

# BIBLE TREASURY VOLUME N13

by Unknown

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*A collection of articles and writings from Bible Treasury Volume N13, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.*

30 Chapters

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## Bible Treasury Volume N13

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## Advertising

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## Fragment: No Fear in Love

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“If I am sure that a person loves me, I do not fear him. If I am only desiring to be the object of his affection, I may fear that I am not so, and may even fear himself. Nevertheless, this fear would always tend to destroy my love for him and my desire to be loved by him. There is incompatibility between the two affections—there is no fear in love.”

## Outline of Matthew: 1

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God has been pleased, in the separate accounts He has given us of our Lord Jesus, to display not only His own grace and wisdom but the infinite excellency of His Son. It is our wisdom to seek to profit by all the light He has afforded us and, in order to this, both to receive implicitly, as the simple Christian surely does, whatever God has written for our instruction in these different Gospels, and also by comparing them, and comparing them according to the special point of view which God has communicated in each Gospel, to see concentrated the varying lines of everlasting truth which there meet in Christ. Now I shall proceed with all simplicity, the Lord helping me, first taking up the Gospel before us in order to point out as far as I am enabled to do, the great distinguishing features, as well as the chief contents that the Holy Ghost has here been pleased to communicate.

It is well to bear in mind that in this Gospel as in all the rest God has in nowise undertaken to present everything, but only some chosen discourses and facts; and this is the more remarkable inasmuch as in some cases the very same miracles, etc., are given in several and even in all the Gospels. The Gospels are short; the materials used are not numerous; but what shall we say of the depths of grace that are there disclosed? What of the immeasurable glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, which everywhere shines out in them?

The undeniable certainty that God has been pleased to confine Himself to a small portion of the circumstances of the life of Jesus, and, even so, to repeat the same discourse, miracle, or whatever other fact is brought before us, only brings out, to my mind, more distinctly the manifest design of God to give expression to the glory of the Son in each Gospel according to a special point of view.

Now, looking at the Gospel of Matthew as a whole, and taking the most enlarged view of it before we enter into details, the question arises, what is the main idea before the Holy Ghost? It is surely the lesson of simplicity to learn this from God and, once learned, to apply it steadily as a help of the most manifest kind; full of interest, as well as of the weightiest instruction, in examining all the incidents as they come before us. What, then, is that which, not merely in a few facts in particular chapters, but throughout, tomes before us in the Gospel of Matthew? It matters not where we look, whether at the beginning, the middle, or the end, the same evident character proclaims itself. The prefatory words introduce it. Is it not the Lord Jesus, Son of David, Son of Abraham-Messiah? But, then, it is not simply the anointed of Jehovah, but One who proves Himself, and is declared of God, to be Jehovah-Messiah. No such testimony appears elsewhere. I say not that there is no evidence in the other Gospels to demonstrate that He is really Jehovah and Emmanuel too, but that nowhere else have we the same fullness of proof and the same manifest design, from the very starting point of the Gospel, to proclaim the Lord as being thus a divine Messiah—God with us.

The practical object is equally obvious. The common notion, that the Jews are in view, is quite correct as far as it goes. The Gospel of Matthew bears internal proof that God especially provides for the instruction of His own among those that had been Jews. It was written more particularly for

the leading of Jewish Christians into a truer understanding of the glory of the Lord Jesus. Hence, every testimony that could convince and satisfy a Jew, is found most fully here hence the precision of the quotations from the Old Testament; hence the converging of prophecy on the Messiah; hence, too, the manner in which the miracles of Christ, or the incidents of His life, are grouped together. To Jewish difficulties all this pointed with peculiar fitness. Miracles we have elsewhere, no doubt, and prophecies occasionally; but where is there such a profusion of them as in Matthew? Where, in the mind of the Spirit of God, such a continual, conspicuous point of quoting and applying Scripture in all places and seasons to the Lord Jesus? To me, I confess, it seems impossible for a simple mind to resist the conclusion.

But, this is not all to be noticed here. Not only does God deign to meet the Jew with these proofs from prophecy, miracle, life and doctrine, but He begins with what a Jew would and must demand—the question of genealogy. But even then the answer of Matthew is after a divine sort. “The book,” he says, of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.” These are the two principal landmarks to which a Jew turns—royalty given by the grace of God in the one, and the original depository of the promise in the other.

Moreover, not only does God condescend to notice the line of fathers, but, if He turns aside for a moment now and then for aught else, what instruction, both in man's sin and need and in His own grace, does thus spring up before us from the mere course of His genealogical tree! He names in certain cases the mother and not the father only; but never without a divine reason. There are four women alluded to. They are not such as any of us, or perhaps any man, would beforehand have thought of introducing, and into such a genealogy, of all others. But God had His own sufficient motive, and His was one not only of wisdom but of mercy; also, of special instruction to the Jew, as we shall see in a moment. First of all, who but God would have thought it necessary to remind us that Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar? I need not enlarge; these names in divine history must speak for themselves. Man would have hidden all this assuredly; he would have preferred to put forth either some flaming account of ancient and august ancestry, or to concentrate all the honor and glory in one, the luster of whose genius eclipsed all antecedents. But God's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are our ways His ways. Again, the allusion to such persons thus introduced is the more remarkable because others, worthy ones, are not named. There is no mention of Sarah, no hint of Rebecca, no notice whatever of so many holy and illustrious names in the female line of our Lord Jesus. But Thamar does appear thus early (1:3), and so manifest is the reason that one has no need to explain further. I am persuaded that the name alone is sufficient intimation to any Christian heart and conscience. But how significant to the Jew! What were his thoughts of the Messiah? Would he have put forward the name of Thamar in such a connection? Never. He might not have been able to deny the fact, but as to bringing it out thus and drawing special attention to it, the Jew was the last man to have done it. Nevertheless, the grace of God in this is exceeding good and wise.

But there is more than this, Lower down we have another. There is the name of Rachab, a Gentile, and a Gentile bringing no honorable reputation along with her. Men may seek to pare it down, but it is impossible either to cloak her shame, or to fritter away the grace of God. It is not to be well or wisely got rid of who and what Rachab publicly was; yet is she the woman that the Holy Ghost singles out for the next place in the ancestry to Jesus.

Ruth, too, appears—Ruth, of all these women—most meek and blameless, no doubt, by the working of the divine grace in her, but still a daughter of Moab whom the Lord forbade to enter His congregation to the tenth generation forever.

And what of Solomon himself, begotten by David, the king, of her that had been the wife of Uriah? How humiliating to those who stood on human righteousness! How thwarting to mere Jewish expectations of the Messiah! He was the Messiah, but such He was after God's heart, not man's. He was the Messiah that somehow would and could have relations with sinners, first and last, where grace would reach and bless Gentiles—a Moabite—anybody. Room was left for intimations of such compassion in Matthew's scheme of His ancestry. Deny it they might as to doctrine and fact now; they could not alter or efface the real features from the genealogy of the true Messiah; for in no other line but David's, through Solomon, could Messiah be. And God has deemed it meet to recount even this to us so that we may know and enter into His own delight in His rich grace as He speaks of the ancestors of the Messiah. It is thus, then, we come down to the birth of Christ.

Nor was it less worthy of God that He should make most plain the truth of another remarkable conjuncture of predicted circumstances, seemingly beyond reconciliation, in His entrance into the world.

There were two conditions absolutely requisite for the Messiah: one was, that He should be truly born of a—rather of the—Virgin; the other was, that He should inherit the royal rights of the Solomon-branch of David's house, according to promise. There was a third too, we may add, that He who was the real son of His virgin-mother, the legal son of His Solomon-sprung father, should be, in the truest and highest sense, the Jehovah of Israel, Emmanuel, God with us. All this is crowded into the brief account next given us in Matthew's Gospel and by Matthew alone. Accordingly, "The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: when as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." This latter truth, that is, of the Holy Ghost's action as to it, we shall find, has a still deeper and wider import assigned to it in the Gospel of Luke whose office is to show us the Man Christ Jesus. I therefore reserve any observations that this larger scope might and ought, indeed, to give rise to, till we have to consider the third Gospel.

But here the great thing is the relationship of Joseph to the Messiah, and hence he is the one to whom the angel appears. In the Gospel of Luke it is not to Joseph, but to Mary. Are we to think that this variety of account is a mere accidental circumstance? or that if God has thus been pleased to draw out two distinct lines of truth, we are not to gather up the divine principle of each and all? It is impossible that God could do what even we should be ashamed of. If we act and speak or forbear to do either, we ought to have a sufficient reason for one or other. And if no man of sense doubts that this should be so in our own case, has not God always had His own perfect mind in the various accounts He has given us of Christ? Both are true but with distinct design. It is with divine wisdom that Matthew mentions the angel's visit to Joseph; with no less direction from on high does Luke relate Gabriel's visit to Mary (as before to Zacharias); and the reason is plain. In Matthew, while he not in the least degree weakens, but proves the fact that Mary was the real mother of the Lord, the point was that He inherited the rights of Joseph.

And no wonder; for no matter how truly our Lord had been the Son of Mary, He had not there by an indisputable legal right to the throne of David. This never could be in virtue of His descent from

Mary, unless He had also inherited the title of the royal stem. As Joseph belonged to the Solomon-branch, he would have barred the right of our Lord to the throne, looking at it as a mere question now of His being the Son of David; and we are entitled so to take it. His being God, or Jehovah, was in no way itself the ground of Davidical claim, though otherwise of infinitely deeper moment. The question was to make good, along with His eternal glory, a Messianic title that could not be set aside, a title that no Jew on his own ground could impeach. It was His grace so to stoop; it was His own all-sufficient wisdom that knew how to reconcile conditions so above man to put together. God speaks, and it is done.

Accordingly, in the Gospel of Matthew, the Spirit of God fixes our attention on these facts. Joseph was the descendant of David, the king, through Solomon; the Messiah must therefore, somehow or other, be the son of Joseph; yet had He really been the son of Joseph, all would have been lost. Thus the contradictions looked hopeless; for it seemed that in order to be the Messiah, He must, and yet He must not, be Joseph's son. But what are difficulties to God? With Him all things are possible, and faith receives all with assurance. He was not only the son of Joseph so that no Jew could deny it, and yet not so, but that He could be in the fullest manner the Son of Mary, the Seed of the woman, and not literally of the man. God, therefore takes particular pains, in this Jewish Gospel, to give all importance to His being strictly, in the eye of the law, the son of Joseph; and so, according to the flesh, inheriting the rights of the regal branch; yet here He takes particular care to prove that He was not, in the reality of His birth as man, Joseph's son. Before husband and wife came together, the espoused Mary was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Such was the character of the conception. Besides, He was Jehovah. This comes out in His very name. The Virgin's Son was to be called "Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." He shall not be a mere man, no matter how miraculously born; Jehovah's people, Israel, are His; He shall save His people from their sins.

This is yet more revealed to us by the prophecy of Isaiah cited next, and particularly by the application of that name found nowhere else but in Matthew: "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (verses 22, 23). This, then, is the introduction and the great foundation in fact. The genealogy is no doubt formed peculiarly according to the Jewish manner; but this very shape serves rather as a confirmation, I will not say to the Jewish mind alone, but to every honest man of intelligence. The spiritual mind, of course has no difficulty—can have none by the very fact that it is spiritual, because its confidence is in God. Now there is nothing that so summarily banishes a doubt, and silences every question of the natural man, as the simple but happy assurance that what God says must be true, and is the only right thing. No doubt God has been pleased in this genealogy to do that which men in modern times have caviled at; but not even the darkest and most hostile Jews raised such objections in former days. Assuredly they were the persons, above all, to have exposed the character of the genealogy of the Lord Jesus, if vulnerable. But no; this was reserved for Gentiles. They have made the notable discovery that there is an omission! Now in such lists an omission is perfectly in analogy with the manner of the Old Testament. All that was demanded in such a genealogy was to give adequate landmarks so as to make the descent clear and unquestionable.

Thus, if you take Ezra, for instance, giving his own genealogy as a priest, you find that he omits not three links only in a chain, but seven. Doubtless there may have been a special reason for the omission, but whatever may be our judgment of the true solution of the difficulty, it is evident that a

priest who was giving his own genealogy would not put it forward in a defective form. If in one who was of that sacerdotal succession where the proofs were rigorously required, where a defect in it would destroy his right to the exercise of spiritual functions—if in such a case there might legitimately be an omission, clearly there might be the same in regard to the Lord's genealogy; and the more, as this omission was not in the part of which the Scripture speaks nothing, but in the center of its historical records, whence the merest child could supply the missing links at once. Evidently, therefore, the omission was not careless or ignorant but intentional. I doubt not myself that the design was thereby to intimate the solemn sentence of God on the connection with Athaliah of the wicked house of Ahab, the wife of Joram. (Compare verse 8 with 2 Chronicles 22-26). Ahaziah vanishes, and Joash and Amaziah, when the line once more re-appears here in Uzziah. These generations God blots out along with that wicked woman.

There was literally another reason lying on the surface that required certain names to drop out. The Spirit of God was pleased to give, in each of the three divisions of the Messiah's genealogy, fourteen generations, as from Abraham down to David, from David to the captivity, and from the captivity to Christ. Now, it is evident, that if there were in fact more links in each chain of generation than these fourteen, all above that number must be omitted. Then, as we have just seen, the omission is not haphazard but made of special moral force. Thus, if there was a necessity because the Spirit of God limited Himself to a certain number of generations, there was also a divine reason, as there always is in the word of God, for the choice of the names which had to be omitted.

(To be continued)

## Outline of Matthew: 2

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(Continued)

However this may be, we have in this chapter, besides the genealogical line, the person of the long-expected son of David; we have Him introduced precisely, officially, and fully as the Messiah; we have His deeper glory, not merely that which He took but who He was and is. He might be styled, as indeed He was, “the son of David, the son of Abraham,” but He was He is, He could not but be, Jehovah-Emmanuel. How all-important this was for a Jew to believe and confess, one need hardly stop to expound: it is enough to mention it by the way. Evidently Jewish unbelief, even where there was an acknowledgment of the Messiah, turned upon this, that the Jew looked upon the Messiah purely according to what He deigns to become as the great King. They saw not any deeper glory than His Messianic throne, not more than an offshoot, though no doubt one of extraordinary vigor, from the root of David. Here, at the very starting-point, the Holy Ghost points out the divine and eternal glory of Him who deigns to come as the Messiah. Surely, too, if Jehovah condescended to be Messiah, and in order to this to be born of the Virgin, there must be some most worthy aims infinitely deeper than the intention, however great, to sit upon the throne of David. Evidently, therefore, the simple perception of the glory of His person overturns all conclusions of Jewish unbelief, shows us that He whose glory was so bright must have a work commensurate with that glory; that He whose personal dignity was beyond all time and even thought, who thus stoops to enter the ranks of Israel as Son of David, must have had some ends in coming, and, above all, to die, suitable to such glory. All this, it is plain, was of the deepest possible moment for Israel to apprehend. It was precisely what the believing Israelite did learn; even as it was just the rock of offense on which unbelieving Israel fell and was dashed to pieces.

The next chapter shows us another characteristic fact in reference to this Gospel; for if the aim of the first chapter was to give us proofs of the true glory and character of the Messiah, in contrast with mere Jewish limitation and unbelief about Him, the second chapter shows us what reception Messiah would find, in contrast with the wise men from the East, from Jerusalem, from the king and the people, and in the land of Israel. If His descent be as sure as the royal son of David, if His glory be above all human lineage, what was the place that He found, in fact, in His land and people? Indefeasible was His title: what were the circumstances that met Him when He was found at length in Israel? The answer is, from the very first He was the rejected Messiah. He was rejected, and most emphatically, by those whose responsibility it was most of all to receive Him. It was not the ignorant; it was not those that were besotted in gross habits; it was Jerusalem—it was the scribes and Pharisees. The people, too, were all moved at the very thought of Messiah's birth.

What brought out the unbelief of Israel so distressingly was this—God would have a due testimony to such a Messiah; and if the Jews were unready, He would gather from the very ends of the earth some hearts to welcome Jesus—Jesus-Jehovah, the Messiah of Israel. Hence it is that Gentiles are seen coming forth from the East, led by the star which had a voice for their hearts. There had ever rested traditionally among Oriental nations, though not confined to them, the general bearing

of Balaam's prophecy, that a star should arise, a star connected with Jacob. I doubt not that God was pleased in His goodness to give a seal to that prophecy, after a literal sort, not to speak of its true symbolic force. In His condescending love, He would lead hearts that were prepared of Him to desire the Messiah, and come from the ends of the earth to welcome Him. And so it was. They saw the star; they set forth to seek the Messiah's kingdom. It was not that the star moved along the way; it roused them and set them going. They recognized the phenomenon as looking for the star of Jacob; they instinctively, I may say, certainly by the good hand of God, connected the two together. From their distant home they made for Jerusalem; for even the universal expectation of men at the time pointed to that city. But when they reached it, where were faithful souls awaiting the Messiah? They found active minds—not a few that could tell them clearly where the Messiah was to be born: for this God made them dependent upon His word. When they came to Jerusalem, it was not any longer an outward sign to guide. They learned the scriptures as to it. They learned from those that cared neither for it nor for Him it concerned, but who, nevertheless, knew the letter more or less. On the road to Bethlehem, to their exceeding joy, the star reappears, confirming what they had received, till it rested over where the young child was. And there, in the presence of the father and the mother, they, Easterns though they were, and accustomed to no small homage, proved how truly they were guided of God; for neither father nor mother received the smallest part of their worship: all was reserved for Jesus—all poured out at the feet of the infant Messiah. Oh, what a withering refutation of the foolish men of the West! Oh, what a lesson, even from these dark Gentiles, to self-complacent Christendom in East or West! Spite of what men might look down upon in these proud days, their hearts in their simplicity were true. It was but for Jesus they came, it was on Jesus that their worship was spent; and so, spite of the parents being there, spite of what nature would prompt them to do, in sharing, at least, something of the worship on the father and mother with the Babe, they produced their treasures and worshipped the young child alone.

This is the more remarkable, because in the Gospel of Luke we have another scene, where we see that same Jesus, truly an infant of days, in the hands of an aged one with far more divine intelligence than these Eastern sages could boast. Now we know what would have been the prompting of affection and of godly desires in the presence of a babe; but the aged Simeon never pretends to bless Him. Nothing would have been more simple and natural, had not that Babe differed from all others, had He not been what He was, and had Simeon not known who He was. But he did know it. He saw in Him the salvation of God; and so, though He could rejoice in God and bless God, though he could in another sense bless the parents, he never presumes so to bless the Babe. It was indeed the blessing that he had got from that Babe which enabled him to bless both God and his parents; but he blesses not the Babe even when he blesses the parents. It was God Himself, even the Son of the Highest, that was there, and his soul bowed before God. We have here, then, the Easterns worshipping the Babe, not the parents; and in the other case we have the blessed man of God blessing the parents, but not the Babe: a most striking token of the remarkable difference which the Holy Ghost had in view when inditing these histories of the Lord Jesus.

Further, to these Easterns intimation is given of God, and they returned another way, thus defeating the design of the treacherous heart and cruel head of the Edomite king, notwithstanding the slaughter of the innocents.

Next comes a remarkable prophecy of Christ, of which we must say a word—the prophecy of Hosea. Our Lord is carried outside the reach of the storm into Egypt. Such indeed was the history of His life; it was continual pain, one course of suffering and shame. There was no mere heroism in the Lord Jesus, but the very reverse. Nevertheless, it was God shrouding His majesty; it was God in the person of man, in the Child that takes the lowliest place in the haughty world. Therefore, we find no more a cloud that covers Him, no pillar of fire that shields Him. Apparently the most exposed, He bows before the storm, retires, carried by His parents into the ancient furnace of affliction for His people. Thus even from the very first our Lord Jesus, as a babe, tastes the hate of the world—what it is to be thoroughly humbled, even as a child. The prophecy, therefore, was accomplished, and in its deepest meaning. It was not merely Israel that God called out, but His Son out of Egypt. Here was the true Israel; Jesus was the genuine stock before God. He goes through, in His own person, Israel's history. He goes into Egypt and is called out of it.

Returning, in due time, to the land of Israel at the death of him that reigned after Herod the Great, His parents are instructed, as we are told, and turn aside into the parts of Galilee. This is another important truth; for thus was to be fulfilled the word, not of one prophet, but of all— “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.” It was the name of man's scorn; for Nazareth was the most despised place in that despised land of Galilee. Such in the providence of God, was the place for Jesus. This gave an accomplishment to the general voice of the prophets, who declared Him despised and rejected of men. So He was. It was true even of the place in which He lived, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.”

We enter now upon the announcement of John the Baptist. The Spirit of God carries us over a long interval, and the voice of John is heard proclaiming, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Here we have an expression which must not be passed over—all-important as it is for the understanding of the Gospel of Matthew. John the Baptist preached the nearness of this kingdom, in the wilderness of Judea. It was clearly gathered from the Old Testament prophecy, particularly from Daniel, that the God of heaven would set up a kingdom; and more than this, that the Son of man was the person to administer the kingdom. “And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” Such was the kingdom of heaven. It was not a mere kingdom of the earth, neither was it in heaven, but it was heaven governing the earth forever.

It would appear that in John the Baptist's preaching it, we have no ground for supposing that either he believed at this time, or that any other men till afterward were led into the understanding of the form which it was to assume through Christ's rejection and going on high as now. This our Lord divulged more particularly in chap. 13 of this Gospel. I understand, then, by this expression, what might be gathered justly from Old Testament prophecies; and that John, at this time, had no other thought but that the kingdom was about to be introduced according to expectations thus formed. They had long looked for the time when the earth should no longer be left to itself, but heaven should be the governing power; when the Son of man should control the earth; when the power of hell should be banished from the world; when the earth should be put into association with the heavens, and the heavens, of course, therefore be changed, so as to govern the earth directly through the Son of man, who should be also King of restored Israel. This, substantially, I think,

was in the mind of the Baptist.

But then, he proclaims repentance; not here in view of deeper things, as in the Gospel of Luke, but as a spiritual preparation for Messiah and the kingdom of heaven. That is, he calls man to confess his own ruin in view of the introduction of that kingdom. Accordingly, his own life was the witness of what he felt morally of Israel's then state. He retires into the wilderness, and applies to himself the ancient words of Isaiah— "The voice of one crying in the wilderness." The reality was coming: as for him, he was merely one to announce the advent of the King. All Jerusalem was moved, and multitudes were baptized by him in Jordan. This gives occasion to his stern sentence upon their condition in the sight of God.

But among the crowd of those who came to him was Jesus. Strange sight! He, even He, Emmanuel, Jehovah, if He took the place of Messiah, would take that place in lowliness on the earth. For all things were out of course; and He must prove by His whole life, as we shall find by-and-by He did, what the condition of His people was. But, indeed, it is but another step of the same infinite grace, and more than that, of the same moral judgment on Israel; but along with it the added and most sweet feature—His association with all in Israel who felt and owned their condition in the sight of God. It is what no saint can afford lightly to pass over; it is what, if a saint recognize not, he will understand the Scripture most imperfectly; nay, I believe he must grievously misunderstand the ways of God. But Jesus looked at those who came to the waters of Jordan, and saw their hearts touched, if ever so little, with a sense of their state before God; and His heart was truly with them. It is not now taking the people out of Israel, and bringing them into a position with Himself—that we shall find by and by; but it is the Savior identifying Himself with the godly-feeling remnant. Wherever there was the least action of the Holy Spirit of God in grace in the hearts of Israel, He joined Himself. John was astonished; John the Baptist himself would have refused, but, "Thus," said the Savior, "it becometh us" —including, as I apprehend, John with Himself. "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

It is not here a question of law; it was too late for this—ever a ruinous thing for the sinner. It was a question of another sort of righteousness. It might be the feeblest recognition of God and man; it might be but a remnant of Israelites; but, at least, they owned the truth about themselves; and Jesus was with them in owning the ruin fully, and felt it all. No need was in Himself—not a particle; but it is precisely when the heart is thus perfectly free, and infinitely above ruin, that it can most of all descend and take up what is of God in the hearts of any. So Jesus ever did, and did it thus publicly, joining Himself with whatever was excellent on the earth. He was baptized in Jordan—an act most inexplicable for those who then or now might hold to His glory without entering into His heart of grace. To what painful feelings it might give rise! Had He anything to confess? Without a single flaw of His own, He bent down to confess what was in others; He owned in all its extent, in its reality as none else did, the state of Israel, before God and man; He joined Himself with those who felt it. But at once, as the answer to any and every unholy misapprehension that could be formed, heaven is opened and a twofold testimony is rendered to Jesus. The Father's voice pronounces the Son's relationship, and His own complacency; while the Holy Ghost anoints Him as man. Thus, in His full personality, God's answer is given to all who might otherwise have slighted either Himself or His baptism.

The Lord Jesus thence goes forth into another scene—the wilderness—to be tempted of the devil; and this, mark, now that He is thus publicly owned by the Father, and the Holy Ghost had descended on Him. It is indeed, I might say, when souls are thus blessed that Satan's temptations are apt to come. Grace provokes the enemy. Only in a measure, of course, can we thus speak of any other than Jesus; but of Him, who was full of grace and truth, in whom, too the fulness of the Godhead dwelt—even so, of Him it was fully true. The principle, at least, applies in every case. He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tried of the devil. The Holy Spirit has given the temptation to us in Matthew, according to the order in which it occurred. But here, as elsewhere, the aim is dispensational, not historical, as far as intention goes, though really so in point of fact; and I apprehend, specially with this in view, that it is only at the last temptation our Lord says, "Get thee hence, Satan." WE shall see by and by why this disappears in the Gospel of Luke. There is thus the lesson of wisdom and patience even before the enemy; the excellent, matchless grace of patience in trial; for what more likely to exclude it than the apprehension that it was Satan all the while? But yet our Savior was so perfect in it, that He never uttered the word "Satan" until the last daring, shameless effort to tempt Him to render to the evil one the very worship of God Himself. Not till then does our Lord say, "Get thee hence, Satan."

We shall dwell a little more upon the three temptations, if the Lord will, as to their intrinsic moral import, when we come to the consideration of Luke. I content myself now with giving what appears to me the true reason why the Spirit of God here adheres to the order of the facts. It is well, however, to remark, that the departure from such an order is precisely what indicates the consummate hand of God, and for a simple reason.

To one who knew the facts in a human way, nothing would be more natural than to put them down just as they occurred. To depart from the historical order, more particularly when one had previously given them that order, is what never would have been thought of, unless there were some might preponderant reason in the mind of him who did so. But this is no uncommon thing. There are cases where an author necessarily departs from the mere order in which the facts took place. Supposing you are describing a certain character; you put together striking traits from the whole course of his life; you do not restrain yourself to the bare dates at which they occurred. If you were only chronicling the events of a year, you keep to the order in which they happened; but whenever you rise to the higher task of bringing out moral features, you may be frequently obliged to abandon the consecutive order of events as they occurred.

It is precisely this reason that accounts for the change in Luke; who, as we shall find when we come to look at his Gospel more carefully, is especially the moralist. That is to say, Luke characteristically looks upon things in their springs as well as effects. It is not his province to regard the person of Christ peculiarly, i.e., His divine glory; neither does he occupy himself with the testimony or service of Jesus here below, of which we all know Mark is the exponent. Neither is it true, that the reason why Matthew occasionally gives the order of time, is because such is always his rule. On the contrary, there is no one of the Gospel writers who departs from that order, when his subject demands it, more freely than he, as I hope to prove to the satisfaction of those open to conviction, before we close. If this be so, assuredly there must be some key to these phenomena, some reason sufficient to explain why sometimes Matthew adheres to the order of events, why he departs from it elsewhere.

I believe the real state of the facts to be this—first of all, God has been pleased, by one of the Evangelists (Mark), to give us the exact historical order of our Lord's eventful ministry. This alone would have been very insufficient to set forth Christ. Hence, besides that order, which is the most elementary, however important in its own place, other presentations of His life were due, according to various spiritual grounds, as divine wisdom saw fit, and as even we are capable of appreciating in our measure. Accordingly, I think it was owing to special considerations of this sort that Matthew was led to reserve for us the great lesson, that our Lord had passed through the entire temptation—not only the forty days, but even that which crowned them at the close; and that only when an open blow was struck at the divine glory did His soul at once resent it with the words, “Get thee hence, Satan.” Luke, on the contrary, inasmuch as he, for perfectly good and divinely given reason, changes the order, necessarily omits these words. Of course, I do not deny that similar words appear in your common English Bibles (in Luke 4:8); but no scholar needs to be informed that all such words are left out of the third Gospel by the best authorities, followed by almost every critic of note save the testy Matthaei, though scarce one of them seems to have understood the true reason why. Nevertheless, they are omitted by Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists; by High Church, and Low Church; by Evangelicals Tractarians, and Rationalists. It does not matter who they are, or what their system of thought may be: all those who go upon the ground of external testimony alone are obliged to leave out the words in Luke. Besides, there is the clearest and the strongest evidence internally for the omission of these words in Luke, contrary to the prejudices of the copyists, which thus furnishes a very cogent illustration of the action of the Holy Spirit in inspiration. The ground of omitting the words lies in the fact, that the last temptation occupies the second place in Luke. If the words be retained, Satan seems to hold his ground, and renew the temptation after the Lord had told him to retire. Again, it is evident that, as the text stands in the received Greek text and our common English Bible, “Get thee behind me, Satan,” is another mistake. In Matt. 4:10, it is rightly, “Get thee hence.” Remember, I am not imputing a shade of error to the word of God. The mistake spoken of lies only in blundering scribes, critics, or translators, who have failed in doing justice to that particular place. “Get thee hence, Satan,” was the real language of the Lord to Satan, and is so given in closing the literally last temptation by Matthew.

## Outline of Matthew: 3. Chapters 4-8

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(continued)

When it was a question, at a later day, of His servant Peter, who, prompted by Satan, had fallen into human thoughts, and would have dissuaded his Master from the cross, He does say, "Get thee behind me." For certainly Christ did not want Peter to go away from Him and be lost, which would have been its effect. "Get thee [not hence, but] behind me," He says. He rebuked His follower, yea, was ashamed of him; and He desired that Peter should be ashamed of himself. "Get thee behind me, Satan," was thus appropriate language then. Satan was the source of the thought couched in Peter's words.

But when Jesus speaks to him whose last trial thoroughly betrays the adversary of God and man, i.e., the literal Satan, His answer is not merely, "Get thee behind me," but, "Get thee hence, Satan." Nor is this the only mistake, as we have seen, in the passage as given in the authorized version; for the whole clause should disappear from the account in Luke, according to the weightiest testimony. Besides, the reason is manifest. As it stands now, the passage wears this most awkward appearance, that Satan, though commanded to depart, lingers on. For in Luke we have another temptation after this; and of course, therefore, Satan must be presented as abiding, not as gone away.

The truth of the matter, then, is, that with matchless wisdom Luke was inspired of God to put the second temptation last, and the third temptation in the second place. Hence (inasmuch as these words of the third trial would be wholly incongruous in such an inversion of the historic order), they are omitted by him, but preserved by Matthew, who here held to that order. I dwell upon this, because it exemplifies, in a simple but striking manner, the finger and mind of God; as it shows us, also, how the copyists of the scriptures fell into error, through proceeding on the principle of the harmonists, whose great idea is to make all the four Gospels practically one Gospel; that is, to fuse them together into one mass, and make them give out only, as it were, a single voice in the praise of Jesus. Not so; there are four distinct voices blending in the truest harmony, and surely God Himself in each one and equally in all, but, withal, showing out fully and distinctively the excellencies of His Son. It is the disposition to blot out these differences, which has wrought such exceeding mischief, not merely in copyists, but in our own careless reading of the Gospels. What we need is, to gather up all, for all is worthy; to delight ourselves in every thought that the Spirit of God has treasured up—every fragrance, so to speak, that He has preserved for us of the ways of Jesus.

Turning, then, from the temptation (which we may hope to resume in another point of view, when the Gospel of Luke comes before us and we shall have the different temptations on the moral side, with their changed order), I may in passing notice, that a very characteristic difference in the Gospel of Matthew meets us in what follows. Our Lord enters upon His public ministry as a minister of the circumcision, and calls disciples to follow Him. It was not His first acquaintance with Simon, Andrew, and the rest, as we know from the Gospel of John. They had before known Jesus,

and, I apprehend, savingly. They are now called to be His companions in Israel, formed according to His heart as His servants here below; but before this we have a remarkable Scripture applied to our Lord. He changes his place of sojourn from Nazareth to Capernaum. And this is the more observable, because, in the Gospel of Luke, the first opening of His ministry is expressly at Nazareth while the point of emphasis in Matthew is, that He leaves Nazareth, and comes and dwells in Capernaum. Of course, both are equally true; but who can say that they are the same thing ? or that the Spirit of God had not His own blessed reasons for giving prominence to both facts ? Nor is the reason obscure. His going to Capernaum was the accomplishment of the word of Isaiah 9, specifically mentioned for the instruction of the Jew, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, "The land of Zebulun, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." That quarter of the land was regarded as the scene of darkness; yet was it just there that God suddenly caused light to arise. Nazareth was in lower, as Capernaum was in upper Galilee. But more than this, it was the seat, above all others in the land, frequented by Gentiles—Galilee ("the circuit") of the Gentiles. Now, we shall find throughout this Gospel that which may be well stated here, and will be abundantly confirmed everywhere—that the object of our Gospel is not merely to prove what the Messiah was, both according to the flesh and according to His own, divine intrinsic nature, for Israel; but also, when rejected by Israel, what the consequences of that rejection would be for the Gentiles, and this in a double aspect—whether as introducing the kingdom of heaven in a new form, or as giving occasion for Christ's building His church. These were the two main consequences of the rejection of the Messiah by Israel.

Accordingly, as in chapter 2 we found Gentiles from the East coming up to own the born King of the Jews, when His people were buried in bondage and Rabbinic tradition—in heartless heedlessness, too, while boasting of their privileges; so here our Lord, at the beginning of His public ministry, as recorded in Matthew, is seen taking up His abode in these despised districts of the north, the way of the sea, where especially Gentiles had long dwelt, and on which the Jews looked down as a rude and dark spot, far from the center of religious sanctity. There, according to prophecy, light was to spring up; and how brightly was it now accomplished? Next, we have the call of the disciples, as we have seen. At the end of the chapter is a general summary of the Messiah's ministry and of its effects given in these words: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those who had the palsy; and He healed them. And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan." This I read, in order to show that it is the purpose of the Spirit, in this part of our Gospel, to gather a quantity of facts together under one head, entirely regardless of the question of time. It is evident, that what is here described in a few verses must have demanded a considerable space for its accomplishment. The Holy Ghost gives it all to us as a connected whole.

The self-same principle applies to the so-called sermon on the mount on which I am about to say a few words. It is quite a misapprehension to suppose that Matt. 5-7 was given all in a single

unbroken discourse. For the wisest purposes, I have no doubt, the Spirit of God has arranged and conveyed it to us as one whole, without notice of the interruptions, occasion, etc.; but it is an unwarrantable conclusion for any to draw, that our Lord Jesus delivered it simply and solely as it stands in Matthew's Gospel. What proves the fact is, that in the Gospel of Luke we have certain portions of it clearly pertaining to this very sermon (not merely similar, or the same truth preached at other times, but this identical discourse), with the particular circumstances which drew them out. Take the prayer, for instance, that was here set before the disciples (chap. 6). As to this, we know from Luke 11 there was a request preferred by the disciples which led to it. As to other instruction, there were facts or questions, found in Luke, which drew out the remarks of the Lord, common to him and Matthew, if not Mark.

If it be certain that the Holy Ghost has been pleased to give us in Matthew this discourse and others as a whole, leaving out the originating circumstances found elsewhere, it is a fair and interesting inquiry why such a method of grouping with such omissions is adopted. The answer I conceive to be this,-that the Spirit in Matthew loves to present Christ as the One like unto Moses, whom they were to hear. He presents Jesus not merely as a legislating prophet-king like Moses, but greater by far; for it is never forgotten that the Nazarene was the Lord God. Therefore it is that, in this discourse on the mountain, we have throughout the tone of One who was consciously God with men. If Jehovah called Moses up to the top of one mount, He who then spake the ten words sat now upon another mount, and taught His disciples the character of the kingdom of heaven and its principles introduced as a whole, just answering to what we have seen of the facts and effects of His ministry, entirely passing by all intervals or connecting circumstances. As we had His miracles all put together, as I may say, in the gross, so with His discourses. We have thus in either case the same principle. The substantial truth is given to us without noticing the immediate occasion in particular facts, appeals, etc. What was uttered by the Lord, according to Matthew, is thus presented as a whole. The effect, therefore, is, that it is much more solemn, because unbroken, carrying its own majesty along with it. The Spirit of God imprints on it purposely this character here, as I have no doubt there was an intention that it should be so reproduced for the instruction of His own people.

The Lord, in short, was here accomplishing one of the parts of His mission according to Isaiah 53, where the work of Christ is twofold. It is not, as the authorized version has it, "By His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;" for it is unquestionable that justification is not by His knowledge. Justification is by faith of Christ, we know; and as far as the efficacious work on which it depends is concerned, it is clearly in virtue of what Christ has suffered for sin and sins before God.

But I apprehend that the real force of the passage is, "By His knowledge shall my righteous servant instruct many in righteousness." It is not "justify" in the ordinary forensic sense of the word, but rather instructing in righteousness, as the context here requires, and as the usage of the word elsewhere, as in Dan. 12, leaves open. This seems to be what is meant of our Lord here.

In the teaching on the mount He was, in fact, instructing the disciples in righteousness: hence, too, one reason why we have not a word about redemption. There is not the slightest reference to His suffering on the cross; no intimation of His blood, death, or resurrection: He is instructing, though not merely in righteousness. To the heirs of the kingdom the Lord is unfolding the principles of that

kingdom—most blessed and rich instruction, but instruction in righteousness. No doubt there is also the declaration of the Father's name, as far as could be then; but, still the form taken is that of "instructing in righteousness." Let me add, as to the passage of Isaiah that the remainder of the verse also accords with this: not "for," but, "and He shall bear their iniquities." Such is the true force of it. The one was in His life, when He taught His own; the other was in His death, when He bore the iniquities of many.

Into the details of the discourse on the mount I cannot enter particularly now, but would just say a few words before I conclude to-night. In its preface we have a method often adopted by the Spirit of God, and not unworthy of our study. There is no child of God that cannot glean blessing from it, even through a scanty glance; but when we look into it a little more closely, the instruction deepens immensely. First of all He pronounces certain classes blessed. These blessednesses divide into two classes. The earlier character of blessedness savors particularly of righteousness, the later of mercy, which are the two great topics of the Psalm. These are both taken up here: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." In the fourth case righteousness comes in expressly, and closes that part of the subject; but it is plain enough that all these four classes consist in substance of such as the Lord pronounces blessed, because they are righteous in one form or another. The next three are founded upon mercy. Hence we read as the very first— "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Of course, it would be impossible to attempt more than a sketch at this time. Here, then, occurs the number usual in all these systematic partitions of Scripture; there is the customary and complete seven of Scripture. The two supplementary blessednesses at the end rather confirm the case, though at first sight they might appear to offer an exception. But it is not so really. The exception proves the rule convincingly; for in verse 10 you have, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake;" which answers to the first four. Then, in verses 11 and 12, you have, "Blessed are ye for my sake;" which answers to the higher mercy of the last three. "Blessed are ye, [there is thus a change. It is made a direct personal address] when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." Thus it is the very consummation of suffering in grace, because it is for Christ's sake.

Hence the twofold persecutions (10-12) bring in the double character we find in the epistles—suffering for righteousness' sake, and suffering for Christ's sake. These are two perfectly distinct things; because, where it is a question of righteousness, it is simply a person brought to a point. If I do not stand and suffer here, my conscience will be defiled; but this is in no way suffering for Christ's sake. In short, conscience enters where righteousness is the question; but suffering for Christ's sake is not a question of plain sin, but of His grace and its claims on my heart. Desire for His truth, desire for His glory, carries me out into a certain path that exposes me to suffering. I might merely do my duty in the place in which I am put; but grace is never satisfied with the bare performance of one's duty. Fully is it admitted that there is nothing like grace to meet duty; and doing one's duty is a good thing for a Christian. But God forbid that we should be merely shut up to duty, and not be free for the flowing over of grace which carries out the heart along with it. In the one case, the believer stops dead short: if he did not stand, there would be sin. In the other case,

there would be a lack of testimony for Christ, and grace makes one rejoice to be counted worthy of suffering for His name: but righteousness is not in question.

Such, then, are the two distinct classes or groups of blessedness. First, there are the blessednesses of righteousness, to which the persecution for righteousness' sake pertains; next, the blessednesses of mercy or grace. Christ instructs in righteousness according to prophecy, but He does not confine Himself to righteousness. This never could be consistent with the glory of the person who was there. Accordingly, therefore, while there is the doctrine of righteousness, there is the introduction of what is above it and mightier than it, with the corresponding blessedness of being persecuted for Christ's sake. All here is grace, and indicates manifest progress.

The same thing is true of what follows: "Ye are the salt of the earth" —it is that which keeps pure what is pure. Salt will not communicate purity to what is impure, but it is used as the preservative power according to righteousness. But light is another thing. Hence we hear, in the 14th verse, "Ye are the light of the world." Light is not that which simply preserves what is good, but is an active power, which casts its bright shining into what is obscure, and dispels the darkness from before it. Thus it is evident that in this further word of the Lord we have answers to the differences already hinted at.

