time, even as their leader, the devil, to enjoy their victory. But the trials and heart-breaking sorrows will overwhelm the most courageous. God will have apparently deserted the field. Satan will have his day. Evil men will have their day, their hatred waxing worse and worse: consequently the love of even the true disciples of Christ will wax cold. Many will be afraid to declare their sympathy with the faithful suffering remnant. But there is an end, praise God, and some will endure thereunto and never see death. They will be preserved blameless (this refers to physical preservation) through all the time of awful tribulation and be ready to receive Christ when He comes triumphant and glorious in His apparel and strength.

This portion is the doing of that eventful week of Daniel 9:27. It answers to the same time of which the book of Revelation instructs, beginning at Chapter 4. There we see the inspired writer caught up to heaven where he beholds the united company of the full overcomers ready to judge the world with the Judge. There the Lamb is taking the book (referring to the things of the future)

into His hands. But note that then He will be manifested. Immediately, as corresponding with Christ in the lamb character, we see Israel nationally again upon the scene, as witness the sealed ones out of all her tribes [Rev.7]. Then, as soon as the seals are opened, the figures which appear upon the scene, in answer to the call of the Living Ones, are strikingly similar to what we have here in this great prophecy given on Mount Olivet.

1. Under the 1st seal we have what answers to the false Christ and his conquest in the wilderness or world (that is, nationally) as well as the Christ in the secret place (that is, religiously). The true Christ warns of both of them.
2. The 2nd seal gives us the symbol of war of which we have the prophecy here.
3. The 3rd seal presages famine.
4. The 4th seal, pestilence.
5. The opening of the 5th seal discloses a great martyrdom which perfectly agrees with our Lord's words in this message. "*Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake*" [Mat.24:9]. Notice that it is the hatred of nations against the nation of Israel, the Jew, that is emphasized. There is also an earthquake, maybe both literal and national, under the opening of the 5th seal.
6. With the 6th seal, the book is further opened and then we may readily see the very prophecies of Daniel, to which the Greater Prophet here alludes, beginning to be fulfilled. The latter part of the determined week of unparalleled tribulation of Daniel 9:27, is again and again in its different phases brought before us.

The middle of that week of 7 years of magnificent prophecy in Daniel 9:27 is plainly marked; as is also the beginning of the Great Tribulation and the place of its most aggressive execution, by the reference to the "*abomination of desolation*" that is standing in the holy place" [Mat.24:15]. That is a most important epoch of the 7 years, the 3½ years which precede are simply preparatory; the 3½ years which follow are the result. Daniel foretold of that momentous event and same abomination [Dan.11:3], and the disciples are here warned to flee from Judea when that prophecy is fulfilled.

We have a further commentary on this subject by Paul, where we are informed of the man of sin sitting in the temple of God, "*showing himself that he is God*" [2Th.2:4]. Then we find a symbol of the same evil one in the beast which John saw coming up out of the sea (the nations)—figuring a world ruler [Rev.13]. "*There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies*" [Rev.13:5]. He is seen boldly declaring himself, casting off all restraint and authority of God. That usurper of Christ's throne will be allowed to continue in that place of defiance of God and absolute rule over the people for the allotted time, 42 months (3½ years). Then also a 2nd Beast will arise simultaneously with the first. He will come from the earth—the Jews. He figures the false prophet; but a beast, as God views him. The horns as a lamb, signify power as Christ, the true Lamb of God. The fact that there are 2 beasts simply means that both apostatized Judaism as well as Christendom accept and follow him. Though he speaks as a dragon, the mouthpiece (oracle) of Satan the arch-enemy of God; yet they discern him not. He influences all the dwellers on the earth and constrains them to make an image of the 1st beast, the usurping counterfeit king, to which, by his mighty dragon power, he gives breath so that the image apparently lives and speaks. That miraculous parody of the coming of Christ; that abomination of desolation, is set up in the holy place in the temple, and worship of it demanded of Israel. Then it will be woe to the inhabitants of the earth; for that desolater, as well as the dragon who energizes him, will have but a short time to do his worst.

The closing words of encouragement have special reference to the disciples in that time of tribulation so severe and yet so brief, with every day numbered. Satan cannot go beyond 1 hour of that measured-off time, which will be shortened 250 days for *“the elect’s sake”* [Mat.24:22]. If those days would continue the full 3½ years, no flesh should be saved (see our study on Daniel).

Through all that time of marvelous happenings, as well as dreadful suffering, the preaching of the Kingdom Gospel will be going out, regardless of all the distress and opposition, as a witness unto all nations. God will give the whole world a positive warning of the end of all its boasted pomp and power; as well as an opportunity to yield to Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. That testimony is symbolized by the angel flying in the midst of heaven, carrying the everlasting Gospel, saying, *“Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of his judgment is come”* [Rev.14:6].

The Lord emphatically warns against any attempt to mislead or induce the Jews to follow after a Christ who comes secretly, or on the earth in any place. He, the True Messiah, will not so come. He will come openly, not secretly, as the Judge of the nations and the Helper of His besieged people, the Jews. The need of His suffering people will call for action, and decisive, open interposition. In this character He will come as the lightning (sudden, swift, blazing all through the heavens) in unsurpassing judgment of all unrighteousness. His long-suffering patience will have run its course. The Shepherd’s rod will turn to a scepter of might and destroy the destroyers of His people and the usurpers of His Kingdom. As the Ruler of the 5th World Empire He must first take the reins of government from the hands of the Gentiles. Their times will have been fulfilled 7 years previously. This statement may appear startling to some; but we are assured of the fact. When Christ, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, a Jew, takes His seat upon His throne in the heavens, the years of Gentile supremacy will be at an end. That will mark the beginning of the Lord’s Day and the end of man’s day, according to God’s reckoning; for when the scepter is in the hands of the Root and the Offspring of David then the times of the Jew will have begun.

When God gave the world-rulership into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar [Jer.27], the king of Judah was a usurper, as well as all other rulers who did not yield to him. That marked the beginning of the **Times of the Gentiles** and the end of the **times of the Jews**, if we may so speak. Therefore, when the scepter returns to Judah, in the Person of Christ, the King of the Jews, the tables will be turned. Then, the king of the Gentiles, the world powers will be the usurper: *“for the heavens do rule,”* as Nebuchadnezzar found to his sorrow for a time; but later to his good [Dan.4].

The above monarch (Nebuchadnezzar), first king of the first Gentile world-power, is a most marvelous type of the last king of the last Gentile world-power. He takes all the glory of his great kingdom and the world-conquest to himself; although God had explicitly informed him by His prophet, that he had been given the dominion by the God of heaven [Dan.2:37]. For this pride and rebellion of heart, he was punished for 7 years, made to eat grass as the ox (no doubt his reason dethroned); and, in all of this, a most striking figure of the last world emperor who as a beast will ignore the Great God, Ruler of the universe, who had given to the Gentiles the world scepter; but reserved to Himself the right to withdraw it in His due time. This, the final Gentile ruler will refuse to acknowledge. Instigated and filled with Satan, He will endeavor to hold the place in defiance of God. He will apparently succeed for 3½ years and reign as absolute sovereign upon earth, while God’s Anointed is sitting on His throne in the heavens; though He is not yet acknowledged upon earth. In Psalm 2, David gives us a graphic word picture of that time.

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves (the united world power), and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.” [Psa.2:1-4]

Rebellion and anarchy against God and His King are depicted in this psalm. But listen to God's answer to this usurping, defiant attitude—"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." What is their puny strength, though it is the united power of the world, when matched against Jehovah's strong right arm? At that time, He will already have set His King upon His holy hill of Zion, as the following verses indicate; and will sit back and let them gather together and set themselves against Him; but they will not prosper. Christ will roar out of heaven. "*He will break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel*" [Psa.2:9-11]. Oh, that the kings were wise and would take instructions and bow their knees to God's rightful Ruler and escape the awful destined end which lies before the devil and before all the rebellious and ungodly who follow his pernicious ways.

David's own experience upon the throne is a further proof that when Christ's reign begins, the rule of the Gentiles will end, that is, according to God. David was crowned King over Judah immediately upon the death of Saul (whose reign aptly figures the **Times of the Gentiles**) and he reigned 7 years before the whole nation accepted him. Furthermore there was a usurper, **Ishbosheth** ("*Man of shame*") who claimed the throne of Saul; but God and David both ignored him, which was not the case in regard to Saul. He was the appointed ruler for an appointed time; but when it was ended God had another anointed king, David, ready. He was not of the lineage of house of Saul. All of which is fragrant of prophetic truth. Note also in this connection that the only mention of the phrase, "*times of the Gentiles*" [Luke 21:24] is relative to the length of time of the captivity of the Jews. One is measured by the other; when the captivity of the Jews ends, the **Times of the Gentiles** ends also. At that point in their history, God expects them to not only acknowledge their failure to worthily represent Him, but also to yield up the world sovereignty to His Anointed, the King of the Jews, the Man of His choice, who will fittingly represent Him. But that they will refuse to do.

As we said, the usurping Antichrist will demand worship, which, if not forthcoming, will bring speedy suffering and death. Then will come the day of Great Tribulation; so great that Jeremiah says, as also our Lord repeats, there is not like it. "*It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it*" [Jer.30:7] by the swift coming of Christ. His return will be ushered in by signs throughout the world; the stars shall fall from heaven. All nature, apparently on the verge of ruin, will need a stronger-than-creature hand to save it from utter collapse. Then shall appear the sign from heaven, for which the unbelieving Jews had asked—the Son of Man once crucified, but now seen in the darkened sky, coming in the clouds of heaven to deliver His almost despairing people. He Himself will be the sign. They shall look on Him whom they have pierced. Every eye shall see Him, not by faith nor in vision; but with their physical eyes, they shall look on a real Man of flesh and bones. Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, no doubt referring to the nations, the 12 tribes. Joseph and His brethren shall meet again.

Then Israel shall be gathered from the 4 winds of heaven, where they have been scattered by the Divine Edict; but angel hands or redeemed glorified men shall call them back to God with a great sound of a trumpet. Joseph's (Christ's) bowels will yearn over his people, as He will view them in their homeland, a new creation, no more to roam [Gen.43:30].

That will all be done suddenly as the Great Prophet impresses upon His auditors. The fig tree is again used as the illustration of Judah; but here of her revival.

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh." [Mat.24:32]

The fruit is there on the fig-tree, after the leaves. Thus, the teaching is obvious, Israel's hopes will come to sudden fruition, when their Great Kinsman Redeemer takes up their cause. "*Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this*

day," as Naomi said to her daughter-in-law" [Rut.3:18]. The very generation that sees the beginning of those wondrous events will be in evidence at their close. The suddenness of the final results is the point that He is emphasizing, also that the Jewish race will be in evidence.

"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be; for as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day Noah entered into the ark And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." [Mat.24:37-39]

The suddenness of the coming of the Lord is herein revealed. It is that which makes it more impressive. The time of that event will be known only to the Father. It will be a surprise to the world, and as unwelcome as a thief, even as was the flood. It came sweeping suddenly upon the ungodly in Noah's day and took them away in judgment. In the end it will be separative and selective of its objects,

"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left." [Mat.24:40-41]

This reveals the separation between saint and sinner that will be in evidence. It defines the time as that of [separation](#). The day of judgment will show plainly who is a believer and who is not. The one who will not believe will be taken away in judgment, even as the illustration in Noah's day emphasizes—the flood took them away. Those who believe will be left for blessing in the earth, even as was the case with Noah and his family. The earth will be purified by judgment, *"for wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together"* [Mat.24:28].

To the whole world, except to the real believers on Jesus, the coming of the Lord will be unwelcome. It will entail [separation](#) in every sense of the word.

"But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." [Mat.24:43]

Readiness for His coming is the absolute requirement to escape from judgment. The Son of Man is coming in such an hour as men think not. They will not believe His Word; therefore, they will not be looking for Him. Judgment will surely come upon them.

Then follow some parables which enforce and emphasize the same facts concerning the advent of the Lord, the need of being ready and the inevitable [separation](#). It will be:

1. between saints and sinners,
2. between servants and servants,
3. between saints and saints,
4. between possessors and professors, and
5. between nations and nations.

