

The
BIOGRAPHY
OF THE
KING
GOSPEL OF MATTHEW
By
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“Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness,
and Princes shall rule in judgement”—Isa. 32:1

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FOREWORD

We are coming to our readers with the second edition of The Biography of the King. The first 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 first edition.

Faithfully Yours for God's Glory

—Grace and Glory

Note from Publisher (Grace Assembly):

Grace Assembly is privileged to publish and post this commentary on our Web Site, www.graceassembliesandiego.com. We believe these commentaries rank among the best for Bible students who desire to learn about the Word of God and the Pauline Revelation. These commentaries were written during the early days of the latter rain outpour of God's Spirit and they continue to provide enlightenment to the reader. These are the original writings of the authors. Grace Assembly has not made any changes or additions to these writings other than format changes for the convenience of the Bible student. In the left hand column we have added the King James Bible version as it applies to the commentary on that page. Where the authors have referred to scripture references without quoting the scripture in the text, we have added the scripture as a footnote. In some places the authors have referred to Bible versions other than the King James. Since Grace Assembly holds to the King James Version as the preserved text, we, therefore, have added in the text the same scripture from the King James Version. We trust these ancillary changes will be helpful to the Bible student.

Gospel of Matthew

Introduction

LEVI—"the joined one," son of Alphaeus—"Chief," is the writer of the first of the four biographys 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. His name was changed to Matthew, "Gift of Jehovah," and was a sign to Israel. In fact Matthew himself was a sign to the nation. 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 tho' Israel have rejected their Messiah. "God will yet set His King upon His holy hill of Zion, tho' the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing and the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel against the Lord and against His Anointed" (*"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion... Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed,"—Psa. 2:6, 1-2 KJV*)—Psa. 2. Yea, "a king shall reign in righteousness," and Israel shall be His people; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Thus Matthew has the honor of presenting Christ as the God-appointed, Messiah and King.

Five Divisions of the Book

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

Division One

The Birth of The King

Chapters 1 and 2

Chapters One

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. The Holy Spirit who inspired Matthew, endeavors to set before us at once the connection of Christ with two of the most important promises of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah. The one given to David as the King (¹2 Sam. 7:8-16) and the one given to Abraham as to His Seed (²Gen. 15:18). Christ was the fulfillment of both promises. As Son of David, He is the King of Israel. As Son of Abraham, tho’ not necessarily King, He is the promised Seed thru 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 (tho’ 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

¹ 2 Samuel 7:8-16 “Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, And as since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”

² Genesis 15:18 “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:”

Chapter 1

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

1:2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

1:3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;

1:4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;

1:5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

1:6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias;

1:7 And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;

1:8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

1:9 And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias;

Israelitish nation and the basic head of blessing, and ends with Joseph the last of the chosen line. The genealogy is divided into three sections each separated and emphasized “as fourteen generations” (V. 17). And 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 seven, stamped upon it three 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 first part of the genealogy embraces both heads of promise. It begins with Abraham and ends with David. The second part begins with Solomon, favored son of David, after which there is a general history of decline; while the giving up of the nation as the acknowledged people of Jehovah ends the section. The third part has in it only one significant name, Zorobabel—“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 were at their lowest ebb, Jesus was born—the Resurrection and the Life—thus justifying the numerical symbolism of the third 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” (*“for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.” KJV*)—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 thru whom He will bring in the promised King, for Mary too is a descendant of David. And 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 thru Joseph; but according to God’s Word, independent of man’s reckoning, He was the heir of David thru His mother, Mary.

Five Chosen Women

Therefore 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 latter 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

1:10 And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias;

1:11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

1:12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;

1:13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;

1:14 And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;

1:15 And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;

1:16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

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 five of these; five 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 two tables of the law with their five precepts upon each. And more than this, it symbolizes the weak united with the strong, man joined to God; as illustrated by our four fingers, the number of human weakness connected with the one thumb, the number of God. Immanuel—"God with us," is the full expression of the latter.

The history of these five 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 that 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. Four of these women may be Gentiles; three certainly are; while two 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. And not only are three of these women under a cloud, because of their heritage of shame by birth; but three of them are marked by their own sin: while Tamar, the first in the line, actually finds her place here thru 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. And He is not ashamed of such, as Tamar's name, implying "prosperity," is the witness.

The second 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. As 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—"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 even unto the tenth generation; they shall not come into the congregation of the Lord forever" (*"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:" KJV*)—Deut. 23:3. Therefore she is legally excluded from the people of God. Yet grace is sovereign in her case also. It rises above

1:17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen generations.

1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

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, third in succession, would have been excluded and later his great Anti-type, Christ, the Saviour-King would also have been excluded from the congregation.

The fourth 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, tho’ we may lose its joy and power and our future reward by our lapse and failure.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the fifth 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,” (Isa. 7:14) 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 the first chapter of 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—John 10. We are also shown at the outset His primary work. “He shall save His people from their sins.” (V. 21) Immediately then would follow the results for which the Jew 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

1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

1:24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

1:25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

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.

Chapter 2

2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

2:2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

2:3 When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

2:4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

2:5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

2:6 And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

The Wise Men—Chapter Two

This chapter shows us the Child of destiny, the promised Son, actually on the scene. He was born in Bethlehem; for it was thus written (¹Micah 5:2) that the typical “house of bread” should first behold the “true Bread from heaven.” 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 has arisen out of Jacob and they bow down before the “Scepter of Israel”—²Num. 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—³Dan. 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 thru 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? 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. And this He did in a marvelous manner. He sent a star to guide them to the land of Palestine where a little Babe was lying in a manger. They began a search after the Creator and it ended

¹ Micah 5:2 “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.”

² Numbers 24:17 “I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.”

³ Daniel 9:25 “Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.”

2:7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

2:8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

2:9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

2:10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

in a stable at Bethlehem where they worshipped the Child found on the breast of his mother. 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, what 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 question. 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 their great mistake, that Jerusalem was surely 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 visioned. 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

2:11 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.

2:12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

2:13 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.

2:14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

rule all creation, He who had created all things, housed in the stable of a country inn. 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 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.

And 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. They are told to return to their homes by another way.

Joseph Flees to Egypt

“And when they were departed, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young Child and His mother and flee into Egypt and be there until I bring thee word”—V. 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” (“*called my son out of Egypt.*” *KJV*)—Hos. 11:1. At first sight the above Scripture 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. And we understand it also when we have learned

2:15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

2:16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

2:17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

2:18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

2:19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

2:20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

2:21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

that the nation itself 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. And tho' they failed to fittingly portray, or 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" (*"The LORD 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."* KJV). We would infer that this is not the nation's saying, "I have spent our mistake," for a Voice answers that is not the nations, saying, "I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with Jehovah and my work with my God" (*"I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God."*—Isa. 49:4 KJV). 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" (*"And now, saith the LORD 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. 49:5 KJV).

Typically Egypt speaks of the bondage of sin in our natural state, out of which a divine voice must call us. However this had no application to Christ, as we know 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, "He shall be called a Nazarene" (V. 23). The latter 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" (*"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"* KJV)—John 1:46. The best of all humanity was now come out from there. It had the unique honor to have 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"—Chap. 11:1. The Stem of Jesse, David's Seed must be cut down, and revive again and eclipse all its former grandeur and glory thru the Branch. For Christ is that Righteous Branch (¹Jer. 23:5) as well as "the Man whose name is the Branch" (Zech. 6:12) who shall

¹ Jeremiah 23:5 "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."

2:22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

build the Temple of the Lord. 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...This is that spoken by the prophets," (*"this is that which was spoken by the prophet"*—Acts 2:16 KJV) 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.

Division Two

Introduction of the King and Kingdom

Chapters 3 to 7

Chapter Three

Chapter 3

3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3:3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

3:4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

MATTHEW now presents the King and His Kingdom. The latter 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 the heavens," 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 right place before the Messiah, thus justifying the fact of His coming—¹Isa. 40:8. John came in the "way of righteousness," as the Lord later testified of him, and thus could only stand apart and mourn for the condition of things. He is uncompromising, fit expression of the law to which he points. Tho' he is the son of a priest, yet we never find him in priestly office; nor is he ever seen in the temple, or even in Jerusalem. His clothing speaks of the desert—the camel's hair and leather girdle. His food of locusts and wild honey is consistent with his message of mourning and repentance. His baptism confirms his teaching. He dips them into repentance in Jordan, the river of death; baptized into death is the

¹ Isaiah 40:8 "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

3:5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

3:6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

3:9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

3:10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:

3:12 Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

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

3:14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

lesson. His disciples 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; the former points out the need of the death; the latter 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. He will baptize into the Holy Ghost, into life, and victory and power, whereas John can only baptize into water, into judgement, into death.

The Lord Himself, after His resurrection, 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" ("*For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*" *KJV*)—Acts. 1:5. Here is the very same contrast of water with Spirit, and the same word "baptism," applied to each ministry, while 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. And it is also positively ascertained by Scripture that they were all born again before Pentecost and that this baptism therefore was not their new birth, but had to do with another experience altogether.

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized of him" (V. 13). This is the first of the five great scenes in the earthly life of Christ. The other four are His temptation in the wilderness, His transfiguration on the mountain, 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. And John thinks so; he is startled, even forbidding the humbling of Jesus in this manner. "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" Jesus said, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." It is clear that Christ's baptism is the entrance to His public

3:15 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.

ministry. Prior to this, with the exception of His birth and the one incident of His youth at the age of twelve years, which Luke records, the Scriptures are silent as regards His life. And this was all designed and controlled by God; for Christ is here viewed as the passover Lamb which was “taken” on the tenth day of the first month and “kept up” until the fourteenth 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”—Ex. 12:2. Why then were the first ten days of this momentous month unnoticed?

As was intimated Matthew connects the Old and New Testaments; therefore we are in the midst of typical teaching. The number “ten,” in symbolic language, is the number of responsibility; therefore those “ten 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 thirty 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 title of the law. Therefore 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.

And as the typical lamb was kept up “four days,” this being the number of testing, so Christ was in the public gaze for four 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 of the devil.” And 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. And as was said, 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 He is presenting Himself here. He, the Holy, the “Last Adam,” offers Himself to God as the Substitute in death for sinful “first Adam.” Not that He took sin into union with Himself; this was impossible. His holiness repulsed sin; but He took here 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. And we are not surprised that this opens heaven and calls forth the divine approval of the Father upon such devotion. And 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. And His perfection is 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 Anti-type offered Himself, the only acceptable Sacrifice unto God.

And 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 three for the first time, openly manifested together in the work of redemption.

3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

The dove or pigeon, the two 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 heaven, not earth, has provided the Sacrifice by which heaven is to be appeased and opened to man. That the "Second Man" is from heaven, is the important teaching here symbolized. The "first 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. 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," (V. 17) 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

Chapter Four

Chapter 4

The fourth chapter corresponds most wonderfully with Numbers, the fourth book of the Pentateuch. It is the story of the wilderness and follows the priestly anointing in the book of Leviticus. Thus the first five chapters in Matthew are a miniature expression of the five books of Moses. We have Christ's beginning, the Genesis of Matthew in the first chapter; His Exodus out of Egypt in the second; His priestly inauguration in the third; His wilderness journey in the fourth; while the fifth chapter introduces the Deuteronomic character of Christ's ministry. The latter is the second giving of the law, the very meaning of Deuteronomy. In fact in the five divisions into which 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?

4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

"Then was Jesus led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil"—Ch. 4:1. The Lord had fulfilled, as we have noted, His own responsibility as Man before God in the thirty years of His private life at Nazareth. And now He comes forth from that retirement to take His public place as Mediator for others and thereby assume their responsibility before God. And 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 whatever 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.

4:2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

And when it was ended "He hungered." There was a limit to the fast, forty 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 tho' 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 tho’ He 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 straitness. The first 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 Second 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 forty 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 (tho’ a different interrogation), that he found effectual in the case of the first Adam.

The First Temptation

“If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread” (V. 3). 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. And 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 whatever. 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 three 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, tho’ simple are yet freighted with divine wisdom, and therefore weighty with divine power to meet our every need. And 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 the Lord, as a

4:3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4:4 But he answered and said, **It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**

Man, takes the creature place in absolute subjection to the authority of God. And the verse of Scripture which He quotes, “It is written, man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,” (V. 4) 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 fathers, 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” (*“And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.” KJV*)— Deut. 8:3. Christ had proved this Word of God sufficient for these forty days. His life had been sustained and nourished by the Truth. He had lived by it and tho’ He was now hungry, yet He was alive and well and able to wield the sword.

Notice therefore that 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—He 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’s 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 Second Temptation

4:5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

“Then the Devil taketh Him up into the Holy City and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple” (V. 5). Notice his 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 arch-enemy. The latter assured Him, bringing the leverage of God’s

4:6 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.

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

4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

Word to bear upon this, that He cannot be hurt; “for it is written, He shall give His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone” (V. 6). This implies that He compel 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” (Ps. 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 is now the Word to move Him to act. This 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; “It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God” (V. 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 belonged, moved on in weakness, leaving His case in His Father’s hands, waiting His own time for vindication and proof of His Sonship. And yet here was the proof—He could not be tempted to desire anything outside of His Father’s will.

The Third 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” (V. 8, 9).

Satan changes his tactics completely in this third test, 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. He has already resisted both his attacks. He will not endeavor to prove by His own power, that He is the Son of God send 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

4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

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

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

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 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 a thousand years and afterwards cast him into the lake of fire.

The Lord answers, as He does the two preceding challenges, by the Word of God, tho’ 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—“Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve” (V. 10). Instead of yielding, Jesus now asserts His authority as the Son of God, who, tho’ 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 tho’ there is no display of Deity, no outburst of divine judgement, 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.

The devil now leaves Him—Victor indeed—calm, undaunted, invincible in spirit, tho’ 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.

4:12 Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

4:13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

4:14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

4:15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

4:16 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.

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

4:18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

4:19 And he saith unto them, **Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**

“Now when Jesus knew that John was delivered up, He departed into Galilee” (V. 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 fore-runner 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 the latter is replete, cluster around and spring from Him.

As intimated 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 had been promised to the chosen nation. And this kingdom, which John announced, Jesus now proclaims by His preaching, “Repent for the, kingdom of heaven is at hand” (V. 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 center and channel of blessing to all other nations. And now the due time is at hand: the King is on the scene to set up the kingdom.

Galilee, the portion of Israel’s land which bore a decided reproach (¹John. 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 Zebulon and Naphtali” on the one hand, but now “Galilee of the Gentiles,” tells us plainly of the ruin which is manifest. Zebulon, “the dweller” had fulfilled Jacob’s prophecy, and “dwelling at the haven of the sea,” was the type of Israel as a whole, the chosen nation, giving up dwelling alone, to mingle in fellowship in commerce, with all other nations. Now it could truly be said, It was “the way of the sea,” as tho’ Zebulon 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 Zebulon 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,” a glorious Conqueror as He had just proved.

He 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. And with this also comes the call for disciples, those

¹ John 7:52 “They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.”

4:20 And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him.

4:21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

4:22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

4:24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

4:25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judaea, and *from* beyond Jordan.

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. 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. And 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 any one. He is Lord, and Master and Guide in all His people's service. And 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 to office. His Father signs His ordination papers with mighty miracles which witness is beyond question and cannot be disputed. 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. And as we go on in the Record we notice that the miracles become steadily fewer from the tenth chapter on, tho' at times He lets the streams flow out in power to the most undeserving, for who can absolutely restrain or shut up the outgushing of grace from the heart of Love.

And great multitudes flock after Him from all the surrounding country: from Galilee itself; from Decapolis, the ten (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," ("*the world is gone after him.*—*John 12:19 KJV*) 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.

Characteristics of the Kingdom Chapters 5 to 7

In chapters five to seven, 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 “restoration of all things” (*“restitution of all things” KJV*) has come (Acts 3:21), then these requirements of Christ’s kingdom will be enforced in the earth, when all men are under the sway and rule of God. The Assembly 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 law. To preach this sermon to the unsaved, unless for the purpose of showing them the demands of law and thus convicting them of their lack of this righteousness, is to wrongfully divide the Word of God. It is only Christians that know experimentally their deliverance from law, who 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 the heavenlies in Christ” (*“all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ”—Eph. 1:3 KJV*) 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.