Much of the deepest interest might be found in the discourse; only this is not the occasion for entering into particulars. We have, as usual, righteousness developed according to Christ, which deals with man's wickedness under the heads of violence and corruption; next come other new principles of grace infinitely deepening what had been given under law (chap. 5). Thus, in the former of these, a word detects, as it were, the thirst of blood, as corruption lies in a look or desire. For it is no longer a question of mere acts, but of the soul's condition. Such is the scope of the fifth chapter. As earlier (verses 17, 18) the law is fully maintained in all its authority, we have later on (verses 21-48) superior principles of grace, and deeper truths, mainly founded upon the revelation of the Father's name—the Father which is in heaven. Consequently it is not merely the question between man and man, but the Evil One on one side, and God Himself on the other, and God Himself, as a Father, disclosing and proving the selfish condition of fallen man upon the earth.

In the second of these chapters (ch. 6) composing the discourse, two main parts appear. The first is again righteousness. "Take heed [He says; that you do not your righteousness before men." Here it is not "alms," but "righteousness," as you may see in the margin. Then the righteousness spoken of branches out into three parts: alms, which is one part of it; prayer, another part; and fasting, a part of it not to be despised. This is our righteousness, the especial point of which is, that it should be not a matter of ostentation, but before our Father who sees in secret. It is one of the salient features of Christianity. In the latter part of the chapter, we have entire confidence in our Father's goodness to us, counting upon His mercy, certain that He regards us as of infinite value, and that, therefore we need not be careful as the Gentiles are, because our Father knows what we have need of. It is enough for us to seek the kingdom of God, and His righteousness: our Father's love cares for all the rest.

The last chapter (7) presses on us the motives of heart in our intercourse with men and brethren, as well as with God, who, however good, loves that we should ask Him, and earnestly too, as to each need; the adequate consideration of what is due to others, and the energy that becomes ourselves; for the gate is strait, and narrow the way that leads to life; warnings against the devil

and the suggestions of his agents, the false prophets, who betray themselves by their fruits; and, lastly, the all-importance of remembering that it is not a thing of knowledge, or of miraculous power even, but of doing God's will, of a heart obedient to Christ's sayings. Here, again, if I be not mistaken, righteousness and grace are found alternating; for the exhortation against a censorious spirit is grounded on the certainty of retribution from others, and paves the way for an urgent call to self-judgment, which in us precedes all genuine exercise of grace. (verses 1-4). Further, the caution against a lavishing of what was holy and beautiful on the profane is followed by rich and repeated encouragements to count on our Father's grace (vers. 5-11).

Here, however, I must for the present pause, though one can only and deeply regret being obliged to pass so very cursorily over the ground; but I have sought in this first lecture to give thus far as simple, and at the same time as complete, a view of this portion of Matthew as I well could. I am perfectly aware that there has not been time for comparing it much with the others; but occasions will, I trust, offer for bringing into strong contrast the different aspects of the various Gospels. However, my aim is also that we should have before us our Lord, His person, His teaching, His way, in every Gospel.

I pray the Lord that what has been put, however scantily, before souls may at least stir up inquiry on the part of God's children, and lead them to have perfect, absolute confidence in that word which is of His grace indeed. We may thus look for deep profit. For, although to enter upon the Gospels before the soul has been founded upon the grace of God will not leave us without a blessing, yet I am persuaded that the blessing is in every respect greater, when, having been attracted by the grace of Christ, we have at the same time been established in Him with all simplicity and assurance, in virtue of the accomplished work of redemption. Then, set free and at rest in our souls, we return to learn of Him, to look upon Him, to follow Him, to hear His word, to delight ourselves in His ways. The Lord grant that thus it may be, as we pursue our path through these different Gospels which our God has vouchsafed to us.

Chapter 8, which opens the portion that comes before us to-night, is a striking illustration as well as proof of the method which God has been pleased to employ in giving us the apostle Matthew's account of our Lord Jesus. The dispensational aim here leads to a more manifest disregard of the bare circumstance of time than in any other specimen of these Gospels. This is the more to be noticed, inasmuch as the Gospel of Matthew has been in general adopted as the standard of time, save by those who have rather inclined to Luke as supplying the desideratum. To me it is evident, from a careful comparison of them all, as I think it is capable of clear and adequate proof to an unprejudiced Christian mind, that neither Matthew nor Luke confines himself to such an order of events. Of course, both do preserve chronological order when it is compatible with the objects the Holy Spirit had in inspiring them; but in both, the order of time is subordinated to still greater purposes which God had in view. If we compare the eighth chapter, for example, with the corresponding circumstances, as far as they appear, in the Gospel of Mark, we shall find the latter gives us notes of time, which leave no doubt on my mind that Mark adheres to the scale of time: the design of the Holy Ghost required it, instead of dispensing with it in his case. The question fairly arises, Why it is that the Holy Ghost has been pleased so remarkably to leave time out of the question in this chapter, as well as in the next? The same indifference to the mere sequence of events is found occasionally in other parts of the Gospel; but I have purposely dwelt upon this chapter 8 because here we have it throughout, and at the same time with evidence exceedingly

simple and convincing.

The first thing to be remarked is, that the leper was an early incident in the manifestation of the healing power of our Lord. In his defilement he came to Jesus and sought to be cleansed before the delivery of the sermon on the mount. Accordingly, notice that, in the manner in which the Holy Ghost introduces it, there is no statement of time whatever. No doubt the first verse says that "when He was come down from the mount, great multitudes followed Him;" but then the second verse gives no intimation that the subject which follows is to be taken as chronologically subsequent. It does not say, that "then there came a leper," or "immediately there came a leper." No word whatever implies that the cleansing of the leper happened at that time. It says simply, "And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Verse 4 seems quite adverse to the idea that great multitudes were witnesses of the cure; for why "tell no man," if so many knew it already? Inattention to this has perplexed many. They have not seized the aim of each Gospel. They have treated the Bible either with levity, or as too awful a book to be apprehended really; not with the reverence of faith, which waits on Him, and fails not in due time to understand His word. God does not permit Scripture to be thus used without losing its force, its beauty, and the grand object for which it was written.

If we turn to Mark, chap. 1, the proof of what I have said will appear as to the leper. At its close we see the leper approaching the Lord, after He had been preaching throughout Galilee and casting out devils. In the second chapter it says, "And again he entered into Capernaum." He had been there before. Then, in chapter 3, there are notes of time more or less strong. In verse 13 our Lord "goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." To him who compares this with the sixth chapter of Luke, there need not remain a question as to the identity of the scene. They are the circumstances that preceded the discourse upon the mount, as given in Matt. 5-7 It was after our Lord had called the twelve, and ordained them—not after He had sent them forth, but after He had appointed them apostles—that the Lord comes down to a plateau upon the mountain, instead of remaining upon the more elevated parts where He had been before. Descending then upon the plateau, He delivered what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount.

Examine the Scripture, and you will see for yourselves. It is not a thing that can be settled by a mere assertion. On the other hand it is, not too much to say, that the same Scriptures which convince one unbiassed mind that pays heed to these notes of time, will produce no less effect on others. If I assume from the words "set forth in order," in the beginning of Luke's Gospel, that therefore his is the chronological account, it will only lead me into confusion, both as to Luke and the other Gospels; for proofs abound that the order of Luke, most methodical as he is, is by no means absolutely that of time. Of course, there is often the order of time, but through the central part, and not unfrequently elsewhere, his setting forth in order turns on another principle, quite independent of mere succession of events. In other words, it is certain that in the Gospels of Luke in whose preface we have expressly the words "set in order," the Holy Ghost does in no way tie Himself to what, after all, is the most elementary form of arrangement; for it needs little observation to see, that the simple sequence of facts as they occurred is that which demands a faithful enumeration, and nothing more. Whereas, on the contrary, there are other kinds of order that call for more profound thought and enlarged views, if we may speak now after the manner of men;

and, indeed, I deny not that these the Holy Ghost employed in His own wisdom, though it is hardly needful to say He could, if He pleased, demonstrate His superiority to any means or qualifications whatsoever. He could and did form His instruments according to His own sovereign will. It is a question, then, for internal evidence, what that particular order is which God has employed in each different Gospel. Particular epochs in Luke are noted with great care; but, speaking now of the general course of the Lord's life, a little attention will discover, from the immensely greater preponderance paid to the consideration of time in the second Gospel, that there we have events from first to last given to us in their consecutive order. It appears to me, that the nature or aim of Mark's Gospel demands this. The grounds of such a judgment will naturally come before us ere long: I can merely refer to it now as my conviction.

If this be a sound judgment, the comparison of the first chapter of Mark affords decisive evidence that the Holy Ghost in Matthew has taken the leper out of the mere time and circumstances of actual occurrence, and has reserved his case for a wholly different service. It is true that in this particular instance Mark no more surrounds the leper with notes of time and place than do Matthew and Luke. We are dependent, therefore, for determining this case, on the fact that Mark does habitually adhere to the chain of events. But if Matthew here laid aside all questions of time, it was in view of other and weightier considerations for his object. In other words, the leper is here introduced after the sermon on the mount, though, in fact, the circumstance took place long before it. The design is, I think, manifest: the Spirit of God is here giving a vivid picture of the manifestation of the Messiah, of His divine glory, of His grace and power, with the effect of this manifestation. Hence it is that He has grouped together circumstances which make this plain, without raising the question of when they occurred; in fact, they range over a large space, and, otherwise viewed, are in total disorder. Thus it is easy to see, that the reason for here putting together the leper and the centurion lies in the Lord's dealing with the Jew, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, in His deep grace working in the Gentile's heart, and forming his faith, as well as answering it, according to His own heart. The leper approaches the Lord with homage, but with a most inadequate belief in His love and readiness to meet his need. The Savior, while He puts forth His hand, touching him as man, and yet as none but Jehovah might dare to do, dispels the hopeless disease at once. Thus and after the tenderest sort, there is that which evidences the Messiah on earth present to heal His people who appeal to Him; and the Jew, above all counting upon His bodily presence—demanding it, I may say, according to the warrant of prophecy, finds in Jesus not merely the man, but the God of Israel. Who but God could heal? Who could touch the leper save Emmanuel? A mere Jew would have been defiled. He who gave the law maintained its authority, and used it as an occasion for testifying His own power and presence. Would any man make of the Messiah a mere man and a mere subject of the law given by Moses? Let them read their error in One who was evidently superior to the condition and the ruin of man in Israel. Let them recognize the power that banished the leprosy, and the grace withal that touched the leper. It was true that He was made of woman, and made under the law; but He was Jehovah Himself, that lowly Nazarene. However suitable to the Jewish expectation that He should be found a man, undeniably there was that apparent which was infinitely above the Jew's thought; for the Jew showed his own degradation and unbelief, in the low ideas he entertained of the Messiah. He was really God in man; and all these wonderful features are here presented and compressed in this most simple, but at the same time significant, action of the Savior—the fitting frontispiece to Matthew's manifestation of the Messiah to Israel.

In immediate juxtaposition to this stands the Gentile centurion who seeks healing for his servant. Considerable time, it is true, elapsed between the two facts; but this only makes it the more sure and plain, that they are grouped together with divine purpose. The Lord then had been shown such as. He was to wards Israel, had Israel in their leprosy come to Him, as did the leper, even with a faith exceedingly short of that which was due to His real glory and His love. But Israel had no sense of their leprosy; and they valued not, but despised, their Messiah, albeit divine—I might almost say because divine. Next, we behold Him meeting the centurion after another manner altogether. If he offers to go to his house, it was to bring out the faith that He had created in the heart of the centurion. Gentile as he was, he was for that very reason the less narrowed in his thoughts of the Savior by the prevalent notions of Israel, yea, or even by Old Testament hopes, precious as they are. God had given his soul a deeper, fuller sight of Christ; for the Gentile's words prove that he had apprehended God in the man who was healing at that moment all sickness and disease in Galilee. I say not how far he had realized this profound truth; I say not that he could have defined his thoughts; but he knew and declared His command of all as truly God. In him there was a spiritual force far beyond that found in the leper, to whom the hand that touched, as well as cleansed, him proclaimed Israel's need and state as truly as Emmanuel's grace.

As for the Gentile, the Lord's proffer to go and heal his servant brought out the singular strength of his faith. "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof." He had only to say in a word, and his servant should be healed. The bodily presence of the Messiah was not needed. God could not be limited by a question of place; His word was enough. Disease must obey Him as the soldier or the servant obeyed the centurion, their superior. What an anticipation of the walk by faith, not by sight, in which the Gentiles, when called, ought to have glorified God, when the rejection of the Messiah by His own ancient people gave occasion to the Gentile call as a distinct thing! It is evident that the bodily presence of the Messiah is the very essence of the former scene, as it ought so be in dealing with the leper, who is a kind of type of what Israel should have been in seeking cleansing at His hands. So; on the other hand, the centurion sets forth with no less aptness the characteristic faith that suits the Gentile, in a simplicity which looks for nothing but the word of His mouth, is perfectly content with it, knows that, whatever the disease may be, He has only to speak the word, and it is done according to His divine will. That blessed One was here whom he knew to be God, who was to him the impersonation of divine power and goodness—His presence was uncalled for, His word more than enough. The Lord admired the faith superior to Israel's, and took that occasion to intimate the casting out of the sons or natural heirs of the kingdom, and the entrance of many from east and west to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of the heavens. What can be conceived so perfectly to illustrate the great design of the Gospel of Matthew?

Thus, in the scene of the leper, we have Jesus presented as "Jehovah that healeth Israel," as man here below, and in Jewish relationships still maintaining the law. Next, we find him confessed by the centurion, no longer as the Messiah when actually with them, confessed according to a faith which saw the deeper glory of His person as supreme, competent to heal, no matter where, or whom, or what, by a word; and this the Lord Himself hails as the foreshadowing of a rich incoming of many multitudes to the praise of His name, when the Jews should be cast out. Evidently it is the change of dispensation that is in question and at hand, the cutting off of the fleshly seed for their unbelief, and the bringing in of numerous believers in the name of the Lord from among the

Gentiles.

(To be continued)

## Outline of Matthew: 4. Chapters 8-11

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(Continued)

Then follows another incident, which equally proves that the Spirit of God is not here reciting the facts in their natural succession; for it is assuredly not at this moment historically that the Lord goes into the house of Peter, sees there his wife's mother laid sick of a fever, touches her hand, and raises her up, so that she ministers unto them at once. In this we have another striking illustration of the same principle, because this miracle, in point of fact, was wrought long before the healing of the centurion's servant, or even of the leper. This, too, we ascertain from Mark 1, where there are clear marks of the time. The Lord was in Capernaum, where Peter lived; and on a certain Sabbath-day, after the call of Peter, wrought in the synagogue mighty deeds, which are here, recorded, and by Luke also. Verse 29 gives us strict time. "And forthwith when they were come out of the synagogue they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John; but Simon's wife's mother was sick of a fever, and anon they tell Him of her. And He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them." It would require the credulity of a skeptic to believe that this is not the self-same fact that we have before us in Matthew 8 I feel sure that no Christian harbors a doubt about it. But if this be so there is here absolute certainty that our Lord, on the very Sabbath in which He cast out the unclean spirit from the man in the synagogue of Capernaum, immediately after quitting the synagogue, entered the house of Peter, and that there and then He healed Peter's wife's mother of the fever. Subsequent, considerably, to this was the case of the centurion's servant, preceded a good while before by the cleansing of the leper.

How are we to account for a selection so marked, an elimination of time so complete? Surely not by inaccuracy; surely not by indifference to order, but contrariwise by divine wisdom that arranged the facts with a view to a purpose worthy of itself: God's arrangement of all things—more particularly in this part of Matthew—to give us an adequate manifestation of the Messiah; and, as we have seen, first, what He was to the appeal of the Jew; next what He was and would be to Gentile faith, in still richer form and fullness. So now we have, in the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, another fact containing a principle of great value—that His grace towards the Gentile does not in the least degree blunt His heart to the claims of relationship after the flesh. It was clearly a question of connection with the apostle of the circumcision (i.e., Peter's wife's mother). We have the natural tie here brought into prominence; and this was a claim that Christ slighted not. For He loved Peter—felt for him, and his wife's mother was precious in His sight. This sets forth not at all the way in which the Christian stands related to Christ; for even though we had known Him after the flesh, henceforth know we Him no more. But it is expressly the pattern after which He was to deal, and will deal, with Israel. Zion may say of the Lord who labored in vain, whom the nation abhorred, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." Not so. "Can a woman forget her sucking child? yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." Thus it is shown that, though we have rich grace to the Gentile, there is the remembrance of natural relationship still.

In the evening multitudes are brought, taking advantage of the power that had so shown itself publicly in the synagogue, and privately in the house of Peter; and the Lord accomplished the words of Isaiah 53:4: "Himself," it is said "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses," an oracle we might do well to consider in the light of its application here. In what sense did Jesus, our Lord, take their infirmities, and bear their sicknesses? In this, as I believe, that He never employed the virtue that was in Him to meet sickness or infirmity as a matter of mere power, but in deep compassionate feeling He entered into the whole reality of the case. He healed, and bore its burden on His heart before God, as truly as He took it away from men. It was precisely because He was Himself untouchable by sickness and infirmity, that He was free so to take up each consequence of sin thus. Therefore it was not a mere simple fact that He banished sickness or infirmity, but He carried them in His spirit before God. To my mind, the depth of such grace only enhances the beauty of Jesus, and is the very last possible ground that justifies man in thinking lightly of the Savior.

After this our Lord sees great multitudes following Him, and gives commandment to go to the other side. Here again is found a fresh case of the same remarkable principle of selection of events to form a complete picture, which I have maintained to be the true key of all. The Spirit of God has been pleased to cull and class facts otherwise unconnected; for here follow conversations that took place a long time after any of the events we have been occupied with. When do you suppose these conversations actually occurred, if we go to the question of their date? Take notice of the care with which the Spirit of God here omits all reference to this: "And a certain scribe came." There is no note of the time when he came, but simply the fact that he did come. It was really after the transfiguration recorded in chapter 27 of our Gospel. Subsequently to that, the scribe offered to follow Jesus whithersoever He went. We know this by comparing it with the Gospel of Luke. And so with the other conversation: "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father;" it was after the glory of Christ had been witnessed on the holy mount, when man's selfishness of heart showed itself in contrast to the grace of God.

Next, the storm follows. "There arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; but he was asleep." When did this take place, if we inquire into it merely as a matter of historical fact? On the evening of the day when He delivered the seven parables given in Matt. 13. The truth of this is apparent, if we compare the Gospel of Mark. Thus, the fourth chapter of Mark coincides, marked with such data as can leave no doubt. We have, first, the sower sowing the word. Then, after the parable of the mustard seed (ver. 33), it is added, "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them.... and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples [in both the parables and the explanations alluding to what we possess in Matthew.

And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. [There is what I call a clear, unmistakable note of time]. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" After this (what

makes it still more unquestionable) comes the case of the demoniac. It is true, we have only one in Mark, as in Luke; whereas in our Gospel we have two. Nothing can be simpler. There were two; but the Spirit of God chose out, in Mark and Luke, the more remarkable of the two, and traces for us his history, a history of no small interest and importance, as we may feel when we come to Mark; but it was of equal moment for the Gospel of Matthew that the two demoniacs should be mentioned here, although one of them was in himself, as I gather, a far more strikingly desperate case than the other. The reason I consider to be plain; and the same principle applies to various other parts of our Gospel, where we have two cases mentioned, where in the other Gospels we have only one. The key to it is this, that Matthew was led by the Holy Ghost to keep in view adequate testimony to the Jewish people; it was the tender goodness of God that would meet them in a manner that was suitable under the law. Now, it was an established principle, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word should be established. This, then, I apprehend to be the reason why we find two demoniacs mentioned; whereas, in Mark or Luke for other purposes, the Spirit of God only draws attention to one of the two. A Gentile (indeed, any mind not under any kind of legal prejudice or difficulty) would be far more moved by a detailed account of what was more conspicuous. The fact of two without the personal details would not powerfully tell upon mere Gentiles perhaps, though to a Jew it might be for some ends necessary. I do not pretend to say this was the only purpose served; far be it from me to think of restraining the Spirit of God within the narrow bounds of our vision. Let none suppose that, in giving my own convictions, I have the presumptuous thought of putting these forward as if they were the sole motives in God's mind. It is enough to meet a difficulty which many feel, by the simple plea that the reason assigned is in my judgment a valid explanation, and in itself a sufficient solution of the apparent discrepancy. If it be so, it is surely a ground of thankfulness to God; for it turns a stumbling-block into an evidence of the perfection of Scripture.

Reviewing, then, these closing incidents of the chapter (ver. 19-22), we find first of all the utter worthlessness of the flesh's readiness to follow Jesus. The motives of the natural heart are laid bare. Does this scribe offer to follow Jesus? He was not called. Such is the perversity of man, that he who is not called thinks he can follow Jesus whithersoever He goes. The Lord hints at what the man's real desires were—not Christ, not heaven, not eternity, but present things. If he were willing to follow the Lord, it was for what he could get. The scribe had no heart for the hidden glory. Surely, had he seen this, everything was there; but he saw it not, and so the Lord spread out His actual portion, as it literally was, without one word about the unseen and eternal. "The foxes," says He, "have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." He takes accordingly the title of the "Son of man" for the first time in this Gospel. He has His rejection before His eyes, as well as the presumptuous unbelief of this sordid, and self-confident, would-be-follower.

Again, when we listen to another (and now it is one of His disciples), at once faith shows its feebleness. "Suffer me first," he says, "to go and bury my father." The man that was not called promises to go anywhere in his own strength; but the man that was called feels the difficulty, and pleads a natural duty before following Jesus. Oh, what a heart is ours! but what a heart was His!

In the next scene, then, we have the disciples as a whole tried by a sudden danger to which their sleeping Master paid no heed. This tested their thoughts of the glory of Jesus. No doubt the tempest was great; but what harm could it do to Jesus? No doubt the ship was covered with the

waves; but how could that imperil the Lord of all? They forgot His glory in their own anxiety and selfishness. They measured Jesus by their own impotence. A great tempest and a sinking ship are serious difficulties to a man. "Lord, save us; we perish," cried they, as they awoke Him; and He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea. Little faith leaves us as fearful for ourselves as dim witnesses of His glory whom the most unruly elements obey.

In what follows we have that which is necessary to complete the picture of the other side. The Lord works in delivering power; but withal the power of Satan fills and carries away the unclean to their own destruction. Yet man, in face of all, is so deceived of the enemy, that he prefers to be left with the demons rather than enjoy the presence of the Deliverer. Such was and is man. But the future is in view also. The delivered demoniacs are, to my mind, clearly the foreshadow of the Lord's grace in the latter days, separating a remnant to Himself, and banishing the power of Satan from this small but sufficient witness of His salvation. The evil spirits asked leave to pass into the herd of swine, which thus typify the final condition of the defiled, apostate mass of Israel; their presumptuous and impenitent unbelief reduces them to that deep degradation—not merely the unclean, but the unclean filled with the power of Satan, and carried down to swift destruction. It is a just prefiguration of what will be in the close of the age—the mass of the unbelieving Jews, now impure, but then also given up to the devil, and so to evident perdition.

Thus, in the chapter before us, we have a very comprehensive sketch of the Lord's manifestation from that time, and in type going on to the end of the age. In the chapter that follows we have a companion picture, carrying on, no doubt, the Lord's presentation to Israel, but from a different point of view; for in chapter ix. it is not merely the people tried, but more especially the religious leaders, till all closes in blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. This was testing matters more closely. Had there been a single thing good in Israel, their choicest guides would have stood that test. The people might have failed; but, surely, there were some differences—surely those that were honored and valued could not be so depraved! The anointed priests in the house of God—would not they at least receive their own Messiah? This question is accordingly put to the proof in the ninth chapter. To the end the events are put together, just as in chap. 8, without regard to the point of time when they occurred.

"And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city." Having left Nazareth, as we saw, He takes up His abode in Capernaum, which was henceforth "his own city." To the proud inhabitant of Jerusalem, both one and the other were but a choice and change within a land of darkness. But it was for a land of darkness and sin and death that Jesus came from heaven—the Messiah, not according to their thoughts, but the Lord and Savior, the God-man. So in this case there was brought to Him a paralytic man, lying upon a bed, "and Jesus seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer thy sins be forgiven thee." Most clearly it is not so much a question of sin in the aspect of uncleanness (typifying deeper things, but still connected with the ceremonial requirements of Israel, as we find from what our Lord said in the chapter to the cleansed leper). It is more particularly sin, viewed as guilt, and consequently as that which absolutely breaks and destroys all power in the soul towards both God and man. Hence, here it is a question not merely of cleansing, but of forgiveness, and forgiveness, too, as that which precedes power manifested before men. There never can be strength in the soul till forgiveness is known. There may be desires, there may be the working of the Spirit of God, but there can be no power to walk before men and to glorify God thus till there is forgiveness possessed and enjoyed

in the heart. This was the very blessing that aroused, above all, the hatred of the scribes. The priest, in chap. 8 could not deny what was done in the case of the leper, who showed himself duly, and brought his offering, according to the law, to the altar. Though a testimony to them, still it was in the result a recognition of what Moses commanded. But here pardon dispensed on earth arouses the pride of the religious leaders to the quick, and implacably. Nevertheless, the Lord did not withhold the infinite boon, though He knew too well their thoughts; He spoke the word of forgiveness, though He read their evil heart that counted it blasphemy. This utter, growing rejection of Jesus was coming out now—rejection, at first allowed and whispered in the heart, soon to be pronounced in words like drawn swords.

“And behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.” Jesus blessedly answered their thoughts, had there only been a conscience to hear the word of power and grace, which brings out His glory the more. “That ye may know,” He says, “that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,” etc. He now takes His place of rejection; for Him it is manifest even now by their inmost thoughts of Him though not revealed. “This man blasphemeth.” Yet is He the Son of man who hath power on earth to forgive sins; and He uses His authority. “That ye may know it (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.” The man's walk before them testifies to the reality of his forgiveness before God. It ought to be so with every forgiven soul. This as yet draws out wonder, at least from the witnessing multitudes, that God had given such power unto men. They glorified God.

On this the Lord proceeds to take a step further, and makes a deeper inroad, if possible, upon Jewish prejudice. He is not here sought as by the leper, the centurion, the friends of the palsied man; He Himself calls Matthew, a publican—just the one to write the gospel of the despised Jesus of Nazareth. What instrument so suitable? It was a scorned Messiah who, when rejected of His own people, Israel, turned to the Gentiles by the will of God: it was One who could look upon publicans and sinners anywhere. Thus Matthew, called at the very receipt of custom, follows Jesus, and makes a feast for Him. This furnishes occasion to the Pharisees to vent their unbelief: to them nothing is so offensive as grace, either in doctrine or in practice. The scribes, at the beginning of the chapter, could not hide from the Lord their bitter rejection of His glory as man on earth entitled, as His humiliation and cross would prove to forgive. Here, too, these Pharisees question and reproach His grace, when they see the Lord sitting at ease in the presence of publicans and sinners, who came and sat down with Him in Matthew's house. They said to His disciples, “Why eateth your Master with publicans and, sinners?” The Lord shows that such unbelief justly and necessarily excludes itself, but not others, from blessing! To heal was the work, for which He was come. It was not for the whole the Physician was needed. How little they had learned the divine lesson of grace, not ordinances! “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.” Jesus was there to call, not righteous men, but sinners.

Nor was the unbelief confined to these religionists of letter and form; for next (verse 14) the question comes from John's disciples: “Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?” Throughout it is the religious kind that are tested and found wanting. The Lord pleads the cause of the disciples. “Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?” Fasting, indeed, would follow when the Bridegroom was taken from them. Thus He points out the utter moral incongruity of fasting at that moment, and intimates that it was not merely the fact that He was going to be rejected, but that to conciliate His teaching and His will

with the old thing was hopeless. What He was introducing could not mix with Judaism. Thus it was not merely that there was an evil heart of unbelief in the Jew particularly, but law and grace cannot be yoked together. "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse." Nor was it only a difference in the forms the truth took; but the vital principle which Christ was diffusing could not be so maintained. "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." The spirit, as well as the form, was alien.

But at the same time it is plain, although He bore the consciousness of the vast change He was introducing, and expressed it thus fully and early in the history, nothing turned away His heart from Israel. The very next scene, the case of Jairus, the ruler shows it. "My daughter is even now dead, but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." The details, found elsewhere, of her being at the point of death—then, before reaching the house, the news that she was dead, are not here. Whatever the time may have been, whatever the incidents added by others, the account is given here for the purpose of showing, that as Israel's case was desperate, even unto death, so He the Messiah, was the giver of life, when all humanly speaking, was over. He was then present, a man despised, yet with title to forgive sins, proved by immediate power to heal. If those who trusted in themselves that they were wise and righteous would not have Him, He would call even a publican on the spot to be among the most honored of His followers, and would not disdain to be their joy when they desired His honor in the exercise of His grace. Sorrow would come full soon when He, the Bridegroom of His people, should be taken away; and then should they fast.

Nevertheless, His ear was open to the call on behalf of Israel perishing, dying, dead. He had been preparing them for the new things, and the impossibility of making them coalesce with the old. But none the less do we find His affection engaged for the help of the helpless. He goes to raise the dead, and the woman with the issue of blood touches Him by the way. No matter what the great purpose might be, He was there for faith. Far different this was from the errand on which He was intent; but He was there for faith. It was His meat to do the will of God. He was there for the express purpose of glorifying God. Power and love were come for any one to draw on. If there were, so to speak, a justification of circumcision by faith, undoubtedly there was also the justification of uncircumcision through their faith. The question was not who or what came in the way; whoever appealed to Him, there He was for them. And He was Jesus, Emmanuel. When He reaches the house, minstrels were there, and people, making a noise: the expression, if of woe, certainly of impotent despair. They mock the calm utterance of Him who chooses things that are not; and the Lord turns out the unbelievers, and demonstrates the glorious truth that the maid was not dead, but living.

Nor is this all. He gives sight to the blind. "And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him, crying and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us." It was necessary to complete the picture. Life had been imparted to the sleeping maid of Zion—the blind men call on Him as the Son of David, and not in vain. They confess their faith, and He touches their eyes. Thus, whatever the peculiarity of the new blessings, the old thing could be taken up, though upon new grounds, and, of course, on the confession that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Two blind men called upon Him as the Son of David a sample this of what will be in the end, when the heart of Israel turns to the Lord, and the veil is done away. "According to your faith be it done

unto you.”

It is not enough that Israel be awakened from the sleep of death, and see aright. There must be the mouth to praise the Lord, and speak of the glorious honor of His majesty, as well as eyes to wait on Him. So we have a farther scene. Israel must give full testimony in the bright day of His coming. Accordingly, here we have a witness of it, and a witness so much the sweeter, because the present total rejection that was filling, the heart of the leaders surely testified to the Lord's heart of that which was at hand. But nothing turned aside the purpose of God, or the activity of His grace. “As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was come out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marveled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.” (See Matthew 9:32, 33). The Pharisees were enraged at a power they could not deny, which rebuked themselves so much the more on account of its persistent grace; but Jesus passes by all blasphemy as yet, and goes on His way—nothing hinders His course of love. He “went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” The faithful and true witness, it was His to display that power in goodness which shall be put forth fully in the world to come, the great day when the Lord will manifest Himself to every eye as Son of David, and Son of man too.

At the close of this chapter 9, in His deep compassion He bids the disciples pray the Lord of the Harvest to send forth laborers into His harvest. At the beginning of chapter 10 He Himself sends forth themselves as laborers. He is the Lord of the harvest. It was a grave step this, and in view of His rejection now. In our gospel we have not seen the apostles called and ordained. Matthew gives no such details, but call and mission are together here. But, as I have stated, the choice and ordination of the twelve apostles had really taken place before the sermon on the mount, though not mentioned in Matthew, but in Mark and Luke. (Compare Mark 3:13-19, and 6:7-11; Luke 6 and 9). The mission of the apostles did not take place till afterward. In Matthew we have no distinction of their call from their mission. But the mission is given here in strict accordance with what the gospel demands. It is a summons from the King to His people Israel. So thoroughly is it in view of Israel, that our Lord does not say one word here about the Church or the intervening condition of Christendom. He speaks of Israel then, and of Israel before He comes into glory, but He entirely omits any notice of the circumstances which were to come in by the way. He tells them that they should not have gone over (or finished) the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come. Not that His own rejection was not before His spirit, but here He looks not beyond that land and people; and, as far as the twelve were concerned, He sends them on a mission which goes on to the end of the age. Thus, the present dealings of God in grace, the actual shape taken by the kingdom of heaven, the calling of the Gentiles, the formation of the Church, are all passed completely over. We shall find something of these mysteries later on in this gospel; but here it is simply a Jewish testimony of Jehovah-Messiah in His unwearied love, through His twelve heralds, and in spite of rising unbelief, maintaining to the end what His grace had in view for Israel. He would send fit messengers, nor would the work be done till the rejected Messiah, the Son of man, came. The apostles were then sent thus, no doubt, forerunners of those whom the Lord will raise up for the latter day. Time would fail now to dwell on this chapter, interesting as it is. My object, of course is to point out as clearly as possible the structure of the gospel, and to explain according to my measure why there are these strong differences between the gospels of Matthew and the rest, as

compared with one another. The ignorance is wholly on our side: all they say or omit was owing to the far-reaching and gracious wisdom of Him who inspired them.

The eleventh chapter, exceedingly critical for Israel, and of surpassing beauty, as it is, must not be passed over without some few words. Here we find our Lord after sending out the chosen witnesses of the truth (so momentous to Israel, above all) of His own Messiahship, realizing His utter rejection, yet rejoicing withal in God the Father's counsels of glory and grace, while the real secret in the chapter, as in fact, was His being not Messiah only, nor Son of man, but the Son of the Father, whose person none knows but Himself. But, from first to last, what a trial of spirit, and what triumph! Some consider that John the Baptist inquired solely for the sake of his disciples. But I see no sufficient reason to refuse the impression that John found it hard to reconcile his continued imprisonment with a present Messiah; nor do I discern a sound judgment of the case, or a profound knowledge of the heart, in those who thus raise doubts as to John's sincerity, any more than they appear to me to exalt the character of this honored man of God, by supposing him to play a part which really belonged to others. What can be simpler than that John put the question through his disciples, because he (not they only) had a question in the Mind? It probably was no more than a grave though passing difficulty, which he desired to have cleared up with all fullness for their sakes, as well as his own. In short, he had a question because he was a man. It is not for us surely to think this impossible. Have we, spite of superior privileges, such unwavering faith, that we can afford to treat the matter as incredible in John, and therefore only capable of solution in his staggering disciples? Let those who have so little experience of what man is, even in the regenerate, beware lest they impute to the Baptist, such an acting of a part as shocks us, when Jerome imputed it to Peter and Paul in the censure of Gal. 2. The Lord, no doubt, knew the heart of His servant, and could feel for him in the effect that circumstances took upon him. When He uttered the words, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me," it is to me evident that there was an allusion to the wavering, let it be but for a moment, of John's soul. The fact is, beloved brethren, there is but one Jesus; and whoever it may be, whether John the Baptist, or the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, after all it is divinely-given faith which alone sustains: else man has to learn painfully somewhat of himself; and what is he to be accounted of?

Our Lord then answers, with perfect dignity, as well as grace; He puts before the disciples of John the real state of the case; He furnishes them with plain, positive facts, that could leave nothing to be desired by John's mind when he weighed all as a testimony from God. This done, with a word for the conscience appended, He takes up and pleads the cause of John. It ought to have been John's place to have proclaimed the glory of Jesus; but all things in this world are the reverse of what they ought to be, and of what will be when Jesus takes the throne, coming in power and glory. But when the Lord was here, no matter what the unbelief of others, it was only an opportunity for the grace of Jesus to shine out. So it was here; and our Lord turns to eternal account, in His own goodness, the shortcoming of John the Baptist, the greatest of women-born. Far from lowering the position of His servant, He declares there was none greater' among mortal men. The failure of this greatest of women-born only gives Him the just occasion to show the total change at hand, when it should not be a question of man, but of God, yea, of the kingdom of heaven, the least in which new state should be greater than John.

(To be continued)

## Outline of Matthew: 5. Chapters 11-21

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And what makes this still more striking, is the certainty that the kingdom, bright as it is, is by no means the thing nearest to Jesus. The Church, which is His body and bride, has a far more intimate place, even though true of the same persons.

Next, He lays bare the capricious unbelief of man, only consistent in thwarting everything and one that God employs for His good; then, His own entire rejection where He had most labored. It was going on, then, to the bitter end, and surely not without such suffering and sorrow as holy, unselfish, obedient love alone can know. Wretched we, that we should need such proof of it; wretched that we should be so slow of heart to answer to it, or even to feel its immensity!

“Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tire and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tire and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you...At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father.” What feelings at such a time! Oh, for grace so to bow and bless God, even when our little travail seems in vain! At that time Jesus answered, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” We seem completely borne away from the ordinary level of our Gospel to the higher region of the disciple whom Jesus loved. We are in fact in the presence of that which John so loves to dwell on—Jesus viewed not merely as Son of David or Abraham, or Seed of the woman, but as the Father's Son, the Son as the Father gave, sent, appreciated, and loved Him. So, when more is added, He says, “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” This, of course, is not the moment to unfold it. I merely indicate by the way how the thorough increasing rejection of the Lord Jesus in His lower glory has but the effect of bringing out the revelation of His higher. So, I believe now, there is no attempt ever made on the Name of the Son of God, there is not a single shaft leveled at Him, but the Spirit turns to the holy, and true, and sweet task of asserting anew and more loudly His glory, which enlarges the expression of His grace to man. Only tradition will not do this work, nor will human thoughts or feelings.

In chap. 12 we find not so much Jesus present and despised of men, as these men of Israel, the rejectors, in the presence of Jesus. Hence, the Lord Jesus is here disclosing throughout, that the doom of Israel was pronounced and impending. If it was His rejection, these scornful men were themselves rejected in the very act. The plucking of the corn, and the healing of the withered hand, had taken place long before. Mark gives them in the end of his second and the beginning of his third chapters. Why are they postponed here? Because Matthew's object is the display of the change of dispensation through or consequent on, the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. Hence, he

waits to present their rejection of the Messiah, as morally complete as possible in his statement of it, though necessarily not complete in outward accomplishment. Of course, the facts of the cross were necessary to give it an evident and literal fulfillment; but we have it first apparent in His life, and it is blessed to see it thus accomplished, as it were, in what passed with Himself; fully realized in His own spirit, and the results exposed before the external facts gave the fullest expression to Jewish unbelief. He was not taken by surprise; He knew it from the beginning. Man's implacable hatred is brought about most manifestly in the ways and spirit of His rejectors. The Lord Jesus, even before He pronounced the sentence, for so it was, indicated what was at hand in these two instances of the Sabbath-day, though one may not now linger on them. The first is the defense of the disciples, grounded on analogies taken from that which had the sanction of God of old, as well as on His own glory now. Reject Him as the Messiah; in that rejection the moral glory of the Son of man would be laid as the foundation of His exaltation and manifestation another day; He was Lord of the Sabbath-day.

In the next incident the force of the plea turns on God's goodness towards the wretchedness of man. It is not only the fact that God slighted matters of prescriptive ordinance because of the ruined state of Israel, who rejected His true anointed King, but there was this principle also, that certainly God was not going to bind Himself not to do good where abject need was. It might be well enough for a Pharisee; it might be worthy of a legal formalist, but it would never do for God; and the Lord Jesus was come here not to accommodate Himself to their thoughts, but, above all, to do God's will of holy love in an evil, wretched world. "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased." In truth, this was Emmanuel, God with us. If God was there, what else could He, would He, do? Lowly, noiseless grace now it was to be, according to the prophet, till the hour strikes for victory in judgment. So He meekly retires, healing, yet forbidding it to be blazed abroad. But still, it was His carrying on the process of showing out more and more the total rejection of His rejectors. Hence, lower down in the chapter, after the demon was cast out of the blind and dumb man before the amazed people, the Pharisees, irritated by their question, Is not this the Son of David? essayed to destroy the testimony with their utmost and blasphemous contempt. "This [fellow]," etc.

The English translators have thus given the sense well; for the expression really conveys this slight, though the word "fellow" is printed in italics. The Greek word is constantly so used as an expression of contempt, "This [fellow] doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." The Lord now lets them know their mad folly and warns them that this blasphemy was about to culminate in a still deeper, deadlier form when the Holy Ghost should be spoken against as He had been. Men little weigh what their words will sound and prove in the day of judgment. He sets forth the sign of the prophet Jonah, the repentance of the men of Nineveh, the preaching of Jonah, and the earnest zeal of the queen of the South in Solomon's day, when an incomparably greater was there despised. But if He here does not go beyond a hint of that which the Gentiles were about to receive on the ruinous unbelief and judgment of the Jew, He does not keep back their own awful course and doom in the figure that follows. Their state had long been that of a man whom the unclean spirit had left, after a former dwelling in him. Outwardly it was a condition of comparative cleanness. Idols, abominations, no longer infected that dwelling as of old. Then says the unclean spirit, "I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits

more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.” Thus He sets forth both the past, the present, and the awful future of Israel, before the day of His own coming from heaven, when there will be not only the return of idolatry, solemn to say, but the full power of Satan associated with it, as we see in Dan. 11:36-39; 2 Thessalonians 2; Rev. 13:11-15. It is clear that the unclean spirit, returning, brings idolatry back again. It is equally clear that the seven worse spirits mean the complete energy of the devil in the maintenance of Antichrist against the true Christ: and this, strange to say, along with idols. Thus the end is as the beginning, and even far, far worse. On this the Lord takes another step, when one said to Him, “Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.” A double action follows. “Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?” said the Lord; and then stretched forth His hand toward His disciples with the words, “Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” Thus the old link with the flesh, with Israel is now disowned; and the new relationships of faith, founded on doing the will of His Father [it is not a question of the law in any sort], are alone acknowledged. Hence the Lord would raise up a fresh testimony altogether, and do a new work suitable to it. This would not be a legal claim on man, but the scattering of good seed, life and fruit from God, and this in the unlimited field of the world, not in the land of Israel merely. In chapter 13 we have the well-known sketch of these new ways of God. The kingdom of heaven assumes a form unknown to prophecy, and, in its successive mysteries, fills up the interval between the rejected Christ's going to heaven, and His returning again in glory.