Notice the following part of the discourse. The above facts are made more impressive by the following words, as to the secrecy maintained concerning the end time, not even the angels knowing of that day and hour, hidden from all but the Father, though the Son is not mentioned here as being in ignorance. The meaning is plainly evident that the world will be taken by surprise, just as we are the case in the days of Noah. Judgment, sharp, sudden and decisive, will sweep upon them. As at other times, judgment will be an occasion of separation. They will

not all be destroyed: There will be 2 in the field; 2 at the mill. One shall be taken away in the devastating flood, while the other will find mercy and be left for blessing in the earth. It will prove the nearness of the ties that will be snapped, the apparent close relationship that will obtain in business and trade, between saint and sinner, even as it is today. The earth must have her purging time. Then will come her purification. The vultures will help clean house for the Lord [Rev.19:17] after the great judgment supper.

THE NIGHT WATCHES

"Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." [Mat.24:42-44]

The Master enjoins upon His disciples the need of watching; for the reason that they know not the day of His coming. They were not to be as the world, to whom His visit would be as welcome as the thief in the night, and far more destructive and despoiling to the temple which they counted their own, "*Be ye ready*," He urges; for His coming is sure. Then follow some parables which all relate to the end time with its different phases.

The program of the 7 years of Daniel 9:27 is given here as a period of night and darkness. It is expressed by the night watches. Notice the next verse. This agrees with Joel 2:1 and Zephaniah 1:15: A time of "*darkness and gloominess and thick darkness*." Luke 12:38 mentions the "*second watch*" and the "*third watch*" and Mark 6:48 names the "*fourth watch*" in which the Lord will be revealed from heaven to deliver His people Israel from the international tempest. Otherwise, no flesh would be saved in that dreadful hour. Note carefully that "*a watch*" and "*an hour*" are used here interchangeably. But the word *hour*, like other figures of measurement, is used also to express a long period; for example, in John 5:28-29 it is a 1,000 years long. Likewise in Psalm 90:4, the Millennial Age is mentioned as "*a watch of the night*" with the Lord. We must learn its length in every case by the context. Accordingly, "*the hour of temptation* (trial)" in Revelation 3:10 is another way of expressing the Great Tribulation mentioned in Matthew 24:21.

PARABLES OF THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

In the following part of the great prophetic outline of the end time, we have 3 parables which show us the relation of the coming of Christ to the Church; but they are in veiled language.

1. faithful or unfaithful servant.
2. readiness or unreadiness (the 5 wise and 5 unwise virgins).
3. use, or misuse, of entrusted talents [Mat.25:14-30].

The principles herein contained are applicable to any time and any of the Lord's people, while the things of God are in the hands of men. The true and the false, the whole-hearted and the indifferent, the active and the indolent are all seen mingled together. Only at His coming will there be the purging or separating time—this not only of sinner from saint, but also of saint from saint; a separation even from those who are professedly of the household of faith. Furthermore, in each of these 3 parables (illustrations) we have a distinct phase of judgment seen; and all in view of the Lord's coming.

The Lord is seen in different characters in these veiled narratives, each one having special significance to the Church Age; which will be just about closing, as the Jewish people will be coming into their own place again. One age overlaps another. While the **Times of the Gentiles**

are over at the beginning of the Week of Daniel 9:27, yet we must distinguish between that and the **fullness of the Gentiles** which will not have come in until later [Rom.11:25]. The phrase “fullness of the Gentiles” relates to the called out from among the Gentiles and the number of these is not given; neither are there any set times for The Church. The limit of her days are hidden in God.

In the 1st parable, we have emphasis as to the responsibility of ministers or shepherds of the flock of Christ. True and false service is commented upon, the governing object all through being the coming of the Lord. The value the Chief Shepherd puts upon the ministry of those who distribute the food to the household in due season, is emphatically declared. Some are good stewards, even as Paul. They give the Word suitable for the time; that is truth, which the Lord here calls “*meat*,” relating to the end time in which they are living; consequently, they teach and preach accordingly. “*Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing*” [Mat.24:46]. He will even set him over all that He has: that is, this faithful servant shall reign jointly with his Lord.

It is service, as we have seen long since, that qualifies us for rulership; but a love service, not a hireling (labored service). Love “*seeketh not her own*” [1Co.13:5]. It is only as the fallen creature that we seek our own in God's things; therefore, there is no reward hereafter for such. Verily they get their reward now. In heaven there will be no such service and we prepare here for great places of trust there. We are qualifying even now, acquiring greater ability to serve more unselfishly, unsparingly of ourselves. It is in this manner that we are fitted for the higher, fuller service during the coming age, reaping even as we have sown; for this is the law of the harvest. There is truly a reaping time for those who love the household of faith and seek to feed them, not only with milk, but also with meat in due season that they may be established.

But there is, sad to say, the other side and other class of servants that also have a day of reaping. The Master bids us consider them also; for “*if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming*” [Mat.24:48], observe that his conduct now is the result of his words, which are the expression of the unbelief of his heart. He begins to smite his fellow servant and eat and drink with the drunken—2 things which show the state of his heart. He opposes the faithful servant, who is giving the meat in season and has no fellowship with the worldly, pleasure-seeking professed Christians. Notice, he eats and drinks with the drunken, though it is not said that he is drunken himself; which would argue that he is a believer in a sense, but not a faithful servant. We would judge that we have a perfect counter part of these 2 servants with us today. There are some who are preaching truth for the times, latter rain, healing, the Lord's coming, as well as separation from the world, religious and otherwise, in view of such salvation. Others oppose, with all their united powers, all, or some of these plain statements of Scripture; consequently, their conduct is lax and worldly. They want God, but they want a portion in the world also: in the world where the Son of God, the Creator, had not where to lay His head. Again we emphasize the fact that this servant's conduct is all the result of his unbelief in the Lord's return. He does not believe that He is coming soon. He puts far away that happy consummation; therefore, he is taken by surprise. The Lord comes when he is not expecting Him and appoints him his portion with the hypocrites (though He does not call him so); but he gets nothing for his service, no commendation, no reward and no appointment to rulership in the future age.

Now the principle herein manifested cannot be confined exclusively to the unconverted (salvation is not the question here); for while true service can only be rendered by the saved, yet it is plainly evident that the saved may also render a mixed service. And this because they are “*double minded* (double-souled)” as James 1:8 puts it; the double minded condition due to either ignorance of the truth or to false teaching, which they have imbibed, especially as relating to the coming of the Lord. Thus, they have no seasonable meat and are either negatively, or worse, positively guilty. They are withholding the good, if not actually giving evil doctrine to the

people. Now we are convinced by our own observations that the above is characteristic of many believers who have constituted themselves preachers and teachers; therefore, we say of such, that their reaping will be as the hypocrites reap—they will have nothing for their labor. They sought their own pleasure, fed their own belly, and verily they have their reward in their own gain; but there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Sorrow and disappointment is the portion of the hypocrites and every unfaithful servant of Jehovah shall reap in measure with them.

THE WISE AND UNWISE VIRGINS

This 2nd parable is also in view of the Lord's coming and is also related to His Church, rather than the Jews; but He is here manifested in a different character and for another purpose. Service is not now the question, neither does the Lord appear here as the Judge, but as the Bridegroom, He, rather than the throne or rulership, is their hope and expectation. The figure of a marriage has been given in a parable relating to the Kingdom [Mat.22]; but neither the bridegroom nor the bride are upon the scene there; though the bridegroom is mentioned as the King's son, for whom the marriage is made. The gathering of the guests is there the central idea; while here they are seen as being gathered and going forth to meet Him. The Bridegroom and Bride (for The Bride is also mentioned by some translators in this connection) have the central place. The virgins revolve around them. There would be no virgins to grace the wedding, if there was not Bride and Groom; therefore, it is plainly evident that this company, even though they are wise virgins, are not The Bride.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." [Mat.25:1]

The little word "*then*," is most wonderfully explanatory in this place. It connects the parable with what has already been spoken on Mount Olivet, even with the trying and important days of the 7 years of Daniel 9:27, the great prophetic time of the end. Now, it is very necessary that we see this point clearly. Otherwise, we cannot understand this parable, for here is a positive proof of that which we have said, time and again, in our study of this Record, that the end of The Church, as well as her translation, will be gradual. There will be a time of transition from God's dealings with the heavenly to the earthly people, even as in the beginning of the age, there was a transition of His dealings with the earthly to the heavenly people. Note this significant fact—Israel was the connecting link at the first; they will also be the connecting link at the end.

At the present time, the Kingdom of heaven is not likened to 10 virgins. It is now in its mystery stage. Bad and good are all seen as one; all professing the name of Christ, whether actually possessing His life or not. At the later time, such will not be the case; for then the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven will culminate into the mystery of Godliness and the mystery of iniquity; both of these are the manifestation of the sowing of the wheat and the tares, which mixture characterizes this evil age. That is, at the end, both Christ and Satan, who have each been responsible for the seed sown will have a reaping time according to the kind sowed. There will be first the revelation of the mystery of iniquity—the Antichrist joined to the false apostatized church, then the revelation of the mystery of godliness—Christ joined to His people, the true blood-washed Church. The latter glorious manifestation (the true blood-washed Church) will destroy the former (the false apostatized church).

But previous to those marvelous revelations, those climaxing consummations, there must come the unparalleled week of destiny; the 7 years of preparation on both sides. Then, in the midst of the week, the Kingdom will be likened to 10 virgins. The fact that there is a great change in religious conditions is evidenced in the change in the likeness of the Kingdom. At that future time, those that are Christ's will be clearly seen. There will be no more mystery regarding the Lord's things; no tares mixed with the wheat then, for no one will care to join the saints for his

own gain. It will have ceased to be popular to be a Christian of this virgin character (though it never was); for the very name **virgin** signifies their separation from the world, especially the defiling religious condition of the end. Profession then will be the synonym of reality, consequently of rejection, reproach and shame. This will be the portion of all the virgins, both wise and foolish; yet, observe this point clearly. There is a separation even here also. That is what makes this parable difficult to interpret. We can readily see why there should be a separation of saint from sinner, as we have seen in Matthew 24; but a separation of saint from saint is somewhat different. Yet we cannot understand this parable otherwise, though we have heard this portion preached many times as the judgment upon the sinner (which they call the unwise virgins), at the coming of the Lord. But oh, how sad a travesty upon the unerring Word of inspiration, for God never likens the ungodly to a virgin. The Word carries with it the thought of chastity, purity, etc.

Then too, all the virgins have lamps and they all go forth to meet the bridegroom. Now, we know that the sinner has no lamp, or light, which speaks of the Word of God, illuminated by the Spirit of God. Their lamps were lit; for later they speak of the light growing dim, which is the true rendering of "*our lamps are gone out*" [Mat.25:8]. The going forth to meet the Bridegroom is another self-evident fact that they are true believers, for this is the attitude of believers, not deceivers, "*to wait for the Son from heaven*" [1Th.1:10]. We know the sinner does not expect the Lord to come. The moment we are in this attitude of faith and expectation, we cease to be sinners.

But nevertheless, there is a great and fundamental contrast between these 2 classes of virgins: "5 were wise and 5 were foolish." Herein is where their wisdom or their folly, as the case might be, was evidenced; one class took oil in their vessels with their lamps, while the other class took their lamps without any extra supply of oil. This was very foolish of them. They were not prepared to go out to meet the Bridegroom. Their lamps were going out. Previous to this, they all slumbered; and as the night advanced, they all finally slept. This statement appears inconsistent as regards the wise, but it simply means their testimony was not aggressive. They were rather passive as regards the truth; for witnessing for Christ will not only be shameful then, but dangerous. They will all hide their light (sleep) in the midst of the dense darkness prevailing at that time; for they will be afraid. The apostasy of Christendom will be in such an advanced stage that they will admit that there is no use to say anything. They will feel weak and useless in the midst of the awful departure from the Scriptures of truth. We have a little experience of this even now, when faithfulness to Christ and the Word is not yet considered a crime against Caesar; but this will come later. There was a Caesar upon the throne when Christ laid down His life for His good profession before the rulers of this world. There will be another man upon the throne of the Caesars at the end, who will demand an absolute allegiance from the people. Woe to him that refuses to yield. Therefore, we can readily understand why even the wise, as well as the unwise virgins, slumber and sleep while the Bridegroom tarries; for that time will be near. But there is a change. There will be a cry heard.