Chapter 5

5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

5:2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

“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” (Chap. 5:1). The Lord “went up.” This is significant of His office. He is the King on His throne, as it were; the Law-giver revealing the righteousness of His kingdom. He begins with blessing; blessing upon the “heirs” of promise. There are nine of these beatitudes, as they are called. The first four 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 three show the positive energy and activity of such a heart in unceasing conflict with that which opposes it.

5:3 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

5:4 Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5:5 Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

5:6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

5:7 Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

First and therefore of chief importance here, we have “Blessed are the poor in spirit” (Chap. 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 “being nothing,” as Paul expresses it; but not yet “possessing all things.” 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.”

The second 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; and 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,” (Chap. 5:4) 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. And then the next blessing follows; these “meek shall inherit the earth” (Chap. 5:5), 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” (Chap. 11:29). And in this knowledge there is present blessing, “Ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Chap. 11:29), as well as future reward.

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 who hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Chap. 5:6), not merely for their own individual supply, 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,” and “satisfy the longing soul, and fill the hungry soul with goodness” (*“For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.”—Psa. 107:9 KJV*).

The next three beatitudes relate to that in which the children of God show forth distinctly their divine origin. The merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, all manifest the character of God as Light and Love. It is directly

5:8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

5:9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

5:10 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

5:11 Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

said of the “peacemakers,” that they “shall be called the children of God” (Chap. 5:9)—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” (“*made peace through the blood of his cross,*”—*Col. 1:20 KJV*). His kingdom is founded in peace; therefore its heirs must be in harmony.

The last two 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 two kinds, namely for righteousness sake and for His sake. In the first case, 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 in the latter; 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—“Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven” (Chap. 5:11-12). 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 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 1000 years before the rest of the house of Israel will receive glorified bodies. John saw “the souls of them that were beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the Word of God, which had not worshiped 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” (“*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.” KJV)—Rev. 20:4.

But besides this and apart from martyrdom, there will also be a preserved remnant who, passing thru this time of trial, will have a special blessing and a peculiar protection; “And to the woman were 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 two-fold rejection. First, “ye are the salt of the earth” (Chap. 5:13). 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? 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. And 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” (Chap. 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” (Chap. 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” (“*the life was the light of men.*”—*John 1:4 KJV*), 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” (“*because their deeds were evil*”—*John 3:19 KJV*), 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 the light, And then there will be “good works,” indeed.

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

5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

5:15 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.

5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Israel, the kingdom people, will occupy, in 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 lustre, throughout the world during the Millennial age; and to this even the physical things in nature will respond, for the sun will shine seven times brighter than now.

The Prophet of the New Age

Second Part of Sermon

Chapter 5 (cont'd)

5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

5:20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

5:21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

5:22 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.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill”—Chap. 5:17.

We have now before us a new and distinct section of the discourse 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. 7:19), and tho’ Moses for the hardness of their hearts may concede some points, He, 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” were 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” (Luke 16:16). 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; tho’ necessarily bearing witness to, and establishing that which they anticipated. For no truth can, in the fullest sense, vanish away, tho’ it may, as in the present instance, be superseded by a fuller revelation.

Hence, 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.” As was intimated, 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 latter were extremely zealous for the external. The Lord proceeds to develop the inward righteousness which He requires, as in contrast to theirs which was outward. He emphasizes the second table of the law rather than the first, because man’s conscience is more accessible on this side. The old creation are rarely concerned with their 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 sixth 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

5:23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

5:24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

5:25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles 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.

5:26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

5:29 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.

standard; but he who is simply angry with his brother. And tho' 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. The Lord 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, etc." (Chap. 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 ye trust."—John 5:45.

Then He proceeds to the seventh precept of the law to enforce the above lesson—that out of the heart of man comes the positive transgression. For what was in the heart to do, even tho' the external trespass was not committed, 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. Then He proceeds to develop the teaching further upon this line. 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. For, 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 to 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.

5:30 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.

5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

5:33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

5:34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

5:35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

5:36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

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

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. 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. "Swear not at all," He exhorts. "But let your words be yea, yea, nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Chap. 5:37). They 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 to the weakness of the flesh and depend upon the Omnipotence of Jehovah, 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" (Chap. 5:38, 39).

He now contrasts 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 non-resistance 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.

5:38 Ye have heard that it hath been said,
An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not
evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy
right cheek, turn to him the other also.

5:40 And if any man will sue thee at the
law, and take away thy coat, let him
have *thy* cloke also.

5:41 And whosoever shall compel thee to
go a mile, go with him twain.

5:42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from
him that would borrow of thee turn not
thou away.

5:43 Ye have heard that it hath been said,
Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate
thine enemy.

5:44 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;

5:45 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.

5:46 For if ye love them which love you,
what reward have ye? do not even the
publicans the same?

5:47 And if ye salute your brethren only,
what do ye more *than others*? do not even
the publicans so?

5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your
Father which is in heaven is perfect.

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. And we are partakers of such an abundant portion that we are exhorted to abundantly “give to him that asketh, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.”

And while all this needs wisdom in exercise, the latter will be forthcoming in the love, divine, discerning love, upon which we may draw. And to this the Lord now proceeds—“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,” 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, tho’ 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. And His love is our enabling and will also be Israel’s enabling when their day has dawned.

And He adds, “That ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven” (Chap. 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,” 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

Third Part of the Sermon

Chapter 6

6:1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

6:2 Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6:3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

6:4 That *thine* alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

6:5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

“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.”—Chap. 6:1.

In this third section, the Law-giver emphasizes the “righteous acts” of the heirs of His Kingdom. The word translated “alms,” in the first verse, should be “righteousness,” as see 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 third part, three 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 the first eighteen verses we have these righteous acts expressed in three different ways; almsgiving, prayer and fasting. And 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 moment 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,” that is, “blow” about our good works, etc., that we may be popular and praised of men; verily, 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.” And 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 two incompatible things are here joined together. We can hardly imagine it possible that any one 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 tho’ 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 over the self-life. It is certainly a wonderful victory when we are enabled to pray as

tho' we were alone with God even when we are in the meeting house. But this only comes thru the enduement of the Holy Spirit.

The Pattern Prayer

6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

6:8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

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 two parts. The first refers to God and His glory; the second 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 thru 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 Law-maker, 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. And 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, as in heaven so on earth" (Chap. 6:10), 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 thru 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" (Isa. 32:1), 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 first section of the prayer. The petitions following are of a personal character.

6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.

"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.

6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

"And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one 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, tho' 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 wilfulness, 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.

6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

"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. And 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 ourselves, ("for in my flesh dwells no good thing") is more to be dreaded; for only thru 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” (Chap. 6:13), 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: “If you forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Chap. 6:14), 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; tho’ 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 is 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 third application of these righteous acts of the heirs of the Kingdom: the selfward aspect, that of fasting. The Lord again connects the negative with the positive exhortation—“Be not as the hypocrite,” when you fast, 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.” And fasting is not simply a refusal of food: it has a much wider application. It applies to the whole of our three-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.

6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

6:15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

6:16 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.

6:17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

6:18 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.

Our Heavenly Life Before Men

Fourth 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. And it is interesting to note, that this is the fourth book of Moses; for as the children of Israel carried their sanctuary with them, in their journey thru the wilderness, so do we, and thus we are empowered to fulfill all these admonitions. And 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.

Chapter 6 (cont'd)

6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

6:22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

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 thru and steal" (Chap. 6:19). All earthly treasures are for ourselves, He assures. And as heaven is our home and this is simply a country thru 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" (Chap. 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." And if we are not interested in it, as some will insist, why then bother to accumulate? 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 this very thing. We have the privilege today of changing worthless paper into good security and yet how slow we are to avail ourselves of the opportunity. And 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. And this alone enables for singleness of heart which really refers to purpose 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" (Chap. 6:22). 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; but 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

6:23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

6:24 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.

6:25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

6:26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

6:27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

6:28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

6:29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

6:30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

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.

And now He goes further on this line and personifies money as an idol and sets it over, as a rival, against God. 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 some one 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 Law-Giver 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. And 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 one 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," He urges, as an example for our weak and wavering faith. They do not endeavour 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! And then He asks, "if God so clothe the grass of the field which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, will He not clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Chap. 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.

6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

6:32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

6:34 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.

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. “Be not careful for the morrow, for the morrow will take care of itself; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Chap. 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

Fifth Part of Sermon

Chapter 7

Chapter 7

7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

7:4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

“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” (Chap. 7). With the above quotation we have the introduction to the fifth section of the Sermon. And in keeping with its numerical signification the lessons are all of divine government thus corresponding with the fifth 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 of grace, is the rule which the Judge will use in His dealing with us. The old creation are not fit to judge; they always behold the mote in their brother’s eye, tho’ never considering the beam in their own eye. They are 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” (V. 5), and begin to see clearly that the trouble was with us, more than with our brother. And it is then when our judgment is tempered with mercy, for we realize the weakness and frailty of men: and that when we are judging others we are

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

7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

really judging ourselves, for as the apostle Paul assures, in his arraignment of the whole human race, that 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 to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and rend you” (V. 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. Unregenerated 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 Sapphira, 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. And 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” (V. 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. And 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 any one 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 latter does not give a stone for bread, nor a serpent for 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.

7:8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

7:9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

7:10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

7:12 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.

7:13 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:

The Lord here 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, tho' 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. And the connection of the above with the following practical admonition 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 will be enlarged" ("*our heart is enlarged.*"—2 Cor. 6:11 KJV) 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.—2 Cor. 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. And He further adds, "This is the law and the prophets" (V. 12). 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. And the righteousness which the law demanded from man, grace bestows upon him and God is satisfied.

The Way of Salvation

Then He solemnly exhorts them to "enter into life thru the strait gate" (V. 13). 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 half-way 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 "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 two religions or ways of salvation in the world, regardless of the multitude of sects and divisions; the one is the way of law, the other of grace; the one is to "do," the other is to "take." And we would suppose all main would choose the latter in preference to the former; 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 tell us "seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). It is a religious

7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

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

7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

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” (V. 14). 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. “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 thru 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 might have life” (John 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 ravening 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. And 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” (*“his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness” KJV*)—2 Cor. 11:15. 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?” (V. 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, 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.

7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

7:19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

7:21 Not every one 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.

7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

7:23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Their fruit is their nature. 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 unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."—Math. 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 his 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 fruit ye shall know them" (V. 20).

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 every one 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" (V. 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" (*"that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."* KJV) (1 Cor. 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. And 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 sepulchres" (Matt. 23:27) for their changed habits are not the result of a changed nature. Therefore good works are not a decisive proof of true discipleship; for the latter necessitates heart subjection, otherwise the works will be lawlessness, or "will-worship" as Paul terms them.—¹Col. 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?

"Wherefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I

¹ Colossians 2:23 "Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh."

7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

7:25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

7:26 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:

7:27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

7:28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

7:29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

will liken him unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock” (V. 24). The True Preacher of righteousness now ends His great Sermon with two contrasted illustrations: the one exhibits the dependent spirit who finds a stable, steadfast anchorage, while the other depicts the independent soul who believes himself sufficient. 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. And 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. But 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. And none other foundation can any man lay that will stand the judgment; for the old Adam building has already been condemned and pronounced a ruin: tho’ while the weather is fair, the latter building 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 two Heads of the human race are presented here, side by side, at the close of this matchless discourse on the mount; for all the truth which it contains is based upon, so to speak, and springs from these two representative Men, Adam and Christ. The one has fallen; the other abides.

And the multitude 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 law-giver of the old covenant.

As we have intimated, the Sermon, falls easily, even as the book of Matthew into five principle divisions, agreeing with the five books of Moses. We have the Genesis in the first part of chapter five, the blessings upon the heirs of promise (vs. 1-17): while the Exodus comes in the latter half of the chapter, the separation of the heirs from the world (vs. 18-48): then the Leviticus section begins with chapter six, the sanctuary part (vs. 19-34), while the Deuteronomic character of the teaching is exhibited in chapter seven, which ends the second 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.

The Ministry of the King

Chapters 8 to 12

Chapter 8

8:1 When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

8:2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

“When He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.”—Chap 8:1.

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, 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 the latter’s 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, 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 the nation 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 irradicable 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, leprosy is incurable. It is a striking type of sin. It has five points of resemblance; first in its subtle invasion, second in its certain spread, third in its contagious character, fourth in its sundering of human relationships, and fifth in its 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” (*“the law entered, that the offence might abound”*—Rom. 5:20 KJV), and “by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20) 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 have mercy. The law has none. 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” (Chap. 8:2). He acknowledged Christ’s power to heal, but doubted His willingness and His mercy. How perfect a picture of the legal heart of the nation.

8:3 And Jesus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, **I will; be thou clean.** And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

8:4 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.**

8:5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

8:6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

8:7 And Jesus saith unto him, **I will come and heal him.**

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 thru the barrier of the law and remove every taint of that which the law could brand, but could not remedy. “I will: be thou cleansed,” we hear Him say, and lo, the leprosy departs instantly. The man is clean. But now He sends Him to the priest, representative of the law, that he may also pronounce him clean; for only so could he be admitted 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—“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. 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 (Chap. 8:8). True humility believes God. So often when God’s free unconditional promises are proclaimed, we hear some one 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

8:8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

8:9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

8:10 When Jesus heard *it*, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, **Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.**

8:11 **And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.**

8:12 **But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

8:13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, **Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.** And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

8:14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

8:15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

God. He argues, because of his own legal heart, that it is too much to expect that God should freely give us all things—"bless us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ" ("*blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*"—*Eph. 1:3 KJV*) 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 acknowledges that it is grace on Christ's part, 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. He, the soldier, 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. It must have refreshed the heart of the Lord in contrast with the doubting, formal, religious Pharisee. In him 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.

The third healing in this account has also, as we intimated, its figurative significance. 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 fulness of the Gentiles has come in. He will return to the sphere of His old relationship and bring healing to the nation, who is still beloved for the fathers' sake, even as Peter's mother-in-law was healed for the Apostle's sake. The fever of restless longing, of covetousness and passion in the nation, 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.

And this meaning is further emphasized by that which follows. "When the evening was come," the end of the age typified, "they brought to Him many possessed with demons," etc. (Chap. 8:16). Israel's restoration will certainly be the beginning of a great day for man. Satan will be cast out. His tyranny over

8:16 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:

8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

8:18 Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

8:19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

8:20 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.**

8:21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

man will cease; his shackles will be loosed; the captives set free when the Deliverer comes out of Zion. And all this will come to pass because the saying of Isaiah will have been fulfilled—"Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (Chap. 8:17). Here is positive proof that healing is included in the atonement; for Isa. 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, tho' 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" (*"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."*—Isa. 35:1 KJV)—Isa. 35.

In the above three 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. And these three 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, as was intimated, 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. 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" (Chap. 8:20). 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; tho' 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 "No," says the Master of His men, "Follow Me and let the dead bury the dead." He will not allow the nearest fleshly claim to interfere or take precedence of His claim. Cruel? you say. No.

8:22 But Jesus said unto him, **Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.**

8:23 And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

8:24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

8:25 And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

8:26 And he saith unto them, **Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?** Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

8:27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

He is Lord in the fullest sense over all those whom He chooses. He insists upon prompt and unhesitating obedience. And furthermore, His disciples are messengers of life and not of death. They are sent as Paul expressed it, “not to baptize” the old man (1 Cor. 1:17), but to preach the Good News concerning a new Man.

And 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, the disciples follow Him” (V. 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” (*“they took him even as he was in the ship”—Mark 4:36 KJV*), 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 tho’ 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.” 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 tho’ these latter were intelligent beings; because He is really rebuking and commanding Satan (Chap. 8:25, 26). 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.” 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?” 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, thru which we are passing, where 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 tho’ 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, tho’ no waves can sink the vessel on which the Master sails, as He teaches here. If we could rest

8:28 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.

8:29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

8:30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.

8:31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

8:32 And he said unto them, **Go**. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

8:33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

8:34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought *him* that he would depart out of their coasts.

amidst the tempest, as He did, we would see far more of “His works and His wonders in the deep” (*“These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.” KJV*)—Ps. 107:24.