Many words are not now required for that which is happily familiar to most here. Let me passingly notice a very few particulars. We have here not only our Lord's ministry in the first parable, but in the second parable that which He does by His servants. Then follows the rise of what was great in its littleness till it became little in its greatness in the earth; and the development and spread of doctrine, till the measured space assigned to it is brought under its assimilating influence. It is not here a question of life (as in the seed at first), but a system of Christian doctrine; not life germinating and bearing fruit, but mere dogma—natural mind—which is exposed to it. Thus the great tree and the leavened mass are in fact the two sides of Christendom. Then inside the house we have not only the Lord explaining the parable, the history from first to last of the tares and wheat, the mingling of evil with the good which grace had sown, but more than that, we have the kingdom viewed according to divine thoughts and purposes. First of these comes the treasure hidden in the field, for which the man sells all he had, securing the field for the sake of the treasure. Next is the one pearl of great price, the unity and beauty of that which was so dear to the merchantman. Not merely were there many pieces of value, but one pearl of great price. Finally, we have all wound up, after the going forth of a testimony which was truly universal in its scope, by the judicial severance at the close, when it is not only the good put into vessels, but the bad dealt with by the due instruments of the power of God.

In chapter 14 facts are narrated which manifest the great change of dispensation that the Lord, in setting forth the parables we have just noticed, had been preparing them for. The violent man, Herod, guilty of innocent blood, then reigned in the land, in contrast with whom goes Jesus into the wilderness, showing who and what He was—the Shepherd of Israel, ready and able to care for the people. The disciples most inadequately perceive His glory; but the Lord acts according to His own

mind. After this, dismissing the multitudes, He retires alone, to pray, on a mountain, as the disciples toil over the storm-tossed lake, the wind being contrary. It is a picture of what was about to take place when the Lord Jesus, quitting Israel and the earth, ascends on high, and all assumes another form—not the reign upon earth, but intercession in heaven. But at the end, when His disciples are in the extremity of trouble, in the midst of the sea, the Lord walks on the sea toward them, and bids them not fear; for they were troubled and afraid. Peter asks a word from his Master, and leaves the ship to join Him on the water. There will be differences at the close. All will not be the wise that understand, nor those who instruct the mass in righteousness. But every Scripture that treats of that time proves what dread, what anxiety, what dark clouds will be ever and anon. So it was here. Peter goes forth, but losing sight of the Lord in the presence of the troubled waves, and yielding to his ordinary experience he fears the strong wind, and is only saved by the outstretched hand of Jesus, who rebukes his doubt. Thereon, coming into the ship, the wind ceases, and the Lord exercises His gracious power in beneficent effects around. It was the little foreshadowing of what will be when the Lord has joined the remnant in the last days, and then fills with blessing the land that He touches.

In chapter 15 we have another picture, and twofold. Jerusalem's proud, traditional hypocrisy is exposed, and grace fully blesses the tried Gentile. This finds its fitting place, not in Luke, but in Matthew, particularly as the details here (not in Mark, who only gives the general fact) cast great light upon God's dispensational ways. Accordingly, here we have, first, the Lord judging the wrong thoughts of "scribes and Pharisees which were of Jerusalem." This gives an opportunity to teach what truly defiles—not things that go into the man, but those things which, proceeding out of the mouth, come forth from the heart. To eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man. It is the death-blow to human tradition and ordinance in divine things, and in reality depends on the truth of the absolute ruin of man—a truth which, as we see, the disciples were very slow to recognize. On the other side of the picture, behold the Lord leading on a soul to draw on divine grace in the most glorious manner. The woman of Canaan, out of the borders of Tiro and Sidon, appeals to Him; a Gentile of most ominous name and belongings—a Gentile whose case was desperate; for she appeals on behalf of her daughter, grievously vexed with a devil. What could be said of her intelligence then? Had she not such confusion of thought, that if the Lord had heeded her words, it must have been destruction to her? "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David!" she cried; but what had she to do with the Son of David? and what had the Son of David to do with a Canaanite? When He reigns as David's Son, there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts. Judgment will have early cut them off. But the Lord could not send her away without a blessing, and without a blessing reaching to His own glory. Instead of giving her at once a reply, He leads her on step by step; for so He can stoop. Such is His grace, such His wisdom. The woman at last meets the heart and mind of Jesus in the sense of all her utter nothingness before God; and then grace, which had wrought all up to this, though pent-up, can flow like a river; and the Lord can admire her faith, albeit from Himself, God's free gift.

In the end of this chapter (15) is another miracle of Christ's feeding a vast multitude. It does not seem exactly as a pictorial view of what the Lord was doing, or going to do, but rather the repeated pledge, that they were not to suppose that the evil He had judged in the elders of Jerusalem, or the grace freely going out to the Gentiles, in any way led Him to forget His ancient people. What special mercy and tenderness, not only in the end, but also in the way, the Lord deals with Israel!

In chapter 16 we advance a great step, spite (yea, because) of unbelief, deep and manifest, now on every side. The Lord has nothing for them, or for Him, but to go right on to the end. He had brought out the kingdom before in view of that which betrayed to Him the unpardonable blasphemy of the Holy Ghost. The old people and work then closed in principle, and a new work of God in the kingdom of heaven was disclosed. Now He brings out not the kingdom merely, but His Church; and this not merely in view of hopeless unbelief in the mass, but of the confession of His own intrinsic glory as the Son of God by the chosen witness. No sooner had Peter pronounced to Jesus the truth of His person, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," than Jesus holds the secret no longer. "Upon this rock," says He, "I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He also gives Peter the keys of the kingdom, as we see afterward. But first appears the new and great fact, that Christ was going to build a new building, His assembly, on the truth and confession of Himself, the Son of God. Doubtless, it was contingent upon the utter ruin of Israel through their unbelief; but the fall of the lesser thing opened the way for the gift of a better glory in answer to Peter's faith in the glory of His person. The Father and the Son have their appropriate part, even as we know from elsewhere the Spirit sent down from heaven in due time was to have His. Had Peter confessed who the Son of man really is? It was the Father's revelation of the Son; flesh and blood had not revealed it to Peter, but, "my Father, which is in heaven." Thereon the Lord also has His word to say, first reminding Peter of his new name suitably to what follows. He was going to build His Church "upon this rock" —Himself, the Son of God. Henceforth, too, He forbids the disciples to proclaim Him as the Messiah. That was all over for the moment through Israel's blind sin; He was going to suffer, not yet reign, at Jerusalem. Then alas! we have in Peter what man is, even after all this. He who had just confessed the glory of the Lord would not hear His Master speaking thus of His going to the cross (by which alone the Church, or even the kingdom, could be established), and sought to swerve Him from it. But the single eye of Jesus at once detects the snare of Satan into which natural thought led, or at least exposed, Peter to fall. And so, as savoring not divine but human things, he is bid to go behind (not from) the Lord as one ashamed of Him. He, on the contrary, insists not only that He was bound for the cross, but that its truth must be made good in any who will come after Him. The glory of Christ's person strengthens us, not only to understand His cross, but to take up ours.

In chapter 17 another scene appears, promised in part to some standing there in chapter 16:28, and connected, though as yet hiddenly, with the cross. It is the glory of Christ; not so much as Son of the living God, but as the exalted Son of man, who once suffered here below. Nevertheless, when there was the display of the glory of the kingdom, the Father's voice proclaimed Him as His own Son, and not merely as the man thus exalted. It was not more truly Christ's kingdom as man than He was God's own Son, His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased, who was now to be heard, rather than Moses or Elias, who disappear, leaving Jesus alone with the chosen witnesses.

Then the pitiable condition of the disciples at the foot of the hill, where Satan reigned in fallen ruined man, is tested by the fact, that notwithstanding all the glory of Jesus, Son of God, and Son of man, the disciples rendered it evident that they knew not how to bring His grace into action for others; yet was it precisely their place and proper function here below.

The Lord, however, in the same chapter, shows that it was not a question alone of what was to be done, or to be suffered, or is to be by-and-by but what He was, and is, and never can but be. This came out most blessedly through the disciples. Peter, the good confessor of chapter 16, cuts but a

sorry figure in chapter 17; for when the demand was made upon him as to his Master's paying the tax, surely the Lord, he gave them to know, was much too good a Jew to omit it. But our Lord with dignity demands of Peter, "What thinkest thou, Simon?" He evinces, that at the very time when Peter forget the vision and the Father's voice, virtually reducing Him to mere man, He was God manifest in the flesh, It is always thus. God proves what He is by the revelation of Jesus. "Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom? of their own children, or of strangers?" Peter answers, "Of strangers." "Then," said the Lord, "are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take and give unto them for me and thee." Is it not most sweet to see, that He who proves His divine glory at once associates us with Himself? Who but God could command not only the waves, but the fish of the sea? As to any one else, even the most liberal gift that ever was given of God to fallen man on earth, to the golden head of the Gentiles, exempted the deep and its untamed inhabitants. If Psalms 8 goes farther, surely that was for the Son of man, who for the suffering of death was exalted. Yes, it was His to rule and command the sea, even as the land and all that in them is. Neither did He need to wait for His exaltation as man; for He was ever God, and God's Son, who therefore, if one may so say, waits for nothing, for no day of glory. The manner, too, was in itself remarkable. A hook is cast into the sea, and the fish that takes it produces the required money for Peter as for his gracious Master and Lord. A fish was the last being for man to make his banker of; with God all things are possible, who knew how to blend admirably in the same act divine glory, unanswerably vindicated, with the lowliest grace in man. And thus He, whose glory was so forgotten by His disciples—Jesus Himself—thinks of that very disciple, and says, "For me and thee."

The next chapter (18) takes up the double thought of the kingdom and the Church, showing the requisite for entrance into the kingdom, and displaying or calling forth divine grace in the most lovely manner, and that in practice. The pattern is the Son of man saving the lost. It is not a question of bringing in law to govern the kingdom or guide the Church. The unparalleled grace of the Savior must form and fashion the saints henceforth. In the end of the chapter is set forth parabolically the unlimited forgiveness that suits the kingdom; here, I cannot but think, looking onward in strict fullness to the future, but with distinct application to the moral need of the disciples then and always. In the kingdom so much the less sparing is the retribution of those who despise or abuse grace. All turns on that which was suitable to such a God, the giver of His own Son. We need not dwell upon it.

Chapter 19 brings in another lesson of great weight. Whatever might be the Church or the kingdom, it is precisely when the Lord unfolds His new glory in both the kingdom and the Church that He maintains the proprieties of nature in their rights and integrity. There is no greater mistake than to suppose, because there is the richest development of God's grace in new things, that He abandons or weakens natural relationships and authority in their place. This, I believe, is a great lesson, and too often forgotten. Observe that it is at this point the chapter begins with vindicating the sanctity of marriage. No doubt it is a tie of nature for this life only. None the less does the Lord uphold it, purged of what accretions had come in to obscure its original and proper character. Thus the fresh revelations of grace in no way detract from that which God had of old established in nature; but, contrariwise, only impart a new and greater force in asserting the real value and wisdom of God's way even in these least things. A similar principle applies to the little children,

who are next introduced: and the same thing is true substantially of natural or moral character here below. Parents, and the disciples, like the Pharisees, were shown that grace, just because it is the expression of what God is to a ruined world, takes notice of what man in his own imaginary dignity might count altogether petty. With God, as nothing is impossible, so no one, small or great, is despised: all is seen and put in its just place; and grace, which rebukes creature pride, can afford to deal divinely with the smallest as with the greatest.

If there be a privilege more manifest than another which has dawned on us, it is what we have found by and in Jesus, that now we can say nothing is too great for us, nothing too little for God. There is room also for the most thorough self-abnegation. Grace forms the hearts of those that understand it, according to the great manifestation of what God is, and what man is, too, given us in the person of Christ. In the reception of the little children this is plain; it is not so generally seen in what follows. The rich young ruler was not converted: far from being so, he could not stand the test applied by Christ out of His own love, and, as we are told, “went away sorrowful.” He was ignorant of himself, because ignorant of God, and imagined that it was only a question of man’s doing good for God. In this he had labored, as he said, from his youth up: “What lack I yet?” There was the consciousness of good unattained, a void for which he appeals to Jesus that it might be filled up. To lose all for heavenly treasure, to come and follow the despised Nazarene here below—what was it to compare with that which had brought Jesus to earth? but it was far too much for the young man. It was the creature doing his best, yet proving that he loved the creature more than the Creator. Jesus, nevertheless, owned all that could be owned in him. After this, in the chapter we have the positive hindrance asserted of what man counts good. “Verily, I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.” This made it to be plainly and only a difficulty for God to solve. Then comes the boast of Peter, though for others as well as himself. The Lord, while, thoroughly proving that He forgot nothing, owned everything that was of grace in Peter or the rest, while opening the same door to “every one” who forsakes nature for His name’s sake solemnly adds, “But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.” Thus the point that meets us in the conclusion of the chapter is, that while every character, every measure of giving up for His name’s sake, will meet with the most worthy recompence and result, man can as little judge of this as he can accomplish salvation. Changes, to us inexplicable, occur: many first last, and last first.

The point in the beginning of the next chapter (20) is not reward, but the right and title of God Himself to act according to His goodness. He is not going to lower Himself to a human measure. Not only shall the Judge of all the earth do right, but what will not He do who gives all good? “For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.” He maintains His sovereign title to do good, to do as He will with His own. The first of these lessons is, “Many first shall be last, and last first” (Matt. 19:30). It is clearly the failure of nature, the reversal of what might be expected. The second is, “So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many are called, but few are chosen.” It is the power of grace. God’s delight is to pick out the hindmost for the first place, to the disparagement of the foremost in their own strength.

Lastly, we have the Lord rebuking the ambition not only of the sons of Zebedee, but in truth also of the ten; for why was there such warmth of indignation against the two brethren? why not sorrow and shame, that they should have so little understood their Master's mind? How often the heart shows itself, not merely by what we ask, but by the uncalled-for feelings we display against other people and their faults! The fact is, in judging others we judge ourselves.

Here I close to-night. It brings me to the real crisis; that is, the final presentation of our Lord to Jerusalem. I have endeavored, though, of course, cursorily, and I feel most imperfectly, to give thus far Matthew's sketch of the Savior as the Holy Ghost enabled him to execute it. In the next discourse we may hope to have the rest of his Gospel.

CHAP. 20:29. We now enter on the Lord's final presentation of Himself to Jerusalem, traced, however, from Jericho; that is, from the city which had once been the stronghold of the power of the Canaanite. The Lord Jesus presenting Himself in grace, instead of sealing up the curse which had been pronounced on it, makes it contrariwise the witness of His mercy towards those who believed in Israel. It was there that two blind men (for Matthew, we have seen, abounds in this double token of the Lord's grace), sitting by the wayside, cried out, and most appropriately, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David!" They were led and taught of God. It was no question of law, yet strictly in His capacity of Messiah. Their appeal was in thorough keeping with the scene; they felt that the nation had no sense of its own blindness, and so addressed themselves at once to the Lord thus presenting Himself where divine power wrought of old. It is remarkable that, although there had been signs and wonders given from time to time in Israel, miraculous cures wrought, dead even raised to life, and leprosy cleansed, yet never, previously to the Messiah, do we hear of restoring the blind to sight. The Rabbis held that this was reserved for the Messiah: and certainly I am not aware of any case which contradicts their notion. They appear to have founded it upon the remarkable prophecy of Isaiah (chap. 5). I do not affirm that the prophecy proves their notion to be true in isolating that miracle from the rest; but it is evident that the Spirit of God does connect emphatically the opening of blind eyes with the Son of David, as part of the blessing that He will surely diffuse when He comes to reign over the earth.

What appears further here is, that Jesus does not put the blessing off till His reign. Undoubtedly, the Lord in those days was giving signs and tokens of the world to come: and it was continued by His servants afterward, as we know from the end of Mark, the Acts, etc. The miraculous powers which He exercised were samples of the power which would fill the earth with Jehovah's glory, casting out the enemy, and effacing the traces of his power, and making it the theater of the manifestation of His kingdom here below. Thus our Lord gives evidence that the power was in Himself already, so that they need not lack because the kingdom was not yet come, in the full, manifest sense of the word. The kingdom was then come in His own person, as is said by Matthew (chap. 12) as well as Luke. Still less did the blessing tarry for the sons of men. Virtue went forth at His kingly touch: this, at least did not depend on the recognition of His claims by His people. He takes up this sign of Messiah's grace—the opening of the eyes of the blind—itsself no mean sign of the true condition of the Jews, could they but feel and own the truth. Alas! they sought not mercy and healing at His hands; but if there were any to call on Him at Jericho, the Lord would hearken. Here, then, Messiah answers to the cry of faith of these two blind men. When the multitude rebuked them, that they should hold their peace, they cried the more. The difficulties presented to faith only increased the energy of its desire; and so they cried, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou

Son of David!" Jesus stands, calls the blind men, and says, "What will ye that I should do?" "Lord, that our eyes should be opened." And so it was according to their faith. Moreover, it is noted that they follow Him, the pledge of what will be done when the people, by-and-by owning their blindness, and turning to Him for eyes, receive sight from the true Son of David to see Himself in the day of His earthly glory.

The Lord thereon enters Jerusalem according to prophecy. He enters it, however, not in the outward pomp and glory which the nations seek after, but according to what the prophet's words now made good literally: Jehovah's King sitting on an ass in the spirit of humiliation. But even in this very thing, the fullest proof was afforded that He was Jehovah Himself. From first to last, as we have seen, it was Jehovah-Messiah. The word to the owner of the ass and colt was, "The Lord hath need of them." Accordingly, on this plea of Jehovah of hosts, all difficulties disappear, though unbelief finds there its stumbling-block. It was indeed the power of the Spirit' of God that controlled his heart; even as to Christ "the porter opened." God left nothing undone on any side, but so ordered that the heart of this Israelite should yield a testimony that grace was at work, spite of the lamentable chill that stupefied the people. How good it is thus to raise up a witness, never indeed to leave it absolutely lacking, not even on the road to Jerusalem—alas! the road to the cross of Christ. This, as we are told by the Evangelist, came to pass that the word of the prophet should be fulfilled: "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek [for such meekness was the character of His presentation as yet], and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass! All must be in character with the Nazarene. Accordingly, the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded. The multitudes, too, were acted on—a very great multitude. It was, of course, but a transient action, yet was it of God for a testimony, this moving of hearts by the Spirit. Not that it penetrated beneath the surface, but was rather a wave that passed over men's hearts, and then was gone. For the moment they followed, crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" (applying to the Lord the congratulations of Psalms 118).

Jesus, according to our Evangelist's account, comes to the temple and cleanses it. Remark the order as well as the character of the events. In Mark this is not the first act which is recorded, but the curse on the barren fig tree, between His inspection of all things in the temple and His ejection of those who profaned it. The fact is, there were two days or occasions in which the fig tree comes before us, according to the Gospel of Mark, who gives us the details more particularly than any one, notwithstanding his brevity. Matthew on the contrary, while he is so careful in furnishing us frequently with a double witness of the Lord's gracious ways toward His land and people, gives only as one whole His dealing with both the fig tree and the temple. We should not know from the first Evangelist of any interval in either case; nor could we learn from either the first or the third but that the cleansing of the temple occurred on His earlier visit. But we know from Mark, who sets forth an exact account of each of the two days, that in neither case was all done at once. This is the more remarkable because, in the instances of the two demoniacs, or the two blind men in Matthew, Mark, like Luke, speaks only of one. Nothing can account for such phenomena but design: and the more so as there is no ground to assume that each succeeding Evangelist was kept in ignorance of his predecessor's account of our Lord. It is evident that Matthew compresses in one the two acts about the temple, as well as about the fig tree. His scope excluded such details, and, I am persuaded, rightly so, according to the mind of God's Spirit. It may render it all

the more striking when one observes that Matthew was there, and Mark was not. He who actually saw these transactions, and who therefore, had he been a mere acting human witness, would peculiarly have dwelt on them; he, too, who had been a personal companion of the Lord, and therefore, had it been only a question of treasuring all up as one that loved the Lord, would, naturally speaking, have been the one of the three to have presented the amplest and minutest picture of the circumstance, is just the one who does nothing of the kind. Mark, as confessedly not being an eye-witness, might have been supposed to content himself with the general view. The reverse is the fact unquestionably. This is a notable feature, and not here alone, but elsewhere also. To me it proves that the Gospels are the fruit of divine purpose in all, distinctively in each. It establishes the principle that, while God condescended to employ eye-witness, He never confined Himself to it, but, on the contrary, took full and particular care to show that He is above all creature means of information. Thus it is in Mark and Luke we find some of the most important details; not in Matthew and John, though Matthew and John were eye-witnesses, Mark and Luke not. A double proof of this appears in what has been just advanced. To Matthew, acting according to what was given him of the Spirit, there was no sufficient reason to enter into points which did not bear dispensationally upon Israel. He therefore, as often elsewhere, presents the entrance into the temple in its completeness, as being the sole matter important to his aim. Any thoughtful mind must allow, if I do not greatly err, that entrance into detail would rather detract from the augustness of the act. The minute account has its just place, on the other hand, if it be a question of the Lord's method and bearing in His service and testimony. Here I want to know the particulars; there every trace and shade are full of instruction to me. If I have to serve Him, I do well to learn and ponder His every word and way; and in this the style and mode of Mark's Gospel is invaluable. Who but feels that the movements, the pauses, the sighs, the groans, the very looks of the Lord, are fraught with blessing to the soul? But if, as with Matthew, the object be the great change of dispensation consequent on the rejection of the divine Messiah (particularly if the point, as here, be not the opening out of coming mercy, but, on the contrary, a solemn and a stern judgment on Israel), the Spirit of God contents Himself with a general notice of the painful scene, without indulging in any circumstantial account of it. To this it is I attribute the palpable difference in this place of Matthew as compared with Mark, and with Luke also, who omits the cursed fig tree altogether, and gives the barest mention of the temple's cleansing (chap. 19:45). The notion of some men, especially a few men of learning, that the difference is due to ignorance on the part of one or other or all the Evangelists, is of all explanations the worst, and even the least reasonable (to take the lowest ground); it is in plain truth the proof of their own ignorance, and the effect of positive unbelief. What I have ventured to suggest I believe to be a motive, and an adequate motive, for the difference; but we must remember that divine wisdom has depths of aim infinitely beyond our ability to sound. God may be pleased to vouchsafe us a perception of what is in His mind, if we be lowly, and diligent, and dependent on Him; or He may leave us ignorant of much, where we are careless or self-confident; but sure I am that the very points men ordinarily fix on as blots or imperfections in the inspired word are, when understood, among the strongest proofs of the admirable guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. Nor do I speak with such assurance because of the least satisfaction in any attainments, but because every lesson I have learned and do learn from God's word brings with it the ever accumulating conviction that Scripture is perfect. For the question in hand, it is enough to produce sufficient evidence that it was not in ignorance, but with full knowledge, that Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote as they have done; I go farther, and say it was divine intention, rather than,

as I conceive, any determinate plan of each Evangelist, who may not himself have had before his mind the full scope of what the Holy Ghost gave him to write about it. There is no necessity to suppose that Matthew deliberately designed the result which we have in his Gospel. How God brought it all to pass is another question, which, of course, it is not for us to answer. But the fact is, that the Evangelist, who was present, he who consequently was an eye-witness of the details, does not give them; while one who was not there states them with the greatest particularity—thoroughly harmonious with the account of him who was there, but, nevertheless, with differences as marked as their mutual corroborations. If we might rightly use, in this case, the word “originality,” then originality is stamped upon the account of the second. I affirm, then, in the strictest sense, that divine design is stamped upon each, and that consistency of purpose is found everywhere in all the Gospels.

The Lord then goes straight to the sanctuary. The kingly Son of David, destined to sit as the Priest upon His throne, the head of all things sacred as well as pertaining to the polity of Israel—we can understand why Matthew should describe such an One visiting the temple of Jerusalem; and why, instead of stopping, like Mark, to narrate that which attests His patient service, the whole scene should be given here without a break. We have seen that a similar principle accounts for the massing of the facts of His ministry in the end of the fourth chapter, and also for giving as a continuous whole the Sermon on the Mount, although if we inquired into details, we might find many and considerable intervals; for, as undoubtedly those facts were grouped, so I believe also it was between the parts of that sermon. It fell in, however, with the object of Matthew's Gospel to pass by all notice of these interstices, and so the Spirit of God has been pleased to interweave the whole into the beautiful web of the first Gospel. In this way, as I believe, we may and should account for the difference between Matthew and Mark in this particular, without in the smallest degree casting the shadow of an imperfection upon one any more than on the other; while the fact, already pressed, that eye-witnessing, while employed as a servant, is never allowed to govern in the composition of the Gospels, bespeaks loudly that men forget their true Author in searching into the writers He employed, and that the only key to all, difficulties is the simple but weighty truth that it was God communicating His mind about Jesus, as by Matthew so by Mark.

Next, the Lord acts upon the word. He finds men selling and buying in the temple (that is, in its buildings), overthrows their tables, and turns out themselves, pronouncing the words of the prophets, both Isaiah and Jeremiah. But at the same time there is another trait noted here only: the blind and the lame (the “hated of David's soul” (2 Sam. 5:8), the pitied of David's greater Son and Lord) find a friend instead of an enemy in Him who loved them, the true beloved of God. Thus, at the very time He showed His hatred and righteous indignation at the covetous profaning of the temple, His love was flowing out to the desolate in Israel. Then we see the chief priests and scribes offended at the cries of the multitude and children, and turning reproachfully to the Lord, who allowed such a right royal welcome to be addressed to Him; but the Lord calmly takes His place according to the sure word of God. It is not now Deuteronomy that is before Him (that He had quoted when tempted of Satan at the beginning of His career). But now, as they had borrowed the words of Psalms 118 (and who will say they were wrong?), so the Lord Jesus (and I say He was infinitely right) applies to them as well as to Himself, the language of Psalms 8

(To be continued)

## Outline of Matthew: 6. Chapters 21-23

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Its central truth is the entrance of the rejected Messiah, the Son of man by humiliation and suffering unto death, into heavenly glory and dominion over all things. And this was just the point before the Lord: the little ones were thus in the truth and spirit of that oracle. They were sucklings, out of whose mouth praise was ordained for the despised Messiah soon to be in heaven, exalted there and preached here as the once crucified and now glorified Son of man. What could be more appropriate to that time, what more profoundly true for all time, yea for eternity!

Matthew, as we have seen, crowds into one scene all mention of the barren fig tree (vers. 18-22), without distinguishing the curse of the one day from the manifestation of its accomplishment on the day following. Was it without moral import? Impossible. Did it convey the notion of a hearty and true reception of the Messiah, with fruits meet for His hand who had so long tended it, and failed in no care or culture? Was there anything answering to the welcome of the little ones who cried Hosanna, the type of what grace will effect in the day of His return, when the nation itself will contentedly, thankfully take the place of babes and sucklings, and find their best wisdom in so owning the One whom their fathers rejected, the man thereon exalted to heaven during the night of His people's unbelief? Meanwhile, another picture better suits them, the state and the doom of the fruitless fig tree. Why so scornful of the jubilant multitude, of the joyous babes? What was their condition before the eyes of Him who saw all that passed within their minds. They were no better than the fig tree, that solitary fig tree which met the Lord's eyes as He comes from Bethany, entering once more into Jerusalem. Like it, they, too, were full of promise: like its abundant foliage, they lacked not fair profession, but there was no fruit. That which made its barrenness evident was the fact that it was not yet the time of figs. Therefore, the unripe figs, the harbinger of harvest, ought to have been there. Had the season of figs been come, the fruit might have been already gathered; but that season having not yet arrived, beyond controversy the promise of the coming harvest should, and indeed must, have been still there, had any fruit been really borne. This, therefore, represented too truly what the Jew, what the nation, was in the eye of the Lord. He had come seeking fruit; but there was none; and the Lord pronounced this curse, "Henceforth let no fruit grow on thee forever." And so it is. No fruit ever sprang from that generation. Another generation there must be; a total change must be wrought if there is to be fruit-bearing. Fruit of righteousness can only be through Jesus to God's glory; and Jesus they yet despised. Not that the Lord will give up Israel, but He will create a generation to come, wholly different from the present Christ-rejecting one. Such an issue will be seen to be, implied, if we compare our Lord's curse with the rest of the word of God, which points to better things yet in store for Israel.

But He adds more than this. It was not only that the Israel of that day should thus pass away, giving place to another generation, who, honoring the Messiah, will bear fruit to God; He tells the wondering disciples that, had they faith, the mountain would be cast into the sea. This appears to go farther than the disappearance of Israel as responsible to be a fruit-bearing people; it implies their whole polity dissolved; for the mountain is just as much the symbol of a power in the earth, an established world-power, as the fig tree is the special sign of Israel as responsible to produce fruit

for God; and it is clear that both figures have been abundantly verified. For the time Israel is passed away. After no long interval, the disciples saw Jerusalem not only taken, but completely torn as it were from the roots. The Romans came, as the executioners of the sentence of God (according to the just forebodings of the unjust high priest Caiaphas, who prophesied not without the Holy Ghost), and took away their place and nation, not because they did not, but, because they did, kill Jesus their Messiah. Notoriously this total ruin of the Jewish state came to pass when the disciples had grown up to be a public witness to the world, before the apostles were all taken away from the earth; then their whole national polity sunk and disappeared when Titus sacked Jerusalem, and sold and scattered the people to the ends of the earth. I have no doubt that the Lord intended us to know the uprooting of the mountain just as much as the withering of the fig tree. The latter may be the simpler application of the two, and evidently more familiar to ordinary thought; but there seems no real reason to question, that if the one be meant symbolically, so too is the other. However this may be, these words of the Lord close that part of the subject.

We enter upon a new series in the rest of this chapter and the next. The religious rulers come before the Lord to put the first question that ever enters the minds of such men, "By what authority doest thou these things?" Nothing is more easily asked by those who assume that their own title is unimpeachable. Our Lord answers them by another question, which soon disclosed how thoroughly they themselves, in what was incomparably more serious, failed in moral competence. Who were they, to raise the question of His authority? As guides of religion, surely they ought to be able to decide that which was of the deepest consequence for their own souls, and for those of whom they assumed the spiritual charge. The question He puts involved indeed the answer to theirs; for had they answered Him in truth, this would have decided at once by what, and by whose, authority He acted as He did. "The baptism of John, whence was it (asks the Lord), from heaven, or of men?" There was no singleness of purpose, there was no fear of God, in these men so full of swelling words and fancied authority. Accordingly, instead of its being an answer from conscience declaring the truth as it was, they reason solely how to escape from the dilemma. The only question before their minds was, what answer would be politic? how best to get rid of the difficulty? Vain hope with Jesus! The base conclusion to which they were reduced is, "We cannot tell." It was a falsehood: but what of that, where the interests of religion and their own order were concerned? Without a blush, then, they answer the Savior, "We cannot tell:" and the Lord with calm dignity strikes home His answer—not "I cannot tell," but, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." Jesus knew and laid bare the secret springs of the heart; and the Spirit of God records it here for our instruction. It is the genuine universal type of worldly leaders of religion in conflict with the power of God. "If we shall say, From heaven, he will say unto us, Why did ye not, then, believe him? But if we shall say, Of men, we fear the people; for all hold John as prophet." If they owned John, they must bow to the authority of Jesus: if they rejected John, they feared the people. They were thus put to silence; for they would not risk loss of influence with the people, and they were determined at all cost to deny the authority of Jesus. All they cared about was themselves.

The Lord goes on and meets parabolically a wider question than that of the rulers, gradually enlarging the scope, till He terminates these instructions in chap. 22:14. First, He takes up sinful men where natural conscience works, and where conscience is gone. This is peculiar to Matthew: "A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my

vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.” He comes to the second, who was all complacency, and answers to the call, “I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto Him, The first. Jesus saith unto them [such is the application], Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him” (Matt. 21:28-32). But He was not content with merely thus touching conscience in a way that was painful enough to the flesh; for they found that, spite of authority or anything else, those who professed most, if disobedient, were counted worse than the most depraved, who repented and did the will of God.

Next, our Lord looks at the entire people, and this from the commencement of their relations with God. In other words, He gives us in this parable the history of God's dealings with them. It was in no way, so to speak, the accidental circumstance of how they behaved in one particular generation. The Lord sets out clearly what they had been all along, and what they were then. In the parable of the vineyard, they are tested as responsible in view of the claims of God, who had blessed them from the first with exceeding rich privileges. Then, in the parable of the marriage of the king's son, we see what they were, as tested by the grace or gospel of God. These are the two subjects of the parables following.

The householder, who lets out his vineyard to husbandmen, sets forth God trying the Jew, on the ground of blessings abundantly conferred upon him. Accordingly we have, first, servants sent, and then more—not only in vain, but with insult and increase of wrong. Then, at length, He sends His Son, saying, They will reverence my Son. This gives occasion for their crowning sin—the utter rejection of all divine claims, in the death of the Son and Heir; for “they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.” “When the Lord therefore of the vineyard comes,” He asks, “what will he do unto these husbandmen?” They say unto Him, “He will miserably destroy these wicked men, and let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.”

The Lord accordingly pronounces according to the Scriptures, not leaving it merely to the answer of the conscience, “Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?” Then He applies further this prediction about the stone, connecting, it would appear, the allusion in Psalms 118 with the prophecy of Daniel 2. The principle at least is applied, to the case in hand, and, I need hardly say, with perfect truth and beauty; for in that day apostate Jews will be judged and destroyed, as well as Gentile powers. In two positions the stone was to be found. The one is here on the earth—the humiliation, to wit, of the Messiah. Upon that Stone, thus humbled, unbelief trips and falls. But again, when the Stone is exalted, another issue follows; for “the Stone of Israel,” the glorified Son of man, shall descend in unsparing judgment, and crush His enemies together. When the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them.

The Lord, however, turns in the next parable to the call of grace. It is a likeness of the kingdom of heaven. Here we are on new ground. It is striking to see this parable introduced here. In the Gospel of Luke there is a similar case though it might be too much to affirm that it is the same.

Certainly an analogous parable is found, but in a totally different connection. Besides, Matthew adds various particulars peculiar to himself, and quite falling in with the Spirit's design by him; as we find also in Luke his own characteristics. Thus, in Luke, there is a remarkable display of grace and love to the despised poor in Israel; then, further, that love enlarging its sphere, and going out to the highways and hedges to bring in the poor that were there—the poor in the city—the poor everywhere. I need not say how thoroughly in character all this is. Here, in Matthew, we have not only God's grace, but a kind of history, very strikingly embracing the destruction of Jerusalem, on which Luke is here silent. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son." It is not merely a man making a feast for those that have nothing—that we have fully in Luke; but here rather the king bent upon the glorification of his son. "He sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which were bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage." There are two missions of the servants of the Lord here; one during His lifetime; the other after His death. On the second mission, not the first, it is said, "All things are ready." The message is, as ever, despised. "They made light of it, and went their ways." It was the second time when there was this most ample invitation which left no excuse for man, that they not only would not come, going one to his farm, and another to his merchandise, but "the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully and slew them." This was not the character of the reception given to the apostles during our Lord's lifetime, but exactly what transpired after His death. Thereupon, though in marvelous patience the blow was suspended for years, nevertheless judgment came at last. "When the king heard thereof, he was wroth, and sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city." This, of course, closes this part of the parable as predicting a providential dealing of God; but, besides being thus judicial after a sort to which we find nothing parallel in the Gospel of Luke (i.e. in what answers to it), as usual, the great change of dispensation is shown in Matthew much more distinctly than in Luke. There it is rather the idea of grace that began with one sending out to those invited, and a very full exposure of their excuses in a moral point of view, followed by the second mission to the streets and lanes of the city, for the poor, maimed, halt, and blind; and finally, to the highways and hedges, compelling them to come in that the house might be filled. In Matthew it is very much more in a dispensational aspect; and hence the dealings with the Jews, both in mercy and judgment, are first given as a whole according to that manner of his which furnishes a complete sketch at one stroke, so to speak. It is the more manifest here, because none can deny that the mission to the Gentiles was long before the destruction of Jerusalem. Next is appended the Gentile part to itself. "Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests." But there is a further thing brought out here, in a very distinctive manner. In Luke, we have no judgment pronounced and executed at the end upon him that came to the wedding without the due garment. In Matthew, as we saw the providential dealing with the Jews, so we find the closing scene very particularly described, when the king judges individually in the day that is coming. It is not an external or national stroke, though that too we have here—a providential event in connection with Israel. Quite different, but consistent with that, we have a personal appraisal by God of the Gentile profession, of those now bearing Christ's name, but who have not really put on Christ. Such is the

conclusion of the parable: nothing more appropriate at the same time than this picture, peculiar to Matthew, who depicts the vast change at hand for the Gentiles, and God's dealing with them individually for their abuse of His grace. The parable illustrates the coming change of dispensation. Now this falls in with Matthew's design, rather than Luke's, with whom we shall find habitually it is a question of moral features, which the Lord may give opportunity of exhibiting at another, time.

After this come the various classes of Jews—the Pharisees first of all, and, strange consorts! the Herodians. Ordinarily they were, as men say, natural enemies. The Pharisees were the high ecclesiastical party; the Herodians, on the contrary, were the low worldly courtier party those, the strong sticklers for tradition and righteousness according to the law; these, the panderers to the powers that then were for whatever could be got in the earth. Such allies now joined hypocritically against the Lord. The Lord meets them with that wisdom which always shines in His words and ways. They demand whether it be lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not. “Show me,” says He, “the tribute money.... And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.” Thus the Lord deals with the facts as they then came before Him. The piece of money they produced proved their subjection to the Gentiles. It was their sin which had put them there. They writhed under their masters; but still under alien masters they were; and it was because of their sin. The Lord confronts them not only with the undeniable witness of their subjection to the Romans, but also with a graver charge still, which they had entirely overlooked—the claims of God, as well as of Caesar. The money you love proclaims that you are slaves to Caesar, Pay, then, to Caesar his dues. But forget not to “render to God the things that are God's.” The fact was, they hated Caesar only less than they hated the true God. The Lord left them therefore under the reflections and confusion of their own guilty consciences.

Next, the Lord is assailed by another great party. “The same day came to him the Sadducees” —those most opposed to the Pharisees in doctrine, as the Herodians were in politics. The Sadducees denied resurrection, and put a case which to their mind involved insuperable difficulties. To whom would belong in that state a woman who here had been married to seven brethren successively? The Lord does not cite the clearest Scripture about the resurrection; He does what in the circumstances is much better; He appeals to what they themselves professed most of all to revere. To the Sadducees there was no part of Scripture possessed of such authority as the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses. From Moses, then, He proved the resurrection; and this in the simplest possible way. Every one—their own conscience—must allow that God is the God, not of the dead, but of the living. Therefore, if God calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it is not an unmeaning thing. Referring long afterward to their fathers who were passed away, He speaks of Himself as in relationship with them. Were they not, then, dead? But was all gone? Not so. But far more than that—He speaks as one who not merely had relations with them, but had made promises to them, which never yet were accomplished. Either, then, God must raise them from the dead, in order to make good His promises to the fathers; or He could not be careful to keep His promises. Was this last what their faith in God, or rather their want of faith, came to? To deny resurrection is, therefore, to deny the promises and God's faithfulness, and in truth God Himself. The Lord, therefore, rebukes them on this acknowledged principle, that God was the God of the living, not of the dead. To make Him God of the dead would have been really to deny Him to be God at all; equally so to make His promises of no value or stability. God, therefore must raise

again the fathers in order to fulfill His promise to them; for they certainly never got the promises in this life. The folly of their thoughts too was manifest in this, that the difficulty presented was wholly unreal—it only existed in their imagination. Marriage has nothing to do with the risen state: there they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. Thus on their own negative ground of objection, they were altogether in error. Positively, as we have seen, they were just as wrong; for God must raise the dead to make good His own promises. There is nothing now in this world that worthily witnesses God, save only that which is known to faith; but if you speak of the display of God, and the manifestation of His power, you must wait until the resurrection. The Sadducees had not faith, hence were in total error and blindness: “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.” Therefore it was that, refusing to believe, they were unable to understand. When the resurrection comes, it will be manifest to every eye. Accordingly this was the point of our Lord's answer; and the multitudes were astonished at His doctrine.

Though the Pharisees were not sorry to find the then ruling party the Sadducees, put to silence, one of them, a lawyer, tempted the Lord in a question of near interest to them. “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?” But He who came full of grace and truth never lowered the law, and at once gives its sum and substance in both its parts—Godward and man-ward.

The time, however, was come for Jesus to put His question, drawn from Psalms 110. If Christ be confessedly David's Son, how does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, “Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?” The whole truth of His position lies here. It was about to be realized; and the Lord can speak of the things that were not as though they were. Such was the language of David the king in words inspired of the Holy Ghost. What was the language, the thought of the people now, and by whom inspired? Alas! Pharisees, lawyers, Sadducees—it was only a question of infidelity in varying forms; and the glory of David's Lord was even more momentous than the dead rising according to promise. Believe it or not, the Messiah was about to take His seat at the right hand of Jehovah. They were—indeed, they are—critical questions: If the Christ be David's Son, how is He David's Lord? If He be David's Lord, how is He David's Son? It is the turning point of unbelief at all times, now as then, the continual theme of the testimony of the Holy Ghost, the habitual stumbling-block of man, never so vain as when he would be wisest, and either essay to sound by his own wit the unfathomable mystery of Christ's person, or deny that there is in it any mystery whatever. It was the very point of Jewish unbelief. It was the grand capital truth of all this Gospel of Matthew, that He who was the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, was really Emmanuel, and Jehovah. It had been proved at His birth, proved throughout His ministry in Galilee, proved now at His last presentation in Jerusalem. “And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.” Such was their position in presence of Him who was so soon about to take His seat at the right hand of God; and there each remains to this day. Awful, unbelieving silence of Israel despising their own law, despising their own Messiah, David's Son and David's Lord, His glory their shame!