"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." [Mat.25:6]

That cry will probably be the result of the catching away of the Philadelphia overcomers. That arouses all the virgins; even the unwise will be awakened. That will be a revival, the last revival of The Church, for both classes arise which speaks of active faith. Furthermore, they all trimmed their lamps—the hindrances to testimony are snuffed out, proving conclusively that the unwise are not sinners. They too are stirred with the fact of the imminence of the coming of the Lord. It is not the doctrine of the coming; but the reality of His appearing that is the moving power. The foolish cry because they have no oil to replenish their lamps. They acknowledge the fact that their light is dim, as compared with those who have oil in their vessels: but note the fact that they make claim to a lamp and a little light.

And here is a lesson and warning for all of us today:

WE MAY HAVE A GOOD ENOUGH LIGHT TO WELCOME THE BRIDEGROOM WHEN WE HAVE NO LIVING ACTIVE FAITH IN HIS COMING; BUT WHEN FACED WITH THE REALITY OF HIS APPEARING, THE LACK IS APPARENT AT ONCE.

The foolish virgins want the Holy Spirit then, with all that accompanies His presence. The fullest measure of oil is none too much. They appear to the wise for oil; but it is too late now. They cannot instruct nor help them; for they must hie away unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. The wise virgins direct them to go to those that sell, and buy for themselves. This is not hard to understand, for we are exhorted to come to the waters and buy, though it is without money and without price [Isa.55:1]. This very exhortation refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit and the very day of which we are writing. Such buying simply speaks of the fixed terms upon which the one who seeks may obtain that which he desires. For one thing, he must thirst, his flesh crying out after God. Indifference and slothfulness will no longer characterize the people of God. They will be alert and responsive to the voice of the Spirit, even though they will not be present at the wedding feast. While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage. And the door was shut, the door to the banqueting chamber in the skies, not the door of salvation for sinners. The door of salvation gateway will never close until the end of time, for whosoever calleth upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. It is never too late to hear the words of pardon from the lips of the Lamb, as witness the dying thief of long ago.

But we must constantly bear in mind that this parable, as all other parables, illustrates some principles of Divine Realities by natural events or natural things. Here we have the figure of a wedding with invited and uninvited guests to point out tremendous, important facts connected with God's Kingdom.

Those foolish virgins, having gone to get the oil for their lamps, that they might shine in that bridal assemblage, simply assures us further that they are saints, who, having received the Spirit, infer that they are ready for translation; but nay, they are shut out from the heavenly gathering. The time for translation of The Church is over. The fullness of the Gentiles will have come in. Those latter are not invited guests. The master of ceremony says, "*I know you not*" [Mat.25:12]. They were not there in due time. Though they feel that they are ready and a part of the company that have gone, yet the fact remains, that they failed to qualify for appearance at the wedding. This is a solemn and searching allegory, and holds great and important teaching for us, who are on the scene today, when a greater company than even the guests at the wedding are being gathered to meet the Lamb, as His Bride. We believe that we are so close to her translation that we may discern even the servants and the guests.

The Bride is making her calling and election sure now. She is not of the night, nor of darkness; therefore, she does not sleep as do others [1Th.5:6]. But the fact that almost everybody belongs to some church, and claims a part in Christ, occasions some difficulties. The 2 seeds of the 2 sowers are being made ready for manifestation, and the children of the day are sometimes daunted and perplexed by the mixture. But after they are gone, the difference between the 2 seeds will become more evident. Later, in the time illustrated by the virgins, the separation between the true and false will be in fullest evidence. Those who do not overcome now will therefore be necessitated to remain here, even though they have been filled with the Spirit or will be later. In this Latter Rain Movement we believe we have a glimpse of 2 companies, the Bride and the wise virgins—the guests. The Bride qualifies on every line. She realizes her espousal to Christ, the coming Bridegroom, and she realizes this as a sacred, beautiful engagement into which she has entered and from which she allows nothing to detract her thoughts or cool her ardor. Her heart is aglow with a vehement flame to win Christ her Bridegroom, the One who died to win her; and she will not be disappointed.

But there are others who, though they have received the gift of the Spirit, yet are not whole-hearted in their allegiance to Christ. They love the world and in some measure seek their own things, partly through ignorance of the Scriptures and therefore of God's plans and purposes; and partly because they want a place with the world, though it is the religious world. They cannot be in that company who will be a fit mate for the Lamb of Calvary. He gave all and He must get all. Yet the others have their place in the body of Christ also, for The Church has many members, though it be one body. The other company will remain on earth, as God's witness after the Bridal Company has gone. Even today, because of a desire for place or prestige, they have grown drowsy and hid their light. They grow lean in consequence, though they will be the brightest light on earth after the 1st Rank of believers is gone. They will be revived when the fact of Christ's coming is again a reality to them. They get ready by trimming their lamps. Their witness for Christ goes forth in power. That wakens the other class who has not yet received the Holy Spirit. Thus, they are the means in the end to get another company ready (after their going away) to witness later in the power of the Spirit sent down from heaven; for God must have a witness for Himself upon the earth, though in the parable, the master at the door of the bridal chamber denies all knowledge of those unwise virgins. This simply means that they were not invited to the wedding; which fact was proved in that they were not ready when the call went forth for the guests. But when they come, they are not called foolish; for they have the oil, and hope that they may yet be in time for the feast. Alas; it is too late. They failed for lack of watching—did not discern the signs of the times. Let us learn from their mistake and not be caught napping when Jesus comes.

No doubt, those wise virgins figure the 144,000 believers (whom we read of in the book of Revelation) that are sealed in the beginning of the 7 years of The Tribulation; though some of them probably lived in the first years of this age. The other class, designated foolish virgins because they failed to qualify at the due time for the wedding, constitute the very last rank in The Church (the body of Christ). They may easily be identified with the company that constitute the feet of the Man of destiny, who shall stand on Mount Olivet [Zec.14:4]. These differing companies are plainly seen in the Scriptures and we ought just as easily to be able to identify and see their places in the body, The Church.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

In this 4th separation, which will take place at that time while the King is absent, we have some special lessons pertaining to this age. The Lord speaks of special trusts committed to His servants who are left to care for His interests on earth.

"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey." [Mat.25:14-15]

We do not believe these talents are natural endowments, gifts, education, tact nor personality; but something added to these, while at the same time acknowledging them. It is according to the several abilities of each that the talents were given. It appears that these talents make us responsible in the measure that they are given, to gain for Christ and His Kingdom; therefore, we infer that they are the opportunities that lie before each of us. The deposit increases with the wise use of it. The sphere of service grows larger as we serve. This is the special point insisted upon—there must be no hiding of the talents. We must make use of all we are and have. Light is given for testimony, not to be put under a basket. Open doors are set before us. We are to take advantage of every one of them. Thus, the 5 talents grow to 10; the 2 multiply into 4 (capacity and capability increasing with experience). This we all have observed. No one is shut up to uselessness in God's vineyard. There are opportunities for all of His people and

possibilities of increasing our talents. Thereby we add to His riches, as is plainly taught by this parable.

Yet there are degrees of responsibilities, which fact we must not overlook. The one who receives but 1 talent is called upon to gain only 1 more; but this very one hides his Lord's money. Thus, we infer that it is the one who has little natural ability, and therefore, has few opportunities for service and imagines he is not responsible to do anything. But each one is entrusted with a charge, little it may be, but there must be the increase. No one is excused from service. The little gift is despised; but the Master says it is according to our ability—that which we are able to do. He asks no more than that we do what we can. The mass of Christians drop out of all responsibility, wax weak and inactive, practically give up their talents into the hands of others whom they esteem better qualified than themselves. Thus the "others" get the benefit of the unused talent; for else the opportunity that yawned before the slothful one is neglected. Some work is left undone.

Suppose we have but 1 talent and a very small despised sphere of service; every day's wise use of it will carry us on to the doubling of its value. We are thus not shut up within the limits of God's first gift to us; though we may shut ourselves up by hiding our talent in the earth and thus lose what we have and the capacity for gaining more. For the rule is as the Master speaks, *"Every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance."* The one that steadily makes use of his gifts shall increase accordingly; *"but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath"* [Mat.25:29].

One more thing that is worthy of note. It is not the amount with which we are entrusted that ensures the reward; but the faithfulness to the trust. The servant that had the 5 talents gained 5 more. He who had but 2 doubled his money and is equally approved by the Lord and rewarded in like manner as the other. It was possible for the one with the 1 talent to win the same commendation and double his capital; thus adding to the joy of the Lord in a greater measure, it might be, than even the others in that He finds one to serve in a humble capacity just as cheerfully as in a more exalted sphere. It is the service born of a love *"that seeketh not her own"* that receives the reward [1Co.13:5]. Such love may covet earnestly the best gifts that would enlarge its sphere and capability for love's sweet service.

Now, there are principles herein which apply to every true Christian; yet the one who is described as hiding his Lord's gifts is not even classed with the people of God. His plea for his conduct is one of total unbelief, expressed in such an arrogant and impudent manner that seems to preclude any thought of the fear of the Lord, such as becomes a believer. Faith would most surely argue differently; for to the one that believes, God can make no mistake. The possession of any opportunity to serve is sufficient warrant to justify the service, though small and unimportant in the eyes of man. Love, Divine Love, would prize the opportunity and take advantage of all such, as a blessing from the Blessor Himself. The servant in the parable is simply an expression of the legal spirit, which often exists in a true believer, but which must be judged; for it renders us incapable of using fully and freely all that we have for the blessing of others.

If we are amazed at the language of the unfaithful servant and harbor the awful blasphemy of his utterance, then let us abhor the unfaithful and cowardly refusal to make use of every advantage that we have to glorify our Master and enrich ourselves eternally. Faith is the energy of service, it worketh by love. The judgment of the Lord finds vent in absolute condemnation. In fact, the servant's own mouth condemned him; for if his Master was as he thought, he should have loaned his Lord's money out to the bankers so that He might at least have received interest on the talent. Therefore, the servant is cast into outer darkness away from God and all that is

light, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth [Mat.25:30]. This is the abode of the old creation that refuses to yield to the grace of God and take advantage of His gifts to serve others.

END OF THE PROPHETIC DISCOURSE

The Lord now teaches us the 5th **separation**, the judgment of the nations, though not now in parabolic language. We have had Israel's portion as well as The Church's portion of that time, set before us. Now we have prophecy relating to the Gentiles (the nations). They too, the living nations, will come into judgment when the King of the Jews is enthroned. He will then cast out of His Kingdom all things that offend and they that work iniquity. This judgment must not be confounded with the judgment of the Great White Throne (a judgment of the wicked dead alone); while the one under consideration is of nation from nation. We are continually reminded that God abominates a mixture. He divides and separates, first sinner from sinner, servant from servant, then saint from saint, professor from possessor, and nation from nation. It is the day of manifestation of which He is speaking. Then the King shall be revealed from heaven with great power and glory, and all things will be naked and open unto the piercing eyes of the Judge.

He will sit upon the throne of His glory and all nations will be gathered before Him. There is no hint of resurrection here; for the first resurrection has already taken place before His revelation, at which time all the saints shall appear with Him in glory. In Revelation 20:4-5 we read of the last rank in the glorious galaxy of the new creation, the resurrected saints, of those who "*had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands*" [Rev.20:4b]. And it is plainly stated there also, that "*But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished* (expired)" [Rev.20:5]. Therefore, it is evident that no saint shall die during the Millennium. The wicked dead are yet in their graves and will only come forth after the reign of Christ, to stand before the Great White Throne for judgment [Rev.20:11-15]. This great gathering before the Son of Man when He appears to set up His Kingdom on the earth, is simply a judgment of living powers, men who have never died, the Gentile nations, as separate from the Jewish nation.