Now they come to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes. “Reward at the end,” is the meaning. No doubt these were Israelites of the tribe of Gad (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 two demon-filled men, maniacs, we would call them. 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 two would indicate, of the reality of demon possession. The demons give utterance to the man, recognize the Lord with intelligence as to His Deity. They address Him and are addressed by Him, the man being only the house in which they dwelt. They are the master in their habitation. 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), He will allow them to enter into a herd of swine, which are feeding thereby. He gives the desired permission; and thereupon the whole herd of them (2000) become mad, rush down the steep bank into the sea and perish in the waters. 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; 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 declamations 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, come out to meet Him and request the great Deliverer to depart out of their coasts. 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

Chapter 9

9:1 And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.

9:2 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.**

9:3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth.

9:4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, **Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?**

9:5 For whether is easier, to say, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

9:6 **But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,** (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) **Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.**

9:7 And he arose, and departed to his house.

9:8 But when the multitudes saw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

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 bring to Him a man sick of the palsy" (Chap. 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." And certain of them bellowed forth their rage, saying, "This man blasphemeth."

The Master is calm, unruffled, serene. "He, knowing their thoughts," for they had not told all, said, "Why do ye think evil in your hearts, for which is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee" (note the order of blessing here); "or to say, Rise up and walk?" (V. 4, 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" (V. 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. And 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 tho' they are forced to acknowledge that He can and does heal the sick. And 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 Twelve

9:9 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.

“And as Jesus passed forth from thence, He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom; and He said unto him, Follow Me.”—Chap. 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 chapter four, 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.

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 thru the flesh. It could not hold the “fish” in its meshes after they were caught. They would break thru its every restraint and escape; therefore the scribes and Pharisees, by their additions to 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” (for so is the meaning of his name), to Israel.

Matthew, as do the other chosen disciples, rises immediately from his natural occupation without any excuse or delay, tho’ 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

9:10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

9:11 And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

9:12 But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, **They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.**

9:13 **But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

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 tho' 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." 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, tho' they do not address themselves directly to Him, but to his disciples. "Why," they dare to question, "eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" (Chap. 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" (Chap. 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 ye and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (Chap. 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. And 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 short comings; 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 Himself and not be one whit ashamed of our condition; for the latter 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 undeserving; 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. Therefore we should rejoice that we needed grace and that Christ "did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to

9:14 Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

9:15 And Jesus said unto them, **Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.**

9:16 **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.**

9:17 **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.**

repentance” (Chap. 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. And 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?” (Chap. 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 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 bridechamber clothe themselves in sackcloth and ashes at such a time, “while the Bridegroom is with them?” (Chap. 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.

Furthermore He 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 which God’s law gave only made the rent worse, that is the law openly manifested the condition of man’s righteousness. And 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.

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” (Chap. 9:17). The new

9:18 While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

9:19 And Jesus arose, and followed him, and *so did* his disciples.

9:20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment:

9:21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

9:22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, **Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.** And the woman was made whole from that hour.

creation, who are clad in garments of righteousness, are therefore 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." 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, the "enlightener," which we learn from the other Records, was the name of the ruler. The latter name was what the nation 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 as was intimated 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, 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 twelve 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 garments, I shall be whole" (Chap. 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 the garment, which she touched. The woman claims His righteousness and immediately her defiling issue of blood was stanchd. 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. Jesus felt her touch, tho' there was a multitude thronging Him, as we learn from the other reporters of this scene, Mark and Luke. They give us more details of all these events, as we noted previously, 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 cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole" (Chap. 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 when they press thru all the reason and unbelief of the old creation, which has

9:23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

9:24 He said unto them, **Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.** And they laughed him to scorn.

9:25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

9:26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

9:27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on us.

9:28 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.

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" (Chap. 9:24). And tho' 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." So Israel, tho' 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 this present age. The dead will then hear His Voice, "and they that hear shall live."

As we intimated these two 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 two 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, tho' 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 thruout the land.

And now we have another departure recorded. He went on from thence and two 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. 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, tho' 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 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 rights and claim Him as the divinely appointed One. He knows such acknowledgment must be preceded by a revelation from

9:29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, *According to your faith be it unto you.*

9:30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, *See that no man know it.*

9:31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

9:32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

9:33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

9:34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

the father, as later we hear Him refer to Peter's confession of Him as being the Father's revelation—Chap. 16. Therefore the significance of His being now addressed as Son of David by the blind men is the more apparent. And the fact that they both receive their sight emphasizes their witness of Him (two being the number of competent testimony), as being true. But they are also a witness of the condition of the nation 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 the nation'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. Here is a hard case indeed, telling us 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. And while they, even as the two blind men, might acknowledge Him as 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 read in a preceding verse (6) in this chapter, that He, the Lord, will have removed "the covering," the blindness that is upon the people. Then they will acknowledge, not only His human, but His divine, claim to the Messianic throne of David. But the miracle at the time only provoked the already hostile heart of the Pharisees and caused them to blaspheme by saying, "He casteth out demons by the prince of demons" (Chap. 9:34). But as yet the common people heard Him gladly. The real attitude of the nation 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. 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. "He went about all the cities and villages" (Chap. 9:35), we read, and carried His identification paper with Him, "healing all manner of sickness and infirmity." Thus the people are without excuse. Even His own labors, tho' 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

9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, *The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;*

9:38 *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*

laborers, where are they? Laborers, observe He calls for, not loungers, as some one has noted. This means work and hard work too, no easy snap, as ministers have it today. But laborers are still few; tho' the harvest still is great. He bids His disciples to pray for such, supplicate the Lord to send, or thrust forth laborers into the needy fields. And 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 any one. 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.

“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 disease”—Chap. 10:1.

Chapter 10

10:1 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.

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, that 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, tho’ never for one moment surmising that the Lord was even then preparing them to loose “the bundles of the yoke.” So the prophet designates legality (¹Isa. 58:6), which is upon the people. And 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 Gallilean fishermen, that they did a greater work, in some respects, than has ever been accomplished since by education, organization or magnetism. And 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.

10:2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother;

There are twelve 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 all and in all” (“*that God may be all in all.*”—*1 Cor. 15:28 KJV*). Those twelve 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 two by two, in their preparatory

¹ Isaiah 58:6 “*Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?*”

10:3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son of* Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

10:4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, **Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:**

10:6 **But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

10:7 **And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

10:8 **Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.**

10:9 **Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,**

10:10 **Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.**

10:11 **And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.**

testimony to Israel. Apparently their natural desire in this regard is considered. Simon or 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 Phillip, “the lover of the race,” with Bartholomew, supposed to be that Nathanael, “Given of God,” whom Phillip brought to Jesus—¹John 1:45. Thomas, “twin,” is joined to Matthew, “gift of Jehovah,” tho’ he styles himself “the taxgatherer.” James the less, as he is called by men, tho’ 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 the latter’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 Himself. The directions are ample; they cover every phase of their ministry. Their sphere of service is limited to the “lost sheep” of the house of Israel. Note that they are sheep, tho’ 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 every day 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 (²Luke 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

¹ John 1:45 “Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

² Luke 22:35 “And he said unto them, **When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing?** And they said, Nothing.”

10:12 And when ye come into an house, salute it.

10:13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

10:14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

10:15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

10:17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

10:18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

10:19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

10:20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

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 the latter 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. "The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you," as He tells them at another time—John 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 good-will. "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 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; tho' 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 were 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. They had no hope in the natural; and tho' wary as serpents, yet as inoffensive as doves. 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 their rejection and encourages them in view of it. And 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 the Father to come to their help, not only with words, but "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2:4). And tho' the hatred of men would be so intense as to break thru 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 the possibility of their brother, their father, their child, their dearest earthly friend turning against them, because of their attitude to the Master. 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 "until the Son of Man be come" (V. 23), was the promise.

The last words emphasize the fact, which is very apparent in the Record of Matthew, that these divinely chosen twelve 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

10:21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death.

10:22 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

10:23 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.

10:24 The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord.

10:25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call* them of his household?

10:26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

10:27 What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the housetops.

10:28 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.

Son of Man from heaven all 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 the twenty-fourth chapter, we are not at all confused. The meaning is plain. In the latter chapter, we are again told, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" ("*But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*"—*Chap. 24:13 KJV*). 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 conform 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 in our later 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. Therefore He encourages them to proclaim upon the housetop's, "to cry aloud and spare not," all that was revealed to them in secret. For tho' 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" (V. 28). 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. "Not a sparrow," He assures them, the very least of all creatures of the very least value, "falls to the

10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

10:31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

10:33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

10:35 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.

10:36 And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

10:37 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.

ground,” without their Father’s notice (V. 29). 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.

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 in heaven” (V. 32). 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.

And further, we learn that such confession of Christ is the test of true discipleship. And this means much more than merely assenting to His Lordship. It means a work done in the heart by the Spirit of God, whereby we know that He is the Son of God and we cast in our lot with Him for weal or woe. We give Him the preeminent place in our lives even tho’ 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. The yielding of one individual in the family generally introduces variance. It brings to the surface all the opposition of the heart to Christ. The 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

10:38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

10:40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

10:41 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.

10:42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

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 shall find it” (V. 39).

Herein is the path to exaltation and honor. It is following Jesus all the way. And 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.” He that receives them, receives Him, and therefore vice versa; he that rejects them is rejecting Him. And 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” (V. 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 a reward.

Thus He ends His directions and instructions to those mighty men of valor, the twelve 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.

Chapter Eleven

Chapter 11

11:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

11:2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

11:3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

11:4 Jesus answered and said unto them, **Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:**

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 two of His disciples to ask Him, “He that should come, or do we look for Another?” (V. 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, 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 Him as “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world” (*“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” KJV*)—John 1:29. Had He not known that this meant suffering and death, not only to the Lamb, but to His disciples also? It seems as tho’ 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.

And 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 (¹35:5, 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 witness—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. And these were

¹ Isaiah 35:5, 6 “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.”

11:5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

11:6 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

11:7 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?

11:8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses.

11:9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

11:10 For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

11:11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

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. And Jesus adds, as a gentle admonition to John and to all of us, “Blessed is he who shall not be offended in Me” (V. 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 tho’ the nation is rejected for their unbelief.

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 the latter 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?” (V. 8). 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” (V. 9); 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. There is one exception, “He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he” (V. 11). 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. He that abaseth himself the lowest, shall be exalted the highest; is the teaching.

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

11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

11:13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

11:14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come.

11:15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

11:16 But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

11:17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

11:18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

kingdom of heaven. Those were the “violent” who were seizing hold by force. That is, they had to press thru 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. And we would remark here, as we intimated above, 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 he persists and takes hold, by faith, of the kingdom of heaven. 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 blaspheme. Then he hears of the enduement of power from on high and he is convinced that he is eligible for the Gift of the Spirit; but lo, he is met again by the obstructers. And so it goes on. Every advance is thru 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 latter might also oppose, but his influence would not count for much.

And the Lord’s next words, “for all the prophets and the law prophesied until John” (V. 13), show that the nation is without excuse. The Kingdom of heaven, which John announced as “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 (¹Malachi 3:1) was present in the person of John—“if they had received him.” 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 does reject Him. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (V. 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. 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 ways. 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. For John came to them, fasting. He ate little, and drank nothing, that

¹ Malachi 3:1 “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.”

11:19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

11:20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

11:21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

11:22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

11:23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

11:24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

11:25 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.

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” (V. 19), 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”—James 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. He thanks Him 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.

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.

11:26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

11:27 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*.

11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

11:30 For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden *is* light.

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” (V. 29). 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: for my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (V. 29). 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 tho’ Maker and Lord of all, was found among men as one that serveth. This was His Father’s will for Him. “He learned obedience” (“*yet learned he obedience*”—*Heb. 5:8 KJV*), moment by moment, by obeying; tho’ 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 this present chapter we find three classes addressed. It is interesting to note the difference in the Master’s words and attitude toward each. 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—“the smoking flax, He will not quench” (“*smoking flax shall he not quench*”—*Chap. 12:20 KJV*). They have some light. They want more and they get it.

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.

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, 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—"Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (V. 28).

The Sabbath Question

Chapter Twelve

Chapter 12

12:1 At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

12:2 But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

The closing verses of the chapter, which we have been considering, connect right on to this chapter, 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 sceptre. He bows to their ultimatum and takes the place of rejection which they give Him. And tho' He goes on apparently offering them the Kingdom, yet even now in the purpose of God the nation is set aside, until such time as they repent and call upon the Lord.

“At that time Jesus went thru 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” (V. 1, 2).

The Pharisees are still busy with their criticism. And 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 ten commandments; but this is not the truth. The sabbath is not strictly one of these commands. When these latter were spoken to Israel (Ex. 20) the exhortation was, “Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy”—Ex. 20:8. This implies that mention was made of it previously, which is exactly the case.

Just one 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. And it was in this connection that the sabbath was first mentioned. The people were instructed to gather twice as much manna on the sixth day. None was to be gathered on the seventh day, because it was announced as “the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord” (Ex. 16:23); yet the ten commandments were not spoken to Israel until thirty days later. The two 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 forty days later—¹Ex. 31:18 and 34:27.

¹ Exodus 31:18 “And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.”

Exodus 34:27 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.”

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"—Ex. 31. 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 the Sabbath shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doeth work therein that soul shall he cut off from among his people; he shall surely be put to death" (*"Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death:"*—Ex. 31:14 KJV). 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 some one 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 ten commandments. It stands there as a mediation like the necessary hub to the spokes in a wheel. The latter 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 show bread—which was not lawful for him to eat—"but only for the priests" (V. 4). It was not any

12:3 But he said unto them, **Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;**

12:4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

12:5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

12:6 But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.

12:7 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

doubtful point of theology nor 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 show bread, 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—¹I Sam. 2:35.

Therefore, David being in rejection here assumes mighty proportions. As we intimated, 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, tho' 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?" (V. 8).

David showed himself lord of the show bread. He is seen here as greater than the show bread, even as Christ is Lord of all these figurative things. They all pointed to, and made way for Him. And as David took the show bread 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

¹ 1 Samuel 2:35 "And I will raise me up a faithful priest, *that* shall do according to *that* which *is* in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever."

the morning and evening sacrifices were increased—¹Num. 28:9, 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 were 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.

Hence we learn from these illustrations, that Jesus is teaching that grace was always given precedence of the law, in the mind of God. She was always reigning even when the law was in the house; for the latter 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. And 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" (V. 7), He plaintively cries. 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 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

12:9 And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue:

12:10 And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

Jesus further emphasizes His words and affirms His work as Lord of the sabbath in the healing of the withered hand on that day. 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?" (V. 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? And is not a man of greater value than a sheep? 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

¹ Numbers 28:9, 10 "And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour *for* a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof: *This is* the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering."

12:11 And he said unto them, **What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?**

12:12 **How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.**

12:13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

12:14 Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

12:15 But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

12:16 And charged them that they should not make him known:

12:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

12:18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

12:19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

12:20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

12:21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

12:22 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.

arm. They are silenced by His words. Then He further stops their mouths by His deed. “Stretch forth thy hand” (V. 13), 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 thru, 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 or murmuring, even as it was written of Him. “Behold My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My Soul is well-pleased. I will put my Spirit upon Him and He shall show forth judgment unto the nations. He shall not strive nor cry out, nor shall any hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break and smoking flax shall He not quench, until He bring forth judgment unto victory. And in His Name shall the Gentiles trust.”—V. 21.

The above citation applied 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. 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?” (V. 23). 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

12:23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?

12:24 But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

12:25 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:**

12:26 **And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?**

12:27 **And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges.**

12:28 **But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.**

12:29 **Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.**

12:30 **He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.**

12:31 **Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy *against* the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.**

12:32 **And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.**

He, “reading their hearts,” answered again according to His divine wisdom. 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 these 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. And 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. To speak 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 age, neither in the age to come” (V. 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 second time.

Then 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 fulness 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

12:33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit.

12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

12:35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

12:36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

12:37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

12:38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

12:39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

12:41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

12:42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

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” (*“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”—Rom. 10:10 KJV.*)

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” (V. 39), who had lain in the belly of the great fish, for three days and three nights. Jonah, who was as tho’ 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 three days and three 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, as we have noted, of Christ as dead and risen; and then of themselves. They like the disobedient servant Jonah, were cast out into the midst of the nation (the sea), where they have been submerged for almost three thousand years; as the ten tribes were scattered some seven hundred 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 seven 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 the twenty-fourth chapter of this Gospel of Matthew.

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 (¹chap. 3:21), which no doubt gave rise to fear that He would go too far

¹ Mark 3:21 “And when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.”