But if man was silent, it was the Lord's place not merely to question but to pronounce; and in chapter 23 most solemnly does the Lord utter His sentence upon Israel. It was an address both to the multitude and to the disciples, with woes for Scribes and Pharisees. The Lord fully sanctioned that kind of mingled address for the time, providing, it would appear, not merely for the disciples, but for the remnant in a future day who will have this ambiguous place; believers in Him, on the

one hand, yet withal filled, on the other, with Jewish hopes and Jewish associations. This seems to me the reason why our Lord speaks in a manner so remarkably different from that which obtains ordinarily in Scripture. "The scribes," He says, "and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen of men." The principle fully applied then, as it will in the latter day; the Church scene coming in meanwhile as a parenthesis. The suitability of such instruction to this Gospel of Matthew is also obvious, as indeed here only it is found. Then, again, our souls would shrink from the notion, that what our Lord taught could have merely a passing application. Not so; it has a permanent value for His followers; save only that the special privileges conferred on the Church, which is His body, modify the case, and, concurrently with this, the setting aside meanwhile of the Jewish people and state of things. But as these words applied literally then, so I conceive will it be at a future day. If this be so, it preserves the dignity of the Lord, as the great Prophet and Teacher, in its true place. In the last book of the New Testament we have a similar combination of features, when the Church will have disappeared from the earth; that is, the keeping the commandments of God and having the faith of Jesus. So here, the disciples of Jesus are exhorted to heed what was enjoined by those who sat in Moses' seat—to follow what they taught, not what they did. So far as they brought out God's commandments, it was obligatory. But their practice was to be a beacon, not a guide. Their objects were to be seen of men, pride of place, honor in public and private, high-sounding titles, in open contradiction of Christ and that oft-repeated word of His—"Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Yet, of course, the disciples had the faith of Jesus.

Next the Lord launches out woe after woe against the Scribes and Pharisees. They were hypocrites. They shut out the new light of God, while zealous beyond measure for their own thoughts; they undermined conscience by their casuistry, while insisting on the minutest alliteration in ceremonializing; they labored after external cleanness, while full of rapine and intemperance; and if they could only seem righteously fair without, feared not within to be full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Finally, their monuments in honor of slain prophets and past worthies were rather a testimony to their own relationship, not to the righteous, but to those who murdered them. Their fathers killed the witnesses of God who while living, condemned them; they, the sons; only built to their memory when there was no longer a present testimony to their conscience, and their sepulchral honors would cast a halo around themselves.

## Outline of Matthew: 7. Chapters 23-24

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When there is no longer the testimony of God that pierces the obdurate heart, when they who render it are no longer there, the names of these departed saints or prophets become a means of gaining religious reputation for themselves. Present application of the truth is lacking, the sword of the Spirit is no longer in the hands of those who wielded it so well. To honor those who have passed away is the cheapest means, on the contrary, for acquiring credit for the men of this generation. It is to swell the great capital of tradition out of those that once served God, but are now gone, whose testimony is no longer a sting to the guilty. Thus it is evident, that as their honor begins in death, so it bears the sure stamp of death upon it. Did they plume themselves on the progress of the age? Did they think and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets? How little they knew in their own hearts! Their trial was at hand. Their real character would soon appear, hypocrites though they were, and a serpent brood: how could they escape the judgment of hell?

“Wherefore, behold,” says He, after thus exposing and denouncing them, “I send unto you prophets, and wise men and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.” It is most eminently a Jewish character and circumstance of persecution; as the aim was the retributive one, “that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily, I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.” Yet, just as the blessed Lord, after pronouncing woes on Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, that had rejected His words and works, turned at once to the infinite resources of grace, and from the depth of His own glory brought in the secret of better things to the poor and needy; so it was that even at this time, just before He gave utterance to these woes (so solemn and fatal to the proud religious guides of Israel), He had, as we know from Luke 19, wept over the guilty city, out of which, as His servants, so their Lord could not perish. Here, again, how truly was His heart towards them! “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” It is not “I leave,” but your house is left unto you desolate; “for I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth [what bitterness of destitution theirs—Messiah, Jehovah Himself, rejecting those who rejected Him!] till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

Thus we have had our Lord presenting Himself as Jehovah the King; we have had the various classes putting themselves forward to judge Him. but, in fact, judged themselves by Him.

There remains another scene of great interest linking itself on to His farewell to the nation just noticed. It is His last communication to the disciples in view of the future; and this Matthew gives in a very full and rich manner. It would be vain to attempt an exposition of this prophetic discourse within my assigned limits. I will, therefore, but skim its surface now, just enough to indicate its

outlines, and especially its distinctive features. It is evident that the greater completeness here exhibited beyond what appears in any other Gospel is according to special design. In the gospel given by the other apostle, John, there is not a word of it. Mark gives his report very particularly in connection with the testimony of God, as I hope to show when we come to that point. In Luke there is peculiar distinctness in noticing the Gentiles, and their times of supremacy during the long period 'of Israel's degradation. Again, it is only in Matthew that we find direct allusion to the question of the end of the age. The reason is evident. That consummation is the grand crisis for the Jew. Matthew, writing under the Holy Ghost's direction for Israel, in view both of the consequences of their past unfaithfulness and of that future crisis, furnishes alike the momentous question and the Lord's special answer to it. This, too, is the reason why Matthew opens out what we do not find in either Mark or Luke, at least in this connection. We have here very comprehensively the Christian part, as it appears to me (i.e., what belongs to the disciples, viewed as professing Christ's name when Israel rejected Him). This suits Matthew's view of the prophecy; and the reason is plain. Matthew shows us not only the consequences of the rejection of the Messiah to Israel, but the change of dispensation, or what would follow on their fatal opposition to One who was their King, yea, not only Messiah, but Jehovah. The consequences were to be, could not but be, all-important; and the Spirit here records this portion of the Lord's prophecy most appropriately to His purpose by Matthew. Would not God turn the Jewish rejection of that glorious Person to some wondrous and suitable account? Accordingly this is what we find here. The order, though different from that which obtains elsewhere, is regulated by perfect wisdom. First of all, the Jews are taken up, or the disciples as representing them, where they then were. They had not got beyond their old thoughts of the temple, those buildings that had excited their admiration and awe.

## Notes on Matthew 25:1-12

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“The kingdom of the heavens” supposes the King, not on earth but in heaven. It did not commence till He was rejected on earth and received up in glory. The third heaven is the very highest blessedness a creature can enter—paradise. We get it three times in the N.T. First (Luke 23:43), a redeemed soul in the disembodied state is received there after the Savior's death; second (2 Cor. 12:2-4), a living saint is taken up to paradise (whether in the body, or out of the body, the apostle could not tell). And we ought to be very thankful for this revelation, as there are many now who deny eternal judgment, and ridicule the idea of any consciousness out of the body. If this were true, how could Paul say, “whether in the body, or out of the body” he knew not? Thirdly, there is another mention of it when we are glorified. “To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7) —our eternal home.

You do not get the bride, named here, but the Bridegroom; it is a parable to show us the necessity of being ready, and of having the possession of oil in our vessels. The portion of this discourse that pertains to the children of God between Pentecost and the coming of the Lord, commences at verse 45 of the previous chapter, and is carried down to verse 31 of this chapter, where it begins a new section. So you get in this Olivet discourse, first, the Jews; then, what God is doing at the present time; and finally, the Gentiles after the church is no longer here.

This then is what the kingdom of heaven (ver. 1) can be likened unto. “Then (at that time) shall the kingdom of the heavens be likened unto ten virgins,” etc. That this is the correct interpretation is confirmed by the fact that though in ver. 13 the words “wherein the Son of man cometh” are found in our A.V. they have really no right there, and in this omission all Editors agree, including our Revised Version. “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour.” One can readily see the temptation for a copyist to insert what he imagined was required to complete the sentence, as in verse 44 of the preceding section.

In these verses (1-13), we have true and false profession—virgins who went in to the marriage, and virgins shut out from it. This could not be said of the bride. For all who form the bride will enter within with the Bridegroom. The five wise, or prudent, virgins here represent those who elsewhere do form the bride. The lamp is profession. If a man professes to be a Christian he is supposed to have light. In Phil. 2:15 it is not lamps, but heavenly luminaries. In Luke 12:35 we get the girdle and the lamp. The oil is the Holy Spirit. It is quite a different thought in Luke to what it is here. You cannot associate a wedding feast with a court of judgment. The thought of a judge is one of terror, and trembling would be connected with it; a wedding is a joyous season. In the “virgins” you get the thought of purity, “I have espoused you... to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ,” said the apostle; and in Rev. 14 those are called “virgins” who are not defiled with the corrupt systems of the world. So these are professed Christians who go forth to meet the coming Bridegroom. He has been the coming Bridegroom from the very first “If I go away, I will, come again, and receive you unto myself.” So it has always been presented as a present, and not a deferred hope. A deferred hope in the heart has a disastrous effect on the soul. Even if aged we ought to remember that the

Lord is near, and may be here before we have finished our journey. This could not be “the remnant” going, or coming, forth to meet the Bridegroom, for they have to stay in the land till He comes; but the Christian has to go forth. So they go forth to meet the Bridegroom, the Coming One. He was the coming One in the O.T. You get both comings in the O.T., His coming to suffer, and His coming to reign, but you could not there get His coming as the Bridegroom. That was a mystery not revealed till Ephesians. We get foreshadowings in the O.T., even of God's present ways with His own. For instance, Enoch taken away without dying before the judgment which fell in Noah's days, when a remnant is carried through the judgment for the peopling of a renovated earth. Then again, what more striking than Rebekah conducted through the desert to the land of Canaan by Eliezer the trusted servant of his master Abraham, to be united to Isaac raised (in figure) from the dead. Is not this the Holy Ghost's leading of a people now, through the wilderness for Christ the heavenly Bridegroom?

Of the ten virgins, five were wise, prudent, and five were foolish. Now what do we gather from the word “prudent” as distinguished from foolish? The prudent foreseeth the evil and hideth himself; the simple pass on and are punished. He makes provision and hides himself; and in Luke 16 we find the unfaithful steward acted “prudently.” One must not think his evil conduct is approved by the Lord. It was his earthly master who approved his foresight in providing for the future. “And I say unto you,” Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when they fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations. That is, what is committed to you, use with an eye to the future. This is the lesson for us. An old writer says to a Christian possessed with wealth, “The Lord is loath for you to use your wealth, He wants you to put it into safe keeping, and there is none so safe as His.” The wise virgins are prepared for the future—for the coming of the Lord; the foolish are not prepared. These take their lamps and their wicks. It is a night scene, the wick is lit, but it does not last long—only human energy, not the sustained power of the Holy Spirit. Oil is a well known type of the office of the Holy Spirit. It was used in the consecration of the priest, and we find it referred to in Psalms 133, “The wise took oil,” it was not merely profession, but the Holy Spirit the power for testimony. He it is by whom we are anointed.

While the Bridegroom tarried they all grew heavy, or nodded, or were drowsy. It was not a sudden but a gradual thing. “He will not tarry.” Directly the company forming the church is completed, He will not tarry. The building is not yet complete. God is still calling out those who will form that temple, but when the last stone is added there will be no God-sent messenger telling out the gospel of His grace as now. Now He tarries; both expressions are right in their proper place. When both the tabernacle and the temple were complete God took possession. I judge this is what is referred to in the address to the first of the seven churches in Rev. 2 There was a lot in Ephesus to commend; one could wish the church now was like it in much. Yet, “I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love.” If first love is lost there is not the longing for the coming Bridegroom, there is not in the heart the blessed hope of seeing Him. If you take church history, you find the hope of the Lord's coming was soon given up. Right through there was the thought of His coming in judgment, but that is not the hope of the church. It is only of comparatively late years that this hope has been revived. Then they get into sleeping places; and the different ecclesiastical systems are sleeping places for the church.

These virgins took their lamps for the honor of the Bridegroom. When the cry went forth they all arose, it produced activity. And I suppose there has been immense activity since that cry went

forth say eighty years ago. It has gone forth; and so nearly every Christian knows something of the coming of the Lord.

The hope of the Lord's coming was soon given up, not only by the false but by the true Christian. We get not only the false professor but also those who have the Holy Ghost, for there are things that may be common to both. All carried the lamp of profession, all went out to meet the coming Bridegroom, all got drowsy, all fell asleep, and they have to be called out of their sleeping places the second time. It is a comforting and a sanctifying hope. "Everyone that hath this hope on Him purifieth himself even as He is pure," and though it is not definitely stated, I do not think we can make much mistake about it, that though there was so much to commend in Ephesus, the most beautiful order and work and care for the Lord's honor, "Nevertheless, I have against thee," —not "somewhat," as though it was something small for it was a very solemn thing— "that thou hast left thy first love." If that is gone the hope of the Lord's coming is gone too. "Ye have need of patience," that is what we need, to patiently wait for the Lord, "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come and will not tarry." His last word was, "Surely, I come quickly," there is no mistake about it. And the right attitude for saints in the interval through all time is "to wait for His Son from heaven."

Of course this is very searching. They might be all attired alike, and they all had lamps which speak of profession, but the foolish lacked the great essential, the Holy Spirit. There are various symbols which speak of the action of the Holy Spirit. In Exodus the oil for the light would signify the power for testimony. Then the Lord speaks of the wind, and a dove is used, and fire, and living water. If it is water alone it is the word, but where it is living water it is invariably the Holy Spirit and is so explained in John 7. So there are a great number of symbols. I suppose there was the need be, for these to be called out again, an act of grace to those who were asleep. "Behold the Bridegroom!" the Coming One. They had started out to meet Him at the first. This midnight cry has gone forth. It was lost through the centuries until the last century, but it has gone throughout the world and it has produced activity, not only among true saints. It is a common expression, 'Oh, do you see the coming of the Lord.' A person may be able to discourse of these things, but have we the Holy Spirit? "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." —there is no real union with Christ.

It is not faith that joins to the Lord, as often stated, nor is it life, but the Holy Spirit. "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." The disciples had faith, and they had life, but there is no union with the Lord in incarnation. It is in resurrection. "Being by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this." All those who have the Holy Spirit are members of Christ, and of one another. Of course I quite grant that this is not brought out in the verses we are considering, but what is here shown is the absolute necessity of having the Holy Spirit in order to be "ready." It is not were they expecting the Bridegroom, but had they the oil? It is not a question of intelligence. We love Him because He first loved us. And John's First Epistle shows us that the babes had an unction from the Holy One. If they have, we know also that the young men and the fathers have. But we must not confound the new birth with the gift of the Holy Spirit. By the word and the Spirit we are born again, but subsequent to this I get also the Holy Spirit given to me. The disciples who could not be "joined to the Lord" in incarnation, were nevertheless born again; so were the O.T. saints; "but the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

Verse 7. There was this activity produced; they arose and trimmed their lamps, a getting ready for the coming bridegroom. It is not the collective thought of the bride, as in Rev. 22, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come," but the individual condition of soul, either with, or without, the Spirit. It is subsequent to believing, that we are sealed, but the time between being born and the sealing varies. God does not act in precisely the same way with all. For instance, Philip went down to Samaria and there were a great many conversions, and great joy in that city; yet they had not received the Holy Spirit. Simon Magus also "believed," but he never received the Holy Spirit.

There was great animosity between the Jews and Samaritans, and if these last had received the Holy Spirit independently of the Jews, we can see there might have been rivalry and division in the church from the first. They did not receive the Holy Spirit until the apostles went down. Then they became part of the church and not till then.

Take again Cornelius. Is it possible for a man in his sins to have his prayers and alms come up before God as a memorial? Not so. Yet Cornelius had to "hear words whereby he should be saved." It was an unique company. As Peter the prepared vessel gave the message, they believed, and the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word, and this before they were baptized. We must not confound salvation with divine life. When the soul has life, it needs deliverance. There was a work of grace in the experience of the one in Rom. 7. When there is a work of grace in the soul there is trouble about sin, and because of the two natures which the believer has, there is indeed the desire to do the good, but no power. For this the Holy Spirit is needed. Rom. 7 is not Christian experience properly so called, but the exercises of a truly "converted" soul not yet delivered. Rom. 8 is Christian experience, for there is now freedom from the law of sin and death, and the power of the indwelling Spirit. Directly a soul is born of God that soul is sanctified, set apart, and safe. If you take the type in Ex. 12 you see the children of Israel quite safe under the blood seen by God; but not a word about "salvation" till chap. 14, where, in verse 13 mention is made for the first time.

Verse 9. The wise cannot give of their oil. We cannot impart the Spirit to another. God alone can give the Spirit. Sometimes He gave it without any human instrumentality, but at other times He used the apostles by the laying on of hands; but we do not find it given by anyone after the days of the apostles.

In Acts 19 we find twelve "disciples" at Ephesus who had profited by the testimony of John the Baptist, but had not yet heard that the Holy Ghost was now here. We must not confound the two—the new birth or being quickened by the Holy Spirit, with the gift of the Holy Spirit. There is always an interval between the two, however short it might be in some cases; but none born again will pass off this scene before receiving the gift. Baptism always, in the scriptures, is at the beginning of the Christian course, but I do not think it has the same importance now as in the early chapters of the Acts. If you take the commission to the disciples in Matt. 28, or in Mark 16, you find baptism in both, but when Paul received his commission (Acts 26:17, 18), there is not' a word about baptism. Paul said, "Christ sent me not to baptize," though He did baptize; but it was not part of his commission. No one preached repentance more than the apostle Paul. Take Acts 17 "The times of this ignorance God winked at," He never winks at sin, but He did at ignorance, "but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." You cannot have anything stronger than that. Baptism is unto the death of Christ. The necessity some attach to it as giving life is foreign to

Scripture. It is always unto death. You get death and resurrection in the Red Sea, and there you get them baptized unto Moses. Christian baptism is outwardly putting on Christ.

It is God alone Who can give the Holy Spirit, and the way He sells, if one may so speak, is “without money and without price.” It is no question of merit but of receiving, and the one who receives God's testimony to the work of Christ receives the Holy Spirit. It is spoken of as “the gospel of your salvation”; it brings in resurrection. The dying thief was born again, there was repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, but he did not belong to this dispensation, and does not form part of the church therefore, but he got as good a title to glory as any saint who ever lived, Abraham, or the apostle Paul himself, for the title is the blood. Those in the glory we hear sing, “Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed to God by Thy blood.” If God in His sovereignty, leaves us here for a while and gives us grace to live to His praise, we must not mix this up with title; for the title of every believer is the precious blood of Jesus Christ alone. And the way the dying thief was saved is the way everyone is saved—all of mercy, all of pure grace, and this excludes the thought of merit.

Verse 10. All indwelt by the Holy Spirit will be “ready,” and all go in no matter what a person's service, or intelligence. If they have not the Holy Spirit they will not go in. It is a searching word. A soul resting on the value of the blood, is the one whom God seals with the Spirit. If you are full of yourself and your own importance, you will never be filled with the Spirit. If a tumbler is half filled with water you cannot fill it with oil, without getting rid of the water, though you may fill it up with oil. If we are filled with the Spirit we are emptied of ourselves. A Christian may not always be “filled with the Spirit,” though sealed. John the Baptist was filled from his birth though that was exceptional. If a soul is full of the Spirit he will not think of himself. Stephen was “full of the Holy Ghost,” and he was occupied with Christ. In every case the thought in buying is making one's own, not the thought of the price paid. If God gives it me is mine as much as if I paid for it.

Verses 11, 12. There had never been any personal dealings between the Lord and these foolish virgins. He will never tell a poor sinner who has come to Him, “I never knew you.” There is a moment coming when the door will be, shut; and it will never be opened again. Those outside will have sinned away their opportunities. God's house will be filled, there will be no vacant, seat. Verse 11 is not presented as in Luke, where those outside seem surprised, saying, “We have eaten and drunk in thy presence and thou hast taught in our streets.” There it is a class of people resting on their privileges. It is possible to share in all the privileges of the assembly, except life, as in Heb. 6; and without divine life the soul is lost. If one has life, he cannot be lost. “I give unto my sheep eternal life and they shall never perish.” In Luke 13:25-27 is surprise; but here, in Matthew, the cry of despair. Not everyone who uses the expression “Lord, Lord,” shall enter in. One who is right with God will exalt Christ, and his ministry will partake of that which owns His Lordship. “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” God reads the heart and He knows if you believe; if you do, you are righteous before Him, and “confession is made to salvation.”

## Notes on Matthew 25:14-30

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In this section of this discourse beginning, as we have already observed, at verse 45 of the previous chapter, it is very noticeable that there is nothing about Jerusalem or Judea. I mention this because it confirms what has been said about it, that it takes up with the Christian during the Lord's absence, whilst later in verse 31 we have before us "all the nations," and their treatment of the Gentiles—Jewish messengers of the gospel of the kingdom after this present period has run its course. I refer to the reception accorded to those who are here called His "brethren." Their gospel would be in connection with God as Creator and Judge, and those that fear God are manifested in their treatment of the messengers.

There are two Old Testament scriptures that bring this before us very definitely. In Israel's tribulation in Egypt, the two mid-wives feared God, and regarded not the king's edict. So in Ahab's time, during the tribulation of the three and half years' drought, Obadiah feared God exceedingly and fed the prophets of Jehovah by fifty in a cave.

Well, coming back to our subject, we have in these verses (14-30), those left in responsibility during the Lord's absence; and the One who is sovereign and infinitely wise, gives to one five, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his several ability; and straightway takes his journey. The servants were responsible to make a right use of what was committed to them. The one that had five trafficked with them and made double; and the one that had two did the same. They knew their Master, they knew His love and His goodness; the one that so terribly failed did not know Him, but misjudged Him. Love is the motive power. There are contrasts between this and Luke 19. It is wonderful the blessing here presented, to which they are introduced, not only kingdom rule, but "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." It is more the sovereignty of God which comes out in our Gospel. The Lord knows what to commit and it is according to one's several ability, for we are not all alike as to this—to each one. Intelligence here is supposed, if they have proper knowledge of their Master and of His character. We are besought in Romans 12 "by the mercies of God" —grace is so different to law—to present our bodies, a living sacrifice, etc. Nothing short of this is becoming for us, but then if we know the love of Christ, His love constrains us to live, not to ourselves, but to Him. It is a poor thing to be aiming at rewards. They are given as encouragements, but not as a motive. The motive should be the love of Christ. Love only wants opportunity to serve. I suppose "the mercies" are what are found in the epistle, up to the end of the 8th chapter. But in view also of the wonderful wisdom, and ways of God as brought out in chap. 9-11. Wondrous mercies indeed! When we think of the fearful immoral state of the Gentiles in chap. 1, and then where we by grace are now brought, what a paramount call to us to present our bodies a living sacrifice!

With these servants it was the one who had the least responsibility that failed. Has not this a voice for us? There is a greater temptation to be lax when one has little, than when one has much! This one who had the one talent and did not know his master evidently was a lost soul, shut out from all blessedness. Then what is this one talent? How can one have a talent from God do you say and

yet be lost? For John 10 is so clear and speaks of our security most blessedly. But if the talent is light, that may be possessed by one without life, as we see from Heb. 6 It is possible for one to share in all the outward privileges of even the assembly, and yet—not having life—be lost! Here they are “servants,” but not every one who is a servant has “life.” Had Judas life? It shows how far a person may go in service when they can say, “In Thy Name we have cast out demons, and in Thy Name have done many wonderful works,” but what says the Master? “I never knew you!” They had not apostatized. He never knew them. That verse in Hebrews refers to the apostolic age, because it speaks of the “powers of the age to come.” What the Lord did in works of mercy, these are samples of what He will do in the millennium. In the plenitude of His grace He healed them all, and do we not sing-

“He'll give these bodies vile,

A fashion like His own;

He'll bid the whole creation smile,

And hush its groan.”

Those who try to prove from Heb. 6 that a Christian can be lost, fail to understand the passage rightly, because it is impossible for the one there to be renewed; so this upsets their theory entirely. It contemplates the case of a Jew being baptized, etc., and then going back to Judaism.

We should never think ourselves “good and faithful.” The Lord has told us what to think of ourselves in Luke 17. How many times shall I forgive my brother? That is the point. It is an awful thing to stumble one of the Lord's little ones. So, “take heed to yourselves. If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.” The apostles saw that that presented a very great difficulty, to persevere in that course. So they said unto the Lord, “Increase our faith,” the Lord said, “If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this Sycamore tree, be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you.” That is, whatever difficulty stands in our way of doing it will be removed if there is faith; but if one does so the Lord warns us from thinking of ourselves as anything but “unprofitable servants.” If we have done everything, we are to say it! But then we want the Lord's “Well done.” Not he who commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

In verse 21 there is something more than ruling in the kingdom, what is special, and blessed indeed. 'The one with the two talents was faithful too. It is only a little we can do “over a few things.” “I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” We are going to reign with the Lord Jesus, when the reigning day comes. But as to the special place and portion, we have to wait and see. There are some that have been told beforehand. “Ye which have followed me.... shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” James and John wanted the best place; so did Jonathan in David's days. Poor Jonathan! Yet he did not continue with David. He commenced well indeed, but he went back to the city.

Some Christians have said to me, “There are many things I would like to remember; what are the things behind that we are called to forget?” I think a safe rule is to remember the things that would

humble us, and let us forget the things that would puff us up. The difference between the Corinthians and the Hebrews was, that while both were babes the Corinthians were never anything else. The Hebrews, however, had progressed while their leaders were living, but had gone back after their decease, and had become like those that had need of milk; the sad result of bad doctrine through Judaizing teachers.

All our privileges are connected with the Holy Spirit. And there is distinct teaching about the Holy Spirit in every chapter in Ephesians. The Colossians were in danger of losing “the Head,” so they needed to be instructed as to the Christ, and there is only one reference to the Holy Spirit, in the epistle, and that is in chap. 1. In the epistle to the Ephesians, it is what the body is to the Head, the complement of Him that filleth all in all; but in Colossians, what the Head is to the body— “In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in Him.” That is the difference. We may see the philosophy warned against in this epistle all around us to-day, The one way as seen in Ritualism, another in Seventh-day Adventism, etc. It is a great mercy that, in the wisdom of God, the germs of all these errors were permitted to show themselves before the apostles passed off the scene, that so we might have the revelation of God's mind about them.

Verses 24-30. Out of his own mouth the wicked and slothful servant was condemned. Then you get the principle of verse 29. In Luke 8:18, it is “that which he seemeth to have” “Cast the useless (or unprofitable) bondman into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.” We don't want to tone that down at all. It is the case of a lost soul, and one eternally lost. There is no one who speaks so definitely, so faithfully, about the eternal state of the wicked as the Lord Himself. Mark 9:48, is very solemn and incontrovertible, and he who denies their import denies the word of Him who is the Truth. Reject it you may, but the truth remains. “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” “Their worm” is the conscience of each individual. Man acquired a conscience by the fall, and man will have it forever—it will never die. The so-called “larger hope” is a fiction—a delusion and lie of Satan. So also is “annihilation.” Cremation with the intent to avoid resurrection is the sin of limiting the Holy one of Israel. The God who created man will raise men in the bodies in which they sinned. The Lord said, in John 13, “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.” And if a man dies in his sins, he is raised in his sins, and is judged in his sins, not to decide whether he is saved or lost for that is decided here, but to apportion the just punishment to each — to some many stripes to others few; and if a man is judged, in his sins, he is cast into hell in his sins, into that place which, as the close of this chapter tells us, was “prepared for the devil and his angels.” Contrast that with “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!” There is no alternative between the two.

Now we enter in verse 31, on the concluding section of the discourse. What forms the Christian part ends here. In chap. 24:30 we read, “They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory,” and this verse, when the Son of man shall come in His glory, links up with it. We see that those that are found openly in rebellion will be cut off, as by a flash of lightning, and they will be raised again to appear before the “great white throne.” But there is more than that. This is sessional. When He sits upon the throne of His glory, His earthly throne, all the nations will be gathered before Him. Now He is sitting on the Father's throne in heaven. As the Son of man who died and rose again, He will sit on His own throne. In Rev. 3:21, where the Lord is the speaker, it says, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne.” No creature can sit on the

Father's throne. He only who is Jehovah's fellow. When He comes from heaven we shall come with Him; all the O.T. Saints as well as the church forming the armies of heaven, Enoch prophesied of this. He was in the secret of the flood as well as of the still future judgment. There is often an anticipatory partial fulfillment of prophecy. Enoch called his son's name Methuselah, which means, "He dies, and it is sent." Accordingly at his death came the flood.

When the Lord comes, His attendants are sometimes spoken of as the saints, sometimes the, angels, sometimes both. It is here the judgment: of the living nations on the earth. In Acts 10:42, the Lord is called the "judge of living and dead"; here He is seen judging, "the living"; 1000 years later He will judge "the dead," at the end of the millennium. We have the same expression in 2 Tim. 4:1, and 1 Peter 4:5 tells us He "is ready to judge the living and the dead." In what sense ready? If a judge has a prisoner before him, evidence is given on both sides, and he has to weigh that evidence before giving judgment. There is nothing like that with the Lord. He knows everything perfectly, He reads the secrets of the heart, and hence He "is ready" to judge the living and the dead.

As we all know, the Lord Jesus is not yet sitting on His own throne, for it is not yet set upon the earth. Jehovah has said to Him, "Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy, footstool" and as we remarked last week, the Lord says to the Overcomer in Laodicea (Revelation 3:21), "To him that overcometh, will I give to, sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne." Now it is clear that the throne which we, as Christians, have to do with now, is the "throne of grace"; but here it is a throne of judgment, and all judgment is committed to the Lord Jesus. Paul told the Athenians that God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead," and, perhaps one of the most definite scriptures to give us light on it is John 5 "The Father judgeth no man" (ver. 22). The Father is a relationship of grace, and where the Father and the Son are spoken of, it is in the activities of grace. "And hath given him authority to execute judgment also because he is the Son of man" (ver. 27). Here he comes as such. Dan. 7 first presents Him there.

Perhaps no scripture has been more perverted than this closing section of Matt. 25 for it has been spoken of as the last or general judgment! This is a scene on the earth. You do not get nations in heaven. When the wicked dead are judged it is after the earth and heaven have passed away (Rev. 20:11-15). This in Matthew is the judgment of the living.

This will not be when He comes for the church; not as Son of man does He come for her, He comes as Lord. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout," etc. Subsequently He comes in His glory. He will not come to the earth when He comes for His saints. We shall meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17) then subsequently we shall come with Him. "When Christ Who is our life shall appear then shall we also appear with Him in glory." Here He is seen accompanied by His holy angels. Enoch prophesied of His coming with ten thousands of his saints" but; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 gives us both comings. Then will be fulfilled that word in John where the Lord says that the glory given Him He has given to the saints.... "and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." The witness of this will be our being seen with Him.

Of course all this is not before us here, but in the other scriptures I have quoted, it is quite plain. In Rev. 19 it is the armies in heaven that accompany the Lord. The Old Testament saints and the church are not there distinguished as they are in the early part of the chapter. The armies take in all the saints up to their glorious appearing.

The wicked living are dealt with; and later, at the end of the thousand years reign, the wicked dead are raised and judged at the great white throne. What we have in Matt. 25 is a sessional, not a summary and final judgment. You get summary judgments in the O.T. as seen in the flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha. Those who then perished will be raised again, and so also those slain when the Lord is revealed in flaming fire.

Well then here the Lord Jesus sits on the throne of His glory—a contrast to the flash of the lightning when He comes as in chap. 24. This is an exact discriminating judgment, some placed on His right hand, others on His left. The righteous are spoken of as “sheep,” the unrighteous as, “goats.” We do not get everything in one scripture. To understand this we must turn to other scriptures, but this very Gospel of Matthew shows us that a gospel will have to be preached—not the gospel of “the grace of God,” or the gospel of the “glory of the happy God” —but the “gospel of the kingdom.” The messengers who preach it will be the Jews. Just what characterizes them shows them to be the very ones to take this gospel all over the world in the least possible time. So you get three parties here, the Jews, the Gentiles, and those who preached this gospel. Some there are who think that this gospel of the kingdom is the same as that which is being proclaimed now. But the Lord announces in His commission to the twelve, “ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel until the Son of man be come.”

If we do not discern that there is a break, a timeless, dateless gap, many O.T. scriptures would still appear mysterious to us; for we often find these gaps. There is one, as familiar to us as any, in Luke 4 When the Lord came to Nazareth after His anointing and His temptation, He stood up to read, and turned to Isaiah 66. When He came to the words “to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,” He stopped at a comma, and did not finish the sentence. Had He read further He could not have said, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears,” for the day of vengeance was still future. As far as He read, it was all grace, and told of his gracious ministry. Just that comma represents all the present period up to the time of His coming to deal in judgment. The scripture above shows there will be those on the earth after the church is gone who will be in a very similar position to the disciples gathered round the Lord at His first coming as seen in this chapter. They were the remnant then, and there will be a testifying remnant after the church is gone. Then again the Lord is spoken of as King here. He is never spoken of as King of the church. He is “King of glory,” and there is the expression, “King of saints,” but that should be, as we have before remarked, “King of nations;” and He is “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” He is Head of the body. Where the distinctive place of the church is given in Ephesians, He is “head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness,” or complement—that which makes the thing complete—of him that filleth all in all.” It is very precious to see the wondrous place of blessedness of those saved now between Pentecost and the rapture.

So He will address those on His right hand, “Come ye blessed of my Father.” The Lord Jesus spoke of “the Father,” and “my Father”; and after His resurrection (He had said in John 17 “I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it”) He sends the message, “I ascend (not, “to our”)

to my Father, and your Father.” There is a very pointed guard there. So they are blessed of His Father here. Not a word of any being raised, not a syllable. It is exclusively of living men on the earth. Whereas at the great white throne there are no living men who had not died, but the dead now raised for their final doom—raised in the very bodies in which on earth they sinned, now to hear the sentence of eternal banishment from His presence.

Those spoken of here need to be instructed, and we cannot imagine that when we are in glorified bodies, and we know as we are known, that we shall need instructions as these do here. The church is not the subject of “times and seasons,” but in God's ways fills up the interlude, as already pointed out being chosen in Christ before, the foundation of the world. The Lord's reign will be over the earth, and those blessed here will be living men on the earth who enter into millennial blessedness. They will not be in changed bodies or raised men. There will be some who have lived at the same time as these but who will have a place of blessing in advance of these, such as the Apocalyptic martyrs. Therefore, “blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth,” for it will be better to have past in the heavenly department. All who have part in the first resurrection will have part in the coming kingdom.

Those judged here will be dealt with according to the way they dealt with the messengers. You get an illustration in the O.T. which may help us to understand this. Jacob's time of trouble was fore-shadowed in the trials they had in Egypt, and when Pharaoh sought to destroy all the male children; but Shiphrah and Puah “feared God and saved the men children alive.” God remembered that and built them houses. Then again in Ahab's time when the heavens were shut up 3 1/2 years(which in itself would point us to the last half week. Obadiah feared the Lord greatly and showed it by hiding His prophets. The “everlasting gospel” will be “Fear God, and give glory to Him,” and I take it those here who are kind to the messengers do fear God, and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but the others have no fear of God before their eyes. The righteous are blessed of His Father. The others are cursed, but it does not say “of His Father.” The Father is always in connection with grace. These had themselves decided their own doom. It is a very solemn scripture.

(To be continued).

## Notes on Matthew 26:1-13

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We have before had occasion to remark that it is the Lord Jesus Himself who gives us the most solemn statements as to the eternal doom of the wicked. It is settled here for eternity. The beast and the false prophet are both taken red handed, and forthwith cast alive into the "lake of fire." A thousand years after, the devil also is cast in where they are. But there are others too. Turn to Isaiah 30:30-33. The Assyrian is the king of the North who has a very large place in Isaiah and Daniel. Verse 33, which should read, "for the king also it is prepared," shows us that he too will be there as well as the beast and the false prophet. They will share the same fate. No doubt the conduct of the sheep was governed by the effect the testimony had on them. The millennial earth will be a very blessed place. First of all, the Lord will deliver creation, there will be universal peace, and the Lord will purge out of His kingdom all that do iniquity. The earth will yield her increase worthily of His reign, and there will be such tremendous plenty that even the poor, neglected, ass will eat clean provender that has been winnowed with the hand. This gives us an idea of what it will be like. Oh, there is a good time coming! But there is only One who can put all things right, and He is called "the desire of all nations." It will be a blessed time for those living then, but we who believe shall have a better place; we shall reign with Him, these will be reigned over.

It will be a reign of righteousness. "The child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed." Some may think this a very difficult scripture: but if a man's life now is reckoned at seventy years, a tenth of this would be seven, and a tenth of man's then life of a thousand years would be one hundred; as seven years now, so would one hundred years then, represent but the age of a child. Any rebellion or covert sin will be dealt with instantly. But though, no doubt, they will know what has gone before, yet if there be no work of grace in their souls, they will be as ready to fall at the end of the millennium as Adam was in Eden. There must be repentance and faith towards God, if man is to be right in his soul, and kept of God.

In our authorized version of 25:46 it might look as if there were two Greek words for the two English words "everlasting" and "eternal"; but it is one and the same word. Whether "life" or "punishment" they are alike "everlasting." Life in the millennium is predicated as "life for evermore" (Psalms 133), or "everlasting life" (Daniel 12:2). Believers now have eternal life and besides, we are waiting for it. Daniel 12 speaks of a national resurrection of Daniel's people, now asleep in the dust of the earth, i.e., lost, but they among the Gentiles shall awake (compare Ezekiel 37) "some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Ezekiel 37 takes in the whole twelve tribes.

The ten tribes will not go through the great tribulation in the land. God will bring these now lost to human vision—into the wilderness, and purge out all the rebels among them, for none of the rebels will go into the land. I apprehend that those who shall enter will have life in their souls. The remnant of Judah who returned in the days of Ezra from Babylon were once more in the land for the presentation to them of the Messiah, but they rejected Him and would not have His reign, and this accounts for their present scattering and ultimate going through the great tribulation. We have

a remarkable illustration of this in Joseph and his brethren. Why did he give them such exercise before revealing himself to them? Because he loved them. And the way Judah pleads for Benjamin foreshadows the work that will be wrought in the soul of the future remnant at the end. I see the Spirit of grace and supplication. So it will be with many in Israel by and by. When the veil is taken away they will look on Him whom they pierced, and He will take away out of their flesh the stony heart that said, "Away with him," and will give them a heart of flesh. Then will they take up the still prophetic language of Isaiah 53, confessing their guilt.

The Lord has not kept back anything. As He drew near the end of His public ministry the hatred of the religious leaders increased, and we get the Lord denouncing these religious leaders. If we turn to Psalms 40, we find He kept back nothing. He declared God's faithfulness and His righteousness, and He also declared what He would do at the time of the end, and how He will have His own kingdom here, and purge out of it all that offend.

So when He had finished all these sayings He said unto His disciples, "Ye know that after ten days is the feast of the passover and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified" (vers. 1, 2). There He definitely discloses when His death would take place. These religious leaders did not want it to occur then when Jerusalem was full of people, for they were under the Roman yoke and they would have to answer for it if there was any uproar among the people then. But Judas came forward, and they could not let that opportunity pass. Yet on the surface there appears a difficulty here. But it is only on the surface: if we knew all we should see that there is never any real difficulty. There are those who think the Lord did not partake of the passover when the Jews did and some try to get over it by quoting the marginal reading of Exodus 12:6. "Thou shalt kill it between the two evenings," as though they were at liberty to do it any time of the twenty four hours. But if we turn to Exodus 29:38, 39, we find the same expression there. The day commenced in the evening, and the evening that closed one day was continued by the evening that began the next. So in verse 8 of the next chapter we find the same expression where it cannot mean that the one evening was twenty four hours after the other. There is a feast which continues twenty four hours. In Leviticus 23:27-32 we find it put in quite another way, yet still meaning the whole twenty four hours. Now turn to Deuteronomy 16:2. The words "of the herd" throw no little light. Not only was the lamb to be eaten, but also the free-will offerings. This helps us to understand some things that seem a difficulty. Verse 4 reads "Neither shall there anything of the flesh which thou sacrificest the first day at even remain all night until the morning." If it might be divided between twenty four hours that would be very peculiar, but go on to ver. 6, "Thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou earnest forth out of Egypt" Thus it had to be offered as a sacrifice, and the Lamb must be sacrificed at the temple, and on another day they could not get it done.

But then this is what puzzles a good many, what we get in John's Gospel. In Matt. 26 the name of the woman is not given, but John 12 tells us it was Mary of Bethany who anointed the Lord. The Gospel of Matthew was written at a very early date, and no doubt Mary may have been living, and if her name had been revealed it might have exposed her to persecution. John wrote very late when, no doubt, she was no longer living and so would be beyond the power of persecution. A difficulty however arises as to the "six days" of John 12, where as in our chapter (verse 2) it is "two days." The Lord spent those closing days in the bosom of the home of Bethany. It was "six days" before the passover that He came there, and it says there they made Him a supper. It does not

say immediately He arrived, but while He was there. It is brought in there because of the truth we get in the chapter preceding; so I don't see any real difficulty.

No doubt the Lord's faithfulness intensified the animosity of the religious rulers. He was hated without cause. "Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people." Psalms 2 says: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Jehovah and against his anointed." Acts 4 shows us it is the Jew and the Gentile who are gathered together there "Imagine" in Psalms 2 is the same word as "meditate" in Psalms 1:2. So it is the leaders of the people who are here meditating to take the life of their Messiah. "But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." But the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand, and the Lord was to die at that very time. So what they had proposed as to the time was upset. But we shall get to that presently.