That judgment is, as we have said, a selective judgment. The righteous nations will be separated from the wicked—the sheep from the goats. There need be no difficulty regarding the judgment of the nations, when we take into consideration the fact that it is the King of kings and Lord of lords who is coming to reign. At the outset, He must put down all rule and authority and power and set in order and place all other kingdoms as subordinate to His throne. Then it will be manifested that the heavens do rule, the very beginning of which is this judgment of the nations. One point is the issue here: Are they for Christ or against Him? Their conduct toward His brethren, the Jews, in the dark hour of God's chastening hand upon them will determine their destiny. For the one, the righteous, who have fed, clothed and harbored His despised and tribulated people, there is mercy; for they will have showed mercy. They "*go...into life eternal*"; that is, there is no death for them [Mat.25:46]. They enter even then, in that glad Millennial day, into a state of security and bliss that will have no end, though not yet having their glorified bodies. That will come later at the last trump, when all the new creation will be changed. Then only can be brought to pass the saying that is written, "*Death is swallowed up in victory*" [1Co.15:54].

But sad to say, the wicked nations on the left hand of the Judge are sent away into eternal punishment. The fire was not prepared for them but for "*the devil and his angels*" [Mat.25:41]. They have voiced their unbelief in their attitude toward the Jew and his message and have thus chosen affinity with the enemy of God; therefore, they will share his eternal doom. It is a dangerous thing for saint or sinner to persecute the people of the Lord. He identifies Himself with His afflicted saints, and woe be to the one who willfully causes them to suffer, though He may allow The Tribulation for a time for their ultimate good.

There does not appear to be another prophecy of this character, speaking so definitely of such a national judgment anywhere in Scripture. Generally, the Lord is seen as coming in judgment smiting with the sword. In John's vision, the apocalypse, He is portrayed as a warrior upon a white horse whom the armies in heaven follow. The beast and the kings of the earth (with their armies) will be gathered together to withstand Him who sits upon the horse (and His armies); but the tables will then be turned. The beast and false prophet will be taken and cast into the lake of fire; while their armies will be slain with the sword that proceeds out of the mouth of Him, the conquering King of kings. They will be taken while the arms of rebellion are in their hands. There will be no judicial trial for them. They will meet their eternal doom a 1,000 years before.

Isaiah the prophet confirms the above with his testimony.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth." [Isa.24:21]

Isaiah does not tell us anything of this selective judgment of nations. The judgment of the nations is the final result of the preaching of the everlasting Gospel which will have been sent out to the nations some time previously in which they are urged to fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come [Rev.14:6-7]. He will be showing grace, warning men to flee the wrath to come. He will end the ages with the same message of grace, the everlasting Gospel, which He introduced to Adam and Eve when He clothed them with coats of skins. Those of the nations, who will not accept the message, will be cut off, even as the Apostle Paul threatened [Rom.11:21].

The Lighted Way

Sometimes we are baffled by satanic fears,
The heavy trials that fall upon our way.
We cannot understand the surging tears,
Altho' we know we have not gone astray.
We're tempted that the rugged road which now appears,
Is not the high, smooth one of yesterday.

"O Lord," we cry, "Let us not miss the best."
The way lies there across Judean hill,
Where Jesus bowed His head upon His breast,
And died alone, our cup with joy to fill;
Our hearts to satisfy with hope and rest,
And ev'ry throb of pain and sorrow still.

O no, we cannot miss that lighted way.
The path of just ones shines brighter ev'ry morn,
While silver stars with beaming, streaming ray
The darkest night with beauty do adorn.
We are going on with God, come what may.
We've learned our blundering way to scorn.

DIV.5, THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF THE KING [MAT.26-28]

We have now arrived in our study at the last division of our book. This account is common to all of the Gospel Records—the suffering and death of the Lord, as well as His resurrection, without which there would have been no Good News for men. The purchase price of the salvation of

mankind is about to be paid. The finder of the treasure must buy the field (the world) [Mat.13:44]. The merchant man must pay the price for the pearl [Mat.13:46]. Here we see at what awful cost we have been purchased and redeemed. Never has the Royal Master been more royal or more masterly. Never has His absolute perfection been more manifest, or the immeasurable distance between Himself and all other men been more marked, than in those last days of His eventful history. He is Monarch of all He surveys. Even in apparent defeat and humiliation He is every inch a King.

After the great discourse upon the Mount of Olives [Mat.24-25] with its contemplation of His coming Kingdom and its attendant glory, He turns to consider the travail and sorrow which must precede. He must prepare and fortify His disciples for the cross which is just before Him.

"Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified."
[Mat.26:2]

He announces the exact time of His offering up, proving that He was Master here also. The time was not fixed by His enemies, but was His Father's will and in His own power. As though His words were the signal for His enemies to act, we read of their gathering together, the chief priests and elders, and counseling as to how they should seize and put Him to death. In their self-willed blindness, they determine not to take Him at the feast; but this is the very time He had already marked out as His destined end. He is the Lamb, foreordained before the foundation of the world in the council chamber of the triune God; therefore, to what purpose is their after-counsel, except as it agrees with God's counsel. The true Passover must suffer at the Passover feast. The Substance must replace the shadow, even as also His resurrection fell upon the very day of the waving of the sheaf of first-fruits and the advent of the Holy Spirit came upon the very day of the feast of Pentecost. All God's preconceived purposes come to pass in due season, on schedule, and on time.

A TENDER ACT OF DEVOTION

Now we have a most precious interruption.

"Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came to Him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it upon His head as He sat at meat." [Mat.26:6-7]

This woman pours the wealth of fragrance upon the head of Christ; this is expressive of her love and devotion. Simon being a leper emphasizes the condition of the house of Israel where Christ was not even a welcome guest, though He must abide for a season. Therefore, the woman's act of devotion is not only in strongest, sharpest contrast to the conduct of Israel, but also a rebuke to the selfishness and unbelief of His disciples. They murmured at her "waste," as they carnally termed her extravagant gift, being prompted, as we are told elsewhere by the traitor, Judas [Joh.12:4]. Judas had sold the Lord of glory for the price of a slave and for only half the cost of the exquisite ointment. It was no doubt the woman's expression of whole-hearted giving which stirred into action the opposite principle slumbering in the soul of the unhappy doomed man, Judas, Satan's tool. He was beginning to see all his earthly hopes and ambitions, for the sake of which he had joined himself to the King, crumbling into ruin and defeat by the words of Jesus and the attitude of the rulers. He was convinced now that Jesus was going to be taken. "Why not," he reasons, "get something out of the transaction?" For some time previous, Judas had been putting his hand in the bag and taking for his own use that which was for the living of them all, but now even his little graft was coming to an end.

We can then realize the disappointment which Judas felt when the price of the ointment was not put in the bag. He was "*the poor*" for whom he had such concern [Joh.12:5-6]. Truly the heart of

man is deceitful and desperately wicked. The prophet asks, "*Who can know it?*" [Jer.17:9]. We answer, "No one but God." Judas, clearer-sighted than the true disciples, saw that the Master's cause was a losing cause. The enmity of the leaders was too plain to be misunderstood. He knew there must come an end, of which Christ was continually reminding them; therefore, he determines to make his escape from a ruined cause and carry with him some compensation, as he would argue, for his years of service. The price of this precious ointment could well be coveted by such a self-seeking one. He breaks out openly with his complaint, "*To what purpose is this waste?*" [Mat.26:8].

The woman had come to the house with her box full of ointment with the deliberate purpose of pouring it all upon the body of her Lord. She realized the fact that His death was inevitable. And more, she understood its absolute necessity, which appeared to be hidden from even His choicest apostles. The box most aptly figured His body, which was shortly to be broken. The ointment most perfectly expressed the fragrant life which was poured out on the cross, an acceptable offering to God. Whether she understood all the meaning of that which she was doing we cannot say; but of this we are sure, the Father knew and guided her hand. Thus, she testifies of even the death itself, which fragrance will fill the House of God forever. "*She anointed my body beforehand for the burial*" we hear Him say [Mat.26:12 ASV]. This was not customary, but it sweetly assures of His resurrection. When after His death, the other women came to anoint His body with

perfume and spices, they were too late. He was risen [Mar.16:1-2]. Mary of Bethany had already anointed Him. The Lord openly vindicates the act of the woman.

"Verily I say unto you, whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." [Mat.26:13]

She poured her devotedness in the very face of His foes which must have refreshed His true human heart, wrung already with the treachery of Judas and the prospect of the nearness of the cross. She manifested her appreciation of His holy, spotless body, far beyond that of others; therefore, her commendation from His lips goes far beyond that of others. Does not this one episode alone speak forcibly of differing companies or ranks of believers? Was not that woman far ahead of all others in her personal love for Jesus, as well as in her understanding of His purposes, although officially she was unknown? The Lord publicly defends her and her action and identifies her action with the preaching of the cross. "*She hath done what she could,*" He adds elsewhere [Mar.14:8]. She expresses perfectly the acts of The Bride of Christ.

But this great love and worship of Christ only brings to the surface the opposite extreme in the heart of **Judas Iscariot** ("*the trafficker*"). He plainly earns his title to his surname. His conduct appears worse by way of contrast. He goes to the chief priest and asks, "*What will you give me?*" Ah, here is the question which betrays him. It is the question we should never ask while we are in the service of the King. We, following the example of the Lord and of the woman also, ask not "What do I get?" but "What may I give?"

Judas agrees for 30 pieces of silver to deliver up his Lord into their hands, thus pouring contempt upon the Master. But though they know it not, they all are fulfilling prophecy. It was written, that He shall go this way, and they are thus acknowledging God's sovereignty in this very rejection of Him.

The feast of the Passover is at hand. It is the last time that it will be observed as the figure; for the reality has come. The Master is still the master, calm, undaunted, unafraid. For though He is going down the steep incline to Calvary, yet it is of His own free will and choice. He is still the King. "*My time is at hand,*" are the words He sends to an unnamed disciple, favored indeed that he is privileged to entertain his Lord the last time while He is tenting in a body of clay [Mat.26:18].

They make ready the feast. When the evening was come, He sat down with His disciples to eat the roast lamb, which so wonderfully portrays Calvary where the fiery wrath of God was poured out upon the defenseless head of the willing Sacrifice, the true Lamb of God's own providing. But here it is yet the type, though the reality is not far away.

"Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me," He cries, as though in amazement at the duplicity [Mat.26:21]. The disciples being sorrowful at the accusation, each enquires, *"Is it I, Lord?"* Judas is slowest of all to respond with his question, asked no doubt with certainty of the answer, yet with the semblance of innocence as the rest [Mat.26:22-25]. But observe that he does not address Christ as **LORD**, as the others; but as **Rabbi** which means *"Master"* or *"Teacher."* He could not call Jesus **LORD** in truth, for this is only possible by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"He that dippeth his hand with me into the dish, the same shall betray me." [Mat.26:23]

One who had the privilege to break bread with the Lord, to share in the same dish, betrays Him. This is the hardest blow. As it is written, *"Yea mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me"* [Psa.41:9]. After the sop, John adds this information, *"Satan entered into Him and he went immediately out, and it was night"* [Joh.13:27]. If there was an indecision or struggle in the soul of Judas it was ended then; for in the face of the awful woe which had just been pronounced by the Lord upon His betrayer, he goes away to fulfill his destined course. He is thus stamped as the son of perdition (a traitor) forever. His fall was gradual, almost imperceptible, but sure; moment by moment his chains were riveted and finally Satan had him absolutely under control. There was no getting away from his captor; such is the hardening process of sin.