12:43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

12:44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, swept, and garnished.

12:45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

12:46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, *his* mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

12:47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

12:48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, **Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?**

12:49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, **Behold my mother and my brethren!**

12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

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, tho' 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 and with that of the whole nation. The latter would have accepted Him, after He had wrought His mighty signs and wonders, if He had not reprov'd 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 (V. 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." No claim of the flesh was allowed or acknowledged. His Father is in heaven and He 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. And then we read, "He went out of the house" (Chap. 13:1), Israel's house, and He is still out. Their house is left unto them desolate, is that to which this points.

Division Four
Rejection of the King

Chapters 13-25

Chapter Thirteen

Chapter 13

13:1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.

13:2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

“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”—Matt. 13:1-3.

Israel is the house from whence Jesus went out. In the division preceding, 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. Chapter 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 every one that does the will of His Father. Thus Israel is judicially set aside for this dispensation, as is 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.

And here He speaks seven parables. They are not to Israel alone, but are spoken to the world, to all men. These parables are the Sower, the Tares, the Mustard Seed, the Leaven, the Hid Treasure, the Pearl and 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. Israel as a nation has been judicially dropped, as we saw by the action of the King at the close of chapter twelve. Now He gives us a seven-fold view of the present things upon the earth, in so far 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 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 the parables. The manifested earthly kingdom has been postponed until Christ’s second 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. And for those loyal subjects, “the kingdom of heaven” was set up, tho’ 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 three facts regarding this rule of an absent King which it is necessary to consider. First, it is not universal during this age. It was not intended to be and does not include all the people of the world. Second, it is mixed in character. Many are in its outward fold who are not loyal to the government of their absent King. These latter, however are permitted to remain, according to their profession, in the “kingdom of heaven.” And 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 are made fat. 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 “weeping, 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 one person out of four; 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 four parables are separated from the other three in that they are spoken publicly; for they concern the world, tho’ 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” (1 Cor. 2:14).

The Sower

“Hear ye therefore the parable of the Sower” (V. 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: tho’ it is said to have been sown in the heart. This is a solemn thing. The Word was really presented to them. It had made its appeal to the conscience; for notice, it is the Word which tests the soil. The latter was not plowed up by conviction.

13:3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, **Behold, a sower went forth to sow;**

13:4 **And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:**

13:5 **Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:**

13:6 **And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.**

13:7 **And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:**

13:8 **But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.**

13:9 **Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.**

13:10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

13:11 He answered and said unto them, *Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*

13:12 *For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.*

13:13 *Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.*

13:14 *And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:*

13:15 *For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

13:16 *But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.*

13:17 *For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

13:18 *Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.*

13:19 *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.*

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 first failure of the good seed, Satan is the manifested opposer. And 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 second failure of the seed sown, we see the flesh rather than Satan, as the opposer. Stony ground is the soil, tho' 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 depth of earth" (V. 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 his conscience has not been touched. He has not counted the cost; therefore when affliction or persecution ariseth because of the Word, immediately he 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, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6) and only flesh.

There is the third 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. And there is also this difference in this case—the seed is not said to be taken away, or withered, but simply 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 hindering the poor man while the care of his money may hinder the rich.

Therefore as was intimated, it is only one out of four 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. And even in that which is fruitful, there are three grades of yieldedness, "one a hundred fold, another sixty, another thirty" (V. 8), which clearly indicate different ranks of believers. The world, the

13:20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

13:21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

13:23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

13:24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

13:25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

13:26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

13:27 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?

13:28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

13:29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

flesh and the devil are the unchanging, untiring foes of all that is of God. They are always on the alert to hinder the people of God in their labor and their growth.

In the first 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 he questioned as to His Kingship, "Thou sayest it. I am a King. To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world that I might bear witness unto the Truth. Every one that is of the Truth, heareth My Voice" (*"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."*—John 18:37 KJV). Its subjects are disciples, tho' the fact that this kingdom is in the hands of men, effects 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. And 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. It will only be after the prophesied awful suffering of the tribulation that the Millennium glory will shine forth.

As we said, 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 tho' 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.

13:30 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.

13:31 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:

13:32 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.

The Mustard Seed

This parable, as the two 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. And when we understand the parable, the application is remarkable.

A tree in the Scriptures, 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” (*“Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied... All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations.”—Ezek. 31:5, 6 KJV*). 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” (*“The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth... under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:” KJV*)—Dan. 4:20-22.

The resemblances in both these cases, to the tree of the parable, surely cannot be doubted. They all figure earthly power and pomp; but in the latter case, it is as we previously remarked, 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 first 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 thru out the world. It has developed from a tiny seed—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, tho' an insecure one, on the earth, Tho' 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 tho' 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. Tho' 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" (Chap. 6:26), 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 fourth parable connects with the above, and foreshadows the inner corruption of the kingdom as in our midst. It is "like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened" (V. 33). Leaven in the Scriptures always figures evil; therefore we are safe in so interpreting it in this instance also. In 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 three 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: for 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

13:33 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.**

13:34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

13:35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

13:36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

13:37 He answered and said unto them, **He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;**

13:38 **The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;**

13:39 **The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.**

13:40 **As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.**

13:41 **The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;**

people, upon which they are to feed in communion with the Father. Therefore 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” (V. 33), 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—2 Thess. 2. The evil will spread until there is naught but corruption.

With this the parables spoken to the multitude are ended. There were four 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 tho’ 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 a parable. I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the earth” (V. 35); for 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 three 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, in this section, 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. For 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 angels and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things which offend and them which do iniquity” (V. 41). He will clean up the world Himself and get it ready for His coming. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father” (V. 43); at the end of the millennium.

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

13:42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

13:43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

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

13:45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

13:46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

beyond the present mystery form of the Kingdom, as does also the parable of the net, which we shall consider presently.

The Three Final Parables

“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”—V. 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—Ex. 19.

Then David tells us that “the Lord hath chosen Jacob for Himself and Israel for His peculiar treasure” (*“For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.” KJV*)—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 a New Creation, His people Israel. And it is this purpose that the next parable, the 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.

“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” (V. 45).

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 latter 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” (*“thy waves and thy billows”—Psa. 42:7 KJV*), of God’s wrath were poured out upon Him. 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” (*“The*

waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.”—Jonah 2:5 KJV). He was the Merchantman, seeking goodly pearls. Therefore He came down into the sea, where He found one pearl of great price which He drew out of the sea—the old creation.

Notice in this parable 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, nacre, or mother of pearl, which lines the interior of the shell. 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 thru-out 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 seven 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” (V. 45), 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. (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.

“Again the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind” (V. 47).

With this parable we have another turn; tho’ 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 two; 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” (*“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”—Mark 16:16 KJV*).

It is the everlasting Gospel which shall be preached at this time—¹Rev. 14:6. And 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

¹ Revelation 14:6 “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,”

13:47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

13:48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

13:49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

13:50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

sheep from the goats when the Lord appears—Chap. 25. In the harvest of the wheat fields of the Church age as depleted 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 drag-net or 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 SEVEN striking parables end with the above. 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 Israel, the nation, hidden for the present age, but shortly to "shine forth in the glory of the sun" in the world (V. 43). Furthermore, He views His Body and His Bride in this conglomeration of Truth and error, called Christendom.

13:51 Jesus saith unto them, *Have ye understood all these things?* They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

13:52 Then said he unto them, *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.*

13:53 And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

Now the Lord speaks another parable, but it is of an entirely different character from the seven which have preceded. He enquires of His disciples as to whether they have understood all these things. They answer quickly in the affirmative, tho' 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, "Every scribe which is instructed in the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (V. 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.

13:54 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?

13:55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

13:56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?

13:57 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.**

13:58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

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.

He comes therefore to Nazareth, His home town, as we would say, where tho' 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. And 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, 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 is the case today.

Thus the very fact which was His glory, that He was not a creature of circumstance, derived 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" (V. 58).

Chapter 14

14:1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

14:2 And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

14:3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.

14:4 For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.

14:5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

14:6 But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.

14:7 Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

14:8 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

14:9 And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*.

14:10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

Anti-Christ Prefigured

Chapter Fourteen

“At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus”—V. 1. The following account of Herod and his treatment of John seems to have 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 this Book of inspiration are thereby exceedingly enhanced. Herod at this point figures the anti-Christ; 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” (*“With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication,” KJV*)—Rev. 17:2.

John the Baptist, type of the two 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, 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; for his honor before his friends must be maintained, sends and beheads John.

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, thru her subtlety, the means in the hands of Rome of destroying the Spirit-filled witnesses of whom another John has prophesied—Rev. 11. The anti-Christ, 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—I King 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 three 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” (V. 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

14:11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought *it* to her mother.

14:12 And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

14:13 When Jesus heard *of it*, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

14:14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

14:15 And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

14:16 But Jesus said unto them, **They need not depart; give ye them to eat.**

14:17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

14:18 He said, **Bring them hither to me.**

14:19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

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—¹Rev. 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 (V. 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 five loaves speak), the Giver, as well as the Sustainer of life. The two 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. Tho' 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

¹ Revelation 12:14 "And to the woman were 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."

14:20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

14:21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

14:22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

14:23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

14:24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

14:26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

14:27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, **Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.**

14:28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

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” (V. 20). The significance of this is, that after this age, when all the hungry have been fed, there will be plenty for the twelve 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 five loaves and two fishes. The rejected humbled Man of Calvary is sufficient for every one.

Grace Still Flowing

Immediately after the above miracle, 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. 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 two advents are seen as tho’ 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?” (*“wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”—Acts 1:6 KJV*). And 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.

And 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” (*“the author and finisher of our faith”—Heb. 12:2 KJV*). Faith lives in the realm of the invisible and is built up and strengthened by the difficulties and obstructions which beset the path way; 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. As we intimated, 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. And this is what calls for overcoming, as the Lord names it (Rev. 2, 3), emphasizing the call to the individual, “He that hath an ear, let him hear” (Rev. 2:29). 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 tho’ 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” (V. 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 realizes that his life is in jeopardy and he calls loudly to Jesus. “Lord save or I perish” (V. 30). Immediately that strong Hand, which never failed any trusting soul in any age, is stretched out to meet his need, small and great.

Notice that Peter gets no reproof from the Lord for his failure (tho’ 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 unbelief. 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; tho’ 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

14:29 And he said, **Come**. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

14:30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, **O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?**

14:32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

14:33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

14:34 And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.

14:35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

14:36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

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 passed over into the land of Gennesaret, "the place of harps;" hint of the music, with its attendant harmony, which will pervade the whole world because Christ is received by His ancient people. The Greek is Chinneroth, "garden of the Prince."

Then, will come the healing of all the country round; for sorrow and sighing 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 they besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment; and as many as touched were made perfectly whole" (V. 36).

The Rebellion of Traditions

Chapter Fifteen

Chapter 15

15:1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,

15:2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

15:3 But he answered and said unto them, **Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?**

15:4 **For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.**

15:5 **But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;**

“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”—V. 1.

The above chapter appears to be a continuation of chapter twelve. Thirteen, and fourteen, coming in between, are apparently only a parenthesis. We have a further exhibition of the blindness on the part of the leaders of Israel as to spiritual things. And 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, (¹Ex. 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. Why do thy disciples transgress such authority? they ask. 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 you transgress the commandments of God by your traditions?” (V. 3). 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 command, the fourth, 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 tho’ its fulfillment contained a breach of the law, as Christ’s

¹ Exodus 30:32 “Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make *any other* like it, after the composition of it: it *is* holy, *and* it shall be holy unto you.”

15:6 And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

15:7 *Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,*

15:8 *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.*

15:9 *But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

15:10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, *Hear, and understand:*

15:11 *Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.*

15:12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

15:13 But he answered and said, *Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.*

15:14 *Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*

words indicate. 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 safe-guard from all error. The "teaching for doctrine the commandments of men" (V. 9), 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. 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" (V. 11). He himself is the source of defilement to the truth of which even nature itself is the witness. The Pharisees resent such plain speaking, tho' 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 themselves 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. He said, "Do you not yet understand that those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man ? * * * but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man"—Vs. 16-20. He shows them that the evil is deeper than that which may be washed away with water. And 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 whence deliverance is to come.

Unmerited Mercy

"And Jesus going forth from thence withdraws into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon."—V. 21. It seems sometimes as tho' 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

15:15 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

15:16 And Jesus said, *Are ye also yet without understanding?*

15:17 *Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?*

15:18 *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.*

15:19 *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:*

15:20 *These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.*

15:21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

15:22 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.

15:23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

opposites of the scribes and Pharisees. They had no righteousness of their own upon which to depend and no fore-fathers 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. 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, “the Son of David” (V. 22), to which He cannot respond. She had no claim upon Him as the heir of David. Her only claim was upon His mercy. Therefore, tho’ 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 fore-father’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 under the curse is our picture and the Son of David is afar off from such which we do well to acknowledge. He Himself, 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” (V. 24). 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 Son of David, for so she had addressed Him, not as the Savior of the world. And if the chosen seed of Abraham, the favored nation were lost sheep, what hope had the Canaanite except in His mercy alone?

She is not daunted by His rejection of her claim. Her heart is torn with anguish and some way 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.” But even yet she has not owned to all her need. Hence, He answered, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and cast it unto dogs” (V. 26). This is harsh language on the surface. The world would call it cruel. But the surgeon in

15:24 But he answered and said, **I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

15:25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

15:26 But he answered and said, **It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.**

15:27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

15:28 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.

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

15:30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:

15:31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

the natural 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 in the case of the heavenly Physician. What if the pill is a little bitter! He does not sugar-coat 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. She says, "Yea Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs which drop from the master's table." 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 Himself 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 done unto thee even as thou wilt" (V. 28); 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 them 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 going up into a mountain, sat down there" (V. 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. Manifestations and demonstration are expected. And why not? Did not the Lord say, "These signs shall follow?" (Mark 16:17). What

15:32 Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, **I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.**

15:33 And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?

15:34 And Jesus saith unto them, **How many loaves have ye?** And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

15:35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

15:36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

15:37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets full.

15:38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

15:39 And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

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”, (*“unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings—Mal. 4:2 KJV*), 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 have come. All these incidents in the life of the Anointed of God, are, as we have intimated, of wondrous significance. They feature greater happenings that are yet to come. After this day of grace to the Gentile, figured by His Mercy to the Canaanite, 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 seven, 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 seven loaves before the feast and seven baskets of fragments after they had all been fed. 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—Chap. 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—¹Acts 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” (V. 39).

¹ Acts 9:25 “Then the disciples took him by night, and let *him* down by the wall in a basket.”

Chapter 16

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

16:2 He answered and said unto them, *When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.*

16:3 *And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: 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?*

16:4 *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.

16:5 And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

16:6 Then Jesus said unto them, *Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.*

16:7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is because we have taken no bread.*

16:8 *Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?*

Various Opinions

Chapter Sixteen

The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came and tempting, “desired Him that He would show them a sign from heaven” (V. 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. And the desire for a sign was not in truth or reality; for He had given them many signs. Furthermore He Himself was the great sign to Israel, as Isaiah plainly states. “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call His Name Immanuel” (Chap. 1:23). 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. And this He would not do.

Then He chides them for their blindness. 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 the nation, disrupted and partly dispersed, should have taught them, if they had spiritual sight. Therefore His verdict of them—“a wicked and adulterous generation” (V. 4)—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, He said to His disciples, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (V. 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” (V. 5). 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, “Why do you reason as to the bread?” (V. 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 great matter in mind, even the leaven of error. The leaven of ritualism (Pharisaic) and the leaven

16:9 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

16:10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

16:11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

16:12 Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

16:13 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?**

16:14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

of rationalism (Sadducean), is what concerns Him. He knew its subtle and pervasive working. When it began to manifest itself there was no end to the influence it exerted: therefore His warning. And 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

“And when Jesus came into the parts of Ceasarea Phillipi, He asked His disciples, saying, Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”—V. 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 the latter house. Here was Israel’s land, where David’s throne should have had dominion if they had held the sceptre 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. And tho’ 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, the necessary training for rulership over it. They must first reign, as Christ indicates, by renunciation. Later they shall reign by acquisition.

And the question now raised by the Master is the deciding issue. Who is Christ? tho’ 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, of 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 sore, dug down deep to the very bottom, as with the Canaanite in the preceding section, only to bind up and heal it forever. Hallelujah!

