GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

A. C. GAEBELEIN

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THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

AN EXPOSITION

BY

A. C. GAEBELEIN

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INTRODUCTION.

The Gospel of Matthew stands first among the Gospels and in the New Testament, because it was first written and may be rightly termed the Genesis of the New Testament. Genesis, the first book of the Bible, contains in itself the entire Bible, and so it is with the first Gospel; it is the book of the beginnings of a new dispensation. It is like a mighty tree. The roots are deeply sunk in massive rocks while its uncountable branches and twigs extend upward higher and higher in perfect symmetry and beauty. The foundation is the Old Testament with its Messianic and Kingdom promises. Out of this all is developed in perfect harmony, reaching higher and higher into the new dispensation and to the beginning of the millennial age.

The instrument chosen by the Holy Spirit to write this Gospel was Matthew. He was a Jew. However, he did not belong to the religious, educated class, to the scribes; but he belonged to the class which was most bitterly hated. He was a publican, that is a tax gatherer. The Roman government had appointed officials whose duty it was to have the legal tax gathered, and these officials, mostly, if not all Gentiles, appointed the actual collectors, who were generally Jews. Only the most unscrupulous among the Jews would hire themselves out for the sake of gain to the avowed

enemy of Jerusalem. Wherever there was still a ray of hope for Messiah's coming, the Jew would naturally shrink from being associated with the Gentiles, who were to be swept away from the land with the coming of the King. For this reason the tax gatherers, being Roman employees, were hated by the Jews even more bitterly than the Gentiles themselves. Such a hated tax gatherer was the writer of the first Gospel. How the grace of God is revealed in his call we shall see later. That he was chosen to write this first Gospel is in itself significant, for it speaks of a new order of things about to be introduced, namely, the call of the despised Gentiles.

Internal evidences seem to show that most likely originally Matthew wrote the Gospel in Aramaeic, the Semitic dialect then spoken in Palestine. The Gospel was later translated into Greek. This, however, is certain, that the Gospel of Matthew is pre-eminently the *Jewish* Gospel. There are many passages in it, which in their fundamental meaning can only be correctly understood by one who is quite familiar with Jewish customs and the traditional teachings of the elders. Because it is the Jewish Gospel, it is *dispensational* throughout. It is safe to say that a person, no matter how learned or devoted, who does not hold the clearly revealed dispensational truths concerning the Jews, the Gentiles and the church of God will fail to understand Matthew. This is, alas, too much the case, and well it would be if it were not more than individual failure to understand; but it is more than that. Confusion, error, false doctrine is the final outcome, when the right key to any part of God's Word

is lacking. If the dispensational character of Matthew were understood, no ethical teaching from the so-called Sermon on the Mount at the expense of the Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ would be possible, nor would there be room for the subtle, modern delusion, so universal now, of a "social Christianity" which aims at lifting up the masses and the reformation of the world. How different matters would be in Christendom if its leading teachers and preachers, commentators and professors, had understood and would understand the meaning of the seven parables in Matthew xiii, with its deep and solemn lessons. When we think how many of the leaders of religious thought reject and even oppose all dispensational teachings, and never learned how to divide the Word of truth rightly, it is not strange that so many of these men dare to stand up and say that the Gospel of Matthew as well as the other Gospels and the different parts of the New Testament contain numerous contradictions and errors. Out of this failure to discern dispensational truths has likewise arisen the attempt, by a very well meaning class, to harmonize the Gospel records and to arrange all the events in the life of our Lord in a chronological order, and thus produce a life of Jesus Christ, our Lord, as we have a descriptive life of Napoleon or other great men. The Holy Spirit has never undertaken to produce a life of Christ. That is very evident by the fact that the greater part of the life of our Lord is passed over in silence. Nor was it in the mind of the Spirit to report all the words and miracles and the movements of our Lord, or to record all the events which took place during His public

ministry, and to arrange them in a chronological order. What presumption, then, in man to attempt to do that which the Holy Spirit never attempted! If the Holy Spirit never intended that the records of our Saviour should be strictly chronological, how vain and foolish then, if not more, the attempt to bring out a harmony of the different Gospels! One has correctly said, "The Holy Spirit is not a reporter, but an editor." This is well said. A reporter's business is to report events as they happen. The editor arranges the material in a way to suit himself, and leaves out or makes comment just as he thinks best. This the Holy Spirit has done in giving four Gospels, which are not a mechanical reporting of the doings of a person called Jesus of Nazareth, but the spiritual unfoldings of the blessed person and work of our Saviour and Lord, as King of the Jews, servant in obedience, Son of Man and the only begotten of the Father. We cannot enter more deeply into this now, but in the exposition of our Gospel we shall illustrate this fact.

In the Gospel of Matthew, as the Jewish Gospel, speaking of the King and the kingdom, dispensational throughout, treating of the Jews, the Gentiles and even the church of God in anticipation, as no other Gospel does, everything must be looked upon from the dispensational point of view. All the miracles recorded, the words spoken, the events which are given in their peculiar setting, every parable, every chapter from beginning to end, are first of all to be looked upon as foreshadowing and teaching dispensational truths. This is the right key to the Gospel of Matthew. It is likewise a significant fact that in the condition of the people

Israel, with their proud religious leaders rejecting the Lord, their King and the threatened judgment in consequence of it, is a true photograph of the end of the present dispensation, and in it we shall see the coming doom of Christendom. The characteristics of the times, when our Lord appeared among His people, who were so religious, self-righteous, being divided into different sects, Ritualists (Pharisees) and Rationalists (Sadducees—Higher Critics), following the teachings of men, occupied with man-made creeds and doctrines, etc., and all nothing but apostasy, are exactly reproduced in Christendom, with its man-made ordinances, rituals and rationalistic teachings. We hope to follow out this thought in our exposition.

There are seven great dispensational parts which are prominent in this Gospel and around which everything is grouped. We will briefly review them.

I.—**The King.** The Old Testament is full of promises which speak of the coming, not alone of a deliverer, a sin-bearer, but of the coming of a King, King Messiah as He is still called by orthodox Jews. This King was eagerly expected, hoped for and prayed for by the pious in Israel. It is still so with many Jews in our days. The Gospel of Matthew proves that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly the promised King Messiah. In it we see Him as King of the Jews, everything shows that He is in truth the royal person, of whom Seers and Prophets, as well as inspired Psalmists, wrote and sang. First it would be necessary to prove that He is legally the King. This is seen in the first chapter,

where a genealogy is given which proves His royal descent. The beginning is, "Book of the generation of Jesus Christ, Son of David, Son of Abraham."* It goes back to Abraham and there it stops, while in Luke the genealogy reaches up to Adam. In the Gospel of Matthew He is seen as Son of David, His royal descent; Son of Abraham, according to the flesh from the seed of Abraham.

The coming of the Magi is only recorded in Matthew. They come to worship the new born King of the Jews. His royal birthplace, David's city, is given. The infant is worshipped by the representatives of the Gentiles and they do homage indeed before a true King, though the marks of poverty were around Him. The gold they gave speaks of His royalty. Every true King has a herald, so the King Messiah. The forerunner appears and in Matthew his message to the nation is that "The Kingdom of heaven has drawn nigh"; the royal person so long foretold is about to appear and to offer that Kingdom. When the King who was rejected comes again to set up the Kingdom, He will be preceded once more by a herald who will declare His coming among His people Israel, even Elijah the prophet. In the fourth chapter we see the King tested and proven that He is the King. He is tested thrice, once as Son of Man, as Son of God and as the King Messiah. After the testing, out of which He comes forth a complete victor,

*We use a translation of the New Testament which was made years ago by J. N. Darby, and which for correctness is the very best we have ever seen. We can heartily recommend it to our readers. It is published in New York City. Price 60 cents a copy. Order from 80 Second Street, N. Y.

He begins His ministry. The Sermon on the Mount (we shall use the phrase though it is not scriptural) is given in Matthew in full. Mark and Luke report it only in fragments and John has not a word of it. This should at once determine the status of the three chapters which contain this discourse. It is teaching concerning the Kingdom, the magna charta of the Kingdom and all its principles. Such a kingdom in the earth, with subjects who have all the characteristics of the royal requirements laid down in this discourse will yet be. If Israel had accepted the King it would then have come, but the kingdom has been postponed. The Kingdom will at last come with a righteous nation as a center, but Christendom is not that kingdom. In this wonderful discourse the Lord speaks as the King and as the Lawgiver, who expounds the law which is to rule His Kingdom. From the eighth to the twelfth chapters, we see the royal manifestations of Him who is Jehovah manifested in the flesh. This part especially is interesting and very instructive, because it gives in a series of miracles, the dispensational outline of the Jew, the Gentile, and what comes after the present age is past.

As King He sends out His servants and endues them with kingdom power, preaching likewise the nearness of the kingdom. After the tenth chapter the rejection begins followed by His teachings in parables, the revealing of secrets. He is presented to Jerusalem as King, and the Messianic welcome is heard, "Blessed is He who cometh in the name of Jehovah." After that His suffering and His death. In all His Kingly character is brought out, and the

Gospel closes abruptly, and has nothing to say of His ascension to heaven; but the Lord is, so to speak, left on the earth with power, all power in heaven and on earth. In this closing it is seen that He is the King. He rules in heaven now and on the earth when He comes again.

II.—**The Kingdom.** The phrase Kingdom of the Heavens occurs **only** in the Gospel of Matthew. We find it thirty-two times. What does it mean? Here is the failure of the interpretation of the Word, and all error and the confusion around us springs from the false conception of the Kingdom of the Heavens. It is generally taught and understood that the term Kingdom of the Heavens means the church, and thus the church is thought to be the true Kingdom of the Heavens, established in the earth, and conquering the nations and the world. The Kingdom of the Heavens is *not* the church, and the church is *not* the Kingdom of the Heavens. This is a very vital truth. May the exposition of this Gospel be used in making this distinction very clear in the minds of our readers. When our Lord speaks of the Kingdom of the Heavens up to the twelfth chapter He does not mean the church, but the Kingdom of the Heavens in its Old Testament sense, as it is promised to Israel, to be established in the land, with Jerusalem for a center, and from there to spread over all the nations and the entire earth. What did the pious, believing Jew expect according to the Scriptures? He expected (and still expects) the coming of the King Messiah, who is to occupy the throne of His father David. He was

expected to bring judgment for the enemies of Jerusalem, and bring together the outcasts of Israel. The land would flourish as never before; universal peace would be established; righteousness and peace in the knowledge of the glory of the Lord to cover the earth as the waters cover the deep. All this in the earth with the land, which is Jehovah's land, as fountain head, from which all the blessings, the streams of living waters, flow. A temple, a house of worship, for all nations was expected to stand in Jerusalem, to which the nations would come to worship the Lord. This is the Kingdom of the Heavens as promised to Israel and as expected by them. It is all earthly. The church, however, is something entirely different. The hope of the church, the place of the church, the calling of the church, the destiny of the church, the reigning and ruling of the church is not earthly, but it is heavenly. Now the King long expected had appeared, and He preached the Kingdom of the Heavens having drawn nigh, that is, this promised earthly kingdom for Israel. When John the Baptist preached, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of the Heavens has drawn nigh," he meant the same. It is all wrong to preach the Gospel from such a text and state that the sinner is to repent and then the Kingdom will come to him. A very well known English teacher of spiritual truths gave not long ago in this country a discourse on the mistranslated text, "The Kingdom of God is within you," and dwelt largely on the fact that the Kingdom is within the believer. The context shows that this is erroneous, and the true translation is "The Kingdom is *among you;*" that is, in the person of the King.

Now if Israel had accepted the testimony of John, and had repented, and if they had accepted the King, the Kingdom would have come, but now it has been postponed till Jewish disciples will pray again in preaching the coming of the Kingdom, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven." That will be after the church has been removed to the heavenly places. The history of the Kingdom is given in the second chapter. The Gentiles first, and Jerusalem does not know her King and is in trouble on account of Him.

III.—**The King and the Kingdom is rejected.** This is likewise foretold in the Old Testament, Isaiah liii, Daniel ix:25, Psalm xxii., etc. It is also seen in types, Joseph, David and others. The herald of the King is first rejected and ends in the prison, being murdered. This speaks of the rejection of the King Himself. In no other Gospel is the story of the rejection so completely told as here. It begins in Galilee, in His own city, and ends in Jerusalem. The rejection is not human but it is *Satanic*. All the wickedness and depravity of the heart is uncovered and Satan revealed throughout. All classes are concerned in the rejection. The crowds who had followed Him and were fed by Him, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians, the priests, the chief priests, the high priest, the elders. At last it becomes evident that they knew Him who He was, their Lord and their King, and wilfully they delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles. The story of the cross in Matthew, too, brings out the darkest side of the rejection. Thus prophecy is seen fulfilled in the rejection of the King.

IV.—**The rejection of His Earthly People and their Judgment.** This is another theme of the Old Testament which is very prominent in the Gospel of Matthew. They rejected Him and He leaves them, and judgment falls upon them. In the eleventh chapter He reproaches the cities in which most of His works of power had taken place, because they had not repented. At the end of the twelfth chapter He denies His relations and refuses to see His own, while in the beginning of the thirteenth He leaves the house and goes down to the sea, the latter term typifies the nations. After His royal presentation to Jerusalem the next day early in the morning He curses the fig tree, which foreshadows Israel's national death, and after He uttered His two parables to the chief priests and elders, He declares that the Kingdom of God is to be taken away from them and is to be given to a nation which is to bring the fruit thereof. The whole twenty-third chapter contains the woes upon the Pharisees, and at the end He speaks to Jerusalem and declares that their house is to be left desolate till they shall say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

V.—**The mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens.** The kingdom has been rejected by the people of the kingdom and the King Himself has left the earth. During His absence the Kingdom of the Heavens is in the hands of men. There is then the kingdom in the earth in an entirely different form than it was revealed in the Old Testament, the mysteries of the kingdom hidden from the world's foundation are now made known. This we learn in Matthew

xiii, and here, too, we have at least a glimpse of the church. Again it is to be understood that both are not identical. But what is the kingdom in its mystery form? The seven parables will teach this to us. It is seen there in an evil mixed condition. The church, the one body, is not evil, for the church is composed of those who are beloved of God, called saints, but Christendom, including all professors, is properly that Kingdom of the Heavens in the thirteenth chapter. The parables bring out what may be termed the history of Christendom. It is a history of failure, becoming that which the King never meant it to be, the leaven of evil, indeed, leavening the whole lump, and thus it continues till the King comes back, when all the offences will be gathered out of the kingdom. The parable of the pearl alone speaks of the church.

VI.—**The Church.** In no other Gospel is anything said of the church except in the Gospel of Matthew. In the sixteenth chapter Peter gives his testimony concerning the Lord, revealed to him from the Father, who is in the heavens. The Lord tells him that on this rock I will build My assembly—church—and hades' gates shall not prevail against it. It is not I *have built*, but I *will* build My church. Right after this promise He speaks of His suffering and death. The transfiguration which follows the first declaration of His coming death, speaks of the glory which will follow, and is a type of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter i:16). Much that follows after the declaration of the Lord concerning the building of the church is to be applied to the church.

VII.—**The Mount of Olivet Discourse. Prophetic Teachings Concerning the End of the Age.** This discourse was given to the disciples after the Lord had spoken His last word to Jerusalem. It is one of the most remarkable sections of the entire Gospel. We find it in the 24th and 25th chapters. In it the Lord teaches concerning the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God; Christendom is in it likewise. The order is different. The Gentiles stand last. The reason for that is because the church will be removed first from the earth and the professors of Christendom will be left, and are nothing but Gentiles and concerned in the judgment of nations as made known by the Lord. The first part of Matthew xxiv is Jewish throughout. From the fourth to the forty-fifth verse we have a most important prophecy, which gives the events which follow after the church is taken from the earth. The Lord takes here many of the Old Testament prophecies and blends them in one great prophecy. The history of the last week in Daniel is here. The middle of the week after the first three years and a half is verse 15. Revelation, chapters vi-xix is all contained in these words of our Lord. He gave, then, the same truths, only more enlarged and in detail, from heaven as a last word and warning. Three parables follow in which the saved and the unsaved are seen. Waiting and serving is the leading thought. Reward and casting out into outward darkness the twofold outcome. This, then, finds an application in Christendom and the church. The ending of Matthew xxv is the judgment of nations. This is not the universal judgment, a popular term in Christen-

dom, but unscriptural, but it is the judgment of the nations at the time when our Lord as Son of Man sits upon the throne of His glory.

Many of the most interesting facts in the Gospel, the peculiar quotations from the Old Testament, the perfect structure, etc., etc., we cannot give in this introduction and outline, but we hope to bring them before us in our exposition. May, then, the Spirit of Truth guide us into all the truth.

CHAPTER I.

The first chapter of the Gospel of Matthew is divided into two parts. In the first to the seventeenth verse we find the genealogy of Jesus Christ, and in the last part of the chapter the account of the birth of the promised One. In the second half we see Him as Son of God and Saviour, while in the first, in the genealogy, His royal descent is proven. He is the rightful heir to David's throne, and thus His Kingship is legally established.

The two Greek words with which this Gospel begins are *"Biblos genesecos,"* the book of the generation, which corresponds to a similar Old Testament expression frequently found in the Scriptures (Genesis vi:9, etc.) The very beginning of this Gospel shows clearly that this is the Jewish Gospel. The question of genealogy is an all important one for the Jew. The genealogy which appears in the Gospel of Luke does not stand there in the beginning, but it comes in with the third chapter, after the account of the Saviour's birth, and the ministry of the forerunner, and when He begins His public ministry. In the Gospel of Luke He is the Son of man, and not as in Matthew, the King. In Luke it is a going backward clear to Adam, while in the genealogy in Matthew it is the opposite; not like in Luke, beginning with His earthly name, Jesus, but beginning with Abraham, it goes forward till the end is reached in Joseph, the husband

of Mary. The first verse in Matthew may be termed a superscription for the genealogy which follows, Book of generation of Jesus Christ, "Son of David, Son of Abraham." How truly He is all that, is now to be established, Son of David, because a King is promised to rule in righteousness upon the throne of His father David; but in a larger sense, Seed of Abraham, through whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed, and the nations to receive spiritual blessings. How incorrect it would have been if it had said, Book of generation of Jesus Christ, Son of Abraham, Son of David. That would have been the rendering by man, but the Holy Spirit puts David here before Abraham, though in the genealogy itself Abraham is the head, the first one. Jesus Christ is first the Son of David, and as such He is to be presented to the nation Israel, as King, and to be rejected by them. He is after that in the wider sense the One through whom the promises of blessing in Abraham to the nations are to be fulfilled. How clearly this proves the verbal inspiration! Indeed, if there is no verbal inspiration there is no inspiration at all.

It is not rarely the case that readers of the New Testament have asked themselves why all these names appear in the first chapter. We have answered many questions and have written numerous letters during the last eight years in answer to inquiries from the Jews on account of the genealogy, as it appears here, and the apparent contradictions and discrepancies between Matthew and Luke. Many a Jew has come and asked, Why must a man have two genealogies, and which is the right one? When the Jew takes the New

Testament and opens it with Matthew, he finds himself upon familiar ground. It is the first question with him, if Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, Son of David, it must be proven by a genealogy. Does the New Testament, in the genealogies in Matthew and in Luke, prove this? is the important question the Jew asks. We have often asked the Jewish inquirer, Supposing Jesus of Nazareth was not the Messiah, not the Son of David, then you would expect the coming of a Messiah who is a Son of David, born in Bethlehem; how could that coming Messiah prove that he is really the Son of David, when your genealogical registers have been lost centuries ago? Others, too, have had difficulty on account of these two genealogies. We will state the case and what they teach in a few words.

In the genealogy of Matthew Jesus Christ is shown to be the King legally; in the Gospel of Luke we have His genealogy as the Son of Man, and as such linked with the whole race. The genealogy in Matthew proves that Joseph is a descendant of David through the house of *Solomon.* The one in the Gospel of Luke proves that Mary, the virgin, is likewise a descendant of David, but not through the house of *Solomon;* she is connected with David through the house of *Nathan.* The Messiah was to be born of a virgin, one who must be a descendant of David. But a woman has no right to the throne. As the son of the virgin alone He could not have a legal right to the throne. For this reason to make the One begotten in her of the Holy Ghost, the rightful heir to the throne of David in the eyes of the nation, the virgin had to be the wife of a man who had a perfect,

unchallenged right to the throne. Now the genealogy in Matthew shows that Joseph is a son of David, and thus entitled to the throne, therefore Jesus is *legally* in this way heir to the throne. He is the legal descendant and heir of David through Joseph, but never *Joseph's Son.* He was supposed by the people *to be* the Son of Joseph. "And Jesus Himself, when He began to teach, was about thirty years of age; being, as was supposed, the Son of Joseph" (Luke iii:23). "And they said, Is not this the Son of Joseph?" (Luke iv:22). His claim as being truly the Son of David was therefore never disputed. Now if He had been the Son of Joseph according to the flesh, He would never be and *could* never be our Saviour. The 51st Psalm would then have found an application. "I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me." On the other hand, if He had been the Son of Mary, without she being legally the wife of a Son of David, the Jews would have rejected His claim from the very outset. We see then that legally He was the Son of Joseph; in His humanity, He is the Son of Mary, and then one step higher, as we read in the closing verses, He is the Son of God. The two genealogies show Him as King—Son of man and Son of God—as the One born of Mary, but begotten in her of the Holy Ghost.

The genealogy in Matthew speaks of decadence. Corruption, ruin and hopelessness is clearly brought out in it. It begins with Abraham. And as generation after generation is mentioned, it puts before us the shameful history of Israel, with their unbelief, apostasy and judgments. At last it becomes all dark and all hopeless as far as Israel is con-

cerned. Like Sarah's womb, as she indeed stands in type for the nation, the whole nation was dead, no hope, all ruin and corruption. But God can bring life from the dead. "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, come of woman, come under the law, that He might redeem those under the law, that we might receive sonship" (Gal. iv:4). It is so with this present dispensation, for after awhile when the Lord has taken to Himself His Church, darkness, ruin and evil will prevail, and in the darkest hour of Israel's believing remnant and in the history of the world, the Firstborn will come again into the habitable world surrounded by worshipping angels (Heb. i:6).

The division of the genealogy is threefold. From Abraham to David, from David to the carrying away into the Babylonian captivity, and from the carrying away into Babylon to Christ (verse 17). In each division are fourteen generations, twice seven in each division. This brings in perfect harmony and order, as He who has given it all is the Spirit of order and not disorder (1 Cor. xiv:33). Seven is a highly symbolical number, peculiar to Israel. Much of the history of Israel is divided into seven; the seventy years of Captivity, the seventy prophetic weeks in Daniel, the last week still future composed of seven years, etc., are well-known facts to every reader of the Word. Here it is three times twice seven, which means fulfillment and completeness.

A closer investigation shows at once that a number of generations have been left out. Attempts have been made to explain this in different ways. Many poor, shortsighted men have put it down as an error, and higher critics and unbe-

lievers have pointed it out as an argument against the inspiration of the Word, and as an example of the contradictions, which, according to them, exist in the Scriptures. Others have charged Matthew with ignorance, and that by not knowing any better, he left these generations out. As a Jew, he was, without question, well acquainted with the Old Testament writings. He had full access to all the collections of books which we term Old Testament. Out of the historical books it would have been a very easy matter to get together a complete register of names, such as would have been in full accord with the object in view to satisfy the Jew. Man indeed would have done that if he had to write the genealogy, but Matthew did not write according to his own taste or wish; the Holy Spirit wrote every word, and He has found it good to make a number of omissions. For this reason, that which is so often claimed to prove that there are contradictions in the Bible, and that the Bible is not infallible, is really a witness for the divinity of the Scriptures. In all this arrangement, leaving out and changing, the Holy Spirit has a wise purpose, and it does not follow, if we in our shortsightedness do not understand it all, that there must be an error involved somewhere. He has the right to do it, and it has been His pleasure to leave out generations. This is also so in the case of another Old Testament genealogy (see Ezra vii).

The most prominent omission is in verse eight. Three kings are left out. These are Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah. Who were they? They are the descendants of the daughter of wicked Ahab, Athaliah. Athaliah desired to annihilate

the kingly seed of the house of Judah. This was a satanic attempt to frustrate the purposes of God. It was, like Haman's attempt, inspired by him who is a murderer from the beginning. It may be called Anti-Messianity. This is undoubtedly the reason why the Holy Spirit left out these three kings.

Another apparent difficulty is the one concerning Jechoniah (verse 11), Zorobabel and Salathiel. The last two are in the genealogy in Luke, and Zorobabel being called a son of Salathiel when 1 Chr. iii:19 speaks of him as a son of Pedaiah.

We give a few hints, which will be helpful in the correct understanding. Jehoiakim is often called by the name of his son Jechoniah. Both have the same meaning translated from the Hebrew, Jehovah will establish. Jehoiakim was carried away into Babylon (2 Kings xxiv:15). He has had brethren, which Jechoniah had not (1 Chr. iii:15). Thus it becomes clear that Jechoniah is Jehoiakim. In the twelfth verse we have Jechoniah, the son of Jehoiakim, because Salathiel is the son of Jechoniah (1 Chr. iii:17). Read also Jeremiah xxii:30.

Upon the line of Solomon there was then a curse, and Joseph is in connection with that line. Upon the line of Nathan there was no curse, and thus in His birth from Mary He is in truth the Son of David, still in the eyes of the nation He was it legally in Joseph.

If Zorobabel and Salathiel appear in Luke we may take them as different persons. The difficulty of Zorobabel being

the son of Salathiel here and the son of Pedaiah in Chronicles may be solved by the levirate law.

Other striking facts come to our knowledge when we go through the list of the generations, each one is highly significant. We mention a few only. Judah is mentioned, because the prophecy of Jacob makes it clear that from him the Shiloh would come (Gen. xlix:10). We are reminded of something else in the phrase, Judah and his brethren, namely, of Judah's sin and his brethren's in selling their own brother, and all that is connected with it.

David alone has the title, the king (verse 6). Solomon's name is there, but there is no kingship attached to it. The unbelieving Jew, as he tries to reject prophecies concerning the Messiah, has always made a strong point of this, that the promises given to David concerning a son were all fulfilled in Solomon. Solomon according to them is the king, and higher than David in his rule and dominion. How striking then that the Holy Spirit gives the name simply Solomon without adding, the king, to it. David is the king and no other can have the title, till his son come: even He who came and whom David called Lord (Ps. cx:1). Thus the angel announced Him, the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

In the last fourteen generations beginning with Zorobabel, we find no more prominent names. Only two of them are recorded in the Old Testament. Zorobabel means, Born in Babel, and his son Abiud, which means, Perishing. However,

the most interesting fact is the four women who are mentioned in the genealogy. Three of them are found in the first division and the fourth in the second one. Women in a genealogy is something which is very rarely the case. There were many noble, devoted and believing women in the Old Testament. Sarah, Rebekah, Deborah, and women received their dead raised to life again, and others were tortured not accepting deliverance (Heb. xi:35). One would naturally expect that in the genealogy of Him who is the seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head, some of these women who believed the promise would be mentioned. However, we look in vain for them. Instead of them we discover four, who are only known, at least three, by their shame, and the other belonged to a race which was according to the law cursed. Let us look into the names and history of these four women.

Tamar is the first. Her shameful history of fornication is recorded in Genesis xxxviii. What a dark story it is, full of the evil deeds of the flesh. Sin in its blackness is seen there. But how did she get into the genealogy? The answer is, by her sin. It was her shameful sin that puts her here in the genealogy of Him who has come to save that which is lost, the Saviour of men. The Holy Spirit has put her name in and shows by it that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners. He has come to save the vilest and the lowest. And the second one is *Rahab*. Who was she? A Canaanitess. Unclean and outcast, a harlot full of abomination. Yet here is her name too linked with Salmon (meaning clothed) and Boaz, her son, which means, "In

strength." She had believed the messengers as they had come, and the scarlet thread, the sign of her deliverance from the doomed city, was in her window. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" (Heb. xi:31). It was faith by which she came into line. Every Jew knew her history and knew too that she had come in to share Israel's blessings. Still the proud Pharisees murmured when Jesus sat down and ate and drank with the publicans and the sinners and the outcasts gathered around Him, murmuring because He sought the lowest.

Ruth, the third woman mentioned, is an exception, for there is no stain upon her character. She was a Moabitess. The law was against her and cursed her. It is written, "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 forever" (Deut. xxiii : 3). But in faith too she enters into the congregation with her children, and the third after her, her grandson, is King David himself. The law which had pronounced the curse is completely set aside in her case.

The fourth woman is not mentioned by name—Her of Uriah, that is all it says. We know it is Bath-Sheba, the one with whom King David committed adultery. Here it is sin in connection with a believer. Did that sin committed by King David then undo him as a believer? No, he had believed and grace had full sway over him.

What a wonderful demonstration of the whole and full Gospel of Grace as it is in Him, the Lord Jesus Christ! We

see sin—Faith as it lays hold and salvation by faith—deliverance from the law—and then the case of the believer, the assurance of salvation. Grace—nothing but grace shines out as nowhere else in the genealogy, in the four women, all four Gentiles. Hannah broke out in her prophetic song and said, "He lifteth up the needy from the dunghill, to make them sit with princes and inherit the throne of glory" (1 Sam. ii:8). How truly this is seen with Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bath-Sheba. What comfort in this fact for us all!

He is Son of Abraham. Through Him the blessing is to go out to the greatest sinner, to the deepest in misery and in want, blessing to the Gentiles in the new dispensation of grace.

We come now to the account of His birth. Here He is presented as human and divine, born of a virgin and at the same time Jehovah-Saviour, Emmanuel, God with us. If Matthew i:1-17 were all that could be said of His birth, He might then *have had* a legal right to the throne, but He could never have been He who was to redeem and save from sin. But the second half before us shows Him to be truly the long promised One, the One of whom Moses and the prophets spake, to whom all the past manifestations of God in the earth and the types, pointed. To accomplish the work of salvation, to suffer the penalty of sin and to put away sin He had to be divine and human.

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was thus: His mother, Mary, that is having been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy

Ghost. But Joseph, her husband, being righteous, and unwilling to expose her publicly, purposed to have her put away secretly; but while he pondered on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, fear not to take to thee thy wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.

"Now all this came to pass that that might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us. But Joseph having awoke from his sleep did as the angel of the Lord enjoined him, and took to him his wife, and knew her not until she had brought forth her firstborn Son; and he called His name Jesus (verses 18-25)."

How simple all this sounds; yet here are depths which no human mind can or ever will fathom. All attempts to explain will utterly fail. Faith worships here and looks with profound adoration upon the mystery made known, God manifested in the flesh. The Lord stood before Abraham, clothed in the form of a human being, eating and drinking (Genesis xviii). What humiliation that was for Him even then, but how much deeper and far-reaching it is here? It is now His mother, Mary, which is prominent in the record. Born of a woman Paul says in Galatians iv. This directs our attention to the very first promise made in Genesis iii: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman,

and between thy seed and her seed: *He* shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel." This is the first promise of a Deliverer.

We often read in the prophetic Word, I am *He*. The Hebrews have the word "Hu" (He) as a divine name. In the ancient book of *Zohar* the word "He" is applied to the eternal God bruising the serpent's head. He is to be the seed of the woman, not of Adam, the man. Interesting is the following quotation from an ancient exposition of the Jews. "The voice which our first parents heard walking in the garden was the Word of the Lord, or the Messiah. Before they sinned they saw the glory of the blessed God speaking with them, but after their sin they heard only the voice walking. The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent, and they shall obtain healing in the days of the Messiah."

Mary was that elect woman, a virgin, from whom the One seed came. She was betrothed to Joseph, the Son of David, and so that there should not even be the shadow of a doubt, it is added, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Ghost. Righteous Joseph pondering on these things and as a righteous man undoubtedly praying to God about it, is visited by an angel of the Lord. Even the little word *"an"* is here of importance. We hear much in the Old Testament of *the* angel of the Lord. He appears often as the mediator between God and man. He has divine names and attributes. He appeared in the form of man to Hagar, Abraham, Jacob, the children of Israel, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah, and to Man-

oah's wife. Jacob calls him the angel, the Redeemer. In Isaiah lxiii:9 he is called the angel of His face. Indeed all through the Old Testament Jehovah and His glory is in him revealed, so that in these manifestations we see the incarnation foretold. The very name of God was in him (Exodus xxiii:20). The old Jewish synagogue believed correctly that this angel of the Lord is the word of God, the Messiah. The One who appeared as the angel, is now to be born of the virgin. He emptied Himself, taking a servant's form, taking His place in the likeness of men (Phil. ii:7). If the writing of the Gospel of Matthew had been the work of an impostor, he would surely have written, that the angel of the Lord came to Joseph, instead of an angel. So even the little word, an, brings out the verbal inspiration.

In the Gospel of Luke we read that the angel Gabriel (the same who announced to Daniel the coming of the Messiah and the time of the end), was sent of God to Mary, and came in to her and said, "Hail, favored one! the Lord is with thee. But she, seeing the angel, was troubled at his word, and reasoned in her mind what this salutation might be. And the angel said to her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in the womb to bear a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for the ages, and of His kingdom there shall not be an end. But Mary said to the angel, How shall this be, since I know not

a man? And the angel answering said to her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and power of the Highest overshadow thee, wherefore the holy thing also which shall be born shall be called Son of God" (Luke i:28-35). In reading this one almost hears the voice which spoke to Moses, Take off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Both Gospels bring it out clearly that it is the Son of God, the eternal Word, who becomes a man, truly the child of His virgin mother, flesh and blood, a real human body like ours, but a *holy* thing, that is *absolutely* without sin. His human nature proceeded directly from the Spirit of God. No other being could have saved us.

The Old Testament speaks often of this great event, the birth of the Saviour, and that He is to be divine and human in His person. He is called the Branch (Zemach). In Isaiah He is called, The branch of Jehovah, and in other prophets, The branch of David. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah ix:7). There is a very important and remarkable passage in Jeremiah, "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall encompass a man" (Jer. xxxi:22). This belongs to a Messianic prophecy as shown by the context. It is a new thing which is to take place, and a creation. This could never be said of the birth of a child in the natural way. Even one of the ancient rabbis acknowledges that Jer. xxxi:22 speaks of Messiah.

and that by the woman a virgin is meant. In the Jewish writings, some of them of great antiquity, much is said on the origin and birth of the Christ. We quote but a few of the most important words of the rabbis. "Several state that Messiah is to have no earthly father." "The birth of the Messiah alone shall be without any defects." "His birth shall not be like that of other men." "The birth of the Messiah shall be like the dew of the Lord, as drops upon the grass without the action of man."

That this exposition of the Scriptures concerning the miraculous birth of the Messiah was generally believed at the time of our Lord is seen from the Gospel of John. "Is not this He whom they seek to kill? and behold He speaks openly and they say nothing to Him. Have the rulers then indeed recognized that this is the Christ? But as to this man we know whence He is. Now, as to the Christ, when He comes *no one knows whence He is* (John vii:27). With this they acknowledged that they believed that with the birth of the Christ a mystery is connected. They thought then they knew who Jesus of Nazareth is; "And they said, is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we have known? How then does he say I am come down from heaven?" (John vi:24). Many centuries later wicked Jews wrote a vulgar and blasphemous account of the birth of our Lord, but the early Jews, it seems never attempted to contradict the first chapter in Matthew.

The angel bade Joseph not to fear, and make known to him not only that that which is begotten in Mary is of the Holy Ghost, but he said also, "She shall bring forth a son,

and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

The word Jesus is taken from the Hebrew Jehoshua, which means, Jehovah is the Saviour. It is the precious name in which the whole story of salvation is contained. The people of Jehovah are His people, because He is Jehovah, and left His eternal glory, His riches, and became poor, to save them from their sins. When Moses stood in the presence of this descended Lord, who proclaimed before him the name of the Lord, Moses said, "If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord," saying this looking to heaven, "let my Lord," the One who had come down and stood before him, "I pray thee go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquities and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance." (Exodus xxxiv:9). And He has come, Jesus, who is able to save His people from their sins, because He is God, and gracious, as revealed to Moses in the mountain. They rejected Him and His salvation. They are scattered among the nations, blinded and hardened, but He is neverthless Jesus who shall save His people. He has bought the field and the treasure in it. He will come again and turn away ungodliness from Jacob and remember their sins no more. Yes, He will come again and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever. Saul of Tarsus heard the voice from heaven, which said, "I am Jesus!" It is very significant that He spoke thus to the one who became the apostle to the Gentiles, and who in many respects is a type of the whole nation in unbelief and in their com-

ing conversion. He saved Saul of Tarsus. He will save all Israel yet. For believers, His name is not simply Jesus, but for us, the church, He is both Saviour and Lord, and the right way to address Him is by His full name, as it is by the resurrection from among the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ.

With the declaration that He shall save His people from their sins the message of the angel was completed. It is now Matthew, and through Matthew of course the Holy Spirit, who continues. The most vital passage of the Old Testament is brought to the front. This is the familiar prophecy in Isaiah vii:14, which reads, "Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel." Like most all the other Messianic prophecies, this one has also been the target of "Higher Criticism." These learned (?) critics have made some very ridiculous utterances on this sublime prophecy, and said that it is anything but Messianic. They stand not alone, but are in company with rationalistic Jews and other infidels, who serve the power of darkness—the one who is the falsifier of God's Word from the beginning. Some of this infidel trash of Wellshausen, etc., is continually being rehashed by some of the so-called professors in theological "evangelical" seminaries in this country. Alas! how true still, professing themselves wise, they became *fools*. Higher criticism is nothing else but infidelity and foolishness.

It is with these critics, who are the educators of the coming preachers in the different denominations, a question what Isaiah wrote and what he did not write, what is genuine

and what is added to by another hand. So it is being taught that Isaiah spoke of his own wife when he uttered the words which are before us. Now beware how you treat this prophecy! Matthew 1:22 says that not the prophet said these words, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child," but the Lord Himself spoke these words through the prophet. A denial of Isaiah vii:14 that it is not a Messianic prophecy is a denial of the integrity of the New Testament, a denial of the Lord. How does any one dare to say the prophet did not utter a prophecy at all, that it is not to be understood as meaning the Lord Jesus Christ, when the Holy Spirit in the very first chapter in the New Testament declares that it is a Messianic prophecy, and that it has found its fulfillment in the person of our Lord? If there were no other evidence whatever in the Old Testament, nay, if there were many difficulties connected with it Matthew 1:22 would settle it all and would be sufficient proof in itself for what the Lord meant when He spoke these words through Isaiah the prophet.

But there is nothing whatever in Isaiah vii. which would in any way show that the prophecy is not Messianic. The Lord spoke the promise at a time when the house of David was discouraged and disheartened, and King Ahaz, instead of trusting the Lord, continued in unbelief. The prophet asks him to demand a sign from the Lord, but he rejects the offer under the plea that he would not tempt God. Upon this the prophet said that the Lord Himself shall give you a sign, and the prophecy then spoken is the sign for the discouraged king and the house of David. In other words, Messiah

is to be born, He is to come from Judah, and from the house of David. How could he, the king, fear destruction and extermination? This was the comfort of the sign. The birth of Him is a sign—something extraordinary, a miracle, and therefore the promise of comfort begins with the prophetic word, "Behold." We will not enter into fuller discussion of the seventh chapter of Isaiah, nor answer the arguments which are brought against the Hebrew word used here for virgin; all this would be of little value and profit to most of our readers.* Some have seen a difficulty that the child was to be named Emmanuel, and instead of this name, He is named Jesus. The Jew often comes with this question. We point out to him that this apparent contradiction is really a proof of the inspiration. How easy it would have been for Matthew to have all fit in so that every word would be in

*"That the word *almoh,* in Isaiah denotes an *untouched virgin,* sufficiently appears from the sense of the passage Isa. vii:14. King Ahaz was afraid lest the enemies that were now upon him might destroy Jerusalem and utterly consume the house of David. The Lord meets this fear by a sign and most remarkable promise, namely, 'that sooner should a pure virgin bring forth a child than the family of David perish.' And the promise yields a double comfort: namely, of Christ hereafter to be born of a virgin; and of their security from the imminent danger of the city and house of David. So that, although that prophecy, of a virgin's bringing forth a son, should not be fulfilled till many hundreds of years after, yet, at that present time, when the prophecy was made, Ahaz had a certain and notable sign, that the house of David should be safe and secure from the danger that hung over it. As much as if the prophet had said: 'Be not so troubled O Ahaz, does it not seem an impossible thing to thee, that never will happen, that a pure virgin become a mother? But I tell thee such a virgin shall bring forth a son, before the house of David perish.'"—*Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae by Lightfoot.*

harmony with the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit guided his hand in writing. The prophecy in the Old Testament says, "And call His name Immanuel." Here it says, "They shall call his name." In the first chapter of Matthew we read that Joseph called the child's name Jesus, but in Luke we read that Mary calls His name Jesus. The name Emmanuel, God with us, is only given in Matthew. He is Emmanuel, and as such Jehovah the Saviour, so that in reality both names have the same meaning. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we have contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only begotten with his Father) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). He is the exalted One over all.

Joseph was obedient to the word of the Lord as it had come to him through the angel. That Mary had other children is clearly seen from the sixty-ninth Psalm, verses 7 and 8, where it speaks of His suffering: "Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame has covered my face. I am become a stranger to my brethren, even an alien to the children of my mother."

CHAPTER II.

The second chapter in Matthew relates events which are nowhere else recorded in the Gospels. For this reason, and this is the only reason, the authenticity of the chapter has been doubted more than once. All that which the second chapter contains belongs properly into the Jewish, dispensational Gospel, and would indeed be entirely out of place in the other three Gospels, therefore the Holy Spirit has seen fit to put it only in the first Gospel. The chapter contains the story of the coming of the Magi or wise men to Jerusalem in search of the King of the Jews, to worship Him, and to bring Him the gifts they had brought from afar; the wrath of Herod the king, and the flight of the child into Egypt, the slaughter of the children in Bethlehem, the return from Egypt, and the dwelling of the Lord in Nazareth as the rejected One. All these events are foretold in the Old Testament, to which we are referred and where we learn the meaning of them. The chapter is an intensely interesting one, full of important teachings. It gives us in a nutshell the story of the entire Gospel. The true King is not known in Jerusalem, the City of a great King; in His own royal residence, His people do not know He has come. Strangers from distant lands seek Him and are desirous to know and to worship Him. Still worse, the ecclesiastical authorities, the chief priests and the scribes,

are indifferent, and the civil ruler is filled with hatred against Him and seeks His life, and later both combined to kill Him. Thus in one of the shortest chapters and narratives the trend of the whole Gospel is given. But it is reaching still farther. The whole history of the kingdom of the heavens in its hidden form is here outlined, and the character of the entire new dispensation is manifested.

"Now Jesus having been born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold Magi from the East arrived in Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that hath been born, King of the Jews, for we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him?" (verses 1, 2.)

The first question would be to ascertain the time when these wise men came to Jerusalem. It is generally believed that it was immediately after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. The old masters have taken most of the subjects for their paintings from biblical history, but many of these productions, if not all, are unscriptural and misleading. Thus the birth of the Saviour has been put on canvas, so familiar to our readers, a stable, a manger, Mary and Joseph, domestic animals, a star shining over the building, shepherds with their staffs on the one hand and on the other three gaudily attired persons on their knees, glittering crowns on their heads, and in the extended hands the gift upon which the eyes of the babe rest. Such a picture of course is incorrect. The authorized version, too, has helped such a wrong conception along by having it translated, "But when Jesus was born." The correct reading is, But Jesus having been born, that is some time after and *not immediately* after.