Verse 6. It was known as the house of Simon the leper. He was a cured leper, and it is possible, as some have thought, that he was the father of Martha and Mary, and Lazarus. It is also called Martha's house, she received the Lord into her house. We cannot be positive who this Simon was, so we say no more except that it is not the Simon who is spoken of in Luke 7. That scene is in Galilee, this in Judea. And further, the woman of Luke 7 was an immoral person, a well known sinner, but there is not a single syllable to indicate anything like that of Mary of Bethany. Again, the woman in Luke comes uninvited and was one whom Simon did not want to see; but in John 12 it is a family scene. Then the woman of Luke 7 came prepared to anoint his feet—not to wash them; but she found them soiled. The common courtesies of the East were lacking on this occasion, but she washed the Savior's feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and anointed them with ointment. With Mary, it was hers but to anoint (His head and) His feet, as love and care had already not been wanting—His feet were clean. Here at Bethany the house is filled with the odor of the ointment. Here is worship, and as we worship we should carry away the savor of it too. The unnamed woman of Luke 7 remains unnamed. She was not Mary Magdalene, out of whom seven demons had been cast, but known as a "sinner" — "her sins many."

"My head with oil thou didst not anoint" (Luke 7:46) shows us it was usual to anoint guests.

But this woman does more: she brake the box and poured it on His head. There is no stint here, but the contrary. Would that we were more after this pattern in our worship and had more to give the blessed Savior.

John lets us know who it was that led in the complaint—Judas Iscariot. The others were led by him. It was not that he cared for the poor, but he carried the bag and was a thief, and he coveted that money. What an awful thing coveteousness is! It takes the place in the heart which the Lord Jesus had a right to. The three great sins in the land were coveteousness, disobedience, and confidence, confidence in their own strength, and in their own wisdom. So you get the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold; the defeat at Ai; and then the deceit of the Gibeonites. Things seen (the lust of the eyes) are dangers to us. If we are not on our guard we want to possess them. But "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" is better than all possessions.

John furnishes in his Gospel many helps to the understanding of the Synoptists (Matthew, Mark and Luke). No man can throw light on the word of God. It gives its own light, and the wisest teacher can only tell of the light it has thrown on him.

“This waste!” (ver. 8) —insulting to the Lord, and very unbelieving of them! How could it be waste if expended on the Lord? Well, as I said just now, it was not waste even as regards Mary, for there was that wonderful commendation of the Lord. We must be receivers before we can give, and Mary was a receiver. Martha was a giver, and the Lord Jesus was her guest, but Mary was the Savior's guest. Alas, we are often content with taking in but few drops, no wonder then we can only give out a few drops; but if rivers are to flow out from us we must receive rivers. With the Lord's presence there is always abundance of provision—His presence always gives plenty.

Matthew does not tell us the valuation. There is about half a crown difference between the appraisal of Judas in John 12, and the amount received by Judas for his betrayal of the Lord. They run very close together, and it shows the power of Satan. The price according to Exodus 21 is the price of a slave; of a freeman the price was double.

The Lord does not resent their rudeness but He does take up and vindicate the woman. And it is very blessed for us, if we are misjudged, not to defend ourselves, but leave our course to Him. Mary did not say anything in self-justification when blamed by her sister in Luke 11. The Lord commended her then. He loved Martha, but He commended Mary. She was the possessor of the good part which should not be taken away from her. Mary is content to be silent and the Lord defends her and does it better than we ever can. We see then, how, as always, love waits on opportunity. Here was one, and love seizes it. He was despised and rejected of men, but here was a heart that appreciated Him. She was eloquently telling out that verse in Song of Solomon “Thy Name is as ointment poured forth.” What a fearful thing to put anything in competition with the Lord!

The Holy Ghost tells us she “poured” the ointment, which speaks of profusion. Those who at his death prepared to do him honor and went to the sepulcher were too late. He was risen before they arrived.

Verse 13, stands out quite unique. We do not find the Lord using similar language of any other. I do not think we could limit this gospel to any character of glad tidings, for Matthew will prove very helpful to the remnant. We know they will be acquainted with this, so therefore this will go on to the time of the end.

## Notes on Matthew 26:14-29

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Judas had been disappointed in the three hundred pence lavished on the Lord, and he, covenanted with the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver—less than half the value of the ointment, and only the price of a slave. The time was come for the Lord to be crucified, but these chief priests and elders had decided not to apprehend Him on the feast, because they feared a tumult; yet He was delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and Judas' offer brought it about. It was an opportunity which they could not let slip.

The disciples come (ver. 17) to inquire of the Lord, where they should prepare the passover, and they were instructed to go to a certain house in the city. Here we see the authority of the Messiah "The Master saith." So His instructions were carried out, and they prepared the passover.

"And when the even was come (ver. 20), the time for eating the passover, he reclined at table with the twelve." Then the Lord tells them, "One of you shall betray me!" Exceeding sorrowful, they began to say, "Is it I Lord?"

"The Son of man goeth as it is written of him" (ver. 23). There we see it fulfilled by the will of God. Although "by the foreknowledge of God," it did not relieve Judas of his responsibility. Peter speaks of stumbling whereto they were appointed—not appointed to be disobedient, but to stumble if they were disobedient, but all is foreknown. The guilt of it rested on Judas, but "it had been good for that man if he had never been born." How appalling! Yet after hearing this Judas says, "Is it I, Rabbi?" Never once is it said that he ever called Jesus "Lord"! The others did. Jesus replies, "Thou hast said." A modest way of asseveration; we get it again in the latter part of this same chapter (ver. 64).

We were noticing before that the passover was an annual feast for an earthly people, but the supper here instituted—the Lord's supper—is for a heavenly people. And I suppose it is not too much to say that it is the most blessed privilege the saint can have this side the glory. When you think that it was the night of His betrayal

"When all around Thee joined

To cast its darkest shadow

Across Thy holy mind!"

Here we have the express desire of the Savior's heart at that time. And it is our privilege—yea, indeed, our duty—to conform to these desires; and the Holy Spirit has recorded it in permanent form that we may consider its injunction again and again.

Everything connected with Christianity is marked by simplicity. We get the institution of the supper here; the teaching about it in the Epistle to the Corinthians; and its observance in the practice of the early disciples as recorded in the Acts. They "came together" on the first day of the week—not to hear a sermon—but "to break bread" (Acts 20:7). The practice of some is to come together to

hear a sermon, and they put the Lord's supper in a corner of the service, at the end! Others give it the place of a corner at the beginning, and say it is introductory to the assembly of God, so hurry to get it over, so as to leave room for ministry, or worship. In neither case could they be said to come together to break bread. When we come together to break bread "ministry" before the supper is an intrusion; after the remembrance of the Lord, there is plenty of room, for whatever ministry the Spirit may be pleased to give. Worship and the Lord's supper is the object and character of our coming together "in assembly" on the Lord's day to remember Him, and thus it will be, I am sure, if we desire to meet the Lord's mind, and to do His will, What we specially have to note is Paul's revelation in his Epistle to the Corinthians, that he had received of the Lord that which he also had delivered to them. Thus was it not only to "the eleven," but through the apostle for us Gentiles who have believed in Christ risen from the dead and now on high. To Paul it was given direct from heaven. At its introduction it is connected with the kingdom, but Paul connects it with the Lord's coming. We may safely say that this will go on till He does come. It is marvelous that in a day of such declension it should have been recalled to us in its original simplicity. It is a dead Christ we remember, while knowing Him as alive for evermore. The first day—the very mention of the day—reminds us we are on the glory side of the Lord's resurrection. But then His death brings us there, and it is the love of the One who went there for us we specially remember. We go there to remember Him, and it touches the secret springs of our heart, and the Lord knows how to bring them out. The first day of the week is "the Lord's" day—though only once is it so designated. The same word is used of "the Lord's" day, and of "the Lord's" supper; even of the table it is different. "The day of the Lord" again is quite different, being a period of judgment. As we come along in this chapter we shall see that what opens the grave is the death of Christ, the very act that rent the veil opened the graves; but He was appointed to be the first that should rise from the dead; so the saints did not come out of the graves till after His resurrection. And I take it those mentioned are of the company of those of whom it is said, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." Christ is the firstfruits, and "the first resurrection" includes not only the O.T. saints and the church, but also the Apocalyptic martyrs. There would be no point in saying "after his resurrection," seeing that He is the firstfruits, if these saints were as Lazarus and died again. They had risen bodies. Heb. 11 speaks of those who died in faith before Christ came, and that we have something better; they will not be "made perfect" before us. These no doubt had died in recent times. They "went into the holy city, and appeared unto Mary"; they did not continue to live here again like Lazarus. This was peculiar and connected with the glory of the Lord's resurrection. The word "saint" constantly occurs in the Psalm and is represented by two words, "holy" and "gracious;" both are used.

Coming back to our chapter, let us look at particulars. It is a request. "Jesus took bread and blessed." The "it" in our version might lead people astray. It is, "he gave thanks," in another Gospel. If God blesses, He confers a benefit, and gives happiness and joy. If man blesses his fellow it means, desiring happiness for him; but if we bless God, we praise Him, we speak well of Him. It means to "laud," to "extol." So the Lord looked up, and blessed—equivalent to giving thanks. The "it" is in italics and is left out by many. Then He "break and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." How simple! How blessed! To part with this simplicity and introduce "transubstantiation" or "consubstantiation" —how very terrible! That body, pointing us to the body prepared for Him, that which was unique—for the Lord Jesus was perfectly man as well as Son of God—that body was "prepared." "Mine ears hast thou digged," is in Heb. 10, "a body

hast thou prepared me.”

So in contrast to all the human race there was a preparedness to do the will of God, and our salvation is wrapped up in that will. On that body too our sins were laid, and there was perfect willingness on the Savior's part to do God's will. He suffered the Just for the unjust. And He who knew no sin was also made sin for us. “God, sending His own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, and as a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh,” our old corrupt evil nature. He died to it; and He died for our sins. Made sin for us He bore its condemnation; hence we are to reckon ourselves “to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:2). Up to chap. 5 of that Epistle it is a question of sins; i.e., what we have done; but from verse 12 to the end of chap. 7 it is a question of sin, the root, our evil nature; and it is a wonderful help to get that clearly in the mind. “This is my body”... and “he took the cup.” It is put somewhat differently in Luke 22, and in 2 Corinthians 11. In the latter (ver. 24) the word “broken” should not be there—it is simply— “which is for you.” “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” The cup comes first in 1 Corinthians 10:16, not to guide us in partaking of it, but Godward. All hangs on that blood. How it brings before us that other cup which He drank for us! When we think of its awful contents, we see nothing short of that could have met our need.

In preaching the gospel we must bring out the value of that blood. Although the life of the Lord Jesus was throughout so God-glorifying—a life of faith and perfect obedience from beginning to end, without a failure, the Man of prayer—yet that glorifying life could not of itself, prospectively and retrospectively, effect the salvation of one single soul—he must die if any are to be saved. “He suffered for sins.” There are sufferings that are non-atoning, and sufferings that are atoning. Peter speaks of witnessing the sufferings and partaking of the glory; Paul reverses it. Jesus suffered at the hands of man for His faithfulness to God: He suffered at the hands of God for His faithfulness to us—sufferings we shall never know. That which is deepest in the cross is known only to God and to Christ. He endured more (and only a divine person could have endured it) than all the lost will endure eternally. The center of two eternities, and the greatest wonder of all eternity, the greatest glory brought to God, in all His nature and every attribute, and a salvation glorifying to God and in every particular suitable to us, was brought about by the cross. The heavens declare the glory of God, but that is not where God's highest wisdom is seen; the angels learn it through the church.

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” and here was One who did it perfectly. I take it that the name “Father” speaks of grace, and the Father's grace is seen through the whole life of the Lord Jesus. “My Father worketh hitherto and I work.” His holiness would not permit Him to rest where sin prevailed, and His grace would not let Him rest where sorrow prevailed. So the Lord Jesus was always at work doing the Father's will. Each Gospel brings out His divinity, but in John's Gospel the prominent thing is the divine side; so there He raises Himself (chap. 2). “I have power to lay it down [his life], and I have power to take it again,” a divine Person is speaking; and when He gave up the ghost He said, “It is finished” —a divine Person putting His own imprimatur on the work He had accomplished.

In Matthew it is the King rejected and the door opened to the Gentiles, and you get them here. “My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,” not only for Israel but for the Gentiles. His blood would avail for many. Here you see this new covenant is the covenant

prophesied of by Jeremiah. That covenant is not yet made, but that blood on which it will be established is here. The covenant of works in Ex. 25 told the penalty of disobedience, death; that is what that blood spoke of; this speaks of remission of sins.

Is it not marvelous how people can turn to the law! It was for man in the flesh, for man not risen with Christ, whereas the Christian is a risen man (Col. 3). The law demanded righteousness but never made one soul righteous, and all who are on that ground are under the curse. But we have died to it. The law has nothing to say to one who has resurrection-life. We know the blessedness of a ministration of righteousness, not demanding it but giving it; and a ministration of glory. The hope of righteousness is to be with Christ in glory. The Christian's rule of life is Christ, not the law. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." There is a couplet by George Herbert:

"Whoso aimeth at the sky,  
Shoots higher far than he who aims a tree."

And if our aim is Christ we press on.

So we have got the blessing of the new covenant— "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." There is going to be a people on the earth in whom that will be true. God will sprinkle clean water upon them and take away their stony heart and give them a heart of flesh, and that is when they are brought under the blessing of the new covenant. The clean water is the word. The Lord referred Nicodemus to Ezekiel 36; 37, the breath that makes the dead bones live. But we come in before that day comes; and we have this blessing of remission of sins without waiting for the confirmation of their covenant.

God has concluded all in unbelief that He might have mercy on all. The Jews are now on a common level with others as "all guilty." I do not think "to the Jew first" is applicable now, it was at the beginning.

In Jeremiah we get the bread for the mourner and the cup of consolation, so what the Lord was using here was quite familiar to them. The Lord dealt differently with them afterward. When the Holy Ghost was given the disciples were in a very different position, but it is surprising how little they took in although the Lord spoke so pointedly and simply.

## Notes on Matthew 26:30-56

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Historically, in John 18 we see the scattering, and the Lord sheltering the sheep. The hour was come for Him to be delivered up. And in the passage in Zechariah 13:7, here quoted, He is called Jehovah's fellow. When He is in humiliation, He is called Jehovah's fellow. When He is in exaltation, we are called His fellows. Of course, He has the pre-eminence in everything. When we are called His brethren, He is the Firstborn.

Then there was a time when the disciples would be left. We know the time would come when they would be put under the care of another Comforter. But now they were to be scattered. After His resurrection they were gathered together again in Galilee. And I suppose that was when the Lord was seen of above 500 brethren at once (1 Corinthians 15:6).

But how very sweet to find that there is no change in Him. If apparently they gave Him up, the Shepherd would not give them up— "I will go before you into Galilee" (ver. 32).

Then we get a practical lesson. Peter could not believe that it could ever be true of him that he would deny the Lord. He was no hypocrite, but he thought his love to the Lord was so strong it could bear any strain.

Verse 34. The Lord had said "this night" should all be offended, or stumbled. Peter goes a long way beyond, and says, "never." The offense of the cross puts us in a place of contempt. They had seen their Master escape out of the hands of His enemies, but He knew it would be too much for them to see Him given up into their hands. He knew them better than they knew themselves. There is the principle of apostasy in all sin. It is not what our love to Him is, but what His love is to us. Had not His love to Peter been infinitely more than Peter's love to Him, it would have been all over with Peter. The three in the garden here were the three who were on the mount of Transfiguration. Peter speaks of that as the "excellent glory," the "holy mount." Yet in spite of all he had seen, he fell. When, the Holy Ghost was given, it put the saints in a far greater position, and such a sin would have been a far, far greater sin.

More definitely still does the Lord speak to him (ver. 34). I think Mark 13 would help us to understand what is here. It was a certain time of the night. "This night, before the cock crow"; it marked off a time between midnight and the morning; that is what the Lord referred to. He knew all that would take place that night. Even then Peter would not bow to it through self-confidence. "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples," influenced, I take it, by Peter. He has prominence here. In ourselves we are weaker than a bruised reed, and this should give us to be characterized by self-distrust. Where there is that, there should be the greatest confidence in the Lord. No doubt Peter benefited by this experience. And we too should learn from whatever we pass through: we ought not only to get benefit to ourselves, but to pass the profit on to others. Both David and Peter fell miserably, and it is easy to see the cause in both. David says "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation"... "then will I teach transgressors thy law." His sad fall could be used for the benefit of others. So Peter, "when thou art converted

strengthen thy brethren." It is he who tells us we are "kept by the power of God."

Gethsemane was at the bottom of the mount of Olives, and the name means "Place of oil presses." Here indeed we are on holy ground! How reverent should be our minds as we contemplate this scene. The Lord says, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." He was coming to that time, marked out from all eternity, when sin was to be taken up and judged; and we see what was before His soul. It was only on the cross sins were laid upon Him, and He there made sin who knew no sin"; but in spirit He went through it here with His Father. So those three favored men—you see them marked out frequently in the Gospels— "He took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful, and very heavy." It is beyond the power of the creature to realize what that dark hour meant to Him. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful." He was a real man with a human soul; not, as some would teach, His Divinity taking the place of a soul; but a perfect man—spirit, soul, and body. It was the judgment of God about sin that was before Him in death. He said "Tarry ye here and watch." He never said "Pray for me." We must weigh the silences of Scripture. But He values their sympathy. Here is His perfection. How intensely He felt being the Sin-bearer—meeting in His holy soul what God was against sin—knowing all, weighing all, yet He came to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish the work given Him to do.

Verse 40. To the one who had said he would lay down his life for the Lord, the Lord now says, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" There was some reproach in the words. Could he not watch one hour? When we think of the Lord, always the same, never overlooking a single saint, never withdrawing His eyes from the righteous, always the same-

"Tis this that humbles us with shame"

"Watch and pray" —not for Him— "that ye enter not into temptation." There is all the difference between the Lord, tempting us and our entering into temptation. Like Abraham, if the Lord tempts us, He can sustain us to go through it for His glory; but if we enter into it, like Peter did, we fall in the same way. If we neglect prayer we are courting failure. They slept while the Lord prayed.

"The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." I can but think myself that it is the Lord's grace to put that construction on it. Man as man is likely to put the worst construction on anything; we should seek to put the best.

Verse 44. We learn an important lesson here. Three times over; but not vain repetition! In an earlier part we are told not to use vain repetitions, but the blessed Lord here uses "the same words." We may pray the same thing over and over again, and it may not be vain repetition, if our heart is in it. Ah, it was not possible! We find further on, that the two thieves proposed something that was impossible— "Save thyself and us." If He saved Himself He could not save them. He must go through it all.

Now the Lord asks those to watch with Him that short time. Do you think their eyes were heavy when the armed crowd came, and after? No; but the flesh was weak here. Had there been enough interest in the Lord's request, there would not have been this manifestation. They miss the opportunity of gratifying the Lord. And have not we often, and been made to feel it keenly? We are told to buy up the opportunity (Eph. 5:16). We cannot redeem the past. How earnest we should be to fill up every moment of every day so as to meet the Lord's mind.

“The Son of man is betrayed.” Judas comes and with him a great multitude. All is known to the Lord. Does it not seem remarkable that the One so gentle and so lowly— “His Voice not heard in the street” etc. —should be come out against, as against a ruffian, with a great armed crowd?

And let us weigh up verse 48. A kiss, the sign of peace—the token of affection—but this, the kiss of a Judas! It is only by the grace of God that we believers are what we are. We ought to be very careful when we say we are not such as he. “Hold Him fast.” It brings to mind the hymn of John Newton-

“Some call Him the Pearl of great price,  
And say He's the Fountain of joys,  
Yet feed upon folly and vice,  
And cleave to the world and its joys.  
Like Judas, the Savior they kiss,  
And while they salute Him, betray;  
Oh, what will profession like this  
Avail in His terrible day?”

Let us shun hypocrisy in every shape and form. No doubt (it looks so, at any rate) the devil had deceived Judas. He did not think they could ever hold Him fast. We have seen the Lord deliver Himself when His hour was not yet come. When Judas found He did not deliver Himself, He was shocked, and threw down the money in the temple, and went and hanged himself.

Verse 49. It is “Rabbi,” here. “He covered Him with kisses,” as if he could not express his love! Oh, how dreadful! but it shows what any one of us is capable of doing, if left to himself.

“Friend, wherefore art thou come” (ver. 50)? It would correspond to what the Lord felt as we find it expressed in Psalms 55, etc., and typified by David and Ahithophel. The Psalms reveal to us the keenness of the pain the Lord experienced. “My own familiar friend hath lifted up his heel against me.”

“Then came they and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.” You don't get everything in one part of Scripture. “He gave his back to the smiters,” or they could not have touched Him. He lived far too long to please men. Look at Nazareth. They sought to kill Him there, but they could not till their hour came. “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.”

And when they took Him, the man who could not watch one hour, and subsequently denied Him with oaths and curses, would fight for Him against the whole crowd! (ver. 51). No doubt he meant to cleave Malchus' skull, but it was permitted him to cut off his ear. There is not only a divine selection in the Gospels, but divine arrangement also; so, as Luke is the Gospel of grace, it is reserved for him to tell us that the Lord immediately healed him. Peter's name is withheld here.

“All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” we are here told (ver. 52); and it would save us much trouble if we bowed to the word of God. “Do not ye judge them that are within? But

they that are without God judgeth.” The time is coming when we shall judge the world, but now that would be going beyond our province. Besides, what seems so large in the eyes of man, when the potsherds of the earth are striving together—what is that to the important things of God's assembly?

The Lord was the unresisting One, and the one that follows Him, has His especial care. If you stand up for yourself, He will stand by: you'll not be the object of His special care then.

Verse 53. A legion in the Roman Army would run up to 6,600—the number of the largest. One angel could destroy 180,000 in one night. If it was a question of destroying, there is immense power in the Lord's word. “But how then must the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?”

“In that same hour Jesus said to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves for to take me?” There is a difference between a “thief” and a “robber.” A thief may be a mere purloiner, but a robber is a thief with violence. Such were the “two thieves” crucified with Him, and also Barabbas.

“I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” What a constant appeal we get to the scriptures, in Matthew! There are more references to the Old Testament in his Gospel than in the three others put together. It has such a Jewish bearing, and hence the amplest testimony is given by Matthew to his race.

## Notes on Matthew 26:56-75

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“Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.” If they had taken in the Lord's words as recorded in John that they were to be His witnesses, it would have dispelled this fear. They thought they were in danger of their lives, and though they had boldly said they would never deny Him, they miserably broke down. A lesson for us. When tested, unless we are in communion with Christ, we shall break down. They had been with Him three years. Peter, James and John had seen Him on the mount of Transfiguration, but in the garden! well, they failed. “Cease ye from man.” It is just God's grace alone that can keep us right, and keep us from falling. The remnant will be subjected to far greater pressure than we shall ever know, and it is in connection with this we get “he that shall endure unto the end shall be saved.” He will preserve a remnant even then.

As far as Peter was concerned, it was needed medicine for him. He has the prominent place in the record here. As far as they were concerned, they had forfeited everything. The Lord had warned them “He that shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed.”

It is one thing to be overtaken in a fault, and another to be characterized by it. To fear God, and know no other fear is what should be seen in a Christian. Of the eleven disciples, two seem to have recovered themselves somewhat—Peter and John. Peter overestimated his own courage and ability to stand. It is a dangerous thing for us to put ourselves in a place of temptation—quite another if the Lord puts us in it. He Who said to Abimelech “I also have kept thee from sinning against me” can keep us too.

“And they that had laid hold on Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas” (ver. 57). That word “led” has a very sweet place. It speaks of the Lord submitting quietly when His time came. “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter” etc. And turn to Isaiah 1. Only a Divine Person could say, “I clothe the heavens with blackness,” but the same One gave His “back to the smiters.” None could touch it, till He gave it. Luke tells us He submitted Himself to them. “This is your hour, and the power of darkness,” and Jew and Gentile, led on by the devil, could do as they list against the Son of God. But in the thing in which they acted proudly God was above them. God is behind every event. There is nothing behind God. The Scripture cannot be broken. There were depths in the cup He drank which you and I will never fathom throughout eternity.

Ver 58. I doubt not Peter intended to stand close by the Lord and take all consequences. But first we see him fail in fleeing, and again in following afar off. There is a present danger in that for the Christian. We should always be known as the Lord's, under any circumstances—going forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. Peter “sat with the servants, to see the end.” I suppose all this was very mysterious to them. They know how men had thirsted for His blood, but He had always escaped out of their hands. A remarkable verse in that way comes at the end of John 8, and we find another instance in Luke 4, “He passed through the midst of them” this last at the very commencement of His public ministry. It looks as if Judas had been deceived. He thought he could get the money and gratify his covetousness, and the Lord would show His power. In that way the devil deceived him. Here Peter was going in and sitting with the servants as if one of the

crowd, thinking that he would not be recognized; but it was the very place of danger that he took in his presumption.

Then the wickedness of these religious leaders—how it is exposed by the Spirit of God in ver. 59! It shows the wickedness of the human heart, no matter how cultured. But how impossible! “They found none.” No doubt there was the prospect of reward, and what won't man, as man, do for money! “Yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses.” It was required there should be two. Under Jewish law they must have the testimony of two to put any man to death. God laid that down, and we see the wisdom of it too. “And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days” (ver. 61). That was false. It shows how they had to go back to the very beginning of the Lord's public ministry in John 2 He said “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” They were to do the work of destruction, and He would do the restoration and resuscitation as a Divine Person. It is in John we find it. Usually it is, “God raised Him,” but you get something on the same lines in Hebrews. In chap. 1 He is Son of God; in chap. 2 Son of man. “When He had by Himself purged our sins He sat down.” His own act—not the Father's! So He said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” “But He spoke of the temple of his body.” They intimated that He had said He would destroy it. It does not agree at all.

Ver. 62. The Lord Jesus was always right. There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent. He knew the time. So with us there is a time to be silent when it is a question of ourselves. But there is a time when it would be treason to be silent—when it is a question of the glory of God.

So the high priest must have felt it would be a flimsy accusation to put Him to death on the witness of the two. It was the Lord's own confession that they condemned Him on. He put the Lord on His oath, according to Jewish law. This affords us light. We are told to “swear not at all.” For one voluntarily to use an oath is condemned in the word of God. But when “the powers that be” require that we should be put on oath, we ought to submit to it. The Lord did here. Thus we have light for our conduct. If the powers that be require us to sin, then we must obey God rather than man, but we are not called to oppose them. Here was a wicked man using the name of God. When Jesus said “Thou hast said,” He answered in the affirmative. He was the Son of God. That is true. “Nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” No doubt the high priest knew what the Lord was referring to there—that the very One submitting then, and unrighteously judged, is the very One spoken of in Dan. 7:13. “One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, etc.” The book of Revelation shows He is both Son of man and Ancient of days, but One Person in the Trinity. They had evidence that He was Son of God—the rending of the vail, and the resurrection! For although they gave them money to keep it quiet, yet had they the witness of the Roman soldiers that He was risen (27:11-15). I may add that when this “coming in the clouds of heaven” takes place, we shall be with Him. He will have come before to take us home; but when “the Firstbegotten” is brought into the world we shall be brought with Him.

Ver. 65. If it was blasphemy, the blasphemer must be put to death; and here is this wicked man bursting with rage. If they could bring that charge home to Him death would be His portion. There were occasions when the high priest was not to rend his clothes—evidently not in mourning. Here

he does it in pretended righteous indignation. We must remember who were here—the Sanhedrin. All the learned and religious leaders were there, and “they answered and said, He is guilty of death.” It is very solemn to contemplate this—to think Who He was Who had all these indignities heaped on Him! But this is no part of His atoning work. Atonement was made when He suffered at the hand of God. He suffered at the hands of man for righteousness—for God. He suffered at the hand of God for sin for us. There is nothing so jealously guarded in the word of God as the Person of Christ, and we should have nothing to do with any who would put the slightest spot on Him, the “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.”

“Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him, and others smote him with the palms of their hands” (ver. 67). What will those men feel when they stand before Him! “I hid not my face from shame and spitting” is the language of the One before Whose face the earth and the heaven flee away in Revelation 20—so glorious is He! This would be the “shame” —smiting and buffeting— “His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.” They would trample Him under their feet. They felt furious to heap contumely on Him. The Lord said to the chief of sinners “Why persecutest thou me?” There are “none too vile and loathsome for a Savior's grace.” The evidence of the word itself shows it may be so, for it was the lowest place of all His suffering at the hands of man when the two robbers “cast the same in His teeth.” Yet He saved one of them!

Ver. 68. “Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?” Yet He knew the secret of every human heart, and knew everything.

That is why He is “ready to judge” —because He knows everything. This was a very simple thing for Him to answer, but He patiently bore it. That is just the teaching of Isaiah 1. If man condemned Him God would justify Him: and that very word is applied to us in Romans 8.

Ver. 69. “Now Peter sat without in the palace.” The first denial was inside, and we must not think it is only the maiden who speaks, but the excited crowd all round. The last two denials are in the porch, or vestibule perhaps. From other scriptures we gather there were others having their say, and accusing him. It shows how far we may fall if God leaves us. There is nothing we should dread so much as being left to ourselves. Look at Hezekiah. When God left him he miserably fell, though he had given splendid testimony before (2 Chronicles 32:31). Hebrews 13:5 is a fact too. God allows Satan sometimes to try. As with Job, God has His hedge about every one of His saints. The “hedge” speaks of guard and possession. And until God removes the hedge, the devil cannot touch him, but He permitted Satan to get in to try him, but not to injure him. So with Peter. He allows the devil to try him, but He never surrenders a saint into his hand—never. If the Lord permits us to fall, He never orders it—He permits it. I think the Epistle of James would bring that out. “Neither tempteth He any man,” but it is for the saint's good if He allows it. All this was blessed to Peter. We may well say at every turn, “Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe.” The hymn puts it:

“In Thy presence we are happy,

In Thy presence we're secure.”

“Wandering from Thee we are feeble,

Let Thy grace then keep us nigh.”

That is so; we must give Him all the praise if we are kept. It is a fearful thing for the Lord to say “I know you not.”

## Notes on Matthew 27:1-23

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We were looking at the closing verses of chap. 26 when the meeting closed last week—the denial of Peter.

Reverting to these we may notice the great difference between the position of Peter and Judas Iscariot. Peter had faith; he loved the Lord. In the case of Judas Iscariot it was a planned thing—all arranged what he should do. But there was nothing planned in Peter's case. It would be, as we read, "a man overtaken in a fault." Not long after in Acts 5 summary judgment falls on a planned thing. Ananias and Sapphira had agreed together, and the Holy Spirit uses Peter, who himself had lied, now perfectly restored, to exercise this discipline in God's assembly. It was "sin unto death." They were not necessarily lost souls. Very dreadful as this was in the instance of Peter, and recorded as a warning to us, there was nothing deliberate about it.

They recognized his dialect. We ought to be careful not to begin with sin. One thing leads to another. You get the case of David "saying in his heart, I shall one day perish at the hand of Saul," and then we have seven distinct downward steps, until God brings him up by burning Ziklag.

Fishermen, as a rule, are given to swearing a great deal, and very likely it was an old habit that Peter had been rescued from. Well, the cock crew, according to the word of the Lord. The whole thing was the result of lack of prayer and watching. Had he watched and prayed, he would have got strength for the temptation.

It was a mercy the cock crew. It was a mercy he remembered the word of Jesus. I have no doubt you get right through here the difference between Peter and Judas. The sorrow of the world worketh death. You see this in Judas. Peter, on the other hand, was a real penitent. He had godly sorrow.

Now commencing our chapter, I suppose a large number was there in the morning. It was not a question of trying Him; they were determined to put Him to death. Only think of the blessed Lord being bound! They had bound him previously, but apparently had loosed that bond; and now they bind Him again. When they bound Samson, how easily he broke the thongs! How much easier for our blessed Lord to do so! But no, the hour was come, and He was going to the cross to secure eternal salvation for you and me.

Judas saw this, and it does appear as if it was a surprise to him. "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders" (ver. 3). A little further on we see how it shows their low estimate of the blessed Savior that they should covenant with Judas for thirty pieces of silver—the price of a slave!

"I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." What a testimony that is! Here is a man who had been in the Lord's company, three and a half years in that inner circle of intimacy, yet he had to bear testimony to His perfect innocence. There is a confession of sinning, but it is not the

confession of one who feels the sin before God, of one who is really repentant. It is remorse and despair, and some have said this was a greater sin than really betraying the Lord. We get cases like that, in the word, with no blessing following—Pharaoh, Saul—but how different with David! In his case there was the confession of a really repentant man. Though we do not get the expression in Peter, we see real repentance, as with David. The latter knew he required nothing short of the multitude of God's tender mercies to meet his horrid crime. He was a wonderful man of faith beyond his dispensation, and he laid hold of God's tender mercies. There was nothing in the law to meet his case. "Thou requirest not sacrifice, else would I bring it."

"What is that to us? See thou to that" (ver.4). What a testimony to their degraded condition! It was no question with them if He were innocent or not. They had Him in their hands, and were determined not to let Him go.

Verse 5. There are two words translated "temple," and the one used here is the inner temple where only the priests could go. In J. X. D's translation there is a note "the house itself." It was not the court for the people; there is a word which takes in all the buildings, but this one is used only of the inner shrine, where Judas had no right to be—only the priests. "And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." What a prey to Satan! It is a combination, no doubt, of remorse and despair. He felt his crime was beyond the reach of God's mercy; and many a soul is wrecked on that rock. The "fearful" are the very first of those mentioned as having their part in the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8).

How those who had shown themselves so conscienceless are very religious! "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood" (ver. 6). They little thought how was being fulfilled the word of God in their punctiliousness.

"To bury strangers in" —I suppose the "strangers" would be Jews who came to the feasts and died while there, as we get elsewhere "devout Jews from all parts under heaven." So now if they died, there was a cemetery for them. "The field of blood" I have not a doubt this name belongs to their land, "Aceldama." In Zech. 11:13, it is "I took" and J. N. D. so translates it here. But it is curious that this 9th verse says "Jeremiah," and all sorts of ways have been resorted to, to get over the difficulty. Jeremiah (18) does not speak of the potter's home, and Matthew does not say "that which was written," but "that which was spoken" by Jeremiah. Zechariah wrote it afterward, but Jeremiah may have said it first. The word of God is not wrong; those who think they find a blemish in it are wrong. There are some whose bent of mind is to try to pick out blemishes in the word of God. There is a well-known case in which two clever men agreed to use their ability to expose it; but their study of it for that purpose resulted in their conversion.

Verse 11. Here we see the One appointed by God to be "the Judge of quick and dead," standing before an earthly judge! What a picture! No doubt this Roman was sitting with pomp and pride on the judgment seat, and the blessed Lord was standing. How wonderful that He should have so deigned!

"And the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest." Here is His good confession before Pilate. Before the high priest He confesses that He is "the Son of God." Before Pilate that He is "the King of the Jews."

How much depended upon that answer! “Son of God.” Of course, “thou sayest” is an affirmative. And then these wretched, misguided men accuse Him (ver. 12), but the Lord does not answer Pilate again. He had given one testimony. He never made a mistake. He never spoke when He ought to be silent, or was silent when He ought to speak. We often are. It was quite consistent with perfect love when He was angry. We are to “be angry and sin not.” The Lord's silence makes Pilate marvel greatly.

“Now at the feast” (ver. 15). This feast commemorated their release from Egyptian bondage. It was a favor granted them that at that particular feast they could release one prisoner. Barabbas was a terrible character. “Bar” means “son”; “Abbas,” —father. Barabbas— “the son of a father.” “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.” And here was the Son of God! It was a solemn moment for that nation when they had before them the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, and this wicked man, the son of his father—the Blessed One, the Originator of life; and a murderer, the destroyer of life, “who for sedition and murder was cast into prison.” It is the choice of the human heart—your heart and mine. As Bonar wrote—

“And in that din of voices rude

I recognize my own.”

That is what we ought to see—the Christ of God the Son of the living God, and Barabbas, the son of his father. Pilate “knew that for envy they had delivered up” Jesus. He could see beneath the surface, and it put him in a solemn position. As far as his determination was concerned, he was “determined to let Him go.” But he had to make a choice between the world and Christ—between Caesar and Christ. That decided him, although he knew he was doing wrong. He would do the wrong thing rather than not be the friend of Caesar. And those who reject the gospel are brought to that position, not once or twice.

Barabbas was a “notable prisoner,” and there were three to be crucified, and the notable prisoner to be in the middle, and that place was given to the Lord.

Ver. 19. This made it, no doubt, more solemn to Pilate, and added to his responsibility that he should receive this message from his wife. And the poor fickle multitude, who could one day shout “Hosanna,” and another ask for “Barabbas and destroy Jesus.” Is it not solemn? How truly the mind of the flesh is enmity against God!

Ver. 20. Solemn choice! and then after they had again said, “Barabbas,” Pilate asks once more “What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ,” and they all say “Let him be crucified.” Let us think what this means. A Roman citizen could not be crucified. Paul, we know, could not be. Peter was. They could not bind a Roman citizen without giving him a trial. It frightened them at Philippi, and they were glad to get rid of Paul and Silas whom they had beaten, when they knew they were Romans. Crucifixion was a mode of death reserved by the Romans for the worst class of criminals. God's hand was in Pilate's wife's dream to increase Pilate's responsibility. But they were determined, for they cried out the more, saying, “Let him be crucified.”

They had not proved anything against Him. Everything is being brought to a point here—man's evil rising higher and higher, till it culminated in His death, but “in the thing wherein they acted proudly, He was above them.” “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound”; and the

circumstances that brought out, as nothing else could, the love of God, brought out also the highest wickedness of man. “Ye denied the Holy and Just One, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead.” Pilate was an ambitious man, and they knew his weak spot when they said, “If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend.” The powers that be are ordained of God, and government had been committed to the Gentile, being taken from the hand of Israel, but the glory did not go with the sword. The two were united in Israel. The city of Rome now occupied the place of Babylon, and the power was delegated to Pilate, the representative of Rome in Palestine. All through this you see the different ones acting their part, but behind all events there is God, and nothing is behind Him; so “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” —man doing his part, but God was behind it all—a very solemn consideration, and it ought to solemnize our minds while reading this. But in all this there is no atoning suffering. It was what the Lord Jesus suffered from the hands of God that was atoning. Man was not allowed to see the effect on His Person of those infinite sufferings when He drank that cup to the very dregs. It was the glory of His Person that enabled Him to do it. If the whole human race could have drunk it, they could still never have seen the bottom if it.

## Notes on 1 John 4:9-19

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We have three aspects here of God's love. First, its manifestations towards us (ver. 9). In our natural condition we are dead towards God, but alive in the world, active enough in it without a thought of God, thinking only of ourselves; sinners, with our backs towards Him. But God was here, come into this world in the person of His Son, and when we were without one thought of God, God had thoughts of us. We have heard a mother say to her child, "God will love you if you love Him," but this is reversing things. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (ver. 10), and it is this which breaks down the heart. The entrance of God's word brings light into the dark soul. How can we help loving God when we think of God's love to us; not when we were good, but sinners?

Divine love is different to human love in this cardinal difference—I do not love anyone unless there is some quality in that person which commends itself to me. We do not love a repulsive or uncomely object (I mean, naturally), there must be something to attract. You may not discern it, but another does. But on the part of God there was nothing in us to call forth His love— "God commendeth His love towards us, in that when we were sinners Christ died for us." The very entrance of these words is enough to, and does, break the heart. As Charles Wesley says:

"I sink, by dying love compelled,  
And own Thee Conqueror."

This then is the manifestation of God's love. A woman once said she never gave God a reason for loving her when she was a sinner, so she was sure He would never cease to love her, now she believed in the Savior. The law, which was the minimum of a holy and righteous God's requirements from responsible man, never gave life, nor was it given for that purpose. It told what God demanded, but never produced it. The apostle Paul said he was "as touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless:" so outwardly he was on creditable ground, but when the law said "Thou shalt not covet," he could not claim the fulfillment of that, so was guilty of all. The law shuts up man in unbelief in himself, but shuts up to faith in God. Then God reveals His love. We never could give a reason for God to save us. "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life," the Savior said. Responsibility rests on everyone to whom the word comes. But we know that unless "compelled" we should have remained as obdurate as any.

Then in connection with this love is revealed God's provision for my sins which now I feel as having a new life, made partaker of a divine nature which feels according to God. So now we have— "sent his Son to be the propitiation for my sins." Thank God! What a Savior indeed.

The Lord Jesus came to do God's will, and He has made purification for sins. We sometimes speak of the Lord as the "will-less man," but He had a will. Yet that will was to do the Father's will. They were One in purpose and desire. It was the Father's will for Him to lay down His life, and though He could not, in view of God's abandonment, but shrink from the drinking of the cup, because He is holy, He says "Not my will, but thine be done." All this was in the counsels of God

from all eternity. He was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but manifested in these last times. There was no thought of turning the heart of God towards us. God's love was manifested in the gift, of the Savior, as well as was His love— “the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

It is not enough to say “God is love,” or that “God loves the world.” I ask, have you the consciousness of His love to you personally? so as to be able to say “He loved me as if the only one in all the world—let alone any other?” “We have known,” says the apostle, “and believed the love that God hath to us.” And He has shown His love in giving His Son that we might have life—divine life. That is our first need.