Judas is therefore separated from the other apostles before the memorial feast. We see in John's Record that they had been defiled by his presence; hence the meal was interrupted, so that Jesus might wash their feet, and thus fit them for the fellowship in the love feast which He now institutes. While they were still eating of the figurative lamb, Jesus takes bread, blesses, breaks, and then gives it to His disciples with these words, *"Take, eat; this is my body"* [Mat.26:26]. Likewise He took the cup of wine, giving thanks, then handing it around to each saying, *"Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament (covenant)"* [Mat.26:27-28]. He is speaking of His death, for body and blood separated, can signify nothing else. Blood has no place in the new creation. It speaks of a life dependent upon food and drink; a life capable of dying, though not necessarily subject to death. After Christ's resurrection He speaks of having *"flesh and bones,"* and not flesh and blood [Luk.24:39]. The blood is here emphasized as shed for many; therefore, it speaks of death, not life. We remember Him in this feast, as what He was, the lamb of sacrifice, making atonement for sin and thereby becoming the Peace-Maker between God and man. This is the primary meaning of these memorials.

The Master's *"remember me"* [Luk.22:19] is the predominating thought that should control and influence us in the keeping of the feast, far beyond any other motive. As someone has said, *"It is a forget-Me-not feast,"* though we also have fellowship with Christ as the Sustainer, as well as the Giver of life when we partake of these emblems, the bread and wine, in faith. But as we said, this is a remembrance of that which is past; we do not commemorate that which is present. The Apostle Paul's comment upon the **LAST SUPPER** is proof positive of this, *"for as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come"* [1Co.11:26]. The Lord's death is past; *"death hath no more dominion over Him"* [Rom.6:9]. But though it is as dead that we remember Him, yet His resurrection is included; for we look forward to His coming again. The 2 Advents of Christ are joined here—the one in humiliation and death, the other in power and glory. The cross is thus linked up with the crown and this whole age is spanned in these few words also:

"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." [Mat.26:29]

He looks forward to participation with His people's joy in association with them in heaven, as the full cup of blessing, the happy consummation of that which He is even now to suffer—separation from them by death.

After this they sang a hymn. It was a custom in Israel; and they went all together to the Mount of Olives. He warns them on the way of His destined end and how they will view the cross. They will all be offended, because of Him, and will be scattered as sheep without a Shepherd, but even this is according to what was written [Zec.13:7]. But there is hope for them as He said, for after His resurrection, He would go before them into Galilee [Mat.26:32]. This Record closes with the fulfillment of this promise, for Matthew, consistent as always, passes over the greater part of what happens in Jerusalem. He would concentrate our attention upon the Kingdom phase of Christ's ministry.

Peter, the leading apostle, illustrates most fully the meaning of the "*offense of the cross*" [Gal.5:11]. He, who most loudly professes his allegiance to Christ, is the one who fails most signally. Two times he declares his allegiance to the Master [Mat.26:33, Luk.22:33]. This attitude he maintains in the face of the Lord's plain, positive assurances to the contrary. Poor Peter, he is not aware of his own weakness. Our reliance on our own strength or stability is just our weakness. Our realized weakness is the positive way to strength, which is the lesson enforced here. The other disciples were just as sure of themselves as Peter, though not so forward in asserting themselves.

Then comes the mysterious suffering and sorrow of Gethsemane; and yet not such a mystery when we have some knowledge of redemption. Here we are given a glance, for it is only this, into the holy soul of the Man, Christ Jesus. For a small moment we see the inward agony, the depths of the unmeasured sorrow that swept over Him as He contemplated the cross of shame. He saw it in the light as God saw it, and the culprit hanging upon it. He saw the guilty, condemned criminal nailed there in the darkness of despair, from whom the Holy God revolted and turned His face aside. The cross from God's side was bared to Him with all its awfulness. Then His soul is bared to us. We are treading on holy ground when we stand here and contemplate that bowed, humbled figure in Gethsemane. The oil press answers to its name. Here was where His soul was wrung in anguish. Here He faced the mightiest temptation and won the greatest victory. Here was where He conquered His own spirit and became willing to be cast out of the presence of God, as an unholy, offensive thing, upon which the Holy One could not look except with abhorrence.

Here, we say, was where the greatest battle was fought and the greatest victory won. Alone with His Father, He drank the bitter cup; being sweetened, in that it was from His dear Father's Hand. None other could have made Him drink the awful dregs of woe, not even our desperate case could have moved Him. It was the Father's will; there was no other way to save us. Therefore, He yields after a 3-fold cry for deliverance, saying, "*Not as I will, but as thou wilt*" [Mat.26:39]. Oh, wondrous triumph! Well may angels hush their singing at that sublime scene. A Man at last is found who seeks not His own will, but owns the sovereignty of God and His will. "Ours not to reason why, ours but to do and die," when God commands. He left 8 of the 11 disciples behind, at the outskirts of the garden and took Peter, James, and John further on with Him. Presently He bids these also tarry while He goes farther on alone, the Captain and File-leader of the faith.

They may share His watching, if they will, but they cannot share His grief. Surely here we have differing ranks of believers featured. Some go on with Christ even into the garden, in some measure entering into His sorrow and understanding His sacrifice; while there are others who

only step inside. Yet others, the greater company of all, do not enter in any measure into the meaning of Gethsemane. The vast number of Christ's disciples were not even present at that time. They did not watch one little hour with the Master. We need not marvel when even these select ones become drowsy and indifferent at the crucial moment. Three times Jesus returns to find them sleeping and though He awakens them with reproof, yet there is also a tender apology for their weakness. He adds, "*The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*" [Mat.26:41]. He looks at the willing spirit, the purpose of heart, and makes allowance for the failure accordingly. The impotence of man, even the best, for this hour is seen in the disciples. Oppressed with the solemnity and dread, they are found asleep. It is as though they are stupid in the valley of the shadow of death even as they had shown themselves to be upon the mount of transfiguration. They cannot respond to His tender appeal that they should watch with Him nor realize their own need of watching and prayer lest they enter into temptation.

"Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." [Mat.26:45]

Their opportunity had passed. It only proved their woeful incompetency to even hold the place with Him that He offered them. But their cause is now in the hands of One that cannot fail. He is about to lay the foundation of a new creation. A dependable man will come forth from the ruins of the old that can and will be able for any place of trust in association with Christ that God may order. To that happy consummation He is looking and hastening; for even now the hour has struck. The traitor is at the door, with him a great multitude with swords and staves from the chief priests and elders. The swords indicate that the Roman soldiers were present, while the staves (clubs) prove the presence of a Jewish guard. Thus we have Jew and Gentile, the world all represented here, ready and willing to take part in the crowning sin of mankind.

Judas would fain conceal his treachery under guise of a kiss to his gentle Master; but the Lord penetrates the disguise. He asks, "*Friend, wherefore art thou come here?*" [Mat.26:50 RV]. The point of the question is, "How comes it that my professed friend is found in company with my enemies?" Luke informs us that He added, "*Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?*" [Luk.22:46]. Divine Love had not even yet closed the door upon this sinner. He could still repent. But no, Satan is filling him now. There is no return for him. He closed the door.

They take the Lamb of God unresisting. He had yielded to His Father and therefore needs no sword or club to coerce Him. His way is plain before His face. Peter would fain resist and fight for Him, who was to be led as a lamb to the shearers, without one word of protest or refusal. Peter had misunderstood the Lord's words, taking them literally as to the buying of a sword [Luk.22:36]. The Lord was speaking of the hostility of the world in which He was leaving them. Peter quickly unsheathes his weapon and cuts off the ear of the servant of the high priest. Impulsive, hot headed, and courageous, he has no fear of the results of a battle. He has seen the Lord in many hard places before and he always escaped. They never took him. He is assured the Master will perform some miracle and His enemies will all fall down in defeat.

But ah, he does not realize that he has belittled and misrepresented his beloved Master whom he would die to serve. Christ would be fallen low indeed did He need His disciple's sword to extricate Himself from the puny hands of men. He must yield; but it is not to man, but to God. He is taking the cup from His Father's hand and what place has a sword in this? Heaven's legions were at His disposal and the Father, if He so willed, would give Him, not 12 frail men, but more than even 12 legions of angels, a legion for every man. But then, how should the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it should be? Yes, His path was ordained for Him in the Council Chamber in the dateless past. The Word was made flesh and actually fulfilled in the flesh of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Furthermore, the Lord reminds the multitude that had come to seize Him of the positive fulfillment of the written Word, as He had just reminded His disciples. “Why had they not taken Him when He sat daily in the temple teaching?” He asked them. They feared the people. Now, through the treachery of Judas, they have come upon Him at night when only a few feeble followers were with Him. Nevertheless, they could not take Him except that the Scriptures declared His time had come. Neither power nor guile would have succeeded against Him except that He had said to the traitor, “*That thou doest, do quickly*” [Joh.13:27]. He Himself signed His own death warrant, proving that He was the antitype of the gentle domestic animal that was at the service of man.

Now the sheep of the flock are scattered, as also the Scriptures foretold; but protected even in their flight by their smitten Shepherd [Joh.18:8]. Here was where they could not follow Him, even as He had told Peter. He entered alone the dark valley of death, not with His own, but for His own. “*He was numbered with the transgressors*” in death, but not with disciples [Isa.53:12]. He must die alone, that the disciples may be numbered with Him in life.

WORLD’S JUDGMENT OF THE KING

“And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.” [Mat.26:57]

The Lord of glory is now seized by the puny hands of men and taken before the judgment seat of this world. He appears first before the ecclesiastical or religious court. Remember, it was the Jews, who professed to know and love God, who were His open avowed enemies. They were the aggressors in His rejection and death and have been so judged by God. He has cast them off as a nation, for almost 2,000 years, and the uttermost of their suffering is yet to come.

Nevertheless, it is not the Jew only, but the whole world who is now on trial in this judgment of Christ. He stands before the leading religious body of the world (the Sanhedrin), and the leading power of the world (Rome, of whom Pilate was the representative), and the wisdom of the world (represented by Herod); all are in evidence, though the present inspired historian does not record Herod’s judgment. It is reserved for Luke to inform us of Herod; for he is telling us of the world’s estimate of the Man. They are all given an opportunity to express their judgment of Christ, which verdict most surely judges them. It proves that they do not know nor love God. Yea more, it proves they are His enemies and in rebellion against Him. The heart of all men is bared: high priest and governor, king and peasant, rich and poor, cultured and ignorant, Jew and Gentile—all have a voice in the condemnation of the Son of God.

This sin, the rejection of Christ, is laid at the door of the world. It is the one sin that will never be forgiven. All other sins, Christ has borne in His own body on the tree; but if men will not accept the Sacrifice which God Himself provided, “*there remaineth no more sacrifice (offering) for sin*” [Heb.10:26]. To reject Christ is to reject God and His salvation. It is to reject life and light and peace and hope. The paramount question is, “What will you do with Jesus which is called the Christ?” The answer settles our eternal destiny. All the world was represented here at the trial and rejection of Christ. They judged Him guilty of death and in so doing they judged themselves guilty, for He stood there as their substitute. When we accept Him as our Saviour and Redeemer we acknowledge the above verdict; yet at the same time we reverse the decision of the world as to Christ personally. They called Him an imposter, a liar, and Beelzebub. We call Him the Way, the Truth, and The Life when we accept Him.

"Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death." [Mat.26:59]

The special charge which the Jews brought against Christ was that He made Himself the Son of God. They also secured false witnesses who swore that He said, He could destroy the temple and build it again in 3 days. What He had said is recorded by John, "*Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up*" [Joh.2:17]. He referred to His own body which was the true dwelling place of God; but yet there is a sense in which He also meant that temple which was then standing. The temple building was destroyed in the siege by Titus in 71 A.D. and will no doubt be raised up in the 3rd dispensational day. Peter tells us that one day with the Lord is as 1,000 years [2Pe.3:8]; therefore, that 3rd day when the temple in Jerusalem must be rebuilt is close at hand. We read in Hosea referring to Israel's restoration, "*after two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight*" [Hos.6:2].

The above bold assertion is only a secondary accusation. The real bone of contention was, as they declared themselves, "*By our law, He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God*" [Joh.19:7]. This was the issue, though they never faced it. No indeed! The Scripture had silenced them. David, in Spirit, had certainly called his own Son, Lord. This they could not deny when Christ Himself put it to them [Mat.22:46]. They had no answer then; they have none now. They would not seek an answer, for they feared the issue; though they probably did not admit this even to themselves. They preferred to pretend ignorance.