Other evidences in the chapter show that the child must have been about a year old when the visit of the wise men occurred. They had seen His star, announcing to them in their far away homes that the expected king had been born. They had to travel over a large territory, and the journey must have taken many months, and then there is nothing to show that they started at once. In the eleventh verse we read, "And when they had come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshipped Him." In Luke it says, "And she brought forth her first born Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." In Matthew it is a house where the child is found, in Luke there was no room in the inn. Perhaps the most important evidence is in the sixteenth verse. Herod had privately called the wise men and inquired of them exactly the time that the star appeared. Their answer is not given, but from the sixteenth verse we may conclude that Herod had received a very definite answer by which he knew that the child could not be over two years old.

The second question would be about these strange visitors, who came to do homage before the King. Who were they? How many of them came? They are called in the Greek, Magi from the East. Magi is the name by which in olden times a large class of people, who were occupied with occult things, were known. These were the astrologers, interpreters of dreams and omens, medical men, necromancers, etc. Among the Persians and Medes they formed a special

class of priests, and were chiefly occupied with foretelling events from the stars, and preparations of medicines for bodily ills. From Magi has come the more modern word magic; in an evil sense, sorcerer. Daniel was chief over such a class of wise men. "And the king made Daniel to be chief governor over all the wise men of Babylon" (Daniel ii:48). These wise men of the East were not all impostors. Many of them were earnest seekers after the truth, and students of natural forces. They did not have the true light. What a significant fact it is that now in the beginning of the twentieth century, in the midst of so-called Christian nations, soothsayers, readers of "human destiny" through the stars, those who claim to ask the dead, others having familiar spirits, are practicing their deceptions, wickedness and abominations, and are advertising their evil things openly, and find among these so-called "Christians" thousands and thousands to consult them. It cannot be otherwise. The true Light rejected, the truth not believed, strong delusions and utter darkness follow (2 Thess. ii). The Magi here were unquestionably earnest seekers after truth. There is nothing to show how many came thus to Jerusalem. That three came and that these three were kings is incorrect. We would rather think that a larger number made their appearance in the city, followed perhaps by a large train of attendants. Their appearance in number was striking enough to startle Jerusalem, and to bring trouble into the heart of its wicked king.

They had seen "His star," the star of the born King of the Jews. There has been much speculating about the star,

likewise. Many think that the star was a constellation of Jupiter and Saturn. The great astronomer, Kepler, issued in 1606 a book in which he attempted to show the year of the birth of our Lord by such a constellation. In 1463 the great Jewish teacher, Abarbanel, concluded from a similar constellation which happened then that the coming of the Messiah must be near. But it does not say stars, but it is star, and that His star. It is also incorrect to think that the star guided the Magi from the East across an immense stretch of country and brought them at last to Jerusalem. The star they had seen in the East went before them only after they had departed from Jerusalem. It says then, "When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." This shows that for a time they did not see the star. Perhaps in their ancient traditions there was something left of Balaam's prophecy (Numbers xxiii and xxiv). Might they not have had fragments of Daniel's prophecies? It is a well known fact that throughout the East there was at that time a universal expectancy of the coming of a King, and Jerusalem was connected with this King. A similar expectancy is even now noticeable among Oriental nations. A marvelous light was seen by these men. It burst forth in a brilliant brightness, as once more in the near future the heavens will be lit up by the sign of the Son of man, returning in power and glory. With that strange light in the heavens, a brilliant star, the intelligence was conveyed to them that the King, the One who is the desire of all nations (Hag. ii:3) was born. And that light was sufficient for these seekers to make them set out with their gifts, to undertake

the long and dangerous journey to find the King and bow before His royal person.

What a day it was when they arrived at last in Jerusalem, not guided there by the star, but by the knowledge that in Jerusalem the King was to reign, and where they expected to find Him! But what did they find? Jerusalem under the regime of an Edomite. Herod upon the throne and his heart filled with Edomite hatred. No question that these evil rulers, including this one, are types of the final usurper, the Antichrist, whom the Lord will find in possession of the city when He comes the second time, and whom He will destroy with the breath of His mouth and the brightness of His coming. "Where is He that hath been born King of the Jews?" Where is He? In vain they go after their long journey through the streets of Jerusalem asking the question; there is no answer. The great city with its magnificent religious institutions, its wonderful Herodian temple, then still in process of erection, its aristocratic priesthood and benevolent institutions, had no knowledge of that King; nay, they did not desire that King to come, they were self-satisfied. This foreshadows the whole story of the rejection of the King, the Lord from heaven, that there was not alone no room for Him in the inn, but there was likewise no room for Him among His own; they received Him not. Herod, the king, was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. He feared for his throne, which was not his. Jerusalem knew what Herod's fear meant—rebellion, bloodshed, and suffering.

How true this is still, and how truly it describes the en-

tire dispensation in which we live! Jerusalem knows not the King, has rejected Him who is their Messiah, and ever since, Jerusalem and Israel's sad history of blood and tears has begun and will surely not end till the false king is dethroned and Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, is crowned as Lord of all.

And these men from the East were not Jews, they were not Israelites, but *Gentiles.* For months, while Jerusalem is not acquainted with the fact of the birth of the long promised One, they had knowledge that He had come. Gentiles were first to acknowledge and to worship Him. The first became last and the last became first. By their fall salvation has come to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy. He, the Saviour, is first, a light for the "unveiling of the Gentiles, but in the end, too, the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke ii:32). Still it is to be seen here likewise that not all the Gentiles came to worship Him, only a small number, and so throughout this dispensation the promise is not that the nations will walk in His light and worship Him, but only a people is called out from the nations for His name. We will see later in the exposition of this chapter that these Gentiles who came to Jerusalem are typical of all the nations going up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts.

But in Jerusalem there was not only a king who was the enemy of the right heir to David's throne, but there were the religious leaders of the people, the Pharisees, the scribes, the priests and the chief priests. The learned doctors of the law, the students of prophecy, the orthodox; had they no

knowledge of Him of whom Moses and the Prophets spoke? Surely if they hear He has come they will run to meet Him and welcome Him! Far from it; they were ignorant, likewise, and all indifferent to the startling news which had come to Jerusalem from such an extraordinary source.

"And when Herod the king heard it he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and having gathered together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea; for it is written through the prophet, And thou Bethlehem in the land of Juda, art in no wise least among the governors of Juda; for out of thee shall come forth a leader who shall be a shepherd to my people Israel."

By order of the king they were called together, not in a special session of the Sanhedrim, but in a larger gathering, all the chief priests and scribes are commanded to show themselves and to produce the scrolls of the law, the prophets and the writings. And now Herod puts his question, Where is Messiah to be born? The answer comes at once from the prophecies of Micah in the beginning of the fifth chapter, "Bethlehem in Juda." There was no dissenting voice. They were all orthodox and had a perfect knowledge of the scriptures, but it was head knowledge, and their consciences were not touched by it. The quotation itself differs from the original Hebrew and from the Septuagint. They used undoubtedly the text from a Chaldee paraphrase. The meeting is dismissed and all goes on in its usual way. Nothing is said that these priests and scribes were awakened and

joined the seeking strangers to find Him, who is their Messiah. Sad was their state. Knowledge sufficient, but no interest in Him, no love for Him, the living Word. Their hearts were not filled with joy, and perhaps in their indifference the incident was soon forgotten, till one day the slaughter of the children in Bethlehem reminded them once more of what had happened. It is the first time we meet these chief priests and scribes in the Gospel; they will soon stand before us in all their religiousness in another character. Indifferent they were once, and soon we shall see them in their hatred, wickedness, and at last, with a perfect knowledge of the person who is in their midst, they deliver Him into the hands of the Gentiles.

And is this not true in Christendom at this present time? How much there is of religiousness, rituals, ceremonies and creeds of men, but with all this it is nothing but profession outwardly, the heart cares not for Him and has no interest in Him. The indifference of our times in the midst of Christendom is appalling. There is no interest in the coming again of our Lord as there was no interest in the religious leaders of the people at His first coming. Indifference ends with this age also in opposition and apostasy, followed by judgment. Perhaps for the first time had these wise men from the East heard the Word of God. The flash of light, the brilliant star, that supernatural sign, was sufficient to start them on their way. The light they had they followed, and soon there is added to it. The Word of God they heard perhaps not at all from any of the scribes and chief priests. These strangers were despised by them and considered as

dogs, in spite of the prophetic scriptures which speak of the salvation of the Gentiles. The presence of them in Jerusalem should have taught them the fulfillment of prophecy. No, not the scribes and chief priests acquaint the wise men with the Word, but wicked King Herod, with his wicked thoughts and intentions, transmits it to them. "Then Herod, having privately called the Magi, inquired of them exactly the time that the star appeared; and sending them to Bethlehem he said, Go and search out exactly about the child and when ye have found Him bring me back word, that I may come and worship Him also." They are obedient to the word spoken; though it came from Herod's lips, it was nevertheless the truth. Jerusalem is left behind, and their faces are set towards Bethlehem. "When they had heard the king they departed; and lo, the star they had seen in the East went before them until it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

The question has been raised, Where did they find the child? In Luke we read, "And when they had performed all these things according to the law of the Lord, they returned unto Galilee, their own city Nazareth" (Luke ii:39). Now if the wise men came about a year later, did they find the child in Bethlehem or were they guided all the way up to Nazareth? We think they were guided by the star to Bethlehem in fulfillment of the word they had heard. Bethlehem is in a southern direction from Jerusalem and Nazareth directly north. They were put without question on the right road by Herod, when the star appeared again.

But if the parents were in Bethlehem a year later with the child, why did they go there? The Gospel of Luke gives the answer. "Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast" (Luke ii:41, 42). This brings out that they were a year after again in Jerusalem for the feast, and were therefore not in Nazareth. Bethlehem was truly their city, and the very short journey was made there from Jerusalem, where the wise men now found the young child with Mary His mother.

"And having come into the house they saw the little child with Mary, his mother, and falling down did Him homage. And having opened their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh." With exceeding great joy they had welcomed the reappearing of the star; it came and stood over the place where the child was. They enter into the house and find the little child and Mary, his mother. Even the order of words teaches us something. It is not Mary, his mother, and the little child, but the one who is God manifested in the flesh stands first, and Joseph is not at all mentioned. What a rebuke to the corrupt systems in Christendom where Mary and Joseph occupy a prominent place and are worshipped. The wise men worshipped Him, there was no adoration for Mary, while Joseph was completely ignored. All the worship and bowing of knee is for Him of whom it is written that at His name every knee should bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal beings, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to God

the Father's glory (Phil. ii:10). The outcome of their long and tedious journey, of their searching and seeking Him who is the King, was worship. A little light was followed, and soon the increase came. The Word of God showed them the way, and there was a second outburst of light from the star which brought them to the right place. What else could they do then but do homage to Him and to adore Him? Their first business was worship. It should be so with every true believer. We often hear it said, "saved to serve." This is not strictly true. We are saved by grace to worship and adore our God and Father and His Son, our Saviour and Lord. Service comes in, too, but only after worship. Where grace is rightly understood there will be a great deal of worship and praise, followed by true service, but where there is a dim conception of what God has done for us, what He has made us in His Son, and where that blessed and comforting doctrine, the assurance of salvation, is not known, there will be much service or attempted service, with much unrest, but little worship, or none at all. May our readers understand that worship stands first and is the first thing. The Father seeks worshippers (John iv:23). We are saved by grace to be worshippers of Him. All our joy and peace as believers, as well as fruitbearing, comes from being at His feet and doing homage to Him.

How long the worship of the wise men lasted we do not know, nor how long they tarried. After their worship they opened their treasures and offered to Him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh. This was their service, the offering of gifts.

Prophetically, this homage of the wise men, and the gifts they brought, is of much importance. It was, of course, and still is a custom of the Orient to appear before a person of royal descent with many presents, but here we have more than a simple custom. Without knowing it, nor knowing the significance of what they did, their hands, in selecting the gifts, were divinely guided. As King they had sought Him, as such they worshipped Him, and now the presents are in full harmony with the character of the King. The gold speaks of His divine and kingly glory, the frankincense of the fragrance of His life, as Son of God in power, according to the spirit of holiness, and myrrh, the balsamic juice of Arabian myrtle, which is used for burial, speaks of His death, that this King is to lay down His life. What lessons there come even from the gifts the wise men spread before our Lord.

Quite often we are told that this is in fulfillment of Isaiah lx:6. However, in looking at this passage, we discover that the wise men could not be spoken of there, nor that they fulfilled that prophecy. We read in Isaiah: "They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praises of the Lord." We notice at once that Isaiah does not say anything at all about myrrh. Why, then, is there no myrrh in Isaiah, and why is there a mention made of myrrh by Matthew? The passage in Isaiah refers to the coming of the Gentiles at the time when the rejected King has come again in power and in glory, and is King of kings; hence there is no need of myrrh. The whole scope of Isaiah lx brings this out. "For behold, darkness

shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the nations (yet to come during the tribulation), but the Lord shall arise upon thee (Israel) and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." If we read through this chapter we find multitudes coming, and they seek not a small humble house like the wise men did, but they seek the house of glory, and there they meet the King of Glory in His beauty, and spread before Him gold and frankincense, shouting aloud His praises and the glory of His name. What a glorious chapter this is, and, oh, the joy which fills us as believers in the anticipation when all this shall be so. May it soon be when violence shall no more be heard in the land, desolation nor destruction within thy borders; but thy walls shall be called salvation and thy gates praise. We would say, then, that it is incorrect to state that the wise men came in fulfillment of Isaiah lx:6; they were but faint types of what shall take place after the Glory, when no more bloodthirsty Herod will be upon the throne, and Jerusalem and not Bethlehem will be the city to which the Gentiles journey, the city of a great King.

"And being divinely instructed in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." This is all the Word has to say about the departure of these strangers. After their worship and offering of gifts, divine guidance instructs them. It is guidance, likewise, we have as believers, but it is a guidance through the Spirit in the Word.

"Now they having departed, behold an angel of the Lord

appeared in a dream to Joseph, saying, Arise, take to thee the little child and His mother, and flee into Egypt, and be there until I shall tell thee; for Herod will seek the little child to destroy it. And having arisen, he took to him the little child and His mother by night, and departed into Egypt, and he was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord, through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son" (verses 13-15).

Thus the narrative continues. The child is the only prominent figure in it. There is a spurious gospel, called the Gospel of the Infancy of our Lord,* in which the flight to Egypt is adorned with many miracles. We mention some of them. Idols broke to pieces wherever the child came; the three-year-old child of an Egyptian priest who was possessed by demons put a swaddling cloth of the child upon his head, and the demon fled; a woman possessed by a demon was healed by looking upon Mary; robbers fled in terror before the child; all manner of diseases were healed, including leprosy, etc. The whole book shows that it is a counterfeit, gotten up by some one who favored the worship of Mary and the child. How simple the story is here in Matthew. The child is dependent upon Joseph, who is now mentioned, and in poverty, under great danger, at night, they had to flee. God could have transported His Son by a miracle, but the Son of God had become man, and now it was for Him to enter into all. He has to go the long and weary road. The cause of the flight was Herod, who under

*Evangelium Infantiæ.

the power of Satan sought the life of the child. He shows himself here as the murderer from the beginning. Satan is that still, the great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, ready to devour the man-child (Rev. xii). The place of refuge is Egypt. There He is to go, to be called back after a while in fulfillment of the prophetic Word, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son."

This prophecy is found in Hosea xi:1. "When Israel was a child then I loved Him, and called My Son out of Egypt." This was spoken about 700 years before and is about Israel, but here we learn through the Holy Spirit its true and full meaning. Jews, infidels and higher critics have stumbled at this, but how simple even this is, no difficulty, as commentaries sometimes say. Israel is, according to Exodus iv:22, God's first born Son, and in Jeremiah xxxi:9 we read, "I am a father to Israel and Ephraim is my first born." Christ and Israel are closely identified in the prophetic Word. Thus the Messiah, our Lord, is called in Isaiah the servant of the Lord, and Israel is spoken of there, too, as the servant of the Lord, that is Israel's Messiah is the servant of the Lord through whose obedient suffering and death Israel becomes at last in the earth the righteous servant of Jehovah. Israel is God's first born, but the Lord Jesus Christ is not alone the only begotten of the Father, but also the first born from the dead. In resurrection He will be the first born among many brethren, which is the Church, His body. But through Him and in Him alone, Israel, God's earthly people, His first born will become that for which God has called them according to His merciful purposes. Israel's history beginning

with Egypt, has been a history of sin, disobedience, apostasy and shame. Therefore the true One had to come, the true servant of the Lord in obedience—obedience unto death. He had to go through the history of His people. This is the reason why He had to go down to Egypt, the house of bondage. Of course, there was no bondage for Him. And when He is called out of Egypt, He comes to pass through the wilderness to be tested and tried, going the long journey through all in the spirit of holiness without sin, far different from that which Israel was. How blessedly He became identified with all.

In the following three verses we read of the satanic rage of Herod when he finds that the wise men did not return and all the boys in Bethlehem and in all its borders from two years and under were slain. "Then it was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying: A voice has been heard in Rama, weeping and great lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." The wicked deed is but a beginning of the sorrows of Israel on account of the rejection of the King. His blood indeed has been upon them and their children, the worst is still to come in the time of Jacob's trouble when the false Messiah will be like Herod, shedding their blood. The quotation is from Jeremiah xxxi:15. It is an application here of that prophecy. Rachel was buried near Bethlehem. Dying there she called the son who was born to her Ben-oni, which means the son of my sorrow, but his father Jacob soon changed his name, and the son of sorrow becomes Benjamin, which means, the

son of the right hand. Rachel is seen here as weeping and lamenting over the slaughtered children, the children of Bethlehem. They were no more, and would not be comforted. What greater crying and lamentation there shall be in the future in the land! In Jeremiah, in the context, we read: "Thus saith the Lord, refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears—they shall come again from the land of the enemy." The child had escaped the murderous onslaught of Satan through Herod, but He comes back to lay down His life, that through death He might annul him who has the might of death, that is, the devil; and might set free all those who through fear of death through the whole of their life were subject to bondage (Hebrews ii.). The return of the child, how long they stayed in Egypt is not said, is next described in our chapter and needs no further comment. The child is kept as He now keeps the feet of His saints, His church, and hades' gates shall not prevail against it.

There is one more prophecy which is to be mentioned. "And having been divinely instructed in a dream, he went away in the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a town called Nazareth; so that it should be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene" (verses 22, 23). It is next to the questions from the first chapter in Matthew, the most important the inquiring Jew brings in reading the New Testament: "Where is it written, or in what prophet is it written, that Messiah should be called a Nazarene?" It does not say here that it is written by one prophet, but by the prophets. Therefore all the

prophets have spoken of Him as being a Nazarene. A Nazarene is an inhabitant of Nazareth. That city is in Galilee, which is called the Galilee of the Gentiles, because so many Gentiles lived there. The Pharisees and scribes in Jerusalem hated and despised Galilee, and especially was Nazareth despised. The inhabitants were called *Am-horatzim*, that is ignorant men. Even the Galileans looked down upon the town and despised everybody who lived there. The ruin and corruption was there the greatest. Therefore we read in another Gospel: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" To that mean, despised place the Son of God is to go, there He, who was rich in all eternity, found His abode. Now, this is spoken by all the prophets, that the Messiah, the Saviour, was to be rejected by men. The rejection began with the very start, and there in the little town He is to spend thirty years of His life, and when He comes forth and begins His ministry in Galilee, it is only to be rejected again, ending at last in Jerusalem outside of the camp. How true, He was despised and rejected of men. And our place is with Him now in rejection, outside of the camp, to bear His reproach. May this be our place, and like Him, the leader and completer of the faith, may we, for the joy set before us, endure the cross and despise the shame.

CHAPTER III.

The third chapter relates the ministry of the herald of the King, who announces that the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh, and the presence of the King Himself, who is to come after him; the baptism of the King, who comes from Galilee to the Jordan to John, and the events connected with it, are given in the second half of the chapter.

"Now in those days comes John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh. For this is He, who has been spoken of through Esaias the prophet saying, A voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. And John himself had his garments of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his nourishment was locusts and wild honey" (verses 1-4).

The forerunner is John the Baptist, a typical Old Testament person, of whom the Lord says later in the Gospel, "Yea, I say to you, and more than a prophet, this is he of whom it is written, Behold I send My messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee. Verily I say to you, that there is not arisen among the born of women a greater than John the Baptist, but he who is a little one in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he" (chapter xi:9-12). In the same discourse the Lord says, in vindi-

cation of John, who was then in prison: "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias who is to come." In the first chapter of Luke the angel announces his birth and says: "For he shall be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine or strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the sons of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn hearts of fathers to children, and disobedient ones to the thoughts of just men, to make ready for the Lord a prepared people" (Luke 1:15-17). In these words, given through the Holy Spirit, the Lord Himself and an angel of the Lord, we have the three prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the forerunner quoted. These are: Isaiah xl:3-5; Malachi iii:1; iv:5, 6. That he was sent in fulfillment of these prophecies is therefore unquestionable. To this comes the manner of his dress and the nourishment. It reminds us of the great prophet Elias, the Tishbite. "He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins" (2 Kings i:8).

John knew His personality and His mission, for he said: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias" (John i:23). But when asked, Art thou Elias? he answered, I am not. The Jews expected Elijah, as the orthodox Jews expect him still, as the forerunner of King Messiah. At every passover ceremony a cup is reserved for the prophet Elijah, and at the circumcision of the child a chair is placed for that person, and many are the prayers which are said, that God may send soon the prophet Elijah, for his

presence would indicate to them the nearness of the King. The character and preaching of Elijah were clearly reproduced in John. He was the Elias for his day. If they had received it, he would have been Elias. In this sense, Matthew xvii:12, is to be understood: "Elias cometh and restoreth all things; But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they did not recognize him, but did unto him whatever they would." He was rejected, and his rejection foretold how things would go, that the King Himself would be rejected. We would only mention that before the King comes again there will be once more a forerunner. Once more the message will be heard, The kingdom of the heavens draweth nigh. It will be the Gospel of the Kingdom preached by the remnant during the great tribulation All we have in Malachi iv:5, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord," will then be fulfilled. In Revelation xiii one of the two witnesses is, without question, one like Elijah. It is necessary to state, that no great and miracle-working preacher of repentance, in the spirit of Elijah, is promised to Christendom. We make this remark, because in our days persons stand up and declare that they are forerunners, or one of the witnesses or messengers of the covenant. These poor people err and know not the Scripture, and by their conceited claims work untold harm.

John the Baptist appears in the wilderness. He is not in the temple in the midst of the learned and the great. There was no room for him there. He is outside of the camp, and the people too have to leave Jerusalem and go out to him.

This is once more significant. It shows what the end will be.

His preaching is, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh."

The phrase, kingdom of the heavens, is mentioned thirty-two times in the Gospel of Matthew. Here it is for the first time. The strangest meaning has been put upon this term. Christendom at large is all at sea about the meaning of it. Heaven or the church are the general interpretations which are given. Both are wrong, and because the meaning of this term is so grossly misunderstood, there is no conception whatever of the thoughts and purposes of God. The kingdom of the heavens is an Old Testament term. It is to be in the earth and not in heaven. It is a kingdom in which the heavens rule (Daniel iv:26). The setting up of that kingdom is spoken of in Daniel ii:44, and in the seventh chapter, verse 14. It is in the hands of One who is the Son of Man, Messiah, the Son of David, who is to rule in righteousness. In that kingdom there will be universal peace, and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the deep. His own people, the house of Judah and the house of Israel, will all be regathered into the land, Jerusalem built again and become the great centre of blessing for the nations of the earth. In one word, the kingdom of the heavens is the *literal* fulfilment of all the prophecies and promises contained in the Old Testament, which the Lord gave to the seed of Abraham, and the blessings of the nations of the earth to come after this kingdom is set up. The Church is not known in the Old Testament, nor is it seen in the opening chapters of

Matthew. *This* kingdom, the forerunner declares, now has drawn nigh, it is at hand. The King is in the earth, Emanuel, He whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, and concerning whom it is said, "that of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever." Not alone did John preach this kingdom to its Jewish, earthly form, but the Lord Himself declared that it had drawn nigh, and when the King sent out His disciples He told them to preach, "The kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh," the special Messianic kingdom power was put upon them to heal the sick, to raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons (Matthew x).

But as the forerunner and his testimony is rejected, and the King Himself, the coming of that kingdom of the heavens is postponed. It is not set aside completely, but only postponed, and all the glories of that earthly Messianic Kingdom, which will reach from sea to sea, so minutely pictured in Old Testament prophecy, will yet be established in the earth with Jerusalem as the center, for the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. The kingdom of the heavens is not the church, and the church is not the kingdom. How great the confusion is on this point in all Christian denominations who read the "history of the church" in the establishment and glory of the kingdom predicted by the prophets.

The proper word for John to utter when appearing in the

wilderness was, *repent*. That kingdom which had now drawn nigh was to bring judgment of all that is evil. Judgments upon all unrighteousness are associated with the coming of that kingdom. Every Jew was acquainted with that fact. It is true the earthly glories of the kingdom of the heavens had been announced by every prophet, but equally true is it that the coming judgments were announced, and at all times in past generations of the earthly people of God, the cry, "Return! Repent!" was heard. Now the greatest one of all the prophets has come, and the cry of the Law and the Prophets, Repent, sounds forth once more, so strong and clear as *never* before.

Before we take up the meaning of repentance here and the baptism unto repentance wherewith he baptized, and compare them with repentance and baptism which are connected with the Gospel of Grace, we must call attention to the quotation from Isaiah which follows. The words are taken from that sublime chapter which begins with, Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, the fortieth chapter. In comparing Matthew with Luke we find that the quotation in Luke is complete, in Matthew it is only in part. Luke, or rather the Holy Spirit through him, adds, "Every gorge shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places smooth ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God (Luke iii: 5-7)." One would look to the Gospel of Matthew as the Jewish Gospel, to find such a complete quotation from the Old Testament. Why then, is it not all quoted in Matthew, and why does it stand in Luke? The reason is easily found.

Luke's Gospel is for the Gentiles, to show that salvation is to be indeed offered to all flesh. For this reason the full quotation is perfectly in order in that Gospel, while in Matthew, here in the beginning in its narrower scope, it would be out of order. It is likewise to be remarked that the testimony of John was not only the cry in the wilderness, the loud and continued "Repent!" Such is heard here, and when the kingdom hopes are not realized, we shall see him later sending from the prison to the Lord with his question. But John had a more perfect knowledge, which he imparted to his disciples. The proper place for that testimony is neither Matthew, Mark nor Luke, but the Gospel where the Holy Spirit shows us our Saviour and Lord as the only begotten of the Father, the Gospel of John. There John points to Him and says, Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. "I have seen and borne Him witness that He is the Son of God (John i:29-34)." But clearer still is that wonderful address he delivers to his disciples when they came to him. "And John answered and said, A man can receive nothing unless it be given him out of heaven. Ye, ourselves, bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices in heart because of the voice of the bridegroom; this my joy then is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all. He who has his origin in the earth is of the earth, and speaks as of the earth. He who comes out of heaven is above all, and what He has seen

and what He has heard this He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He that has received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true; for He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives not the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things in His hand. He that believes on the Son has life eternal, and he that is not subject to the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him (John iii:27-36)."

Such a testimony then was given by John, he knew of life through Christ and that the bridegroom is the Son of God.

Repentance is his foremost message to the nation. Let us consider briefly what it means. Repentance as it is found in the Old Testament, is God's request to His earthly people to return unto Him. This is the call of John the Baptist in this third chapter. It is the Gospel of the Kingdom which he preaches. The Gospel of Grace is something different. It was not known then, it could not be fully made known and preached till after the death, the resurrection, ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit. To preach the Gospel of Grace from the words of John the Baptist, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh," would be misleading. Still it is being done throughout Christendom. Not knowing what the kingdom of the heavens is, what the church is, and the differences between the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Grace, there is a constant misapplication of the scriptures and preaching of a repentance which is Jewish. Theological systems, especially Arminianism, have produced a way of salvation, which is surely nothing less, than the new wine in old wineskins. There

is the demand of a repentance, a certain form of penitence, a deep feeling of being lost, grief and despair, turning away from the world and worldly pleasures, seeking the Lord, perhaps for many weary months, then at last, after such a weird experience, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. After this the receiving of what is termed, the witness of the Spirit, a good feeling, by which it is claimed one alone can know that he is saved, a feeling which can be lost, after which the person is once more *unsaved*. That all this is not according to the Gospel of Grace, the teachings of Romans, as well as the other epistles is evident. One who has written on the subject of repentance has done it in such a scriptural and simple way that we desire to quote from his book:*

"What then about repentance? Are faith and the Spirit's work enough? Or is not repentance no less a necessity if men are to be saved? I meet this question boldly and at once by denouncing it as based, not so much on ignorance as on deep seated and systematic error. The repentance which thus obtrudes itself and claims notice in every sermon is not the friend of the Gospel but an enemy. It is like the officious guide, who forces himself upon the traveler only to mislead him. Faith and repentance are not successive stages on the road to life; they are not independent guides to direct the pilgrim's path; they are not separate acts to be successively accomplished by the sinner as a condition of his salvation. But, in different phases of it, they represent the same Godward attitude of the soul, which the truth of God *believed* produces.

* "The Gospel and its Ministry." By Robert Anderson.

"Salvation there cannot be without repentance any more than without faith, but the *soundest and fullest Gospel preaching need not include any mention of the word.* Neither as verb or noun does it occur in the Epistle to the Romans—God's great doctrinal treatise on redemption and righteousness—save in the warnings of the second chapter. And the Gospel of John, pre-eminently the Gospel-book of the Bible—will be searched in vain for a single mention of it. The beloved disciple wrote his Gospel that men might believe and live, and his Epistle followed to confirm believers in the simplicity and certainty of their faith; but yet from end to end of them the word 'repent' or 'repentance' never once occurs. It is to these writings before all others men have turned in every age to find words of peace and life, and yet some who profess to hold them inspired will cavil at a Gospel sermon because repentance is not mentioned in it—a fault, if fault it be, that marks the testimony of the Apostle John and the preaching of our Lord Himself, as recorded by the fourth evangelist. The repentance of the Gospel is to be found in the Nicodemus discourse and in the gracious testimony to the woman at the well; and, I may add, any repentance that limits or jars upon those sacred words is wholly against the truth."

In Acts iii:19 we hear Peter preaching, "Repent." It is here still to the nation connected with a national hope: The restoring of all things of which God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets. After the calling out of people for His name is accomplished, and the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, there will be once more the call heard, "Repent!"

But the call to repentance is associated with baptism—the baptism unto repentance. "Then went out to Him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the country round the Jordan, and were baptized by Him in the Jordan, confessing their sins (verse 5)." Concerning his baptism He said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance." There was then a great stir, and large were the multitudes from the city who came out to hear and to follow the call to repent. Among them were many Pharisees and Sadducees, to whom He said, "Offspring of vipers, who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce, therefore, fruit worthy of repentance. And do not think to say within yourselves. We have Abraham for our Father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. And already the axe is applied to the root of the trees; every tree therefore not producing good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire." "And all the people when they heard it, and the publicans, justified God, having been baptized with John's baptism; but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's counsel with regard to themselves, not being baptized by Him" (Luke vii:29, 30).

The baptism of John shows clearly what repentance means. Jordan is always in the Word the type of death. Thus John baptized in the river of death, which would mean unto death.* The people came, confessed their sins, seeing then their true position, what they were and what they deserved; they went

*Baptism in water was known and practiced among the Jews centuries before John. Proselytes were not only circumcised but also dipped in water.

down into Jordan to be buried in water, thus typifying death. They heard, they believed, they confessed and witnessed to it outwardly. In this way they justified God, as recorded in the above passage from Luke. Christian baptism is, of course, something essentially different. It is not a baptism unto repentance of deserved death, but it is unto Christ's death, who has taken our place and died for us. "Are you ignorant that we, as many as have been baptized unto Christ, have been baptized unto His death? We have been therefore buried with Him by baptism unto death, in order that even as Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi:3-5). Christian baptism is not taught in the third chapter of Matthew. How much confusion has resulted from giving it such a meaning, placing believers into a sad legalism.

Many then were baptized unto repentance by the forerunner. But now for the first time we meet with the two great religious classes and leaders among the Jews, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, who came out to John. These two classes play an important role in the Gospel. The Pharisees* were the strictly religious, orthodox-ritualistic class. They were well versed in the traditions of the elders, and occupied themselves with creating new commandments and strange interpretations of the law. They are the fathers of the talmudical Jews of the present day and typical of

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*The name Pharisee means a Separatist. One who says: "I am holier than thou."

ritualistic Christendom, having the form of godliness and not the power. The Sadducees were the rationalists, the unbelieving class. They were much given to reform. Their offspring to-day are the reformed Jews, who reject the greater part of the Word of God, and in Christendom they are remarkably reproduced in the unevangelical "Isms," though they call themselves "Christian" (as the Sadducees called themselves Jews), who reject portions of the Word, who do not believe in the inspiration of the Bible.

"Offspring of vipers!" thus the Holy Spirit declared through the forerunner their true character. What a strong and cutting word it is, which applies not alone to the Pharises and Sadducees, but to all ritualistic-religiousness and unbelieving criticism. They are the offspring not of God but of vipers. But still they were the proud boasters of being the seed of Abraham and as such entitled to the promised blessing. They believed that they were to be saved from the wrath of God connected with the establishment of the kingdom, and the wrath would fall entirely upon the Gentile nations. One only needs to peruse some of the tracts of the Talmud to find the reflection of their proud, self-righteous belief. When they came, they were far from taking that true position in repentance, in death. And so John demands of them that they are to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. He uncovers their false pretensions, and shows that no natural birth, no religious attainment would deliver them in the day of wrath. This is followed by the announcement of the nearness of the judgment, the axe laid at the root of the trees, ready to fell the mighty trees void of fruit. All this

finds an application in the day in which we live, when the axe is once more laid at the roots to cut off and cast into the fire that which has not brought fruit.*

From the words of condemnation upon the proud, self-righteous Pharisees and Sadducees, the herald of the King now turns to speak, as it became him in humility, of the glorious Person of the King Himself. And what a far-reaching testimony it is we have in the eleventh and twelfth verses! "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that comes after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not fit to bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire; whose winnowing fan is in His hand, and He shall thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and shall gather His wheat into the garner, but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable."

Here we have another passage which is of vital importance. Let us understand in the first place that the words spoken refer to the first and second coming of our Lord. Let this be clearly fixed in our minds, and all will be plain. The promise connected with the first coming is, He shall baptize you with the *Holy Spirit.* The second coming of the Lord will bring the baptism with *Fire,* as it is seen at once in the words which follow, which speak clearly of judgment and fire unquenchable. It may appear strange at the first glance that John says in one breath: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire"—that the Holy Spirit should

*The conditions in nominal Christendom now, immediately before the Second Coming of Christ, are the same as the conditions in professing Judaism at the time of His first coming.

refer to His first coming and the fire to His second appearing, but let us take into consideration that John still belongs to the Old Testament, and he expresses himself in a way as many of the prophets did, who frequently spoke in one clause of the Lord's first and second coming. However, the fifth verse in the first chapter of Acts puts into our hands the key. The Lord said then to His disciples, "John, indeed, baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." That our Lord speaks of what John said in our passage here is evident, yet He does *not* mention baptism with *fire*. If He had added, and with fire, it would clearly prove that the baptism connected with His first coming is a baptism with the Holy Spirit *and* fire. But He leaves out the fire because it stands in connection with His second coming. Thus it is seen in the entire prophetic Word, which speaks of the day of wrath and vengeance as being a day of burning and fire. How could we even undertake to mention but half of the erroneous doctrines which are more or less emanating from this passage wrongly applied? The doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the work of the Holy Spirit, etc., has of late years been made very prominent. Conventions for baptisms, fillings with the Holy Spirit, the enduement of the Spirit for power in service, and many other topics in relation to the doctrine of the Spirit and for a so-called "second blessing" (a term which is nowhere found in the Word) are being held. But how sad it is to see the contortions of the Scriptures as well as the unscriptural, abnormal applications which have been made. A good deal comes from teaching that the believer

is to be baptized not alone with the Spirit but also with fire. It is not enough to have believed, so *they* teach, and be saved by Grace, but there is to be a baptism with fire, a second experience which outshines all others. Hence we find the most extravagant terms which are used in connection with the Holy Spirit, such as Holy Ghost preachers and Holy Ghost fire.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit promised by the Lord took place on the day of Pentecost. By this one Spirit are we all baptized into the one body, which is the Church (1 Cor. xii:13). We are not born again by the baptism of the Spirit, but those who are born again become by it the members of that one body. Every believer who has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ hath the Holy Spirit. He the blessed Paraclete, is abiding in him. It is wrong for a believer to plead or pray for the Holy Spirit to come unto him, and equally unscriptural is it to pray for a baptism with fire, for there is *no such baptism now,* and no believer could pray for the *flaming fire* to fall upon him, for he is delivered from that wrath.

The Lord comes again, and then it will be with a baptism of fire. The wheat will be gathered into the garner, and then the chaff upon the threshing floor swept together, corresponding with the tares in the parables put together in bundles, will be given over to the fire unquenchable.

John unquestionably waited anxiously for the appearing of Him whose advent he had announced. God, who had sent him to baptize with water, had told him that upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on him,

he it is who baptizes with the Spirit (John 1:32-34). At last the moment came. What a moment it was! It terminated the ministry of the forerunner. It was the beginning of the public ministry of the King Himself. He now steps to the front to go that path of obedience marked out for Him, to be presented as King to the nation, to be rejected, and to do that work which no Prophet, no John, no Angel or Archangel could do, but He alone.

"Then comes Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized of him." The Lord, He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire, He who is greater than John, to whom the Baptist bowed in humility and worship, He who is the creator of all things, comes to the preacher of repentance and presents Himself to be baptized. What a scene! John stood amazed. "He forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" In other words, I am the sinner, I need repentance, I deserve to go into that river of death, but Thou art holy—no evil in Thee, nothing worthy of death.

Thus in the very beginning of His public ministry we have the testimony of His holiness. He is the one who alone is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; He knew no sin, who could not sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. When at last the prince of this world came he had nothing in Him. But why then should He, the holy one, this spotless, pure being, present Himself to the preacher of repentance? Why should He go into the river of death and take His place in death? Where there is no sin there need be no confession. Where there is no sin there *can*

be no death. How could He, the King, that holy thing born of the virgin, God manifested in the flesh, ever confess sin when there was no sin? Yet He not only came to be baptized, but He was baptized. The question has had many answers. We said above that His baptism marks the beginning of His public ministry, He enters upon His work, and there can be only one meaning to His baptism, which is in fullest harmony with that work He came to do. Baptism means death and resurrection. He had no sin, but came to be the substitute for sinners, and so He takes in the very beginning their place, the sinner's place in death. He knew His work before. It is not to be understood as if now He had learned for the first time who He is and what His work is. But publicly He declares in presence of men, angels, demons, and in the presence of God that He is here to fulfill all righteousess. "Suffer it now, for it thus becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (verse 13). No confessing or repenting on His part, He was fulfilling all righteousness. As one has said, "He saw His sheep struggling in the dark waters of the river of judgment, the meaning of the Jordan, and He must go in for their rescue. He must become identified with them, taking their place in judgment that they might be made the righteousness of God in Him, bringing in 'the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ towards all and upon all those who believe" (Rom. iii:22). He knew no sin, was made sin for us, and His baptism declares this. The details of His baptism are not given. Then he suffers Him. He placed Himself into the hands of John and went into the waters of Jordan. Later He said, I have a baptism to

be baptized with, and how I am strengthened until it shall have been accomplished! The man of sorrows and acquainted with grief soon reached that place, when He went into the deep waters of suffering and death, when all the billows broke over His head. His baptism was but a type of this.

"And Jesus, having been baptized, went straightway from the water, and lo, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon Him; and behold a voice out of the heavens saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I have found My delight (verses 16 and 17)."

Here we have something which leads us still deeper. It is a glorious manifestation of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son who has gone down comes out to be anointed by the Holy Spirit, and proclaimed as the beloved Son by the Father's voice. He is anointed for the work He had to do. He was begotten by the Holy Spirit, filled with the Spirit, and through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God. John learned now that He was the true One. The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus in the form of a dove. The dove is the type of the Holy Spirit. We are reminded of the dove which flew across the dark waters of judgment, come from the ark, lifted above all judgment, finding no resting place and returned to the ark. And when sent out the second time the dove returns with an olive branch and the third time there was no return to the ark. This speaks of the sending forth of the Holy Spirit in the different dispensations. But here is the One

upon whom the Holy Spirit came to abide. We are reminded of the prophet whose book and experience is a type of Christ, Jonah the son of Amittai, translated, the Dove, the Son of Truth. The dove is, as one of the sacrificial birds, a type of Christ. And through Him and in Him we have the Holy Spirit as the abiding one, the Paraclete. He was poured out after His death and resurrection.

The heavens were opened *unto Him.* This is a significant word which is often overlooked. For Him alone the heavens are open. No one has gone up into heaven save He who came down out of heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven (John iii:13). He came out of heaven. The heavens were opened unto Him and He has passed through the heavens. In Him the heavens are opened for us, and He has taken us all, who believe, into heaven, bringing many sons to glory. And now a voice is heard. It is not the voice of an Angel, but the voice of the Father. Wonderful fact, that now after He, who is eternally the Son of God, subsisting in the form of God, and who became Son of God incarnate, after He has thus taken the place in death for sinners, that the Father speaks to approve of Him. He had seen Him, His beloved Son, go down to fulfill all righteousness, and now He vindicates Him by declaring, This is My beloved Son in whom I have found My delight. This corresponds to the word in the second Psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee. The Lord Jesus Christ is eternally the Son of God, but here in both passages we see Him as the Son of God incarnate. Never could it be said of Him as the Only begotten of the Father, This day

have I begotten Thee. Equally true is it that eternally the Father's delight has been in the Son. But Romans i:3 speaks of Him as *His* Son, come of David's seed according to flesh, marked out as Son of God in power, according to the spirit of holiness by *resurrection of the dead* Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the first begotten, and in Acts xiii we have the true application of that word, Thou art My Son—"having raised up Jesus;" as it is also written in the second Psalm, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee" —it is then in resurrection, by the resurrection from the dead that He is marked out Son of God.

And thus we see it here. In going down into Jordan He typifies His own death, but His coming up straightway is the type of resurrection, and in this coming up the Father's voice is heard declaring Him the well beloved. "Therefore doth My Father love Me—because I lay down My life that I might take it again". Well pleasing to the Father He was, and how else could it be with the Sinless One, who was made like unto His brethren. It is then seen from the baptism of our Lord that He is the Lamb of God for the sacrifice, even as John recognized it in pointing to Him, Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. He is perfectly pleasing to the Father, and by the Holy Spirit who came upon Him He is consecrated to the work before Him. It is also clear from these meditations that the baptism of the Lord is typical of His death and resurrection.