Then the light reveals what we have done, our sins are felt, and we are led to cry for forgiveness. We need redemption, and this we have through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. “Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins,” Have we nothing to do to win this? Well, do you believe My testimony? My word? Do you accredit what I say? “All that believe are justified from all things.” “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Having life, we want also the knowledge of the forgiveness of our sins, and so is added, “sent His Son the propitiation for our sins.” When a soul has divine life it hates its sins for the first time. A natural man wants to fulfill his own inclinations, and does not like to be fettered. The fatal boast of an Englishman, to wit! It does not matter what it is—say, put a prohibition, such as “Smokers take back seats.” No, he resents it at once. “Why should I not do as I like!” Ver. 11. John is writing to fellow believers. So, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” Whilst the law said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and thy neighbor as thyself,” it never got it. Does the gospel tell me I ought to love God? No, it tells me God loved me, and the result of this knowledge in the heart is that we do love God. Love Godward is produced, not exacted. We do it: we love Him. taut then there are those we are called to love, who may be very awkward. We do not like so and so—they are a great trial to us: perhaps we are to them! So there are these peculiarities, and eccentricities, etc., these hindrances in the way, for we do not always behave ourselves. “In many things we all offend”—what, an apostle! Yes. But we are to bear one with another. If I love my brother because he is loved of God, that is unchangeable. I may not be able to go along with him if he is going wrong. “Have no company with him that he may be ashamed, yet count, him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” If he is not keeping God's word, and I did not care for him, I might leave him to himself and the world would call that love. But “Am I my brother's keeper?” Yes. Who was neighbor to him that fell among thieves? We act in a spirit of independency! “If you say anything you will only be getting yourself into trouble.” That is thinking of self. The only question is what would please the Lord. There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent. So the Christian is held responsible to walk in dependence on God. Does He care for me in everything? Why should we not realize it? What repose is given to me then! My Father knows.

David was at man after God's own heart. There was no one else in the Old Testament to whom that term could be more appropriately applied—in failure and difficulty he turned to God. If the Philistines come against him, “Shall I go up against them?” Yes, “Go.” If they come again, he must wait on God again. Then when Shimei curses him (though the sword did not depart from David's house in the government of God), yet he says “The Lord hath bidden him.” It was good for David, and God allowed Shimei to give vent to the wickedness of his heart, but David relegates

everything to God. Then at the time of the plague— “These sheep, what have they done?” Is not that a high-minded man? —the sweet Psalmist of Israel. No wonder the Spirit of God uses him to express beforehand the Spirit of Christ, and to make David's breathings and cries into a prayer book for the Jews in days to come. The Jews want a prayer book; we do not, for we are indwelt by the Spirit of God. He will be upon, not dwell in, them, for they are an earthly people. We are partakers of a heavenly calling, and despised on earth.

I was asked the other day what was the meaning of the parable of the unjust steward. It shows the necessity of walking in the light of the future if we are to be received into everlasting habitations. The commendable quality was acting in view of the future. Are we seeking to walk in its light? Prudence is looking ahead. He did unjustly, but the point is, he acted with prudence or forethought. Only as I am pleasing the Lord am I acting rightly in view of the future—not to be saved, but because I am saved. “No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.” We all have to give account. We may shut God out, but He does not shut us out. Every one must give account. Every one shall bow the knee and every tongue confess Christ is Lord. The devils? Yes; will it change them? convert them? No, but they are bound to know they are before God. I often feel how overwhelming it is to think of the solemn issues before every one. How earnest it ought to make us to snatch brands from the burning! Eternity! and not to have one kindness shown us there—an eternity of darkness, and God's wrath abiding—appalling thought! Yet the Lord Jesus revealed the truth. Did He not speak in accents of truth? He came from heaven in care for me, and I don't care for Him? I did not deserve it, but He did it! Oh, I am His forever!

Ver. 12. A seeming paradox! The same writer says, “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” A thorough incompatibility—you cannot love God and hate your brother. If you hate your brother you are a murderer. If there was no eye to see, and no hindrance, would you not be seen a murderer? Murder is in your heart. You may not dare perhaps to kill, but you would like to! But here, we do love One whom we have never seen.

“If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.” Here is love in operation—its second aspect working in me and flowing out to another (vers. 11, 12).

And “He hath given us of His Spirit” —a divine Person given to you and me. We are not men and women only; we have, indeed, spirit, soul, and body; but if believers, something more, something new—a divine Person making this body His dwelling place. Do we realize that? If we did, should we not take care lest we grieve Him? In your body a divine Person! Yes. Does it not pull us up? We do not know what to pray for as we ought, but He knows, and He is in us, and breathes out unutterable groanings. What a wonderful creature a Christian becomes! People often quote “Judge not that ye be not judged,” but that is judging motives and feelings. It is written “Do not ye judge them that are within?” So are we not to judge a person's acts? If a man is not walking as a Christian, but in open sin, though called a brother I am to have no company with him. Because the church of God is holy the saints are called upon to put him out from amongst them. The very fact that he takes the place of being a Christian necessitates he should be put out if walking in sin, etc. The man in 1 Cor. 5 proved himself a Christian because he repented and was restored. God only knows the heart; we must judge by the outward course, “By their fruits shall ye know them.” Ver. 14. When the apostle John brings in “the world” he shows this salvation is not for Jews only—not confined to the Jews, but is world-wide. Not that all the world is saved, but He is the propitiation.

“Preach the gospel to every creature.” Will every creature be saved? No, but the gospel is world-wide in its aspect; but it is only “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become children of God.” Ver. 15. Will every confessor then be saved? No, but John deals with realities. In chap. says, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”... “If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.” There is no middle ground. He looks at things in their essential principles. If I came into this room in the middle of the night in total darkness, I should make a noise, kicking over the chairs, and knocking against the table, but some one brings in light, and I see where I am. So John brings in principles. If a Christian, I am “in the light,” and there is no excuse there fore for carelessness of walk. I am responsible to walk according to the place where I am. Walking in the light is not conditional, but is where every Christian is, and renders us inexcusable if acting inconsistently. The word of God does not allow us our own thoughts. “Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear, forasmuch as ye know ye were redeemed” —the very fact I have been redeemed is the ground of my responsibility. I am to walk as redeemed, and the Father takes knowledge of the walk of His children.

You may perhaps have seen a tract with the title “Grace and Government.” Grace is one thing, government is another. Was not David overjoyed when he wrote Psa. 32? But what did God say? “The sword should never depart from his house.” There is the government of God. God cannot pass over anything. Well, He did in a certain sense pass over, as it says in Rom. 3:25; but that is He refrained from executing judgment—it was then pretermission; but now His righteousness is shown not in passing over, but in blotting out. In Old Testament times, He forebore to enter into judgment in view of the sacrifice that was to be. A Jew never knew forgiveness of sins as the known standing of the Christian. David knew the forgiveness of that particular sin; but not of sins in the sense we do, because redemption was not accomplished. The One that was to come has come. So you see the mistake of taking the language of the Psalms as ours. It is rather the language of pious Jews in the millennium. Do we say, “Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me?” The Holy Ghost came upon them, but did not indwell them until redemption had been effected. The Lord Jesus was anointed, because holy, but we are not anointed until we know forgiveness and the cleansing by blood. Then the Holy Ghost dwells within.

Ver. 15. That is reality. “With the heart man believeth.” Ver. 16. That is the ground of it all.

Ver. 17. Here we come to the third aspect. “Love with us,” not our love, but God's love perfected in respect of us. Ver. 18. You are not afraid of the judgment seat of Christ as to your acceptance. For we shall be glorified, like Christ, before this manifestation. The believer comes not unto judgment as our Lord has Himself declared. And as He is so are we now “in this world!” That is, as I understand it, we are as clear of judgment as the blessed Lord Himself. Judgment is forever behind Him. He suffered once for sins, and now glorified on high. So too, for us, who have been justified freely by God's grace, judgment is behind us, for Christ has borne it, and we are clear. “As He is, so are we,” soon to be manifested when in glory. We are now accepted—taken into divine favor, in Him, God's beloved One. Oh, the fullness of that love—not our love, but God's love on our behalf. Perfect love has indeed cast out fear, so that we can truly say, We love Him, because He first loved us. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. And it is in Him that we stand; we shall be like unto Himself when glorified—the fruit of His toil and of His grace; to the praise of the glory of His grace.

Manifested indeed we shall be, not only to a wondering world when He shall come to be wondered at in all them that believed, but also before this, to be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ for the recognition and approval of all, of everything, we have done, whether good or bad. What we have wrought for His glory down here will then be rewarded; what otherwise in the believer will be seen and condemned not only by the Lord Himself but by us, for we also shall look upon the past according to His judgment. His approval of our whole life and conduct will be our appraisal also, for we shall see all in His light, and according to the fullness of His grace. Oh then, may we, like the apostle, be “ambitious” (2 Cor. 5:9) for that is really how he speaks, “that whether present or absent, we may be well pleasing to Him,” “walking worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and growing in (or by) the knowledge of God.”

## Notes on Philippians 2:15

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In Ephesians it is our privilege to go through the lengths, and breadths and depths and heights of those heavenly places—but there is something better even than the blessedness of the land—the love of Christ that has made it ours. It passeth knowledge. You cannot know that love in its infinite fullness and breadth, but, to know the love of Christ! I was struck when reading Rom. 5, in connection with the wilderness way where we are learning our lessons, after “rejoicing in hope” it is “not only so but we glory in tribulations also.” It is tribulation all the way to the glory: then it ceases, never to be known again. But in the wilderness “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost” —not, my love increasing, but the love of God, the wonderful love of God manifested in sending His Own Son—that is, the love the Spirit of God sheds abroad in our hearts—the love of God, and the love of His Christ.

It came to mind when our dear brother uttered in prayer “building up yourselves in your most holy faith.” The love of God is brought in there too— “keep yourselves in the love of God.” What does it mean? I suggest, “Just roam in that—dwell there: it has been manifested—dwell there.” When all His work is done, God is going to be silent in His love: let us dwell there; it will never fail. It is the source of all our blessedness for all eternity.

In Ephesians then it is the love of Christ which surpasseth knowledge—which has made all the glory since for you and me—oh, what we owe it!

In Philippians we are in the wilderness, and a word from chapter 2 may be profitable to our souls. What we had in Isaiah 53 we have in the opening of Philippians 2—the Same One is before us in both chapters. He who was in the form of God, O wondrous truth! — “From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God”! Holy is His Name! —may we never forget it! —that is the One we see in Isaiah 53 “despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” In Philippians 2 it tells of that One and His mighty stoop, when He laid aside His glory—that external glory. He did not lay Himself aside—did not cease to be what He always was from all eternity. That lowly Man Who sat on Sychar's well and talked to the woman was the Eternal God, the refuge of His saints. But Philippians 2 tells us He laid aside His glory, and took upon Him the form of a servant—because that He never was before; and henceforth is, a servant forever! He became a man to serve us, and after the work of the cross He went back to heaven, and He lives to serve us. And He is coming to serve us. Perhaps before the time allotted to our meeting is over He may be here! Adorable thought—it bows our hearts in worship.

But He took that place in wondrous grace—and what was it to God? Everything that God would have, and the utter contrast to the first man, who snatched at equality with God and fell. But this Man, from the first moment He was seen on His mother's breast was a sweet savior to God. And God just reversed everything that poor creatures did to Him; after they had done their very worst God highly exalted Him. God shows us what He thought of Him by “giving Him a Name which is above every name”; and to the Man who was called Jesus every knee shall bow. Our hearts delight to think it will be so He is worthy! He is worthy! But oh, the grace that has bowed our hearts

to Him now and taught our lips to confess Him! “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. 10:9); so we are among the number God says “saved.” God says it. People think it presumptuous, but God says it; and it is impossible for God to lie.

Well, in Philippians the apostle speaks to those who are saved, who have apprehended somewhat of the glory of that One. The apostle has a good report of these Philippians. In chapter 4 he has a little word to two sisters who seem to have some little friction, but the apostle would have them right, and of one mind in the Lord. Otherwise he seems to have a very good report of the dear saints there. In chapter 1 he speaks of their fellowship in the gospel “from the first day until now” a good commendation. It is a bad sign when saints of God get weary of the preaching, of having fellowship with the gospel. That gospel whereby God saved our souls we should never be weary of!

But in chapter 2:12 he says they were still going, on, and “obedient.” That is the path we have to tread, and the pattern is in the earlier verses. There is the obedient One Who never swerved from the path of obedience. “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God,” and He learned by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. He is the pattern here for us; and the verse specially on my mind is verse 15, and just the thought of the One in the early verses being our pattern. There are three things in the verse. “Sons of God” or rather here, “children of God.” What a relationship! But He of whom the preceding verses had spoken was, THE SON of God in this scene, and He was this from all eternity. But also as born into this world He was Son of God; and in resurrection He is the Son of God. Even when Son of man, still' was He the Son of God. So, these dear saints (and you and I, confessing His Name, for “whosoever confesseth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”) had been brought into happy relationship with God Himself, as His children. It is also true we are “sons of God” (Rom. 8:14, 19; Gal. 4:6). He exhorts them to be “blameless and harmless.” It is Isaiah 53 again—the unresisting One. It is only as we look at Him that we imitate Him. We see a little grace in' a brother or sister, and admire it; but all fullness is in Him; and I can draw, and you can draw from that fullness. All the millions of saints have drawn from that fullness, and it abides! No wonder Paul says in chapter 3 “That I may know Him.” Did he not know Him? But the better I know Him, the more the language of the heart is “that I may know Him.” Those who know Him little have little to say about Him.

So there is the character— “blameless and harmless”; may we be stamped with it. “Without rebuke.” Do we know anything of the true character of the scene through which we are passing? Well, we are ever to remember we are children of God, and sons of God. Children by birth; sons by adoption; a place of affection and a place of dignity. May we ever remember it! So it comes in we have such a Pattern, our Counselor and our Guide. His Name is Wonderful, Counselor. Are we walking in His steps? He has left us an example that we should do so.

Other two things are (1) “lights in the world.” The moral darkness of this scene is great. The Light of Life has been in it, and the darkness was so dense it comprehended Him not. We once belonged to it, but “We are not of the night nor of darkness.” “Walk as children of light.” I see Him the Light of the world, and I am to walk, I am to shine now, as a light in the world. He has been here, and rejected, and put out. “Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self, with the glory that I had with Thee before the world was,” —and I see that once lowly Man the glorified Man at God's

right hand; and I belong to Him up there Who was despised down here; and I am to shine in this dark scene as a heavenly light—like Him. I have got the pattern in Himself.

Then further (2) “holding forth the word of life.” He was the Word, and we are to hold forth the word of life. Blessed privilege! wonderful position—the very position the Son of God has been in! Oh, may we have that mind in us—that mind which was in Christ Jesus! That is the mind—that lowly mind! I get Him in this wonderful chapter as the One Who came from the highest heights, and went as low as He possibly could go; and God took Him up to His own heights. And the apostle tells me to keep an eye on Him and walk as He walked, and see how He went down. John says, “You keep your eye on Him and walk as He walked,” but Paul sees Him gone back and says, “I want to reach Him.” He did not know Christ in the days of His flesh. He was converted by the glorified Christ, and He says, I want to get to Him. That Man has laid hold of me, Saul of Tarsus who, breathing out threatenings and slaughter, would have got rid of every confessor of Christ. But that Christ had His eye on Saul of Tarsus, and that light shone from a glorified Christ. It put Saul of Tarsus down, and then he was lifted up; and ever after he says, 'I want to get to Him'—that glorified Christ Who had been on the tree for him, and suffered, the Just for the unjust- that One has got hold of me' he says, 'to be with Him in heavenly glory.' That is our place, through grace; and He has got hold of us to be with Him up there. Can we be worldly when we believe such a thing? Surely not. A saint who believes that Christ has got hold of him for heaven, cannot be worldly.

The Lord give us grace to feed on a humbled Christ and a glorified Christ. A humbled Christ is for us to imitate, and a glorified Christ for us to go after; and we are sure to get to Him. The perfection of our state here is conflict; we are in an enemy's land, and if in a right state as Christians we must be in conflict—Galatians and Ephesians teach us that. Flesh and spirit are always at war, and if I am seeking to get hold of a glorified Christ the enemy will see I don't enter in easily. So the perfection of our state here is conflict, but the perfection of our state in glory will be sinlessness. No sin is there. Here in myself, in the world, it is; but when with Him I shall never have to do with it more. But we have a will still. Which way is it bending—to the old master or the new? There is the Pattern; may we be walking with our eye on Him up there, listening for His Voice, “Rise up, my love, my fair one and come away.”

W. J. T. B.

## Notice of Final Issue of the Bible Treasury

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It has been considered necessary that the Issue of the Bible Treasury should be concluded with this present (July) number.

A new magazine will (D.V.) be published

(Jan. 1921), entitled the Bible Monthly for the promulgation of expository and practical truths. Price twopence.

The closing issue of the Bible Treasury (Jan. to July, 1920) may be obtained bound on paper covers, price 2s. 4d.

## Notes on Revelation 1:10-20

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The book of the Revelation supposes that we are familiar with the whole of God's revelation; consequently it is with some timidity we approach a book that is so comprehensive, and which sums up as it were the whole word of God.

It is a judicial book. The presentation of the Lord in what we have read indicates Him as prepared for judgment. He is in priestly robes. The setting of the book is the setting of the temple; but He is not here to offer or to intercede, but to judge, and consequently in the character as given Him in the Gospel of John, with "authority to execute judgment, also, because He is the Son of man."

The book has special signification to us in that it views us not only as saints, sanctified ones, set apart, and cleansed both by water and by blood, but it views us (chap. 1 as His bondservants, or slaves. It is important to recognize this aspect of the truth—that we are not our own but bought with a price.

How the Lord is entitled to speak here as the One that has been here a Faithful Witness to God! And He addresses His bondman John, who also had been faithful in testimony, and in consequence is imprisoned in the Isle of Patmos. He is in the Spirit. You notice it is a big "S," it was not merely his own spirit—a good spiritual state, but in a condition that is characterized by the fullness of the power of God, the Holy Spirit Himself. And it is only here we have the Lord's Day mentioned—a very suitable day on which to make this revelation—when he was cut off from the weekly communion with his fellowservants on this resurrection day, "the first day of the week," and here stamped, as ever after to be known, as indeed "the Lord's Day."

On this day it was that the disciples "came together to break bread," as we know from Acts 20:7; and, cut off from the common privilege of this day, the Lord gives His servant the compensation of this presentation of Himself, and of knowing and shewing the things that must shortly be done. The Lord presents Himself, as it were, by public announcement, for the trumpet in the Old Testament announced some great public assembly—whether for festival or war. And the trumpet is intended here to announce the Lord's character as depicted in the prophecy of Daniel (chap. 7); He has all the characteristics there seen as attaching to "the Ancient of Days." And without going into all particulars, the whole is summed up by the presentation of the Lord in a judicial character.

But the Lord gives confidence to His servant and lays His right hand on him, giving him strength, as He did to Ezekiel in like circumstances. He announces Himself as "the Living One" with the keys of death and of hades; and then, in one graphic verse, the whole book is divided for us (chap. 1:19) in the simplest of ways.—"The things which thou hast seen" —evidently in ch. 1 "the things which are," or exist (as in chaps. 2, 3); and finally, "things which shall be after these things" (as from ch. 5 and on). But one would emphasize chaps. 4 and 5, because there heaven is opened, and the church—the special object of the Holy Spirit's operation in this dispensation, is viewed as glorified with Christ. I think that is as brief a summary as I know how to give on such a subject.

Perhaps it would not be amiss to make a remark on ver. 20. A mystery is mentioned there. A mystery is a secret, and this is one of many such secrets; but this is specially concerning “the seven stars” and “the seven candlesticks.” The seven candlesticks represent the whole of the church period, and a testimony appointed by God. And so we have doubtless in the seven epistles the whole period of the professing church's history down to the close; and we ought 'to be exceedingly grateful to God that He has disclosed it to us. We want to see the range of these seven churches; and the simplest way is by that which divides them into the first three, and the last four. They are divided by the different position in which the exhortation is placed.

In the first three epistles the exhortation precedes the promise of reward; and in the last four the reward precedes the exhortation.

Now the significance is this—the first three phases of the church were not permanently to abide, but would pass away; whilst the supervening four phases of the church would after their rise respectively continue concurrently to the end. So we will first announce the characteristics of each. Ephesus is characterized by loss of first love, It is a history of declension, declension that terminates in total apostasy. The next, Smyrna, is characterized by suffering and persecution, but only for a limited period— “ten days”: and the third is characterized by dwelling where Satan's throne is—the church dwelling where Satan exercises his power, as prince of this world! How rapid this decline of the church, from a chaste virgin espoused to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2), to dwelling in a place of authority peculiarly Satan's! The next is marked by the world coming into the church—Thyatira, and the highest offices of the state and of the world coveted by those who profess to be the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. At this point the Holy Spirit describes this as religious fornication (chap. 2:14). No other figure would so strike home the awful character of the church and the world being identified as this figure. All that we understand by Romanism characterizes Thyatira—but not Rome alone—Rome and her children.

This is followed by that which is representative of Protestantism, and what characterizes Sardis is a name to live whilst dead—no vitality, just cold formalism; and alas! this is what distinctly has followed the great Reformation, wonderful as it was. I suppose no intelligent saint but what would thank God for the marvelous recovery of truth then, notably justification by faith; but even then there was not a complete recovery of the truth, and so the church had not yet the power that she should have had. The deeds of the Nicolaitanes in 3:6, and their doctrine in ver. 15 one hesitates to dogmatise about, but I think the key is in the preceding verse. It is there connected with the doctrine of Balaam, etc. The deeds of the Nicolaitanes were what we should call to-day antinomianism—do as you like, and continue in sin that grace may abound! The doctrine was what Balaam taught when he seduced the people with the daughters of Moab and brought on them the judgment at Bethpeor. This truth is a very vital point, that the Lord held Pergamos responsible for allowing them that held that doctrine in their midst. The Ephesians hated it; they were in full accord with their Master; but when the church went into the world, they put up with these things. In Matt. 13, when the enemy sowed the tares, they were first the evil teachings that preceded the evil men. A tare is a direct emissary of Satan to defile and destroy God's work. So here the Lord cites them to gee account about it. The allowance of evil teaching among the saints of God is a very solemn thing, and leads the Lord to act quickly.

Philadelphia ("brotherly love") represents things when there is but "little" strength (omit the article). The condition of Philadelphia is feebleness but faithfulness. And the Lord does not rebuke Smyrna or Philadelphia. He does not rebuke those being persecuted, or those with "little strength." He has set before them an open door—an opportunity created by Himself—and no man shall shut it. This is what marks that phase which is a bright spot in the church's history, because it brings out the Lord's grace.

The last is a state marked by total indifference, Laodicean lukewarmness: and that is most repulsive to the Lord; when it comes to this He publicly disowns that which professes His name. No longer owned, but spued out of His mouth. The spurious counterfeit goes on, and is seen as the great whore in chaps. 17, 18, but all relationship as the church of Christ is disowned after chap. 3, when in fact the true church is thenceforth seen as no longer on the earth but is here seen clothed in white raiment and "round about the throne" (chap. 4). So with Israel the Lord disowned relationship with Israel after He said, "Your house is left unto you desolate," though the nation went on for forty years after. This brings us to an important juncture, because it gives us—a panoramic view, of the whole church, from Pentecost to the close.

In verse 13 the words "In the midst" occur, We get them in Matt. 18:20, also in the cross— "on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." Then on the resurrection day, in John 20, and Luke 24 Again in Rev. 5 in the midst of the throne; and in Heb. 2, "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee." There is the Divine center. If you want to put everything in its right place, as the sun is the center of our solar system, round which, and at relative distances, all the planets move, so in the word we have the divine center, and the gathering point. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, here am I." What the Christian has is not a visible thing. We have not a visible "house of God," so called, like the Jews, who had the temple—not a visible sacrifice, or a visible priest; but we have that Name, and we gather to that Name; and it is the name of Jesus, and no Christian should recognize any other as a gathering point. As Peter says, "Whom not having seen ye love," etc. Never before had there been such a gathering as this. God had an assembly in the wilderness—not the "church," but Israel. They are quite distinct. Israel is a national thing; the church is a heavenly body. No two things are more apart. But the Lord says, He will be in the midst of those gathered to His name, He is in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and His real living Presence is in our midst. Without His being in the midst you have none to lead you. We get that in Heb. 2:12. We are dependent on the Lord Jesus Christ for everything.

Ephesus then was characterized by works, labor, and patience-zeal. They tried those calling themselves apostles, and found them liars. Their labors are referred to twice, and it was not that the Lord had (as given in italics) "somewhat" against them, but a very serious matter against them. Another church had "work of faith and labor of love," but Ephesus was marked by great activity, without the mention of faith and love. There is no mention of the candlesticks after Ephesus. It should be an encouragement to our hearts to see witnesses true to God among us. The "candlestick," or, lampstand, as you know, is taken from the candlestick in the Holy Place—a seven-branched one; and this warning to Ephesus is to remove her candlestick, though she was only one branch. The whole should have presented a perfect testimony to Christ; but if love is lacking, the centre, so to speak, represented the whole candlestick, though she was only one branch. The whole should have presented a perfect testimony to Christ; but if love is lacking, the center, so to speak, is lacking. The Lord's eye detected it—the testimony becoming, not for, but

against, Him. A corrupt church is a testimony against Him. If an assembly is wiped out, the candlestick is removed. It was a warning, rather than an accomplishment. It was what would result if there was no restoration. The light of the lampstand (or, candlestick) gave light over against the table. The tabernacle was called “the testimony,” and is so spoken of in Numbers. So I take it the candlestick throwing its light on the table was to throw a general testimony. The church at Ephesus had the grandest truths God made known. What we get in the Epistle to the Ephesians is the highest and fullest revelation ever made known, and that because there was no fault to find with them. To the Corinthians there was much fault to find. So with the Galatians; and so even with the little Philippian assembly he had to draw attention to division, and exhort Evodia and Syntyche to be of the same mind. There is no reference to sin in that epistle; it is true Christian experience, and should be the experience of all of us—not only Paul's experience but ours, if like Paul and Timothy we too are “bondmen of Jesus Christ,” as is the Christian's obligation (Rom. 6:16-22).

E. B. D.

## Notes on Revelation 21

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It is well for us to anticipate what lies before us. Hope is not uncertain. Our God would have us full of hope in the power of the Holy Ghost. Hope in the world is uncertain—not so in the word of God. Here we have the eternal state—new heavens and a new earth—new conditions—no sea.

How different the “holy” city to the “great” city! Holiness, fitness for the presence of God marks the bride, the Lamb's wife—the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. Every blessing comes from Him, but he “that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” He is the One we may glory and boast in, in the fullest way, “Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” Don't we know with joy of heart that it was God Who made Him to be sin for us? and every blessing comes from Him.

Here she comes from Him: and more—once espoused as a “chaste virgin to Christ,” she here comes down “as a bride adorned for her husband,” the same as a thousand years before. “He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.” We know that the Lord God brought to Adam in Eden all the animals, and what he called them was their name; but when the woman was brought to him, he said, “This! this shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.”

You and I belong to the tabernacle of God. I hope we value our church privileges; there is nothing like them! God dwells in the midst—with men, not nations; all distinctions are passed away. But He Who came down into the garden of Eden has His dwelling place with man, and “God Himself, their God.” Oh, the reconciliation of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Then that next verse! (verse 4). We are accustomed to such actions by our Lord Jesus Christ. He entered into all circumstances when down here. But one title is very precious— “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Our God and Father too; and here GOD wipes away every tear.

You and I came short of His glory; now we rejoice in hope of it. We are brought to God.

“No more death,” —the ways of sin are paid; “no more pain,” summarized as “former things,” —the whole creation groaning and travailing—no more of that. It is not our imagination; the Spirit of God writes this: they never return. The arch-deceiver gets in here no more.

Look at verse 5. The Sitter on the Throne says, “Behold, I make all things new.” God sets His seal, and who shall interfere? And then He “commits” Himself (as we sometimes speak). Men are careful of what they write. Job said, “Oh, that mine enemy had written a book!” We rejoice in true and faithful sayings. The Epistle to Timothy is full of them. Fables then were rampant. “These things are true and faithful. It is done.” God has not only “committed” Himself by writing, but it is “done.” Is it not blessed to know what you and I are taken up for, even the immediate presence of our God? “I am the Alpha and the Omega”-still more secure!

Our church privileges are highest, and we never ought to divorce them from the gospel. God is jealous of His grace. Look at verse 6, and compare it with chap. 22:17. The church turns round to the thirsty, or to the not quite thirsty, “whosoever will, let him take”! God never presents anything

less, or anything apart from Christ. “To anyone who is thirsty, I will give the fountain of the water of life freely.” To any poor sinner who says, I would like to be in that glory, God says, I want you to be there. It is a question of what Jesus has done. No experience or aught else can be added to it. God cannot tell us of that future glory without adding this invitation.

“He that overcometh.” Who is the overcomer? Turn to another portion by the same writer—1 John 5:4,. Faith! what does it rest on? Jesus, the Son of God... come by water and blood. The overcomer is he whose faith rests in Him, and what He has done. “He that overcometh shall inherit these things.” Here is individual blessing, infinitely precious to the soul! May we be continually praising Him in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

W. N. T.

## Address on Romans 1:1-23

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It is not my intention to take up the opening verses so much of the chapter, nor indeed the doctrine of the Epistle with which we are familiar, in setting forth the righteousness of God and the means of justification by faith, although one may find it convenient to say a word on these latter, but my mind is centered on verse 16—the stability of the gospel and its power.

The opening verses show us the gospel as “concerning His Son” (verse 3) and giving the Savior’s descent from David, so fulfilling the promise of God to David. Very beautiful it is to see that the key note of the gospel is the fulfillment of promise. There is no give and take in the gospel, no exchange, as commonly thought that in return for faith God gives salvation. No, it is the fulfillment of God’s promise not only to David’s Son to sit on His throne, but the Seed of Abraham in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed. But the apostle says, “I am not ashamed.” Was there anything in his day to produce a feeling of shame? When the apostle was deserted by all, he might have thought he was linked with a very poor cause. John the Baptist had felt so. All the multitude had gone out to hear him preach, but when cast into prison, his heart failed him, and he sent his disciples to say, “Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another.” What a contrast to the bold stand he had taken at the Jordan when he said, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” and then, to his disciples, “Behold the Lamb of God”! Presenting His great work, he then draws attention to the Person who should accomplish it!

The apostle had a very varied experience, and he too found himself in a Roman prison but not at this time. He had purposed going to Rome, and I think we may gather how God overrules all for our good and His own glory. We should never have had a treatise such as this if he had not been hindered in his journey to Rome. And it brings out his interest in a people he had never seen, we know how our interest increases with those we come in contact with, but here is the love of God shed abroad in the heart of His servant, toward those he had never seen. This is very beautiful. It was his special commission to go to the Gentiles, but there is something more here—the deep yearning of the evangelist in the apostle—for He sums up all the gifts in this vessel, a very rare thing. The evangelist’s gift causes him to stir about and go to the unconverted; and the more fish he catches, the more he wants to catch. So when the Lord called Peter from his fishing to become a fisher of men, he also became an evangelist as well as an apostle. But as far as we may gather Peter cannot be behind the apostle Paul in his mission. “I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I but the grace of God that was with me.” Gift is capable of development. The talent must be used if the one talent is to become five, and the more we use the gift the more it increases. Now the apostle shows a true pastoral character as well. This epistle was addressed to saints, those “set apart” and “called saints” by God’s grace, just as he was called on the road to Damascus as an apostle and a saint too and it was as saints he wished to establish them. It is altogether fictitious to suppose that there are any successors of the apostles. A man who goes to an unexplored part may be called so, in a sense, but not in the strictly scriptural sense, “some apostles,” Eph. 4.

But the apostle's object was that those who came under his ministry should be established. Because I have peace with God it does not follow I am well grounded in the faith; so whether it is Peter or Paul, both endeavor to establish and encourage souls, 2 Pet. 1:12. Rom. 1:11.

The Lord Jesus had spoken of shame. He knew the tendency of our hearts when He said, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed," etc. Luke 9:26. No doubt it was addressed to Jews at that time, but the principle always holds good; so He puts the danger of shame as well as of fear. John the Baptist thought he might have made a mistake: his thought was fear, not shame.

The word "gospel" is the Saxon for glad tidings, but the gospel of the kingdom means the glad tidings of a coming kingdom, though this would remain in abeyance for a long time while the King is in heaven; but the sowing and the reaping would follow, and those He was addressing would shine forth in the kingdom of their Father, Matt. 13:43, but the Lord did not say then that those who believe are now translated into the kingdom of His Son, Col. 1:13. Yet that gospel of the kingdom was nothing to be ashamed of. But the disciples thought it, the kingdom in glory, was near at hand and were always asking when it was to be set up, Acts. 1:6. The Lord knew all that and what tribulation and trial they would go through to enter into it, Acts 14:22, and that it would produce shame and fear. The apostle spoke of the gospel of the glory (2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Tim. 1:2). To be an apostle he must have seen the Lord, and he says "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" 1 Cor. 9:1.

In Acts 9, 22, and 26, we get a three-fold account of Saul's conversion, and in each instance there is the sense of the Lord's personal presence. He has seen a vision and the center of it is the Lord; no doubt he was also caught up into Paradise, but he would not boast of it, He received the thorn in the flesh and three times besought the Lord to remove it (2 Cor. 12). If he must boast it should be in the cross etc. (Gal. vi. 14). It was necessary to sustain the revelation he had had. There was that which it was not lawful for a man to utter. The apostle John had his revelation, and he was enabled to tell it out with one exception (Rev. 10:4).

There is something between the Lord and the servant that is only given to the servant. It is very blessed to serve the Lord. Well may the apostle say, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel!"

"The gospel of glory" and "My gospel!" Now he goes on to show its power, power unto salvation. Each writer of the New Testament has got his special line of things, and we must not shake up all the epistles together, because there was never meant to be a harmony of these any more than of the Gospels. No harmony is wanted. It is contrast rather than comparison that is needed. But there is no discord. The Gospels give us One Person in four views, and each Epistle gives us its own line of things, looking at these from a different standpoint. The apostle John in the main looks at eternal life in his Epistle and as a present possession, taking up the instructions he had received. How we need to treasure the teaching of the apostle John now, and based upon his Gospel, when the Person of the Lord is assailed in His divinity and humanity! So the apostle shows us the truth about both. He deals with eternal life as a present fact. His teaching is abstract and positive. He records, "I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish." There is absolute security denoted in these words, and how much blessing and comfort they have been to the saints for many years! yet the enemy has not been slack in seeking to rob us of these.

Paul, in speaking of eternal life in this epistle, looks at it as something to be gained and striven after, and gained at the end. So he directs our attention to two classes of people. Chap. 1 is devoted to bringing out the gross immorality of heathendom which has given us all the corrupt religions in the world even to making a religion of sin deifying their very lusts. Then he takes up that which was not exactly religious. There was a class of people who had seen the folly of making a religion of their sin, and yet they did similar things themselves—this he brings out in chap. 2:6. “God will render to every man according to his works.” That is the subject of judgment, whether of the nations in Matt. 25; or at the great white throne, in Rev. 20; or of the judgment seat of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5. Every one shall receive the things done in the body. So it says here, “to these who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honor and immortality, eternal life; but unto these that are contentious and do not obey the truth... indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish” You see he is looking at eternal life here as a goal; so in chap. 6 where he traces the issue of things in verse 21, “the end of those things is death.” We must not forget that God said, “Dying thou shalt die,” to Adam, and in his sinning, death was wrought, and he would have died eternally had not God announced the Seed of the woman. Adam was a believer, for otherwise the end of these things would have been eternal death for him He now was mortal, and had to die. I know in the Old Testament eternal verities are not gone into, but I am showing the logical conclusion. But because of verse 22 it does not follow you have to wait to the end to receive., anything. You must begin with life. The new birth includes the thought of eternal life, and you cannot disengage these two truths. There is a necessity for the new birth, and with it the gift of eternal life.

But to come back to our verse 16. What a thought, “the power of God unto salvation!” Just think what is included. In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is called “So great salvation.” There we are on the ground of contrast. There were numerous temporal salvations and deliverances in times past, but none to compare with what we get in Hebrews. In Ex. 15, on the shores of the Red Sea, it was a great salvation, but here was a greater. Everything connected with Christ glorified is greater than anything before. Everything is greater, and heavenly, in contrast with what is earthly. But salvation is a continuing thing, not only a present deliverance from God's wrath, and future too, as promised to the Romans, (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:10); but all along the pilgrim pathway we experience God's delivering mercy, until the salvation of the body, when He gives us one like Christ's, Philippians 3. The apostle in this epistle not only speaks of what is doctrinal, but of what is very practical; and if it is not, the truth has not got hold of us at all. When we are finally established, then the apostle may give us exhorting, for he wants a practical people to be expositors of his doctrine. So he says (Romans 12:1, 2), “I beseech,” etc. Oh, what true missionaries of the gospel we everyone would be if these verses were fulfilled in us! The apostle was a living witness of this, so he says “I am not ashamed.” What a mighty change had been made in him! One who had sought to exterminate, now builds up (Galatians 1:23), and none built so firmly and strongly as he. Oh, the mighty power of faith! It is the ground of justification, here, and even to all. Faith is just as essential for our daily life as for forgiveness of sins. How often we get a rude awakening instead of simply reposing in God! “The just shall live by faith” is applied not only to my eternal safety but to my walk. The emphasis in Habakkuk 2:4 being upon live, as in Rom. 1:17 it is upon the word just, and Gal. 3:11 on faith.

E.B.D.

## Prophecy: 1. Object of Prophecy

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Scripture itself lays down, in a text already referred to, the criterion of its object so clearly as to preclude argument when it is understood. "And we have the prophetic word more sure whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a squalid place, until the day dawn and the daystar arise in your hearts; knowing this first that no prophecy of scripture is of its own interpretation. For not by man's will was ever prophecy brought, but men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:19-21).

Here we learn that the prophetic word was confirmed by the vision on the holy mount, where the King was seen transfigured, the Old Testament saints represented, the chosen witnesses of Israel in their natural bodies, and the Father's voice was heard from the excellent glory pronouncing his complacency in His Son, the center of the whole scene. The apostle, in his making known the transcendent blessings of the gospel, admits the value of taking heed to prophecy. It is like a lamp for those that need one where all is dark wretchedness till the heart appreciated evangelic daylight and, further, the heavenly hope of Christ coming to receive us to Himself, a light higher than the luminaries of heaven exceed a candle. How slow the Christian is to make good practically (and this the apostle urged) his own peculiar privileges! If it is so with us now, it was perhaps more so with those who then labored under Jewish prejudice and were unwilling to admit aught superior to that which Daniel or David, Moses or Abraham, enjoyed. Vain thought! which none would have reproved more sternly than those saints of old. Did not the prophets (and such they were) seek and search diligently who prophesied of the grace toward us, searching to what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ that was in them did point, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ (literally Christward), and the glories after them? To whom it was revealed that not unto themselves but unto us they ministered those things which were now announced to us by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into. Can any words more explicitly assert the peculiar blessing attached to this day of, not promise only, but accomplishment enjoyed in the power of a present Spirit? Among other results is the heavenly light so far surpassing the lamp of prophecy, good as this is. The hope is as much enhanced as the faith; and love proved, tasted, and shed forth as it could not be before, whatever be the reasoning or traditions of men.

But further, we have it laid down as a known first principle, that no prophecy is of its own (i.e., isolated) solution. Local and temporal circumstances give occasion; but it forms part of a great whole, of which Christ the King is the center. Taking it by itself is like severing a bough from a majestic tree, of which it is an integral part. All points to Him in that day. Hence the way in which both advents are connected habitually in the Old Testament, whilst the second is set forth prominently in the New. Hence the habit of the Spirit, when predicting the fall of Nineveh, Babylon, Tere, Egypt, etc., of ever linking them with the day of Jehovah when the Lord will in personal presence inflict vengeance on ungodly Jews and Gentiles. Making these prophecies of their own solution is when men stop short with present fact, and even misuse this to the deeper unbelief of effacing the great unraveling of that day when Jehovah alone shall be exalted, and every word

verified indisputably by divine judgment.

Such is the genuine unforced meaning of this scriptural canon. It is not “our,” viz., the readers', any more than “of one's own,” viz., the prophet's, solution; for neither is here in question. Not the prophet but the prophecy had as yet been before us. Nor again does *επιλυσις* mean production but “interpretation.” The verb *γινεται* here translated “is,” does not warrant any such thought. Even if we plead for its primitive force of becoming or coming, the meaning is that no prophecy of scripture becomes a matter of its own solution. It is by its nature such as to exclude isolated interpretation. It belongs to a vast system which has Christ and His kingdom for its object. For though the prophets were men, they “spoke from God” under the power of the Holy Spirit. He who used them to write is the only source of sound interpretation; which views each prophecy of scripture as a component part of God's testimony to Christ, in and by whom only His glory is secured and yet to be displayed.

This, it ought to be evident, excludes the notion that history interprets prophecy. Of course, man's history, as far as it is true, must coincide with prophecy, as far as it is accomplished; but what of the great mass of prophecy which bears on the day of Jehovah? Will it not be too late to get its interpretation then? The very text itself disproves the thought: prophecy was given as a lamp for the dark place all through; and now that Christ is come, a better light—the True Light—shines, at least for the sons of light and day, indeed for all who truly bow to Him. Plainly one must understand or interpret aright the prophecy, before it can be applied save by guesswork to any event of history; but even so, if this e made all, prophecy is made of private solution. In fact, it would be truer to say the converse—that prophecy interprets history; for God's mind is given in prophecy, which ever looks to Christ's glory, anything short of which is at best partial and misleading. The only effectual interpreter of prophecy, as of all scripture, is His Spirit, who deigns to work in the believer.