They answered, Some say, He is John the Baptist; others, Elias; yet others think Him Jeremias, or one of the prophets. And 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 positiveness about any of these answers; no living faith, even tho' 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 conception. While they differ very materially as to the real identity of the Son of Man, yet there is perfect agreement as to their unbelief. And if His Friends do not accept His claims, what is to be expected of His enemies? Surely the nation 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.

16:15 He saith unto them, **But whom say ye that I am?**

Peter's Confession

16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

16:17 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.**

16:18 **And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**

He now turns and asks His disciples, "But whom say ye that I am?" (V. 15). Peter answers for them all, "Thou art the Christ, Son of the living God" (V. 16). Here is the faith of the election, while the nation 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. "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven"—V. 17. Thus Peter's faith is a divine revelation; and he truly answers to his name—"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. "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" (V. 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, tho' Rome insists he is, in contradiction of Peter's own words (¹1 Pet. 2:4, 5) tho' 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.

He is going to build His Assembly on resurrection ground, is the real meaning of these words. He refers to the future. Between the time of the building

¹ 1 Peter 2:4, 5 "To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

and the time in which He was speaking, there lies the awful gulf of woe, which He must bridge by His death. And 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

16:19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

16:20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

“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” (V. 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 two 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 that confess the name of Christ, tho’ 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 of all true disciples who thus were built up as living stones in His Church; so here too the application must be to all official disciples. The keys of the Kingdom are in the hands of His servants, tho’ 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 and 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 two or three gathered together in Christ’s Name—Chap. 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, as we have noted, 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. And 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 or spheres, at this time: for the visible revelation of the Lord will be at hand. And 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 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 He begins to show them that "He must go to Jerusalem and suffer and be killed" (V. 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 tho' Christ also assures them that He would rise again. Peter rebukes his Lord saying, "Pity thyself". "This shall not be unto Thee." 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. He rebukes the enemy, tho' disguised in Peter's flesh. "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" (V. 23). Even the smell of the flesh, which is at enmity against God, is obnoxious to the Lord and He quickly makes it known.

16:21 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.

16:22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

16:23 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.**

And 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; tho' 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 latter's choice and the dignity of His Person were lost to Peter; tho' 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. And 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 tho' saved and walking with God, we yet have another nature.

16:24 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.**

16:25 **For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.**

The Master not only declares His own path of humiliation, but announces it also as the path of His followers. He warns us all, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." 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 out-come 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 into the fullest reward.

We will not save our lives; for so says the Captain of our salvation. Surely His words ought to count. And 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

and 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 go 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 purgations, the inward filth, as well as the refuse, the outward filth of the world—¹1 Cor. 4:13. Gr. 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?

We are facing the very same opposition today as that which Christ faced, tho' men say differently. 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 words 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 the 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. And this is why the spirit of discipleship is so rare. Why, when present, it appears so strange because the preaching of 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 are 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

¹ 1 Corinthians 4:13 "Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the offscouring of all things unto this day."

16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

16:27 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.

16:28 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.

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, tho’ 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, witnesses 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 two questions which have never been answered. “For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul (or life)? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?” 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. And even tho’ 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. And 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. It is then, at His coming, that it will be manifested, who have saved and who have lost their lives. He says, Then each man shall be rewarded according to his works. 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 that there are some of those standing here who shall not taste of death until they see the Son of Man coming” (V. 28). These last words were fulfilled six days later, when several of those disciples were given a vision of His coming and His Kingdom. And while only a miniature picture; it was nevertheless true as to the essential features. Peter was there, for he informs us in his second 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 was an eye witness of His majesty” (“*the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*”—2 Pet. 1:16 KJV). 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”—2 Pet. 1:17.

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. As we intimated previously, 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 (¹Rev. 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.

¹ Revelation 3:21 "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

The Kingdom Vision

Chapter Seventeen

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them”—Vs. 1, 2.

Chapter 17

17:1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

17:2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

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

This is one of the four great scenes in the life of the Lord. The fact that He took only three 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 out-cast earth and bathing it in His effulgence.

“And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him.” 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; and Elijah had witnessed of their 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 (¹Luke 9:31) that they were talking of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. One of those men died (Moses), and God buried him (²Deut. 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 9, the devil disputing with Michael as to the body of Moses. Elias, or Elijah as the Hebrew gives it, went up to heaven in a chariot of fire. He was one of the two men of whom we read in the Scriptures

¹ Luke 9:31 “Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.”

² Deuteronomy 34:6 “And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.”

17:4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

17:5 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.

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. It is not at all in harmony with the revealed will of God. Hence, Peter is silenced immediately. “While he was yet speaking,” the Father’s Voice is heard interrupting the great apostle’s little speech. The flesh is not even allowed a hearing on this tableland of glory. God emphatically points to Christ, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him” (V. 5). He 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 Shekina glory cloud, which dwelt in the tabernacle of old and led the children of Israel thru 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 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. And 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 of Sinai. They prayed to Moses that they might not hear it any more; for it was the fiery law which the Voice then proclaimed.

But here all is changed. The voice of law is hushed. Sinai’s dread shaking mount has become a mount of grace. And those favored three are listening to a far different message. Tho’ 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

17:6 And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

17:7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, **Arise, and be not afraid.**

17:8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

Cloud, “This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased; hear Him” (V. 5). 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 tho’ the latter 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” (V. 7). Finally all else has disappeared. They lift their eyes, but see no man save Jesus only. 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 (tho’ 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. The latter 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; for it will surely come” (“*wait for it; because it will surely come*”—*Hab. 2:3 KJV*). 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 him 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 tho’

redemption was already an accomplished fact and man again in control of the situation; tho' 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 first 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" (*"his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives"* KJV)—Zech. 14:4. These latter saints will be the link between the heavenly and earthly Jerusalem. They will run on errands as it were, do the bidding of the Christ above, the Man of matchless destiny, Emperor of the Fifth great world Empire; five being the number of God with man. Truly we little realize the surpassing glory and exaltation to which the Church has been called in one body, yet in different ranks or 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 He takes His throne.

But the god of this world has a man in preparation also. He too will reign for a short season, three and a half 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 will wonder after the beast" (*"all the world wondered after the beast" KJV*)—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 the first 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 child.

But after all, those three 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 can not take it in. Even the apostle Paul said, it was not lawful to tell all the glorious things which his eyes beheld—¹2 Cor. 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" (V. 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,

¹ 2 Corinthians 12:4 "How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

17:9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

17:10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

17:11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.**

17:12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

17:13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

17:14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a *certain* man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

17:15 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.

17:16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

17:17 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.**

17:18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

17:19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

17:20 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.**

17:21 **Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.**

its King; therefore the divine purpose could not fail; but they could not imagine a victory thru 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 they would receive it.” 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. As we intimated previously, this insane man represents the unbelieving mass of Israel who have gotten into divers troubles because of their foolishness—“oftentimes falling into the fire and oft in the water” (V. 15), figuring tribulation. The disciples had been asked to cast out the demon and tho’ 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. The apostles in the beginning of this present age 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, witnesses to the nation, mightily empowered and energized, showing their credentials by signs and wonders, will nevertheless fail to loose Israel until 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 bear with you? Bring him to Me” (V. 17); 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, for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Depart hence and it shall depart and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (V. 20). The principle of the above promise always applies, when we are in the path of his appointment for us; but these words have also a most suggestive application to the nation (mountain in Scripture 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.” 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

Chapters 17:22 to 18:35

17:22 And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, **The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:**

17:23 **And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again.** And they were exceeding sorry.

17:24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute *money* came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

17:25 He saith, Yes. 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?**

17:26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, **Then are the children free.**

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. And this leads on to the cross, where He must go before His Kingdom will come. Tho’ 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” (John 1:3), but yet when He was passing thru 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 Himself assures. 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. “What thinkest thou, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive tribute, from their sons or from strangers?” (V. 25). There was of necessity but one answer. “From strangers,” says Peter. Surely then the sons are free, the Lord replies. 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

17:27 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.

conforms to the law as an ordinary man. He says to Peter, “But that we,” note the identification of Peter with Himself, “may give them none offense, go to the sea and take up the fish which comes up first; Then thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money; that take and give, for thee and for Me” (V. 27).

He thus hides His glory while yet revealing it. He summons a fish, in acknowledgment of the divine right of the King, 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. And this is what we are further instructed by His attitude to Peter. He takes the responsibility of the latter’s debt upon Himself. The fish served Peter also, “For thee and for me,” 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 He might deliver them, who were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (*“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;... And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. KJV*)—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. He whom the Son makes free is free indeed. 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—¹Rom. 8:19. In the meantime we pay tribute. The Son set us the example, as tho’ 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.

¹ Romans 8:19 “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.”

Further Lessons

Chapter Eighteen

Chapter 18

18:1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

18:2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

18:3 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.

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

18:5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

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.

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. And 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, placing him in the midst of these carnal men, said, with one of His characteristic affirmations, “Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven” (V. 3).

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. And that this condition of nothingness may not become a distress, even tho' 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

18:6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

18:7 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!

18:8 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.

18:9 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.

18:10 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.

least; hence He is the greatest. Here we have the one absolute requirement to overcoming in His Kingdom and one from which none is barred. We may all be little.

But He is not thru yet. Those little ones are subject to others, weak and defenseless, hence He must be their defense. And 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 he were cast into the sea” (V. 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, “Offences will come;” but it is woe to the world, yes woe to the man who is the cause of the trouble. And He continues with His admonition, repeating what He had said in the Sermon on the Mount, referring to the seventh commandment of the law. It were better to cut off hand or foot, better to pluck out an eye, if it was the offending cause, 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 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 heirs 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; tho’ the truth of the two creations was not yet revealed, as taught by Paul.

Then He reiterates more emphatically, “See that ye 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 (¹Matt. 4:11, Luke 22:43), and we read of ministering spirits, sent forth to serve the heirs of salvation—²Heb. 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

¹ Matthew 4:11 “Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”
Luke 22:43 “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.”

² Hebrews 1:14 “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

18:11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

18:12 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?

18:13 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.

18:14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

18:15 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.

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” (V. 11). Here is the explanation as to the identity of the children. They are the ones of the nation who were poor and needy and 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. Here we have but a glimpse of that which in Luke is more vividly portrayed—the contrast between the Pharisees and the taxgatherers and sinners. The ninety and nine in the case here, emphasize more the solicitude of the Shepherd for the one 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, tho’ the worth of the one sheep can never compensate Him for the danger and sorrow of the way. He contends that the Shepherd rejoices more over the one that was lost and found than over the ninety and nine 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, humble, contrite ones shall perish. And 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 should be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (*“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” KJV*)—1 Tim. 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 two or three gathered to His Name. This pledges Him to meet all their need.

“If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother” (V. 15). Judging from conduct manifested today, we should think that He had said “Tell it to every one 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; therefore why put our brother under its power. If we truly judge ourselves, we will first go to our brother before we tell any one 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.

18:16 But if he will not hear *thee*, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

18:18 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.

“Go and show 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 two or three who would fain persuade him. He can generally find two or three 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 any one. 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 you are not under law, but under grace” (*“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”—Rom. 6:14 KJV*). 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 taxgatherer” (V. 17). The man so lawless is to be treated as tho’ 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 upon earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (V. 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.

And 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

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

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

18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

18:22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

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” (V. 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 two, least possible number of fellowship, to cash it in. Let us not limit His promise.

And He adds, “For where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them.” 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—¹1 Cor. 5:3-5. The sentence was as binding as tho’ Paul was present himself. But again we emphasize the fact, which we have noted thru-out the 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 Law-Giver, or rather Grace-Teacher, as to the manner of dealing with an offending brother. Therefore he comes with his question, “How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times?” (V. 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, “I say not unto thee, Until seven times, but until seventy times seven” (V. 22). 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.

¹ 1 Corinthians 5:3-5 “For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

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

18:24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

18:25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

18:26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

18:27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

18:28 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.

18:29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

18:30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

18:31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

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. This king has a reckoning with his servants; immediately there is brought to him one overwhelmed with debt—ten thousand 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, tho' 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 the man and forgave him all that debt" (V. 27).

The above is very plain to us. We can apply the parable to our own case, tho' the point that the Master would emphasize is yet to come. "But that servant went out," from the presence of the gracious king who had forgiven him, "and found one of his fellow servants who owed him an hundred pence," just a small fraction of which has now been forgiven him. He seized him by the throat with violence, saying, "Pay what 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 show 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 near-sighted. 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. "Have patience with me and I will pay thee" (V. 29). 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 companions 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 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 also shall

18:32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

18:33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

18:34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

18:35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

your heavenly Father do unto you if you forgive not every one his brother from his heart.”

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. And 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.

Chapter 19

19:1 And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan;

19:2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

19:3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

19:4 And he answered and said unto them, *Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,*

“And the Pharisees came to Him tempting Him and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” (V. 3). Here we have a new departure. The Master leaves Capernaum, “the 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 He 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 relation 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. And 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. And there is a much more weighty and far-reaching significance, as we intimated, to His words in this regard than what is upon the surface. The disciples little understood, as we note later, 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 the instructions concerning this subject; while to the world there is nothing said whatever. 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. And while His answer to the Pharisees contains some fundamental principles of God’s dealings with man, of which the marriage relation is the figure, yet in this case He is applying them strictly to Israel. And 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” (V. 4), distinctly two, and yet one, as His next words indicate: “this twain shall be one flesh.” That is, this unity of two 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 God-Jehovah, used of Deity

19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

19:9 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.

in Gen. 2 (where we have the story of the first man and his wife) conveys this very meaning—God in covenant relation 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 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—¹Ex. 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—²Ex. 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. And in this relationship no divorce figures.

But herein is where men failed again. They wanted to take the case in 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. He promises to love, protect, 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. And 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. Their departure He likens to fornication—Ezek. 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." Observe that

¹ Exodus 6:3 "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of* God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them."

² Exodus 19:5 "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine:"

19:10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.

19:11 But he said unto them, *All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.*

19:12 *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.*

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, depended upon the flesh instead of Jehovah's right Arm. They went down to Egypt for help, when they were in need 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 their 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 betrothment (¹2 Cor. 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, tho', as the disciples of today, they merely see the natural significance, to which they attach great importance. If the marriage relation is so binding, then it is not good for a man to marry, they argue. His answer, "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given" (V. 11), shows a loop-hole of escape. All men cannot remain without a wife: therefore all men cannot put away their wives and then remain single. To some, as Paul, it is given to do so; others have a necessity in this regard; therefore cannot receive this as an absolute requirement. So the Apostle Paul instructs in harmony therewith. "But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner and another after that"—1 Cor. 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 to 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 help meet for Him. The Father's will so ordered it and this was law to Him. "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" (V. 12). Here is further light on the same subject.

In the natural, a eunuch is a man who is incapable of generation. He

¹ 2 Corinthians 11:2 "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ."

19:13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

19:14 But Jesus said, *Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*

19:15 And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

19:16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

19:17 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.*

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 fruitful according to the will of God. The last Adam Himself was a eunuch. He was one, 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—¹Psa. 22:6. In resurrection, as joined to His wife, He becomes fruitful. "He that is able to receive it, let Him receive it" (V. 12), He adds.

Then they bring unto Him little children that He should put His hands on them and pray. His disciples, as many today, would turn away these little ones and rebuke them. But Jesus said, "Forbid them not." These are the ones representatively, 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 put 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?"—Chap. 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. For, as we have intimated, we have here depicted the very opposite of those principles, littleness, meekness, humility, which obtain in 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 He 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 His query, "Why calledst thou me good? there is none good but One, that is God." 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

¹ Psalms 22:6 "But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people."

19:18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, **Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,**

19:19 **Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**

God or He is not good. The young man is in a quandary. Nevertheless the Teacher answers his question—"what good thing shall I do?" He 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? But yet he is not quite satisfied, tho' he is all one could expect. 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" (V. 17). "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 ten commands 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" ("*which if a man do, he shall live in them*" *KJV*)—Lev. 18:5. But as Paul learned and as all learn to whom the law truly comes, "that which was the way to life, I found to be unto death" ("*And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.*" *KJV*)—Rom. 7:10.