And now, after all this took place and He entered thus upon His official work—*then* Jesus was carried up into the

wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted of the devil (chap. iv:1).

Many other teachings could be given in connection with the third chapter in which we tarried longer than we expected. How rich, how unfathomable is God's Word! Divine from beginning to end, a living Word, energetic, and sharper than any two-edged sword. May we praise our God for His written Word, and for Him who is the living Word, who took our place in death, delivered for our offences, but raised from the dead on account of our justification. All honor and praise and glory to Him who loveth us and has washed us, to Him the Son who has made us sons, and in whom we hear the Father's loving voice. "And because ye are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father" (Gal. iv:6).

CHAPTER IV.

The first part of this chapter gives us the history of the temptation of the King. This is a most important topic, many-sided in its applications; large volumes have been written on it without exhausting it. We will therefore have to confine ourselves to the bringing out of some of the most important teachings, without attempting to go into many of the precious details and applications to the believer.

The baptism marked, as we saw in the last chapter, our Lord's entrance upon His official work. He is declared as the Son of God by His Father, and anointed with the Holy Spirit; and the third act is that He, who is declared the Son of God, anointed with the Spirit, come to do the eternal will of God, to suffer and to die, is to be tempted by the devil. "*Then* was Jesus carried up into the wilderness by the Spirit" (verse 1). It came immediately after he had come out of the waters. There was no interval between. This is seen from the Gospel of Mark. "And *immediately* the Spirit drives Him out into the wilderness" (Mark 1:12). It was the first thing to be done in fulfilling the Scriptures. He was *carried* into the wilderness, and in Mark it is stronger still: *driven there*. Some have said, as if our Lord was anxious to meet the enemy, desirous of coming face to face with that old serpent, the devil, who has the power of death, and whom to annul He had come. But that cannot be. If

it had been our Lord Himself who hastens impatiently to meet the adversary, He would have been the tempter of the Evil one. Not His Spirit drove Him, but the Spirit carried Him into the wilderness. It was the Holy Spirit who took Him to meet the enemy. The Spirit, who had come upon Him and rested on Him—He impels Him. The Christ, the second man and last Adam, meets the devil in another place, far different from the garden where Adam and Eve had their abode. What a contrast! Even the earth, though good and perfect it was, did not seem to be a good enough place for Adam and Eve. So the Lord planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food (Gen. ii:8, 9). What a beautiful spot that garden must have been! Surrounded by all this, with all wants supplied, the enemy came to tempt, and with it came the failure. But here is the second Man, and He is not brought into a garden, but He is driven into the wilderness—"the great and terrible wilderness wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions, and thirsty ground where was no water" (Deut. viii :15). He was there in the wilderness with the wild beasts (Mark i:13). In that terrible wilderness, surrounded by serpents, scorpions, adders and the wild beasts, the Messiah, the King, stands to meet the foe. And having fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He hungered; His blessed body, a body of flesh and blood, felt hunger and thirst. How reduced in His outward appearing He must have been, the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief!

We would call attention to the fact, that the tempter did not come to Him for forty days, as it is often said in misquoting scripture, but *afterward,* when, having fasted, he came to Him.

And the *tempter* came to Him. It is the adversary, the accuser of the brethren, that old serpent, the devil. He is as truly a person as God and our Lord is a person. How terrible it is that in the very midst of Christendom the personality of the devil is denied. If there is no personal devil there is no need of a personal Saviour. The "new" theology, whose father the devil is himself, has no use for a belief in the personal devil. That person is simply put down as an invention of the dark middle ages, and spoken of as an old relic, which still survives in the minds of some old fogies. It is no longer a person with most of these modern theologians, but an evil principle. The Lord's temptations, according to this new interpretation, were only imaginations, they were the workings of the mind, a kind of weakness which was produced by the prolonged fastings. If we ask these men who got rid of the personal devil, how they can explain the belief of the Jews in a personal devil and in the demons, as well as the demoniacal possessions in the days of our Lord? they answer us and say, The Jews brought this superstition from the Babylonian captivity. But if we ask these "critics" Why, then did the Lord and His apostles not correct so grave an error? they give us an answer which dishonors our Lord. The denial of the existence of a personal devil, as it is becoming almost universal in Christendom, is surely the masterpiece of all the dreadful work

Satan has done, and we can well imagine what fiendish joy he must have in seeing his existence denied, and by and by he will have the world in security ensnared by his delusions. Then, when he himself and with him his demons are cast out of heaven into the earth, the earth will know that there is a personal devil, for he comes on the earth and brings with it that which is his work, the great tribulation. His wrath will be great for a short time (Rev. xii). What a terrible awakening that will be for all those who denied the existence of that Evil one! The dreadful chain in denying the personality of the devil is: *No devil, no sin, no judgment, no wrath, no atonement, no Saviour, and at last no God.*

We do not know in what form of a person the devil appeared to our Lord. There is a scripture which tells us of a form he took that is in Genesis the third chapter. The serpent must have been perhaps the most attractive of all the creatures and not as the serpent is now, creeping upon its belly, having become this by the curse. In the New Testament we read that he goes about as a roaring lion and that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. Perhaps in that subtle form he came to meet Him, whom he knew to be the eternal Word made flesh.

There is but one more word to be considered before we turn to the temptations themselves and take them up in their order. It is the word *tempt.* It is here where much misunderstanding comes in. The word tempt has different meanings. One of them is inciting or enticing to evil, to seduce. This always presupposes evil present in some form, the

possibility that the person can be enticed and incited to evil, that in the person there is something which responds or may respond to the evil placed before the soul. This could *never* be the case with our Lord. There was no sin, no evil in Him. He is *absolutely* holy. Therefore the word tempt in this form can *never* apply to Him. But the word tempt means also, put to test. To test means to bring to trial and examination; compare with a standard; in this sense *only* it can refer to our Lord. He was tempted means, He was tested as to His ability to do that for which He had come. The test or tempting is to bring out that He is the pure gold, the Holy One, the spotless One, the One who alone can do the work for which He appeared, to put away sin by sacrificing Himself. Therefore the Spirit led Him up into the wilderness. The word tempting or testing has also a special significance in connection with Israel. The Lord, as Messiah and King, is closely identified with His people. He goes through their history, so to speak, and fulfills all, and at last He died for that nation. Israel was tested or proved, and failed. "There He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them." The Septuagint translates the Hebrew "Nissohu" with a Greek word which is used in the fourth chapter of Matthew. The Hebrew means testing, to find out if it is really so by a test. The same word is used in Deuteronomy the eighth chapter. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God has led thee these *forty* years in the wilderness that He might humble thee, to prove (test) thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou

wouldest keep His commandments or no" (Deut. viii :2). The Lord, the true Israel then is tested and He does not fail.

And now we come to the temptations themselves. The devil begins to address Him, who has come to crush his head. It would be very interesting to make a careful study of the words of Satan we have in the Word of God. They are contained in Genesis the third chapter, the first chapter of Job, and here in the Gospel. The words he speaks in these passages establish him in his true character, the liar and murderer from beginning, the accuser. He places before our Lord three temptations, the test is threefold.

I. "And the tempter coming up to Him said, *If* thou be Son of God, speak that these stones may become bread."

The answer from the Lord: "But He answering said, It is written man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which goes out through Gods mouth" (Deut. viii:3).

II. Then the devil takes Him to the holy city and sets Him upon the edge of the temple, and says to Him, *If* Thou be Son of God cast Thyself down; for it is written, He shall give charge to His angels concerning Thee, and on their hands shall they bear Thee, lest in any wise Thou strike Thy foot against a stone" (Psalms xci).

The answer: "Jesus said to him. It is again written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Deut. vi :16).

III. "Again the devil takes Him to a very high mountain, and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and says to Him, All these things will I give Thee, *if,* falling down, thou wilt do me homage. Then Jesus says to

him, Get thee away, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt do homage to the Lord thy God, and Him alone shalt thou serve" (Deut. vi :13).

First, a few general remarks. Twice Satan takes the name Son of God in his mouth. He knew that the Person before him is the Son of God, but he hates Him as such. Later this hatred is fully seen in those of whom the Lord said, "Ye are of the devil, as your father, and ye desire to do the lusts of your father" (John viii:44). The Pharisees and elders of the people, who are seen in the Gospel of Matthew, knew Him as Son and Heir, and with this knowledge they rejected Him and delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles. This was surely Satanic. Each of these temptations leads higher. In the first it seems but a small matter to turn a stone into bread. He knew this Lord had spoken in creation, and the heavens were blazing with millions of worlds, now but speak and change a stone into bread. The second demands more, but the third is the climax, when he asks Him, who is the Heir of all things, and in whose name every knee must bow, to fall down and do him homage. All the forces at Satan's command were unquestionably brought to bear in this last temptation. With one stroke of His hand He could produce before Him, who is the King of kings, all the kingdoms of the world.

Only once the tempter says, It is written. He knows what is written and he knows more of the written Word, which is forever settled in the heavens, than all the higher critical professors in the world. Higher criticism of the Word is but his child, his production. But whenever he

quotes scripture it is always in the wrong way. It was so in the Garden of Eden and it is so here. He quotes from the ninety-first Psalm, but leaves out the words, "In all thy ways." Another interesting fact is that the tempter knew that this psalm was spoken prophetically of the second man, the Lord from heaven. What sneering remarks have been made on the Book of Psalms by the critics. What they deny is a denial of the truth, which the devil knows, believes and trembles. Our Lord speaks three times, It is written. What a testimony to the Word of God! He knows no other weapon than the written Word. In quoting the scriptures to the enemy He does it from but one book, that is the book of *Deuteronomy*. More than any other book in the Old Testament this one has been denied an ancient date. Higher criticism has declared and declares to-day, that Moses never wrote that book, but that it is the work of some priest living centuries later. The late J. H. Brookes wrote very pointedly on this, saying, "Our Lord took refuge, so to speak, behind the written Word of God, quoting each time from the book of Deuteronomy, as if foreseeing the contempt with which this precious book is treated by modern higher criticism, and defending it against the attacks of the enemy. It is perilously near blasphemy to assert that He quoted from a book which this insolent criticism declares to be a forgery. For if He did not know the date of its composition He is not divine. And if He did not know but chose to humor a popular error, He connived a falsehood. Genesis tells us of election; Exodus of redemption; Leviticus of worship; Numbers of warfare in the wilderness;

Deuteronomy of obedience; and hence the appropriateness of quoting from this book, which the Lord knew as divinely inspired. It is written, was enough for Him in the conflict with the devil, and It is written enough for us amid all the temptations we may encounter on our way to meet Him in the air."

We will leave it, then, as we suggest above, to the reader to make a careful comparison between the opening verses of the third chapter in Genesis and the temptations of our Lord. The Satan there is the same, that old serpent, the devil. He came to Eve with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, and the same he brings to bear upon the Lord. He said to Eve, "Is it so that God said?" and to Christ he said, "If thou art the Son of God." It is doubt, unbelief with which he always advances. He misquoted the Word of God to Eve. God had said, "Thou shalt surely die," and he said, "Lest ye die." He does the same in the temptations of Christ. These hints will be sufficient to help in the comparison.

The first temptation is of course the principal one. Defeated in this one he is defeated in all. He is detected at once as the enemy and with the first victory the whole victory is won. It is the most subtle of all; it appears extremely plausible and one might think it hardly a temptation at all, while in the third it is the most blunt attempt; we might almost say a desperate, despairing attack. But what was the first temptation and what does it teach us? "If thou be Son of God, speak that these stones may become bread." That the Christ is the Son of God as He stands before the

tempter was well known to the evil one. He knew it before and attempted to take the life of the child through Herod, and the demons cried out before Him in terror, "What have we to do with the Son of God—hast Thou come here before the time to torment us?" But it can hardly be said that the temptation is to make Jesus doubt that He is the Son of God, because He is suffering hunger. The first temptation is one in which He is assailed as the Son of man. He was truly man, and this is seen here in the wilderness. He fasted and He hungered. Is there anything wrong in being hungry? Certainly not. It is in this that the subtlety of the tempter shows itself. The enemy comes with a natural want and appeals to our Lord's power to relieve Himself from that want. He is still the same evil, cunning deceiver, who begins with the most subtle temptations. Here one might ask, What wrong is there in satisfying hunger? The Lord could easily have done this, turning stones into bread. He, who spoke in the hour of creation, "Let there be light," "let the earth bring forth," He by whom and for whom are all things could have at once changed all the stones into bread. Later He fed thousands in a miraculous manner. He could have done so now for Himself, but if He had done it He would have been proven at once unfit to be our Saviour, who could die for us. He came to do the will of God. Thus it is written, "Sacrifice and offering Thou willedst not, Thou hast prepared me a body. * * * * Lo I come, O God, to do Thy will" (Hebrews x:5-8). He had not esteemed it robbery to be on an equality with God; but had emptied Himself, taking the form of a ser-

vant, taking His place in the likeness of men. Now the path for Him has begun. He is here as true Man, God manifested in the flesh, but the path is to do the will of God, that eternal will of salvation. The path leads downward in humiliation, suffering, it is to end in the cross, suffering death and tasting death for everything. Hunger is a part of His humanity. Was there or is there in the Word of God one word which could have told Him to change stones into bread? On the cross in deep agony He remembered but a little Scripture concerning Himself, which had to be fulfilled, and so it was by His own request so that even not one of the smallest prophecies about His sufferings might be unfulfilled (John xix:28). But had God given anywhere one word to Him, who had come to do His will that He was to end His suffering as man, His hunger by a miracle? Nowhere is to be found such a direction. If He had entered upon the suggestion of Satan He would have acted according to His own will and that would have been the will of the enemy. He would have taken His case in His own hands. *All* the elements of *disobedience* and *distrust* to God are in it involved. Now having failed in this one thing, having satisfied His hunger and saved Himself by using powers which were not according to the will of God, He would have been unfit to endure the cross and to despise the shame. When it came to Gethsemane He might have shrunk from drinking the cup, He might have called upon legions of angels at His command to deliver Him, and when the billows of wrath and judgment were coming He could not have stood them. Thus the changing of stones into

bread would have shown that He who did it was not fit to die for us, for He had chosen His own will by the suggestion of Satan and not done the Father's will, which is that He should suffer.

This is clearly seen from His answer. He detects the old serpent at once. There is no parleying from His side as it was with Eve. He resists the devil at once. The perfect, sinless and spotless One has His "It is written" to hand and this Word, bringing out the Father's will which He is here to do, ends this first temptation. "It is written man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which goes out through God's mouth" (Deut. viii:3). The meaning of the word He uses here is that man lives truly not by bread alone, but by the Word of God, that is, in obedience to this Word. And there is an application for us as believers. One has said on this,* "We realize the wondrous privilege that is ours, the solemn responsibility that lies upon us. For we are sanctified into the obedience of Christ, and He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps" (1 Peter i:2, ii:21). This principle of His life must then be the principle of our lives. If with Him the governing motive was to do the will of God, how simple is it that for us also the will of God must be our motive for action. By every word that goes out of the mouth of God doth man live. What a sustenance of the true life within us to be thus, day by day, receiving the messages of His will guided by that wondrous voice, learning more contin-

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*Numerical Bible, New Testament, page 62.

ually the tenderness of His love for us: "He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear as the learner" (Isaiah 1:4). This is the utterance of the Lord Himself. How blessed to be able to make it our own, and to have the fulfillment of those words: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eyes."

For the next test the tempter took the Lord to the Holy City and sets Him upon the edge (the pinnacle) of the temple, and said to Him, "If Thou be Son of God cast Thyself down; for it is written, He shall give charge to His angels concerning Thee, and on their hands they shall bear Thee, lest in any wise Thou strike Thy foot against a stone."

The Psalm which Satan quotes (Psalm xci.) is a Messianic Psalm. He takes Him to the Holy City, Jerusalem, and upon the pinnacle of the temple, because the second temptation is the temptation of Him as the Messiah. Standing upon that high place the people below must have seen Him and recognized Him; Satan was hid from their view. What a test and proof of His Messiahship if slowly He had descended, the laws of gravitation completely set aside, landing unharmed on His feet before the astonished multitude. Would they not at once accept Him? Why should He be rejected if by doing this He might become in the shortest order their leader, their King and redeemer from the yoke of the Roman oppressor? Now Satan defeated had heard the Word upon which the Lord stood. He was defeated by the Word. He comes now with the Word himself, quoting scripture and that from a Psalm which speaks of the Mes-

siah, the second man. However, he misquotes the Word and leaves out the seven words, *"and keep Thee in all Thy ways."* It is as subtle as the first temptation. Here he presents the Word and tries to make our Lord act in obedience to the Word by testing God's Word and by doing so to prove that He is the Messiah and the Son of God at the same time. But why did he leave out those seven words? Because the ways in which He, the Messiah, will be kept are the ways of God. "Thy ways" are indeed His ways. It was not the way of faith in impatience to test the truth of the Word and casting Himself down and to prove thereby that He is Messiah and Son of God. It was impossible that He could have even given this temptation a moment's thought. The answer is at once ready as soon as the tempter has uttered his lie. Jesus said, "It is again written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." It would have been testing, proving God and as such again distrust and disobedience. We see how closely the two temptations are connected. It is tempting Him to choose His own will and not the Will of God, to act in His own behalf and to escape the suffering before Him.

It is very suggestive that Satan should demand of Him to cast Himself down from the edge of the temple, and to prove by this act His Messianity and Divinity as well. Our Lord is gone into the presence of the Father with a glorified body of flesh and bones. In a future day He who ascended upon high, will descend. The heavens will be covered with His glory, and He who is the leader and completer of faith, the great Exemplar of faith, in whom patience had its com-

plete, perfect work, will come again in glory and majesty, seen by all eyes, the Messiah-King of Israel, the Son and Heir. Then at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to God the Father's glory. The adorable One knew the Father's will; He knew the suffering and the patience, the only road that leads to glory. He begun to go the path, and His face is set like a flint. He could not fail in what He had come to do. Again the old serpent is conquered.

Let us, like our Lord, be patient and go the way which is for us now in humilitation, never murmuring or tempting God. "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into various temptations (trials), knowing that the proving of your faith works patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James i:2-4).

And now they stand upon a high mountain. What a picture is presented to our view! The liar and murderer from the beginning, and alongside of him stands He who is Jehovah, the eternal Word made flesh. What must have been His outward appearance with the fasting of forty days, with perhaps the tattered robes which hung upon His body rent by the thorns of the wilderness. The tempter's eyes must have beholden such a weak and frail Person—a man of sorrows, One who knew not where to lay His head. But the scene changes. The serpent hisses, and by his immense power still at his command the darkness of the night and the gloominess of the mountain top are dispersed. Marvelous visions of beauty! Right here is

Egypt with its pyramids and wonderful buildings, treasures of art and precious things. It disappears, and in its place ancient Greece, Athens and Corinth come up in all their splendor. Once more the scene shifts, and now Rome, the mistress of the world, that great city, is revealed. Satan shows Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory. Yes, all the kingdoms of the world, and they are in the tempter's grasp still, are passing by, one startling vision after the other. And when the glory has passed, or perhaps while still in view, driven to the very last, Satan speaks, but now no longer mentioning the Lord as Son of God, but treating Him as mere man. He says to Him, "All these things will I give Thee if falling down Thou wilt do me homage." The very words speak of despair. All things are His—all the kingdoms of the world and their glory shall yet be the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the prince of this world, whose eternal abode with all his demons is the lake of fire, could dare and stand by Him who is the King, the second Man, and offer all the world to Him. Perhaps the very appearance of our Lord may have brought the tempter to this despondent act. But when all the kingdoms of the world and their glory pass along and the eyes of Jesus rest upon them, what thoughts must have been His? What did He behold in all the grand and glorious scenes? Surely we can venture to say that He must have thought of this poor, benighted world under sin, death and judgment, in the grasp of this dark and dreadful being standing there at His side. And He had come to be the Lamb of God and to take away the sin of the World. He

had come to annul him, who has the might of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews ii:14). That He is the future heir of all things Satan must have felt, and now he offers Him all at once to turn over all the kingdoms of the world and their glory to Him if He will but do him homage—again if He but turn aside from the will of God. It is now clear that Satan feared Him going that path of faith as the second man—going it to the very end where He would crush the serpent's head. Through death, through His death on the cross, the might of death in the devil's hand, and eventually the control over this world, were to be wrested from Satan's hands. All three temptations bring this out, "The tempter would keep Him back from doing the will of God." But our Lord has gone that way. He was obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross. God has exalted Him, the eternal victor, by whom we are forever separated from sin and death. He has put all things in subjection under His feet; He has left nothing unsubject to Him. He has been welcomed in heaven by the Father and taken His place at His right hand, waiting till the time comes when heaven and earth shall be shaken, when He, the First-born, is brought into the habitable world, and with Him in glory the many sons, and when at last the glorious shout shall ascend, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and forever."

With threatening, defying words the Lord might have hurled the tempter down the mountainside, but it is a majestic "Get thee away, Satan" (He calls him now by name),

"for it is written, Thou shalt do homage to the Lord thy God, and Him alone shalt thou serve." The devil leaves Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him. What a ministry that must have been!

Satan could not conquer Him. He has met Him whom he could not harm, and the temptations were the tests and show that our Lord is He, the only One who is able to do the work He came to do. But the tempter has gone on with the same temptations, and how astonishingly he has succeeded in that monstrosity which calls itself Christendom! He has brought about a perfect blindness. Christendom attempts to rule, to control the world, to be on the throne; world-conquest, influence and power are its watchwords. Christendom has bowed the knee before Satan. It would not go the way the Lord went, doing the will of God, in obedience, patience and suffering, and then the glory. Hence Christendom has become the enemy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The remainder of the fourth chapter describes the entrance of our Lord upon His public ministry. The ministry which the Holy Spirit describes in Matthew is the Galilean. The events which show Him and make Him known as the true Messiah, the Jehovah-Jesus, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, are vividly described. As Jehovah in the earth, He does miracles, announces the kingdom of heaven to be at hand, but soon is in want, despised and rejected by the leaders of the nation and by the nation itself. The events of His Judean ministry in Jerusalem are passed over in Matthew. The fourth Gospel describes these events in

detail, in which He is manifested as the only-begotten of the Father. There has been and is still a great deal of wrestling, so to speak, with these events as they are recorded in the different Gospels, to arrange them in a perfect chronological order, or, as it is said, to harmonize the Gospel records. The infidels of all ages have made the most of it to prove contradictions, and the rationalistic preachers and professors in the camp of Christendom have generally founded their accusations of numerous contradictions in the New Testament upon these apparent discrepancies, which they think exist in the different statements concerning the public ministry of our Lord. The Holy Spirit could have written a perfect account of the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ and arrange a biography of Him accounting for every detail, but He has not done this. To charge the writers of the Gospel with ignorance of certain facts is charging the Holy Spirit with it. In each Gospel the Holy Spirit makes prominent the events which are calculated to impress the specific teachings of the respective Gospels, and He has always arranged the events in such an order to suit Himself. Every Gospel is therefore to be studied and read separately from the others. They are in their contents not the mechanical reporting of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, but the spiritual unfolding of the blessed person and work of our Lord and Saviour as King of the Jews, servant in obedience, Son of man and the Only-Begotten of the Father.

In Matthew we have before us the King and His rejection; therefore in the matter of His public ministry all is brought together by the Holy Spirit to show Him as King

and to bring out as in no other Gospel that He is rejected of men.

We divide the account of the beginning of His public ministry, as given in the fourth chapter, into three parts. The first from the 12th to the 17th verse. Our Lord was in Jerusalem. The report reaches Him there that the forerunner, John, was delivered up, cast into prison and his ministry is ended. This foretold His rejection, and on account of the imprisonment of John, He departed into Galilee. Here we see Him first in His own city, in Nazareth. But we have here only the bare mention that He was in Nazareth and that He left Nazareth to dwell in Capernaum (verse 12). What happened in Nazareth we have recorded in the Gospel of Luke. In the fourth chapter of that Gospel we read that our Lord, after the temptations, returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. The whole surrounding country was stirred up on account of Him, and He entered their synagogues, being glorified of all. In the synagogue of Nazareth the scroll of Isaiah was handed to Him, from which He read the opening verse of the lxi chapter, stopping in the middle of a sentence, and began to say to them, "To-day this scripture is fulfilled in your ears." And there in the city where He was brought up they said, "Is not this the son of Joseph?"* But the starting point of the Galilean ministry and its career is not Nazareth, but the place called Capernaum, that is, "village of comfort," and there

*In a little pamphlet. "The Messiah and His People," we have described the event in Nazareth in connection with the chapter from Isaiah.

He did some of His mighty works. But leaving Nazareth and dwelling in Capernaum was done by Him in the literal fulfillment of a prophecy, standing in a very significant part of Isaiah. We find the words here quoted in the ninth chapter of Isaiah. It is in the midst of prophecies which are all Messianic that we read in the beginning of the 9th chapter that the great light (the Messiah) was to be seen in the Galilee of the nations. The most oppressed, the darkest and the most corrupt province was to receive the light first. Here we see this word fulfilled. We notice a twofold description of Galilee, namely, as the land of Zebulon and Nephtali and as the Galilee of the nations. Read Genesis xlix:13, "Zebulon shall dwell at the haven of the sea, and he shall be for an haven of ships and his border shall be upon Zidon." Jacob's prophecy outlines the history of the sons of Jacob, that is, the whole nation, and Zebulon signifies the time of their rejection, when they become merchantmen. Here in Matthew we see Zebulon dwelling by the sea. So that we have the fulfillment of two prophecies before us —the prophecy in the forty-ninth chapter in Genesis and the one in Isaiah. The same is true of Nephtali. This means struggler. "Nephtali is a hind let loose" (Gen. xlix: 21). In Jacob's prophecy Nephtali stands for the coming struggling and victorious Jewish remnant. Here, then, in the land of Zebulon and Nephtali the great light shines first. Grace comes down to the most miserable, the struggling ones. But here we see likewise something which has a connection with His second coming. The great light will shine once more. The glory of the Lord will cover the

heavens, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in His wings, and when this great event comes, the light will shine indeed upon a remnant of Israel sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. The term Galilee of the nations has another significance. The province was called by this name, because the most ignorant class of Jews lived there and they had become mixed up with the Gentiles, who were very numerous in that borderland. The aristocratic classes of Judea, the learned in the law, the refined and ecclesiastical leaders, yes, all the different sects in Jerusalem, despised Galilee. An inhabitant of Galilee was looked upon as an *Am-Hoarets* (an ignorant countryman). What good thing can come from Nazareth?—But here, where the people had sunk the lowest, the Lord appears first. That this is again an indication that the Gentiles, the outcasts and despised, were to come first, as we saw in the second chapter, need hardly be mentioned.

From the lips of the King Himself comes now the proclamation, "Repent, for the Kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh" (verse 17). He announces that the Kingdom has drawn nigh in that He, the King, is standing in their midst to establish that Kingdom. He never said nor taught of a Kingdom *within* them. All spiritualizing on these lines of a Kingdom within, which our Lord is made to teach here in Matthew, is wrong. It is the Kingdom John had announced which He now preaches. He prolongs the message of the forerunner for a short time and soon His lips were closed, too. We preach not the Gospel of the Kingdom, but the Glad Tidings of Grace. A day is coming when

heralds will announce once more the Kingdom to be at hand, and when it will come in the person of the Son of Man coming from heaven with angels of His power in flaming fire (2 Thess. 1).

The second part of the portion here before us extends from verses 18-22. It describes the call of four disciples, Peter and Andrew and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John. They were not from the class of wise men, learned in the written and oral law, but they were fishers. He calls them away from their nets to be fishers of men. This illustrates what the Holy Spirit later declared through the Apostle of the Gentiles: "For consider your calling, brethren, that there are not many wise according to flesh, not many powerful, not many high-born. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world, that He may put to shame the strong things, so that no flesh should boast before God" (1 Cor. 1:26). To be a fisher of men, to preach the Gospel, does not demand a classical education, nor the ordination parchments of man. It is the Lord who calls to service. It is not the first acquaintance these four men had with the Lord. They knew Him before. Here it is the definite call which comes to them to be fishers of men. If we want to learn how these men came to the Lord Jesus Christ we must read the first chapter in the Gospel of John. The events there transpired before the Lord departed into Galilee. We see in the first of John that the forerunner was still witnessing; he was not yet in prison. The "Follow Me" here does not mean, as often erroneously put, the call of the Gospel. Gospel preaching never asks to follow the Lord,

but to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the "Follow Me" for service. And how simple and refreshing the whole scene is! Their obedience is prompt. There is no excuse and no delay, for the King's business requires haste. They had come to Him, to Whom John had pointed as the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, and trusted Him for salvation, eternal life, and now they put themselves, their time, their all completely into His hands. The first call in John came to them, as the call from Him as Saviour, and here it is the call of Him as Lord, and they were to be His servants. "And they, having left their trawl nets, *immediately* followed Him" (verse 20). How many questions might have been asked by them? "What about our nets?" "What about our support?" "What about food and raiment?" "And here is our old father. Does not our law say, Honor thy father and thy mother? Is it right to leave our father to toil alone by the sea?"—They left it all immediately and trusted Him for all. And so the true servant of the Lord is obedient to His call and looks to Him, who has called him to service and who has promised from the glory through His Spirit to supply all need. How sad we are made when we look away from this refreshing picture to the modern evils of Christendom. Surely a salaried Gospel ministry is unscriptural. And then to think of all the evil, dishonor to the Lord and reproach upon His Name which is sometimes associated with it.

In the third section we see our Lord making the whole round of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the glad tidings of the Kingdom and healing every disease

and every bodily weakness among the people. The work done was threefold—teaching, which was exclusively done in their synagogues, and that was expounding the scriptures, the law and the prophets. The meeting in the synagogue in Nazareth referred to above was repeated in many other synagogues. Preaching the glad tidings of the Kingdom, which may have been done mostly to the large crowds of people who flocked around Him in public places, in the streets and at the side of the mountains. Closely connected with the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom was the healing of every disease not spiritual, but every bodily disease and weakness. The healing of disease is always connected with the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom. The healings were signs that the King is the Jehovah and that the Kingdom had drawn nigh. These signs of healing every disease are the powers of the world to come. Later in our exegesis of the eighth chapter we hope to consider the question of healing more fully in all its far-reaching importance. Here we point out simply the fact, that it is not the Gospel of Grace which is preached, but that of the Kingdom. The Gospel of Grace needs no sign outwardly by healing of disease to demonstrate that it is God-given. Nowhere in the Epistles have we the promise that Gospel preaching is to be connected with healing of every bodily weakness and disease. However, it is very significant that the question of healing of every disease by supernatural power is made so prominent in our days. It is but an indication of the nearness of the coming dispensation, when the earth shall be delivered with its groaning creation.

His fame then went forth into the whole of Syria. And now they flock to Him. What a multitude it must have been! Satan had his mighty power resting upon that land. He knew that Christ had come to make an end of his power, hence he troubled his poor slaves with terrible diseases and by his demons took possession of his victims. There were various pains and diseases, those possessed by demons, and lunatics, and paralytics; and He healed them. Once more the prince of this world will attempt to have the world in his control. An evil day is coming for this world. Even now there is an increase of crimes and forms of insanity which indicate demoniacal possession. China and other countries are full of it. In our own land there are unquestionably those who have familiar spirits, known under the name of spiritualistic mediums. But He will come again. He comes when Satan with his demons are in the earth, and in his great but short wrath, torments the inhabiters of the earth during the tribulation. Christ's coming means an end of that awful enemy. Then the Sun of Righteousness will bring healing, and what we see at the end of the fourth of Matthew is but a faint outline of what will be when the Kingdom will have come in the person of the returning King. May that day be hastened!

CHAPTER V.

In the closing of the last chapter we saw our Lord Jesus Christ surrounded by a great multitude of people, which followed Him and who were attracted by the King's presence, before whom the various diseases had to flee. If we turn to the eighth chapter we find the continuation of these scenes we had in the last half of the fourth chapter. Between these two chapters are three very important ones, which are as such found only in this Gospel. The contents of the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters are in the form of a continued discourse of our Lord, commonly called "the sermon on the mount," an expression which the reader knows is nowhere found in the Gospels. If we look through Mark, Luke and John we do not find any such report there of a lengthy discourse; indeed, except a number of fragments in the Gospel of Luke, we find nothing whatever in them about these sayings. When we turn to the Gospel of Luke, we find that the portions of this discourse reported there are in an entirely different setting. We point to that which is generally called "the Lord's prayer." In Luke we read (chapter xi) that as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father, etc. Now in Matthew there is no such incident, but the dis-

ciples hear it in a continual flow of speech. We also call attention to the fact that the call of Matthew is reported in the ninth chapter, the call of the twelve disciples in the tenth, here his discourse is placed before these historical events. The Holy Spirit, to carry through the wonderful scope of the first Gospel, has put the words of our Lord together into one continued address to His disciples, in the very midst of the most positive evidences that the King has come and Jehovah is in the midst of His people. When the King is manifest He utters His proclamation. Such is the discourse before us here in Matthew, the proclamation of the Lord Jesus Christ as King. And if the King proclaims, makes known His proclamation, it must be concerning the Kingdom which He came to bring, preached and offered to the people. Let this, then, be the starting-point of our analysis of this discourse. The so-called sermon on the mount is a proclamation concerning the Kingdom, the magna charta of the Kingdom of heavens.

In the next place let us consider three false applications which are being made of the discourse of our Lord before us.

1. The application to the unsaved, unbelieving mass of Christendom and others, as if in the sermon on the mount the way to righteousness is revealed and human nature's development (as they say) were here shown, for which every man should strive. This, of course, is the grossest error possible. The discourse speaks of the characteristics of persons who *are* saved, who *have* redemption. There is nowhere found in it the word redemption, nor is salvation men-

tioned and pointed out; in other words, the way a sinner is saved is not revealed here, but, as the greater part of the discourse was addressed exclusively to disciples, the Lord is speaking about such who are saved and not sinners. Yet how little this is understood.

In our days more than ever before we notice an astonishing misuse of the sermon on the mount. The saddest of all is that many preachers of various evangelical denominations fall back upon it as the most important document of Christendom; for them it seems to become more and more *the* Gospel, and the consequences are that we hear in our times more ethical preaching, more about becoming better, doing good, improving your better self, etc., than ever before. It would require much time and a great deal of space to show up all the errors which are springing from this application. It is the Gospel of works and of evolution. And as this is done there is less preaching of the utter corruption of man, his lost condition and utter helplessness to be righteous (that which the discourse makes very clear), and the salvation of God in our Lord Jesus Christ, the absolute necessity of being born again, the reception of eternal life, the new nature. As the teachings of the Epistle to the Romans have been and are being abandoned in Christendom, the false application of the discourse here in Matthew has been taken up. There is therefore a continual increase of teaching about lifting man out of his lost place into a better sphere by means of ethical teachings taken from the sermon on the mount. This is done also under the garb of a social Christianity,

union of worshippers (?), the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Not long ago we were told of a reformed rabbi who read in his synagogue on Saturday portions of the sermon on the mount and preached on it to his hearers. This was hailed as a favorable sign of the progress made toward the lifting up of humanity. Surely, if evangelical preachers (in creed at least) continue to progress in this awful direction by substituting ethical teachings for salvation by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and declare, as not a few have done, "the sermon on the mount is a large enough Bible for us," a general apostasy from the faith will soon be reached. There is a lifting up of the sinner from his miserable place into sonship and making him the heir of God, but that is never by the sermon on the mount, by striving to obtain the heavenly righteousness revealed here.

2. There are others who give the discourse in Matthew v-vii an exclusively Christian application.

This is the second false application. We cannot put into the discourse exclusively church teachings and say that all found here is to be applied to the church, and that it is the guide for the church, as some have said. If the Lord had had the church in her heavenly calling and character in mind, the place given to the discourse would be all wrong. The Lord mentions the church the first time in the sixteenth chapter, and if following the sixteenth chapter He had spoken these words we might say that we should find in it the church. He said something to His disciples after He had declared that He would build His church, which applies

to the church. A good deal in the sermon on the mount appears mostly in connection with the earth. The meek are to inherit the earth. The church, however, is heavenly. Not here, but in the Epistles, written after the death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ and after the Holy Spirit had come down from heaven, do we find all about the church. The magna charta of the church is in the Epistles of Paul, to whom the full revelation of the church was given. Out of this misconception has sprung a good deal of error. People attempt to make the sermon on the mount the standard of their lives; they apply it to themselves in the least details and get into legal bondage. The flesh given so much to legality likes this only too well. Here the greatest mischief comes in, that believers do not see clearly what grace has done, and that their heavenly walk does not spring from a contemplation of a series of descriptions of the character and actions of regenerated persons, but by the fact that we look upon ourselves as lifted into the highest heaven once and for all in the person of our perfect High Priest. A heavenly walk is the outcome of a heavenly contemplation. But this not being seen, professing Christendom, amongst it many true believers, stumble around in the sermon on the mount. In this way it has come about that the "Our Father" (the name next to "Lord's prayer" given to the prayer, our Lord taught His disciples) has become the ritualisic prayer of Christendom, repeated at numerous occasions.

3. The last false interpretation is that one, which makes the sermon on the mount exclusively Jewish.

There are not a few who refuse to consider the three chapters in Matthew as having any reference to Christian believers at all and as if there is no application to be made in this direction and the believer could afford to pass them by entirely and not be concerned about it. This is the other extreme and equally wrong.

In our exegesis of the three chapters, (which of necessity we have to condense considerably) we shall always in every part look upon the sermon on the mount as the proclamation of the King concerning the Kingdom. That Kingdom is not the church, nor is the state of the earth in righteousness, governed and possessed by the meek, brought about by the agency of the church. It is the millennial earth and the Kingdom to come, in which Jerusalem will be the city of a great King. We read in the Old Testament that when the Kingdom comes, for which these Jewish disciples of our Lord were taught to pray, the law will go forth out of Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. While we have in the Old Testament the outward manifestations of the Kingdom of the heavens as it will be set up in the earth in a future day, we have here the inner manifestation, the principles of it. Yet this *never* excludes application to us who are His heavenly people, members of His body, who will share the heavenly throne in the heavenly Jerusalem with Him. Israel's calling is earthly; theirs is an earthly kingdom, ours is altogether heavenly. "In the sermon on the mount we have, then, the principles of the Kingdom of heaven, with very plain references to the millennial earth * * * Yet let it not be thought

that this takes from us the application to ourselves which Christians seek in it. The fuller revelation only completes the partial one; the higher blessing but transcends the lower. Through all dispensations God is the same God, and we are 'blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Of many things we can only argue, indeed a more perfect (or at least a fuller application) to ourselves than to them. To take from Israel what is hers is only to diminish her and not enrich ourselves. Nay, what has been called in this way the spiritualizing of the promises has led most surely and emphatically to the carnalizing of the church."*

The Kingdom has, then, a heavenly and an earthly side. Both are seen in the discourse, but the earthly is predominant. In itself the discourse is most perfect. The sevenfold division is well known. We mention them here, and will take up each for a very brief consideration.

1. The characteristics of the Heirs of the Kingdom (chapter v. 1-16).

2. The Law goes forth from Zion. It is confirmed and expounded by the King (verses 17-48).

3. The better righteousness (chapter vi:1-18).

4. Kept in the world. Single-eyed, trusting in God (verses 19-34).

5. The judgment of righteousness (chapter vii:1-14).

6. Warning against false prophets (verses 15-20).

7. Warning against false professors (21-29).

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*F. W. Grant on Matthew, page 70.

Most of these sections may again be divided into seven parts. The number seven is the perfect number, and as He is the divine King, the perfect King, all that proceeds out of His mouth is perfection. We have seven expansions of the law, seven parts of the better righteousness, and seven petitions in the prayer our Lord taught His disciples.

The first section in the fifth chapter from the first verse to the sixteenth is before us. Seeing the crowds He went up into the mountain, and having sat down, His disciples came to Him; having opened His mouth He taught them. Moses the mediator of the old covenant went up into the mountain where he received the law; but here is a greater one than Moses, the Mediator of a better covenant and the King at the same time. He begins with blessings, the blessings of grace.

The blessings in themselves are most wonderful in their scope and inexhaustible in their meaning. We can but call the attention to a few thoughts in connection with them.

We notice seven beatitudes which show forth the character of those who are the heirs of the kingdom. These are:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Blessed they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed the merciful, for they shall find mercy.

Blessed the pure in heart for they shall see God.

Blessed the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

These seven blessings must be divided into two parts. The division is into four and three. Four is the earthly number and three the heavenly. In the first four we see the characteristics of the heirs of the kingdom in their position in the earth, waiting for the kingdom of the heavens and the inheritance of the earth, and in the last three the inner characteristics as the heirs of the kingdom have them by having become the partakers of the divine nature. Let us remind ourselves once more that the Lord does not speak to *unsaved* persons, but to His disciples. The blessings do not speak of what a person *should* be, or *strive* to be, but what *they are*. All here is contrary to the natural man, everything is strange to his disposition. It is only the Grace of God in Christ Jesus which can produce this. The gift of God is eternal life in our Lord Jesus Christ. He Himself is the true God and the eternal life, which has been manifested and which is communicated to every one who believes and thus hath the Son. Believing in Him we receive life and are partakers of the divine nature. Here we have the description of one who is in possession of this new nature and as it manifests itself. (The first Epistle of John shows the same characteristics). One has said very pointedly: "At the beginning of His career, Christ draws the picture of the person who is to be the result of His work. This is the ideal man whom the Saviour is to make actual by saving him from sin."* How great then the blindness of those

*Weston on Matthew.

teachers in Christendom who make the sermon on the mount, the beatitudes, the Gospel, and who attempt to reform the world by it.

In the first place let us consider that in the seven blessings we have the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He is the fullest expression of all. He is the highest illustration of these characteristics. It is a most blessed study to see how the Word speaks of Him as the one who was poor and needy, who became poor for our sake. He took that place for us. He could say, "I am poor and sorrowful" (Ps. lxix:29). and, "Bow down thine ear, O Jehovah, for I am poor and needy" (Ps. lxxxvi:1), and again, "For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me" (Ps. cix:22). And He who humbled Himself receives the kingdom. He was while on earth the man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs. He Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus and over Jerusalem, and in that night of deepest gloom He offered both supplications and entreaties to Him who was able to save Him out of death with strong crying and tears (Heb. v:7). He was the great mourner and He was comforted; heard because of His piety and raised from the dead. We know Him as the One who was meek and lowly in heart. He did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street (Isaiah xli:2). And now the earth is surely the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein (Ps. xxiv). Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under His feet (Ps. viii.). As the hungering and thirsting One, He was

here, too, hating iniquity and loving righteousness, His meat and drink to do the will of Him who sent Him. And surely He sees and shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. Mercy and Purity and Peace were embodied in Him.

Every one then who is born of God has by grace these characteristics. Poor in spirit is the very first characteristic. The unsaved sinner knows nothing of it. It is altogether the work of the Holy Spirit. It means to take the right place before God, which is in the dust in absolute helplessness. It is the continued attitude of a saved person in the earth, poverty in spirit and entire dependence upon the Lord. The mourning which comes next should not be made to mean grieving on account of personal sin. It is rather over the results of sin, the present conditions of things in the earth. Thus our Lord grieved and mourned. The comfort is that coming redemption from the presence of sin and entrance into that heavenly inheritance which belongs to us in Christ Jesus. But having taken the true place before God, and knowing the evil and mourning on account of it, what is to be our path on the earth? Blessed are the meek! Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness! This is the way of the heirs of the kingdom, waiting for the manifestation of it.