It is only then, as we seize the association of Christ with each subject coming before us in the prophetic word, that we really understand it as a whole or in detail. For the divine purpose is to display His glory on the earth, not only in a people called to the knowledge of Jehovah as His own, but with all nations yet to be blessed when His own people are blessed (Psalms 67; Isaiah 60).

It is Israel that have the earthly call and purpose of God, the nations then subordinately.

But there is blessing for none apart from Christ, the object, center, and security of all the promises of God. And this, in varied form and fullness, the Old Testament demonstrates. Of old a curse came, not the blessing, as the law was violated, God's witnesses were despised, and idolatry more and more prevailed, first in Ephraim, then in Judah, “till there was no remedy.” God's people not only vanished from the land of promise, but were pronounced Lo-ammi (not-My-people). The return from Babylon, important as it may be, was but provisional, and in no way the restoration of God's people, according to patriarchal promises or early and later prophets. It was only a remnant of Judah and Benjamin, with individuals of other tribes, especially of Levi, who were in time appointed to have their King, Messiah, presented to them, and alas! rejected disdainfully to death, but in that death glorifying God and atoning for sin, as He had already glorified the Father in a life that bespoke the Word made flesh, full of grace and truth. When the Jew rejected the testimony of the Spirit to the Messiah exalted in heaven, whom they had crucified on earth by the hand of lawless men, it was all over with the returned remnant, as before with the nation. The same evil

heart of unbelief which gave up Jehovah for idols, rejected Jehovah-Messiah in Jesus, as well as the gospel through His blood; and “wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” The King was wroth; and He sent His armies, and destroyed those murderers and burned their city, as the rejected Messiah forewarned.

Then God began a new call above, believers from among Jews and Gentiles united to Christ on high, as the one body, wherein is neither Jew nor Greek: all the distinctions blotted out, Christ all and in all. They are not of the world, as Christ is not; they are heavenly, as He is heavenly, though they be on the earth for the little while that God is calling them out. This explains why the church of God is not properly an object of prophecy, for prophecy regards the earth and living man upon it. But the members of Christ have died with Him, and belong to Him for heaven, being warned against “all that is in the world,” and exhorted to set their minds on things above; a state not at all contemplated by the prophetic word, which is, we saw, a lamp shining in a squalid place. This lamp we can use, and do well to heed; but we have by grace already a better light in our hearts, and are waiting for Him to take us where He is, the constant hope of the church, wholly independent of prophecy with its earthly times and seasons, its judgments and blessings under Messiah's government here below.

But has God cast away His people? This the apostle has answered elaborately in the Epistle to the Romans (chap. 11). To the saints in the metropolitan city of the world that then was, the Holy Spirit has declared on the contrary that the day is coming when “all Israel shall be saved” (Rom. 11:26), that is, all Israel who survive the tremendous judgments of that day. He, Paul, was himself a pledge of it; as in Elijah's time there was a remnant, so there was in the apostle's day. No doubt the men now, yet more than then, are blinded, and salvation is for the Gentiles, not to cast off the Jews but to provoke them to jealousy, as Moses predicted (Deuteronomy 32). Now, if their fall be the world's wealth, what will be their future rise? Life from the dead. After all, the Gentile was but a wild olive grafted into the olive tree of promise, and is warned not to be high-minded but to fear, seeing how God spared not the natural branches. It is only Gentile pride and delusion that Israel are gone forever to make themselves “the Israel of God,” and abide till time melts into eternity. Not so! Assuredly, if the Gentile abide not in God's goodness (and who will dare to affirm this?), he will be cut off, and the Jews will be grafted into their own olive tree. Then the apostle drops argument and figure, declaring in plain terms that a hardening in part (it has never been complete) has befallen Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in; “and so all Israel shall be saved,” according to the prophet (Isaiah 59:20). This will be the true restoration of Israel in the day of Jehovah, when the Gentiles meet with condign judgment at His hand. It is only fleshly Israel that can be said to be “enemies for your sake as touching the gospel.” It is only they who are “beloved for the fathers' sake, as touching the election.” What theologians call “the spiritual people,” “the Israel of God,” or believers, cannot answer to this language. It is the same people, enemies as regards the gospel yet beloved as regards election, who shall be saved. For, adds the apostle, the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance—they are subject to no change of mind on His part. God will assuredly restore is people yet.

Then does the great prophet join the great apostle. “For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In overflowing wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith Jehovah thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the

earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, saith Jehovah that hath mercy on thee” (Isaiah 54:7-10). So perfectly coincides the teaching of Paul with the prophecy of Isaiah; as both are set aside by the figment that it is henceforth only a question of the church, in which merge all that believe, whether Jew or Gentile: as if God had cast away His people according to Gentile conceit!

Without full credit to God's purpose in this respect, the prophets are unintelligible. Given the restoration of Israel, not only to their land, but to Jehovah their God, whom they will own and see in their manifested Messiah, the field of prophecy begins to be truly discerned. Jerusalem is the city of the great King. “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.” More than carnage may open “that day” when the garments, rolled in blood, shall even be for burning, for fuel of fire. But how blessed when they say, “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, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon the kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness henceforth even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6, 7).

Nor is this all. As grace called Gentiles when the Jews rejected the Messiah, so prophecy shows us Him in glory the Head of Israel and the Gentiles here below. “And it shall come to pass in that day [not in this], that the root of Jesse which standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek, and his resting-place shall be glorious” (Isaiah 11:10). “And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him [the Son of man]; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:14). “And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one.” (Zechariah 14:9).

The key of all is Christ seen in His various glory, not alone Only-begotten Son of God in personal right, but Christ Jesus a Man, dead, risen, and glorified in virtue of His work as well as person; Son of David, Son of Man, and withal, Head over all things to His church, the body of Him that filleth all in all. It is this fact which emerges with heavenly brightness in Ephesians and Colossians, as well as partially, elsewhere. It is the omission of it (the mystery, hid in God from the ages, now revealed), which enfeebles alike Fathers, Greeks, Orientals, Copts, Abyssinians, Romanists, Anglicans, Lutherans, Reformed, Moravians, Methodists, etc. Yet the proper character even of Christianity cannot be intelligently apprehended without it. Thus it is a far larger question than prophecy; for it affects all things spiritual, individual and corporate, inasmuch as we ought to be now on earth, as by and by in heaven, the answer and witness to Christ at God's right hand.

Hence also we need not disparage in the least the Old Testament saints, but can allow ungrudgingly their future and heavenly glory in reigning with Christ. Hence we can leave adequate room and time for the displayed Kingdom of Christ over the habitable world to come, which is therefore neither the present age nor yet eternity, but between the two. Then the Jews and the Gentiles shall be blessed under Christ's reign—Jehovah King over all the earth, the peoples all suitably and sovereignly blessed, none confounded one with another, still less with the bride the Lamb's wife, the new Jerusalem metropolis not of earth only but of the universe in heavenly glory,

yet specially connected with the earth. Even now on earth is neither Jew nor Gentile in that body of Christ, but He is all and in all.

Now there ought to be not the smallest hesitation about this great truth; for it is no question of prophecy as to its full revelation, but of the weightiest and plainest dogmatic scripture, as in Ephesians 1:9-10: "Having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself for the administration of the fullness of the times, to sum (or head) up all things in the Christ, the things in the heaven, and the things on the earth—in him, in whom also we were allotted (or obtained) inheritance, being fore-ordained according to the purpose of him that worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will." Thus it is sure that God's purpose in the coming economy is to put all the universe, heavenly and earthly, under Christ as head, we who believe (whether Jews or Gentiles) being His joint-heirs in this unbounded and glorious inheritance; of which, as the apostle proceeds to explain, the Holy Spirit, who has sealed us unto that day of redemption, is meanwhile the earnest in our hearts. The latter part of Colossians 1 may be compared in proof of the general purpose grounded on the work of the cross, and of the church's special relationship with Christ as the head of His body. Hence we shall reign in that day with Christ, not certainly giving up our characteristic blessings in heavenly places, and therefore, as Revelation 5 10 says "over" rather than "on" the earth, where the Jews shall have the central place and first dominion (Micah 4), and the Gentiles willingly bow, even their kings and queens, to Jehovah's disposal and ordering (Isaiah 11; 49; 60; 66).

It is thus the special relationship with Christ that makes all clear in scripture, and assigns the just place to each, whether to Israel, or to the Gentiles. As the church was part of "the mystery," which is expressly declared to be hid from ages and generations and hid in God, it is never as such the subject matter of the prophets, though principles of the glorious future are already verified in and applied to the gospel now. We may regard it as bound up with, and eclipsed in, Christ (comp. Isaiah 1:8, 9, with Rom. 8:33, 34). But when the day is come for the display of His glory before the universe, Rev. 21 shows the bride, the Lamb's wife, as the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, the witness of grace, even then with healing for the nations (22:2); as the earthly Jerusalem will be the witness still of earthly righteousness. "For that nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (Isaiah 60:12). She, in the heavenly places, will reign with Christ over the earth; Israel will be reigned over, but the inner circle on earth, as the Gentiles also more distantly but blessed indeed.

What throws all prophecy into confusion, darkness, and error, is making ourselves, the church, its object. This the church is not. Give Christ, the true center, His place; then everything falls into order, and shines in the light of God before our souls. Such is the effect of God's word intelligently enjoyed by His spiritual power. Without it all vision becomes "as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee, and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned" (Isaiah 29 2, 12). "By faith we understand." There is no other way, nor ought there to be.

W. K.

## Prophecy: 2. Occasion of Prophecy

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The occasion, or moral ground, of prophecy is departure from God, who sends thereon His word, which convicts of the sin, and holds out His intervention in power to deliver those who believe, by the judgment of His and their adversaries. This we see verified in Eden from the fall of man. God at once appears on the scene, brings home to conscience the sin of each, and, in pronouncing judgment on the Serpent, points to the blessing that hangs on the triumph of the bruised Seed of woman, the bruiser of the Serpent's head. A state of innocence before, or of fidelity afterward, drew out no prophecy; which, on the contrary, laid the evil of the creature bare, and held out God's sure resource in bringing in not only judgment of the evil, but a better hope: the first man superseded by the Second.

So it is always as a general principle. If Enoch prophesied, it was, Behold, the Lord came with His holy myriads to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly works, and of all their hard speech against Him, If Noah so opened his mouth, it was the wickedness of Canaan that drew out the curse, whatever the blessing to Shem and Japheth. It was the foreseen oppression of Egypt and iniquity of the Amorites that formed the background for the predicted gift of the promised land to the seed of Abraham; and it was the too plain failure of his sons which led the way for dying Jacob to tell beforehand what should befall them in the latter days, culminating in the advent of Shiloh, to whom the obedience (or gathering) of the peoples shall be, however long the interval between the first part and the second. Man's theory is that the people of Israel, their kings, and their prophets, stand forth in the history and in the prophecy of scripture as the representatives of God's cause and of goodness; and that as the history shows them imperfect representatives, so they can only be imperfectly the subjects of predicted blessings, which did or did not belong to them in the measure of their faithfulness. Thus Moab was not all evil, Israel was not all good. Prophecy spoke without reserve of God's triumphs and of His servants: if Israel belongs to God only imperfectly, her share in God's triumphs must in that proportion be imperfect also. But the theory does not hold: for it is alleged on the one hand that Moab, Ammon, Amalek, are vanished out of history; it is allowed on the other that Israel exists still unchanged. Yet what were the sins of those nations compared with Israel's, if at least we bow to the Lord's estimate (Matt. 11:21-24)? Jonah's case, too, is misused to prove that it all depends on circumstances whether prophecy could be fulfilled or not. In all cases the fulfillment is supposed to fall short of the strength of the prediction, because it was aimed at a more unmixed good and evil than ever was in any people. Christ, therefore, remains the real subject of all prophecy for good; the Son of David has reigned for more than eighteen hundred years, owned over all the earth as King and Lord, and of His kingdom there shall be no end!

Scripture in no way sanctions this sliding scale, and the uncertain or partial fulfillment it involves. The only thing true is that Christ is the object and security, not only of all God's promises to faith, but of executing His wrath and threats. He is the Son of God, in whom there is life eternal for those that believe; He is the Son of man, the executor of judgment on those that believe not. That God used Jonah's preaching to awaken the Ninevites to repentance for a season did not hinder.

Nineveh's utter ruin ere long, as Nahum predicted, nor Nahum's going on to the last Assyrian, when Jehovah will make a full end, and affliction shall not rise up a second time. He may go forth in the pride of power, imagining evil against Jehovah; but, behold, upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! Keep thy feasts, O Judah, perform thy vows; for the worthless shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off. The Ruler out of Bethlehem shall be thy peace, when the Assyrian shall come into the land. Prophecy whatever it may take in of partial accomplishment, stays not short of the consummation at the end of the age, when He, whose right it is, takes the Kingdom. Thus what is partially accomplished amply encourages that faith which ever waits and longs for His appearing, whilst it furnishes material, because it is necessary partial till then, for the unbelief which doubts the past and disregards the future, because its pleasure and its confidence are in man, not in the true God whom it knows not.

But the thoughts even of good men are far from God's mind and counsel; and deeply interesting it is to trace how true it is that moral ruin in man's past brings out more and more God's voice in prophecy. Never were the Israelites in the wilderness lower than when Balaam was hired of Balak to curse them, after their manifold unfaithfulness in the day of temptation. His false prophet went forth to meet! But Jehovah met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth. In His moral government He passes over no fault in His people, but blames and chastises. Before the enemy He brings out His thoughts and grace and purposes of glory. Every effort of Balak draws forth a fresh blessing from Balaam, compelled to be the mouthpiece in Jehovah's hand. Israel dwell alone, are justified, and beautiful in God's eyes; they have Messiah coming to be their crown of glory and power. But even so it is Israel, and not some other people, and carrying all expressly on to "the latter days." For no prophecy of scripture is of its own or isolated interpretation. It is part of God's revelation in view of Christ's glory on earth in that day.

So Moses' song in Deut. 32 flows from Jehovah's unchangeable purpose, whatever the undisguised failure of Israel, the center of His government of the world (ver. 8). The very call of the Gentiles is but to provoke them to jealousy (ver. 21), as the apostle drew from this long after, when it came to pass (Romans 10). No doubt, the Gentiles proved utterly unworthy, and God will take vengeance on them (vers.40-42); but even when He restores Israel as He will (ver.36), He calls the Gentiles to rejoice with His people (ver. 43); a principle already, as we know, accomplished in the gospel, but to be fulfilled in the Kingdom of Messiah.

When the priests failed as fully as the people, we hear of Samuel raised up on God's part; as Peter says (Acts 3), "beginning With Samuel and all the prophets." And as the prophet was raised up in sovereign grace to speak for God, so a King is held out even before this as the hope of Israel. "And I will raise me up a faithful priest that shall be according to that which is in my heart and in my mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed forever." The Messiah is the key, the King in God's counsel, the new and only true Anointed, before whom the priest should walk (soon to have an earnest in David and Solomon, who rejected the house of Ithamar, and brought forward Zadok of the line of Phinehas), as will be seen fully in the Kingdom.

Then, when the kings even of David's line fail more and more palpably, the prophets proper, who were inspired to write their imperishable books whether on a great or on a lesser scale, were raised up of God. Here, if we take Isaiah as a sample of the greater, and Hosea of the less, we may see the same principle as clearly at least as ever. For the introductory chapters (1-5) of Isaiah

self-evidently lay the ruin of Israel as the basis of his announcing divine intervention in judgment of evil, and mercy to the repentant remnant, as chapter 6 reveals his formal inauguration on that very ground. Nor is Hosea 1 less explicit, called during the same kings of Judah, but adding Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, with children given as signs of the kingdom ceasing from the house of Israel; of no mercy thereon; and, what was still more serious, of Lo-Ammi pronounced; yet withal of the gathering of both another day under one head; “for great shall be the day of Jezreel,” thus carrying us on to the glorious scenes of the latter day. In both the ruin was imminent and irretrievable, save provisionally, till Messiah reign over the earth.

But Christ was wholly rejected in that capacity, as the New Testament clearly shows, in fulfillment of Psalms 2 and a crowd of Old Testament prophecies. He has never reigned for one day as Son of David. Undoubtedly the cross brought in higher things, and He sits on the Father's throne, where David never did, never will sit; as by-and-by He will sit on His own throne. Then not only will the holy hill of Zion be the seat of His power, but He will ask and receive the nations for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession, to break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel—a statement of His rule clearly future, and incompatible with His grace as now under the gospel. And though we Christians gladly own Him Lord, “King” does not express His relation to us, but Head, for we are members of His body; and the difference is as momentous in practice as in doctrine. In that day, when Israel is restored, and spiritually as well as literally in their land under Messiah and the new covenant, the nations shall be blessed, and bow before the Son of man. In that day the races that have vanished out of history will once more reappear, according to prophecy, as Isaiah distinctly declares (chap. 11:14), and others also. The mouth of Jehovah has spoken it. Infidels cry, Impossible. Good men as credulously listen to their vanity, as they fear to trust the word that lives and abides forever. But God will justify it in its time, and all the more, because not a trace appears now. Scripture cannot be broken. Races remain, whatever the shiftings of time, place, or circumstances, as Jehovah will prove in honor of His King.

John 13:31, 32, puts the case from His own lips in the light of God. The moral glory of the cross is the basis of the Son of man's heavenly glory, and this straightway, i.e., without waiting for the Kingdom which He is to receive, when He returns in visible power and splendor. Then only will the inhabitants of the world learn the righteousness which they dislike and disdain; while favor is shown as now in the gospel of grace to the wicked (Isaiah 26:9, 10). Meanwhile Jesus is a world-rejected Lord, but on the throne of His Father—a seat which none ever had or can share; and He will only take His own throne (Revelation at His coming. And hence the only true place of the Christian now, according to the uniform strain of New Testament teaching and sanctioned practice, is where fellowship with Christ's sufferings and conformity to His death are the highest privileges. We who are His are called in the measure of our faith and love to share loyally His reproach in separation from the world till He comes, who is Lord of all. Then shall we be with Him where He is and forever; then too shall we reign with Him, instead of being blessed and reigned over here below: a prospect bright beyond all thought, so that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory.

## Prophecy: 3. Sphere of Prophecy

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Prophecy is occupied, not with heaven, but with the earth, and consequently with Israel and the nations. This is evident to any familiar with its general scope or its details. Principles which apply in the highest degree to the Christian, the gospel, or the church, may and do appear therein. But the more closely the prophets are scrutinized, the more evident it becomes that Christianity and the church as such lie outside its purview, and that a wholly different condition is contemplated: the government of the world, or divine dealings there to introduce it, not the action of heavenly grace by the power and presence of the Spirit, uniting those who believe, freed or justified from sin, to Christ their Head on high.

Hence it is, as the attentive reader of scripture will not fail to discern, that times and seasons and external signs, as they are not for heaven, so belong not to heavenly men while on earth, save as they may read and understand them concerning others. They are given in profusion about God's earthly people, whether for their own help directly, or to signify God's hand on their enemies. Where the Jew is concerned, alike in the New Testament as in the old, there do we find those suited landmarks. The hope of the Christian and of the church stands wholly on the Lord's sure promise of love. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am [there] ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). It is His word, expressly and wholly independent of earthly events.

As their faith, so is their hope. Pharaoh was not in question, nor Balak, nor Sihon, nor Og, nor the many hostile kings of Canaan. Satan did resist to blood by human instruments; but an infinitely greater must be met in death and judgment of sin. And so it was in the life of Christ, if we read it, as we ought, in the light of heaven and eternity. There sin is seen leveling all distinctions, and no difference before God between Jew and Gentile is proclaimed; for all are lost. But grace through faith saves all equally and forever, and constitutes a new man of which Christ is head above, wherein is neither Jew nor Gentile, but all are one in Him. This is the church, the fruit of sovereign favor, the heavenly Eve of the last Adam. It has nothing to do now with the government of the world, or with the execution of earthly judgments. God in love gave His Only-begotten Son, not only to become man for us men, but even to be made sin for us sinners, that we might become God's righteousness in Him, yea, and be raised up together with Him and seated together in heavenly places indeed, in the glory of His grace: for His own counsels in Christ alone account for it all. We are accordingly called to a walk quite different from that which was imposed by the law on the ancient people of God; created, as the apostle says, "for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them," the details of which fill the New Testament in general. Our worship too is confessedly distinctive, as is our service or ministry. Christ is the center and object and expression of all, as the Holy Ghost is the power acting by the word of God. And the heavenly hope is the crown: His own coming, we are sure of soon, we know not when, to receive us to Himself and present us with Himself in the Father's house on high.

Prophecy, strictly so called, is quite distinct, and bears directly on the future tribulation, whether that which is called “the great one,” out of which God-fearing Gentiles come from every nation and tribe and people and tongue, or the unparalleled hour of Jacob's trouble, out of which he will be saved. In either we never hear of the church; and no wonder. For the Lord, apart from those predicted sorrows, will have called us to meet Him in the air; so that we follow Him from heaven when He appears to deliver the Jews and Israel, who are ready to be swallowed up by their adversaries. On all this the lamp of prophecy sheds its light, deeply needed for the squalid place of the world. But we can say believingly, and without presumption, that we are not of the world, for Himself has told us so. We therefore find a better hope spread before us in His word, though many lose it by confounding it with the just expectation of the Jewish remnant, who look for deliverance by His appearing to take vengeance on their foes. Our hope has no such connection, as it is by our being caught up to meet Him. It is the translation of heavenly grace. For “that day” we come along with Him from heaven. Hence when Christ, our life, shall be manifested, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory. “The day” is a time of displayed divine power, when “every eye” shall see, and Jehovah be exalted in that day. On this all prophecy converges.

“The land,” and the earth too as a whole, will then become a direct object of divine blessing; and the reader of Old Testament scripture is inexcusable, who overlooks the many obvious places in which God pledges Himself to this end. Doubtless His people and the nations are nearer to His heart; but the long groaning earth, the creation travailing in pain together until now, shall be set free from the bondage of corruption into the liberty (not of grace, which is for souls by the Spirit now, but) of the glory of the children of God at Christ's appearing. Does this surprise or offend any? It was here the Son of God, who created all, became man, and lived, and died, by the grace of God. It was here was manifested the wonder of a divine person, humbling Himself in obedience unto death—yea, death of the cross. It was here God was glorified in the Holy One made sin; and here that Satan was vanquished forever by Him who had accomplished redemption by His blood, and was raised in power according to the Spirit of holiness. If heaven and God's throne be the worthy reward, this earth shall be delivered and reconciled. It may be a little spot compared with the universe, but it is the little spot where He wrought in divine love a work matchless in value, to which not man only is indebted for blessing, but God for His retrieved moral glory, and in virtue of which blessing the man who believes is made God's righteousness. If sin of the first Adam subjected all to vanity, how meet it is that the Second man should more than restore all things! How blessed that Satan should be banished, not only grace as now reigning to eternal life in Christ; and that Christ, no longer hidden, should establish the rejoicing earth with His power and blessing, yet still to the glory of God the Father!

Undoubtedly our best portion is in Christ and with Christ where He is, to share His love and see His glory: better even than being manifested in the glory which the Father has given Him and He has given us, when we shall be perfected in one, that the world may know that the Father sent Christ and loved them as He loved Him. For they appear together in the same heavenly glory, as we see in Rev. 17:14; 19:14; 21:9, etc. But every spiritual mind will feel that it is far better to have Christ's desire fulfilled, for which He asks the Father as to that which He has given Him—that where He is they also may be with Him, that they may behold His glory which the Father has given Him, for He loved the Son before the world's foundation. There shall we be in the richest grace; nothing else could explain it, as it all depends on the Father and the Son, and is outside all

prophecy, save so far as the very exceptional glimpses of Rev. 21:22 may suppose, if not reveal it, We can account readily for this exception; because at that time those who are heavenly enter with Christ on the reign over the earth; and it is exactly the province of prophecy to speak of God's government of the world, which cannot be in the full sense till Christ has taken His great power and reigns, and we shall reign with Him.

There is thus a two-fold error to avoid. Many, if not all, the post-apostolic fathers of early date were chiliasts (without noting heterodox men); and their tendency doubtless was to see little, if at all, more than the earth glorious and the glorified saints with Christ: an unworthy view which not only gave up heaven, but shut out Israel from the Messiah and the new covenant, to say nothing of the Gentiles, blessed distinctively on the earth. Revolting from the thought of nothing higher than the millennial earth, Origen, Jerome, Augustine, &c., thought only of heaven for those that are Christ's, and saw no prospect for Israel and the nations, beyond coming into Christianity by the gospel as now preached, which they conceived to constitute Christ's everlasting dominion, where all nations should serve Him in perpetuity. Moderns etherealized yet more, so that the soul practically became all for heaven at death, and resurrection faded away save in name. Revival of prophetic study and testimony recovered many from views so vague. But rarely have the children of God taken in the full truth of placing all things, both those in heaven and those on earth, under Christ as Head and the heavenly saints, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, thus comprehending the universe as His, both heavenly and earthly, to the glory of God the Father. This alone maintains the promised earthly blessings of the Old Testament not set aside but sealed in the New Testament, leaves room for all that divine mercy has in store for Israel and the nations and creation generally, and without confusion conciliates with the accomplishment of the prophets the resurrection glory of the departed saints from the beginning, and above all, the incomparable results of the mystery of Christ and the church, now revealed in the New Testament, then to be displayed in the heavens and over the earth.

Thus also is the progressive character of the divine dealings made evident. For under Christ's reign in this fulness of glory, Israel will advance from the old to the new covenant, and their Messiah glorified, as the church from her present anomalous ruin to be the glorious bride of Christ; and all nations be delivered from their infidelity, superstitions, and other abominations, to flourish in righteousness and peace; the whole earth be filled with His glory, and the heavens no longer severed through the first man's sin, but maintained in the power of the Second man from heaven. Not only is there nothing retrograde in any sphere, but there is blessed progress everywhere for heaven and earth. It is only from looking at part of the coming glory that Christians have failed to seize the truth of an advance so marked and universal.

Prophecy then treats of the earthly people, or rather the righteous remnant (Isaiah 1, 4, 6, 10, etc.), saved by the Lord's appearing for the destruction of their enemies, not by translation to heaven, as the heavenly saints will know like Christ Himself, without any dealing in vengeance on the world. The difference is simple and complete. Hence it connects itself with daylight dawning and the day-star rising in the heart, as compared with the prophetic lamp. Our hope rests on the assurance of His love, that He will come and take us to heaven; prophecy tells of blessing and glory for Israel and the nations too on earth by the judgment He will execute on its evil. Hence a Christian might and ought to be waiting for Christ with all his heart, who knew little of prophecy, however good to be known in its place; as on the other hand, souls might be familiar with

prophecy, on whose heart that heavenly hope has scanty power, if it have dawned there at all. The apostle Peter was solicitous that the believers he addressed, besides heeding prophecy, should enjoy a brighter light and the hope that belongs to it.

Thus, to say nothing of “burdens” on the various nations that assailed or oppressed Israel, it is striking to observe that the blessed result of prophecy is, in every case where it is predicted, associated not with the energy of divine grace as now in the gospel, but with the unmistakable execution of God's judgments at the close of the age. Who does not hail with joy the assurance that “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). It is certain, however, that the prophet declares that the Lord shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips (cf. Isaiah 30:27, 33) slay the wicked (11:4), as introducing this blessedness here below. The apostle cites this in 2 Thessalonians 2:8, and binds it up with the manifestation of the Lord Jesus. Moses had referred to the same thing in Numbers 14:21. Judgment there too, not preaching the gospel, is connected with filling all the earth with the glory of Jehovah. Habakkuk 2:12-14 is yet more explicit; for after pronouncing woe on violence and iniquity, the prophet asks if it is not of Jehovah, that the peoples labor for the fire, and the nations weary themselves for vanity. “For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.” What the peoples toil at is but for the fire to consume; their weariness for vanity (cf. Jeremiah 51:58) the judgments of the Lord will demonstrate, but will do more and better. They will cause the earth to be filled with the knowledge of His glory. Then only will the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness, whatever be the vain hopes of Gentile conceit. Not the gospel in man's mouth, but judgment in the Lord's hand, will inaugurate the earth's deliverance, blessing, and glory (compare Daniel 2:35, 44, 45; 7:11-14). The gospel is now calling and forming souls, apart from the world, for heaven.

## Prophecy: 4. Language of Prophecy

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As much is often essayed to mystify prophecy on the score of its language, it may be well here to notice the subject a little.

The fact is that all language is more or less figurative, more especially where it is poetic or impassioned. History, if it be not a dead chronicle, abounds with figure; but none the less does it aim, or at least profess, to give nothing but the truth: Simple language is distinguished from figurative, though both styles are freely used and understood readily in all compositions, as well as in oral address and ordinary conversation. Carnal and spiritual are the true correlatives, as also literal and mystical, but these respectively apply to the sense of what is said or written, rather than to the diction. Allegory, parable (or its abbreviation in proverb), and symbol, again, are varieties of form in which truth may be conveyed, but they ought not to be confounded with figurative language. A symbol may be a material object, actually existing, and applied morally; or it may be made up by combining in one a variety of existing objects, so as to give God's moral view of what is thus revealed, as the four beasts or Gentile imperial powers of Daniel 7, the fourth of which re-appears in Revelation 11-19. But symbolic language is exceptional, and seems limited to prophecy during the times of the Gentiles. It is in no way characteristic of prophecy in general. In every case what was conveyed was real, not artificial: when accomplished, it is history from the divine side. It must never be forgotten, however, that whatever the form or figure employed, the subject matter referred to in prophecy is not ideal but real, any more than in the rest of Scripture. It may be a fact or a place, a person or a people, a time or a state of things. Simple language may be used alone, or with figures to impart vividness, as in all speech; or symbol may be the method, as sometimes in Ezekiel and Zechariah, and yet more in Daniel and the Revelation; but what is conveyed is a reality, and not a figure. Poetical elevation is not uncommon, any more than figurative representation; and only in an exceptional way, as in Daniel 11, have we the revelation of events successive in relation to each other, though with gaps first and last, for which room is carefully made in the terms of the prophecy itself, before the grand terminus of all, the conflict of the close, in which figures for the first time "the king" in "the land," as distinct from him of the north and him of the south. "The King" it is as idle to confound with Antiochus Epiphanes as with the Pope or Buonaparte. It is the final catastrophe, ending where all the visions of Daniel, and we may say generally of the prophets, do end, in the coming Kingdom of the Messiah. As they have one divine authority, so have they one glorious, consummation, when He takes His great power and reigns. Thus, as all prophecy looks to that end, none is of private or isolated interpretation. It is the Spirit glorifying Christ, when He shows the things that are to come.

The Revelation, as it is the latest, so it is by far the most elaborate, of all prophetic books, consisting throughout of visions, in which symbolic objects fill a larger place than anywhere else in Scripture. Still it is to be observed that the prophet conveys literally what he saw in the plainest language. The objects and acts in the scenes which he in the Spirit saw, and the words announced to his ears, are given with precision. The symbols we have to study and comprehend in the light of general usage and of the particular context; for symbolic forms, though less pliant

than the ordinary expressions of thought, are, like the rest, modified by their associations; and the Holy Spirit alone can guide rightly in this and in all else of Scripture; as common sense does in the affairs and intercourse of natural life. Save in the symbolism which forms a comparatively small part of prophecy, its language differs only in degree from that of Scripture generally, and must be interpreted on exactly the same principle. Indeed even the symbolic portion finds its counterpart in the types not only of the Pentateuch, but of Scripture history as a whole. The form may vary according to divine wisdom but one mind and purpose will be found to pervade all. Every scripture is inspired of God; and as Christ is the image of the invisible God, and He alone declared the Father, so is He the object of all revelation and others only appear as related to Him.

The late Dr. P. Fairbairn (*Prophecy*, 86), who sought to allegorize the prophetic word, contends that, if Genesis 3:15 is to be read literally, "it speaks merely of the injuries to be received from serpents on the one side, and of the killing of serpents on the other: and any member of Eve's future family, who might have the fortune to kill a serpent, should by so doing, verify the prophecy." But no spiritual mind could tolerate such an interpretation, no fair mind allow the relevancy of the argument. Jehovah Elohim addressed the tempter, and winds up His sentence by the words (so pitifully travestied for controversial purposes) which, understood in simple faith, have comforted believers from that day to this. It is burlesque, not argument, and utterly vain to maintain that Israel means the church, or that Jerusalem means the New Jerusalem, which is the desired conclusion. Nor is there the slightest force in explaining away the bearing of Isaiah 40:3, which was accomplished in the Baptist's ministry preparing the way of Jehovah as Isaiah 53 was in Messiah's humiliation and atonement. But all that these scriptures say is not yet fulfilled, and cannot be till His second advent in power and glory, which will, make good every word which the allegorical school dissipate into thin air. The rejection of the herald and of his Lord has suspended very important parts of both predictions as of prophecy in general, which wait "that day," when Jerusalem's heart shall hear what is spoken, and rejoice that her warfare is accomplished and her iniquity is pardoned: then the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. Even the first prophecy, like the great mass, awaits that day for its full effect in the execution of judgment on the Serpent. For prophecy, as the rule, lets us see the glorious end of God when Christ takes His great power and reigns. We may and ought to see what faith alone can see now; but the future King of glory will be the public display to every eye.

Those whose theory it is that all prophecy is ideal, have to face the fact that a vast deal given out by the prophets has been fulfilled literally. Ignorant self-will denies in vain what is patent. Its accomplishment is plain in Nineveh and Babylon, in Tiro and Sidon, in Edom and Egypt, as well as in the Medo-Persian and the Macedonian powers, to say nothing of Rome; above all, in Israel before the Assyrian and Chaldean captivities, and in the subsequent partial return of the Jews to be dispersed again, as they were by the Romans, still more terribly after the Cross and the rejected gospel. In the predictions simple language, figures, and symbols were employed as God saw fit; but the cities, the nations, and the lands were known historically, as the changes were punctually accomplished; and many an unbeliever has been arrested by this evidence, to learn still better and deeper things from God's Word, even Christ and His redemption.

Take an example of symbol in Ezekiel 17. The parable is as determinate as if the prediction had been couched in literal terms. The scripture itself interprets the first great eagle as the king of Babylon, the second as Pharaoh. By the breaking off the topmost twig of the cedar of Lebanon,

and placing it in a city of traffic was meant the king of Babylon putting down Jehoiachin and carrying him captive to Babylon. By the taking of the seed of the land to become a vine of low stature, we are to understand his setting Zedekiah (for so Mattaniah was now named by the conqueror) to be his vassal king in the land. The king of Egypt, though typified by a great eagle with great wings and much plumage, is not said to be of long pinions, nor with feathers of various colors like the king of Babylon. Yet Zedekiah breaks his oath, and turns for aid to Egypt against Babylon, to the destruction of his kingdom by Jehovah's decree. The manner of conveyance differs from that of history; but the parties in view, and the results of the action, are no less certain, fixed, and exclusive. If there are general lessons in divine prophecy, so there are in inspired history. Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh-Hophra (the Apries of the Greeks, and perhaps Psamatik III of the Egyptian monuments) are here intended, and none else. So it is with the two deposed Jewish kings

But it has been contended with no small assurance that Ezekiel, referring to Isaiah 2, connects it with circumstances which oblige us to understand the elevation of the sacred mount spiritually, and as verified in what has already been, and not in what is to be. The reference is dim to moderate eyes, without disputing that the elevation of Moriah is of a moral kind. But the evidence is certain that the glorious promise is future in both chapters. In the tender young twig from the highest branch of the lofty cedar is undoubtedly meant the Son of David, and not Zerubbabel. Yet it is not the first advent, but the second, which is in the perspective of the prophecy. It is the Kingdom, and in no way the church. Never will the "little stone" expand into the great mountain that fills all the earth till the blow is struck on the toes of the image of the Gentile powers, and breaks them all into pieces, like chaff to be swept away by the wind. The lowly condition of Messiah is no doubt pointed out here, but yet more the power and glory of His Kingdom, when He is set, as He will be set, on His holy hill of Zion. The church, on the contrary, is unfaithful to her calling, if she be not a despised pilgrim and stranger here below, as He was, till she joins her coming Bridegroom in the air, before she appears with Him, when He appears to fulfill His glory over all the earth, as He will in that day. Symbolic language therefore is no more vague than any other.

Again, the attempt to turn the prophetic style and diction into an engine for setting one prophecy in opposition to another is unworthy of a Christian. Isaiah. 56:7; 8:60; 66:21-23, are in no conflict with Isaiah 56:3-5; 65:17; 66:1-3, any more than Jeremiah 3:6 with Jeremiah 30:18-22; 31:31; 33:15-22. Such objections spring from ignorance; for evidently the statements arrayed, one against another, are quite consistent, and teach distinct truths. So Ezekiel's last vision, where the temple is so important on earth, in no way contradicts John's last vision of the New Jerusalem on high, wherein is no temple. These cavils are a fair sample of the follies of spiritualizing, which confounds heaven with earth, and sets prophet against prophet, and even the same inspired men against themselves. It is too sad to find such teaching in a believer, set forth and accepted with no small blowing of trumpets, though worthy only of an infidel. But it may be for the very reason the more instructive a warning against false principles of interpretation. Nor is it prophecy only that is misunderstood. The error substitutes Jewish for Christian relationship to our Lord, destroys that bridal separateness which is enjoined on the church (2 Corinthians 11:2, and so forth), and consecrates desires and ways of undisguised worldliness to the dishonor of God and His word about us.

Granted that prophecy in each case exceeds what history can tell. This is an essential constituent of its character. It is a vast system of divine prediction, the center of which circle is Christ, and Christ assuming by God's gift the government of the world with Israel nearest to Him at the end of this age. If the prophecies, even about races supposed to have vanished, were exhausted, every one might be made of its own interpretation. But it is not so. They look expressly onward to "that day." Their partial accomplishment is the pledge of all that remains to be fulfilled. Faith, accepting the part, assuredly awaits the whole.

Unbelief, over-looking the divine mind, works evilly in two forms. Some are too instructed to deny the tallying of facts with the words of the prophets. Starting with the assumption that prediction is impossible, they essay to prove that the alleged predictions must have been written after the event. Hence the importance of knowing when the prophet wrote; for, this once clear, their inspiration by God flows from the correspondence of word and fact, which is confessed. There is another class however, who, if they could, would pare down or eliminate all exactitude, and reduce the word of prophecy as much as possible to general principles and ideal forms, without definite line or historical issue. Vagueness of interpretation is so complete that even in the Apocalypse distinct prediction is nowhere, unless there remain enough Protestantism to discern Romanism in Babylon.

It is vain to reason from the curse on "the Serpent," or the raising up of "David" in the future (Ezekiel 34), against a strict and full accomplishment of prophecy. All who are worthy of consideration agree that the context demands the great enemy in the one case, and the great King of Israel in the other; all repudiate a lowering literalism, with which the surrounding words are incompatible. There is a genuine as well as a spurious literalism, with figures interspersed, as in Isaiah 2 or 40, which none but adversaries urge in their efforts after allegory. As vain is it to argue the discrepancy of Isaiah in his later chapters, which await the days of the world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; as do the passages cited from Jeremiah, and yet more obviously Ezekiel. That Revelation 21 is symbolical is true, as it treats of a heavenly object; whereas all the others speak of Israel and the Gentiles on the earth in plain terms, with figures here and there. Scripture is perfectly consistent. The fault is in the confusion of its mis-interpreters. Israel and Judah mean the two houses or families of Jacob's posterity, and none other; Zion and the mountain of Jehovah's house, mean the seats of the throne and the temple respectively in the land, and the Gentiles are the nations of the earth, distinct from Israel here below, and from the church and risen saints generally on high. The attempt to spiritualize these objects is a mere dream, which no idealist among the Christians at least has ventured to act on consistently. For the theory is that all these objects distinguished in prophecy are the Christian church now, or in the future, under the gospel. What? Israel, Judah, Jerusalem, and the New Jerusalem, Zion, Moriah, and the blessed Gentiles too! Can any scheme to interpret be more despairing or grotesque? It is really the aim of the enemy to discredit and destroy the true force of the prophecy, and thus of God's Word altogether. The result is little but cloudland, as it would be wholly, if it were applied logically throughout.

If it had been drawn from an induction of Scripture that prophecy is not mere history anticipated, but admits of a perspective, and that an accomplishment may be true and not complete, that only the manifested Kingdom of our Lord in a day yet to come will exhaust it in its opening, its establishment, and its results, no sober Christian could rightly deny this. But the principle is false;

for as the rule, prophecy sets forth divine intervention, not in grace, as in the gospel, but in judgment and power, as in the world-kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. There are common grounds of mercy and exceptional hints, which were fulfilled in part, and justify the gospel meanwhile, as the New Testament shows. But prophecy cannot be fulfilled as a whole till Christ be glorified in Israel and their land, the center of earth's promised blessing, of which it speaks abundantly. Incredulity avails itself, not only of extravagant spiritualizing on the part of erring Christians, but of fulfillment not yet complete, to deny what has been really accomplished. Let us search and see how that part was accomplished, and thus learn what to expect for the future. That there were great moral principles, that there was a manifestation of God's ways and glory, is most true; but these are actual facts before all eyes. All this we shall find in the light of the New Testament; not less, but far more, we may surely expect for the day when every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him, whatever the peace, joy, and blessing, and glory that follow.

But it is pleaded by the allegorists of the Old Testament, that the Apostle Paul in particular sanctions their principle of interpretation; and as they cite in proof Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 4:26; 6:16 and Hebrews 12:22. These scriptures, however, do not touch the question, and are therefore invalid for their purpose. Let us review them in their order.