He stood firm on the ground of His Deity, and would accept none other. He would not have the Kingdom upon any other terms; for this would be yielding to Satan and admitting the claims of the old creation. It is only as the Son of God that He will accept the place as King of Israel. False witnesses may come and go. He refuses to plead one way or the other. Let them force the real issue. "*Tell us if thou be the Christ, the Son of God*"; and he quickly answered, "*Thou hast said it.*" But He does not let it rest here. He has more to say to them. "*Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven*" [Mat.26:63-64]. He spans this whole age and the beginning of the next in these few words. He is at this present time, sitting on the right hand of the Majesty on high as man's Intercessor and Representative; but later He will rise up and be visibly seen, coming in the clouds of heaven, with great power and glory. Then He will take vengeance on His enemies and later reign over the world.

Thus, He throws out His defiant challenge, though He is yet in their hands, apparently defenseless as a lamb in the midst of wolves. They can heap upon him further indignities and he must patiently endure them; for it is still their hour and the power of darkness. Satan is moving them, as He had said [Luk.22:53]. But Jesus is almost at the end...at the end forever of all His limitation and humiliation. Hereafter they will not see Him in this condition. All will be changed for Him and for them when they see Him again. It will then be His hour and the power of light. God will be ruling and they will be in abasement while He is exalted. He further emphasizes His claims by calling forth Daniel for proof that His manhood, which they deemed a sufficient disproof of His Divine Right, was linked in prophecy with the Messiah's glory and Kingdom.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."
[Dan.7:13-14]

But even this added confirmation of His claim avails but for His condemnation. Satanic hatred is energizing them. They are frenzied in the presence of that calm unruffled Man, whom nothing moves to anger nor retaliation. His very demeanor of peace and quietness stirs the very opposite condition in them. They break forth with insult, denying all His claims. The high priest even rends his clothes, which is forbidden by Moses [Lev.21:10], as though in horror of such blasphemy, declaring the trial is over. Christ has witnessed a good profession. They all agree that out of His own mouth He stands convicted and is worthy of death. Then the mock trial is ended. The religious world has judged Him guilty and has thus uncovered their own wicked, unregenerate heart. All its depths of enmity is now poured out against the holy Man who has never done aught but good. They spit in His face. Some buffet Him. Others hit Him in the face, saying, "*Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?*" [Mat.26:68]. And yet, oh wondrous grace, no fire comes down from heaven to destroy them; neither does the earth open and swallow them. God is quiet as though the Man were guilty.

Now we have the denial of the foremost disciple recorded, and that in the presence of the Master. He stands here the apt figure of the believing remnant, as Judas figures the unbelieving mass of Israel at the end of this dispensation. Three times, and the last with noisy profanity, Peter denies knowledge of, or friendship with, this friendless Man. It seems that the reckless overflow of a heart, so in harmony with their own, assures them that he indeed cannot be a follower of the meek and lowly Nazarene. Only the eye of the Master, which he finds presently looking upon him, can discern the troubled heart that would deny the intimacy aloud, but cannot deny the revelation within, which the Eternal Father had given to him concerning His Son [Luk.22:61]. The 2 natures are plainly in evidence here in Peter. With the flesh he can deny the Christ for whom with his spirit he would fight and die. Matthew does not tell us of the gentle look of Jesus upon his failing disciple; but we read here that immediately the cock crowed. This was enough. Peter remembers the prophesied warning which had been spoken to him, and with an intense sense of guilt he went out and wept bitterly [Mat.26:69-75].

THE CIVIL COURT

"When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor." [Mat.27:1-2]

Having bound Jesus, they delivered Him up for trial before Pilate, even as Joseph's brethren long before gave him over into the hands of the Gentiles. The Jews had no authority to inflict the penalty of death; yet they were determined this Man should die; therefore, they were dependent upon the Roman governor for their purpose. Crucifixion was not the Jewish mode of putting people to death. They might hang the dead, but not the living. The Lord Himself had declared that He was to be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles to be crucified. He must stand before the world's judgment seat. Those wicked men were but carrying out the foreordained purposes of the Triune God. He must be crucified. The curse of the broken Law was to be upon Him and the open sign of the curse was the hanging on a tree [Deu.21:23]. The infliction of hanging after death, as the Jewish penalty, would have altered its significance. It would have meant that punishment was not stopped at death, but continued after. In the case of Christ we know this was not so; therefore, another reason for the fact that He was in Gentile hands.

Matthew breaks off and follows the course of Judas (type of Israel), betrayer of his King, to the end. There appears to have remained a hope within his breast that the Master would not be condemned; or it might be that the horror of what he had done seized him. Clearly it is the awful agony of remorse that now awakens in Judas; but this is not repentance toward God. METHMELETHEIS (Greek meaning "*regretted*") is the word used here not [*metanoieithis*](#) (Greek

meaning “*repented*”). He cannot keep the money he has gained. He brings it to the chief priests on whose hands also the blood of Jesus is indelibly attached. He shrieks out in their ears, “*I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood*” [Mat.27:4]; but notice he does not say holy or righteous blood. The glory of the Son of God has no part in the remorse he feels. He does not turn to Him, whom he had accompanied so long and whose tender mercy he had never seen fail anyone. There is, in short, no faith; therefore, no repentance. We never repent until we believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Judas cast the silver pieces into the temple, and this was the very place where it belonged. The den of robbers, as Christ called it, answers to its name. Judas, rejecting God’s grace, then went and hanged himself.

The money in the hands of the priests put them in a quandary. As they declare, they do not want to defile the treasury with the price of blood with which they and their temple are already defiled. They are **particeps criminis** (Latin: **PARTNER IN CRIME**) with Judas, and they cannot escape the issue. They have the issue to meet whether they acknowledge it or not. The money is in their hands. They decide to buy the potter’s field (a special place of that name), in which to bury strangers. These strangers were, no doubt, the Gentile proselytes to whom a certain regard was due, but whom priestly exclusiveness and sectarian Pharisaism would exclude from consecrated, as they would call it, Jewish ground. The price of blood and the field of blood are good enough for the stranger; so man declares.

But there is the other side, God’s side. He has a voice in this burial place. It was bought with the price of His Son’s betrayal; hence He decides the issue. The house of Israel have been strangers ever since; strangers from God and from their own consecrated ground. They acquired for themselves, as the price of Christ’s blood, a burial place in strange lands. Their graves have often been in a field of blood—a place of Slaughter. They have indeed cast the money into the field and therewith bought for themselves tribulation, even as the quotation from the prophet proves,

“Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.”
[Jer.18:5-6]

They have been ever since a vessel marred upon the wheel—the old creation—but they are to be molded and remade in due season. They are yet in the fire of discipline.

Now Jesus stands before **Pilate** (“*the one armed with a dart*” is the significance of his name). He speaks of the power of the world arrayed against the Anointed of God. The Jews, chief priests, and elders, witness against Christ; but God also brings forward His witnesses to the character of His Son. We have already had Judas, as the first witness. He declared Christ an innocent man, though he had betrayed Him as guilty. Then comes Pilate’s wife with her admonition to her husband to “*have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him,*” she exclaims [Mat.27:19]. She is witness that He is a righteous man. And, a little later, Pilate himself corroborates her testimony. He stands in defense, as he says, of this just Man. Thus we have 3 witnesses on the side of Christ, all acknowledging that He has done nothing deserving of death.

The special charge brought against Him before Pilate is that he affirmed himself to be a king. The governor hears it. He hears also Christ’s own declaration that He is King of the Jews and then declares Him innocent of any wrong. As the record reads, “*he knew that for envy they delivered Him*” up [Mat.27:18]. But now the question of His acceptance or rejection is pressed upon every side. Again, we are amazed at the arrangement of everything according to the will of God. There was an established custom of releasing a prisoner every year at the time of the Passover feast. It was left to the decision of the people as to who it should be. This is a most wonderful

hint of what the Paschal Feast figured—the release of the whole Adamic creation from the bondage of sin by the death of the Lamb of God—but of the true meaning the people were ignorant. At this special time there was in prison a notable criminal, most suitable in every way for comparison and by way of contrast with the spotless Victim now before them. His name, **Barabbas** (“son of the father”) is also suggestive in more ways than one. It might be as though claiming for the old creation the place of Christ; but in another way he most aptly figures the old man, the son being all that the father is—robber, rebel, seditionist, murderer—every crime laid at his door. Now Pilate desires the people to say whether he should release this notorious criminal or “*Jesus which is called the Christ*” [Mat.27:22].

Pilate is uneasy. His wife’s dream and his own convictions are too much for him to face calmly. He would fain put the responsibility upon the people. Not the chief priests, but the multitude shall determine the fate of this man. He does not believe there will be any question when it comes to the popular voice. He thinks he can safely leave the issue in their hands. “*Which of the two shall I release unto you?*” [Mat.27:21 RSV] Alas the chief priests persuaded the multitude and they chose according to the dictates of their own hearts. “*Barabbas*,” they cried; “*for the mind of the flesh is enmity against God*” [Rom.8:7 ASV]. They choose the evil and refuse the good. And yet, Pilate is not satisfied. He wants to escape all the responsibility; therefore, he put it to them again to decide the fate of Jesus. He cried, “What shall be done with Him?” Immediately the answer comes, as though with one voice, “*let Him be crucified*” [Mat.27:21-23]. The end is full and absolute rejection. They deliver up the Prince of life and desire a murderer instead. We cannot but too plainly see in this Barabbas, whom they have chosen, the shadow of him who is yet to come; the one who will be the final expression of man’s choice. Jesus said earlier, “*I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive*” [Joh.5:43].

There will come another savior, the son of another father, son of the devil. He will be all that men desire, as to outward appearance and expectation. The world, not only the Jew, is getting ready for him. They are looking even now for some man to bring order out of chaos. Europe is on the verge of collapse, as the statesmen express it, unless there arise another Napoleon to save them.

All the heart of man was revealed there in that mock trial of the Son of God. They all rejected Him, God’s Man, both religious and civil courts, and chose a criminal instead. So in the end of this age they will do the same. Only this time Christendom also, as well as the Jew, will reject the Son of God. The whole world will wonder after the beast, the Antichrist, and accept him as their king. The national powers led on and energized by the religious world, even as the chief priests and elders overpowered Pilate through the multitude.

“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” [2Th.2:11-12]

Israel rejected Christ and chose Barabbas, a type of him whom they will enthrone in a very near day in the temple of God in Jerusalem.

But in all of this the government of God is manifestly over all and the power of the enemy is subject thereto. Pilate, who is determined to escape the responsibility of this just man’s death, as he expresses it, adopts for his purpose part of the Jewish ceremony used in the case of an unknown murder. He washes his hands in the presence of the multitude, saying, “*I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it.*” But the people, who are determined upon the death of Christ and care nothing as to the responsibility, answer readily, “*His blood be upon us and on our children*” [Mat.27:25]. Thus, they accept all the weight of blame for what they are doing. Though they cannot shift the load from Pilate, yet ever since they have been fleeing from the “avenger of blood,” who has been upon their track continually. No effectual city of refuge have they ever found

[Num.35:11-12], nor will they, until they look upon Him whom they have pierced and find their hiding place in the wounds of the Crucified One.

THE KING CROWNED

"And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!" [Mat.27:29]

Now the soldiers of the governor take Jesus into the common hall and all the band gather round Him. These are a new class of men and they manifest their true condition, their kinship with the others, in the treatment accorded to this innocent man. They have heard His justification from the lips of the judge, Pilate, before whom He has stood; therefore, they have no excuse whatever. They are not Jews, but Romans. They are not moved in any way by the chief priests or scribes, whom they despise as senseless fanatics. Nor are they forced by their office as executioners to this form of mockery and insult of which they now are guilty. It is for their own amusement that they torture this holy, harmless Son of God; therefore, they call the whole band together to enjoy a new sensation. They have a king in their hands now which does not happen often. And such a King. Ah, it must have seemed indeed a joke to those ribald men. A king, poor, weak, unknown, and yet with such a royal dignity and demeanor that no taunt nor insult of puny men could touch. Others have tried. It is their turn now. What shall they do to pierce that inscrutable calm or mar that peaceful front?