When we come to the next three blessings, we find the divine origin of the children of God brought out. It would be very helpful to compare these last three beatitudes with the first Epistle of John. God is righteous, God is light and God is love. Everyone who is born of God is righteous, he

is in the light and he loves. The love of God which comes down from heaven is perfected in Him. Merciful would stand for Righteousness, purity in heart for Light and peacemaker for Love. These are then called the sons of God and shall see God.

But while all this is a true application or rather a faint outline of that which is so richly told out here, we must not forget that there is also a direct application to the believing remnant of Israel. This remnant of Israel will pass through the great tribulation through which the Church (which of course can never be put into the first part of Matthew) will never pass. They will then be waiting in the midst of great tribulations, persecutions and sufferings for the kingdom to come. When the kingdom at last comes, in the return of the king, the Son of man, they will enter in. Let us look at the first four beatitudes from this standpoint. This people will be poor in spirit. The remnant is described in Zephaniah iii., 12, "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of Jehovah. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth, for they shall feed and lie down and none shall make them afraid." In Isaiah lxvi:2: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and that trembleth at my Word." This elect remnant will mourn in the earth in the evil day. Here is a prophetic description of the mourning of this remnant: "Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat; my soul desireth the first

ripe fig. The godly man is perished out of the earth and there is none upright among men; they all lie in wait for blood, they hunt every man his brother with a net. Their hands are upon that which is evil to do it diligently. * * * The son dishonoreth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, a man's enemies are the men of his own house. (Compare with Matthew xxiv:10 and x:21-23). But as for me, I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me" (Micah vii:1-7). They shall then be comforted. Their comfort, however, will not be in the heavenlies, but they shall be comforted in Jerusalem, for He shall come and deliver them from all their enemies and restore the kingdom to Israel. They will be as the meek of the earth and inherit the earth when the king comes. Inheriting the earth is Israel's promise; ours is to rule and reign with Him in the heavenlies over the earth. The thirty-seventh Psalm forms a perfect commentary to this beatitude "Blessed are the meek." There we find what meekness includes, both in ourselves as believers and the future believing remnant. "Fret not thyself"—"Neither be thou envious"—"Trust in the Lord"—"Delight thyself in the Lord"—"Commit thy way unto the Lord"—"Rest in the Lord." The meek waiting for the Lord are thus described. But it is of the believing remnant we read in that Psalm. Some day it shall be as it is written there: "Evildoers shall be cut off. But those that wait upon the Lord they shall inherit the land. For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be, but the meek shall inherit the land, and

shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Psalm xxxvii:9-11). They will also be hungering and thirsting for righteousness and shall be filled in the day of His manifestation.

The seven beatitudes are followed by two others which describe the heirs of the kingdom as sufferers and persecuted in the earth. Therefore, because we are children of God, the world knoweth us not, for it knew Him not. Do not wonder, brethren, if the world hate you. Our Lord here, too, is the great exemplar. "For to this have ye been called, for Christ also has suffered for you, leaving you a model that you should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who, when reviled, reviled not again; when suffering threatened not" (1 Pet. ii:21). The first blessing is for the persecuted for righteousness' sake, but in the second we read, "Blessed are ye when they reproach and persecute you, and say every wicked thing against you, lying, for my sake. Rejoice and exult, for your reward is great in the heavens, for thus have they persecuted the prophets who were before you." This second beatitude stands in connection with the last three blessings. In the first the Lord says "They" and that "theirs is the kingdom of heaven," but in the second He says, "Ye." In the first it is the kingdom of heaven, in the second it is the great reward in heaven. The latter is more than the earthly glory of that coming kingdom. This finds unquestionably its fulfillment during that time of Jacob's trouble. There will be the suffering for righteousness' sake during the tribulation as never before and many will be slain of these

faithful Jewish witnesses for His sake. The latter will receive great reward (read Revel. xx:4). It will be the comfort for His earthly people in the coming day of trouble. The suffering of the church, outside of the camp bearing His reproach is revealed in the Epistles.

From the 13th-16th verse we hear what the heirs of the kingdom are in the earth. "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become insipid, wherewith shall it be salted? It is no longer fit for anything but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot by men."

This is in reference to the first beatitudes. Salt preserves from corruption. Thus is the heir of the kingdom to be in the midst of all that which is corruption. But what when the salt becomes insipid? It becomes absolutely worthless and is trodden under foot. It was so with Jerusalem, it has become worthless; it has been trodden down by the Gentiles and Christendom will be that, nay is, in the age of Laodicea. Ye are the Light of the world. This is in reference to the last three beatitudes. This is followed by the exhortation: "Let your light thus shine before men so that they may see your upright works, and glorify your Father who is in the heavens." But what light is it which is to shine? Surely this can mean only the reflection of Him who is the Light. "He does not say let *your* good works shine, but let *your light* shine; that is, let Christ shine in *your* life; not that *ye* may see *your* good works, but that men see them; not to *your* glory, but to the glory of your *Father*."

Because it is the God who spoke that out of darkness light should shine who has shone in our hearts, for the shin-

ing forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. iv:6). Salt and Light, to preserve and to shine—this is then our responsibility and our testimony we have. But the salt, the preserving, hindering power will at last be taken away from the earth, and the light will shine no longer. What will be left, but unspeakable corruption and the gross darkness which will cover the earth?

The second section of the great proclamation of the King contains the confirmation of the law and its expansion. We can but give a very brief outline and exposition and will be obliged to guard against digressions, which might be made at almost every verse.

We now see our Lord speaking as the one who is greater than Moses (Hebrews iii:12). Sitting upon the mount, He speaks with greater authority than Moses or any one before Him, because He has greater authority. He who speaks concerning the law and the prophets, confirming and expanding, is the one who gave it to Moses, whose fingers wrote upon the tables of stone, whose Spirit revealed the visions to the prophets and testified in them and through them beforehand, concerning the suffering and the glory that should follow. The question which comes to the Jewish mind after reading the opening of the discourse, the description of the characteristics of the heirs of the kingdom is the question concerning the law and the prophets; that is, the whole Old Testament. Did He then come to set them aside? Did He come to make the law and the prophets void? He states at once that He came not to make void

the law and the prophets, but to fulfill, and adds, "For verily I say unto you until the heaven and earth pass away, one iota or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law until all come to pass."

A good deal of wrong teaching has been taken from these words; the most erroneous is the one which puts a Christian believer still under the law and teaches from this passage that inasmuch as Christ came not to make void the law so, every believer is obliged to fulfill the law. This is a favored argument with Seventh Day people and others. It springs from forgetting the fact that here we have no teaching concerning the Church or the individual believer as it was made known subsequently in the Epistles. The Epistles make very clear the relation to the law which the true believer sustains, who has eternal life and is in Christ. "So that, my brethern, we also have been made dead to the law by the body of Christ, to be another who has been raised up from among the dead in order that we might bear fruit to God" (Romans vii:4). We are dead to the law, yet the law in itself is not dead; it is as much alive as ever, and holy, just and good. However, the new nature which we have is the perfect law of liberty; it is something altogether new; yet the old law still exists and has its power, but never for him who is a new creation in Christ Jesus. "The law has been our tutor up *to* Christ, that we might be justified on the principle of faith, but faith having come we are no longer under a tutor, for ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii:24, 25). The law could make nothing perfect, but Christ came, and perfection is in Him and through

Him. What is the meaning of "to fulfill"? It means to give the fullness, to make full, to fill out the law and the prophets. The wrong interpretation comes generally from having only the ten Commandments in view, but there is more than that and more than the Lord's full obedience to the law and fulfilling Himself all that which the law and the prophets had spoken concerning Him. In the true sense of the word the meaning is, that He came to make good the whole scope of the law and prophets. He is come to reveal the completeness of that which the law and the prophets had but pointed out. All that which the law and the prophets teach and predict, the fullness, is of Him and will be fulfilled in Him who came and who will come again. The eighteenth verse makes this clear. Even the smallest letter, the Hebrew "jod," shall come to pass; not even the least letter can be set aside, but all will be accomplished. Here we have one of the strongest words for the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Bible. Even the "jod" is of Him, and "until the heavens and the earth pass away one iota or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law till all come to pass." All then is divine, infallible and will come to pass. What a solemn declaration of the great King this is! This is in full harmony with the entire testimony of the Word. "Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in the heavens" (Psalm cix:89). "Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name" (Psalm cxxx:2). "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the com-

mandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them is great reward" (Psalm xix). In the cxix Psalm the perfection and excellency of the Word is told out in each of the 176 verses, with the exception of two, and the declaration is made, "Thy Word is true from the beginning." What an awful sin, what a heinous thing, the rejection of the inspiration of the Word of God is!

In the nineteenth and twentieth verses the King speaks of the doing and teaching of the commandments. Here we are, of course, altogether on Jewish ground. Then there is to be a surpassing righteousness, or better righteousness for the one who is to enter into the kingdom of the heavens. Their righteousness was their own and insufficient for the entering into the kingdom of the heavens. But does our Lord here teach that a person is by a better righteousness of his own to enter into the kingdom of the heavens and that he is by his own efforts to produce this righteousness? Certainly not. Still the false application, the ethical teachings in Christendom substituting now so universally the preaching of the glad tidings of our salvation, teaches that man is to lift himself up into heaven by his own righteousness. Our Lord speaks not to sinners here, but to such who are saved, and the saved sinner has a better righteousness than the scribes and the Pharisees, who were only natural

men. In possession of his righteousness we do rejoice. "But now without the law the righteousness of God is manifested, borne witness to by the law and the prophets; righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ towards all, and upon all those who believe, for there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth a mercy seat through faith in His blood for the showing forth of His righteousness; in respect of the passing by the sins that had taken place before, through the forbearance of God; for the showing forth of His righteousness in the present time, so that He should be just and justify him that is of the faith of Jesus" (Romans iii:21-26). "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law should be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans viii:3, 4). And the outflow of the righteousness of God we are in Him, is His righteousness. But these words stand also in relation to Israel, converted at last and entering into the kingdom (Ezek. xxxvi:25, etc).

And now after He had confirmed the law and made known its immutability, He begins to teach that surpassing righteousness which He demands. He teaches the law in its fullest and deepest spiritual meaning. Here we see all the majesty of the King and the lawgiver. Six times He says "I say unto you." It is divine "I" of Jehovah, who

speaks. And as He speaks here and sends forth the expansions of the law, so will He speak again. Out of Zion shall go forth the law and the Word of the law from Jerusalem (Isaiah ii:3). And when that time comes, then surely righteousness and peace will kiss each other, and Israel, new-born, having the laws in their inmost parts and written in their hearts and the Spirit upon them, will walk in His statutes, and nations will be converted.

Not alone does He show in these expansions of the law, in declaring the true righteousness, His divine authority, but He uncovers the human heart and shows its deep corruption and the hopelessness that the natural man could ever attain to such a righteousness. It condemns every human being. As mentioned before, thousands of unsaved person, Jews and Gentiles have made this first discourse of our Lord in the Gospel of Matthew the standard for what they call "their religion." It is a sad statement which is now heard from all sides: "The sermon on the mount is my creed," or "Our preacher preaches only from the Gospels and the sermon on the mount, and never touches the Old Testament or the Epistles" (this was told us), etc. Are these people really honest, and do they know the cutting words of our Lord, words like a two-edged sword, penetrating to the division of soul and spirit, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart? If they read and are sincere they find themselves all uncovered and naked before Him whose eyes are like flames of fire, before whom indeed all things are naked and laid bare. The words show the

sinner his ruin and his corruption. Condemnation comes from every word to the natural man.

Let us look but briefly to the different teachings our Lord giveth, both to show the true righteousness He demands and to uncover the corruption of the heart.

He takes some of the commandments which He wrote on the second table of stone and begins with the commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." Murder was the first awful fruit after the fall, sprung as it was from envy in the heart. The penalty of murder is the judgment. This, then, is the letter of the law. It dealt with the outward deed, but the heart itself it did not touch. Now He speaks. "*I* say unto you, that every one that is *lightly** angry with his brother shall be subject to the judgment." It shall be as if he had committed the deed "thou shalt not kill." Every one that hates his brother is a murderer (1 John iii:15). "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca (a word embodying hatred and contempt) shall be called before the Sanhedrim; but whosoever shall say, Fool, shall be subject to the penalty of the hell fire." It will be so, no doubt, when the kingdom will be come into the earth; swift judgment will overtake the offender. But the words lay bare the heart and show the impossibility of man to stand before God, who judges the heart, in their own righteousness. The believer being the partaker of the divine nature, is righteous and loves his brother. Only the reception of eternal life, which is Christ

*The word "lightly" belongs in here. It was dropped in some manuscripts, but stands in the oldest. It is not angry alone outwardly, but even the remotest feeling of displeasure is meant.

Himself, can produce righteousness and love. "Whosoever has been begotten of God does not practice sin, because His seed abides in him and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God. In this are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil. Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, and he who does not love his brother" (1 John iii:9-11). The believer walking in the Spirit will in no way fulfill flesh's lust.

The 23d and 24th verses refer primarily to Israel; in principle they are applicable during this Christian age.

The words which follow are: "Make friends with thine adverse party quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest some time the adverse party deliver thee to the judge and the judge deliver thee to the officer and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say to thee, Thou shalt in nowise come out thence till thou hast paid the last farthing." The words contain an allegorical exhortation to Israel. It is a short outline of their history the Lord here introduces. Following the expansion of the law concerning murder and hatred, that which they were about to do with their own Brother, it is significant. Israel were the adversaries of Him who had come, and treated the royal Person in their midst as an adversary. They did not agree with Him and have been put into the prison (nationally) under punishment till the last farthing is paid. The lord will perform His whole work (punitive) upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem (Isaiah x:12), and then it will be "that her warfare is ended" or, as the marginal reading gives it (Isaiah xl:2), "her punishment is accepted," and "her iniquity is par-

doned and she hath received of the Lord's hand double (in blessing) for all her sins." Thus explained these words fit in the whole.

The next two expansions of the law are concerning purity and divorce. Not alone the deed itself, which was punishable by a severe penalty, is sin, but every one who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Out of the heart the transgression comes, and the heart is evil. And this is what so many persons in Christendom say is their creed and standard for "religion"! It is the word which condemns them altogether.

The plucking out of the right eye and the sacrificing of the right hand is, of course, never to be understood in the literal sense, but stands for the inner exercise of the believer, who in self-judgment puts that away which is a snare or a stumbling block. But what sinner can do it or will do it? Let him try it. And while there is in our day an increased boasting in a better morality, a higher standard, and a "social Christianity" is attempted and built upon certain words of our Lord in this discourse, it becomes more and more evident that the lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh are honeycombing all classes of the professing church and are practiced as never before. So it is with divorce. What dreadful things might be mentioned here! Among the Jews the greatest laxity prevailed in this direction. Even now through talmudical laws the marriage relations may be dissolved on a mere pretext. Our Lord says with the voice of authority, binding ever: "Whosoever shall put away his wife except for cause of fornication makes her

commit adultery, and whosoever marries one that is put away commits adultery."

In the fourth place He speaks against swearing, not against oaths such as are demanded by law, but in a profane way. Heaven, earth and Jerusalem are mentioned because these were mostly used in profane swearing. Significant here is the description of Jerusalem as the city of the great King. This will be during the millennial reign. When the kingdom has come praise will be heard in the heavens, in the earth and in Jerusalem. Now the earth is full of swearing and wicked words, but in that coming day the offences will be gathered out of the kingdom.

The law of retaliation comes next (verse 38). He teaches not to resist evil. This is again a great principle for His disciples. The author of the Numerical Bible says: "There is no supposition of the abrogation of law or of its penalties. The government of the world is not in question, but the path of the disciple in it. Where they are bound by the law, they are bound and have no privileges. They are bound, too, to sustain it in its general working, as ordained of God as good. Within these limits there is still abundant room for such practice as is here enjoined. We may still turn the left cheek to him that smites the right, or let the man that sues us have the cloak as well as the coat which he has fraudulently gained, for that is clearly within our rights. If the cause were that of another, we should have no right of this kind, nor to aid men generally in escape from justice or slighting it. The Lord could never lay down a general rule that His people should allow lawlessness or identify

themselves with indifference to the rights of others. He speaks only of what is personal to one's self—smite *thee,* compel *thee* and sue *thee.*"

The last expansion brings forth love. "Ye have heard that it has been said, Thou shalt love they neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those that hate you and pray for those who insult you and persecute you," etc. (verses 43-48), ending with "Be ye therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." It is the same exhortation as in Eph. v:1: "Be imitators of God as dear children." The standard for the heirs of the kingdom is then His own moral perfection.

The day will come when such righteousness and love and perfection as the King here describes will dwell amidst His earthly people and will be manifested in the earth. It will be in the day when the kingdom has come and His will be done in earth as it is in heaven. But every child of God born anew has put before him the highest standard, which includes all that which the King here expounds and that is in possession of Himself, who is the true God and the eternal life, "to walk even as He walked." "Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

CHAPTER VI.

Our Lord said: "For I say unto you, that unless your righteousness surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of the heavens" (chap. v:20). This righteousness He had taught in His confirmation and expansion of the law, but now He speaks of something higher still. He makes known the motive of this true rightcousness, which the heir of the kingdom is not alone to possess but also to practice. The motive is in all to act in the presence of the Father. The first eighteen verses of the sixth chapter shows this in a threefold relation. First, in relation to man (verse 1-4), then in relation to God (verse 5-15) and lastly in relation to self (verse 16-18). The word Father is found ten times in these first eighteen verses of the sixth chapter. The Father sees, the Father knows; therefore all is to be done before Him, the Seeing and Knowing One. Here, then, relationship is acknowledged and made prominent, such a relationship which was unknown in the Old Testament. How we are brought into this relationship to God as Father, and to know Him as our Father, so as to act continually as in His presence, is not taught in the Gospel of Matthew. The Gospel of John makes this fully known. There we read all about eternal life, the reception of this life, being born anew, born into the family of God, etc. "As many received Him (Christ, the true God and eternal life), to them gave He the right to be

children of God, to these that believe on His name; who have been born, not of blood nor of flesh's will nor of man's will, but of God" (John i:12, 13). This is all anticipated in Matthew, and the Father here is not that "All-Father," as the modern twentieth-century teachers of a Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of men teach, but He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His great mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead (1 Peter i:3-5). Only such as are begotten again, born into the family of God are children and though they are little children, yet do they know God as their Father. "I write to you, little children, because ye have known the Father" (1 John ii:13). Only such who are children and partakers of the divine nature can act as in the presence of the Father; with all others this is an impossibility; for how can they act and walk before One and do all out of love for One and to please that One, whom they do not know? This is another proof how impossible it is for the unregenerated, who have taken the sermon on the mount as a so-called rule for conduct, to do that which is taught.

Our Lord begins with alms. In the first verse the word alms is best translated (as several old manuscripts read) by "righteousness." "Take heed not to do your righteousness before men to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens."

Alms are good deeds towards others, charitable actions, bestowing upon the poor, needy and afflicted. Such deeds of mercy and kindness are generally designated by Jews as

righteousness. In their prayers on New Year's day they profess that repentance, prayer and *Zodoko*—righteousness will influence God and change the evil to come upon them for their sins, into good. Under righteousness every orthodox Jew understands alms. It must have been so during the days of our Lord in the midst of His earthly people. How was it done? We believe that the description our Lord gives here was a literal performance by the self-righteous religionists. Alms were given so as to be seen by men, a trumpet was sounded before them and the sums they gave to the poor were heralded through the streets. And is it not so now even in the midst of Christendom? How much almsgiving and charities would there be if it were not for a big display? Such almsgiving, such deeds of mercy are not pleasing to God. Such a righteousness, and done by such a motive, are but filthy rags which give no covering and defile. But so it is among Jews and professing Christians, almsgiving, charities without end, good works to appear before men as religious, and no knowledge of the Father. "Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand does; so that thine alms may be in secret and thy Father who sees in secret will render it to thee" (verse 4). The lesson here for every true believer is that all our good works are to be done as to our Father and as before Him alone; when we have done all things that are commanded, we are to say, we are unprofitable servants (Luke xvii:10). Prayer is the next which follows. Prayer is that which relates to God. How much might be said on that most

precious duty and privilege—prayer! But we cannot digress here. "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hyprocrites; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the street, so that they should appear to men." What glaring contradiction to pray in words which are addressed to God, and in motive they are but uttered so as to be heard by men! What our Lord describes any one can witness still, on any Saturday morning on the lower East Side of New York City. In synagogues and private dwellings many a Jew can be seen marching up and down, or standing still, or swaying his head and reading his prayers. He is attired with the philacteries (prayer-straps), a purely rabbinical invention, and his shoulders are enshrouded by a prayer-mantle. His whole behavior as he takes a prominent stand in the synagogue or before an open window, shows but too well that it is done so as to appear before men. "Hypocrites" is the word with which our Lord designates such men. Yet, is it any better in Christendom? The modern "church prayer meeting" shows only too often the same spirit. We have known men and seen them standing in public places to lead in prayer, and before them a very carefully worded prayer written beforehand, which was read with much pathos. Some observer of religious movements spoke of a leading New York preacher a short time ago as making "beautiful and very flowery public prayers." Alas! without sitting in judgment upon any one, the flowery prayers, human eloquence in prayer, are only too often a form of address to God but only uttered to be seen of men. None is excepted of this danger which

comes with public prayer. It should be with much godly fear and earnest looking to the Lord when a brother rises to lead in prayer. It is to be done as before God and not before men.

Next our Lord tells us that prayer, like alms, is to be done in secret, as unto the Father and not unto men. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to the Father who is in secret, and thy Father who sees in secret will render it to thee." No one would conclude from these words that our Lord forbids public or united prayer. It is seen only that He speaks against the mode and manner of public prayer. A believer praying in public should be as before the Father in secret. Later our Lord says, anticipating the church, "Again I say to you, that if two of you shall agree on the earth concerning any matter, whatsoever it may be that they shall ask, it shall come to them from my Father in heaven" (chapter xviii: 19). United prayer of the assembly and that not in secret alone but in public, yet as before the Father, is a great privilege and attended by untold blessings. "They gave themselves all with one accord to continual prayer" (Acts i: 14). "And they persevered in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, in breaking of bread and prayers" (Acts ii: 42). "But we will give ourselves up to prayer and ministry of the Word" (vi:4). Unceasing prayer was made by the assembly to God concerning him (Acts xii:5). Such was the practice in the apostolic age, and the exhortations given to believers in the New Testament are in harmony with it. "As regard prayer, persevering" (Rom. xii:12). "Perse-

vere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving, praying at the same time for us also, that God may open to us a door of the Word to speak the mystery of Christ" (Col. iv:4). "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. iv:6). Secret prayer is here mentioned by our Lord, and surely the true believer is doing this as he looks to the Father only. What joy, comfort and strength it does afford to be alone before God. Here it cannot be done as unto men. The hyprocite does not know nor practice secret prayer, and the professing Christian often makes an attempt at it in a legal way so as to satisfy his conscience. "The Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee." Some manuscripts have "openly." The day will be when all the secret prayers, that precious ministry of prayer given to the saints who are holy priests, will be made known. What revelations there will be and what reward to the saints for such faithful and persevering ministry in secret!* "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as those who are of the nations: for they think they shall be heard through their much speaking. Be

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*No sooner had Saul of Tarsus passed from death unto life, than the Lord says of him *"Behold he prayeth!"* Doubtless he had as a "Pharisee of the Pharisees" said many long prayers, but not until he "saw that Just One and heard the voice of His mouth" could it he said of him, Behold he prayeth (Acts xxii:14). Saying prayers and praying are two totally different things. A self-righteous Pharisee may excel in the former; none but a converted soul can enjoy the latter. The spirit of prayer is the spirit of the new man; the language of prayer is the distinct utterance of the new life. The moment a spiritual babe is born into the new creation it sends up a cry of helpless dependence toward the source of its birth.—C. H. M.

not ye therefore like them, for your Father knows of what things ye have need before ye beg anything of Him." Martin Luther says on this: "Here He censures the abuse of prayer, when they that are praying make use of many words and babblings; He calls this a heathenish practice, a loose, idle and useless talk, of such who think they would otherwise not be heard. The spirit of the worshiper prays, and because he knows that God will hear him, he dares not use such endless, idle talk—the fewer the words, the better the prayer."† The Pharisees had their long prayers with many vain repetitions. One only needs to take up an orthodox Jewish "prayer book" to see the numerous vain repetitions, repeating phrases over and over again. That our Lord had this first of all before Him seems clear. Yet what else is Christendom but, as one has said, "an unauthorized revival of a departed shade"?* It is an aping after that which no longer exists. The rituals of Christendom with their liberal use of the Psalms in responsive readings, set forms of prayer for all occasions, their chant and rapid delivery, are but the daughters of the old mother—Phariseeism. Here we mention especially rituals which are used at the Lord's supper, generally called by that unscriptural word "sacrament." There are used repeatedly phrases like "Lamb of God, have mercy on us," "Almighty God, have mercy on us," "O Lord, save us." These indeed are vain repetitions, and at the Lord's table when they are used by a believer (who only has a right to the Lord's table) they are worse

†Luther's notes on the Gospels.
*Adolph Saphir on Hebrews.

than vain. Vain repetitions, however, may also be used by such who use no formal prayers, ritual and prayer book. This is often done when the name of God and the Lord is falsely used in public prayer as well as other oft-repeated phrases. Others have gone into an extreme and have declared that the Lord teaches here that a petition should be made only once, and that if we have asked in faith for something once, to ask again is only proof of our unbelief. The Lord teaches no such thing. Our Lord Himself in Gethsemane made the same petition three times, and Paul with his thorn in the flesh had besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him (2 Cor. xii:7).

This is followed by a *model* for prayer which the King now gives. This prayer is generally called throughout Christendom "the Lord's prayer." Where is the authority in Scripture to call it by this name? If any prayer can be called the Lord's prayer it certainly is the one contained in John xvii. It is not the Lord's prayer, but the disciples' prayer This model for prayer has become the formal prayer, the ritualistic prayer of every sect in Christendom. That which our Lord forbids, vain repetitions, is practiced with this divine model by those who call themselves Christians. In the Roman and Greek Churches, so-called, it becomes a good work to repeat so many "Our Fathers," and the poor deceived souls expect blessing in this world and in eternity from the mechanical repetition of so many prayers. This of course is very little different from the prayer machines of Thibet, upon which a certain number of prayers written on paper are placed and unwound before some god or goddess.

In "evangelical" denominations it is not much better. We remember well in childhood, being strictly brought up in the Lutheran denomination, how constantly this prayer was used. In sickness, in pain, in danger, at mealtime, in the morning and at night, in severe storms, etc., it was ever repeated as if a miraculous power indwelt these words sufficient to dispel sickness, deliver from danger and bring blessing which otherwise would not come. It is one of the rags which Luther brought away from the old Roman sepulchre. Yet it is the same in other denominations. In one of the strongest it is used at the burial of the dead, sprinkling of infants, Lord's supper, "ordination" of deacons and elders, "consecration" of bishops, and it is repeated in public by the congregation. All this practice, the use of this model for prayer, as the Lord's prayer given to the Church, to be used by the Church, is wrong, decidedly unchristian, nor can it be proven from the New Testament that it is intended for the Church. In the Acts of the Apostles we read of the breaking of bread, the gifts of the Spirit, the assembly of believers, the baptism of believers, but do we read anywhere in the divinely inspired record of the beginning of the Church that the so-called Lord's prayer was used by the apostles or by the primitive church? Is there a hint anywhere in the New Testament that the prayer is to be repeated in public and used by believers? Not even the faintest hint that this should be so, but many strong proofs and arguments that it should not be so. Centuries passed before it became a settled custom to make the prayer the King gave to His Jewish disciples the prayer for Christians

and to use it in the form and in the way it is used now. An unknown hand then added something to the last petition, "Deliver us from the evil one." The words, "for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever —Amen," are an interpolation. They do not belong into your Bibles, for the Lord never uttered them. The revised version (though so imperfect in many of its revisions) has done well in omitting them altogether. When it was decided to use this model for prayer as a prayer, this ending was written by some one and added to it and thus making it a prayer with the "Amen" attached to it. No such "amen" belongs there.

This perfect model of prayer was given by our Lord to His disciples to be used by them individually and previously to the gift of the Holy Spirit. It was then all on Jewish ground; they were Jewish *believers* and as such they received this model prayer and used it in the transition state. There came a day when our Lord said another word to these very disciples who had come to Him with the request, "Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples." It was in the upper room where He spoke all the precious words concerning the Comforter, all that which was so new, altogether new, that which would take them upon a new ground. He said, *Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. * * * In that day ye shall ask in My name"* (John xvii:24-27). This message alone ought to give perfect light and understanding to any of our readers who are in doubt about this matter. "Hitherto ye have asked nothing

in My name." This shows two things: (1) They asked of God, and (2) They asked not in His name. They had then used the prayer He had taught them, and it was a prayer *not* in His name. Now He tells them that they were to ask *in His name.* This, then, is Christian prayer to ask God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. When He says "in that day" He means the day which began when the Holy Spirit came down from heaven, and this day is still present.* The Christian believer, knowing his perfect standing in Christ Jesus, prays in His name, and that is prayer in the Holy Spirit, who now joins His help to our weakness; for we do not know what we should pray for as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession with groanings which can-

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*When the Holy Spirit was given, and the child was able to draw near to the Father in the name of Christ, you have something different. *The Lord's prayer* so-called does not clothe the believer with the name of Christ. What is meant by asking the Father in that name? Can it be merely saying "in His name" at the end of a prayer? When Christ died and rose again, He gave the believer *His own* standing before God, and then to ask the Father in the name of Christ is to ask in the consciousness that my Father *loves me as He loves Christ;* that my Father has given me the acceptance of *Christ Himself* before Him, having completely blotted out all my evil, so as to be made the righteousness of God in Him. To pray in the value of this is asking in His name. Is there a soul using the Lord's prayer as a form that has a real understanding of what it is to ask the Father in the name of Christ? I believe they have never entered into that great truth.—*Notes on Matthew by W. Kelly.*

The latter is, alas! too true; "they have never entered into that great truth." How sad to see the great mass of professing Christians without a knowledge of what grace has done, without assurance of salvation, constantly "unchristianizing" themselves, cumbered with much service, running to and fro.—A. C. G.

not be uttered (Rom. viii:26). We glance but briefly at a few of the petitions to show how a Christian believer could not use this model of prayer as a form. However, we desire to state once more the perfection of the prayer. Every word here is as divine as He who spoke it. There could be no imperfection about anything He uttered. Many volumes have been written on it and many more might be written to show the perfection of every petition.

As believers we know that our Lord gave the promise and has fulfilled it by the gift of the Holy Spirit, "That if any love Me, he will keep My word and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him." We are brought nigh by His blood, and in the person of an adorable Lord we *are* in heaven seated with Him in the heavenlies. The "Our Father who art in heaven" does not give expression to this nor could it be before the death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord. "Hallowed be thy name" is Jewish. Indeed, the Jewish ritual uses the phrase very often. The believer exalts "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Him whom God has exalted and made head over all things."

"Thy kingdom come." This petition is for the coming of the kingdom, the kingdom of the heavens, the Messianic Kingdom, which is followed by the doing of the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven. Here Christendom is the most confused, expecting a kingdom now; a spiritual kingdom without a king. What our Lord taught His Jewish disciples to pray for is the kingdom of the heavens to come, that which John the Baptist preached, and also the

Lord up to the time of His rejection. As believers we do not wait for the coming of the King and the establishment of the kingdom in the earth, but we wait for the coming of the Lord to take us out of the earth. The prayer of the Church is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." And the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." Without enlarging on the other petitions or attempting a full exposition of them in their full and perfect meaning we wish only to say that this prayer will be heard once more in the earth and will then be used as it was once used by the Jewish disciples when they were sent forth by our Lord. When the Church is taken from the earth a believing Jewish remnant will give the witness and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom once more. They will undoubtedly use this prayer during the great tribulation through which they will pass, the tribulation in which the evil one is in the earth and famine and many temptations will abound. Then can they truthfully ask, "Give us this day our daily bread—lead us not into temptations—deliver us from the evil one," which is the personal Antichrist. "Thy kingdom come." This prayer will be answered, deliverance will come for them from heaven in the coming of the King.*

Then our Lord speaks in connection with prayer of the spirit of forgiveness which every one who is in relationship with God as Father should exercise. If such a spirit of love and patience towards those who have done evil against us

*We pass over the petition, "And forgive use our debts as we forgive our debtors." This is a legal, an Old Testament petition. Our forgiveness does *not* depend upon our relation to each other.

is not practiced, it means that we cannot enjoy full communion with Him. Therefore, "let all bitterness, and heat of passion, and wrath, and clamor and injurious language be removed from you, with all malice; and be to one another kind, compassionate, forgiving one another, so as God also in Christ has forgiven you" (Eph. iv:32). That which relates to ourself follows next: "And when ye fast be not as the hypocrites, downcast in countenance, for they disfigure their faces so that they may appear fasting to men; verily I say to you, they have their reward. But thou when fasting anoint thy head and wash thy face, so that thou mayest not appear fasting unto men, but to thy Father, who sees in secret; and thy Father who sees in secret shall render it to thee." Here once more we have the wrong motive and the true. It was done by the hypocrites in just the way spoken of here. It was an attitude of humiliation of the body, denying self, but only as to be seen of men. What else has been and is all the fasting and asceticism as it has been fostered in Christendom? If one does fast, let the fasting be done in secret as unto the Father and not to appear before men.

In the second half of the sixth chapter we are taken upon another ground. The heirs of the kingdom are seen in this section as in the world, subject to the cares and temptations of the wilderness. We must not lose sight here of its Jewish application. When our Lord sent forth His disciples in the tenth chapter to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom He gave them instructions how they should go about, depending in all things upon their Father in heaven. The disciples thus

sent forth with the preaching of the Kingdom Gospel are the types of another Jewish remnant which is to preach once more in a future day the same Gospel, "The Kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh." To this remnant going through the tribulation the exhortations have a special application. However, we pass this by and apply it to ourselves as believers, for all which our Lord speaks in this section is for every member of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, as such, who are in the earth, pilgrims and strangers, waiting for the coming of the Lord. We are in the world though not of the world, hated by the world as the world hated Him, but in this world we are exposed to all the temptations and the cares and sorrows connected with an earthly life which are ever coming upon the believer. Our Lord tells us now how to behave in the midst of these scenes, passing through the wilderness, what our privileges and comforts are.—"Lay not up for yourself treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust spoils, and where thieves dig through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust spoils, and where thieves do not dig through and steal; for where thy treasure is, there will be also thy heart."—The natural man lives for the earthly things and strives for the things which are seen. His delight is in treasures which are here below, and connected with this life is care, worry, anxiety and at last the loss of that which was cherished and loved. As believers born again we have a new nature and belong no longer to the earth, but we belong to heaven. "If therefore ye have been raised with the Christ, seek the things which are above,

where the Christ is sitting at the right hand of God: have your mind on the things which are above, not on the things that are on the earth" (Cor. iii:2, 3). "We look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things which are seen are for a time, but those that are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv:18). While, then, this is our calling it is neverthless true that the heirs of the kingdom are constantly in danger in this present evil age to forget that they are but pilgrims and strangers here. Alas! only too many are like Lot, pitching first the tent towards Sodom and getting there altogether after a while. In these days especially the danger is exceedingly great and the heavenly calling, the laying up of treasures in heaven is often put into a secondary place. The exhortations in the Epistles are but a continuation by the Holy Spirit of this word of our Lord. "Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many unwise and hurtful lusts, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For the love of money is the root of every evil; which some having aspired after, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows" (1 Tim. vi:9-11). "Enjoin on those rich in the present age not to be high-minded, nor to trust in the uncertainty of riches; but in God who affords us all things richly for our enjoyment; to do good, to be rich in good works, to be liberal in distributing, disposed to communicate of their substance" (1 Tim. vi:17, 18). "Let your conversation be without the love of money, satisfied with your present circumstances" (Heb. xxiii:5). How great the danger of looking back to Egypt! But as we follow the

exhortation and lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven and that in view of the judgment seat of Christ, where we shall receive the rewards, our heart will surely be there. Thus having our treasures there and laying them up there they are not alone secure, but our heart will constantly be drawn there and in this way kept from the earthly things. And where do our thoughts mostly rest—on earthly or heavenly things? If our thoughts are here surely our treasure cannot be in heaven.

Our Lord continues: "The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body will be light; but if thine eye be wicked, thy whole body will be dark: If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great the darkness."

These are most solemn words. The believer has a spiritual nature, a heart in which he sees, "being enlightened in the *eyes* of your heart" (Ephes. 1:18). The Word of God is the light and the entrance of His Word bringeth light. The eye, the heart single—that is looking only above to the heavenlies, the whole body will be light, there will be not only a realization of a heavenly calling but also a walk worthy of this high calling, a heavenly walk. But light rejected becomes darkness, and how great the darkness! Truth given, light flashed forth from the Word and not used and acted upon, leads into the grossest darkness.*

Therefore a double service is impossible. We cannot serve two masters. It is impossible that the eye could look

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*This is the deplorable state of thousands of believers.

at the same time to the earth and to heaven. Friendship with the world is enmity with God (James iv:4). Is it then a hard path which we have in the wilderness with no comfort? No, for the very next words of our Lord bring to our hearts that sweet and precious comfort which only he can enjoy who with the single eye looks to things above and walks in separation from the world.

These words (25-34 verses) tell us that we have a Father who careth, a Father who knows and who loves. He who feedeth the birds of heaven provides surely more abundantly for those who are much better than they, and all He asks is trust in Him. "Be not careful"—oh, how blessedly it sounds—oh, how full and rich it comes to the believer's heart. And again it is written "Be careful about *nothing*; but in *everything*, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. iv:6). Be not careful for your life, what ye shall eat. * * * Be careful for nothing. * * * Yet how slow we are to learn it. Anxiety and care, hurry and worry, these God-dishonoring works of the flesh are ever coming up again. How true George Mueller used to say:

"Where anxiety begins faith ends,
Where faith begins anxiety ends."

The lesson can only be learned in constant dependence upon Him in seeking the things which are above.

And what does anxiety and care accomplish after all? "But which of you by being careful can add to his growth

one cubit? And why are you careful about clothing?" etc. (Verses 27-33). We are then utterly helpless in ourselves. Alas! how often we look in our anxiety, in sickness and in health to something in ourselves and to men and man's help and not to Him in whose hands we are so securely and leave it all with Him, committing our way unto the Lord. And all this is applicable to even the *smallest* matters of the daily life. Seeking then first of all the kingdom of God and His righteousness—that is, the things which are above—the promise is given, all things shall be added unto you.

And there is another characteristic about anxiety. It looks unbelievingly ahead. Unbelief draws dark pictures of despair and occupies the mind with a day which may never come. How different it ought to be and will be if we but follow His word, "Be not careful then as to the morrow, for the morrow will be careful for itself: sufficient for the day is its own evil."

CHAPTER VII.

The chapter which follows contains the last words of the great discourse of our Lord. The contents of this chapter are very instructive and form a most fitting end of the declaration of the King. The first few verses contain a warning against judging. We have in the beginning of the chapter something which is altogether different from the last section of the sixth chapter. There we saw the heir of the Kingdom in the midst of the world, how he is to trust in and dependent on the Father and seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, his walk undivided and depending. When our Lord begins with "Judge not, that ye be not judged" He directs the attention to the conduct of the disciple towards his fellow disciple. The conduct towards those who are enemies, who despitefully use and persecute the heirs of the Kingdom was mentioned by our Lord before. It is the relation they were to show one towards the other He touches upon now. The principle of this relation is love. In Matthew of course it could not be mentioned in full. In the Gospel of John our Lord leads His disciples into the fullness of it, which here is but indicated, and in the First Epistle of John these precious things are still more unfolded. After He had, as the Lord and Teacher, washed the disciples' feet, He told them that they ought to wash one another's feet. This is the opposite from that against which He warns

here, sitting upon judgment against the other and *exposing* one another's faults.

But we ask, what does our Lord mean, when He says: "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"? Does He in these words forbid the judging of outward actions or the present evil? Some have taken it in this sense and gone into that looseness against which the Lord warns later (verse 6). The Lord does not forbid here the judging of actions and evil. If He did, His words would clash with numerous statements in the Epistles. For instance, we read in Corinthians: "For what have I to do with judging those outside also? Yea, do not ye judge them that are within? But those without God judges. Remove the wicked persons from among yourselves" (1 Cor. v:12, 13). It is evident from these words, as well as from the order our Lord has laid down, to proceed with a brother who has sinned (Matthew xviii:15-18), that the individual believer as well as the assembly has a right to judge evil actions. Furthermore, in this very chapter our Lord declares, "By their fruits ye shall know them;" how, then, could we know them if it were not by ourselves judging the persons on account of their evil actions? Certainly judging of things which surround us, as well as persons, when it is our plain duty to do so, is nowhere forbidden. Contending earnestly for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints, to which we are exhorted in these days of falling away, carries with it the necessity of judging that which, in man-made systems as well as in persons, is offensive to

God and dishonoring to our Lord. The words which demand the separation from that which is evil presupposes judging likewise. This solemn duty we have as believers, in the midst of a perverse generation, standing as we do, at the close of this dispensation. It is to be exercised as in the fear of the Lord and with the single eye to His glory and the honor of His name. Easily and quickly made is the step from the judging, which is duty, to that censoriousness, fault-finding and all that follows, against which our Lord warns and which is sinful.

But what is the meaning of the words "Judge not"? Our Lord forbids the judging of motives, the spring from which actions result. I have no right to judge that which is not manifested to mine eyes. Motives are concealed and known to God alone. He who in censoriousness continually judges his brother's motives and in a fault-finding spirit sits in judgment upon him, assumes the place of the judge, which does not belong to him, but to the Lord only. Two passages, perhaps, from Romans and Corinthians explain the judging which our Lord condemns: "One man is assured that he may eat all things; but the weak eats herbs. Let not him that eats make little of him that eats not; and let not him that eats not judge him that eats: for God has received him. Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own master he stands and falls. * * * But thou, why judgest thou thy brother? or again, thou, why does thou make little of thy brother? for we shall all be placed before the judgment seat of God. * * * Let us no longer therefore judge one another; but judge ye this rather, not

to put a stumbling-block or a fall-trap before his brother" (Romans xiv:3-13). "So that do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord shall come, who shall also both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and shall make manifest the counsels of hearts; and then shall each have his praise from God" (1 Corin. iv:5).

And how true it is what our Lord says: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you." This is a law, from which the believer cannot escape. A law like that other one in Galatians, "Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatever a man shall sow, that shall he reap." Many a one has found out the swift working of this law, "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you." Many will have yet to learn by sad experiences and much heartache that the execution of this law is never slow. The word was quickly spoken which censured a brother's motives, which belittled him (to lift up the self of the accuser), but it will not take very long, and some one will step up with the same measure and the same judgment and do the same to us. Nothing is so detrimental to spirituality than a habitual censoriousness.