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. 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, and have 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 second table of the law—the human side of these divine requirements. And these are all summed up in "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (V. 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, All these have

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

19:21 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.*

19:22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

19:23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, *Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

19:24 *And again 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.*

19:25 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

I kept from my youth; but listen, “What lack I yet?” he enquires. He confesses 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, tho’ 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. “If thou wouldest be perfect, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me” (V. 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 Himself has come to die 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. He would be giving his money back to himself if he loved his poor neighbor as himself. Ah, this is some test. His neighbor’s need was his need. This was too much. The young man can not 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. 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. Tho’ 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.” 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” (V. 23). Furthermore He continues, “I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go thru the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God” (V. 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 thru the straight and narrow gate. But God; how good to know that He is able to do that which with man is impossible. He 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?” (V. 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. And this is what will indeed happen to Israel. They will be brought low by the Almighty power of God tho’ He will use men and the devil to humble them. Afterwards He will bring them into His Kingdom, and do that for them which

19:26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, **With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.**

19:27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

19:28 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.**

19:29 **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.**

19:30 **But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last *shall be* first.**

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 time of His reign over Israel. “Verily I say unto you, that ye who 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” (V. 28). They were qualifying then by their judgment of the riches of the world, spiritual 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 Ghost”—Titus 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. A “hundred-fold 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 thru 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.

Chapter Twenty

Chapter 20

20:1 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

20:2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

20:3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

20:4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

20:5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

20:6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

The fact that it is nevertheless all of grace even then, He emphasizes further in the following parable which is especially applicable to the nation. 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” (V. 16). He again likens the kingdom to a man that is a house holder; and in its application we are bidden to remember that we must distinguish between the way of men and the way of God even tho’ the one may be taken to illustrate the other. God certainly does not hire laborers after the manner of men tho’ 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”—Verse 1. The parable of the householder illustrates as was intimated 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 third hour, he simply says, “Whatsoever is just I will give you” (V. 4). At the sixth and ninth hour it is still, what is just, but at the eleventh 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 every one 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. These latter 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. Israel, the nation, 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

20:7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, *that shall ye receive.*

20:8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

20:9 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

20:10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

20:11 And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

20:12 Saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

20:13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

20:14 Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

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. And 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, “Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny?” 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. “If by grace, it is no more works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it is of works it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work” (“*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.*” KJV)—Rom. 11:6. Wages is measured by what man is and does; grace 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. This is an ocean divine, a fathomless, bottomless sea.

Then the Lord in closing adds, “For many are the called but few the chosen ones” (V. 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

20:15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

20:17 And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,

20:18 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,

20:19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.

20:20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

20:21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

too highly. They have not the true judgment of themselves, therefore divine grace is shut off. It cannot get possession of them. The hireling 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”—Verses 17, 18.

We have witnessed in the preceding section 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, as we intimated, we are given to behold at the outset 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 twelve 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. 10:9). 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 again.

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 the latter 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.

20:22 But Jesus answered and said, **Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?** They say unto him, We are able.

20:23 And he saith unto them, **Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.**

20:24 And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

20:25 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, **Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.**

20:26 **But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;**

Nature is leading as is plainly evident. The mother of these two 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, “Can you drink of the cup that I drink of?” (V. 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. And tho’ they 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” (V. 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 the 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. And 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. And He commends to us, this dependent, surrendered life.

But the ten disciples are indignant with the two who were seeking their own things and thus they manifest their kinship with them morally. And 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 which 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

20:27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

20:29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

20:30 And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David.

20:31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David.

20:32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, **What will ye that I shall do unto you?**

20:33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

20:34 So Jesus had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

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 perforce for those who follow closely in this despised and lowly way. "He came not to be ministered unto; but to minister" (V. 28), He assures them. Then He unfolds the extent of this service—"to give His life a ransom for many." 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.

The King's Triumphant Entry

Chapter Twenty One

Chapter 21

21:1 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

21:2 Saying unto them, **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.**

21:3 **And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.**

21:4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

21:5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

21:6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

21:7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon.

“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”—Vs. 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. A motley crowd it was, viewed with the eye of man—a poor, despised, unknown Man riding upon an ass, escorted by twelve Galilean fishermen, who acted no doubt as His body-guard, 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, the city of the curse, which latter 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. Two blind men sitting by the wayside cried out to Him as He approached them. Their physical darkness was no handicap. They were inwardly enlightened to call upon Him. Tho' 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 of one only; 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.

Now 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, 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 figtree, which is a most striking prophecy relative to the Jew. But before this came to pass, He sent two of His disciples (this number two again) to claim an ass and a

21:8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.

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

21:10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

21:11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

21:12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

21:13 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.**

21:14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

colt for His use. The latter animal is the suitable accompanist of the Prince of peace in contrast to the war-horse upon which He shall be riding when He comes again—Rev. 19.

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 tho' 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 tho' 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.

And the latter part of this prophecy (¹Zech. 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, tho' 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 from Nazareth of Galilee" (V. 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 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. He 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, "buying and selling in the temple," when He commenced His ministry—²John 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, which He insists should be a house of prayer; but which they have made a den of thieves. And 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, the blind and lame, who came unto Him and were healed.

¹ Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

² John 2:15 "And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;"

21:15 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,

21:16 And said unto him, Hearst 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?**

21:17 And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

21:18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

21:19 And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, **Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.** And presently the fig tree withered away.

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. Tho' He has claimed and proved His title to David's throne, yet He cannot take it; for His people shall be willing in the day of His power; and there are only a few of these loyal 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. 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 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 hast perfected praise" (V. 16). 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 opened 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 figtree 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 figtree, 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 figtree. "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth forever," He cries. 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, tho' 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. "When his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh"—Chap. 24:32. He intends us to understand, that the Jewish nation restored to their own land, 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

21:20 And when the disciples saw *it*, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

21:21 Jesus answered and said unto them, *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.*

21:22 *And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

21:23 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?

21:24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, *I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.*

21:25 *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?

righteousness, type of the durable garment of salvation purchased by Christ on the cross.

The disciples were amazed at the miracle of the withered figtree as well they might be. Disciples today 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. And we would not be surprised if the disciples, Jewish no doubt, should pray the mountain (kingdom) out of the way which hinders the figtree's growth. This is the word of encouragement to such, "Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea; and it shall be done" (V. 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" (V. 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 to Him while He was teaching, saying, By what authority doest Thou these things?"—V. 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 tho' 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 (tho' 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, is left desolate. But this leaves the door open to the usurper, the

21:26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

21:27 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.**

21:28 **But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.**

21:29 **He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.**

Gentile invader, the one who should “come in his own name” (John 5:43) and be accepted by the nation.

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 second 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 was 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 enquire of Him as to who had authorized His actions.

Observe the force of their question. 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. 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. They sent unto John and “he bare witness unto the truth” (John 5:33), the Master says. 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 Master Mind 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 are not competent to judge for the people if they cannot discern what is of God. The Master takes advantage of their own admitted failure. “Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things” (V. 27), 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 two sons, He states. One, when commanded, “Go work today in my vineyard” (V. 28), refuses openly and defiantly, yet later repents and goes: while the other expresses his ready obedience, but does not go. Which one pleased the 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

21:30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.

21:31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

21:32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

21:33 Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:

21:34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

21:35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

21:36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

21:37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

that the taxgatherers and harlots go into the Kingdom of heaven before you” (V. 32). He further adds that they, the rulers, had refused the message of John (who called the nation 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.

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. 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. And this is allowed in the parable, tho’ 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 beaten one, stoned another, killed another, is the divine commentary on their actions.

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 respect My Son.” But when the husbandman 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.” Ah, this was indeed wisdom from above. He pictures for them all that is in their hearts to do, as tho’ 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 loop hole of excuse upon the ground of ignorance. They knew what they were about to do and were doing it with their eyes open. They themselves 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. He wants to profess that he knows God, but at the same time he refuses to yield to His will. These two things are incompatible. Two cannot walk together except they be agreed. God will not

21:38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

21:39 And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

21:40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

21:41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

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

21:44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

21:45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

21:46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

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?" (V. 42). Their building would not stand; for the Lord's marvelous doing was to be the reversal of their doing. And 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, "Whosoever shall fall on this Stone," alluding to Himself, "Shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder" (V. 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 ten-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 Fifth world Empire. Then it can be truly said, "The Kings are dead; long live The King," 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 has preceded. In these inspired allegories we are shown some penpictures of divine purposes.

Marriage of the King's Son

Chapter Twenty Two

And Jesus spake again to them saying, "The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a man, a king, who made a marriage for his son and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding"—Vs. 1-2.

Chapter 22

22:1 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

22:2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

22:3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

22:4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

22:5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

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 out-lined in the Scriptures. And 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 Help-meet, His Eve, as well as the First Adam. All that is written in between, as well as the ages which separate these two 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 already were 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: "the oxen and 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—"all things are ready; come unto the marriage" (V. 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.

22:6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.

22:7 But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

22:8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

22:9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

22:10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

22:11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

22:12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

22:13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

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 good-will and fellowship. He sent his armies and destroyed both those men and their city, A. D. 71, 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 of His purpose. It must be consummated. He has gone too far now to draw back in any measure. And as He intends to have a great feast, He must perforce have those guests: therefore He sends out the invitation again, "Go ye therefore into the highways and as many as ye shall find invite to the marriage" (V. 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. The Kingdom at the present time, 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 cast him into outer darkness" (V. 13). 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 is the weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Yet even so the Master emphasizes in all of this 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"

22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

22:15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

22:16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

22:17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

22:18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

22:19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

22:20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

22:21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

(V. 14), what Scripture constantly asserts, that, "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 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 thru, 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, tho' 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 two 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?"

Now this was a most dangerous question. It involved much more than 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 the latter 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, arousing the ire of the Roman government, and bringing upon Him the weight of its iron heel. He is as tho' 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?" He asks. "Caesar's," they answer. "Render then to Caesar the things which are Caesars, and to God the things which are God's" (V. 21), is this heavenly

22:22 When they had heard *these words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

22:23 The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,

22:24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

22:25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:

22:26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

22:27 And last of all the woman died also.

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

22:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, **Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.**

22:30 **For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.**

Diplomat's rejoinder. 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.

The nation had fellowshiped the world by soliciting their help in time of trouble; consequently they were simply now reaping what they had sown. They were Gentile in heart and way, therefore God had reckoned them where they belonged. He had done the same, tho' in a more marked way, to the ten 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. The world will shortly feel this to their sorrow when the anti-Christ 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 seven brothers. "In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife shall she be of the seven; for they all had her?" (V. 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. And 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, "neither marrying nor given in marriage" (V. 30). 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, He adds; for the truth of resurrection underlies the very simplest assurance of God's covenant-relationship with men.

To the Sadducees, the words spoken to Moses out of the burning bush, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" (V. 32), could have no meaning. Abraham was but a shadow that had passed away

22:31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

22:32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

22:33 And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine.

22:34 But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

22:35 Then one of them, *which* was a lawyer, asked *him a question*, tempting him, and saying,

22:36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

22:37 Jesus said unto him, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

22:38 *This is the first and great commandment.*

22:39 *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

22:40 *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

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 God of this trinity of men, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, The I Am, 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. Sadduceeanism 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. Tho' death exists for a time, a life supreme is above it. This was comforting language for the multitude; but hard on the Sadducees. And 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 and their attitude toward Christ as a whole and not with the individual.

The test question follows—"Which is the great commandment of the law?" (V. 36). The Master answers, even as Paul later, that "love is the fulfilling of the law." 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 two commandments, love to God and love to man, not only in law, the books of Moses, but also in the prophets. 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 do they think of Christ? Whose son is He?" (V. 42). To that they readily reply, "The Son of David." This of course was 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 enquires, "How then does David in spirit call Him Lord?" (V. 43). Then He quotes from Psalm 110, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand until I make thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet." 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 shake terribly the earth. "If David calls Him, Lord, how is He his Son?" (V. 45). 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

22:41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

22:42 Saying, *What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?* They say unto him, *The Son of David.*

22:43 He saith unto them, *How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,*

22:44 *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?*

22:45 *If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?*

22:46 And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions*.

them, tho' they refuse to yield, that "no man was able from that day to ask Him another question" (V. 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."

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,
Tho' foes assail and Satan rave,
To be assured when life is done,
That he shall reign above the sun.

Judgment is Pronounced

Chapter Twenty Three

Chapter 23

23:1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

23:2 Saying, *The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:*

23:3 *All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.*

23:4 *For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.*

23:5 *But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,*

23:6 *And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,*

23:7 *And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.*

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 which were enlarged so that their piety might appear conspicuous. They were apparently endeavoring to have the law in the most literal way "as frontlets between the eyes" (*"as frontlets between thine eyes."* KJV)—Deut. 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 things were 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 or 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. There is the hint of the Trinity in these three admonitions—the Teacher, the father, 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

23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.

23:9 And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

23:10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ.

23:11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

23:12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

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 or representative on earth. These also claim they alone have 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 revealed, note this, "revealed unto babes" ("*revealed them unto babes.*"—*Chap. 11:25 KJV*).

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—"the greatest of you shall be your servant" (V. 11), 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—"Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (V. 12). The two creations are seen in these latter 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.

Eight 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 eight successive woes, each one growing in intensity, revealing the awful wrath and the certain judgment of God against them. And 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.

The first woe 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, with the exception of the outcasts, "the taxgatherers and harlots," took advantage of the open door in their midst.

The second woe 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.

23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

23:16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

23:17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

23:18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

23:19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

23:20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

23:21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

23:22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

23:24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

23:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

The third woe follows in order. They had received the light, but refused to walk therein, because, as the Master tersely expressed it, “They love darkness rather than light” (*“men loved darkness rather than light,”—John 3:19 KJV*). And 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 proselites. The latter were more deluded and darkened than their predecessors, “two-fold more the sons of hell than themselves” (V. 15). 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.

The fourth woe upon those blind guides shows that in the measure that the light in them became darkness, in 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 three following woes are somewhat different from the four preceding. Here we are given to see the inward state, the double life, as we would say, of those blind guides. In the fifth woe He accuses them of going so far as to pay tithe of the smallest and most insignificant of herbs—*anise, mint, and cummin*; yet at the same time the weightier matters of God’s demands, judgment, mercy and truth, were neglected. These were the important matters, tho’ they should perform the least. But this is ever the way with humanity when truth is given up—they “strain at the gnat and swallow the camel” (V. 24).

The sixth woe 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.

The seventh woe in accordance with what goes before, speaks of the spiritual death which reigns within as the whitened sepulchre; 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!

The last woe is a return to the thought expressed in the first three. Their opposition to God is again emphasized, tho’ 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 just as their fathers. They themselves were witnesses to this fact.

23:26 *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness.

23:28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

23:29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

23:30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

23:31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

23:32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

23:33 *Ye* serpents, *ye* generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

23:34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify; and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city:

23:35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

23:36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

23:37 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!

They would not only fill up the measure of the iniquity which had gone before; but they would increase 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 bloodshedding, which was crying out to God for vengeance, from Abel the first to Zechariah. The latter 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 Himself), because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous. It is the seed of the devil, the blood of vipers, whom He is addressing here. They were 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—¹Gen. 3:15. It was at Calvary that Christ gave to Satan his deadly wound; while the people, who proved they were the serpent's off-spring, 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, tho' it had rejected Him, its rightful Ruler. 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 the hen gathers her blood under her wings; but ye would not" (V. 37). They refused His sheltering care. So their house, no longer His house, is left to them desolate, for the desolater, the anti-Christ, will enter and rule there. Their rejection of the true King leaves place for the abomination of desolation, of whom Daniel spoke and of whom we hear in the following chapter. Thru that usurper, they will be disciplined and in judgment they will learn the preparation necessary to cry with broken and contrite hearts, to Him to point out to Him the buildings. "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" ("*Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD:*" KJV)—Psalm 118:26.

¹ Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

23:39 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.

Chapter 24

24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

Prophetic Outline of End Time

Chapters Twenty Four and Twenty Five

“And Jesus went out and departed from the temple and His disciples came of the temple”—Verse 1.

We have in the present section under consideration 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 or the Jew as the central figure upon the earth at that time; tho’ part of the Church is also viewed in veiled speech, as being still present—Chap. 25. And 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 three relays as it were. A period of time intervened between the first deportation and the last. So in the end of their captivity, there was in evidence the same successive stages. The people did not all come back at one time. And we note the same fact again after Calvary, tho’ 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 A. D. 71, 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 two 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—¹Rom. 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 granduer will be. And note that the temple then standing was built by Herod as the governor over Judea, which is a figure of the one in the end time. It will be built by the world to some extent, and the world’s king will

¹ Romans 11:24 “For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?”