Ah, they have it. Herod had decked Him in royal attire. They would go further and crown him. But with what? Here we see again the hand of God—the holy writing that must be fulfilled in every jot and tittle. They will crown Him. Yes they will have their little jest at His expense. They will crown Him with thorns. So they stripped Him, putting again upon Him the scarlet cloak of royalty and crown of thorns, which they quickly platted for this purpose and laid it upon that kingly brow. And as a finishing touch, they put a reed in His hand, the scepter of authority, and kneeling down before Him in mockery they cried, "*Hail, King of the Jews!*" [Mat.27:29]. How fitting, yet how solemn! Those poor dupes of Satan did not know that all the years since that fateful day men would be gazing in rapt adoration at that wondrous Person arrayed by their cruel hands in derision; nor how all down the ages men should note and judge their deeds, as not only a ribald, cruel jest upon a defenseless man, but divinely ordered counsels, all significant of God's glorious King.

The **scarlet cloak** was no ordinary garment; but the robe of royalty, worn by emperors and kings, the color produced from the blood of a crushed worm. It was stained with death, as it were. **THORNS**, the sign of the curse upon a fallen earth, He bears upon His own head, that He may remove it from the head of others. **THE REED**, the insignificant emblem of weakness, becomes in His hand the scepter of power; for He conquers through defeat. He went down into death alone, as the corn of wheat, one little grain; but He comes up in resurrection, a multitude. The field white to harvest is the result. He triumphed over all the power of the enemy that was against us by the cross, the weakest thing in the world; but thereby, He wins title to the sovereignty of the 5th World Empire, the greatest thing in the world. It is plainly evident that all that happens here is under the direct supervision of the unerring wisdom of God. The King is simply on His way to the throne and this is the humbling route. He makes no effort to escape the ordeal; even as the Lamb before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth. They cannot move Him in any way. Therefore, they cease their brutality. Then they put His own raiment upon him and lead Him away to dark Calvary.

But there is an interruption. Another man is made to carry His cross after Him. And this too is significant: for this man, **Simon** ("*the hearer*"), simply speaks of the obedience of faith. He is seen, as Luke tells us, coming out of the country, and this fact is the cause of the cross being

laid upon him. Note that he does not die upon it. He only bears it after Christ. This honor is the privilege of every one that takes his place as rejected with his Lord and Master, and thus walks in separation from the world. If we are spiritually dull of hearing, we may escape the world's persecution; but we will also escape the privilege of jointly sharing in Christ's throne and its honors.

Finally, the **place of the skull (Golgotha)** is reached, the objective point toward which Christ was always headed. The Lord of life now enters a place of death, of ruin and wreckage, not merely to visit the scene, but to taste its awfulness in every fiber of His being. He refuses therefore the deadening opiate, offered to those led to execution, which might have relieved much of the physical torment, and gives Himself up to the full measure of suffering which God, as the Judge, ordains for Him, as the sinner's Substitute [Mat.27:33-34].

THE CROSS OF SHAME

Now we come to the cross itself on which the Prince of Glory died. Here is the lowest step of His humiliation, which has been gradual. Seven steps in His descent as Paul declares in Philippians 2:7-9. Here is the place of deepest agony. Hitherto His suffering was from man's hand, but now it is from God's hand. It was here that atonement for sin was made. It was on the cross that Christ bore our sins, as Peter plainly declares, "*In His own body on the tree*" [1Pe.2:24]. Note that it is on the tree, nowhere else. Scripture never speaks of Christ bearing our sins in life, but in death. Bearing our sins in life includes not only physical death as the penalty for sin, but the judgment which follows death [Heb.9:27]—eternal banishment from God. Christ bore the latter, eternal judgment, first. He tasted not only physical death upon the cross, but the outer darkness, eternal separation from God. The holy, offended God turned His face away from His Son when "He was made sin for us," but never before. Here is the very point that distinguishes the death of Jesus from that of any other man. He suffered without the gate, as the unclean and the outcast.

This was not a mere incident or accident. No indeed. It was in the perfect order of God as shown by the type. The bodies of those beasts, whose blood was brought into the sanctuary for sin, were burned without the camp. Here surely it becomes evident that "**WITHOUT THE CAMP**" answers to without the gate. Note that the special point of distinction between those offerings, whose blood went into the most holy place, was not in the fact that they were burned (for all sacrificial offerings were burnt in part or wholly), but in the place of the burning. This is the aspect of Christ's sacrificial work that is emphasized in Matthew's and Mark's Records.

The significance of the above is of immense importance. The ordinary place of the burning of the sacrifice was upon the Brazen Altar in the court of The Tabernacle. It was there that the Lord had said, in connection with the blood, "*I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for the soul*" [Lev.17:11]. And yet it was the blood of that offering, which was burned outside the camp upon the ground, that went inside the holiest of all, and not the blood of that which was burned upon the altar. It is the judgment upon sin, even the curse of God, which is made prominent here. This is expressed in the fact of its banishment not only from the courts of Jehovah's house, but also from the congregation of the Lord. We, as sinners, were in this outside place of banishment from God, into which Christ entered, in this aspect of His redemptive work, by being made sin for all mankind.

The tree (cross) further emphasizes this phase of atonement; for it is written, "*cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*" The cross is therefore a cursed death. "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*" [Gal.3:13]. Here we are taught again that everything was ordered in the life and death of the Lamb of God. His death was truly propitiatory; therefore, it was not a mere circumstance that He hung upon the tree. This was but the outer form of an intense reality.

Man could nail Him there only because God had willed that He should so suffer. This is what the cry, *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* signifies, of which Matthew and Mark tell us [Mat.27:46]. His death is carefully distinguished, in that prophetic psalm in which this desolate cry is recorded, from that of all the other suffering saints. It is written there,

“Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” [Psa.22:4-6]

The sorrow depicted here speaks altogether of atonement. It is different from all other pain or grief. Note also that this was altogether different from anything recorded of Him in life. He testified Himself, *“He that sent Me is with Me; the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him”* [Joh.8:29]. It was this moral, glorious perfection, in which His Father continually found delight that made it possible for Him to atone for sin. He was the only Root out of the dry ground of humanity that God could find [Isa.53:2]. His own holy Person was the basis of His finished work on Calvary. He must be the Burnt Offering first, before He could prevail as the Sin Offering. All the offerings referred to some phase of His death. They were but shadows which pointed to the substance of Calvary where they all had their fulfillment.

When the darkness disappears the crisis over. He declares, *“It is finished,”* then dismisses His spirit and departs [Joh.19:30]. His work is done. He has conquered. The vail is rent. Heaven is opened to man, while the graves are opened for man. The way out and up is made. All is harmony, complete and perfect; antitype answers most beautifully to type.

He has for His title upon the cross these words, *“This is Jesus the King of the Jews”* [Mat.27:37]. It was the accusation of the Jews against Him and for which He is hanged between 2 thieves. John, in His biography of Jesus, tells us that the leaders objected to the above superscription desiring Pilate to change it; but again God’s power is seen overshadowing all things. Pilate refuses saying, *“What I have written, I have written”* [Joh.19:22]. Thus, Jesus goes down into death classed with robbers; but He comes up to sit upon His Father’s throne as King of the Jews, even as it was written.

But the cross was the stumbling block to the Jew. It was a conclusive argument against all His claims. What! The Son of God upon a cross. That was the limit. All that passed by reviled the gentle Man suffering upon the tree. *“If He is the King of Israel, let Him deliver Himself,”* they argued. *“He trusted in God,”* they exclaim, *“let Him come to His help,”* using almost the identical words of Scripture [Psa.22:8]. Even the robbers reproached Him on account of His weakness [Mat.27:44]. Ah, here it is—weakness! How the natural man shrinks from anything that appears weak and helpless; but it is through this very weakness, this despised way of the cross, that man is glorified. Christ crucified through weakness made God responsible to raise Him from the dead; therefore, *“He liveth by the power of God”* [2Co.13:4], dependent even now upon His Father.

Immediately we read of the results of accomplished redemption, the fruit of His death, even while He is still upon the cross. Luke informs us of the one thief who, realizing his condition, acknowledged his need and found refuge from the judgment after death, in the safety provided by the offering up of the spotless victim by his side. Though the first paradise be not restored, he, with the other resurrected saints, enters with Christ, the Last Adam into the paradise of God. Christ is seen here as the Trespass Offering, restoring that which He took not away; not only so, but adding the one fifth more, the overplus of compensation, both to God and man, by the finished work of Calvary. Furthermore, at this juncture we are informed of the conviction of the Gentile centurion and those that were with him. They are convinced by all that they have heard and seen that this Man is not merely King of the Jews, but as they confess, *“truly this was the Son of God”* [Mat.27:54]. What a tribute from the stranger, a tribute that the Jew was loath to render.

Thus we see the Gentile also coming into his blessing as the fruit of Christ's death. Now there is no more indignity nor humiliation for the Well-Beloved Son. Everything is marked out and designed by God Himself. The rich man comes forward to give testimony to Christ, as it had been prophesied. "They gave Him a grave with wicked men;" that is, men had so proposed; but it availed naught, for God had disposed differently. He was to be "*with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*" [Isa.53:9]. No more is He numbered with transgressors, but the opposite; the transgressors are now numbered with Him, the Righteous, when they believe. He is now in the hands of these little ones, tender hands if they are feeble. He is laid away in the clean sepulcher, where never man yet lay [Mat.27:57-60]. No death defiling body had ever rested in the tomb which held the precious tabernacle of Christ. His death cannot mingle or be identified with the death of any other man; but rather His death, is death-dispelling. Moreover, the Holy One who is to see no corruption cannot enter the abode of corruption. How marvelous is the sovereignty of God manifested over every little detail. All is under His direction and government.

But the enemy is busy too. His work is also in evidence; but as always it only enhances and glorifies the triumph of Christ. The Jews insist that Pilate set a watch, that the body of the deceiver, as they call Him in one instance [Mat.27:63], may not be stolen away by His disciples. Ah, they remember His words; note that fact. Nothing that He had said, as to His death and resurrection, escaped their notice. He had asserted His final triumph and they had not forgotten. The devil would hinder His resurrection; for this was his defeat, and they were but his tools.

So Pilate yields again to them, for God desired that all the power of Satan and man be exerted to hold His Son in death, that His victory over the enemy might be that much more glorious. He points to the resurrection of His Son as the acme of His might, the masterpiece of His creative power [Eph.1:19-20]. It is upon this basis, Christ in resurrection that all creation rests. "*If Christ be not raised ye are yet in your sins,*" the Apostle Paul informs us later [1Co.15:19]. He was delivered up to death for our offenses and was raised again for our justification [Rom.4:25]. It was as man (representative of a new creation) that Christ was taken out of the grave, the stronghold of the adversary; therefore, it is no marvel that Satan resisted and marshalled all his strength to prevent the bursting of the bars of death.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Atonement is over. Christ is dead. He is in the tomb. His work is done. And now God must come in. It is time for Him to work. His answer to the sacrifice of His Son is due. It cannot be long delayed. Immediately there is some answer, as the rent veil, the earthquake, the graves opened witness [Mat.27:53]; but not yet the final justification of Christ. His resurrection alone is the answer on God's part to His good pleasure in his Son. Note the fact, which Matthew alone records, that after Christ's resurrection, some saints also arose and came out of the opened graves and went into Jerusalem appearing to many. God's government is now satisfied. His claims against man have all been met, of which He gives us the proof in raising His Son, as well as other holy ones, from the grave. But note the fact that is emphasized; **THE SAINTS WAITED CHRIST'S TRIUMPH.** He had to lead the way out to victory and up to God. He said, "*No man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven*" [Joh.3:13]. Paradise had closed once to man, but now it is opened by the death and resurrection of Christ. The rending of the veil, which preceded this stupendous event (His resurrection) is symbolic of Christ's death. The veil itself was a sign of the barred way to God from man's side. Because of the Covenant of Law, God dwelt in thick darkness, hidden from man. The way into the holiest was not made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing. Man was shut out of God's presence. The flesh of sin was the barrier. But when Christ came and tabernacled and died in the likeness of this same sinful flesh, He opened the way to God.