And why, then, do men see the little mote in their brother's eye? Because they do not see the great beam in their own.

If the saint but judges himself he will surely not be forever occupied with seeing the mote in the brother's eye. He will be patient, loving and not surmise always evil. "Love does not impute evil * * * beareth all things,

believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. xiii).

In the sixth verse our Lord warns against the other extreme, which is looseness, the abuse of His grace: "Give not that which is holy to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them with their feet and turn round and rend you."* A person misunderstanding the "judge not" may allow evil to go unjudged, and therefore that which is holy and the pearls become defiled and are trampled under feet by dogs and swine—unconverted persons, though perhaps outward professors (see 2 Peter ii:22). To apply the passage to the preaching of the Gospel to the unsaved and to those sunk the deepest in vice would be incorrect. It has no reference to the preaching of the Gospel. We should, however, always guard against any irreverent use of the word of God and the blessed things made known in it.

In verses 7-11 we have the familiar words of our Lord telling us to ask of Him, with the assurance that every one that asketh receiveth. The connection is obvious. In looking at the injunctions our Lord gives not to judge and not to abuse, what He has given, one feels the need of wisdom. Intercourse with God in prayer supplies this need. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God that giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James i:5).

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*That incorrect paraphrase called "the Twentieth Century New Testament" has seen fit to put part of this verse in a more *refined* (? !) language. They translate, "Do not give what is sacred to dogs; nor yet throw your pearls before *pigs*." How ridiculous!

And what an invitation is here put before us! How simple and definite the language! How plain it all is with no "if" or "but" added to it. Happy he who takes all these words in their simple meaning and ever uses the royal offer in faith. Of course we would not look in Matthew for the fullest teaching on prayer in His name nor could the words here, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you," be applied to anyone else but believers. This is clear from the words: "If ye then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to those that ask Him." In Luke xi we read the same word, but there it says, "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." The prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit, however, is no longer in order, for the Comforter has come, and no believer has a right now to ask upon this promise for the Spirit.

The 12th verse in this chapter is one of the most misapplied in the whole discourse of our Lord. "All things, therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, thus do ye also to them: for this is the law and the prophets." This, many professing Christians and others, who make no profession at all, call the golden rule. How many, Jews and Gentiles, have told us that this is the religion they believe in. It is even claimed that in the "sacred" books of the East, the religious products of Buddhism and Brahmanism, something similar is found.*

*Jews claim the same for the Talmud because Hillel taught "What thou wouldst not wish for thyself, do not unto thy neighbor, This is the whole law."—*Talmud, Sabb.* 31.

Yet with all this boast in a rule which they do not understand, no one keeps it nor would think of keeping it. The Lord gives this practical word to the true disciple. He who is born again is born of God. He has the nature of God and that is love. "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. * * * Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii:8 and 10). "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (1 John iii:11). "We love, because He first loved us" (1 John iv:19). We see then that the terse saying our Lord puts in the chapter is not out of keeping with the whole. The outcome of intercourse with God spoken of in verses 7-11 will be, acting in love.

This is followed by an exhortation such as He who is from above alone could give and with it the first half of the seventh chapter closes. "Enter ye in through the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth unto destruction, and many there are that enter through it; because narrow is the gate and straitened is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there are that find it." It is the well-known Gospel text, though not always correctly applied. The gate (door) and the way is Christ Himself. "I am the *door* of the sheep; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John x). "I am the way * * * no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John xiv). And why then is the gate narrow? Not because certain conditions and hard terms are to be fulfilled, but because man does not want to give up his own righteousness and clinging still to his mis-

erable, filthy rags, he refuses God's way and God's door of salvation, which is Christ and Christ alone. Ah, the devices of Satan ever multiplying to keep men away from entering in through the narrow gate! The broad way that leads to destruction was never so thronged in the history of Christendom with such masses of professing, self-righteous, moral, educated, but Christ and the blood rejecting "Christians" as in these days, and still the word is true of the narrow gate and the straitened way that "few there are that find it."

In His closing words our Lord gives a most solemn warning against false prophets, and makes a contrast between the false professor and the true possessor. "Beware of false prophets, such as come to you in sheep's clothing, but within are ravening wolves!" (verse 15). Let us notice first of all that this warning has a special significance for the closing of the age, that is, the ending of this dispensation, the seven years of tribulation and sorrow in the earth. We only need to turn to the Olivet discourse (Matt. xxiv) in which our Lord answers the question of His disciples concerning the consummation of the age. When they asked about this ending of the age they surely meant nothing else but the Jewish age, for of a Christian age they knew nothing. In answer our Lord gives, describing the events which fall into the seventieth week of Daniel, He says: "And many false prophets shall arise." These false prophets will make their appearance during the great tribulation, no doubt under the leadership of *the* false prophet, the Beast, so prominent in the book of Revelation. That there have been throughout this dispensation false

prophets in sheep's clothing and that they are more numerous now than they have ever been before we need hardly mention, yet strictly speaking, the warning against false prophets concerns the Jewish remnant in the earth during the time of Jacob's trouble. Nowhere are we as believers warned against false prophets; we are warned against *false spirits* and *false teachers,* which of course, like the false prophets come in sheep's clothing. False prophets then, after the church is taken, to lead many astray; false teachers and false spirits now while the Church is still on the earth. The false prophets, who will undoubtedly work many miracles and be leaders of the strong delusions, are the visible manifestation of the false spirits which are now at work. When Paul said farewell to the Elders of Ephesus he said: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts xx:29, 30). How soon this prophecy was fulfilled! Let us remind ourselves of some of the solemn warnings which are for the Church. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ" (Col. ii:8). "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science, falsely so-called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith" (1 Tim. vi:20). The very errors and false teachings so prevalent in these days are marked out here. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from

the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. iv:1). And how great the increase of these seducing spirits in our day! "But there were false *prophets* also among the people, even as there shall be false *teachers* among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Pet. ii:1). The so-called "Higher Critics," who sit in wicked judgment upon the infallible Word of God and dishonor Christ, the living Word, are meant here. And where are these men not found throughout Christendom? See also the warnings against false spirits in the first Epistle of John. (1 John iv:1-3; 2 Cor. ii:17; 2 Cor. xi:13-15; Titus i:10, 11, and other passages).

But whether they are false prophets coming in the future or the false spirits and teachers at the present time, they come in sheep's clothing. Anti-Christ himself will first speak like a lamb and have a flattering tongue, and all the prophets under his control will follow him, backing their assertions by signs and lying miracles. The story of Moses and Aaron sent by Jehovah, and Jannes and Jambres sent by Satan and endued by him with power, will then be acted out again (Exodus vii:11). In this way many will be led astray. In our age Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and the false spirits and teachers appear like meek sheep of the Great Shepherd. In the subtle infidelity which denies the inspiration of the Bible, Satan has surely transformed himself thus. There is much talk from their side of "Bible research," and that their work will help in bring-

ing out the truth, and many declarations that they are sincere and earnest Christian workers in spite of their infidelity in the divinity of the Scriptures, but all this is but the sheep's dress in which they make their appearance. We think of other false teachers who deny the eternal Deity of our Lord, the physical resurrection of Him and the revealed facts concerning the dead in Christ and those who died unsaved.* All these soul destroying false teachings come in the garb of truth and light.

Our Lord continues: "By their fruits ye shall know them: do men gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles? So every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but the corrupt tree bringeth forth bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth forth not good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. By their fruits then shall ye know them" (verses 16-20).

What does our Lord mean by fruit? Does He mean downright wickedness? There is no question that immorality and evil deeds are included under the term fruit. Many a false teacher began in teaching error in such a way that the error could hardly be distinguished from the truth, but continuing in error he ended with many of his followers in the flesh. Often behind the most subtle errors the flesh is nourished and an outbreak in gross immorality may

*We have reference to the *"Millennial Dawn Series."* Thousands have been led astray by these books which appear indeed in sheep's clothing, but within is the ravening wolf who wishes to harm the flock of Christ.

follow. Yet, if our Lord meant nothing but evil deeds and wickedness, it would be hard indeed to detect these false ones. Satan is not so blind as to peddle his lies around by wicked people whose lives bear the stamp of immorality and open wickedness. He does it in quite another way. We were often told of people who hold the most abominable doctrines and deny the Deity of our Lord as well as the atonement, "But look at the beautiful lives they live! How meek and lovely they are! How much good they do! Do not their lives prove that their doctrine is right and the fruit show that the tree is not bad?" This outward moral appearance and a "sweet" temper belongs only too often to the sheep's clothing and is one of the devices of Satan with which he tries to lead many away from the truth and into error—the fruit by which we shall know them may be wickedness in the grossest form, but it means more than that. The word "Do men gather grapes from thorns and figs from thistles?" is the key. Grapes and figs speak of *true* fruit. Thorns bear fruit which may resemble grapes, but never can they be grapes from which comes the wine which makes glad the heart of God and man. The soul looking deeper (and we remember the warning is for believers) than outward appearances finds soon that the false teacher or spirit is not in the truth. He tests it by the Word, and finds the fruit, the glory of Christ and glorying in Him, lacking. It is a most subtle substitute for the true fruit—a counterfeit—and leaves the soul empty. A believer, not much taught in the Scriptures, sent us a few weeks ago a question about a certain publication which was

sent to him with the promise of leading him into a better knowledge of the Bible inasmuch as it was devoted to Bible study. We wrote him at once exposing the true character of the paper. He answered, that while he had but little knowledge yet of the Word, and while much seemed to be in favor of the paper which had been placed into his hands, yet while reading he experienced a feeling of emptiness, there was no response from his heart and a lack of joy and peace. This, perhaps, will be helpful to see how a true believer will know them by their fruit.

But in the words of our Lord we have also the most definite teaching of that doctrine, which may be termed the A B C of the Gospel, the total depravity of man, the utter ruin of man, and, therefore, the necessity of the impartation of a new nature. Both, as we well know, are denied by some of the leading preachers and teachers of all the great evangelical denominations. To deny these truths is equal to the denial that Christ is our Saviour. Man is, according to the new theology, his own Saviour. The tree is corrupt, the fruit is bad. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. The tree is good and the fruit is good. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.

In the three verses our Lord mentions His own coming day, when He will appear as the One into whose hands the Father has given all things. The whole ending of the discourse brings us into that time. This in itself makes it that great dispensational discourse concerning the kingdom, as we have pointed out in our exposition.

"Not every one who saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father, who is in heaven. Many will say to Me in *that day,* Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out demons, and in Thy name have done many wonderful works? And *then* I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye who work lawlessness!"

That this has no reference to the Church is evident. The Church meets the Lord in the air, and every believer has in Christ's day to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. But at that judgment seat no mere professors of Christ's name will appear, and no "Depart from Me," will be heard from the lips of the Lord, the Head of the Body. Nor does this word here in Matthew refer us to the great white throne. When our Lord says "in that day," He means the day when the kingdom of the heavens is come by His return to the earth. Then many will be found but empty professors, who in spite of their works and using His name were none of His. From this dispensational aspect, we may well look to our times. The name of Christ is upon many lips, and there are many who speak in His name, and do works of power in His name, yet they are not saved and know Him not. Christian Science, falsely so-called, may be mentioned here as well as others. Not outward profession brings into the kingdom and makes one an heir of it, but doing the will of the Father. This is continued in the last paragraph. "Therefore, whosoever *heareth* these words of mine and *doeth* them, is likened unto

a prudent man, who built his house upon the rock, and the rain and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. And the rain and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it" (verses 24-27).

How sublime and yet simple is this illustration of our Lord! Hearing first and doing is the way. The rock upon which he who heareth (believeth), builds, is Christ. Other foundation can no man lay. Being in Him we are safe and secure in time and in eternity. The storm will come, and is even now advancing, yet we have a refuge and a shelter in Him, and as He abides, the Rock, so shall we abide. How true, oh! how true it is:

> On Christ, the solid rock, I stand,
> All other ground is sinking sand.

All which is not Christ is sinking sand. Reader! where do you stand, upon Christ and Christ alone, or upon something else—no matter what—the sinking sand?

Such teaching, such unfoldings of the purposes of God were never heard before. The Pharisees and scribes disputed together, and expressed their human opinions, but here One spake with authority, so that the multitudes were astonished.

CHAPTER VIII.

With the eighth chapter we enter into a new section of the Gospel. This section extends to the end of the twelfth chapter. The King had declared the principles and rule of the kingdom, and now He comes down from the mountain followed by great multitudes. First of all He is to manifest Himself as the divine King, the Jehovah of the Old Testament Scriptures, who is truly come to His own. To them He offers and through His disciples likewise, the kingdom. But soon it becomes evident that His own receive Him not. They reject Him and recognize Him not as their King, and accuse Him, before whom the demons cried in terror, that His miracles were done by Beelzebub, the prince of demons. He then breaks off the relationship with His own, which we find at the end of the xii chapter. These five chapters, from the eighth to the twelfth, contain therefore the full manifestation of Jehovah-Jesus among His people and the rejection of the King.

And how completely He manifested Himself as the King with divine power! Here we have a number of miracles, one following the other, as we hope to show, put in perfect order by the One who is perfect in knowledge, the Holy Spirit. Yet with these wonderful manifestations, the leper cleansed, the demons driven out, the blind made to see, the dead raised, the people deliberately reject Him, and fall

not at His feet to worship Him. This shows the utter ruin and full character of the flesh, enmity against God. It is so still and never can be anything else. Even if now (as it is sometimes said it should be) signs and miracles would be done, the flesh would not be changed by them, *but would still reject Him and turn away from the Lord.* The antichrist, the false king, Satan's masterpiece and counterfeit, will make his appearance in the closing days with all power and signs and lying wonders. He will mimic all the signs and miracles done by our Lord. The flesh will surely accept that false one with his strong delusions. But let us briefly point out the signs our Lord does in these chapters:

1. The cleansing of the leper, viii:1-4. He touches the leper.

2. The healing of the Centurion's servant, viii:5-13. He heals by His word. Faith touches Him.

3. Peter's wife's mother healed of fever, 14, 15. Healing by His touch.

4. The healing of All, 16, 17. His presence among the suffering.

5. He rebukes the winds and the sea, 23, 27. His divine power over nature.

6. The two possessed by demons delivered, 28-34. Demons confess Him Son of God.

7. A man sick of palsy completely restored, ix:1-8. Full restoration of soul and body. "The lame man shall leap as an hart" (Is. xxxv:6).

8. A woman with an issue of blood healed, ix:20-22. She touches Him.

9. The daughter of the ruler raised up, 23-26. Resurrection.

10. Two blind men receive their sight, 27-31. "He openeth the eyes of the blind" (Is. xxxv:5).

11. A dumb man with a demon healed, 32, 33. "The tongue of the dumb shall sing" (Is. xxxv:6).

12. Preaching the Gospel of the kingdom and healing *every* sickness and *every* disease, 35 (Is. lxi:1).

13. The man with the withered hand healed (xii:10-13).

14. One possessed by a demon, blind and dumb, restored, 22. His last sign of this section (Is. xxxv:5, 6).

In these miracles we have before us the manifestation of the King. Jehovah alone could manifest Himself thus in mercy, healing and restoring. Satan may have great power to work signs, yet never could such a manifestation come from him. "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?" (xii:26). With these words our Lord silenced the Satanic accusations of the Pharisees. What He did, furthermore, is seen in the Old Testament in connection with the kingdom. The signs manifest the King as well as the Kingdom.. In Isaiah xxxv we have a description of the kingdom as the King is to set it up. He came, and that He is the King and His Kingdom at hand, is proven by Him in doing the signs enumerated in the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah. The King and Kingdom is rejected, the Kingdom postponed, and Israel and the

nations wait with a groaning creation for the glorious fulfilment of this chapter in Isaiah. The fulfilment will come, when the King comes back to the earth, then "the ransomed of Jehovah shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

And how full is the manifestation of His divine power! Leprosy, the awful disease and defilement, altogether gone. Winds and sea calmed. Demons banished and sent to the place where they belong. Forgiveness of sins followed by the healing of the body. The blind see, the dumb speak, the dead rise! Every sickness and every disease healed. These miracles our Lord did here to show Himself as the King are certainly also typical of the spiritual cleansing, the opening of the eyes of the blind, the sinner, the speaking in praise and worship of those who never spoke to God or of God, the raising of the dead, the power and dominion of Satan broken. The application on these lines is evident. We see in them also a foreshadowing of the redemption of the body of the believer in resurrection, as well as the blessings for Israel and the nations, in the coming age. All these features, we hope to point out as we look to the different signs, separately.

Before taking up the first part of the eighth chapter we must call the attention of our readers to another fact. If one looks for these miracles in the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and traces our Lord's movements in them, he will be astonished to find that they are put in these Gospels in an entirely different setting. We will not go into details here. In Matthew all has its peculiar arrangement, and every-

thing is taken out of its chronological order. This is nowhere so evident, as in the section before us. The reason is obvious. The Holy Spirit has manifested in it His divine wisdom. Infidels have ever sneered (and do even more so every day) at a verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. The utterances of some well-known "evangelical" teachers, that the New Testament contains numerous discrepancies, is generally backed up by arguments about the miracles recorded in Matthew, as happening after the sermon on the mount, when in another Gospel they are given as having occurred before the discourse of our Lord. Now that which moves the infidel and the preacher tainted with higher criticism to ridicule the divinity and infallibility of the written Word, moves the believer and diligent searcher of the Scriptures to praise, for the very argument which the denier of a verbal inspiration uses to build his infidel fabric on, is to the believer the most positive evidence of the divinity of the Bible and its verbal inspiration. It is not alone so here but all through the Word. The Holy Spirit as the writer of the first Gospel has taken certain events in the life of our Lord and grouped them together in such a way that they not only show us how the King proved Himself King and how He was rejected, but to show in the grouping of these miracles the purposes of God, and bring out some very rich yet simple dispensational teachings. The Gospel of Matthew as the Jewish Gospel is the proper place for it.

We look now at the first seventeen verses of the eighth chapter. Here we have four different signs.

The first is the cleansing of the leper, followed at once

by the healing of the centurion's servant, after which our Lord enters Peter's house, and his mother-in-law being sick, He touches her hand and the fever leaves her. The last is the healing of all. Now in these four miracles, following one the other as they do here, we have by the Holy Spirit dispensational teachings concerning the Jews and the Gentiles. The first, the cleansing of the leper, stands for Jehovah among His people Israel. The second, where He is absent, and heals not by His touch but by His Word; this represents the Gentile dispensation which is still running. After this dispensation is passed He will enter the house again, restoring His relations with Israel, and healing the sick daughter of Zion, represented by the healing touch and raising of Peter's mother-in-law. After this is accomplished the millennial blessings come to *all* in the earth when the curse of sin will be removed. We look at each but briefly.

I. *The cleansing of the leper. Israel represented by the leper. Jehovah-rophe (Ex. xv.) among His people.* Leprosy is the most loathsome disease known. There was no remedy for it in the Old Testament, nor is there a remedy for it in our times, and we may say there will *never* be any found. The Spirit of God has made leprosy a type of sin, and inasmuch as there is no remedy from the human side for sin, so there is none and will be none from man's side for leprosy. Jehovah alone could heal the awful disease (Numbers xii:13; 2 Kings v:1-15, etc.). This man meeting our Lord as He comes from the mountain was according

to Luke (and he was a physician), "A man full of leprosy" (Luke v:12). The application of leprosy as to every sinner is so well known that we pass it over. The leper here does not alone represent the sinner, but he represents Israel. Long before the Spirit of God had made known the leprous condition of the people in the following words: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores. They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (Is. i:5, 6). This is a most perfect description of the leper with his wounds, bruises and sores as he wanders an outcast toward still greater sufferings. Here then Israel's Messiah, Jehovah-Jesus, the same who spoke in Exodus, "I am Jehovah, thy Healer," meets His poor, unclean people, represented by the leper. The attitude of the leper as he fell before Him, doing Him homage, should have been Israel's attitude, his prayer, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou art able to cleanse me," Israel's prayer. Jehovah-Jesus stretches out His hand and touches him. He speaks as Jehovah in all His omnipotent power and mercy, "I will—be cleansed." And *immediately* his leprosy *was* cleansed. Thus Jehovah could and would cleanse Israel. He had then manifested Himself as the "Jehovah, thy Healer," among His people. The Lord sends the cleansed leper to the priest and asks him to offer the gift which Moses ordained. This was all proper before the death and resurrection of our Lord. Some have taken this as an evidence that the law should still be kept, but they forget that by the death and resurrection

of our Lord we are delivered from the law. However, the issue here is not the continuation of the Mosaic institutions The Lord sends the cleansed leper to the priest for a different purpose. The priest was the proper person to pronounce the cleansed one clean. How then had he become clean? Had he used any remedy? No. Had he seen some celebrated physician? No. Jesus had spoken, "I will!" He, who in prophecy, in the law (Deuteronomy), in Ezekiel and Isaiah, saith again and again, "I will," had touched him. Who was this Jesus? There could be only one answer, *He is Jehovah* manifested in the flesh. The priest should have broken forth in song and praise: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought redemption for His people!" He should have run from the sanctuary in search of Him, and having found Him adores Him as Jehovah. But the event closes abruptly. The priest alone heard the story, for the man was told not to tell it to others. The priest is silent; we hear nothing of him. He failed to recognize Jehovah in the midst of His people, and does not respond by coming forth to meet the divine King. The priest is the type of unbelieving Israel. The day, however, will come when the King will come again, and when in mercy, He will speak again to the remnant of His people, "I will." The Sun of righteousness will rise with healing beneath His wings.

II. *The Centurion's servant healed by His Word. Grace shown to the Gentile. Not even in Israel have I found so great faith.* Israel having failed to accept the King, and

not recognizing Jehovah in their midst, the Gentile is introduced. Grace was to come to the Gentile. The Centurion's servant was a paralytic—the type of the helpless and hopeless condition of the Gentiles. The Centurion steps up with a simple, childlike faith. How different from the ritualistic priest who had no answer to Jehovah-Jesus. Jesus declared Himself willing to come and heal him. He, the One who knows the heart of man, well knew that this would bring out the faith of the Gentile. And the Centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not fit that Thou shouldest enter under my roof: but only *speak a word* and my servant shall be healed." In this simple faith there is the fullest confession that Jesus *is* God and able to heal by His Word, though absent from the sufferer. What a grand foreshadowing of the dispensation in which we live and of the mercy shown to the Gentiles! It is the character of the dispensation. Jesus is absent, yet in childlike faith we know Him, and by His Word He manifests His power. It is not healing by touch, but by His Word. Upon the manifestation of "so great faith," our Lord reveals the coming in of the Gentiles and the setting aside of Israel, "the sons of the kingdom." "But I say unto you that many shall come from the rising and setting sun, and shall lie down at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens; but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth." There is another feature here we must not forget. In the eighteenth chapter of Genesis we read how Abraham refreshed the

Lord. Here after the failure of Abraham's seed the Gentile refreshes the heart of the Lord. What joy and comfort the blessed One had in looking upon this Gentile and "so great faith," and then look towards the cross and beyond it; the travail of His soul must have come before Him, the blessed fruit of His death and resurrection in the coming of them afar off. And are you refreshing and comforting His heart, Him who is unseen now? And surely it is by simple faith in Himself and in His power we refresh Him.

III. *Coming to the house. The suffering woman healed of fever, raised up and serving Him. Typical of Israel's healing and raising up.* In the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, we see a type of what will take place after the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. The sick woman is typical of Israel. In some of the Prophets we have the comparison of Israel to a woman, a widow, one forsaken, but the promises speak of her healing and that she is to become the minister of the Lord as Peter's mother-in-law served the Lord. We also see that He heals her by touch. So will He come again in relationship with His people and heal them.

IV. *The demons cast out. All healed who were sick. The fulfilment of Isaiah liii:4. Millennial blessings.* "And when the evening was come, they brought to Him many possessed by demons, and He cast out the spirits with a word and healed *all* that were ill; so that that should be fulfilled which was spoken through Esaias the prophet,

saying, Himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases." Later the demons cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Son of God? Hast Thou come here before the time to torment us?" (Verse 29.) The day is coming, the set time, when Satan will be cast out and bound. This will be in connection with our Lord's return and Israel's restoration. *Then* all demons will be cast out. Now not *all* are healed, but *then* the sad results of sin will be removed. "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick" (Is. xxxiii: 24).

We come now to the second half of the chapter. It will not be necessary to call again attention to the arrangement of the incidents recorded, differing from the Gospel of Luke, where the scene is laid after the transfiguration. We have learned before that the Holy Spirit does not report these events chronologically, but puts all together in His own perfect, divine way. First, we meet with a scribe who desires to follow Jesus, and then a disciple is seen, who wishes to go first to bury his father before following Him. After this He and the disciples are on the stormy sea and He rebukes the winds and the sea. On the other side the two possessed of demons are delivered. We can touch upon but a little of the manifold application which can be made of these events.

"And a scribe came up and said to Him, Teacher, I will follow thee whithersoever thou mayest go." And Jesus says to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heavens roosting places, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head" (verse 19, 20).

This man was a self-seeking scribe, one whose mind was filled with idle dreams of a Kingdom to be established and, having seen the manifestation of the divine power, he desires selfishly to follow Jesus. No doubt his expectations were earthly gain, riches and glory. In this respect he may well be taken as a type of the nation itself. The Lord then gives the answer, which showed the scribe how perfectly He understood his heart and read his thoughts. Nothing is heard of the scribe afterward. It was sufficient to discourage him completely. The Messiah had nothing to offer him, and if he would follow Him, it meant that which the flesh can never do. But all brings out the fact of the coming rejection of the King. None of the multitude come to fall down before Jesus and worship Him as Jehovah, only this man comes. Our Lord was on His way to the other side, when the scribe approaches Him with his carnal request. The answer which Jesus gives is also significant. It is the first indication coming from His own lips of His rejection, and for the first time in this Gospel He speaks of Himself as "Son of Man." This title belongs to Him both in His rejection and in His exaltation. Of course, here it refers to His rejection. The words, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the heaven roosting places, but the Son of Man has not where He may lay His head," are generally taken to refer to His extreme earthly poverty. This is certainly correct. He who was rich became poor, that we might by His poverty become rich. He who is the creator of all things came into the earth and made a little lower than the angels, which He had created, took the place

of dependence in lowliness. The Book of Psalms, which so fully reveals Him, the Son of Man, in His rejection as well as in His glory, records His voice as He would speak and as He did speak in the earth. There we read that He says: I am weak, I am weary from groaning, I am poor and needy, I am a worm and no man, I am poured out like water, I am poor and sorrowful, I am like a pelican of the wilderness, I am a sparrow alone, etc. But this word of our Lord speaks also of His death, though it is in the xvi. chapter, after Peter's confession, He reveals to His disciples fully the fact of His rejection, suffering, death, resurrection and coming again as Son of Man. The foxes have places where they find shelter when the hunters seek their lives, so have the birds roosting places where they are safe, but for the Son of Man there was to be no refuge; He came to die the death on the cross.

Many there are still who speak of "following Jesus." What has not the flesh attempted in this direction! Some went into poverty to be as poor as He was and others tried to follow Him in His life and walk as Jesus of Nazareth, ever speaking of His earthly life as an example and of "character building" (a phrase so prominent in modern preaching), as if the flesh could ever be anything but flesh. The true "follow me" and the connection of him who has believed with the Lord in death and resurrection, is but little known and understood.

Then comes one who is a disciple. In Luke we read that the Lord spoke to him first. He called him as His disciple.

Here we read, "But another of His *disciples* said to Him, Lord, suffer me first to go away and bury my father. But Jesus said to him, Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead." The Lord who calls asks absolute obedience. He is the first and all earthly connections are to cease. How reluctant to follow the call; how often the disciple, the believer, who is the Lord's when there is the call to service from the Lord, says, "Suffer me first." Some earthly thing, a certain occupation, an earthly relationship intrudes itself between the calling Lord and His disciple. Oh, for more and greater devotedness to Him, whose we are and who is our Saviour *and* Lord. May we be loosed from all earthly bondage and "let the dead bury their dead."

"And He went on board ship and His disciples followed Him; and behold, the water became very agitated on the sea, so that the ship was covered by the waves; but He slept. And the disciples came and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save: we perish. And He says to them, *Why* are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then having arisen, He rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. But the men were astonished saying, What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him" (verse 23-28).

"He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still" (Ps. cvii:28). The "He," who created the sea was in that ship upon the stormy sea and rose in His power and *rebuked* (what a word!) the winds and the sea. How suggestive it all is. He had asked devotedness and obedience of His disciples and now He shows them that He is with

them and in the midst of storm and waves they are secure and are kept and saved by His power. He slept. What calm and rest was His in the midst of the turbulent element when the disciples were threatened with disaster and death. And such rest is the rest of faith. How slow we are to learn it, the simple lesson "Be anxious for nothing." It is impossible for the flesh. Though the Lord may have sent deliverance a thousand times, whenever a new trial of faith comes, whenever a new storm arises and tribulation is before us, the flesh will always fear and tremble in unbelief. But how blessed the assurance that in the midst of all the waves and roaring, in all the attacks of Satan and the world, in all trials and adversities, we are secure, eternally secure. We can never perish. "All things work together for good to those who love God, who are called according to purpose;" and therefore "we glory in tribulations." And the disciples with their unbelieving appeals and cries, how often we have been like them! Instead of looking to Him, who is Lord and *our* Lord, we looked to circumstances and cried for help where faith should have looked in rest and silence to Him, who doeth all things well. But where could we stop with the lessons and different applications of this scene! The world and the age, this present evil age, is represented by the sea and His own are upon it, so fearful and of little faith. As He arose then, so will He rise again and will *rebuke* in His majesty as Son of Man the winds and the sea. We speak not only of the blessed fact that in our own lives and experiences He does *now* often rebuke the winds and

the sea, but of His coming again. Then and *only* then will be "a great calm."

Coming to the other side He is met in the country of the Gergesenes by two possessed by demons, coming out of the tombs, the place of death, exceedingly dangerous, so that no one was able to pass by that way. They could not be bound, not even with chains and they cut themselves with stones (Mark v:1-7). Not one demon, but many demons had entered into them; their name in one of them was Legion (Luke viii:30). What awful witnesses, these naked, bleeding, raving and tearing demoniacs were of the body and soul destroying power of the enemy. When our Lord appeared in the land the evil one had by the demons taken possession of large numbers of people and was driving them on to perdition. It will even be worse before His return. Satan and his angels *will* be cast out into the earth and his angels with him. This will be during the great tribulation. And even now those possessed by demons are continually increasing. The ever changing, as well as new forms, of insanity, many of them at least, if not all, must be connected with the influence of these evil spirits. The so-called "mediums" of Spiritism and adepts in occult "sciences" are undoubtedly demon-possessed. Surely our days, the days long ago predicted, are the latter times in which some apostatize from the faith, giving their mind (it is the *mind* where these evil workings begin) to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons (1 Tim. iv:1). And opening the soul to the deceiving spirits and teachings of demons means their

dreadful entering in and taking full possession. We cannot follow here this dark theme, much as it is needed in our days. And, He, the Son of God has come to destroy the works of the Devil, and through death annul him, who has the might of death, that is, the Devil. And here the demons confess Him, that He is Son of God. "And behold they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Son of God? Hast thou come here before the time to torment us?" It is the first confession of Him as Son of God we have in the Gospel. They give Him His right title. The demons believe and tremble (James ii:19). They see and know Him as their future Judge, but they argue that the right moment for the punishment is not yet. The knowledge of the demons according to this is threefold: They know Him as Son of God, as their Judge and that the judgment will take place at a certain time. But Satan with his lies drives his countless victims on in unbelief to deny every one of these facts that Christ is Son of God and the Judge, and the most striking thing is that the father of lies succeeds to put himself down as a myth.

He shows Himself next as the one who has power over these demons and that they may well fear Him. They cried out and then asked, "If thou cast us out send us away into the herd of swine." He said: "Go!" What power over these legions is His! Can they ever touch Him or harm Him? No, never! And Son of God, declared by resurrection from the dead as all power in heaven and in earth and the day will be when *all* things shall be subjected under

His feet. Then "*at* the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal beings." And we are linked with Him, His victory is ours, we too can triumph over these evil beings. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. "For the rest brethren, be strong in the Lord, in the might of His strength. Put on the panoply of God, that ye may be able to stand against the artifices of the Devil; because our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against principalities, against authorities, against the universal lords of this darkness, against spiritual power of wickedness in the heavenlies" (Eph. vi: 10-13).

"And they, going out, departed into the herd of swine; and lo, the whole herd of swine rushed down the steep slope into the sea, and died in the waters." This has puzzled not a few readers of the Word. We may explain it from the dispensational side. The deliverance of the two possessed typifies the deliverance of the Jewish remnant, the apostate part of the Jewish nations is foreshadowed in the swine and they will rush on into the waters, representing judgment.

The account in Mark and Luke goes into details, showing each one of the delivered victims in their right mind. In the end of the chapter we hear that the whole city went out to meet Jesus, and when they met Him, they begged Him to go away out of their coasts. They feared perhaps the loss of other possessions, and rather have the earthly things and the swine, than the Lord. What Satanic blindness! He

the evil one, is seen here in the manifestation of His power in another form. Strange that they should be afraid of Him who is the deliverer! But Satan had completely blinded them. And as we look back over what we were, we can praise our God for such deliverance from such an enemy, for we *were* dead in offences and sins in which we once walked according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit who works now in the sons of obedience (Eph. ii).

CHAPTER IX.

After our Lord was requested by the Gergesenes to go away out of their coasts, He passed over the lake and came to His own city, that is, Capernaum. Here the Lord did His greatest miracles, yet they rejected Him there, so that later He said: "And thou, Capernaum, who has been raised up to heaven, shall be brought down even to Hades. For if the works of power which have taken place in thee had taken place in Sodom, it had remained until this day. But I say to you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in judgment day than for thee" (Matt. xi:23-24).

One of the mighty miracles He did in Capernaum is related by the Holy Spirit in the beginning of the chapter which we have reached. He is manifested in this miracle like in the others, as Jehovah. A paralytic is brought to Him by loving hands, and when He saw their faith He said to the helpless one, "Be of good courage, child; thy sins are forgiven." And now for the first time in the Gospel do we read that the scribes said, "This man blasphemes." They did not speak it out, but He saw their thoughts, for He is the One of whom David says: "Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandeth my thoughts from afar off" (Ps. cxxxix:2).

He then asks them: "Which is easier: to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye

may know that the Son of God has power on earth to forgive sins (then He says to the paralytic), Rise up, take thy bed and go to thy house. And he rose up and went to his house" (verses 2-8).

Divine power is here fully manifested. In Luke the Scribes and Pharisees say, "Who is able to forgive sins but God alone?" (Luke v:21). Indeed, if He who spoke the word of comfort and gave the paralytic the assurance of forgiveness is not Jehovah, anything less than He, the accusations of the scribes would have been well founded. He then shows that He has the power to forgive sins by healing the body of the paralytic, who rises up and carries away the bed upon which he was brought. The paralytic is a type of the sinner in his helpless condition. In the Old Testament we have a beautiful type of this in Mephibosheth, who was lame on both of his feet and who had to be brought to King David. So this one is brought. But why did they bring him? No question, healing of the body was all which they desired for their helpless friend and what he himself expected. But our Lord goes deeper to that which is the fountain of all disease and pain—sin. He knew the guilt of sins resting upon the paralytic, and before he could rise and walk, before he could be delivered out of his helpless condition, the sins had first to be forgiven. The conscience, burdened more than the crippled, paralyzed body was by disease, had first to be relieved. The lessons here are clear. It *foreshadows* that which He, who gave Himself for us and who was raised on account of our justification, gives to every one who believes in Him. He has re-

moved completely the guilt of sin and we have the assurance of the forgiveness of sins: the blessedness of the man "whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" is ours through and in Christ. He also has given us a new life. He has delivered us from the power of sin and spoken the word "Rise up and walk." All this is so familiar that we will not enlarge upon it. We should not forget that the spiritual application of "Rise up" is not the first meaning. The paralytic received healing for his *body* and the miserable body was delivered from the paralysis which held it down. So the body of the believer has been redeemed and there will be a "rising up" from the grave and from the earth, changed in the twinkling of an eye. We have also to say that the teaching of remission of sins and what is connected with it is not to be taken from the ninth chapter in Matthew. To teach from this chapter the doctrine of forgiveness, as it has been done so much, would be an error. He shows His authority as Son of Man to forgive sins on earth, and because He has this power and proves it, He manifests Himself by it as God. He is now no longer Son of Man *on earth,* but He will come again as Son of Man, and then once more will show His authority to forgive sins *on earth* and speak the Word of Life to those who are helpless. To this the miracle refers us in type.

The paralytic is the type of Israel. We have a number of such types in the Word. In the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John we read of an infirm man who was lying helpless in the five porches (typifying the law) and Jesus came and healed him, telling him, "rise, take up thy couch and

walk." He is the type of Israel. In the third chapter of Acts another helpless one, lame from his mother's womb, was lying at the beautiful gate of the Temple. He is raised up and leaps and praises God. The name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene had raised him up. He also is a type of Israel. Aeneas in Acts ix:32-35, who had been lying for eight years upon a couch, paralyzed, and to whom Peter said, "Jesus the Christ heals thee," is not different in the typical application from the others.

It is Israel we have to see here represented in type. What He, the Son of Man, when He comes in glory, will do for His earthly people is seen in the healing of the paralytic. First, He will come and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. He will forgive their sins and remember them no more. And His people, the remnant of Israel, will break forth and sing, "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy" (Micah vii:18). He will then say to His people, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Is. xliii:25).

After this He will heal them. His own, poor, blinded, paralyzed and miserable people Israel will be the first of the nations of the earth to receive complete healing for soul and body. They will leap and shout for joy like the lame man in the third chapter of Acts. Therefore it says in Malachi iv, where it speaks of the Son of Righteousness with healing beneath His wings, "Ye shall go forth and leap for

joy (correct translation) as calves of the stall." "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Is. xxxiii:24). The ciii Psalm illustrates most beautifully Israel's coming praise. It is not only "who forgiveth all thine iniquities," but also "who healeth *all* thy diseases." The diseases in this psalm are generally spiritualized, but that is incorrect. They are bodily diseases. The healing of the paralytic has been put by the Holy Spirit in a special place to be in harmony with the whole scope of the Gospel of Matthew. What the Son of Man did in humiliation to one paralytic, the Son of Man in exaltation, coming again, will do to the whole nation and others in the earth in that coming age of millennial glory.

The healed one went to his house. "But the crowds seeing it were in fear, and glorified God, who gave such power to men" (verse 8). This was all they saw and did. They did not acknowledge Him as Jehovah, but simply in their formal way glorified God, which was but the service of the lips.

Besides the record of the healing of the paralytic we have nine other events put together once more in a peculiar order, far from being chronological, but in fullest harmony with the scope of this first book. These are: The call of Matthew, Jesus entering the house and sitting down with the publicans and sinners, the question of John's disciples, the ruler whose daughter had died and the Lord going to raise her up, the woman with an issue of blood who touches Him and is healed, the raising from the dead of the ruler's daughter, the healing of the two blind men, the healing of

the dumb man as well as others and the Lord's compassion for the multitudes.

The call of Matthew, the same who was chosen by the Holy Spirit as the instrument for the writing of this Gospel, is related in a few words only: "And Jesus passing on thence saw a man sitting at the tax office called Matthew, and says to him, Follow Me. And he rose up and followed Him" (verse 9). Had Matthew written this book by himself and not by inspiration he would have followed the custom of other writers in making himself more prominent. He might have begun the book with an elaborate account of himself, his earthly circumstances and spoken, perhaps, at length of the scene which is but rapidly sketched in one verse. The Holy Spirit, however, guided his pen, and in the right place in the right words he records the story of his own call. The place given to it is significant. After the Lord had shown Himself in His power to be Jehovah He now manifests Himself in His grace to the lost and outcast sinner. What a scene it is which the one little verse puts before us! There he sits gathering in the tax, no thought of Him, no knowledge of Him. As a tax-gatherer he was, with his colleagues, despised by the leaders of the Jews, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Scribes, as well as by the mass of the people. Tax-gatherers (Publicans) were known as thieves, who enriched themselves by extortions. Another one said later, after the Lord had entered into his house: "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I return him fourfold." However, this was not the cause why the people hated him. They looked

upon them as miserable hirelings of the Roman government, who had put themselves under the control of the Gentile rule and helped in the subduing of the land and the people, their own land and their own brethren. The tax-gatherers were, therefore, considered apostates. And such a one is called not alone to follow Jesus, but called and chosen as an instrument to write the kingly Gospel. Marvelous Grace! "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John xv :16). This is perfectly illustrated in Matthew's case as well as in everyone who is saved by Grace. Well may we adoringly cry out: "Oh, the Grace that sought me!" With no thought of Him or for Him, busied in earthly things for the meat that perisheth, Matthew was called to follow Him. Matthew follows. He leaves the table, there is no bargaining on his side, no request to think it over, no desire to go first to do something else, but the first thing done was obedience to the voice which had spoken. Yet there is no claim of merit from his side in doing this. May we who are His own ever be ready in obedience to His call.

And Matthew invites Him to his house and makes Him a feast. It does not say in this Gospel that it was Matthew's house; in another Gospel the Holy Spirit has made a record of it (Mark ii :14-17.) Here a company of tax-gatherers and sinners are come together, and He, the Holy One, the One who had come to seek and to save that which is lost, reclines with them at table and eats with them. Again we say, what a scene of grace! He who created the heavens and the earth in the creature's place in living touch with those who rebelled against Him! And there they stand,

the poor, miserable, self-righteous Pharisees. They would in their religiousness, with their broad phylacteries, keeping the outside clean, not even touch a tax-gatherer, much less speak to him. To sit down and eat with them would have been in their eyes an almost unpardonable crime. And here they find Him whose words of divine authority they had heard, whose deeds of omnipotent power they had seen, who had manifested Himself as Jehovah, and *He* eats with tax-gatherers and sinners. Not the poor, wicked, self-confessed thieves, the tax-gatherers and harlots appear in this scene and throughout the Gospel as Satan's masterpiece, but the proud, religious, self-righteous Pharisee. John the Baptist with his divine message came, and the Pharisees were rightly called by him the generation of vipers, but never the tax-gatherers and the harlots, who gladly came and confessed their sins and owned their lost condition. "John came to you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the tax-gatherers and harlots believed him; but ye, when ye saw it, repented not yourselves afterwards to believe him" (Matt. xxi :32). So here we see them, without any faith in Jesus and no knowledge of the God of mercy, wrapped up in the filthy rags, their own righteousness. What else then could they do but speak against the Lord's gracious way? "Why eateth your Master with tax-gatherers and sinners?" And the self-righteous Pharisees of ritualistic Christendom are not different from these, their forefathers, the Pharisees. No heart for Christ, no understanding of grace and no knowledge of God. In the answer our Lord gives He shows that what He does

is in fullest harmony with His having come down into the earth. God would have mercy and He had come to show it. "They that are strong have not need of a physician, but those that are ill. But go and learn what that is—I will have mercy and not sacrifice; for I have not come to call righteous men, but sinners."