24:2 And Jesus said unto them, **See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**

24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Take heed that no man deceive you.**

24:5 **For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.**

have the image there which will 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; tho' its magnificence astonishes the carnal. In fact this temple which was in building fifty 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 all other men, even as spiritual saints today are a mystery and a trial to the worldly minded and the babes.

But tho' 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?" (V. 3). They also add two other questions which were as one in their mind, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming and the end of the age?" not world, as in the authorized version.

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 first and second 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 at great length and assures them that the time is longer than they imagine, tho' still leaving it largely indefinite. 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. And furthermore all that He teaches here, as He sits upon the mount, has reference to the same time and is in answer to their three questions and different phases concerning them.

The very first words of His reply carry a warning against false Christs, of whom He says there will be many coming at that time. The false prophet and the usurping king of the revived Roman empire, the two beasts (Rev. 13) are especially in view; tho' 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.

24:6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

24:8 All *these are* the beginning of sorrows.

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. 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, kingdom against kingdom” (V. 7). In other words, a world war, with its awful consequences—famine, pestilence, as well as earthquakes will follow. Some may say, “Well, these latter 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 tho’ 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—¹Rev. 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 heartbreaking 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) thru all the time of awful tribulation and be ready to receive Christ when He comes triumphant and glorious in His apparel and strength.

¹ Revelation 12:2 “And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.”

24:9 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.

24:10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

As we intimated previously, this portion is the doing of that eventful week of ¹Dan. 9:27. It answers to the same time of which the book of Revelation instructs, beginning at chapter four. 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 of Olivet. Under the first 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. The second seal gives us the symbol of war of which we have the prophecy here. The third seal presages famine. The fourth seal pestilence. The opening of the fifth seal discloses a great martyrdom which perfectly agrees with our Lord's words in the Olivet 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" (V. 9). Notice that it is the hatred of nations against the Nation, the Jew, that is emphasized. There is also an earth-quake, maybe both literal and national, under the opening of this fifth seal. With the sixth 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 ¹Dan 9:27, is again and again in its different phases brought before us.

The middle of that week of seven years of magnificent prophecy 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 standing in the holy place" (V. 15). That is a most important epoch of the seven years, the three and one half years which precede are simply preparatory; the three and one half which follow are the result. Daniel foretold of that momentous event and same abomination (²Dan. 11:31,) 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 sinsitting in the temple of God, "shewing himself that

¹ Daniel 9:27 "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

² Daniel 11:31 "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate."

24:16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

24:17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

24:18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

24:19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

24:22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not.

24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it* were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

he is God”—II Thess. 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, forty and two months, or three and one half years. Then also, a second 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 two simply means that both apostatized Judaism as well as Christendom, accept and follow him. Tho’ he speaks as a dragon the mouthpiece or oracle of Satan the archenemy of God; yet they discern him not. He influences all the dwellers on the earth and constrains them to make an image of the first 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 one hour of that measured off time, which will be shortened 250 days for “the elect’s sake” (V. 22). If those days would continue the full three and one half years, no flesh should be saved. (See our notes on Daniel.)

And thru 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. 14:7.

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, decisive, open interposition. And in this character He will come as the Lightning, sudden, swift, blazing all thru the heavens, in unsurpassing judgment of all unrighteousness. His long-suffering

24:25 Behold, I have told you before.

patience will have run its course. The Shepherd's rod will turn to a sceptre of might and destroy the destroyers of His people and the usurpers of His Kingdom. As the Ruler of the fifth world empire He must first take the reins of government from the hands of the Gentiles. Their times will have been fulfilled seven 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 sceptre 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, as well as all other rulers who did not yield to him, was a usurper. 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 sceptre 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, 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; tho' God had explicitly informed him by His prophet, that He had been given the dominion by the God of heaven—¹Dan. 2:37. For this pride and rebellion of heart, he was punished for seven 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-sceptre; 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 three and one half years and reign as absolute sovereign upon earth, while God's Anointed is sitting on His throne in the heavens; tho' He is not yet acknowledged upon earth. David in the second Psalm, 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" (Psalms 2:1-3). 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" (Psalms 2:4) What is their puny strength, tho' it is the united power of the world, when matched against

¹ Daniel 2:37 "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory."

Jehovah's strong right arm? He will at that time 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" (*"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.—Psalms 2:9 KJV*). 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 most aptly figures the Times of the Gentiles) and he reigned seven 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 or 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" (¹Luke 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 end 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 anti-Christ 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 none like it. It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (*"so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."* KJV) (Jer. 30:7) by the swift coming of Christ. His return will be ushered in by signs thruout 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

24:26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he is* in the secret chambers; believe *it* not.

24:27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

24:28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

¹ Luke 21:24 "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

24:31 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.

24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh:

24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

24:37 But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

24:38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

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. And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, no doubt referring to the nations, the twelve tribes. Joseph and His brethren shall meet again.

Then Israel shall be gathered from the four 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.

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 hear of her revival. "When her branch is tender and putteth forth leaves ye know that summer is nigh" (V. 32). The fruit is there on the fig-tree, as soon as the leaves. Thus the teaching is obvious. Israel's hopes will come to sudden fruition, when their Great Kinsman Redeemer takes up their cause. "The man will not be at rest until He has finished the thing this day" (*"for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day."*—*Ruth 3:18 KJV*), as Naomi said to her daughter-in-law—*Ruth 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," etc.—*Vs. 37, 38*. 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 to the Father only. 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. And in the end it will be separative and selective of its objects—"two in the field, one taken and the other left: two women shall be grinding at the mill, one shall be taken and the other left" (*V. 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, as intimated—"and where the carcase is, there will the vultures

24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

24:41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

gather” to devour the spoil (*“For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.”—V. 28 KJV*).

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. “If the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have suffered his house to be broken up” (V. 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. First, it will be between saints and sinners; second, between servants and servants; third, between saints and saints; fourth, between possessors and professors; and fifth, 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, tho’ 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 was 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. Two will be in the field; two 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 (¹Rev. 19:17) after the great judgment supper.

The Night Watches

“Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come”—V. 42. 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” (V. 44), He urges; for His coming is sure. Then follow some parables which all relate to the end time with its different phases.

¹ Revelation 19:17 “And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;”

24:43 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.

24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

The program of the seven years of Dan. 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 ¹Joel 2:1 and Zeph. 1:15—a time of “darkness and gloominess and thick darkness.” ²Luke 12:38 mentions the “second watch and the third watch” and ³Mark 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 ⁴John 5:28, 29, it is a thousand years long. Likewise in ⁵Psalms 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” (or trial) in ⁶Rev. 3:10 is another way of expressing the great tribulation mentioned in verse 21.

Parables of the Olive Discourse

In the following part of the great prophetic outline of the end time, we have three parables which show us the relation of the coming of Christ to the Church; but they are in veiled language. 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. And 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 three illustrations, or parables, we have a distinct phase of judgment seen; and all in

¹ Joel 2:1 “Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for *it is nigh at hand*;”

Zephaniah 1:15 “That day *is* a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,”

² Luke 12:38 “*And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.*”

³ Mark 6:48 “And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.”

⁴ John 5:28, 29 “*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*”

⁵ Psalms 90:4 “For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night.”

⁶ Revelation 3:10 “*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*”

24:45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

24:46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

24:47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

view of the Lord's coming. First, as to faithful or unfaithful service. Second, as to readiness or unreadiness. Third, as to the use, or misuse, of entrusted talents. And the Lord is seen in a different character 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, as we have intimated several times. While the Times of the Gentiles are over at the beginning of the Week of Daniel 9:27, yet we must distinguish between the fullness of the Gentiles which will not have come in until later—¹Rom. 11:25. This latter phrase relates to the called out from among the Gentiles and the number of these are not given; neither are there any set times for the Church. The limit of her days are hidden in God.

In the first parable, we have emphasis as to the responsibility of ministers or shepherds of the flock of Christ. True service, and false, is commented upon, the governing object all thru 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 calls "meat," relating to the end time in which they are living; consequently they teach and preach accordingly. Blessed is he whom His Lord shall find so doing, when He comes. 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, or labored service. "Love seeketh not her own." 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 got 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 the 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" (V. 48), observe that his conduct now is the result of his words, which latter are the expression of the unbelief of his heart. He begins to smite his fellow servant and eat and drink with the drunken, two things which show the state of his heart. He

¹ Romans 11:25 "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

24:49 And shall begin to smite *his* fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

24:50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

24:51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

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, tho' 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 counterpart of these two 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. And 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 on surprise. The Lord comes when he is not expecting Him and appoints him his portion with the hypocrites, (tho' 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 latter may also render a mixed service. And this because they are double-souled as James puts it; the latter 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

Chapter Twenty Five

This second 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, Himself, 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 (chap.

25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

25:2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

25:3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

25:4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

25:5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

22); but neither the bridegroom nor bride are upon the scene there; tho' the former 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 latter 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 no Bride and Groom: therefore, it is plainly evident that this company, even tho' wise virgins, are not the Bride.

"Then shall the Kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom" (V. 1). The little word then, is most wonderfully explanatory in this place. It connects the parable with what has already been spoken on the mount, even with the trying and important days of the seven years of Daniel 9:27, the great prophetic time of the end. Now it is very necessary that we see this point clearly. We cannot understand this parable otherwise: 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 of 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. And note this significant fact—Israel was the connecting link at the first. They will also be the connecting link at the end.

The Kingdom of heaven is not, at the present time, likened to ten 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 anti-Christ joined to the false apostatized Church, then the revelation of the mystery of Godliness, Christ joined to His people, the true bloodwashed Church. The latter glorious manifestation will destroy the former.

But previous to those marvelous revelations, those climaxing consummations, there must come the unparalleled week of destiny; the seven years of preparation on both sides. Then, in the midst of the week, the Kingdom will be likened to ten 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

25:6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

25:7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

25:8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

25:9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

to be a Christian of this virgin character (tho' it never was); for the very name virgins 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. And 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 the preceding chapter; but a separation of saint from saint is somewhat different. Yet we cannot understand this parable otherwise, tho' 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. And their lamps were lit; for later they speak of the light growing dim, which is the true rendering of "our lamps are gone out" (V. 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" (*"And to wait for his Son from heaven" KJV*)—I Thess. 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 two classes of virgins—"five were wise and five were foolish" (*"five of them were wise, and five were foolish."*—V. 8 *KJV*). And 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. Now 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. “Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him” (V. 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. And furthermore, they all trimmed their lamps—the hindrances to testimony are snuffed off, proving conclusively that the unwise are not sinners. They too are stirred with the fact of the immanency 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 want the Holy Spirit then, with all that accompanies His presence. The fullest measure of oil is none too much. They appeal to the wise for oil; but it is too late now. They cannot instruct nor help them; for they must hide 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, tho’ it is without money and without price—¹Isa. 55:1. And this very exhortation refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit and the very day of which we are writing. And such buying simply speaks of the fixed terms upon which the one who seeks may obtain that which he desires. He must thirst for one thing, 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 tho’ 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 latter 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

¹ Isaiah 55:1 “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

25:10 And 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.

25:11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

25:12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

25:13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

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. And 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" (V. 12). They were not there in due time. Tho' 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. And we believe that we are so close to her translation that we may discern even the servants and the guests.

But there are others, who, tho' they have received the gift of the Spirit, yet are not whole-hearted in their allegiance of Christ. They love the world and in some measure seek their own things, partly thru ignorance of the Scriptures and therefore of God's plans and purposes; and partly because they want a place with the world, tho' it is the religious world. They cannot be in that company who will be 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, tho' it be one body. The other company will remain on earth, as God's witness after the Bridal company have gone. They have grown drowsy and hid their light, even today, because of a desire for place or prestige. And they grow lean in consequence, tho' they will be the brightest light on earth after the first 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 have not yet received the Holy Spirit. Thus they are the means in the end to get another company ready to witness later (after their going away) in the power of the Spirit sent down from heaven; for God must have a witness for Himself upon the earth. And tho' 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.

Those wise virgins figure no doubt the 144,000 believers, whom we read of in the book of Revelation, that are sealed in the beginning of the seven years of tribulation; tho' 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 or body of Christ. They may easily be identified with the company that constitute the feet of the Man of destiny, who shall stand on Mt. Olivet—¹Zech. 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 fourth 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. 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, or talent was 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. And 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. And thus the five talents grow to ten. The two multiply into four, capacity and capability increasing with experience, as 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.

And yet there are degrees of responsibilities, which fact we must not overlook. The one who receives but one talent is called upon to gain only one 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, that 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

¹ Zechariah 14:4 "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

25:14 *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.*

25:15 *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.*

25:16 *Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.*

25:17 *And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.*

25:18 *But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.*

25:19 *After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.*

25:20 *And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.*

25:21 *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

25:22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

25:23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine.

25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

25:28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.

25:29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

25:30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

inactive, practically give up their talents into the hands of others whom they esteem better qualified than themselves. Thus the latter get the benefit of the unused talent; or else the opportunity that yawned before the slothful one is neglected. Some work is left undone.

Suppose we have but one 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; tho' 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, "to him that hath shall more be given." The one that steadily makes use of his gifts shall increase accordingly; "but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away" (V. 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 five talents gained five more. He who had but two 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 one 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 its own" ("*Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;*"—1 Cor. 13:5 KJV), that receives the reward. Such love may covet earnestly the best gifts, that would enlarge its sphere and capability for love's sweet service.

Now, as we have intimated, there are principles herein which apply to every true Christian; yet the one described, that hides 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, tho' 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 Blesser Himself. The man 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. This is the abode of the old creation who refuse 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 of the fifth separation, the judgment of the nations, tho' 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. 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, which latter is 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, servants 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.

25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

25:32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

25:33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

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. We read of the last rank in the glorious galaxy of the new creation, the resurrected saints, in those "who had not worshipped the beast neither his image neither received his mark in their foreheads or in their hands" (*"which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands;" KJV*)—Rev. 20:4. And it is plainly stated there also, that "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years are expired" (*"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."*—Rev. 20:5 KJV). 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. 20:5. 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. And there

25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

25:37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

25:38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

25:39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

25:42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

25:43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

25:44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

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. He must put down at the outset, 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. They enter even then, in that glad Millennial day, into a state of security and bliss that will have no end, tho’ 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” (1 Cor. 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” (V. 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, tho’ 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 any where 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 that sits upon the horse, and His army. 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 thousand years before. Isaiah the prophet confirms the above with his testimony.

“And it shall come to pass in that day that Jehovah shall punish the host of the high ones on high and the kings of the earth upon the earth” (“*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 KJV) (Isa. 24); but he does not tell us anything of this selective judgment of nations. The latter no doubt is the final result of the preaching of the everlasting

25:45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Gospel which will have been sent out to the nations some time previously (¹Rev. 14:6, 7) in which they are urged to fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come. 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 threatened—²Rom. 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.

¹ Revelation 14:6, 7 "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

² Romans 11:21 "For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee."

Division Five

The Death and Resurrection of the King

Chapters 26 to 28

Chapter Twenty Six

We have now arrived in our study to 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. The merchant man must pay the price for the pearl. 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 (chaps, 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 delivered to be crucified” (V. 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 tho’ 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 counsel 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 time.

“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”—Vs. 6, 7.

Chapter 26

26:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,

26:2 *Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.*

26:3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

26:4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill *him*.

26:5 But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar among the people.

26:6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper.

26:7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat *at meat*.

26:8 But when his disciples saw *it*, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose *is* this waste?

26:9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

A Tender Act of Devotion

And now we have a most precious interruption. A woman comes with an alabaster box full of ointment and pours its wealth of fragrance, expressive of her love, upon the head of Christ, as He sits at meat in the house of Simon, called a leper. The latter emphasizes the condition of the house of Israel where He was not even a welcome guest, tho' He must abide for a season.

Therefore the woman's act of devotion is not only in strongest, sharpest contrast to the conduct of the nation, 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—¹John 12:4. He 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 above 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?" He had for some time previous 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 realize then the disappointment which he felt when the price of the ointment was not put in the bag. He was the poor, for which he had such concern. Truly the heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it? the prophet asks. 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?" (V. 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

¹ John 12:4 "Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, which should betray him,"

26:10 When Jesus understood *it*, he said unto them, **Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.**

26:11 **For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.**

26:12 **For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did *it* for my burial.**

26:13 **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.**

26:14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

26:15 And said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

26:16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

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. And 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” (V. 12), we hear Him say. 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—¹Mark 16:1, 2. Mary of Bethany had already anointed Him.