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a newly-slain and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, let us draw near to God with a true heart.” [Heb.10:19-20 Greek]

God answered to the death of His Son by immediately rending the veil from the top to the bottom. The way into God's presence was opened, but that was not enough. Christ must be raised, and as man, actually enter in and take possession of His seat on the right hand of God, the sure pledge that man has been accepted. Under The Law, none could see God and live. Even Moses the mediator could not see His full glory. Now man may not only see God in Christ, but live forever in His presence, in His light and love.

“And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.” [Mat.28:9]

Matthew does not dwell upon the resurrection. He says nothing about various appearances of the Lord to His disciples at Jerusalem, with the exception of that to the women who came very early to the sepulcher. They are the first witnesses of the victory over death, which is not without its significance. We read that *“Adam was not deceived; but the woman being deceived was in the transgression”* [1Ti.2:14-15]. Therefore, as the woman brought death on the scene; so by the grace of God, in the person of Mary, woman is the bringer-in of life, and now she is its first herald. This is also prophetic of women in the end who are proclaiming and will continue to proclaim the glad tidings. We read, *“The Lord gave the Word; great was the company of women that published it”* [Psa.68:11 RV]. They wait until the Lord gives the message. Men want to deliver their own words. The Lord used women to deliver the first message concerning the resurrection. No men of might, no silver-tongued orators were needed. The feebleness of woman emphasizes again the apparent weakness of the cross. Christ had fought alone and won the battle. Of the people there was none with Him. Even His chosen, His best, had turned their backs in the day of battle; therefore, He speaks to them now through the women. He sends the word to them to meet Him, not in Jerusalem as we would expect, but in Galilee, the scene of His former labors. There the commission regarding the Kingdom is given them; for Matthew gives us the Kingdom aspect.

AFTER HIS RESURRECTION, WHAT?

Galilee emphasized the rejection of Christ from the beginning. In His infancy, He was refused by Jerusalem in the person of its king, Herod, who sought to kill Him. When He returned from Egypt, where He had sought refuge with His parents, they found a haven in Nazareth, which was a town of “Galilee of the Gentiles” [Mat.4:15]. The latter was in disrepute, because it was the witness of the ruin of Israel, being largely given over to people of other nations, since the 10 tribes had been carried captive to Assyria. Out of Galilee, the scribes assured the people, there should arise no prophet; but God ordered otherwise. He chooses weak things to confound the mighty. So it was there in the midst of darkness and the shadow of death, that Light arose and Life appeared in the person of Christ. Jonah also was of Galilee.

And the passing over of Jerusalem at that time was also most wonderfully prophetic of the world-wide proclamation of the Gospel which began immediately after His resurrection, but will not have its complete fulfillment until the end of the age. Paul, with his message to the church, a heavenly people, comes in between these 2 epochs. That is one reason that there is an air of reserve over the end of this Kingdom gospel. The Holy Spirit could not be explicit as regards Israel's affairs, because their clock was about to stop. Therefore, we who now know the truth may read between the lines and see through the veil as it were. Thus Christ's words to the women, *“go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me”* [Mat.28:10], simply assures us that He will first meet a remnant of Israel, if not Judah, scattered in the world. The meaning of **Galilee** being *“a wheel, circular,”* etc. A remnant of His people will be gathered together, with

Kingdom hopes rekindled, while yet He has not been revealed to the whole nation, nor to Jerusalem.

Mary of **Magdala** (meaning “*the watchtower*”) being mentioned here, emphatically speaks of the great victory achieved. She, out of whom were cast 7 demons, most fittingly represents the remnant who first believe. She is the positive witness that Christ has spoiled principalities and powers, and led captivity captive. The unclean spirits have left; but her heart is not empty. The vacancy has been filled with One who satisfies her to the uttermost. And the demons have had no opportunity nor inclination to return to the place where Christ abides. So will it be with Israel when they come into possession of their own things again.

In the meantime the chief priests are informed by the guard of their ineffectual efforts to keep the Man Jesus in the grave. They received the knowledge of the resurrection; for note the fact that the men **TOLD OF ALL THAT HAD COME TO PASS** [Mat.28:11]. They knew that the great stone had been rolled back by supernatural power before which the guards quailed and all their puny power failed. But the religious rulers still persisted in their rejection of His claims, even as He said that **THEY WILL NOT BELIEVE THOUGH A MAN RISE FROM THE DEAD** [Luk.16:31]. Yet they publish the failure of all their efforts, with the addition of the false account that the disciples came while the guards slept and stole His body away. They continue their vain struggle, even as the devil himself, against Omnipotence, willfully blinded to the light.

REVELATION OF THE KING PRE-FIGURED

The Kingdom Gospel closes with the appearing of the Lord to the 11 in Galilee as He had appointed; but it seems that His brethren included more than just the apostles. It probably was here that he was revealed to “*more than five hundred brethren at once*,” as Paul later informs us [1Co.15:6]. That gathering was no doubt prophetic of the beginning of the regathering of Israel from the world and the setting up of Christ’s Kingdom. The King assures them of having all authority given into His hands, and as such He sends them out to disciple all nations. This is not the message of Paul, nor the Gospel for this age. Simon, who is Peter, at the very first declared the program of God’s dealings. Listen—he tells us that God is simply “*visiting the Gentiles now, taking out of them a people for His name*.” But later, “*after this, He will return to Israel, as also the prophets declare, and build again the ruins of David which are fallen down*” [Act.15:16-17 RV].

Then will be the time when they shall baptize all disciple nations into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The triune God will then be fully revealed. Today, as members of Christ’s body, we are baptized into the Name of Jesus, being significant of Him as Head, the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him. To be a part of the great man of destiny, the Christ, who is to rule all nations, is a much greater honor than to be one of a nation even though they are disciples. We note that the 12, the Kingdom Apostles, did not follow this prescribed formula, for they obtained the mind of the Spirit for the time and baptized believers into the name of Jesus [Act.2:38]. The body of Christ was already in formation; for as Paul later informs us, “*In one Spirit were we all baptized into one body*” [1Co.12:13 RV].

Again, we emphasize the fact that **all nations** were to be the sphere of the Kingdom message, which certainly does not signify Gentiles only. This is the Kingdom Gospel; therefore, this proclamation is especially to Israel who are hidden in the world. They will manifest their character as the true Israel by the reception they accord the messengers of God and their message.

The further words, “*Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the age*,” are a wondrous promise of encouragement [Mat.28:20]. They are applicable at all times, yet will be of special import to the remnant, who shall preach the **GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM**, of which those first disciples, who heard

these words, were but the earnest. They will no doubt be in desperate need of its comfort and strength and find it a tower in which they may hide in the day of trouble—the hour of judgment which is coming upon the earth.

The commission that is given the disciples in Mark's Gospel is entirely different from Matthew's. That is only another proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures. They are here sent to preach to every creature; not nations discipled, but individuals converted. Faith that is only implied as necessary in Matthew's words is insisted upon by Mark. "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned,*" irrespective of whether he is baptized or not [Mar.16:16].

Then come the signs which followed the Gospel in the beginning and still follow those that believe.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." [Mar.16:17-18]

Matthew gives us no hint of them because they are in Mark's Gospel in their own proper place, in the Sin Offering aspect of the cross. These signs emphasize the fact that the power of Satan over mankind has been broken by the death and resurrection of Christ.

1. The Stronger One has entered the strong one's house and destroyed his goods, as even the very first of the gifts assures. "*They shall cast out demons in my name,*" is the glad proclamation that Christ reigns supreme over all the domain which Satan had usurped and held for ages.
2. In the 2nd gift, the new tongue, we have the reversal of the judgment of Babel. There, men were scattered by the different tongues in which they spoke. Here is the sign that they are united into one body by the one baptism of the Spirit. Men cursed God at the defeat of Babel because they could not understand one another; while at Pentecost they all spoke the same thing. They told of the wonderful works of God and shouted His praise in different languages, signifying that the victory is for the world. All men everywhere are called to praise God.
3. The taking up of serpents, as well as.
4. The annulment of every deadly drink, by faith, further proves that Satan is a conquered foe.
5. All his weapons have been taken out of his hand, as the 5th sign is conclusive evidence: "*They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.*" Victory over Satan and victory over sickness are the glorious results of the victory over sin which Christ achieved for man by being made sin. Sin's annulment is the devil's defeat. It deprives him of his power over man. Sickness and death are thereby vanquished. Hallelujah!

Thus in Mark we are taken further on than in Matthew. We are not only out of the grave with Christ, but we are taken up to heaven in our representative. Mark gives us a glimpse of the Conqueror ascended and sitting on the right hand of God. He is back whence He came, but not the same. He was there before, eternally equal with God; but now He goes back a Man, A Servant, joined to His people, with whom He is seen here still working. He is one with them forever. It is the place He has chosen. He had to stoop to conquer; but oh, the grandeur of His abasement! To all eternity we shall marvel at the mystery of the Gospel of the Son of God.

APPENDICES

We add several explanatory statements that may be of interest and profit.

The phrase [the kingdom of heaven](#), which is peculiar to Matthew's record, invariably is **THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS** in the Greek. The definite article is expressed and the word [heaven](#) is plural. The phrase occurs 8 times in Matthew 13 and 30 times from Matthew 3:2 to 25:1. The phrase, [the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens](#) suggests the hidden purpose of it.

On the dimensions of Christendom as figured by the Mustard Tree, consider the fabulous statistics of the sects²:

Congregational and Christian Churches Merged	1,050,000
Disciples of Christ	1,500,000
Presbyterians in the United States	2,500,000
Lutheran Church	3,500,000
Fifteen Baptist Bodies	8,000,000
Methodist, 16 organizations	8,000,000
Catholics in Canada	4,000,000
Catholics in the United States	20,000,000
Total	44,000,000

168 different religious organizations; 145 of these call themselves Christians.

The **Talents** (in Matthew 18): A talent of silver was worth \$1,000; a talent of gold, \$15,000. Hence, the debtor's indebtedness was \$15,000,000 in gold. No marvel that he was unable to pay the debt.

A **hundred pence** was worth \$17.00, the indebtedness of the servant of the one who was irrecoverably insolvent.

The expression, "*the end of the world*" [Mat.13:39-40, Mat.24:3] is **THE CONSUMMATION OF THE AGE** (Greek); that is, the Millennial Age.

² From "*Story of the Christian Church*" by J. L. Hurlbut, 1933.

Cal vary's Hil l

Three men are hanged upon a hil l ;
But onl y one man dies.
The other two made rendezvous,
And met in paradise.

And so today, three crosses stil l ,
By sin are lifted high.
God's Word stands fast as in the past—
"In eating, thou shal t die."

Upon one cross, men sinful , il l ,
Die cursing God and fate.
They see Christ not. He is forgot.
Their heart is fill ed with hate.

On other cross, men of good wil l ,
Repent, and cry "Forgive."
Christ on thir d cross, bears al l their loss.
They l ook to Him and live.

BARABBAS

Barabbas, Barabbas, the ne'er-do-wel l ,
Awaited death in his prison cel l .
His cross was ready; in the dawning he'd die;
When, hark! From the distance there comes a cry,

"Barabbas, Barabbas! We want the thief.
Crucify Jesus. Put Him to grief."
Pil ate, the weakling, coul d not mob deny.
He said, "Take ye Him and crucify."

They saved the robber with hands unclean,
And nailed to the cross, The Nazarene.
What did Barabbas, when he was set free,
And Jesus was hanging on Cal vary?

Methinks to the hil l , he quickl y ran
And gazed at the cross that hel d The Man,
Who died for Barabbas, the son of shame,
And breathed in hushed accents, the sacred Name.

But this is the story, we fain woul d tell —
We, as Barabbas, were slated for hell .
All were awaiting the pal e horse and hearse;
But Christ has redeemed us from sin's death and curse.

He died for Barabbas, the robber, 'tis true;
But likewise He died for me and for you.
By His death on the cross, we now are set free,
May come out of prison, and shout, "LIBERTY!"

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