Then the disciples of John came to Him with a question. "Why do we and the Pharisees often fast, but Thy disciples fast not?" John's disciples were having a difficulty. Their master had made much of fasting and had enjoined it upon themselves, but the disciples of Jesus were not fasting. Were they not with Him in the tax-gatherer's house, eating and drinking? It is a straightforward question they bring. They come not as faultfinders or murmurers, like the Pharisees, but as intelligent inquirers, who were seeking light. So the Lord meets them and solves their difficulty by a gracious answer. He is still the same, ever ready to teach and instruct the saint who sits at His feet. The only difficulty is we are often so unlike these disciples of John, though our knowledge and our position is higher than theirs. Instead of taking the straight course in coming to Him first of all, we seek first the solution of our difficulties somewhere else. Perhaps the disciples of John who came here are the same who came and told Jesus, after they buried the headless body of their master.

"Can the sons of the bridechamber mourn so long as the bridegroom is with them? But days will come when the bridegroom will have been taken away from them, and then they will fast." He Himself is the bridegroom and He had

come and while He was with them, mourning could have no place; His rejection was to come and then they would fast. But our Lord not merely answers the question and shows Himself greater than John, who was but the friend of the bridegroom (John iii :29), while Jesus is the bridegroom. He adds something which is of great importance. He speaks of a complete change of the order of things. "But no one puts a patch of new cloth on an old garment, or its filling up takes from the garment and a worse rent takes place. Nor do men put new wine into old skins, otherwise the skins burst and the wine is poured out, and the skins will be destroyed; but they put new wine into new skins and both are preserved together." The old garment is Judaism with its legal righteousness. It is no good and had proven itself as such. No value in it at all, only to be cast aside, utterly put aside. A new garment, a better righteousness was about to be given. He whose name is "Jehovah our righteousness" had come and a change of dispensations was to take place. And now as it has come the old is gone, it is no longer in existence. Yet that which the Lord here but faintly indicates, the impossibility of patching up that which is hopeless and worthless, has been done in Christendom, nay, is the almost universal state of Christendom. It is mixing law and grace together. The rent has become worse. A Judaistic Christianity which, with a profession of Grace and the Gospel, attempts to keep the law and fosters legal righteousness, is a greater abomination in the eyes of God, than professing Israel in the past, worshipping idols.

The new wine is the Gospel of Grace. The old skins* are the law, the Levitical institutions and all connected with it. New wine belongs into new skins. If the new wine is put into old skins, the skins will burst and then there is no wine left and the skins are also made useless. The two belong no longer together. So Gospel and Judaism, Law and Grace do not belong together. The Gospel of Grace enclosed in ceremonial Judaism will result in the loss of the new wine, and ceremonial Judaism, the old skins, will be gone as well. And such is ritualistic Christendom; it is neither Christian nor Jewish. It has not Judaism and has lost the new wine. "They say, they are Jews and are *not*" (Revl. iii 9). If men hold only the form of godliness and deny the power thereof, it will always mean outward religiousness, legality, self-righteousness and turning away from Grace and the Lord Himself.

The ruler whose daughter had died appears next on the scene. He is unlike the Centurion in the eighth chapter who had the greater faith and wanted the Lord to speak but a word. The ruler of the Jews wants the Lord to come in *person* to his house and *touch* the one, without life. His personal presence is demanded to raise the daughter from death to life. That we have here once more dispensational truths before us is seen at the first glance. Israel is often spoken of in the Old Testament Scriptures as a daughter, the daughter of Zion. In the short book of Lamentations

*Bottles in the authorized version. Skins were used and are being used in the Orient for the preservation of wine. Hence skins is the correct translation.

alone we find the word, daughter, as meaning Israel, eighteen times. The daughter who has died is then likewise a type of the people. To bring life to Israel can be only through the presence of Him, who is the life. When He came the first time, they would not come to Him that they might have life. But He is coming again to raise up His people, to touch the daughter of Zion.

And while our Lord goes forward to fulfill the request of the ruler, another incident comes in by the way. An unclean woman touches Him and is healed. "And behold a woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years came behind and touched the hem of His garment; for she said within herself, if I should only touch His garment I shall be healed. But Jesus, turning and seeing her, said, 'Be of good courage, daughter, thy faith hath healed thee.' And the woman was healed from that hour" (verses 20-23). She represents the Gentiles and the grace which comes to them by faith, while the resurrection of Israel is still unaccomplished, but drawing nigh. Faith touches Him now and receives of Him salvation with its precious assistance. But the touching of Him is parenthetical, just as the present age with salvation come to the Gentiles is a parenthesis. Jesus comes to the house of the ruler. It has the meaning of relationship. So will He come to raise up the daughter of Israel. "And when Jesus was come to the house of the ruler, and saw the flute players and the crowd making a tumult, He said, Withdraw, for the damsel is not dead, but sleeps. And they derided Him. But when the crowd had been put out, He went in and took her hand; and the damsel

rose up. And the fame of it went out into all that land." May not the crowd of unbelievers and mockers represent nominal Christendom? Surely the same is in Christendom which we see here. The Lord has declared in His Word, eternally settled in the heavens, His loving purposes concerning Israel. It can well be said of His earthly people, as He said of the ruler's daughter, "The damsel is not dead, but sleeps." The Scriptures are full of promises to Israel and the day of their resurrection and restoration, yet Christendom treats all this with unbelief and ridicule. There is no understanding of God's purposes, the plan of the ages, and hence no heart and no love for the people, who are still beloved for the Father's sake and whose *are* the promises. Our Lord said to that crowd, "Withdraw," and they were put out of the scene, when He came and touched the damsel to raise her up. And may we not see in this also the end of the motley throng in Christendom, which will be put off the scene when He comes to do the miracle of His mercy and His power on Israel?

And when He does this to His people then surely the blind will see and the dumb speak.

In the healing of the two blind men, which comes immediately after the raising of the maid, we see again a dispensational foreshadowing of Israel's present condition and future healing. It is true the miracle of the two blind men who cry to Him is often spiritualized, and we do not at all deny that he has an application in that direction. First of all, however, we must not overlook the original meaning it has in this Jewish Gospel, and as we do this we shall yet

more and more grasp the divine scope of the Gospel of Matthew. "Two blind men followed Him crying and saying, Have mercy on us, Son of David." The two blind men picture Israel's condition as the leper did in the beginning of the eighth chapter. They were blind, when He came and dwelt among them. His own knew Him not and received Him not. But how much greater has their blindness become since they not only have cast Him out, but rejected the offer of His mercy after His resurrection and ascension? Now it is, Let their eyes be darkened. Blindness in part has happened to Israel. When the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, had come to Rome, and in his burning love for his brethren, his kinsmen, had sent for them and in disagreement they began to leave, he addressed to them the Word, so true throughout this age: "Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, saying, Go to this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear and not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive. For the heart of this people has become fat, and they hear heavily with their ears, and they have closed their eyes; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted and I should heal them" (Acts xxviii:25-28). But this is not Israel's final condition. Like these two blind men, so Israel will cry out of the deepest darkness, out of the terrible night of Jacob's trouble, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." Son of David is His title as He stands in relation to His earthly people, and in this passage we have Him called by this name for the first time in the

Gospel. The cry these two men utter is specifically Jewish, and surely no Gentile will cry to Him as Son of David. Later in the Gospel a Gentile woman cried after Him, "Have mercy on me, Lord, *Son of David*; my daughter is miserably possessed by a demon. But He did not answer her a word" (Matt. xv:23). When she called again, she said, "Lord, help me," and after she had taken her place with the dogs the Lord acknowledged her faith. And when thus Israel cries for mercy and waits for the coming of the Son of Man and the Son of David, He will arise and have mercy upon Zion and "in wrath He will remember mercy." "He will return again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah vii:19).

He did not pass by the two blind men. "When He was come to the house (which always stands for relationship), the blind men came to Him, and Jesus says to them, Do ye believe that I am able to do this? They say to Him, Yea, Lord. Then He touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it unto you. And their eyes were opened." So He healed them by coming in touch with them not absent and unseen, but present and touching them. He is absent from the earth now unseen to the eyes of men, yet we believe in Him and through Him on God; we believe, too, that *He is able,* that all power is given to *Him* in heaven and on earth and it is also now "according to *your faith.*" But He who is absent will come back to earth again, back into definite relationship with His earthly people, and *then* and not before will Israel's blindness be ended.

And what these two healed men did, spreading His name abroad in all that land, believing and seeing Israel will do in that day.

Next comes a dumb man possessed by a demon, and the demon having been cast out, the dumb spake. This, too, refers to Israel still under the control of Satan's power. Instead of praising their King, Israel was dumb and is dumb now; but the demon will be cast out, and then Israel will speak His praises and sing the new song unto the Lord. What a day it will be, when dumb Israel is at last the people "formed to show forth His praise!" "And the crowds were astonished, saying, It has never been seen thus in Israel." And in that day when Israel is healed it will be said, "What God has wrought," and all the nations *will* know that He is Jehovah. We learn therefore in the three miracles—the raising of the maid from the dead, the opening of the eyes of the blind and the casting out of the demon from the dumb man—the blessed story of Israel's coming redemption. Israel raised from the dead will see and behold the King, the Son of David, and speak and praise His name. It is not less the way of divine grace with each sinner who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are dead in trespasses and sins. He said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that an hour is coming and *now is* (and the hour is not yet passed), when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that have heard shall live" (John v:24), and those He raises from the dead to them He gives eternal life, which is He Himself, and gives them the light of life, His Spirit, to enlighten them and guide them. Out

of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak to His praise who loveth us and has redeemed us by His blood and delivered us from the power of darkness. Oh, how blessedly rich and full in His Word!

But now the dark side. While the crowds were astonished, the Pharisees said, He casts out the demons through the prince of demons. Here for the first time in the Gospel do we find the awful blasphemy of the religious leaders of the people. The power of Jehovah had been manifested before their very eyes. The leper had been cleansed and gone to the priest, who knew Jehovah's power had done it; the tempest had been stilled, the demons cast out, the paralytic healed, the dead maid raised up, the blind saw and the dumb spake; but instead of bowing in the august presence of the King and acknowledging the power, which manifested itself in such a manner, as divine, they attributed it to Satan, the prince of demons. They accused the Lord from heaven of being the instrument of Satan! Awful blasphemy! It is here but the first muttering of the coming storm. The storm breaks fully in the twelfth chapter. There they stand in all their Satanic boldness and charge Him with casting out demons by Beelzebub. They committed there and then the sin against the Spirit. We must reserve the closer investigation of this matter till we read the chapter in which our Lord speaks of that sin. Here we notice especially that the rejection of our Lord began with the blind leaders of the people, the religious, self-righteous Pharisees. It is not different in Christendom with the falling away from the faith.

Our Lord continued in His ministry in Galilee. "And Jesus went round all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom and healing every disease and every bodily weakness" (verse 35). What an activity this must have been! He walked up and down through Galilee, and certainly not one of the numerous villages was forgotten by Him. Let us notice again that it is the Gospel of the *kingdom* He preached, therefore Kingdom signs were present. When He, the King, comes again, and the Kingdom of the heavens is established and the heavens rule, then disease and all that offends will be put away.

But what scenes met His eye as He passed thus ministering among the crowds of people? He beheld them as worn out, harassed and cast away as sheep not having a shepherd. His loving heart was moved with compassion for them. In this loving sympathy He reveals Himself as the Shepherd of Israel. Long before His Spirit in the prophets had spoken of the scene we behold here. "Son of Man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds: Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do not feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? * * * And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd; and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, where they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; yea, My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth and none did search and seek after them" (Ezek. xxxiv). In the same chapter we read what

Jehovah the Shepherd of Israel says: "*I* will both search My sheep and find them out. * * * *I* will seek out My sheep. * * * *I* will bring them out from the people and gather them from the countries. * . * * *I* will feed them in a good pasture. * * * *I* will feed My flock and *I* will cause them to lie down. * * * *I* will seek that which was lost. * * * *I* will make with them a covenant of peace," * * * etc. He came thus to His own as the Shepherd, but they did not want Him. As the *good* Shepherd He laid down His life for the sheep, becoming the *great* Shepherd in resurrection and the *chief* Shepherd in glory. But He is also the Shepherd of Israel, and thinks still of His earthly people and loves them. That thirty-fourth chapter of Ezekiel will yet be literally fulfilled through the returning Son of Man, and then His poor flock will know Him and sing in the earth what the believer's heart sings now: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." "Then saith He to His disciples, The harvest is great and the workmen few; supplicate therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth workmen unto His harvest." He Himself is the Lord of the harvest. He sends forth the workmen and He equips them for the service. But there is a great difference between the sending forth of the workmen to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and to heal the sick, and the gifts, the Lord in glory, as the Head of His body, has given to the church. The sending forth of the laborers into the harvest will be before us in the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

We learn now how our Lord, who is truly the Lord of the Harvest, sends forth the laborers. He does it as the King, who came to offer the Kingdom to Israel. He sends forth the laborers into the harvest as messengers of Himself to announce the same message, which He announced, "The Kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh," and confers to them the authority and the power to heal the infirm, raise the dead, and cast out demons. This sending forth, as we shall see, was altogether in connection with the Kingdom; it was therefore only temporary and ended with the complete rejection of the Kingdom by Israel. However, there is a time coming when a Jewish remnant will again go forth to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. This will be during the great tribulation.

It is strange that Christian believers should go to the tenth chapter of Matthew and look upon what is written here as meaning the sending forth of the laborers, missionaries, preachers and teachers to proclaim the Gospel of Grace, when there was first of all no Gospel of Grace and when the words of our Lord so clearly show that it could *not* refer to anything outside of Israel and Israel's land. Yet this wrong application is constantly made. It is claimed by some on the authority of this chapter that missionary efforts should consist in not preaching alone, but healing of

the sick. They send out, therefore, missionaries who are physicians, and supply them with drugs and surgical instruments, as if our Lord did anything of the kind. Others again claim that the healing of the sick, besides the preaching of what they term, the Kingdom of the heavens, is still in order, and they act according to this belief; however, the raising of the dead they do not include in their powers. The Mormons with their abominable and blasphemous teachings likewise go to this chapter, going forth two by two and trying to follow the other commands given. All this confusion is at once ended, when we look upon the sending forth of the laborers here, as the sending forth of messengers to announce the Kingdom; after the Kingdom had been postponed this special mission of the twelve ended.

The first verse in the chapter tells us that He called His twelve disciples and that He gave them power over unclean spirits, so that they should cast them out, and heal every disease and every bodily weakness. The twelve messengers, whose names are given in the second, third and fourth verses, stand as such always in relation to Israel. He tells them later, "Ye shall also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (chapter xix:28). Even in the New Jerusalem there will be this distinction. "Her shining was like a most precious stone, as a crystal like jasper stone; having a great, high wall; having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names inscribed, which are those of the *twelve* tribes of the sons of Israel. * * * And the wall of the city had *twelve* foundations, and on them *twelve* names of the *twelve* apostles of the Lamb" (Rev.

xxi :12-14). The twelve apostles thus stand in prominent and definite relation to Israel. Here among the twelve, who are sent forth, is also the name of Judas the Iscariot, who delivered Him up. After his awful end another was rightly and divinely chosen in his place, that is Matthias. It is astonishing to hear able teachers of the Word talk and write of the mistake which the eleven made in the first chapter in the book of Acts in casting the lot and choosing Matthias. We have heard all kinds of criticism upon their action. They were, however, guided aright, and did *not* make a mistake, for they acted upon the Word of God in the Psalms, and in the casting of the lot they were fully authorized by the Old Testament Scriptures, and besides this, they did it in dependence on the Lord. It is also said by these brethren who see in the choosing of Matthias an error, that the Lord wanted *Paul* to be the one who belongs to the twelve. This is the *worst* blunder of all. The Holy Spirit fully endorses the action of the eleven before Pentecost through Paul himself. In 1 Corinthians xv :5 we read that the risen Lord was seen by the *twelve*. In the eighth verse Paul says: "And last of all, as to an abortion, He appeared to me also." It is clear from this passage that Paul does not belong to the twelve. Paul, as apostle to the Gentiles, is an apostle not from men nor through man (Gal. i :1); he received his apostleship from the risen and glorified Lord. It is through Paul as the one who has no earthly connections, but has it all from above, that the Gospel of Grace as well as the mystery hid in former ages is made known.

In the Epistles given through Paul we read, therefore,

all concerning the Gospel of Grace, the church and the ministry, which is for this age, an age in which our Lord Jesus Christ is not King, but Lord in Glory. It is from the Glory as Head of the Body He gives gifts. "He that descended is the same who also ascended up above all the heavens, that He might fill all things; and He has given some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints" (Ephes. iv :10-12). He ministers then through the instruments He chooses from above, and nowhere in the Epistles do we read anything like that which is contained in the tenth chapter of Matthew. Let us divide the Word of truth rightly and not put the church and the ministry of the church in the chapter before us. All this will become clearer to us as we turn to the different verses.

For instance, in the sixth verse we read: "Go not off into the way of the Gentiles, and into a city of Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This is a limited sphere. They had nothing to do and could have nothing to do with the Gentiles nor with Samaritans. After the death and resurrection of our Lord the Gospel was to be preached, beginning in Jerusalem, in Samaria, to the uttermost parts of the earth. The lost sheep of the house of Israel, that much "spiritualized" phrase, were not Gentiles, nor were they the church, for a church was not and could not be then. Their preaching was only this text: "The Kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh." What does it mean? It meant that the promised Kingdom for Israel, and through Israel to the nations, the Kingdom

with all its earthly blessings, was about to come. It was heralding the fact of the presence of the King to set up the Kingdom, if His own would have it. Such a preaching of the Kingdom of the heavens is not given now. After the church age closes by the removal of the church from the earth into heaven, as foreshadowed by the vessel which Peter saw *coming* out of heaven and again *received* into heaven, *then* the kingdom will again draw nigh in the person of the returning King and Lord with His saints.

He tells them: "Ye have received gratuitously, give gratuitously.* Do not provide yourselves with gold, or silver, or brass, for your belts, nor scrip for the way, nor two body coats, nor sandals, nor a staff, for the workman is worthy of his nourishment." Some well-meaning persons have tried to follow out these commandments to the very letter, but it was never meant for the servants of Christ to be followed literally during this age. However, two principles are in these words before us, which find their application in this age. They had received the message and power gratuitously and thus they were to give it. The Gospel is to be free, without price and without money. This principle holds good at this time. How great the failure in Christendom, with its salaried ministry, pew rents, fairs and entertainments to make money for the building of churches and other things!

They were to go forth with no provision made. This

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*Christian Science also claims to follow this chapter by healing the sick. But "freely give" is not practiced by this wicked cult. It costs to be healed.

made them altogether dependent upon the Lord who had sent them. Trust in the Lord, who sends out the laborer, is another principle, which belongs to this age as well. All disappointment and discouragement for the servant of Christ comes in when he looks not to the Lord but to man. The Lord never disappoints. "And He said to them, When I sent you without purse and scrip and sandals, did ye lack anything? And they said, Nothing" (Luke xxii:35). The Lord who calls His servants and sends them forth always keeps them when they walk in simple dependence upon Himself.

From verses 11 to 15 we read other instructions for this special mission. In city and village they were to inquire for them who are *worthy*. The worthiness consisted undoubtedly in a desire to know Messiah, "waiting for the consolation of Israel." The Gospel of Grace, which is preached now, is preached without any such distinction. Its message is: "Whosoever," even the most unworthy. At the end of this paragraph (verse 15) there is the threatening of judgment when their message is not accepted.

In the next four verses (16-20) we read of how their ministry would be accepted. "Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves; be therefore prudent as the serpents and guileless as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to sanhedrims and scourge you in their synagogues." And so they did reject the Lord and the servants He sent. But it was not alone confined to the Jews—sanhedrim and synagogue—but the Gentiles would treat them in the same way. "And ye shall be brought before

rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the nations." Part of the fulfillment of all this is found in the book of Acts. We see here also a deeper meaning and refer to these words again when we come to another verse.

"But when they deliver you up, be not careful how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given to you in that hour what ye shall speak. For ye are not the speakers, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you." We can point to Stephen in Acts vii as an illustration how fully this promise has been fulfilled.

The most bitter persecution is now promised them by our Lord: "But brother shall deliver up brother to death, and father child; and children shall rise up against parents and shall put them to death; and ye shall be hated of all on account of my name. But he that has endured to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee to the other, for verily I say to you, Ye shall not have completed the cities of Israel until the Son of Man be come." These words are perhaps the most important in the whole chapter. They are a kind of key to the entire chapter.

The coming of the Son of Man which is mentioned is His second coming. The giving of the testimony by Jewish disciples concerning the Kingdom of the heavens is according to the words of our Lord to continue till He comes again. How are we to understand this? The testimony which was begun by the apostles up to the time when Israel rejected once more the offers of mercy from the risen Lord, when He was still waiting for their repentance as a nation, is an

unfinished testimony. After that offer was again rejected the great parenthesis, the church age, began, and during this age (which is not reckoned in the Old Testament) there is no more Jewish testimony of the kingdom of the heavens. Israel nationally is set aside, blindness in part is theirs till the fulness of the Gentiles is come in. When the church *is* complete and the rapture of the saints has taken place, *then* the Lord begins to deal with His people Israel again. There is the seventieth week of Daniel ix yet to come, and this week of seven years forms the end of this dispensation. In this coming last week of seven years the church testimony is finished and Jewish believers will take up the *unfinished testimony* to the nation and proclaim once more "The Kingdom of the heavens is at hand." The xxiv chapter in this Gospel is a continuation of the x chapter, inasmuch as Matthew xxiv shows us the unfinished testimony of the x chapter, finished and completed. (Read Matt. xxiv:5-32.) In Matt. xxiv we read of the great tribulation, so likewise here in the tenth chapter. In Micah vii we read of a dark picture and there the Spirit of Christ reveals a tribulation, which His lips on the earth proclaim to His disciples. Then during the tribulation (*never now*) it will mean enduring to the *end* and *salvation* will come then by the visible return of the Son of Man from heaven. What our Lord said in verses 17 and 18 about persecutions from Jews and Gentiles for these witnesses will find its final great fulfilment in that great tribulation, when not alone the unbelieving nation will persecute the believing and witnessing Jewish remnant, but nations as well.

From the twenty-fourth verse to the end of the chapter our Lord continues to speak to the twelve, who were about to go forth. His words are now words of encouragement, not to fear; they were safe in the hands of His Father. While all these words had a special significance for the Jewish disciples our Lord sent forth, they also contain precious comfort and instruction for every true believer living in this day. It would be extremely one sided to pass over these words of our Lord and treat them as not containing truth for us. Every word which our God and Father has been pleased to give us has a meaning for us.

First of all our Lord speaks of the position of the disciple. "The disciple is not above his teacher, nor the bondman above his Lord. It is sufficient for the disciple that he should become as his teacher, and the bondman as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub,* how much more those of his household?" (verses 24-26). The position of the disciple is then according to these words identification of the closest kind with His Lord. However, to learn fully of this identification with Him, who is our Saviour and Lord, we do not go to this first Gospel. The Gospel of Matthew was not written with this purpose. In the Gospel of John, the Gosepl of Life and Resurrection, and the First Epistle of John as well as the Epistles given by the Holy Spirit through Paul, we learn of the blessed identification which exists by *Grace* between the Lord and His own. How preciously it is revealed by Himself in that

**Beelzebub* means "Lord of the house," that is, Satan as the possessor of the house.

Holy of Holies in the Gospel of John, the seventeenth chapter. And this chapter itself is but the germ out of which the Holy Spirit develops in the Pauline Epistles, the Gospel of Grace and the truth concerning the Church as the Body of Christ. In that marvelous chapter our Lord intercedes before His Father for the very disciples (as well as ourselves) whom He sent forth in the beginning of His earthly ministry. Altogether one with Him, is the golden thread which goes through His prayer. And He said: "The world has hated them, because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world. I do not demand that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them out of evil." In the First Epistle of John the Holy Spirit says: "Do not wonder, brethren, if the world hate you," and in the upper room He said to His own: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before you" (John xv:18). It is therefore an identification of the closest nature in which we stand with our Lord. And do we ever stop and think on these things? How little we do, how little all this is *real* to us? It is true little of the reproach of Christ is seen in these days; but little hatred from the side of the world, nor any names of rejection. We ask why? The answer is soon given. The professing church has turned her back upon her heavenly calling and with that upon the Lord. She has committed adultery in loving the world and has returned to the beggarly elements of this world. But let the true believer leave this camp and go outside of that which *professes* His name and soon enough the reproach will have to be borne.

Christendom and the world has little use for one who walks in true separation. Still how precious is that place. If it is reproach it is *His* reproach; hatred, it is the same with which He was hated. Reproach, hatred and persecution is the seal of identification and fellowship with Him.

But with this our Lord does not leave it. He comforts those He sent forth. And now He speaks the word which is to calm their fears: "Fear not." What meaning it has coming from such lips! Angels spoke the word "Fear not" in olden times. They are but creatures sent with a message from the Throne. But He who speaks here is the Creator Himself made a little lower than the angels He had created; the Omnipotent One, our Lord speaks, "Fear not!" "Fear them not therefore; for there is nothing covered which shall not be revealed, and secret which shall not be known. What I say to you in darkness speak in the light, and what ye hear in the ear preach upon the houses." In other words, He tells them of the day when all is to be uncovered, and the secret things to be made known. This fact is ever to be before them. It is to be daily before us. Oh, brethren, let us learn to look at *all* things in the light of the Judgment seat! "Do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord shall come, who shall also bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and shall make manifest the counsels of hearts; and *then* shall each have his praise from God" (1 Corinth. iv:5). In view of this revelation of the secret things our Lord tells us to be bold and to declare the whole counsel of God.

Then what harm can men do to him anyway, who is

Christ's (and Christ is God's). We belong to God, we are His own. No man can do us any harm with his persecution or hatred. Therefore He says now: "And be not afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul." What if they should even go so far as to kill the body, as they often did and will yet do, especially to the Jewish Saints in the great tribulation.* If they kill the body they cannot kill the soul and the killing of the body and faithful testimony given through martyrdom will enrich the Lord as well as the disciple. We may not be called upon to surrender thus our bodies, yet the principle of it is ours; fear nothing outward, nothing temporal, whatever it may be. "But fear rather Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."† And He who is able to do that and will do it at the great white Throne to the unsaved, is God. He then is to be feared alone. Of course all this is not to be read as referring to the believer. He who has believed is passed from death unto life, he does not come into judgment. Once saved means always saved. We must, however, not overlook the fact that among the twelve there was one who was not saved. It was the first warning coming to Judas. He looked to outward things and was a thief.

Words of comfort come next. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the

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*We mention again that all these words have a future meaning and fulfillment during that time of Jacob's trouble, after the removal of the church. The Jewish believers will know the comfort of these words, as Saints during this age know them.

†Here *Gehenna* and not Hades. Gehenna is correctly translated hell.

ground without your Father; but of *you* even the hairs of the head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; *ye* are better than many sparrows." And where is the child of God who does not rejoice in such a statement? He knows the sparrows upon the housetops as He knew the fish in the sea and the piece of money, which laid on the bottom of the sea. He knows every hair of His own. He speaks of a special providence which watches over every child of God. Happy are we if we walk in the simplicity of a child before our Father and our Lord and ever know by day and by night "He careth for you." We are all in His hands.

The words of responsibility follow: "Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men, I also will confess before my Father who is in the Heavens. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in the Heavens."

He who believes in the name of the Lord Jesus is saved; confession with the mouth follows (Rom. x:8-12).

Every one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ and confesses with the mouth that Jesus is Lord, such confesses Him before men. This confession of Him is ever to increase not only with the lips but in the conduct and the life. Thus every true believer is a confessor of Jesus as Lord and the Lord in His day will confess him before His Father. Individual faithfulness will of course bring a corresponding reward. The *unsaved* denies Him before men. He may have the name of Jesus upon his lips but he trusts not in Him and this is the denial and he who has not be-

lieved will not be confessed before the Father, because the unsaved is none of His.

In the few verses which follow (34-36 verses) our Lord describes the characteristics of this age, the age in which we live and which is so rapidly ending up. "Do not think that I have come to send peace upon the earth. I have not come to send peace, but a sword." Many puzzled Jews have come to us with this word and asked what Jesus of Nazareth meant. How could He be our Messiah when instead "of peace He sends the sword?" "Is not Messiah the Prince of Peace to speak peace to the nations?" However we learn that the words He speaks here, foretelling the history of this age, are blessed evidences of His divinity. This age is not the age of world wide peace. "Peace on Earth" is not yet reached in the divine program for the earth. The King and His kingdom rejected, He Himself absent, strife, confusion and wars, the sword reigns. But the King is coming back. Before His return as King out of the opened heavens the sword will be unsheathed and peace be taken from the earth. The nations may boast of peace among themselves at this time, but it will not last very long and soon the rider upon the red horse will gallop over the earth (Revel. vi). Peace like a river will surely flow after the King has come and all swords have become plowshares. The Lord hasten the day.

And what place and position has the true disciple with Christ in this age? Christ is rejected and scorned. He Himself is to be owned and full devotedness shown to Him, and that means—suffering.

"He who loves father or mother above me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter above me is not worthy of me. And he who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He that finds his life shall lose it; he who has lost his life for my sake shall find it."

But there is another side. Not alone the suffering but the glory which is to follow. The recompense is as sure as the suffering and the recompense will be greater than the sufferings.

"He that receives you, receives me, and he that receives me, receives Him who has sent me. He that receives a prophet in a prophet's name shall receive a prophet's reward; he that receives a righteous man in a righteous man's name shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily he shall in no wise lose his reward." The one who receives a prophet shall have the blessing of a prophet—he who receives the Son of God becomes the Son of God, Heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ, and anything done, which has love for its motive, will not be forgotten.

CHAPTER XI.

The first verse of this chapter belongs to the sending forth of the twelve, and should be put to the previous chapter. "And it came to pass when Jesus had finished commanding His twelve disciples, He departed thence to teach and preach in their cities." He took the work upon Himself once more, and with the disciples He had sent forth He preached the Kingdom of the Heavens to be at hand. The Lord of the harvest, who had sent forth the laborers, enters the harvestfield Himself. His rejection is now to be made more and more manifest. He came to His own and His own received Him not. Gradually in this Gospel we have seen how Israel had no heart, no desire for Him; they were indeed blinded. The rejection of Him who had so fully shown Himself to be Jehovah manifested in the flesh, is now rapidly approaching. Soon He will leave the house and take His place at the seashore (chapter xiii:1) to teach the mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens, that which is to pass, while He, the King, and with Him the Kingdom is rejected. The eleventh chapter is the beginning of the crisis, and the twelfth chapter is the great turning point.

First of all we have the record of John the Baptist in prison sending to our Lord, and the message our Lord sends to him. "But John, having heard in the prison the works of the Christ, sent by His disciples and said to Him,

Art Thou the Coming One? or are we to wait for another? And Jesus answering said to them, Go, report to John what you hear and see. Blind men see and lame walk; lepers are cleansed and deaf hear; and dead are raised and poor have glad tidings preached to them; and blessed is whosoever shall not be offended in Me."

The incident has been differently interpreted. From the fourth chapter we learned that when Jesus heard that John was cast into prison He departed into Galilee (iv:12). The fourteenth chapter in this Gospel gives the story of John's imprisonment and his death. In this arrangement the divine hand which guided Matthew's hand is seen again.

John the Baptist spent therefore some time in prison before he sent his disciples to our Lord. It is generally assumed that John, the preacher of repentance and the coming Kingdom, had finally expected that Jesus would soon establish the Kingdom, and that he, as the voice in the wilderness, the forerunner, would have a share in its glories. Instead of this expected glory he is cast into a dungeon. He had faithfully discharged his duties. Not like a miserable hireling had he acted, but fearlessly he had denounced evil, and for all his faithfulness nothing but suffering, rejection and death staring him in the face. It is, therefore, said by many that he doubted that Jesus was truly the promised Messiah, and asked for evidences of His Messiahship. However, this interpretation can hardly be right. If we turn to the Gospel of John and read his utterances there, we find that he had a complete insight into the work which Christ as the Lamb of God was to do, and he *knew* Jesus was *the*

Christ. It is also reasonable to assume that his own disciples who had come to our Lord with the question, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast but Thy disciples fast not?" had come to him and given him the answer, that the bridegroom, the Messiah, was to be taken away from them, and then there would be fasting.

Others have looked upon this incident in another light. They attempt to shield John the Baptist altogether, and defend his absolute faith and confidence in Jesus as the Christ. According to many John was perfect so that no doubt could assail his mind. But why should he send from his prison and ask of the Lord such information? The difficulty is, according to these, solved, in that John desired the answer not for any confirmation of his faith, but that he sent his disciples because they were staggered in their belief. Martin Luther says on this passage: "It is certain that John sent to inquire on account of his disciples; for *they* did not yet regard Christ as the One for Whom He was to be regarded. They waited for one who would move along pompously, highly learned, as a mighty King. John treats them tenderly, endures their weak faith till they become strong; does not reject them because they do not yet believe in Him so firmly." This solution of the difficulty, however, lacks scriptural support. It is a fanciful theory that John should have sent to Christ for the sake of his disciples. We need not claim perfection and infallibility for John the Baptist, for he had neither. Only one on the earth was perfect and infallible, sinless and spotless, who was never assailed by doubt, and that one is our Lord Jesus Christ. John, like

Elijah, was "a man of like passions as we are." Elijah's ministry was marked with individual failure. His life was threatened by Jezebel: "And when he saw that, he arose and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers" (1 Kings xix: 3, 4). What a failure this was! Surely there is nothing good in man, and even in the most privileged servants of the Lord there is the flesh and the failure of the flesh. John in prison passes through the experience of Elijah in whose spirit and power he had come. It would be incorrect to say that John doubted the Messiahship of Jesus. He knew Him as the Christ. Yet in prison his patience is severely tested, and doubt troubles him. In this test he looks to Him, whom he always honored as his Lord, for succor. He sent directly to the Lord, and certainly He knew the weak and doubting one, as well as his faith, which looked to Him for strength and a word of cheer.

And is this not an incident with lessons for us? It teacheth us to confess our weakness before Him, and look to the Lord for the strength and comfort He alone can give.

We may also meditate in connection with John in prison and his doubt with another servant of the Lord in prison. There in Rome he sat and wrote, "I, Paul, prisoner of the Lord." And out of that prison came forth the strains of praise and joy. How many "ifs' and "hows" and "whys"

he might have asked? How many murmurings and bitter complaints might have flown from His lips? He sends out a letter from the dungeon which has not the slightest hint of failure in it, where sin and flesh is not seen and not mentioned. But what is the secret of the rejoicing prisoner of the Lord? What is the secret which underlies the triumphant language of joy in the Epistle to the Philippians? It is one word, "Christ." The life of Christ in him, and Christ the center, Christ the pattern and object before the apostle, and Christ his strength, enabled by Him to do all things, is the secret of all; and that John the Baptist, the greatest of the Old Testament did not know, nor could he be in possession of it. It is our full inheritance as believers on the other side of the cross. Oh, may we live in enjoyment of it, up to the mark of our position and possession in Christ.

But we return to our chapter. The Lord gives the message for John. If his disciples had any doubt, the words of the Lord must have dispersed these. And when John heard the answer it must have brought him strength and cheer. The Lord speaks of the signs of the Kingdom which He did in fulfillment of Old Testament predictions. We have shown before how in the miracles our Lord performed Is. xxxv:5 and 6 was fulfilled. The dead also were raised and the glad tidings preached. The spiritual significance of the latter two is of course fully seen in the Gospel of John. The words, "And blessed is whosoever shall not be offended in Me," are words of exhortation to John the Baptist. How like the Lord to put them at the *end* of the message. The Holy Spirit has repeated this in the Epistles where the ad-

monitions are always coming in at the end or after words of love and commendation were given first. The admonition was certainly understood by John, and how deeply it must have exercised him. It led to humiliation, heartsearching, and in the end it was a beatitude, a "blessed." May it ever be so with us.

And all this was not unknown to the crowds. They stood there and heard what passed between the Lord and John's disciples. They heard the question they asked and the answer our Lord sent to John. John the Baptist was known by these crowds and they believed in him as a great prophet. His testimony and his personality might then be discredited by them. The Lord addresses himself to the crowds in what may be termed a defense of John. He shields him now before any criticism, and maintains his testimony and divinely given mission.

"But as they went away Jesus began to say to the crowds concerning John, What went ye out in the wilderness to see? A reed moved about by the wind? But what went ye out to see? A man clothed in delicate raiment? Behold those who wear delicate things are in the houses of kings. But what went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say to you, and more than a prophet; this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee. Verily I say to you, that there is not risen among the born of women a greater than John the Baptist. But he who is a little one in the Kingdom of the Heavens is greater than he."

We confine our remarks to the end sentence. What is

the meaning of it? Its common application is generally the thought that our Lord speaks here of the church age, and that the least in this present dispensation is greater than John in the old dispensation, to which he fully belonged. That such is the case no one doubts. We as Christian believers are higher in our standing than the Old Testament saints. However, the primary meaning of the passage is a different one. The question would be first of all, "What does our Lord mean here by Kingdom of the Heavens?" Up to the thirteenth chapter in the Gospel of Matthew the phrase, "Kingdom of the Heavens," has only one meaning, viz., the Kingdom to be established in the earth, as predicted by the Old Testament prophets. In the thirteenth chapter it is the Kingdom of the Heavens in the hands of man in its development during the absence of the King. We cannot think, therefore, that in the eleventh chapter, where it is still the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens, our Lord would introduce the present age. This would be all out of keeping with the scope of Matthew. Now as our Lord means the Kingdom of the Heavens actually set up in the earth, the meaning of His words becomes clear. The little one who *is* in that Kingdom of the Heavens, when it has come at last, will be greater than John, who but announced the Kingdom to come. It foreshadows the glories of the coming Kingdom age, when the little one will be greater than John ever could be in the earth.

But our Lord adds: "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of the Heavens is taken by violence, and the violent seize on it. For all the prophets and the law

have prophesied unto John. And if ye will receive it (him), this is Elias, who is to come. He that has ears to hear let him hear."

These words are again very simple and to our mind present no difficulty at all, if they are taken in their literal meaning.. It is strange that the words of our Lord should be made to mean the Gospel, eternal life, conversion and the sinner's own efforts to take possession of it. Yet such is the case. Many preachers and evangelists have no other light on this passage and preach and exhort from it what is in direct opposition to the blessed Gospel. According to these preachers, the violent, who take the Kingdom by force or press into it (Luke xvi:16), are unsaved sinners. The devil, the flesh and the world stand in the sinner's way of salvation, so they teach, and he must use force, great violence, to enter into the Kingdom. After due exercise, strenuous effort and violence he will be able to take it by force. This is the general interpretation of the passage. It is as erroneous as the interpretation of the parable of the treasure hid in the field and the pearl of great price, which makes the sinner give his all (though he has *nothing* to give) to buy salvation.

No, the violent who take the Kingdom by violence are *not* unsaved sinners, who seek salvation and that salvation must be taken by force. Salvation is by grace, it is God's free gift, and the sinner is not saved through and in his violent efforts, but *in* believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Pharisees and scribes who stand here before our Lord are the violent who take the Kingdom of the Heavens (never the Gospel) by force and seize on it. Our Lord says:

"From the days of John until *now*." The forerunner, John, was violently rejected by the Pharisees. This foreshadowed the rejection of the King, the rejection of the preaching of the Kingdom and the Kingdom itself. In this seizing upon the Kingdom, rejecting it, the Kingdom of the Heavens suffered violence. It was rejected by force and now is postponed till He comes again. If they had received John the Baptist he would have been Elias. But he was rejected, they would not have it so. They did violence to what the King had come to bring. Another Elias will come once more, and then no violence can keep back the coming of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

Let us notice that John's ministry was *exclusively* to his own people. Elijah's ministry is still future and falls in the period of the great tribulation. His ministry and testimony will be confined to the land of Israel and to the remnant of Israel. Any one who claims to be Elijah incarnate at this time is either a downright fraud, unbalanced in his mind, or so grossly ignorant of the Word of God and His revealed purposes, that the proud imaginations of his heart lead him astray into such a ridiculous claim.

The words which follow are a true description of the generation which was privileged to see the King, Jehovah, manifested in the earth. "But to whom shall I liken this generation? It is like children calling to their companions, saying, We have piped to you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wailed. For John has come, neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He has a demon. The son of man has come eating and drinking,

and they say, Behold a man that is eating and wine drinking, a friend of tax-gatherers, and of sinners;—and wisdom has been justified by her children" (verses 15-19). In other words, the generation was a foolish lot of people who could not be suited by anything. They were like children. It is a wonderful declaration of our Lord of the condition of the people, His own to whom He came, and who received Him not. The illustration is taken from children playing with the real things of life, with joy and sorrow, and idling their time away. John appeared among them and they were dissatisfied with him. He was too strict, too severe; they cared not for him, and because he would not sit down and eat and drink with them they said, he has a demon. Then the Lord came. Truth and mercy were revealed through Him. He sat down with the tax-gatherers and sinners and mingled with them, eating and drinking. Divine mercy towards the fallen and outcast was most blessedly shown—the spotless One in touch with the defiled and lost, calling sinners to repentance. But they had no understanding for this, no heart for that wonderful grace. He was in their eyes but a man, for they said: "Behold *a* man—eating and drinking." They put Him on the same level with the wine drinking company. Neither mourning nor rejoicing suited them. Behind it stands the evil heart, the natural man, never pleased with God's way, always finding fault. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. viii:7). The words "wisdom has been justified by her children" has found many different interpretations. Its meaning is very

simple. While the large mass of people were thus rejecting John and Christ, and had no understanding for God's love and mercy made known, there were others, a few indeed, and these accepted the teaching of John and believed in the Lord. "Wisdom" is an Old Testament name of our Lord. The whole book of Proverbs abounds with the word Wisdom and the speech Wisdom utters. The eighth chapter tells us that Wisdom is a person and that person is our Lord. Those who believed in Him are the children of Wisdom and they had no fault to find, neither with John's burning call to repentance, nor with the mercy of Christ in eating and drinking with the tax-gatherers and sinners. In this way Wisdom was justified by her children.

And is the present generation of nominal Christian better than the generation of professing Israelites in the day of Christ? We think not. They are to-day the same as the Christ rejecting Jews were then. The Christ of God, God's way of Righteousness and Grace does not suit the natural heart at any time.

Solemn are the words which follow now. The Judge speaks. He who speaks here will take His place upon the throne and preside in that judgment day of which He speaks, "Then began He to reproach the cities in which most of His works of power had taken place, because they had not repented. Woe to thee, Chorazin! Woe to thee, Bethsaida! for if the works of power which have taken place in you, had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they had long ago repented in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in judgment day than for

you. And thou, Capernaum, who hast been raised up to heaven, shall be brought down even to Hades. For if the works of power which have taken place in thee, had taken place in Sodom, it had remained until this day. But I say to you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in judgment day than for thee." His divine patience is now seen as almost exhausted and for the first time in this Gospel He speaks the "Woe," which He repeats later a number of times. And oh! the word "woe" coming from such lips! Chorazin and Bethsaida had been greatly privileged. Works of power, works which manifested Jehovah's presence had been shown in their midst, yet they repented not. Tyre and Sidon never witnessed such manifestations. The responsibility of Chorazin and Bethsaida is therefore greater than the responsibility of Tyre and Sidon. There will be in that day different degrees of punishment. Capernaum, His own city, had come nearest to heaven and still there was no response. Sodom with all their awful fruits of the flesh will fare better in judgment day than Capernaum. The measure of relationship is always the measure of responsibility. Tyre, Sidon and Sodom had no such privileges and stood in no such relationship to the Lord as the cities which our Lord mentions here. It is so with Christendom to-day. It shall be more tolerable in that day to the nations of darkest Africa than to the so-called "Christian nations," with light and privileges offered and wilfully rejected.