The Lord openly vindicates the act of the woman. She proved 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 also 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 purpose, altho’ officially she was unknown? The Lord publicly defends her and her action and identifies the latter with the preaching of the cross. “Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, this also which this woman hath done shall be spoken as a memorial of her” (V. 13). She hath done what she could, He adds elsewhere—²Mark 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 trafficar,” He plainly earns his title to his surname. His conduct appears worse by way of contrast, as we intimated. 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 thirty pieces of silver to deliver up his Lord into their hands, thus pouring contempt upon the Master. But tho’ 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 their very rejection of Him.

The feast of the passover is at hand. It is the last time that it will be

¹ Mark 16:1, 2 “And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.”

² Mark 14:8 “**She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.**”

26:17 Now the first *day* of the *feast* of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

26:18 And he said, **Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.**

26:19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

26:20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

26:21 And as they did eat, he said, **Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.**

26:22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

26:23 And he answered and said, **He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.**

26:24 **The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.**

26:25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, **Thou hast said.**

26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, **Take, eat; this is my body.**

observed as the figure; for the reality has come. The Master is still the master, calm, undaunted, unafraid; for tho' 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, is the word 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—V. 18. They make ready the feast. And 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, tho' the reality is not far away. "Verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray Me" (V. 21), He cries, as tho' in amazement at the duplicity. The disciples being sorrowful at the accusation, each enquires, "Is it I, Lord?" (V. 22). 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.

But observe that he does not address Christ as Lord, as the others; but as Rabbi which is 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" (V. 23), is the traitor, is the answer. 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" (*"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."* KJV)—Ps. 41:9. After the sop, John adds this information, "Satan entered into Him and he went immediately out, and it was night" (*"And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly...He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night. John 13:27, 30 KJV"*)—John 13:27. If there was any indecision or struggle in his soul 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 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, 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 to His disciples with these words, "Take eat; this is my body" (V. 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 covenant" (V. 28), He is

26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, **Drink ye all of it;**

26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

26:29 **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.**

26:30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

26:31 Then saith Jesus unto them, **All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.**

26:32 **But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.**

26:33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended.

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, tho' not necessarily subject to death. After Christ's resurrection He speaks of having "flesh and bones," and not flesh and blood—¹Luke 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" is the predominating thought that should control and influence us in the keeping of the feast, far beyond any other motive. As some one has said, "It is a forget Me-not feast," tho' 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 shew the Lord's death till He come"—1 Cor. 11:26. The Lord's death is past; "death hath no more dominion over Him" (Rom. 6:9). But tho' it is as dead that we remember Him, yet His resurrection is included; for we look forward to His coming again. The two 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—"I will not drink henceforth any more of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom" (V. 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—²Zech. 13:7. But there is hope for them as He said (V. 32) after His resurrection, He would go before them into Galilee. And 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." He, who most loudly professes his allegiance to Christ, is the one who fails most signally.

¹ Luke 24:39 "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

² Zechariah 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man *that is* my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones."

26:34 Jesus said unto him, **Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.**

26:35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

26:36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

26:37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

26:38 Then saith he unto them, **My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.**

26:39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, **O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.**

26:40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, **What, could ye not watch with me one hour?**

Three times he declares his allegiance to the Master. And 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, tho' 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 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 three-fold cry for deliverance, saying, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (V. 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. "His not to reason Why? His but to do and die," when God commands. He left eight of the eleven apostles 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. And 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: and we need not

26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

26:42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, *O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.*

26:43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

26:44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

26:45 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.*

26:46 *Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.*

26:47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

26:48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

26:49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

26:50 And Jesus said unto him, *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

marvel when even these select ones become drowsy and indifferent at the crucial moment. Three times He returns to find them sleeping and tho' He awakens them with reproof, yet there is also a tender apology for their weakness. He adds, "My spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (V. 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 tho' 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.

And then He says, "Sleep on now and take your rest" (V. 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 or 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 here?" (V. 50). How comes it that my professed friend is found in company with my enemies? is the point to the question. Luke informs us that He added, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48). 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—Luke 22-36. He 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.

26:51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, **Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.**

26:53 **Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?**

26:54 **But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?**

26:55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, **Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.**

26:56 **But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.** Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

26:57 And they that had laid hold on Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

26:58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

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 disciples 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 twelve frail men, but more than even twelve 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 Counsel 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 thru 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"—John 13:27. He Himself signed His own death warrant: proving that He was the antitype of the gentle domestic animal who 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—¹John 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" (Isa. 53:12) in death, but not with disciples. He must die alone, that the latter may be numbered with Him in life.

World's Judgment of the King

"And they that had laid hold of Jesus, led Him away"—V. 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 two thousand 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 religions body of

¹ John 18:8 "Jesus answered, **I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:**"

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, tho' the present inspired historian does not record the latter 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, Jews and Gentile—all have a voice in the condemnation of the Son of God.

And 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 offering for sin" (*"there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,"—Heb. 10:26 KJV*). To reject Christ is to reject God and His salvation. It is to reject life and light and peace and hope. What will you do with Jesus which is called the Christ? is the paramount question. The answer settles our eternal destiny. As was said, 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.

The Religious Court

"The chief priests and elders and all the council sought false witness against Jesus to put Him to death"—V. 59.

The special charge which the Jews brought against Christ was that He made Himself the Son of God: tho' they also secured false witnesses who swore that He said, He could destroy the temple and built it again in three days. What He had said is recorded by John, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up"—John 2:19. 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. This was destroyed in the siege by Titus, A. D. 71 and will no doubt be raised up in the third dispensational day. Peter tells us that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years (¹II Pet. 3:8); therefore that third 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

26:59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

26:60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,

¹ 2 Peter 3:8 "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

26:61 And said, This *fellow* said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

26:62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

26:63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

26:64 Jesus saith unto him, **Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.**

26:65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

26:66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

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” (John 19:7). This was the issue, tho’ 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—¹Chap. 22:46. They had no answer then; they have none now. They would not seek an answer, for they feared the issue; tho’ 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” (V. 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, tho’ 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—²Luke 22:53. But He 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. “He beheld one like the Son of Man come with the clouds of heaven and receive from the Ancient of days, dominion, and glory and a Kingdom which shall not be destroyed” (“*behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven,*

¹ Matthew 22:46 “And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions*.”

² Luke 22:53 “**When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.**”

26:67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands,

26:68 Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

26:69 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

26:70 But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

26:71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

26:72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

26:73 And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

26:74 Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

26:75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him...his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” KJV)—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 (¹Lev. 21:10), as tho’ in horror of such blasphemy, declaring the trial is over. Christ has witnessed a good profession. Out of His own mouth He stands convicted and is worthy of death, they all agree. 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, “Prophecy unto us, Thou Christ. Who is he that smote Thee?” (V. 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 tho’ the Man were guilty.

And 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 the nation at the end of this dispensation. Three times, and the last with noisy profanity, Peter denies knowledge of, or friendship with this friendless Man. And 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. The two 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.

¹ Leviticus 21:10 “And *he that is* the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes;”

Chapter Twenty Seven

The Civil Court

Chapter 27

27:1 When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:

27:2 And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

27:3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

27:4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? see thou *to that*.

27:5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

27:6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

“When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people * * led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, the governor”—Chap. 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 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—¹Deut. 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 the nation), 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. “Metamelethis,” regretted; not “metanoeitis,” 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, that he has betrayed innocent blood; 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 any one. 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” (V. 5), 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” with Judas, and they cannot escape the issue. They have the issue to meet whether

¹ Deuteronomy 21:23 “His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged *is* accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.”

27:7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

27:8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

27:9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

27:10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

27:11 And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, **Thou sayest.**

27:12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

27:13 Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?

27:14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

27:15 Now at *that* feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.

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 latter 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, "The word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith Jehovah. Behold as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in My hand, O house of Israel" (*"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."* KJV)—Jer. 18:5, 6. They have been ever since a vessel marred upon the wheel—the old creation—but they are to be moulded and remade in due season. They are yet in the fire of discipline.

And now Jesus stands before Pilate, "the one armed with a dart," which is the significance of his name. He speaks, as we intimated, 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 first witness. He declared Christ an innocent man, tho' he had betrayed Him as guilty. Then comes Pilate's wife with her admonition to her husband to "have nothing to do with this just man; for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of him" (V. 19), she exclaims. She is witness that he is a righteous man. And Pilate himself a little later corroborates her testimony. He stands in defense, as he says, of this just man. Thus we have three 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" (V. 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

27:16 And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

27:17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

27:18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

27:19 When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

27:20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

27:21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

27:22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

27:23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

who it should be. This is a most wonderful hint of what the paschal feast figured—the release of the whole Adam 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 tho’ 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. And now Pilate desires the people to say whether he should release this notorious criminal or “Jesus which is called the Christ” (V. 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?” Alas the chief priests persuaded the multitude and they chose according to the dictates of their own hearts. “Barabbas” (V. 21), they cried; “for the mind of the flesh is enmity against God” (*“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God:”—Rom. 8:7 KJV*). They choose the evil and refuse the good. And yet Pilate is not satisfied. He wants to escape a the responsibility, therefore he put it to them again to decide the fate of Jesus. What shall be done with Him? He cried. Immediately the answer comes, as tho’ with one voice, “let Him be crucified” (V. 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”—John 5:43. There will come another savior, the son of another father, son of the devil. He will be all, as to outward appearance and expectation, that men desire. 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 anti-Christ, 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 thru the multitude. “God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be

27:24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye *to it*.

27:25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

27:26 Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *him* to be crucified.

27:27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band *of soldiers*.

27:28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

27:29 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!

damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness”—II Thes. 2:7-12. Israel have rejected Christ and chosen Barabbas, 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 man; see ye to it" (V. 24). 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 upon our children" (V. 25). Thus they accept all the weight of blame for what they are doing. Tho' 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 (¹Num. 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 into His right hand; and they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews,"—Verse 29.

And now the soldiers of the governor take Jesus into the common hall and all the band gather around 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?

¹ Numbers 35:11, 12 "Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares. And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment."

27:30 And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

27:31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify *him*.

27:32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

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 a crown of thorns, which they quickly plaited for this purpose and laid it upon that kingly brow. And as a finishing touch, they put a reed within His hand, the sceptre of authority, and kneeling down before Him in mockery they cried, “Hail, King of the Jews” (V. 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 sceptre of power; for He conquers thru 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 Fifth 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.

27:33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

27:34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink.

27:35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

27:36 And sitting down they watched him there;

27:37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27:38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

27:39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

27:40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

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 fibre 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.

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 latter has been gradual. Seven steps in His descent as Paul declares in ¹Phil. 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" (1 Pet. 2:24). Note that it is on the tree, nowhere else. Scripture never speaks of Christ bearing our sins in life, but in death. And the latter includes not only physical death as the penalty for sin, but the judgment which follows death (²Heb. 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" ("*For he hath made him to be sin for us*"—2 Cor. 5:21 KJV), 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. And 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 and Mark's Record.

And 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

¹ Philippians 2:7-9 "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:"

² Hebrews 9:27 "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"

27:41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said,

27:42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

27:43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

27:44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

27:45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?** that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

27:47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias.

27:48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink.

27:49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

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” (*“I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls:” KJV*)—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 further emphasizes this phase of atonement; for it is written, “cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13). 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 every thing 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. And this is what the cry, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?” (V. 46) signifies, of which Matthew and Mark tell us. And 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 in Thee and Thou didst deliver them: they cried unto Thee and were not confounded; but I am a worm and no man” (*“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;” KJV*)—Ps. 22:4-6. The sorrow depicted here speaks altogether of atonement. It is different from all other pain or grief.

When the darkness disappears the crisis is over. He Himself declares, “It is finished” (John 19:30), then dismisses His spirit and departs. 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” (V. 37). It was the accusation of the Jews against Him and for which He is hanged between two 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” (John 19:22). Thus He goes down into

27:50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

27:51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

27:52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

27:53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

27:54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

27:55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:

27:56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

27:57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:

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—¹Ps. 22:8. And even the robbers reproached Him on account of His weakness. Ah, here it is, weakness! How the natural man shrinks from anything that appears weak and helpless; but it is thru this very weakness, this despised way of the cross, that man is glorified. Christ crucified thru weakness made God responsible to raise Him from the dead: "therefore He liveth by the power of God" (*"yet he liveth by the power of God."*—2 Cor. 13:4 KJV), 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. Tho' the first paradise be not restored, he, with the other resurrected saints, enters with Christ, the Last Adam into the paradise of God. He 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, the Son of God. 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. And 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" (*"And he made his grave with the wicked,"*—Isa. 53:9 KJV) 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 there any deceit found in His mouth" (*"and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."* KJV)—Isa. 53:9. No more is He numbered with transgressors, but the opposite: the latter are now numbered with Him, the Righteous, when they believe. He is now in the hands of these little ones, tender

¹ Psalms 22:8 "He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him."

27:58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

27:59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

27:60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

27:61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

27:62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

27:63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

27:64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

27:65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can.

27:66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

hands if they are feeble. He is laid away in the clean sepulchre, where never man yet lay. 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 inevidence; 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, 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 master-piece of His creative power—¹Eph. 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” (*“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”—1 Cor. 15:17 KJV*), the Apostle informs us later—I Cor. 15:17. He was delivered up to death for our offenses and was raised again for our justification—²Rom. 5:15. 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.

¹ Ephesians 1:19, 20 “And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,”

² Romans 5:15 “But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”

Chapter Twenty Eight

The Resurrection of Christ

“Behold, Jesus met them saying, All hail; and they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him”—Chap. 28:9.

Chapter 28

28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

28:2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

28:3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

28:4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*.

28:5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

28:6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

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 (Chap. 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. And 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 Himself said, “No man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven” (John 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 latter stupendous event, 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 thru the veil, that is to say, His flesh, let us draw near to God with a true heart” (*“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;” KJV*)—Heb. 10:19, 20, Greek.

And 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.

28:7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

28:8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

28:9 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.

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 sepulchre. 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”—I Tim. 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” (*“The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.” KJV*)—Psalm 68:11, R. V. They wait until the Lord gives the message. Men want to deliver their own words. Anyway 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 thru 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, as we have noted 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. 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 ten 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 worldwide 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 two epochs. That is one reason that there is 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

28:10 Then said Jesus unto them, **Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.**

28:11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

28:12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

28:13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him *away* while we slept.

28:14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

28:15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

stop. Therefore we who now know the truth may read between the lines and see thru the veil as it were. Thus Christ's words to the women, "Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee; there shall they see Me" (V. 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, "the watchtower," being mentioned here, emphatically speaks of the great victory achieved. She, out of whom were cast seven 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 this fact, "the men told of all that had come to pass." 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 Himself, They will not believe tho' a man rise from the dead. 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 eleven 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—¹I Cor. 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 nation. This is not the message of Paul, nor the Gospel for this age. Simon, which 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

¹ 1 Corinthians 15:6 "After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."

28:16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

28:17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.**

28:19 **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:**

28:20 **Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.**

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—¹Acts 15:16, 17.

Then will be the time when they shall baptize all disciplined nations into the Name of the Father and the Son and of 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 fulness of the God-Head 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. And we note that the twelve, 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—²Acts 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" (*"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body"* KJV)—I Cor. 12:13, R. V.

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" (V. 20), are a wondrous promise of encouragement. 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 disciplined, 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" (Mark 16:16), irrespective of whether he is baptized or not.

Then come the signs which followed the Gospel in the beginning and still follow those that believe. Matthew gives us no hint of them because they

¹ Acts 15:16, 17 "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

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. 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" (*"In my name shall they cast out devils;"—Mark 16:17 KJV*), is the glad proclamation that Christ reigns supreme over all the domain which Satan had usurped and held for ages.

In the second 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.

The taking up of serpents, as well as the annulment of every deadly drink, by faith, further proves that Satan is a conquered foe. All his weapons have been taken out of his hand, as the fifth sign is conclusive evidence—"They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover" (Mark 16:18). 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.