And what a scene follows! "At that time," when in the midst of the outburst of His righteous words of condemnation, He speaks the words so precious still. What words

could picture Him as He stood there and that face, soon to be marred and spit upon, turned upward to heaven? And now He said, "I praise thee, Father, Lord of the heaven and the earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to babes. Yea, Father, for thus has it been well pleasing in Thy sight. All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son but the Father, nor does anyone know the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son may be pleased to reveal Him."

The Lord stands on the earth and looks to the Father in heaven. Both are Lord. It was so at the destruction of Sodom. "Then the *Lord* rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire *from the Lord* out of heaven." (Genes. xix:24). The Lord who had then been in the earth and communed with Abraham His friend, stood once more on the earth. He came in the form of a servant, having emptied Himself of His outward glory, and here as the obedient One praises Him, to whom He had said coming into the world, "Lo, I come to do Thy will" (Heb. x:4-7). The Lord of the heaven and of the earth is His Father, but He who looks now to Him is not less the Lord of the heaven and of the earth. "Father," He said. He was then the only One who could thus look to heaven. It is, blessed be His name! different now. The Spirit of Sonship has been given whereby we cry, "Abba, Father."

From the wise and the prudent, the self-sufficient religionists, the Pharisees and speculating Sadducees these things were hid, but revealed unto babes. They had refused Him,

the wisdom of God; being wise in their own conceits and blindness was the dreadful result. Babes instead received the revelation of Himself. We often wonder why the wise and prudent of our day do not see certain truths, the blessed Gospel of the Glory of God, the truth concerning the church, the coming of our Lord, while others, poor and weak though they are, are in full possession of these revelations and ever receive more out of his fullness. The reason is soon found. Only He who owns his nothingness, who takes his place in weakness at His feet, and is like a babe, can receive these things. Never does the Lord entrust His secrets and his councils to the wise and prudent. Would we know more of Him, of His Word, His purposes and His thoughts? There is only one way—be a babe, own yourself as such and as a babe walk and live before the Lord of heaven and earth.

"*All* things," our Lord said, "have been delivered unto me by my Father." The people were soon ready to reject Him as their Messiah and King, but He knew His inheritance, an inheritance in which the babe in Him has a glorious share.

Furthermore, "the Father knoweth the Son." How softly we should tread whenever we speak of the person of our Lord, for the full knowledge is only with the Father. "No one knoweth the Father but the Son and he to whomsoever the Son may be pleased to reveal Him." No one cometh to the Father but by me. Whoever denies the Son has not the Father either. Revealing the Father is what our Lord did and still is doing. In resurrection He is Son of God

with power, and all who receive Him are brought to God and become children of God, to know the Father.

Upon this divine statement of His own person, His oneness with the Father, He utters that word which is so well known and which has been a word of blessing to uncountable souls.

"Come to Me all ye who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest." This is the first part of the gracious invitation. Significantly it comes in right after the rejection by His own becomes manifest and after He spoke of the rejection of the favored Galilean cities. It is typical of that full, free and blessed Gospel of Grace, which was made known after His death and resurrection, and which is still being preached.

It is an invitation to *all,* Jew and Gentile. The invitation is to those who labor and are burdened; it is to come to *Him* and He promises rest. How full it is! How inexhaustible in its meaning! The second part of His invitation brings us further. "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest for your souls; for My yoke is easy and My burden light."

The one who has come to Him and found rest is to take now His yoke upon him and to learn of Him. It means to follow Him, to be under Him as Lord. The yoke is not the law, but His own yoke, His loving restraint; and two belong into the yoke; we are yoked together with Him. And having Him, the One meek and lowly in heart, ever before the

soul, rest for the soul is the blessed fruit. It is the whole Epistle to the Philippians in a nutshell. "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus." Coming to Him we have rest—living in Him we find rest for our souls. May the reader meditate upon these words of our Lord till they become sweeter than honey and honeycomb.

CHAPTER XII.

The twelfth chapter brings before us the full manifestation of the enmity of Israel against our Lord and His rejection by His own.

It is the great turning point in this Gospel and with it the offer of our Lord to Israel as their King, as well as the offer of the Kingdom ceases. We have followed the story of our Lord manifesting Himself as Jehovah the King. Everything in the first part of this royal Gospel proves Him to be the promised One. Speaking not like the Pharisees and the Scribes, but with authority, He had declared the principles of the Kingdom He came to bring.

Going through the cities of Galilee, He and His disciples had preached the Kingdom of the Heavens to be at hand. Multitudes had heard the glad and solemn announcement.

These glad tidings were backed up by the most startling signs. The blind saw, the lepers were cleansed, demons were driven out and the dead were raised. There could be only one explanation for these miracles.

Every one of them proved conclusively that Jehovah had visited His people; He whose name is "Immanuel" had appeared in their midst. Old Testament predictions of the coming of the Messiah, the manner of His coming and His works were being fulfilled before the eyes of that generation yet they did not and would not recognize Him.

They remained cold and indifferent. They had no heart for Jehovah-Jesus. This in itself was a fulfillment of prophecy. And so we learn in the eighth chapter that a Gentile showed greater faith than the Lord had found in Israel and our Lord indicates the immediate future of the children of the Kingdom. They were to be cast out and others from the East and the West were to come and sit down in the Kingdom of the Heavens with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The murmuring of the Pharisees, first heard when he healed the paralytic and forgave him his sins, was the first outbreak against Him. And now the storm we saw in its threatening is to break. The awful blasphemy is uttered and the King declares in His sovereign power the relationship between Him the King and the Kingdom people broken. It is now clear that the Kingdom of the Heavens, so fully revealed in the Old Testament, is to be postponed till the Son of Man comes again. After this rejection of the King and His turning away from His own, He revealed the Kingdom of the Heavens in mysteries. He shows, as the Revealer of Secrets, the history of what He brings and makes known, the Kingdom in the hands of men and the development of it during His absence from the earth. And so we read immediately following the xii chapter, "And that *same day* Jesus went out from the house and sat down by the sea." He left the house; breaking off His relationship and taking His place by the sea—(a type of the Gentiles).

And now we are ready to look a little closer at the sad events before us in the important twelfth chapter.

The first paragraph, contained in eight verses, shows us

our Lord manifesting Himself as Lord of the Sabbath and answering the charge of the Pharisees, who accused them of Sabbath breaking. "At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath through the cornfields; and his disciples were hungry and began to pluck the ears and to eat. But the Pharisees, seeing it, said to Him, Behold, Thy disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." It was "at that time," at the time of that loving call to come unto Him, which stands at the close of the eleventh chapter. When divine love was full of solicitude for the burdened and the poor, the evil hearts of the enemies were ready to attack Him.

The Sabbath, the *seventh* day, is something essentially Jewish, the peculiar day for the peculiar people. Its keeping is embodied in the ten commandments. The seventh day was, and is to the present day, a matter of great importance with the Jew. He prides himself with it and boasts in the strict keeping of it. Not satisfied with the plain fourth commandment in the decalogue, the Jewish elders added their injunctions forbidding even the smallest matters and entering into details which are ridiculous. These human traditions were in the days of our Lord strictly followed. The religious Pharisee saw to its enforcement and they put these burdens upon the people and tried to establish their own righteousness. To take ears of corn and eat them on the Sabbath is nowhere forbidden in the law given through Moses. Among many other injunctions the leaders of traditions had added this to the Word of God and made it a sin should anyone pluck an ear of corn on the seventh day.

Before we continue with the story of this chapter we

desire to add here a few words, which may prove helpful to some of our readers. Not a few Christian believers have been annoyed, as well as disturbed, by a class of professing Christians who have added to their denominational names, as a special distinction, the term "Seventh day." Thus we find about us "Seventh Day Baptists" and "Seventh Day Adventists," as well as others whose chief endeavor seems to be to preach the keeping of the Jewish Sabbath. These sects, who defend the seventh day as a Christian institution, are nearly all infested with other serious evil doctrines, such as soul sleep, second probation, universalism and others. The root of this error of Sabbath keeping is the ignorance of these people of the fact that the believer in Christ has not the law, the ten commandments, for his rule, but the believer in Christ is dead to the law, and as a new creation is completely severed from that which is old, as well as from all earthly connections. The believer in Christ is above the law. He is complete and perfect in Christ. The rule for his walk is Christ Himself, by whom he is indwelt. The Sabbath, the seventh day, is connected with the earth and with Israel, but the believer is not Israel, nor does he belong to the earth, but Grace has lifted him into heaven. It is quite true there is a Sabbath day and this day is the seventh day of the week. But there is no Sabbath keeping now as regards Israel and the earth. The great and true Sabbath is still coming.

The question might then be asked, "Has the Christian believer no Sabbath day to keep?" The answer is, *No.* If we speak of a Sabbath day then surely it must mean the seventh day, and if we desire to keep the Sabbath day holy we must

keep not the first day of the week but the seventh day. But some will say, "the Sabbath has been changed from the last day of the week to the first day." This is often said; but there's no scriptural authority for it. Neither Christ nor His apostles declared such a change. It is, therefore, wrong to call the first day of the week, known by the name "Sunday," the Sabbath or "*Christian* Sabbath." The first day of the week is the Lord's day, the day of resurrection, the day of the new creation. This day was kept in the very beginning of the Christian age as a precious memorial of Him who was dead and was raised from the dead, who is seated in the Highest Heaven and who is coming again. It was with the early Christians, and should be so still, a day of worship, when they came together to break bread and partake of the blessed cup, to show the Lord's death, till He come again. Some one has expressed it in the following short sentences: "Israel was *commanded* to observe the Sabbath day; the church is *privileged* to enjoy the first day of the week. The former was the *test* of Israel's moral condition; the latter is the significant *proof* of the Church's eternal acceptance. The Sabbath day manifested what Israel *could* do for God; the Lord's day perfectly declares what God *has done* for us."

There is no law about this blessed first day of the week. The Christian believer is in perfect liberty, with no yoke and bondage upon him. "For ye have been called to liberty, brethren; only do not turn liberty into an opportunity to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Gal. v:15). The child of God will know how to use this liberty in the right

way and will certainly have the first day of the week as a day of rejoicing in the Lord and fellowship with Him.

A strange sight indeed it is to see the nominal church attempting by political influences, legislation, police activities, to force the *world* to keep the Sabbath day on the first day of the week. As if it were the calling of the church to enforce *laws* and as if the world could be made to keep the Sabbath. What a deplorable mixture! What an awful confusion!

And now after this disgression we come back to our chapter. The human way of answering the objections of the Pharisees would have been to tell them that there was no law forbidding the deed done by the disciples. In a few words He might have informed them not alone of the invalidity of their traditions, but also of the sin they had committed by adding to the Word of God. However, this is not the way divine wisdom chooses to silence their accusations. Perhaps they expected in their Satanic device some such answer, which they would have used against Him. The answer they hear from His lips, the lips of the Lawgiver Himself, is a different one they expected. It reveals His divinity, Him the perfect one in knowledge, as does every other answer He gave to His enemies in this Gospel, silencing their temptings at every instance. When He met Satan, as we learned from the fourth chapter, He used as weapon the Word of God, His own Word. Now He meets the offspring of vipers, the children of the enemy, and the weapon He uses is the same. He wields once more the Sword of the Spirit and answers their unscriptural objections by His scriptural

assertions. May we learn from it, and at all times, whether it is the Devil or his offspring which tempt us, use the Word in our defense. And thus He spake: "Have ye not read what David did when he was hungry, and they that were hungry? How he entered into the house of God, and ate the shewbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests only? Or have ye not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are blameless? But I say unto you, that there is here what is greater than the temple. But if ye had known what is: I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

The incident quoted by our Lord from David's life we find recorded in 1 Sam. xxi: How then is this incident to be applied? David was forced, as the rejected one, though God's anointed king, to enter the house of God and do what was not lawful for him to do. David's hunger and the hunger of those who were with him is but a type of the greater One than David and His disciples passing through the cornfield hungry and obliged to pluck ears of corn to eat. The sad scene on that Sabbath day was evidence enough that the people did not care for the little group headed by the King. When David was rejected and a fugitive, the holy things connected with the ceremonials given to Israel by God ceased to be holy. The sin was David's rejection, and this made the consecrated shewbread common, as David said to the High Priest, "the bread is, as it were common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel" (1 Sam. xxi:5).

The rejection of God's anointed had profaned all. This is the thought our Lord expressed to the Pharisees. They had rejected Him. They had no love for Him nor cared for Him. How ridiculous for these hyprocrites to speak of Sabbath-keeping when they were rejecting the Lord of the Sabbath! They were straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. How much of this pharisaical, hypocritical spirit we have about us in Christendom. The divinity of the Bible, as well as the Lord and His redemption work, is denied by many professing Christians, who hold still outward forms, rituals, keeping of holidays and ceremonials. But even the priests profaned the Sabbath and were blameless. What did our Lord mean by this? The priests had to bring sacrifices on the Sabbath day. "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"—thus the law commanded (Num. xxviii:9). This demanded work, and according to the law and their interpretation of it, it was forbidden on the Sabbath, yet the priests, though they profaned the Sabbath, were held blameless. Grace was fully typified in these sacrifices and Grace working is above the law and does away with the legal covenant. Our Lord surely indicates here the time when laws and ceremonials were to find their end in Him who is "greater than the temple." He had come as the true priest and the true sacrifice to do that which the blood of bulls and goats could never do; that is, to take away sin and bring the Sabbath, the rest. He is the Lord of the Sabbath and that

as Son of Man, in His humiliation and in His exaltation. But alas! they would not understand Him nor know what it meant, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." There was no answer from the Pharisees. The declaration of Himself as the Lord of the Sabbath, the One who is above the Sabbath, must have inflamed the hatred in their hearts still more. And so we see Him going away from thence. However, He did not turn His back upon them. It is a lingering, patient love we learn of Him here. He turns His blessed feet towards their synagogue. How reluctant to leave them in their dreadful condition of enmity against Him!

A man is present with a withered hand. They desire now to find some new ground of accusation again Him. Their first attempt had failed. He had read their evil thoughts, and by His answer He had shown that He anticipated the question they now put to Him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" Awful motive, which stands alongside of the question, showing the depths of Satan "that they might accuse Him." The question also discloses the fact that they believed in His healing power. We may well imagine the scene in that synagogue. The Lord in His divine calmness, the unfortunate man with the withered hand, the malicious, accusing Pharisees with their Satanic desire. And now the stillness broken by His voice, "What man shall there be of you who has one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and raise it up?" There was no answer; of course none could stand up and declare he would not deliver his one sheep out of the pit. "How much better then is a man than a sheep! So that it is lawful to do well on the

Sabbath." What a divine logic! How unanswerable this statement!

But it is not His Word alone. He has divine power to heal him who has heard His words. His glory as Jehovah, the King Immanuel, is to shine forth once more. He says to the man, "Stretch out thy hand!" Faith answers to His Word, and he stretcheth it out, and it was restored sound as the other. It was faith to stretch out a withered hand in answer to His Word and precious are the lessons we may learn from it for the life by faith to which we are called, ever living and acting in obedience to His Word. Yet we pass over that which is so plainly seen on the surface and add but a few words of what this miracle stands for in this dispensational Gospel. The man with the withered hand is a type of poor, withered Israel, withered spiritually and nationally. He had come to restore, but, unlike the man, Israel had no faith. Yet the day is coming when Israel will answer in faith and healing will follow.

The Pharisees beaten by His words and deed go out of the synagogue. In their dark councils for the first time they came together to find a way how to destroy Him.

How great the blindness which began to settle upon them! How could they destroy Him, who had raised the dead? How could they take His life, who is the true God and the eternal life? And even if there and then, in their dark counsels, they had found a way, according to their conception, to destroy Him, they could never have touched His life, for our Lord's body was not subject to mortality, His body in His humiliation was immortal, for He knew no sin. And

while they kept their blind endeavors to themselves, He was not ignorant of it. "But Jesus, knowing it, withdrew thence, and great crowds followed Him and He healed them all and charged them strictly that they should not make Him publicly known" (verses 15, 16). The withdrawal of Himself from the scene and the presence of the Pharisees indicated His withdrawal from the nation itself, the result of His rejection.

This is made clear by the quotation from the Scriptures which follows: "That that might be fulfilled which was spoken through Esaias the prophet, saying: "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul has found its delight. I will put my Spirit upon Him, and He shall show forth judgment to the nations. He shall not strive or cry out, nor shall anyone hear His voice in the streets; a bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, until He bringeth forth judgment unto victory; and in His name shall the nations hope" (verses 17-21). These verses are found in Isaiah xlii:1-4. He who knew the Scriptures and who had come to fulfill the prophecies relating to His sufferings, whose constant desire was to do the will of Him who sent Him, that the Scripture might be fulfilled—what comfort and encouragement must have come to Him through these words, which His own Spirit had revealed to Isaiah. The rejection of Him by His own was imminent. They were turning away from Him and accusing Him, but He knew Himself as the chosen One, the Beloved, His Father's love and delight upon Him. Thus in the midst of the enemies with their wicked accusations

and persecutions He could be calm, His perfect trust in Him, whose Beloved He was, well pleasing to Him.

Our way, as His own, should not be different from this. In the midst of tribulations and adversities, surrounded by the enemy, we can be calm, and more than that, rejoice.

He, as the servant of Jehovah, did not strive. Why should He strive as the One who put His trust in Jehovah? And thus it is written of the servant, His follower, "the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all." (2 Tim. ii:24.) Gentleness as foretold was to be found in Him. How gentle and loving He must have been?. Can we ever think too much of His patience and gentleness? The bruised reed He did not break. The weakest thing He took tenderly in His hands. The smoking flax was not quenched by Him. In the Epistle of our practical walk in Christ we are exhorted, "let your gentleness be known of all men." (Phil. iv:5). He in us will reproduce the very same characteristic in our lives here on the earth.

But the force of the quotation lies in the fact that the Gentiles, the nations are mentioned. The fulfillment in its completeness will take place, no doubt, at the time of His second Coming, but here the Holy Spirit uses it in still another way. Israel had begun to reject Him and now the Gentiles shall hear of God's gift and grace. The passage is introduced by the Spirit of God in a way as He only could do it.

Another one possessed by a demon is brought before Him. Most likely He had returned from the withdrawal recorded above, and once more the Pharisees are present. The pos-

sessed one is blind and dumb. Was he not a perfect picture of the nation Israel? Blind and dumb was their condition. Again He manifests Himself as Lord and He healed the demon possessed man, so that the dumb spoke and saw. No wonder that all the crowds were amazed and said, "Is this the Son of David?" They must have meant by this cry the Messiah, for they expected Him under the title of the Son of David. Still the question also implies doubt.

And here they stand again, these dark and cunning Pharisees. They have heard it. Perhaps the cry, "Is this the Son of David?" reached their ear. Moved with jealousy, anger, malice and Satanic hatred against Him whose omnipotent power was once more manifested, they said: "This man does not cast out demons but by Beelzebub, prince of demons."

The accusation had been made before by them (ix:34) when it was passed over by the Lord, but now, after the repeated manifestations of His power, after their hatred culminated in seeking His life, the awful blasphemy is to be rebuked by Him. Cowards they were, as it is seen that they did not dare to bring the accusation to His face. How could they dare to stand before Him? So He reads again their very thoughts, a miracle in itself, which should have startled them. His answer to their Satanic thoughts consists in two very logical arguments. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not subsist. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself, how then shall his kingdom subsist?" (verses 25-26). This is very clear. Satan casting out Satan would mean a division in his awful domain,

which would mean its complete ruin and overthrow. It is, therefore, inconceivable that the Devil could furnish the power to destroy his own kingdom which he controls. The passage is full of meaning aside from the argument it contains. He who knoweth all things in perfect knowledge tells us that Satan is a *person* and a king, for he has a kingdom over which he rules. The demons* are in his kingdom, one with the head in thought and purpose. How little we know of his awful power, of his kingdom and the agencies at his command to destroy body and soul. We need not know it all, it is sufficient to know that he is an enemy overcome, his kingdom is spoiled by the victor, by Him who has annulled him, who has the power of death, that is the Devil. Higher Criticism claims that our Lord acquiesced in the legendary belief of the Jews, a belief they had picked up in Babylon, that there existed a personal Devil and demons under him. This foolish, infidel theory, which is nowadays held by so many preachers and theological professors, is almost as blasphemous as the accusation of the Pharisees. If our Lord knew better than what the Jews held, and He did not correct their views, and if He did not know that their belief was incorrect, then in neither case could He be divine. This is Higher Criticism, the denial of the infallibility and divinity of the living and the written Word. The second argument against their evil thoughts is the following:

"And if I cast out demons, by Beelzebub, your sons b··

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*The translation "devils" is not correct. There is one devil, but the fallen angels are demons.

whom do they cast them out? For this reason *they* shall be your judges" (verse 27).

Among the Jews there were and are still such who profess to be exorcists, men who claim to have power to cast out demons. We cannot follow certain traditional teachings of the Jews concerning exorcism at this time. Some of them were wandering exorcists, going from place to place professing to cast out demons. Such are they who are mentioned in Acts xix:13: "And certain of the Jewish exorcists also, who went about, took in hand to call upon those who had wicked spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preaches." Perhaps those who are mentioned elsewhere, who drove out demons using the name of the Lord and did not follow Him, were exorcists. Certain it is the Lord did not mean His own disciples upon whom He had conferred the power to cast out demons in His name; He meant the school of Pharisees, who practiced, or claimed to practice, exorcism. The question put to them by our Lord demanded an answer which they cared not to give, for it would have been to their own condemnation.

And so He continues with His perfect argumentation, driving it home to their hearts, as only He could do it. "But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then indeed the Kingdom of God is come upon you." It is impossible that Satan could cast out Satan. There remains, then, only one other alternative; the Spirit of God casts out the demons. Then, indeed, the Kingdom is come upon you in the person of the King who manifests this power. Alas! they knew it, but they would not have Him and the Kingdom He preached.

And still His voice is heard: "Or else, can anyone enter into the house of *the* strong man and plunder his goods, unless he first bind the strong man? And then he will plunder his house."

The strong man is Satan, but the Lord, stronger than Satan, had bound him and has the power to enter his domain and take away his prey. Who then is He who bound the enemy? Perhaps His voice rested here. Perhaps He waited for an answer. "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God" would have been in order here.

And stronger still He speaks. "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathers not with me scatters." He demands decision. Half-heartedness does not satisfy Him and in face of such open-faced accusations and blasphemies would be impossible. It was an appeal to decide. In our day in which we live, out and out decision is not less demanded. Phariseeism and Sadduceeism, the leaven is working about us and to be undecided is paramount with dishonoring His own glorious person.

"For this reason I say unto you, every sin and injurious speaking shall be forgiven to men but speaking injuriously of the Spirit shall not be forgiven to men. And whosoever shall have spoken a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming one."

Much has been said and written on this passage and on the question of the unpardonable sin. Many who had lived in open sin and worldly lusts, having been arrested by the

grace of God, almost despaired for they feared they had committed that sin and now in spite of their repentance forgiveness was an impossibility for them. This wrong conclusion is often preached in so called "revival meetings" to bring sinners to accept Christ. Believers who fell in sin likewise have thought that after sinning with open eyes, wilfully, they had been guilty of the unpardonable sin. How many poor, ignorant souls have grieved for weeks and months thinking the Holy Spirit had now left them for good. But the Holy Spirit once given to the believer in believing on Christ has come as the *abiding* Comforter. He has come to stay and *never, no never,* to leave that which He has sealed. The Spirit may be grieved, He may be quenched, but never can He be driven away so that the true believer would fall back and be lost.

This widespread doctrine of falling from grace in the sense of the believer's possibility to be lost dishonors Christ and His work for us. But some one says: "Did not David pray: And take not the Holy Spirit from me?" Certainly he did, and it was in order for him to pray thus for the Holy Spirit might have left him, for He was not then in the earth with believers as the abiding comforter. The believer in the New Testament is never exhorted to pray to the Spirit to remain with him. He is to be filled with the Spirit and continually guard against grieving the Spirit or not to quench Him, but never to doubt His presence. All these wrong conceptions spring from a deplorable ignorance of the fundamentals of the blessed Gospel of the Grace of God.

And now what is this sin of which our Lord speaks here?

In His coming to His own people, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were manifested. The Holy Spirit in His power was manifested through the Son, our Lord, upon whom He was in His fullness. The signs He did were not alone done in His own omnipotent power as Jehovah, they were the manifestation of the Holy Spirit likewise. And these Pharisees had sinned against this Holy Spirit by accusing Christ, that He drove out the demons by Satanic power. They had blasphemed the Spirit, spoken injuriously about Him, in saying that Beelzebub, the prince of demons, was present with Christ and not the Holy Spirit. This they did maliciously. And this and nothing else is the sin of which our Lord here speaks. The sin is to charge the Lord with doing His miracles through Satanic power and not through the Holy Spirit. We do believe, therefore, that this sin could only be committed as long as our Lord Jesus Christ was in the earth and that it was committed by the Pharisees with their blasphemies. This is the sin which would not be forgiven neither in this age nor in the coming one. In 1 John v:16-17, we read, "If any one see his brother sinning, a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life, for those that do not sin unto death. There is a sin to death. I do not say of that that he should make a request." This is to be explained in the following way. The brother is a believer. On account of sinning he is chastised. God permits sickness to come upon him and the sinning not having been unto death (physical death *only*) he is raised up. However, a believer may go on *wilfully sinning* and remain there dishonoring Christ. He is to be taken away out of the

land of the living, cut off by death. No request could be made for such a one. The question of death is not eternal condemnation but only physical death.

From the fact of the sin these Pharisees were doing, the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, the Lord now turns to the cause of this, the spring from which the evil comes. "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt. For from the fruit the tree is known. Offspring of vipers! how can ye speak good things, being wicked?" (verse 33-34). The Searcher of hearts, He who understandeth the thoughts afar off, uncovers the real condition of these men and the condition of man in general. The tree is bad, the fruit must be bad. The tree must be made good, and that denotes a change, and the fruit will be good. "The heart is deceitful above all, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart" (Jerm. xvii:9, 10). He does it here and speaks of them as John, the forerunner did, as "offspring of vipers," with wicked hearts and impossible to bring forth anything good. And, later, once more He spoke of the condition of the heart of man, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matth. xv:19). How little those Pharisees, and Sadducees as well, believed in this and how unwilling they were to accept the sentence and verdict of Him, who knoweth all things. They were given to their ceremonial, ritualistic observances, very scrupulous about their phylacteries and fringes of their garments, making long prayers, keeping the outside of the cup and

the platter clean, but never acknowledging the condition of the heart before the Searcher of Hearts. Self-righteous, moral, religious and, with it all, "offspring of vipers." All their religious observances and outward morality did not and could not effect a change. And so they stood before Him whose finger had written the law, boasting in the keeping of the law and rejecting the Lord, blaspheming against the Holy Spirit.

The leaven of the Pharisees is still at work. This leaven has leavened, indeed, the whole lump. Ritualistic, religious, moral Christendom, professing, and not possessing, is the direct descendant of the Pharisee of old and as such the offspring of vipers as much as they were. How little the radical, complete corruption of man is believed in Christendom, how little it is taught. Man with the good spark in him (as they claim), developing it by religiousness and the use of his own will, becomes and is his own Saviour. The Lord is looked upon not as Lord, but as Jesus of Nazareth, whose life is an example, while the atonement, the blood, is set aside and rejected. The wicked heart cannot bring forth good things. Fine and polished, sweet and harmonious, may be the language of the cultured, religious, unsaved man, but proceeding from an evil heart it can never please God. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man out of the good treasure brings forth good things and the wicked man out of the wicked treasure brings forth wicked things. But I say unto you that every idle word which men shall say, they shall render an account of it in judgment day; for by thy words thou

shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (verse 35-37).

These words have been misunderstood and much misapplied and all this by wresting these words out of their connection. They are mostly applied in connection with that unscriptural phrase and doctrine, "universal judgment." According to this, even the words will be weighed and judged, and only then in that hour of judgment, will it be known, according to this teaching, who will be saved and who is lost. Our Lord did not teach this here nor is it taught anywhere else. These Pharisees were proud of their works and were self-righteous. If they relied on their works as a means of their justification and salvation they have to expect a judgment accordingly; every idle word is to be judged, which means utter, absolute condemnation. Their words could not be good because they were wicked. May the self-righteous, religious man remember this. Absolute condemnation awaits him. Salvation is by grace, and by that salvation man receives a good treasure and brings forth good things. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth then speaks. Futhermore, the word "idle" means useless, barren. All that which man speaks out of himself is barren and useless. The believer, however, living after the Spirit, will not utter useless words, but that which is in honor of the Son of God. As believers, we should bear constantly in mind that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, not for a decision of eternal salvation, this was settled when the believer trusted in Christ,

but for rewards. Surely then our deeds, our works and our words will be either approved or disapproved.

"By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." This has also a reference to the familiar passage in Romans x: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." And wherever there is not this confession springing from the belief of the heart there is condemnation.

The scene is now drawing to its close. The hard-heartedness of the Pharisees is seen by some of them coming after such words, saying, Teacher, we desire to see a sign from Thee. Whatever evil design they had in asking him thus we do not know. He had done sign upon sign and they had ample proofs of His divinity. Upon such an evil, unbelieving request He can only utter His righteous indignation. So He calls them a wicked and adulterous generation. "A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and a sign shall not be given to it save the sign of Jonas the prophet. For, even as Jonas was in the great fish three days and three nights, thus shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. Ninevites shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold more than Jonas is here" (verse 38-41). This is a most significant passage. How far the Pharisees believed the story of Jonas we do not know. The Sadducees no doubt rejected the book of Jonah, for they were the rationalists and critics of their day. It is significant for us in our

day when the judgment to fall upon apostate Christendom is so near, nothing is more ridiculed than the book of Jonah and its sublime teachings. The Sadducees of the present day, the higher critics, assume to know more than the Lord, and by rejecting the book of Jonah as uninspired they reject the infallible Lord Himself. But why does our Lord mention Jonah here? Because Jonah is a type of the death and resurrection of our Lord. Jonah is the only prophet who was sent away from Israel's land far unto the Gentiles, to the great and ungodly city of Nineveh. However, before he went there, he passed through a death experience and out of that grave in which he was brought he was taken again, a type of resurrection. Through it God brought salvation to the Gentiles, for Jonah, after his death and resurrection experience proclaimed the message of God. So the Lord was going away from Israel. He was soon to leave them, and the grace of God was to go out towards the Gentile world. Yet before that could be He had to go into the jaws of death, and, like Jonah, was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so was He to be the same length of time in the grave, but also to come forth in resurrection. He was preached, after His resurrection, to the Jew first; but while Nineveh repented after the message of Jonah, that wicked and adulterous generation did not repent of their course, after the preaching through Him, who is greater than Jonah. Therefore the Ninevites will rise up and condemn that generation. Jonah is likewise a type of the whole nation, which, however, is not before us in this

chapter.* The Queen of Sheba also will condemn that generation, she came to hear the wisdom of Solomon and here stands He who is *the Wisdom* and they reject Him, who imparted to the wise King the wisdom he had.

And this is followed by a prediction by our Lord which concerns the future of that generation. "But when the unclean spirit has gone out of the man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and does not find it. Then he says, I will return to my house whence I came out; and having come he finds it unoccupied, swept and adorned. Then he goes and takes with himself seven other spirits worse than himself, and entering in, they dwell there; and the last condition of that man becomes worse than the first. Thus it shall be to this wicked generation also" (verse 43-45). All kinds of interpretations and applications have been made of this prediction. It is, however, clear that there is but one application, and that is in respect to the unbelieving generation. "Thus shall it be to this wicked generation also"—settles the point of application. Generation is certainly to be understood in the sense of race. The unclean spirit is idolatry. It had left the nation, and even now the nation is swept from that evil spirit and unoccupied, and boasts of reform. It will not be so forever. The unclean spirit will return and bring seven others with him and take possession of that house again, and the last condition, the end, becomes worse than the beginning. The

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*See our tract on "Jonah and the Whale," where the dispensational side is expounded.

return of the unclean spirit with its seven companions will take place during the great tribulation.

The end of the rejection of our Lord by His own has come. He has outlined their dreadful end, and to which Israel's unbelief is rapidly leading on, and now follows a pathetic ending of this great crisis. "But while He was yet speaking to the crowds, behold His mother and His brethren stood without, seeking to speak to Him. Then one said to Him, Behold Thy mother and Thy brethren are standing without, seeking to speak to Thee. But He answered and said to him who had spoken to Him, Who is My mother and who are My brethren? And stretching out His hand to His disciples, He said, Behold My mother and My brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother." From Mark's Gospel we learn the possible reason of His relatives coming to Him. "And His relatives having heard of it went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, He is out of His mind" (Mark iii:21).

He refuses to see them. Behind this refusal stands the fact of a broken relationship. He no longer recognizes His own, and speaks of a new relationship, founded upon obedience to the will of His Father in the heavens.

CHAPTER XIII.

We have now reached one of the most important chapters in this Gospel. It demands, therefore, our closest attention, and this more so because the revelation which our Lord gives here, the unfolding of the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, has been and still is grossly misunderstood and falsely interpreted. Precisely that which our Lord did not mean has been read into this chapter. The whole chapter has been, so to speak, turned upside down by most of the learned commentators of Christendom. For any believer to turn to these for light and instruction will only result in getting thoroughly confused. We have often said if this one chapter would be rightly understood by the professing church, the consequences would be the most far-reaching. But one almost despairs of seeing the true meaning of the mystery of the kingdom in Matthew xiii believed in Christendom. The professing mass continues, and will continue, with the majority of those who are not merely outward professors, to build upon the misinterpretation of our Lord's parables the optimistic dreams of the enlargement of the church, the foreshadowing of the universal extension of the church and the continued good work of the leaven in the three measures of meal, etc. We have found in our experience, that it is hard to get the individual believer, brought up in these wrong conceptions,

to see the true meaning; and often the testimony given is rejected. Let us then carefully and prayerfully look into the chapter before us, and may our Lord give His blessing; and while the many may reject what we teach from these parables it may be a few receive light through the entrance of His Word, and may all believers in these truths be strengthened.

Let us notice, first of all, two verses in this chapter; "Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to them it is not given" (verse 11); "All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and without a parable He did not speak to them, so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the world's foundation" (verses 34-35). These verses then tell us what our Lord makes known in this chapter, namely *"the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens"—"Things uttered, which were hidden from the world's foundation."*

In Genesis we read of one who is called "Zaphnath-paaneah" which, according to rabbinical interpretation, means "Revealer of secrets." He is Joseph, the Hebrew lad rejected by his brethren, that most perfect type of our Lord. After his rejection by his brethren, Joseph becomes the revealer of the secrets, and that through the wisdom of God.

Here in this chapter Christ appears as the rejected one, and now after the offer of the kingdom is rejected by the people of the kingdom, and He as king, is likewise rejected,

He becomes the revealer of the secrets, to show what will take place after the Kingdom has been rejected by Israel, and postponed.

That He is the rejected one and the far-reaching witness He gives now is evident in the very opening verses. "And that same day Jesus went out from the house and sat down by the sea." Leaving the house means He severed His relation with His people as we saw at the close of the twelfth chapter. Taking His place by the sea, the sea typifying nations, shows that His testimony to be given now, the mysteries to be revealed have a wider sphere; they are relative to the nations. "And great crowds were gathered together to Him, so that going on board ship He sat down, and the whole crowd stood on the shore." He separated Himself from the multitude, while in the first part of this Gospel He moves in the midst of the multitudes, here He takes His place alone. What a scene it must have been! There on the seashore the multitude, and He alone some ways from the shore—He cannot be reached by *touch* now. All is significant. Then when all eyes hang upon His lips, He began to speak.

What He says is in parables, and without parables He did not speak to them. He utters seven parables. In no other Gospel do we find them grouped together as here. Why is this? This is the great dispensational Gospel. Here God's plan of the ages is revealed as in no other Gospel. We have seen before that the Holy Spirit in giving us this Gospel, the Genesis of the New Testament, is not tied down to chronological order,

but He arranges everything to suit His sublime purpose. After the kingdom was offered and rejected, the Lord makes known what is to be after this rejection, and during the time of His absence. Therefore these parables, seven in number, denoting completeness, are put right in here.

Now the important question is when the Lord says six times in these parables, "The kingdom of the heavens is like" what does He mean by the term "Kingdom of the heavens?" That it can no longer mean the kingdom as it is revealed in the Old Testament, as it is promised to Israel, and as He offered it to the people, is evident. For in the first place, the offer was made and rejected. The preaching of Him and the messengers He sent out was, "The kingdom of the heavens it at hand, repent." Not a word do we hear of this in the thirteenth chapter, nor after this chapter. And in the second place, if our Lord had had the Old Testament kingdom promised to Israel in view, when He says here "The Kingdom of the heavens is like," He could not have said that He uttered things hidden from the world's foundation, for the kingdom, in the Old Testament is not a mystery, but clearly revealed.

Some say, and indeed the popular and almost universally accepted interpretation is—it is the church. The Lord begins now to teach about the church. So that if He says: "The kingdom of the heavens is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal," etc., it is declared the church is meant, and the Gospel. The church is nowhere called the kingdom of the heavens. Oh, the great confusion which exists on this topic. The

Lord mentions the word church only once in the Gospel, and that is in Matthew xvi., where He says that He *will build His church.* The church did not exist in the Old Testament, it was not known there at all; it was not in existence while the Lord walked in the earth, and *nowhere* does He refer to the church as the kingdom of the heavens, neither does the Holy Spirit speak of the church as the kingdom. He speaks of the church as the habitation of God, a house, a temple, the body of Christ and the Bride of Christ, but we repeat it, *never* as the kingdom of the heavens. All this modern application of kingdom of the heavens to the church is foreign to the Word of God. It is the unscriptural theory of man.

But what does our Lord mean when He says "the kingdom of the heavens?" The answer is a very simple one. The kingdom on the one hand was rejected by Israel, but on the other hand, God gives His Word to the Gentiles, a fact indicated in the Old Testament prophetic Word.

The mercy and grace offered to Israel is to go forth to the Gentiles, the nations, while the King Himself is absent. This is indicated in the first parable where the sower *went out,* which stands for the fact of His going forth into the field, which is the world. So that which is extended to the Gentiles and that in which the name of Christ is confessed is now the kingdom of the heavens, and of this development of what He the Lord from heaven brought and left in the earth, our Lord speaks in these parables. In one word "the kingdom of the heavens" in Matthew is equivalent with "*Christendom.*" It includes

the whole sphere of Christian profession saved and unsaved, so-called Romanists and Protestants, all who are naming the name of Christ. Therefore the church is not the kingdom of the heavens, though the church is in the kingdom of the heavens.

The Lord teaches in the seven parables how matters will go in the earth while He is not here, and what men will do with that which He brought from heaven and left in the hands of men.

Before we take up the parables separately we must consider their general character. The seven parables are first divided into four and three. The first four He speaks before the multitudes. Then after He dismissed the crowds, He went into the house and in the presence of the disciples He utters the three last parables. These three last ones, the treasure hid in the field, the pearl of great price and the dragnet, have a deeper spiritual meaning than the first. The first two parables our Lord explains Himself to His disciples; the other five He leaves unexplained.

They may also be divided in the following way by twos:

1. The sower who went out to sow.
2. The enemy sowing tares, the spurious seed.

These refer in part to the *beginning* of the kingdom of the heavens in the hands of men, however the conditions pictured here last to the end, the time of the harvest.

3. The parable of the mustard seed.
4. The parable of the leaven.

These fortell the external and internal development of

the kingdom of the heavens, the progress is described and it is an unnatural and evil progress.

5. The parable of the treasure hid in the field.

6. The parable of the one pearl.

These stand for the two mysteries of the kingdom, God's earthly people hid in the field, the church the one pearl for which He has given all. First the pearl is taken, then the treasure is lifted in the field.

7. The parable of the dragnet.

It stands isolated, and refers to the end of the kingdom of the heavens in its mystery form.

Still another way of looking at them would be to compare them with the seven church messages in Rev. ii and iii. Here the Lord speaks again, and this speaking is from the glory. In the seven messages we learn the beginning, the progress and the end of this present Christian age. It is the history of Christendom, the kingdom of the heavens.

1. The parable of the sower—*Ephesus.* The apostolic age. The beginning with failure—leaving the first love.

2. The parable of the evil seed—*Smyrna,* meaning bitterness. The enemy revealed.

3. The parable of the mustard seed—*Pergamos*—meaning high tower and twice married. The professing church becomes big, a state institution under Constantine the Great. The big tree and the unclean birds (nations) find shelter there.

4. The parable of the leaven—*Thyatira*—the one who sacrifices. Rome and her abomination. The woman Jeze-

bel, the harlot, corresponds to the woman in the parable of the leaven.

5. The parable of the treasure hid—*Sardis*—the reformation age—having a name to live, but being dead and a remnant there. Israel, dead but belonging to Him who has purchased the field.

6. The parable of the Pearl—*Philadelphia.* The church, the *one pearl.* The one body of Christ and the removal of the church to be with Him.

7. The parable of the dragnet—*Laodicea*—Judgment. I will spue thee out of my mouth.

We do not claim to teach all this exhaustively. That would take many months, but we give these that each reader may have hints in what way to search.

We add but one more fact to these introductory remarks to the study of the different parables. The key for their right interpretation is in themselves as well as in the scriptures. The sower in the first parable and in the second is the Son of Man. What He sows is the wheat, that which stands throughout the scriptures for purity, for Christ himself. The Word He is Himself and the corn of wheat; the good seed are the sons of the kingdom. The field is the world. The enemy is the Devil. The man in the sixth parable who buys the field (the world) is the same Son of Man and the merchantman who sells all He has to purchase the one pearl He desires is the same person as the Sower. It is nonsense to make out of the merchantman and out of the man who buys the field the sinner. That

would mean that the sinner has something to give. He has not. And the field, meaning the world, it would mean the sinner is to buy the world.

The three measures of meal of course come from the wheat, they *always* stand for that which is good. Leaven, however, *never* means anything good, but it always stands for evil. The closer study of these parables, which we now take up will bring out all this more fully.

After having studied this important chapter in a general way, we shall now look at the seven parables separately and to learn from them the development of the Kingdom of the Heavens in its mystery form. Throughout our study the dispensational aspect of the parables is to be kept strongly in the foreground, for it is dispensational truth which is taught here.

The first parable is the well-known one of the sower. "And he spoke to them many things in parables, saying, Behold the sower went out to sow." Two thing attract our attention in this opening sentence of the parable. We notice first that our Lord speaks of *the* sower, not of *a* sower, and when He expounds the parable later to His disciples He does not tell them who this sower is, but He only speaks of what happened to the seed He sowed. The second thing we mention is that the sower went *out*.

The personality of the sower is not difficult to clear up, for in explaining the second parable our Lord says: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man." Our Lord Himself is the Sower. He came with the precious seed, the fine wheat, and of course He himself is the corn of wheat.

The seed He sows can only bring forth as it falls upon good ground, and in the ground it dies, and out of death comes the fruit. All this is indicated here. We would, however, take this parable in the first sense to apply to the days of our Lord in the earth. In a wider sense it must be taken as typical of the entire age, in which He is absent from the earth and the Kingdom is in the hands of men. The sowing He began continues still, and the result of sowing is likewise the same.

And what is the significance that it is written that the sower went *out* to sow? It shows the beginning of something new; a new work which the Lord now takes up. Israel had failed to yield fruit. Israel was the vineyard of Isaiah v. "He fenced it in, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vines, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine press therein; and He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes . . . and now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down." (Is. v:2-7.) Israel is the fig tree of the parable; the Lord came and found no fruit. The vineyard is laid waste and the fig tree stands barren. It is true, it will not be always so. The vine and the fig tree will bring fruit at last, but in the meantime, while Israel is unfruitful, the sower has gone out to sow. Where has he gone? Where does the sower generally deposit the seed? In the field. What is the field? The divine interpreter gives us the answer. "The field is the

world." So we have here the fact established that after Israel failed the Word is to go forth into the wide world, "beginning in Jerusalem unto Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth."

The question comes at once, what will be the result? Will all the world receive it and every part of the entire field be cultivated? Will the whole field be reached by the seed and the seed spring up and bear an abundant harvest? Will not a single grain be lost? The parable has this very thought as its centre, What becomes of the seed?

What we learn from the parable is far from teaching us the optimistic dream of Christendom of world conversion, so often founded upon a wrong application of these parables. The parable proves that it will not be a universal acceptance of the Word which we can look for in this age; only the fourth part of the seed sown brings forth fruit, and there is again a marked difference in the quantity of fruit in that fourth part. Our Lord then impresses here in this simple parable the fact, which later the Holy Spirit repeats, the age in which He is absent and in which His Word is preached and His grace is offered, that Word will be in greater part rejected, and only a fourth part yields the fruit; the rest is failure.

It is very significant that we meet this important dispensational fact at the very threshold of Matthew xiii. Alas! it has not been believed by the great mass of professing Christians. To speak of failure in this age and deny a soon coming world conversion is frowned upon as a miserable, unbelieving pessimism. One is sometimes even ac-

cused of disbelieving the power of the Holy Spirit to convert the whole world, as if the Holy Spirit had been sent down from heaven for world conversion.

But we shall now read what came from the lips of our Lord in this parable.

"Behold the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed, some grains fell along the way, and the birds came and devoured them; and others fell upon the rocky places where they had not much earth, and immediately they sprang up out of the ground, because of not having any depths of earth, but when the sun rose they were burned up, and because of not having any root were dried up; and others fell upon the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them; and others fell upon the good ground, and produced fruit, one a hundred, one sixty, and one thirty. He that has ears let him hear" (verses 5-9). We need not to guess the meaning of this parable for the Lord Himself tells His disciples what He meant by the birds and the rocky place and the thorns. And so we shall take His own explanation with such comments which may be helpful for a fuller understanding.

"The disciples came up to Him and said, Why speakest thou to them in parables?" This question came at once after He had finished this first parable. They had never heard a parable from His lips. What He had spoken before to the people and their leaders had been in simple words, easily to be understood by every one, and now for the first time He spoke something which they could not comprehend. It was veiled. The answer which our Lord

gives is of great solemnity, as it announces the judgment upon Israel.

"And He answering said to them, Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens, but to them it is not given." The disciples, representing believers, were to understand the mysteries coming in now while the nation who had refused the light would be in darkness. "For whosoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall be caused to be in abundance. But he who has not, even what he has shall be taken away from him." The disciples had received the Lord and He gave them more, while Israel had not, they rejected Christ and so what they had still as His earthly people was to be taken away from them. But this two-edged sword cuts in another way. The principle our Lord here utters is still active. The true believers composing the church have, and by and by we shall be caused to be in abundance, while an apostate Christendom which has not shall lose even what it boasts to have.

"For this cause," our Lord continues, "I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear nor understand; and in them is filled up the prophecy of Esaias, which says, Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and beholding ye shall behold and not see; for the heart of this people has grown fat, and they have heard heavily with their ears, and they have closed their eyes as asleep, lest they should see with the eyes, and hear with the ears, and understand with the heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." This passage is a quotation from Isaiah vi:9-10. Isaiah saw in a

vision Jehovah sitting upon a throne, and He spoke these words to the prophet. If we turn to the xii. chapter in the Gospel of John we find these words quoted again, and there is the significant addition, "These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spoke of Him" (John xii:40). The Jehovah Isaiah saw upon His throne was our Lord Jesus Christ. Once more do we read the same words brought to remembrance by the Holy Spirit. In the last chapter of Acts, when Israel's apostasy and unbelief is fully established, Paul speaks them to the assembled Jews and adds, "Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and they will hear."

And now after our Lord declares them blessed on account of what they see and hear, He explains the parable Himself.

"Ye, therefore, hear the parable of the sower. From every one who hears the word of the Kingdom and does not understand it, the wicked one comes and catches away what was sown in his heart; this is he that is sown at the wayside" (v. 18-19).

How easy is it then understood. The wayside is hard and trodden down by feet, there the seed fell and birds were ready to snatch it up and devour it.

A hearer or a class of hearers is given here who do not understand the Word. But is it the question of mental capacity of an intellectual understanding? Certainly not. The Lord says the word was "sown in the heart;" it had directed itself to the conscience and could either be accepted or rejected. But the heart would not have it and turned against it; "and does not understand it," means "he

would not understand or receive it." No sooner is this the case and the seed has fallen upon such a ground, a hard heart like the wayside, then the birds come and devour the seed. The birds represent the wicked one. He is present with his agencies and busy to take up whatever was given and rejected. Once more do we read in this chapter of birds; it is in the third parable, that of the mustard seed. The birds there mean nothing good but that which is evil, like in the first parable.

"But he that is sown on the rocky places—this is he that hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy, but has no root in himself, but is for a time only; and when tribulation happens on account of the Word, he is immediately offended" (vv. 20-21).

The rocky ground is lightly covered with earth. There is a sudden springing up, an enthusiastic reception one might say, which pushes itself along. But the sun rises higher, the heat is felt, and there is no resistance, no life to combat these conditions; the delicate thing drops over and is burned up. It had no roots. This little earth on top of the rock may well represent the natural heart of man as the way trodden by men represents it. Only here is the brightest side of the flesh, if one can speak of it in such a way. But behind that little earth is the solid rock, which no plow has broken and where no life is present. How large is this class? It is the great class of professing Christians. They are covering over this old, desperately wicked heart with a little earth. They put on the form of Godliness, while they know nothing of its power. There

is also a great deal of enthusiasm, a springing up of the seed; it looks almost as if there is to be a great result—but alas! there is only the name to live, but death is behind it.

"When the sun rose they were burned up." May we not apply this word also dispensationally? The rocky ground sowers will flourish, and they flourish and increase now with their empty profession and their enthusiastic show at religiousness and world improvement. But the sun will rise, tribulation will come. The great tribulation and the judgments, which precede the rising of the Sun of Righteousness will burn them up and sweep them away.

"And he that is sown among the thorns, this is he who hears the Word, and the anxious care of this life and the deceit of riches choke the Word and he becomes unfruitful" (verse 22).

This is so plain that it needs hardly any comment at all. "The deceit of riches" hinder the growth of the Word. It becomes choked and there is no fruit. How true this is of the present day we all know. The world, the pleasures of the earth, cares and anxiety in getting as much as possible of these phantom things seems to control more and more the outwardly professing masses. All that is of God becomes choked.

Thus we see in these three classes, in which the seed perishes and brings no fruit, the Devil, the Flesh and the World represented. The Devil snatches up and devours, the Flesh attempts and fails, the World surrounds and chokes. And yet how much else might be said in connection with these three classes! No human being could have

spoken such a simple parable with such a deep and far-reaching meaning. The Revealer of Secrets speaks, who knows the hidden things.

"But he that is sown upon the good ground, this is he who hears and understands the Word, who bears fruit also and produces one a hundred, one sixty, and one thirty" (verse 23). Hearing, understanding, which is in faith and through faith, fruitbearing and producing, this is the process of the seed in the good ground, a receptive heart prepared by the Grace of God.

We come now to the second parable, in which we find the Kingdom of the heavens mentioned. It was not mentioned in connection with the first parable of the sower. "Another parable set He before them, saying, The Kingdom of the heavens has become like a man sowing good seed in his field; but while men slept his enemy came and sowed darnel amongst the wheat and went away. But when the blade shot up and produced fruit then appeared the darnel also. And the bondmen of the householder came up and said to him, Sir, hast thou not sown good seed in thy field? Whence then has it darnel? And he said to them, A man that is an enemy has done this. And the bondmen said to him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather it up? But he said, No; lest in the gathering the darnel ye should root up the wheat with it. Suffer both to grow together unto the harvest, and in time of the harvest I will say to the harvestmen, Gather first the darnel, and bind it into bundles to burn it; but the wheat bring together into my granary" (verses 24-30). Again we are

not left to seek for an interpretation. After he had spoken two other parables we read that our Lord in answer to His disciples' question tells them what He meant by the parable. To this perfect interpretation by the divine speaker we have to turn to find the correct and far reaching meaning of this second parable. "Then, having dismissed the crowds, He went into the house; and His disciples came to Him, saying, Expound to us the parable of the darnel of the field. But He answering said, He that sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world and the good seed are the Sons of the Kingdom, but the darnel are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who has sowed it is the devil, and the harvest is the completion of the age, and the harvestmen are angels" (verses 36-39).

The connection with the first parable is clear. The same sower is in the beginning of the parable before us, and the seed is deposited in the field, which is the world. But our Lord says, "the good seed, these are the Sons of the Kingdom." This can mean only one thing, namely, that the good seed sown and fallen into a good ground, as we saw in the first parable, brings forth fruit, and the Word of the Kingdom produces the Sons of the Kingdom. Like begets like; the fruit is according to the seed. However, the leading thought in this parable is the enemy and his evil work. It is a work of spite, as it is yet quite often practiced in oriental countries. The enemy watches till his hated neighbor has deposited his seed into the field, then he goes to work and during the night, while men sleep, and begins to sow the bad seed of some weed. Not till the seed springs

up and grows does the unsuspecting victim see the work of the enemy. The enemy, our Lord says, is the devil. As from the Word of the Kingdom the Sons of the Kingdom spring forth, so from the evil seed sown by the devil come the sons of the evil one.

It is important to notice the *time* when the enemy did this and the *manner* in which he attempts to counteract the work of the Sower, the Son of Man.

In regard to the time, we have two facts to consider. The first is: It was immediately after the Sower had deposited the good seed; and the second fact: It was "while men slept." No sooner had our Lord brought the truth, and the Holy Spirit had been given, than the enemy began its work. In the days of the Apostle Paul the work which the enemy had done became manifest, and the evil seed, which at the end of this age is full grown, is easily seen springing up in the beginning of the age. The mystery of iniquity began its work then, and continues throughout the age till the end is reached, when it is fully developed.

It was while men slept that the enemy did it. Not the Sower slept, He neither sleeps nor slumbers, but the men slept. Such an unwatchful condition soon developed in the beginning of the age. The first love was soon given up, and then the enemy did his work.

The manner was by putting a counterfeit seed in the field. The darnel looks in its seed like the wheat. When it springs up it cannot be distinguished from the wheat, yet it is a poisonous weed. The darnel represents the lie as it is put into the field by the devil. It is evil doctrine,

a counterfeit of the faith once and for all delivered unto the saints. The denial of the Deity of our Lord, the denial of the resurrection and the inspiration of the Bible belong to this darnel seed, which makes itself felt in the very beginning of this Christian age.

In a certain sense this process still continues. Whenever the truth is proclaimed and the Word taught, it does not take long before the enemy comes and brings the counterfeit when "men sleep." Another strong lesson we learn from this parable is the character of this entire age. It is evil. Satan is the god of this age till the end of the age comes. The mixed condition of good seed and darnel seed, Sons of the Kingdom and sons of the evil one, prevails to the very end. The servants of the bondmen were willing to root out the darnel but were not permitted to do so. It is an idle dream, which many hope to realize, to reform the world, to gather out obnoxious evils, to banish drunkenness and immorality, to purify the state and politics. Such efforts are nowhere taught in the Word of God. Men, under Christian profession, take such work upon themselves, and they little know how they sin and dishonor Christ with it. No, error and its fruits will continue to grow alongside the good seed and its precious fruit till the time of the harvest. Before we follow the thought of the harvest we turn our attention to still another matter in connection with the first part of this parable.

A vital error has been committed in regard to the place where the wheat and the darnel grow together. It has been said to us "we cannot have a pure church, or

assembly, for the Lord Himself has said that the evil will always be with us and that we are not to put them out who are the sons of the evil one." This was said and is said on the supposition that our Lord speaks of the Church. However, this is not the case. The church, the assembly, is not before Him at all. As we have said before the Kingdom of the heavens is not the Church. When it comes to the revelation concerning the Church we hear our Lord say that evil is not to be tolerated in the assembly. "If thy brother sin against thee go, reprove him between thee and him alone. If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he do not hear, take with thee one or two besides that every matter may stand upon the word of two witnesses or of three. But if he will not listen to them, tell it to the assembly and if also he will not listen to the assembly, let him be to thee as one of the nations and a taxgatherer" (Chap. xviii:15-17). This is the way evil is to be treated in the assembly, or, as we generally say, Church. In the epistles we find numerous exhortations that evil doctrine and an evil walk contrary to the Gospel is not to be tolerated in an assembly. The assembly is to judge evil. It is *not* said of the Church "let them grow together."

The field is not the Church, but the world, and it is in the world that this takes place; in that part of the field where the good seed has been sown, in the entire sphere of professing Christendom.

The harvest is the completion of the age. Our authorized version has it "world." This has misled many

readers of the Word. The end of this world is a good ways off yet. The end of the age in which we live is drawing rapidly to a close. What will take place then? Our Lord says, "As then the darnel is gathered and is burned in the fire, thus it shall be in the completion of the age. The Son of Man shall send His angels and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all offences, and those that practice lawlessness, and they shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their father. He that hath ears let him hear" (verses 40-43). Before in the parable our Lord said: "I will say to the harvestmen, Gather first the darnel, and bind it into bundles to burn it; but the wheat bring together into my granary."

The completion of the age is the same as in Matthew xxiv, when the disciples asked for the signs of His coming and the completion of the age. The ending of the age will be Jewish; Jewish history resumed in the events which fall into the last week of Daniel, the seventieth week. Of this ending the Lord speaks. The angels will then be the harvestmen. It corresponds to what we read in Rev. xiv: 14-20. "And I looked and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having upon His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

Some who teach the unscriptural theory, that the church will remain in the earth to the very end of the age and pass through the great tribulation, have used this parable to support their views. We repeat the parable has nothing to do with the Church. When our Lord speaks of the bundling up of the darnel and the gathering of the wheat into the granary, He did not teach that the wheat is the Church or represents the Church, and that the gathering in of the Church is to be His last act in this age. The wheat, of course, is the good seed, the good seed are the Sons of the Kingdom. That all true believers are the good seed and as such Sons of the Kingdom none would doubt. Yet, after the Church is removed from the earth, before the completion of the age, as foretold in prophecy, begins, there will still be wheat in the earth. There will still be sowing. Indeed it will then be "the Word of the Kingdom" which is preached. The Gospel of the Kingdom will be proclaimed during that end and the seed will spring up. A great multitude will come out of that great tribulation having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. This multitude will be gathered in the time when the darnel are bundled up, preparatory to the burning. The wheat, these Sons of the Kingdom, will be gathered into His granary, kept and preserved for the Kingdom to be established in the earth. "Then the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." This reminds us very strongly of the language of Matthew xxv: 34. "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World."

These words are *not* addressed to the church, but to that multitude come out of all nations (Rev. vii) and the Kingdom is not the heavenly glory but the *earthly* Kingdom. The Church, her heavenly calling and destination, we repeat again, is *not* in view at all in this second parable.

Let us hold fast the three great facts the parable teaches. These are, as we have seen, the following:

1. The enemy, the devil, began his work in the beginning of the age.

2. The age is mixed, good and evil grow together. This condition cannot be changed throughout the age.

3. The mixed condition will cease with the completion of the age. The Sons of the Kingdom will inherit the Kingdom. The darnel after being bundled up are burned with fire.

The next two parables our Lord spake to reveal still more of the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens are the parables of the mustard seed and of the leaven.. They belong together. We shall learn in the exposition of these two parables, how the popular interpretation of them through the leading commentators of Christendom has turned everything upside down. The fact is, precisely the opposite our Lord meant is being taught by teachers in evangelical Christendom. The fault of this erroneous interpretation springs from the great fundamental error that the Lord has the church in view when He speaks of the kingdom of the heavens, and that the church is that kingdom. Therefore it is taken for granted by this exposition that when the Lord now speaks of a grain of mustard seed,

which becomes a great tree and which gives shelter to the birds, that this is a prophecy relating to the expansion of the church. The leaven is therefore made to mean the gospel with its leavening power. All this is *radically* wrong. We turn to the parable of the grain of mustard seed first.

"Another parable set He before them, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field, which is less indeed than all seeds, but when it is grown is greater than herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of heaven come and roost in its branches" (verses 31-32).

Here we have the outward development of the kingdom of the heavens as it grows and expands, in an unnatural way, and becomes the roosting place of the birds of *heaven*. As indicated above, the almost universal comment on this mustard seed and its miraculous growth, as it is termed, is that it fully declares the expansion of the church, and the birds of heaven are interpreted as meaning peoples and nations, who find shelter in the church. Growing and still growing, the mustard tree reaches over the entire earth, its branches spread out wider and wider, and soon (so they tell us) the tree will have covered the earth as the waters cover the deep. It is also a common occurrence that some denominational leader—a bishop or an elder—claims the parable for his denomination and illustrates with it the phenomenal growth of the sect to which he belongs, or claims a great future of success. Again, the history of the "church" is resorted to for the sake of showing the fulfillment of this parable and the statistics of Christen-

dom, so many millions of Protestants (including all the infidels, unsaved masses of Germany, England, and every other "evangelical" country) so many more now than fifty years ago. etc.

If the Lord had meant His church by this mustard seed, which becomes a tree and the roosting place of birds, if it is really the church, which is His body, then this parable would be in flagrant contradiction with what He and the Holy Spirit teach elsewhere concerning the church in the earth, the mission and the future of the church. The greatest clash of teaching would be the result.

For instance, in His prayer our Lord says concerning His own, those who are one as the Father and Son are one: "They are not of the world, as I am not of the world" (John xvii:14). The church then, composed of all true believers, is not of the world as He is not of the world. The church is from above, as every believer has a life which is from above; but for a little while the church is *in* the world, and in a little while the church will be above, where He is the glorified Head of His body. The mustard seed springing up in the field (do not forget the field is the *world*), rooting deeper and deeper in the earth and expanding in this unnatural way affording room for birds, is the picture of something entirely different. It shows us a system which is rooted in the earth and which aims a greatness in the world, expansion over the earth. The Lord never meant His church to be rooted and grounded in the field, the world. He never called the church to assume such proportions and become an abnor-

mal growth in the earth. Whatever is spoken of Christ is spoken of the church. Suffering and glory, after lowliness, followed by exaltation, is the way Christ went; it is the way ordained for the church. She is to be lowly, now suffering with Him, rejected and disowned by the world as He was, never to reign and rule now, but patiently waiting with Him for the moment when He is manifested and *then* to share His Throne and His Glory. The calling and destiny of the church is heavenly. Her mission is to shine out Himself and testify of His grace, but never to control and overspread the world. The epistles addressed to the church make this sufficiently clear.

But if the mustard seed and its growth does not mean the *church,* what does it mean? It means the Kingdom of the heavens, and this is, as we have seen before, professing Christendom. At once the parable becomes illuminated with light. Looked upon in this light, in full harmony with all the Lord teaches in this chapter, all is easily understood. The little mustard seed, which was not destined to be a tree but only a shrub, easily taken out of the garden where it had been planted, develops against its nature into a tree. That which came from Him, the Son of Man, the Sower, develops, committed into the hands of men, into an unnatural thing—one might say, a monstrosity—for such a mustard *tree* is. This unnatural thing, this monstrosity, is professing Christendom as a system of the world, professing Christ, without possessing Him and His Spirit.

Here we have to call attention to the third message to the churches in Revelation, the second chapter. That is the mes-

sage to Pergamos, typifying the age of the history of Christendom, beginning with Constantine the Great in the fourth century. The suffering church was made a state church. The mustard seed *suddenly* became the tree, and ever since the professing church has delighted in looking upon herself as a big expanding tree. But notice the perfect agreement—the third parable and the third church message.

The birds which roost in that tree would mean, if the parable applies to the church, converted sinners. Do birds ever represent clean persons? We need not go outside of the chapter to answer this. The birds which fell upon the seed which had fallen by the wayside were instruments of Satan. Birds of heaven, or fowls, never mean anything good in Scripture. Abraham stood in the midst of the pieces of the sacrifices and drove away the fowls which were ready to fall upon the pieces (Gen. xv.). The animals divided there represent Christ and the fowls nothing good. Birds in this parable mean unsaved, unconverted people and nations who flock for selfish motives to the tree, the outward form of Christendom, and find shelter there. But they defile the tree.

At last the tree will be full grown. Of the full grown tree it is said, "Great Babylon has become the habitation (roosting place) of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every *unclean and hated bird*" (Rev. xviii:2).

But let us not forget there is a tree which is to grow up and spread its branches, taking sap out of the root, over

the whole earth. This tree is Israel—the good olive tree with its indestructible root. Some of the branches are now broken off and lie upon the ground. Romans xi, however, assures us that God is able to graft them in again. Yet, before this olive tree with its holy root, this olive tree with its long promised future, the covenant made with an oath, stands highminded, boasting Christendom, boasting itself against the branches and claiming to be the tree to overspread the earth and thus attending to Israel's earthly calling. Alas! the warning is cast into the winds, "if God spared not the natural branches take heed lest He spare not thee." What a fall it will be when at last that tree, the monstrous tree, falls and is destroyed forever root and all!

But we must now turn our attention to the next parable, the parable of the leaven. "He spoke another parable to them: The kingdom of the heavens is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until it had been all leavened" (verse 33). It is, perhaps, unnecessary to state the universal explanation of the parable of the leaven. All the leading commentators of the Bible have accepted it, and it is taught throughout Christendom. However, we must refer to it briefly. The leaven is taken to mean the Gospel and its power. The woman represents the church. The woman takes the leaven and puts it into three measures of meal, which, according to this general exegesis represents humanity, the entire human family. Here the leaven does, in a hidden manner, its work in an

assimilating process in penetrating the whole mass of humanity.*

That the parable *could* mean anything but that, which we have briefly outlined, seems to the great majority of teachers and preachers of Christendom next to an impossible thing. It is such a general accepted view that but few can tear themselves loose from it, and see the true teaching our Lord gives in this fourth parable. One hears so continually statements about the Gospel leaven and prayer that the "good" leaven may do its work, etc., that another explanation of this parable puts one at odds with the bulk of Christian believers. Indeed, this little parable contained in a little verse is apt to revolutionize the conception of many truths revealed in the Word of God. If we then approach this parable with a candid mind, laying aside any prejudice and preconceived ideas and are willing to know and follow the truth at any cost, we shall certainly find the truth and with it great joy and peace. If it revolutionizes our views it will only put us *right,* for whosoever follows the accepted teachings of men is generally not right.

If then the leaven means the Gospel, and the woman the

*Thus writes P. Lange, often called "the Prince among Commentators." "The woman is an apt figure of the church. Leaven, a substance kindred, yet quite opposed to meal, having the power of transforming and preserving it, and converting it into bread, thus representing the divine in its relation to, and influence upon, our natural life. One of the main points of the parable is the hiding or the mixing of the leaven in the three measures of meal. This refers to the great visible church, in which the living Gospel seems, as it were, hidden and lost."

church, and the three measures of meal humanity, the Lord would teach that the Gospel, through the instrumentality of the church, is to permeate humanity, and that the world is to be converted by the assimilating power of the Gospel in penetrating the whole mass of humanity. Such, of course, *is* the belief, the unscriptural belief, of Christendom. But if the Lord teaches any such doctrine in this parable He manifestly contradicts Himself, a thing impossible with Him, who is infallible. We have seen in the second parable that the wheat and the tares grow together until the time of the harvest. This *excludes* the thought of world conversion in this age. This age, as we have seen, is a mixed one, and these conditions prevail to the end of it. If our Lord meant the leaven to permeate the whole lump of humanity then He teaches something entirely different from what He taught in the second parable.

But let us turn our attention to the word "leaven." We should not forget that our Lord as the teacher, as Nicodemus called Him, come from God, was according to the flesh the Son of David and the Son of Abraham. These to whom He speaks were Jews. Now the hearers of the parable certainly understood what was meant by leaven. No Jew would ever dream that leaven used in illustrating some power of process, could stand for something good. Leaven with the Jews means always evil. It was excluded from every offering of the Lord made by fire. Conscientiously the orthodox Jew searches his dwelling before keeping the feast of the unleavened bread, if perhaps

somewhere a morsel of bread with some leaven may be hid. He purges out the leaven.

The word leaven, however, is not used here exclusively. We find it a number of times in the New Testament; the question is for what does it stand in the other passages?

Three times our Lord uses the word leaven, besides here in the parable. He speaks of the leaven of the Pharisees, the leaven of the Sadducees and the leaven of Herod. (Matt. xvi:12; Mark viii:15.) Does He mean some good quality of the Pharisees and Sadducees when He mentions leaven in connection with them? Certainly not, He cautions His disciples to beware of that leaven. He terms the hypocrisy of the ritualistic Pharisee, leaven, and the rationalism of the Sadducees and worldliness of Herod is leaven. The Holy Spirit furthermore usês the word leaven only in an evil sense (1 Cor. v:6; Gal. v:9). It is then evident in Scripture language leaven never means anything good, *always* stands for evil and corruption. It is impossible that it should mean only *once* something good, and that the Lord without any further comment, should use it here as a type of the gospel.

But let us turn to the question of the three measures of meal. What do they represent? The faulty but accepted teaching is, that the Lord means corrupted humanity by it. However, this is as impossible as it is for leaven to be something good. Where does the meal come from? Surely any child can answer this, the meal comes from the *wheat*. Tares, the type of evil, corruption, never yield fine, wholesome meal. Meal is the product of the good seed

only. Good, nutritious and pure as it is, it can *never* represent the unregenerated mass of humanity. But we have still greater evidence. Three measures of meal *stand* in type for Christ, the corn of wheat and the bread of life. When Abraham comforted the Lord (Genesis xviii) it was by three measures of meal and a calf. Both are typical of Christ, His Person and His Work. He is good, pure, holy, undefiled, as well as that which He has given, His Word. It is therefore all folly to twist Scripture language around, and make the three measures of meal mean corruption, when it always denotes purity.

Again, if the Gospel is leaven, and this leaven is to permeate the whole mass of humanity, we have an additional contradiction. Does the Gospel really work like leaven? How does leaven work? It is put into meal and then it works by itself. That is all. Simply put it there, leave it alone, it is bound to leaven the whole lump. But this is *not* the way the Gospel works the power of God unto Salvation.

Conceding it is true, the Gospel is leaven and is to permeate the whole lump, then we can readily say the "Gospel leaven" is the biggest failure which has ever been put out. There is no nation, nor even a town or hamlet which has ever been successfully "leavened" by the Gospel.

The process is then a failure, the Gospel does not accomplish the leavening of the lump, it has not done it in 1900 years. The inference which comes next is, that in giving such a prophecy the speaker, our Lord, was mistaken.

We have now torn down the false explanation of the

parable, and laid the foundation upon which we can easily build and grasp the true meaning of the parable.

Leaven is error, evil, corruption. The good pure meal stands for truth, for Christ and His Word. The leaven corrupts the meal, it changes that which is good, and attacks in a hidden way its purity, till it has pervaded the whole mass. The Lord teaches in the parable how evil doctrine will corrupt the fine meal, the doctrine of Christ. It follows the parable of the mustard seed. First the professing church was lifted up into prominence, and the next step was the woman who put leaven into the three measures of meal. Pergamos, the period of church history, in which the professing church is married (the meaning of Pergamos) to the state and the world, is followed by the fourth period, that of Thyatira. This fourth message corresponds to the parable of the woman and the leaven. A woman, the woman Jezebel, is mentioned in Revelation ii. No doubt she stands for Rome. The woman in the parable represents the same, the apostate church, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. She has with her evil doctrine, the leaven, corrupted the fine meal, the doctrine of Christ. And now this leaven works in professing Christendom. It cannot yet fully pervade all, the whole is not yet leavened. The true believers, the church, still in the earth, is a hindrance to the full leavening process of evil. But the church will be removed from the earth, then the whole lump will be leavened. The fire alone can arrest the leaven in its work. The fire will make an end of the

leaven. This explanation is the only correct one, for it agrees perfectly, not only with the teaching of our Lord in the previous parables, but with Scripture as a whole. The evil conditions in which the kingdom of the heavens gets in the hands of men, during the absence of the Lord, is here fully declared. Christendom, Rome, the mother of harlots, and the daughters, is evidence enough and proof how the Revealer of Secrets revealed things to come.

All these parables show the growth of *evil,* and are prophecies extending over the entire age in which we live. May we bow before the Word and follow the Word and its clear teachings, the oracles of God, rather than the "voice of the church" or "the doctrines of men."

After our Lord dismissed the crowds, He went into the house and here, in answer to the request of the disciples, He expounded the second parable. It was given to them, as it is given to us, to know the mysteries of the kingdom. We have looked at this divine interpretation before, and so we can at once proceed with the three parables which follow and which our Lord speaks to His disciples in the house. Two of these, the parable of the treasure hid in the field and the parable of the one pearl of great price, belong together. After these the Lord concludes His teaching of the mysteries with the parable of the dragnet.

"The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hid in the field, which a man having found has hid, and for the joy of it goes and sells all whatever he has, and buys that field. Again the kingdom of the heavens is like a merchantman seeking beautiful pearls; and having found one

pearl of great value, he went and sold all whatever he had and bought it" (verses 44-46). That these two parables are closely connected is seen by their similarity. In both a man is mentioned, and he sells in each all he has to obtain what he esteems precious. In the first, he finds a treasure in the field and hides it there, while he buys the field to possess the treasure. In the second, he sells all to obtain one pearl of great value. There is, of course, a difference likewise. The treasure is in the field; it is deposited there. The field is bought, and with it the treasure. The one pearl comes out of the sea; its value is greater than the treasure in the field, of which it is not said that it has a great value. Again, a treasure may be increased or decreased, there may be taken away from it or added to it; the one pearl, however, is complete, its value and beauty are fixed.

As we turn to the interpretation of these parables, we are obliged to follow the same course which we followed with the preceding parables. We have to set aside the commonly accepted view. We have to show once more that the almost universal exposition and application of the parables by evangelical Christendom is wrong, unscriptural and conflicting with other parts of God's Word. We shall have to use the sharp knife again, to lay bare the errors of the teachings taken from the treasure in the field and the one pearl. Only in this way can we get at the root of the matter, and see the true meaning and understand the mysteries of the kingdom.

Perhaps the best way to mention the erroneous interpre-

tation is to quote the father of Protestantism, Martin Luther. His comment on these two parables is about the best expression of the accepted theories, what our Lord meant with the treasure and the pearl. Luther said:

> The parable of the treasure means, that we vainly seek the kingdom of God by our works and exertion, or the works of the law. For we are not born of the blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man. The Jews had the field, but did not see the treasure in it. But the Gentiles bought the field with the treasure; that is the *law with Christ*. . . . . The hidden treasure *is the Gospel,* which gives us grace and righteousness without our merit. Therefore when one finds it, it causes joy; that is a good, cheerful conscience, which cannot be secured by any good works.
>
> The parable of the pearl is almost of the same import as the preceding one, except that the former speaks of the finding and this of the seeking. Therefore he speaks here of a growing faith, and signifies therewith that the pearl was not unknown, but that it had been heard of, as being of great price. Here the merchantman is intent only, that he may possess the one pearl. For this is also the nature of the Christian life, that he who has begun it imagines he has nothing, but he reaches out for it, and constantly presses onward, that he may obtain it.*

This mode of interpretation has been strictly followed by commentators. H. A. W. Meyer, a leading expositor of the New Testament, declares "the kingdom, the most valuable possession, must be taken hold of by a joyful sacrifice of all earthly things." Another one says: "The treasure and the pearl are pictures of the great value of the kingdom of the heavens. To possess them one has to sacrifice all his other goods" (Prof. Holtzmann). P. Lange, so well known, declares: "True Christianity is like an unexpected discovery, even in the ancient church. It is

*Luther's Explanatory Notes on the Gospels. Page 82.

the best possession we can find, a gift of free grace. Every sinner must find and discover Christianity for himself. In order to secure possession, even of what we found with no merit of our own, we must be willing to sacrifice all; for salvation, though entirely of free grace, requires the fullest self-surrender." But enough of this. It is the general way of interpreting these two parables by making the man who sells all to obtain the treasure and the merchantman, the unsaved sinner. The Gospel, salvation, the grace of God, or as some term it "religion," is, according to this, represented in the treasure and the one pearl of great value. That such a theory is unreconcilably clashing with the very heart of the gospel is but little considered.

Gospel sermons, so-called, are preached, in which the sinner is exhorted to give up, to sell all, in order to become a Christian, to surrender the world and himself and *then* to find the pearl of great value. But is this the Gospel? We answer, No! The sinner has no sacrifice to bring. All his trying to surrender himself or giving up the world can never secure for him eternal life or the grace of God. "What must I *do* to inherit eternal life?" was spoken by a self-righteous Pharisee, the young ruler, and the Lord answers him, who came to him with the law and as under the law, accordingly, and tells him to sell all he has and give it to the poor and follow him. But this is *not* the gospel, but the law, which says, "Do and live." To preach the Gospel to sinners and tell them to *do,* to give up and to receive, is fundamentally wrong. The Gospel of grace does not ask of the sinner to sell all he has to receive

the grace of God and eternal life, but the Gospel of grace offers to every sinner eternal life as God's *gift,* a free gift, in Christ Jesus. The Word of God, it is true, speaks of buying; but what kind of buying is it? "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" (Is. lv. : 1, 2). It is buying without money and without price.

The giving up, the surrender, follows when a person is saved and has received the grace of God, but never before. We see that to teach, the man who finds the treasure is the sinner, and the sinner is to sell all to obtain the possession of Christ, or the merchantman is the sinner who obtains a pearl, eternal life, by giving up all, is wrong teaching.* The Lord *never* meant in these parables to describe the seeking and the finding of the sinner.

The difficulty which is so apparent in the first of these two parables is but little dealt with by preachers who make the Gospel out of it. According to this wrong application the sinner would have to buy the *field* to obtain the treasure, the Gospel. What is the field? One of the above mentioned commentators makes of it "the external, worldly ecclesiasticism." This is simply a human opinion. We know what the field is. We need not to ask Dr. Luther, Lange, or any other man, what means the field. The Lord has given us the key. "The field is the world." This is the meaning of the word field in the first two parables.

*How strange that even the simple Gospel is so little known, and there is more and more the preaching of a Gospel, which is another. A nauseating mixture of law and grace.

Who would say that the word "field" means anything different in the fifth parable? The field is the world. If the sinner is meant by the man who buys the field, it would mean that the sinner has to buy the *world*. There is no sense whatever in giving these two parables such an application.

Again, in the two first parables a person is spoken of—the sower, the man who sowed the good seed. This Man in the first two parables is the Lord Himself. In the two parables before us the man and the merchantman stand for the same person, and this person is identical with the man in the first and second parables; in other words, the man who bought the field and the treasure in it, and the merchantman, who sold all to obtain one pearl of great value, is the Lord Himself. It is not the unsaved seeking and finding salvation, but it is the Saviour seeking the sinner, purchasing the field, buying the treasure in it, giving up all to possess *one* pearl of great value.

As we look upon it in this light we have indeed the blessed Gospel. He, who was rich, became poor for our sakes, that by His poverty we might become rich. He, who subsisted in the form of God, emptied Himself. He came down, He gave up, He gave all and was obedient unto death, unto the death of the cross. Both parables teach the same great truth, Christ, the Saviour, who came to seek that which is lost and who has purchased the field and found in it a treasure, which is His, and obtained one pearl of great value.

But the question arises, if this is the case, why two

parables? If the finding man and the seeking merchantman is our Lord, why should His work in giving up and selling all be mentioned twice? Why is a treasure mentioned first and then a pearl? and why is the purchased treasure hid, while the one pearl of great value comes evidently first into the possession of the merchantman?

The Lord certainly speaks here of a twofold mystery of the kingdom of the heavens and of two different objects, which He obtained by His work of redemption. When He mentions the treasure hid in the field, which is His by purchase, He means His earthly people, *Israel*. The one pearl of great value, taken out of the sea; the one pearl, beautiful and complete, means the *church*, the *one* body. We have in these two parables the mystery of Israel and the mystery of the church; of both mysteries the Holy Spirit witnesses in the epistles by the Apostle of the Gentiles, to whom these mysteries were made known.

Israel is the treasure in the field. "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth *is* mine" (Exod. xix : 5). "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob for Himself and Israel for His peculiar treasure" (Psa. cxxxv : 4). When He came from heaven He found His people in the field. He bought the whole world and with it, inclusive, the people who are His earthly treasure. "He died for that nation" is spoken of His blessed work (John xi : 51). However, we do not read that He got possession of the treasure; it is rather the thought which we get from it, that the treasure found is hid still in the field which He bought by so great a price, for the sake of own-

ing that treasure. And in this we have the key, why this is introduced in these parables of the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens.

Israel is the Lord's peculiar treasure. He has purchased His earthly people. They shall be yet his peculiar treasure, displaying in the earth, in the coming age, all the excellencies of Himself. They will be justified, a separated and Spirit-filled people. In Balaam's prophecies the Spirit of God speaks of what Israel is in God's eyes through the redemption work of Jehovah. The Lord died for that nation, and still the results of His death are not yet manifested. Israel is hid in the field, in the world. The Lord will come again and return to the field, the world, once more. He comes to claim His inheritance. Then He will lift the treasure, then He claims His people Israel and they will rejoice in His salvation. During this age, the age of an absent Lord, Israel is kept hid in the field. This is one of the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens. It corresponds to Rom. xi : 25 : "For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, of this *mystery,* that ye be not wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the nations be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written: The Deliverer shall come out of Zion; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Alas! Christendom is wise in their own conceits and has ignored, yes completely ignored this mystery. It declares that "God hath cast away His people and there is no hope for Israel." Christendom forgets that Israel is the treasure in the field,

purchased by the blood, the precious blood of the Son of God, and that He, who is like a man who has gone to a far country, will come again to claim the earth and lift His peculiar treasure Israel. Much more might be said on all this, but we are obliged to turn to the meaning of the one pearl of great value.

This one pearl is the *Church*. "He loved the Church and gave Himself for it," thus it is written, and here in the parable He declares this precious truth Himself. The pearl is taken out of the sea. Way down on the dark bottom of the ocean is the shell, the house of an animal, and in this animal, by its work, the beautiful pearl is produced. A small grain of sand, we are told, imbeds itself between the animal and the shell and creates by its presence a wound in the side of the animal. Upon this miserable grain of sand the animal deposits a thin crust of a brilliant material. How often this is repeated no one can tell, one deposit after the other is made, till at last in the side of the animal there is found a most beautiful pearl, a pearl of great price, a pearl in which the colors of the rainbow of the heavens are wonderfully blended together. It is taken up and becomes the well nigh priceless jewel in the crown of some mighty monarch.

We see at once *why* our Lord used the pearl as the type of the church, which He loved and gave Himself for it. Like Eve who was taken out of the side of Adam, so His blessed side was opened and out of that side *is* building His church. Like the pearl, the church is *one*, though composed of many countless members known to Him alone.

This one pearl is *still* forming out of His side. The one pearl is still in the dark waters of the sea. How many more members will be added to this one pearl we do not know. How long it will be yet, before the Lord takes her unto Himself into the air, to adorn Himself with that precious pearl, none can tell. The church belongs to Him, and will be with Him in the heavenlies. Of what great value must this one pearl be to Him, that He gave *all* for it? What glories will He receive from the possession of that pearl and what a beautiful object will be the pearl in the possession of the heavenly and eternal merchantman?

When He comes to take possession of Israel, the treasure, and of the world, His church will be with Him. And what else might be said of this precious parable! May we meditate on it, and rejoice in that love which gave up all to take us out of our ruin and loss untold, and make us the objects of His marvelous grace.

One more parable remains, the seventh. "Again the kingdom of the heavens is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and which gathers together of every kind, which when it has been filled, they having drawn up on the shore and sat down, gathered the good into vessels and cast the worthless out. Thus shall it be in the completion of the age; the angels shall go forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (verses 47-50).

This is not the Gospel net, as it is often called. After

the one pearl is taken up the end of the age begins. This parable falls into the completion of the age. The dragnet is let into the sea, which, as we have seen before, represents the nations. The parable refers to the preaching of the everlasting Gospel as it will take place during the great tribulation (Rev. xiv:6, 7). The separating of the good and the bad is done by angels. All this cannot refer to the present time nor to the church, but to the time when the kingdom is about to be set up. Then angels will be used, as it is so clearly seen in the book of Revelation. The wicked will be cast into the furnace of fire and the righteous will remain in the earth for the millennial kingdom. To follow all this in detail would take us into the history of the seventieth week of Daniel. It is the same "end of the age" which is described in Matthew xxiv.

We have learned from these seven parables the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, beginning with the apostolic age and showing us the conditions which prevail up to its end. It is significant that the last three parables—containing, as we have seen, the mystery of Israel, the mystery of the church, and the mystery of the ending of the age—were spoken in the house to the disciples. The great multitude did not hear them, as they contain truths for His own, to whom alone it is given through the Spirit of God to know the mysteries of the kingdom. And so we read: "Jesus says unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say to Him, Yea, Lord. And He said to them, For this reason every scribe discipled to the kingdom of the heavens is like a man that is a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old"

(verses 51, 52). The things old are the things revealed in the Old Testament and the new things those of the new dispensation, which are given in these parables in a nut-shell.

Upon this declaration there follows a symbolical action of our Lord. "And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these parables, He withdrew thence." The revealer of the secrets has given His revelation and now He disappears from the scene. It stands in type for His bodily absence from the earth during this age.

The end of the chapter is in full accord with the beginning and the teaching of the entire chapter. "And having come into His own country, He taught them in their synagogues, so that they were astonished, and said, Whence has this man this wisdom and these works of power? Is not this the son of a carpenter? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brethren James and Joseph, and Simeon and Juda? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then has this man all these things? And they were offended in Him. And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor, unless in His country and in his house. And he did not there many works of power, because of their unbelief" (verses 54-58).

What else is all this but evidence of His full rejection. His own knew Him not. They speak of His earthly relations. For them He is "this man." His Father they knew not. They call Him "the son of the carpenter." And thus He is rejected still by His earthly people; and alas! many of those who call themselves by His name during this age treat Him no better. With the next chapter we shall follow the story of His rejection.

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