In the first, the apostle is expressly arguing with the Jew from Romans 2:17, and charging home his guilt notwithstanding his privileges; as he had dealt with the Gentile in the latter half of Romans 1, and in the first half of Romans 2 with the speculative moralist, who might pique himself on being no longer an idolater. In order to afford any show of reason, the text in question should have been an address to Gentiles treating them now as Jews; whereas it is to the Jew strictly and exclusively, to show that his privileges can in no way screen him if ungodly, and that he only is an accepted Jew who is so inwardly. There is not a thought accordingly of calling believing Gentiles, Jews.

Nor is there any satisfactory ground in Galatians 6:26; and this is the more in point because the apostle does say that Abraham's two sons, and their mothers, contain an allegory; not the language of the prophets, but the person and facts in Genesis. "Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to the Jerusalem that now is; for she is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother," the critical text rejecting the word "all." The truth is that this scripture disproves the hypothesis, instead of giving the least warrant to construe Jerusalem of the church. Our mother, says the apostle, is "the Jerusalem that is above." The note to page 3 has shown "the Israel of God" to mean those Israelites who now believe the gospel, and so to give no license to call Christians, Israel, or to read Israel in the Old Testament into Christians. The general body of believers are distinguished from this special class," the Israel of God," in the verse itself.

In the last, or Hebrews 12:22, the apostle contrasts with Sinai (the mountain of the nation's responsibility under law, with its associations of judicial terror and gloom) Mount Zion to which the Christians had come, no less conspicuous as the seat of royal grace, which was won for the true king of God's choice in the past, after man's choice had fallen by Philistine hands instead of working deliverance; Jehovah's resting place for ever, for there He will surely set His King, upon His holy hill of Zion. But the epistle proceeds in the next clause to distinguish it from the city of the

living God, heavenly Jerusalem, as well as from myriads of angels, a general assembly, and from the church of firstborn ones, with which last the hypothesis identifies Zion. Any intelligent Christian has only to weigh the passage in order to be satisfied that those addressed are here said to have come (of course by faith) to the entire circle of what is to be blessed in the coming day, rising up from Zion to God, Judge of all, and thence coming again to the blood-sprinkling, that speaketh better than Abel for the earth, when curse shall yield to peace and glory. No disproof of the traditional confusion can be conceived more complete or decided.

There is another consideration which must strike every unbiased mind. The restoration of Israel is so plainly intimated in the very scriptures which declare their ruin and scattering, that some of the allegorizing school admit cordially, not Arabia, and answereth to the Jerusalem that now their conversion only, but their return nationally, though truly renewed, and for such peace and glory in their land as they never had of old. Now this is to give up their false principle. For were it to stand logically, it is hard to conceive how on that principle God could predict His gracious purpose of restoring, in the latter day, Israel for blessing in their land under the Messiah and the new covenant. Taken in their plain and uniform meaning, the prophets are full of that blessed expectation for Israel in divine mercy, but not without hints here and there of grace toward the Gentile, sometimes during their eclipse, as in Isaiah 65:1-2 and Hosea 1:10. Yet these texts afford no pretense for the identification, but the contrary.

It is full of interest to observe the spiritual skill which was given to the apostles Paul and Peter in quoting from Hosea. The former, in writing to the saints in Rome — chiefly Gentiles — applies, not only Hosea 2:23, which predicts the future recall of Israel, but also Hosea 1:10, which reveals the actual call of Gentiles, not to be His people as Israel shall be by-and-by, but to have the blessed title of Christians now, “Sons of the living God.” Mark the singularity of the phrase “in the place where it was said unto them Lo-ammi, it shall be said unto them, ‘sons,’” and so forth. It was among the nations while the Jews are not recognized as such. The latter, in writing to the Christian Jews scattered in Asia Minor, applies only Hosea 2:23. The mass of their unbelieving brethren forfeits any such privilege now, however surely to be made good to those that repent at the last, as God declares it will when the prophets are to be fully accomplished. Those who now believe anticipate that blessing (with much more peculiar to Christianity), “who were once not a people, but now God’s people; who were not objects of mercy, but now obtained mercy.” Only in the verses following it is carefully shown that, instead of being sown in the earth, never more to be rooted up, but to flourish forever in the bright kingdom of Messiah here below, they are called to follow Him in present rejection and reproach and long-suffering, “as pilgrims and stranger” until His appearing in glory. This is the present calling of the Christian.

## Prophecy: 5. Some Old Testament Prophecies Referred to in the New Testament

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In Matt. 1:23 we have Isaiah 7:14 cited, and applied to the birth of the Messiah. The facts stated prove its literal fulfillment. Now there are symbols and figures, as well as simple language, in Isaiah 7-9:7; but this does not hinder the Holy Spirit stamping the prophecy of the Incarnation, not as an “idea” or general principle, but as an objective fact. There were other children for signs and for wonders in Israel— Shear-jashub already born, and Maher-shalalhash-baz about to be, sons of the prophet; but they are as distinct from the Virgin's Son Immanuel as Hezekiah, already a dozen years old at least, and born before Ahaz came to the throne. Neither he, nor Isaiah's children, were born of the Virgin; nor could even Hezekiah, still less a future unknown son of Ahaz, call it his land, as Immanuel can, whose name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, the Destroyer of the last Assyrian, and the Deliverer and King on David's throne forever. Alas! there is the secret root of unbelief. He is the Great Unknown, not the writer of chaps. 40-66, though Isaiah's was indeed the pen that indited them, but Isaiah's theme, the Virgin's Son, in the striking parenthesis of his introductory chapters. Had men but seen as God reveals Him at the beginning, they had not doubted the voice of God through Isaiah at the end.

Even the chief priests and scribes (Matt. 2:4-6) could answer unhesitatingly as to the place where Messiah should be born. It was none other than Bethlehem of Judea according to Micah 5:2. The Holy Spirit in no way discountenances, but accepts the light they saw from the lamp of prophecy. Luke 2 adds the providential ordering by which Joseph went from the north of the land to this particular spot in the south. God was taking care, we may boldly say, that the word should be fulfilled to the letter. And the true-hearted believer may see how full of instruction is the context; for the words immediately preceding declare that the Judge of Israel should be smitten upon the cheek. Then comes in the parenthetical verse 2, which reveals not only His birth as David's Son, but an everlasting kinship (for indeed He is Immanuel, God with us). And because of the Jews thus contemning their Ruler in Israel, they are themselves given up (says verse 3) till she which travaileth hath brought forth—till the birth of the divine purpose for the restitution of all things. “Then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel,” or, in the figure of the apostle, the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree. Then will the glorious hopes that follow be punctually fulfilled. Neither Satan nor the Lord will have any difficulty in finding the Assyrian who, in that day, is to perish in the land. There the Assyrian stands on the page of prophecy, as he will on the stage of the future, to perish forever. So false is it that neither the restoration itself of Israel, nor the events growing out of it can be understood according to the letter. So true is it that those who reason thus maintain that, in this sense, considerable portions of the prophetic scriptures can have no proper fulfillment. “And why, then,” they boldly ask, “should any be supposed to have?” It is systematic dishonor of God's mind through ignorance of the scriptures and of His power.

The next quotation (from Hosea 11:1) is full of interest. The prophet was inspired to blend, as it were, Israel of old and Christ called out of Egypt. He, before God, was the true Israel, and their

history recommenced in that blessed Person for Whose sake God had led out the ancient people at their beginning. Theirs is a sad tale of self-will, rebellion, idolatry, yet to be repented and forgiven, when the generation to come shall say, Blessed be He that cometh in the name of Jehovah. The observant reader may see a similar transfer and identification in Isaiah 49. This is not merely literal, but spiritual in the true sense, not the vague spiritualizing which fritters all away, forgets the glory and relationship of Christ, blots out Israel as such from God's mercy in the future, and lowers the church from heaven to earth.

Matthew 2:17 exhibits a difference in the form of citing: "Then was fulfilled" Jeremiah 31:15. What can more strikingly testify how Christ is ever before the Holy Spirit, than the application here by our inspired Evangelist? A heathen, or certainly a Jew, might admire the beauty, and boldness, and elevation of the impersonation; who but God would have thought now of the mourning prophet's words, which brought His Son before Him in the Edomite's slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem? Matthew does not say that it was the object of the prophecy, as in other cases. If the evil one prompted the savage jealousy of Herod, God felt for Rachel's children afresh when shielding the Messiah, who will yet reward her work, give hope for her latter end, and bring the children again to their own border.

The last verse of chap. 2 gives another variety that differs not only in the form, but in the general reference: so that (■πῶς, not ■vα) it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets. It was their scope. He was to be despised of men. So His residence accorded. "Can any good come out of Nazareth" There Joseph took Mary and the Heir of all the promises of God. Such was the scope of the prophets.

"Isaiah the prophet" is said, in Matthew 3, to have predicted John as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Isaiah 40:3). This would be decisive if higher criticism consisted with the fear of God—if it trembled at His word. How came men to set themselves above apostolic authority? Because they must otherwise, accepting prophecy, give up their skepticism and bow to God's revelation. If Isaiah wrote this wondrous moral pleading to the end, he clearly predicts Cyrus by name and character, by mission and work, and graphically foretells Babylon's fall, and the return to Jerusalem; nor this only, but the rejection of the Messiah and His atoning death, by the faith of whom the people, no longer impenitent, become God's servants through Jehovah's Righteous Servant, who appears at length for their final deliverance and everlasting joy, and the destruction of enemies within and without. As to the bearing of the words quoted by the Baptist, they must be childish indeed who fail to see that they describe the service of John as Messiah's herald, a moral work set out in material figures, as is common in the New Testament. Never have I heard a whisper of future "engineering" intended, save by believers in human progress, and in a millennium brought about by man's instrumentality rather than by Christ's advent. But there may be souls no less simple and rash on the other side.

"Isaiah the prophet" is cited again (9:1,2) in Matt. 4:14-16, and with marked propriety. Just so much of the prophecy is used as bears on the first advent of Christ, the great light that shone on her that was distressed, "the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles," etc. The figurative language of the former quotation in no way forbade its literal accomplishment in John the Baptist, without a vague series of heralds to bring in the Lord. So equally bold figures here only render vivid testimony to that True Light which Christ was, not to His forerunner who bore Him

witness. They are both definite and accomplished prophecies. Only the very next words of Isaiah 9 open the unfulfilled coming glory of Messiah here below. "Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy. They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil": words alien from gospel blessing and from heavenly glory, but perfectly expressive of the world-kingdom of our Lord at the end of the age. Hence the flash which shines next, lighting up the judgment which brings it in. "For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken, as in the day of Midian. For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood shall even be for burning, for fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born," etc. (R.V.). This ought surely to be unmistakable. It is the Second Advent, not the first. In the perspective of the prophet the one is followed by the other. Christ's death separated them; the New Testament, and its special work and heavenly relationships with the exalted Head of the body, come between. But the one is as literal and distinct as the other, though figures cluster round both to enlighten faith, not to wrap in mist and cloud as men wish.

The next quotation of prophecy is from "Isaiah the prophet" (53:4): "Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases" (Matthew 8:17). The Evangelist applies it to Messiah's removal of disease. Atoning work is distinguished, and even contrasted, with the latter half of verse 4, in verses 5, 6, 8 (last clause), 10, 11, 12, though there is more than atonement. And so the New Testament cites these, not verse 4, for atonement. Thus all is precise and definite in the prophecy, as well as in apostolic citation. It is scientific theology which produces darkness, of which it is equally unconscious and vain, with which it would, if it could, envelop the divine word. It really deceives itself. The prophecy is luminous throughout, opening and closing with Messiah's exaltation in His kingdom to come; but almost all between is the inimitable portrait of His humiliation and death in man's rejection and God's atonement. It is not surprising that those who love to regard the prophets as dwelling in their own fog are shy of a chapter which is not more sharply defined than it is momentous and humbling. Nor is it that figures are lacking, but that simple language pervades it from first to last. Symbol is wholly absent, and all excuse for allegorizing; and the rather, as there is most needed yet spiritual food already prepared of God for the spiritual.

The Lord in Matthew 11:10, warrants our personal application of Malachi 3:1 to the Baptist, stopping short of the verses that follow, which await His coming again. And though Luke 1 clearly refers to Malachi 4:5, 6, it is even there only applied morally, or to faith, not historically; as our Lord Himself puts the case in Matthew 11:14, and Mark 9:13 "And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah which is to come." Nothing is farther from His mind than to set aside a future action of Elijah (compare Mark 9:12, John 1:21) before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come, a description in no way suiting His first advent in grace, even though moral judgment accompany that grace.

The only other quotation that need be noticed here is in Matthew 12:17-21, from Isaiah 42:1-4. The folly of a great unknown prophet is cut off here also by anticipation. "Isaiah the prophet" spoke it: a distinct prediction applicable at that time to the Messiah's presence in lowly meekness, and with tender care for the crushed or the dim waiting for ultimate triumph. Never can it apply again as then, though it looks to the end from that beginning. The poor of the flock would, and did, appreciate His unpretending grace, whatever the disappointment of His brethren after the flesh, and however the wise and prudent find excuse for unbelief and a plea for stumbling. But divine wisdom is justified by all her children.

## Prophecy: 6. General Result of the Prophetic Word

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Summarily then it may be said that the New Testament affords proof, ample and clear, that the prophecies of the Old Testament are so much the more strikingly accomplished, because they are selected from all parts—Law, Psalm and Prophets—written by many hands, scattered over many centuries, yet all meeting as in a common center in Christ. His lineage in general and in particular, culminating in His unique birth, with its time and place; His despised position, His meek and lowly life, the gracious character of His ministry, and His miracles distinct from all others before Him; His disciples with the law sealed among them, while Jehovah hides His face from the house of Jacob, yet the mass not neglected, but instructed in righteousness by His knowledge. And what can surpass the minute care with which the Holy Spirit treasures up incidents of no value in the eyes of small or great who despise? but how momentous and precious for such as love Him, even where His infinite work of dying in atonement for our sins might seem calculated to overshadow all else! If God embalmed all in prophecy, His children do not explain away the literal fulfillment of His riding into Jerusalem, the predicted King on an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass, or the Hosannas of the multitude, the cleansing of the temple, the children's cry in the temple; or, again, His sale by Judas, or the traitor's dreadful death and end, or the purchase of the field of blood, any more than the buffeting and scourging and spitting that befell Himself, or the piercing of His hands and feet, the insults and scorn of His enemies, the vinegar and gall, the parting of His garments, and the lots cast for His vesture.

It is not only that every sacrifice before and since the law pointed to His death; but Isaiah 53 is the matchless clue, the prophetic comment, and so applied by the apostles. Even the manner of His death was predicted in His singular exemption from a broken bone, and the peculiarity of a pierced side, both in contrast with the two crucified along with Him. His burial, so different from His life, was not omitted; and His resurrection as the path to heaven, and to the right hand of God's throne, all are as positively foretold as they were punctually fulfilled. Assuredly we have the fulfillment of these scenes so expressly set out in scripture, that God's children need not hesitate who do, or who do not, teach according to God—those who regard the words as hyperbole and essentially unhistorical, or those who take them all in the simplicity and fullness and precision of their meaning, without presuming to think that our faith has exhausted all that God wrote in the scriptures.

How wrong, then, for any man to say that the passage about “the Virgin conceiving,” etc., has a manifest historical meaning as applied to Isaiah's wife! though in unexaggerated strictness to our Lord only. What can one think of the judgment, that Isaiah 53 seems to refer to events more closely connected with the return of the Jews from captivity! Everyone at all versed in Isaiah's prophecy must know that this has not the least justification in the contents, and supposes ignorance of the very structure, of the book. Chapter 49 begins the prophetic dealing, not with idols judged in Babylon, and the deliverance wrought by Cyrus (for this closes at the end of chapter 48), but with the deeper question of the more remote future, the rejection of Messiah and His atoning death and the glorious consequences for Israel, the nations, and kings, to which only Isaiah 53

refers, and not in the remotest way to the Jews' return from the captivity. This is here said in Christian plainness of speech for the truth's sake, and in no disparagement, but with all respect and love. The sentiments show how deadly is unbelief, even as to prophecy, and in a most estimable man.

Another remark may close this section. Christ has been made an exception, and prophecy allowed in His case to be not hyperbolic, though assumed to be everywhere else. We have just seen how grudgingly its application even to Him is allowed. But where is the warrant for considering prophecy in His case valid; in every other, precarious and exaggerated? Scripture draws no such line; and man's unauthorized rule to this effect is as capricious, as absurd and Irreverent. It is forgotten in effect, as always, that every scripture is inspired of God, and that the prophetic word is His, no less than the Law or the Psalm the Gospels or the Epistles. Even in human testimony, if we could not receive the witness of men about the least things, how trust it about the highest? Truthfulness we want, and have, nor this only, but divine character and purpose everywhere. If we believe it all to be God's word, such questions are decided. Impossible that God could lie anywhere, or as to anything. If we can trust Him when promising life eternal in His Son, assuredly no less if He speaks of Edom or Egypt, of Jerusalem or Judah.

The current interpretations of Christendom are here altogether at fault; and the consequence is the scanty interest in the prophets, of which people are conscious that they understand little and enjoy less. Men of learning owe much directly, and more indirectly, to Origen and Eusebius among the Greeks, and to Jerome and Augustine, for that perverse ingenuity which has darkened this large department of holy scripture. The earlier Christian writers, such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus with Lactantius, were at least simpler, and avoided that allegorizing to which those already named gave so large an impulse. But they were utterly wrong in confounding the Christian hope with the expectations of Israel. By this error was provoked the vague reaction which followed, in which Jerusalem or Zion, Judah or Israel, were regarded as no longer applicable as of old, but to be henceforth realized exclusively in the church. Thus by a different route the same evil result ensued: on the one hand, denying the faithfulness of God to His promises, and hence casting off Israel from that mercy which awaits the people in the day that is rapidly approaching; and on the other, leveling down the church to the plane of Israel, in ignorance of her proper and heavenly relationship to Christ as His body and bride.

Error, as it injures and darkens the good, lends ready and effective aid to the evil and corrupt. Hence the Romish harlot greedily adopted and perpetuated a system of interpretation exactly suited to earthly aggrandizement and intolerant pride and unrelenting persecution of all that stood aloof from its unscriptural aims. The commentary of Cornelius a Lapide may be seen as by one of its ablest exponents. Take as an instance his observations on Isaiah 60:12-14, though any other of less renown might suffice. Rome's faith and kingdom, he says, stand from Christ's coming through 1600 years, and will stand till His return at the end of the world. For it is needless to say that, like theologians generally, this learned man wholly confounded "the age" with "the world," and did not know of "the age to come," introduced by the unsparing judgment of Rome, as well as of the quick everywhere, long before the world passes away. He adds that the bending unto Zion of their sons that afflicted her, and the bowing down of all that despised her at the soles of her feet, is plainly fulfilled in the Roman Pontiff, who is the church's head. What a contrast with Christ's beatitudes for His own (Matt. 5:3-12)! and especially for His chief servants (Luke 22:24-30)! The vain Corinthians

began what Popery consummated (compare 1 Corinthians 4:8-13); but God is not mocked. "Ye have reigned without us," said the blessed apostle, content in present suffering to await the coming and reign of Christ.

Let us now hear Calvin, who is no less a representative man among the Reformed. He says (Calvin, Tr. Series in loco) that Zion denotes here, as in other passages, captives and exiles; for however far they had been banished from their country, still they must have carried the temple in their hearts. Can anything be more vague and vapid? He adds that Paul justly concludes from Isaiah 59:20 (the passage cited in Rom. 11), "that it is impossible that there shall not be some remnant that come to Christ." This is quite a misconception; for the apostle had already shown that this is true now, but contrasts with the remnant at present the day when "a nation" shall be brought in at once, and all Israel shall be saved. Calvin, like others, ignores this through his mistaken principle. So on Isaiah 60:10-12, though heartily denouncing the Papists for their torturing the passage to uphold the tyranny of the Pope, he only modifies the same untenable ground, and deduces the submission of kings to the authority of God and of the church. He has not even a glimpse of Israel under Messiah's glorious scepter, but swamps it all saying that Isaiah "intends to speak of that obedience which kings and nobles and the common people render to the church when they promote, as far as they are able, sound doctrine." Vitranga, in his elaborate folios, sees in verse 15 the change brought to the Waldenses and the Bohemian brethren by the Reformation from affliction to an eternal excellency. The Papist and the Protestant are equally mistaken in principle: which of the two is the more abjectly poor, and distant from the mind of the Spirit, it may be hard to decide; but Rome is more consistently proud and oppressive.

There is another popular variety during the last century, which is, if possible, more ruinous; for it appropriates the earthly glory that restored Israel is to have under the Messiah as the portion of the church universal when it advances more and more on its race after perfection here below. The hoped for conversion of Israel and of all nations, or at least their profession of the gospel; it claims to be the fulfillment of the prophecy.

These absurdities disappear when we believe the word as the Spirit wrote it; and, while holding fast the hope of Christ for the heavens, we can all the better rejoice in the ancient people blessed under the new covenant in Immanuel's land, and made a blessing to all nations of the earth: the grand, constant, and universal prospect, which is found in all the prophets. The special Christian relationship, our calling, inheritance, and hope, are unfolded only in the New Testament. It is "the mystery concerning Christ and concerning the church," founded on redemption, and formed by the Spirit sent from heaven to baptize us into the one body of the ascended Head. The effect of ignorance on this score is as disastrous for practice. For Christians have slipped from their rejected lot and the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, as they await heavenly glory, and thus become earthly like Israel in desires and walk and worship. Whereas we are not of the world as He is not, and are not to think it strange if fiery trouble come for our trial, but, as we share in Christ's sufferings, to rejoice that when His glory shall be revealed; we may rejoice also with exceeding joy. It is a settled thing for the believer that the present age is an evil one, instead of the vain hope of man to make it a good age by education, science, moral suasion, or religious influence. The gospel, as God sends it, essays no such aim, but is the testimony of God to separate us from its evil in order to be with Christ on high. Him, therefore, we are continually to await, knowing that He will judge the habitable earth in that day, and thus bring in the new age of righteousness and

peace.

In Rom. 11 the apostle lays down the true and only sound principle. It is the more remarkable because in the first half of the Epistle he treats of the gospel which effaces the distinction between Jew and Greek, alike guilty, alike justified by faith in the indiscriminate grace of God. There is no distinction on the one hand; for all sinned and come short of the glory of God; as, on the other, there is no distinction between either, for the same Lord of all is rich toward all that call upon Him. The rejection and death of the Messiah left the Jews justly rejected, and gave the occasion for God to proclaim His grace to every creature under heaven, that all who believe in Christ should be saved. When this work of the gospel is done according to God's purpose, He will take up that government of the world of which Israel has the foremost place according to promise and prophecy, but on the ground of sovereign mercy in which He will also bless all the nations, and this by His Son returning in power and glory to reign in Zion, and possess the uttermost parts of the earth—indeed to be the Head of the universe in that day, as the New Testament clearly proves.

For the apostle in that chapter furnishes the most conclusive evidence that God has not cut off His people, as it might have appeared from the freeness of the gospel. First, there is a remnant of Israel (vers. 1-6) at this present time also, of which the apostle himself was an instance, the remnant according to the election of grace. Of no other people is this true. Its attaching to Jews only is the witness that God has not absolutely cast them off. Next, though the Jews have as a people stumbled at the stumbling-stone of Messiah's humiliation, it is not in order that they might fall, but by their trespass, salvation is to the Gentiles (or nations) to provoke Israel to jealousy, and not therefore to cast them off. Again, the figure of the olive-tree teaches the same lesson. For theirs is that line of promise and testimony; and the Gentile, only a wild olive, was but grafted in, on the breaking off some of the branches; and he is called not to be high minded but fear, lest, failing to abide in God's goodness, he be also cut off (vers. 7-12). As it is certain that the Gentile has not so abode, but dishonored the grace and truth of God in the gospel, at least as much as the Jew failed in his previous responsibility, the natural branches shall no less certainly be grafted in, when the Gentile is cut off (vers. 13-24). Lastly, direct and absolute proof is adduced from Isaiah 59 to expose the fond delusion of conceited philosophy that the Gentiles have a lease of favored place forever. For when that complement or fullness of the Gentiles is come in, which God is taking, "All Israel shall be saved; even as it is written, the Deliverer shall come out of Zion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me to them when I shall take away their sins."

Not a word of this could apply to the so-called spiritual Israel, but only to the ancient people of Jehovah; nor could the language consist with Gentiles either. Taken in their ordinary import of the terms the reasoning is as sound as the meaning is important. For we are thereby taught to read Israel in its literal force throughout the prophets as the apostle did; and so Zion, Jerusalem, Judah, Ephraim, and all other names. Figurative language there is abundantly in both the Old Testament and the New. It is so in everyday life, and yet more on occasions when we are more than ordinarily concerned. But the names designate facts, even the well-known objects as they occur, and are never themselves figures. Symbols also are employed, which differ from figures as being a composite of ideas which the prophet saw and describes for the more graphic delineation of the object. There is no uncertainty in the employment of either symbol or figurative expression, but rather to give objects all the more force. The objects are real, not ideal, in every case. As plain

language is constantly intermingled with figures, there need never be any great difficulty. So when symbols are employed, there is often an interpretation added: only we have to bear in mind that divine interpretations may and do frequently give more than the statement under explanation. The Holy Spirit gives all requisite guidance in comparing scripture with scripture; and He is needed for profitable understanding of Genesis and John as truly as He is for using Ezekiel and the Revelation aright. The true difficulty is quite independent of figures or symbols, and lies in employing the same object now and then as the vehicle of a lesser primary application, while it also looks onward to a larger and more complete fulfillment in due time; the right apprehension of which is at least occasionally a matter of delicacy.

The Jews therefore did not stumble because they understood the scriptures in their plain literal import. On the contrary they shut their eyes and ears against all the prophecies which dwelt on Messiah's sufferings, and warned them of unbelief and every other sin. They were wholly insensible to His moral perfection and His testimony of God as light and love, which should have led them to repentance. They clutched at the gorgeous visions of power and glory, and overlooked that they are as full of holiness and righteousness and peace. They ignored the plainest predictions, as much as if they never were written, of their own hatred and loathing of the Messiah, as well as of His being wounded for their transgressions, and being bruised for their iniquities. They never pondered the words that Jehovah laid on Him the iniquity of us all; that the chastisement of our peace was on Him; that by His stripes we are healed.

W. K.

## The Teacher's Prayer for the Taught

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“For this cause I bow my knees unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints What is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph. 3:14-21).

In these verses we have the prayer of the apostle on behalf of the saints of God that they might by divine help lay hold in some measure of the special truths that he was communicating in this letter. We know that this Epistle sets before the children of God their lofty destiny in the purposes of God, so far as this is revealed to the sons of men in the New Testament.

It is most needful for us, as well as them, to have some insight into God's great plan in connection with this world, so far as that plan has been made known. We are not given complete details of this plan, but we are given in this Epistle the great principle of our present association with our Lord Jesus Christ on high, and of our association with Him in that future scheme of blessing and glory for the heavens and earth through the church. There could be no nobler theme for the heart of any of us than the share we are given as units in the accomplishment of God's vast plan for the re-constitution of the heavens and the earth through Christ. Such a theme lifts us out of ourselves and our little circle, it lifts us out of the common matters of daily life; it lifts us above the abortive schemes and ambitions of men for the progress and glory of this world, and sets our outlook of hope in accord with God's revealed mind and purpose in this matter.

We have some aspects of this great subject unfolded in this Epistle, but it does not follow that there are no difficulties in our appropriation of what has been revealed. The apostle was conscious that to lay hold of God's mind and purpose was a serious matter for the family of God. They needed support; they needed help outside of themselves; they needed a strength superior to their own. For such transcendent revelations the believer needs a power working in him, a power which is of God, that he may apprehend them.

Hence the apostle bows his knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that He would grant them the power of Christ by the inward strengthening of the Spirit, that they might believe the things to come that God has revealed, and having these things in their hearts there should be here upon the earth, some here and some there, in living touch and intelligent sympathy with the divine purpose of bringing about a sphere of universal blessing, of which Christ is the Center and Head.

No wonder that we need special strength from God to receive instruction of this sort. The apostle prayed that such strength might be imparted to the saints whom he was addressing. How far the efficacy of his prayers reach to us we cannot say. But in order that we ourselves should participate in this blessing we must bow our own heads, and be ourselves in the posture of dependence upon God and His Spirit. We must ourselves open our hearts to receive these things that God has written by His Spirit for our learning, and while in this humble attitude of receptivity our souls will be exalted above the plane of mere worldly events, and will be enabled to view them in their true perspective.

The apostle puts up his petition for divine aid for the saints, and the scope of his desires for them is "according to the riches of His glory." His words are: "I bow my knees unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom the whole (every, is the better word) family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory," and so on. Who could measure the glories of Christ? And because of the vastness of these, the mind of the saints needs to be enlarged and strengthened by the power of God.

This appeal of the apostle is made directly to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ because the central theme of this Epistle is the glory of God's Son, the constituted Head over all things to the church. The Christ of God is the One ordained in resurrection glory to set all things right both above and below. The revelation of this simple but momentous decree at once gives us the key to the understanding of the purpose of God. We in our small-mindedness and our selfish tendencies are apt to consider man and his blessing, that is ourselves, as the central object of the purpose of God, and so we misinterpret the dispensations of God.

We should not under-estimate the seriousness of this vitiating propensity, but seek to be delivered from its narrowing influence, and to be led to that view which is "according to the riches of his glory." In our shortsightedness we look upon man as the being for whose ultimate benefit God is working out His plans. The blessing and glory of man undoubtedly form a part of the truth, but not the whole nor the most important part of the truth. Even if we take the church, which is the body of Christ, and because of its intimate association with Christ the Head, assume it to be the governing center of the administration of the fullness of the times, we lamentably err, because we thereby displace Christ. We fail to apprehend the unity of the scriptures whose dominant testimony from Eden to the eternal state is to Him, who will bring in and maintain the regeneration of all things.

The decreed purposes of God are in connection with the glory of Christ. His ultimate object which has been maturing throughout the successive ages of the world's history is, as we find in the first chapter of this Epistle, to head up all things in Christ. At the conclusion of the ages all spheres of dependent life will be brought under the direct and manifest government of the Lord Jesus Christ, that lowly Man who was here for God yet was God, that exalted Man raised from the dead by the mighty power of God and seated above not merely earthly dominions and powers but above all heavenly ones.

For the highest and most mighty dignitaries must all take a place of subordination in the presence of the Lord Jesus, the despised Nazarene. He must be above them all, not only above them as the object of universal adoration, but above them to sway and control and to gather up everything that is worth having in God's wide creation, centering them in Himself as the Head of the new creation in a perfection and glory never yet seen.

We gather from this revealed purpose a useful principle of truth for our present guidance: nothing is ever right nor will be right in this world nor in the next, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. Do we not prove this in our experience day by day? We know as we consider our ways and circumstances that if we have Christ before our eyes, His will over before our eyes, His presence by our side and in our hearts, all is well, all is peace, all is joy, because He has His rightful place of supreme love and rule in the life. As this is so now, so will it be in the wider circles of God's grace and government yet to come. The Lord Jesus is the central Figure before God's holy mind, and all scripture is found to point to Him and His glorious excellence as Prophet, Priest, and King.

We see then that the apostle in this Epistle is lifting up the hearts of those to whom he is writing to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ in His glory on high, not manifested but to be known by faith. And we surely know very well that it is difficult for us to have Him in His glory before our hearts, except as we are in the Spirit. We know that the glory of Christ in heaven blinded Saul of Tarsus. He could not face the Shekinah glory that shone down upon him from Jesus of Nazareth. Neither can our natural thoughts, unassisted, come up to Him where He is. Thought and imagination fail in the task. Our highest mental efforts cannot reach Him where He is.

We can therefore only bow ourselves in adoration and wonder at the all-surpassing glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, while we feel how much we need the same strengthening power that Paul sought in his prayer for the saints of his day—that they might be granted such strength in the inner man as would give them to know yet more and more of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We require this energy because the bent of our minds is to recur again and again in an all-absorbing interest to the petty things of the moment. The inner man should seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, should think of Him in His present glory, and of what God will do for Him yet. But our minds are too feeble for such flights, and our hearts too restricted and earth-bound to dwell above the stars. The apostle, however, has indicated our resource—let us bow the knees in prayer that we might “know Him and the power of His resurrection.”

But the apostle further implies that the attainment of this spiritual knowledge depends upon personal communion, for he desired that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith. And we may be sure that it is only in this way that the saints of God will readily and effectually grow into the knowledge of God's things. And think what a regal way it is Christ dwelling in our hearts.

If we think for a moment or so of Christ, of the glory that is His, the glory in which He is even now, the glory which He had with the Father before the worlds were, our poor hearts are humbled and ashamed before Him in the overwhelming sense of His greatness and of our insignificance. But the apostle shows that the One in whom the fullness dwells, the One who fills eternity, the One whose all-transcending glories must ever be beyond our conception, will dwell in our hearts by faith. Without a doubt Christ is on high in glory, but it is revealed in the word that you and I may have Him for ourselves—within our hearts, and therein not as a passing guest, but therein to dwell. Let us then pray for ourselves that, in the sense of this scripture, Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith.

This phrase, relating as it does to a personal indwelling, implies that the knowledge of which the apostle is speaking is not a mental exercise simply, but a personal acquaintance with the Lord of

glory. He who once deigned to tabernacle on earth in human flesh and who circumscribed Himself so that man might, in His own presentation, We and hear and know the love of God, that same One will come to our hearts and abide there, being known to us by our faith.

The Lord Himself before the date of the apostle's prayer had promised that there should be such visitations as these. You will recollect that when He was about to depart out of the world to the Father, He announced this imminent departure to the disciples, and they were filled with grief and sadness in consequence. They could not bear to think that they should look upon His face no more. To comfort them in their sorrow He said, "If I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also." In this promise we have the foundation of our hope of the personal return of our Lord.

But in the same connection He went on to say to the apostles that He would impart to them the Holy Spirit who should come to the world to abide. And having promised that the Holy Spirit should come to abide, He then added, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." This reference is not at all to His coming to receive us to be with Himself in glory, but to His coming to them that they might not feel themselves friendless and forsaken as orphans might do. Such a coming in the heart to dwell is not only a possible experience for us, but it is indeed the right of every one of us. I say the right, because it is founded upon the Lord's own promise. He proposed to come that we might not be left desolate in the world. And how is the fulfillment of this promise to be known? We know it by the inward ministry of God's Holy Spirit. Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith is not a subject of imagination but an object of faith.

The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ knows of a surety that He does make Himself known to us. Christ comes and manifests Himself to us as He does not to the world. And, if on our part we but keep His word, He will make His abode with us, dwelling in our hearts by faith. How far this is a matter of personal experience with us concerns us individually, But it should be a cause of joy to us that we know it at all. May we know it more.

Here in Ephesians divine interposition is sought not so much in the way of support for our fainting hearts and strength to meet the sorrows and enemies of the wilderness journey but rather strength for the knowledge which is not of this world, that knowledge which is truly spiritual. In this Epistle we have true spiritualism, a spiritualism which is not of Satan but of God. We are said to be with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and it is ours to acknowledge this truth and to glory in it. Besides other favors, we learn that the second Person of the Holy Trinity is pleased to dwell in our hearts by faith to lead us forward in this superhuman knowledge. He comes to abide with us and to sustain us while He unfolds what are His great purposes. He who visited the home of Mary and Martha at Bethany and said things, which are not recorded, of heavenly import to Mary sitting at His feet, will also dwell in the humble home of our hearts, and will whisper to us of this mighty scheme which God is working out for His own glory here in this world which stands guilty of the crucifixion and death of His beloved Son. The One who was so humiliated by man in this world God has exalted to the very highest in heaven, and that supremacy will be manifested in this world also, when God brings in His First-begotten again. Let us acknowledge His supreme Lordship more completely than ever.

I wonder whether all present realize that this subject is one not to be confined to our reading and meditation. It is a definite element of the new life through the power of God's Spirit. Is it not,

therefore, of the first importance to you and to me that we should seek earnestly that Christ, the Mighty One, should dwell in our hearts by faith.

The apostle petitions that his prayer might be granted "according to the riches of his glory," that is I take it, according to the riches of the glory of Christ. His eye is upon the Glorified One of God, and it is He who will come to dwell. Who can measure the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ? In Him there is glory upon glory, for all possible glories are added to the Christ whom God loves to honor, to Him who glorified God upon the earth. While it is sweet to us to read and to know of the love of Christ, we should also desire to know the riches of His glory too.

It is a way of Scripture to use large-scale truths for the correction of our minor difficulties. And I suppose that one immediate cause of the apostle's exalted theme in this Epistle was the petty quarrels which arose at that time in the Christian assemblies between those of Jewish and Gentile origin respectively. They brought their native feuds into their new spiritual relationships, with the result that there was much striving with one another for precedence.

To dispose of such disagreements among the saints, the apostle brings forward the great truth of their joint association in Christ Jesus. The middle wall of partition between them that once was raised by God Himself was now destroyed by the same authority. According to the New Testament revelation, Christ Jesus had made Himself of twain one new man, so making peace. There was now a unity of the Spirit, a unity which came about inasmuch as God had given both Jew and Gentile believers a place even while they were here below in and with Christ Jesus, not merely in His death and resurrection but in His exaltation also the apostle looks upward and sees, seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, both Jew and Gentile quarrelers, united above, having already been made joint-partakers in the new creation. They were possessed of all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, God having created them anew in Christ Jesus.

In their new position, all racial enmity arising out of an earthly condition should disappear Christ was the peace. He made peace through the blood of His cross, and in that death every national and carnal distinction would of necessity be obliterated. Hence in the next chapter the apostle proceeded to counsel them to "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." This bond is not a peace which results from ignoring the difficulties of the moment, the difficulties of walk, the difficulties that arise in assembly relationships, but it is that bond of peace which the Lord Himself made. It was the result of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, bringing men and women who believe into one body in a living unity before God by the Holy Spirit. This unity we are to seek to maintain in practice.

Well, the only way in which the full knowledge of these truths could be received was by the strengthening with might by the Spirit of God in the inner man, according to the riches of Christ's glory. It is to be noted that in the education and instruction of the children of God the Father and the Son and the Spirit are concerned. The prayer itself is addressed to the Father for His grant. The Son is to dwell in their hearts. And it is the Holy Spirit who by His might strengthens the inner man to receive the deep things of God. Our capacities it is true are very limited, but a little of our own can be made to go a long way when the Lord is with us. We can look out of a very small window, and yet see the wonders of the heavens. There we behold them far away in all their glories in the vast expanse above us. We have but a small power of natural vision, but we can look into the heights and depths of immeasurable space. And so it is in spiritual matters when our

hearts are attracted in the right direction, the Spirit of God strengthens us by His might for our growth in knowledge—so shall we comprehend these things.

The apostle continues, “That ye, being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” It is of course not to be assumed that we shall be enabled to penetrate fully all these mysteries, at present at any rate. There must be much beyond us that we shall not know. But one important point to be clear upon is that, so far as the subjects of knowledge are concerned, nothing is reserved in the Holy Scriptures from us. All revelation is open to us, and the great purposes of God are there in their breadth and length and depth and height for our interest, our meditation and our comprehension. They are for the present possession of our hearts, to make them our own as truly as the land of Canaan was for the occupation of tribes of Israel

One beauty of divine truth is that it is intimately bound up with spiritual emotion—love. The apostle says, “To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.” We remember that John often couples the twin words-truth and love. For the apprehension of the things of God, we do not so much require a capacious mind as we do a loving heart. It is through the heart that the truths of God are communicated. Knowledge comes to us by way of our affections. The Lord loves to win our loyalty and homage and adoration for Himself, and it is in communion with Him by the spirit that we learn the love of Christ. The mere mental effort to apprehend the truths of Christianity is a very dreary occupation. Indeed, as we all know, nothing is more calculated to promote sleep than a theological disquisition, but when we have the Son of the Living God as our Teacher and Friend, we yearn to know more of His blest ways.

It is on the basis of Personal teaching, so it seems to me, that this petition in the apostle's prayer is framed. It was necessary for them that Christ should dwell in their hearts by faith in order that they might know the love of Christ. The full knowledge of the love of Christ does not imply that we get to the end of it, in the sense that we grasp it in its entirety. The knowledge of the love of a person is surely a practical acquaintance with the working of the affections of the heart towards us. We do not measure the affections of another. They cannot be weighed, nor can we take the dimensions of even one of them, but yet we do know, without a doubt, what a warm-hearted affection is. We never imagine that we have got it; we know it. We feel its pulsations, and are conscious of the joy and preciousness of it. To get to the end of love would spoil the whole experience of it. Who would ever want to exhaust the love of a loved one?

To know fully the love of Christ does not imply that it is an attainment easy of accomplishment. We are not to expect that we can sit down quietly in the study, or go down upon our knees and in an hour or two, or in any defined period, take to ourselves all the divine affections of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Nevertheless, we do know that moment by moment in our need and in our sorrow, we are finding how that all-transcending love is helping us and carrying us forward. And this love which is our enjoyed portion now will also be our portion throughout all eternity, and the love which we experience here in the face of the enmity of the world and of the trials of the present time is the same love which will also be our joy in the ages to come.

But the apostle states that the love of Christ surpasses knowledge. This must be so; the love of Christ must exceed our capacity. We know that the nature and extent of human love cannot be

fathomed, and if this is true of the love of man's heart, what shall we say of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ? It passeth knowledge, but it is an inexhaustible fountain from, which we may draw evermore.

“That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” The fullness was in Christ. It dwells in Him. All that God was and is He was and is, for He was God. In the fulfillment to us of the apostle's requests, we too may be filled with all the fullness of God. These are great words. They are words that we need inscribed upon our hearts, along with the prayer we have here, often repeated by us that we might be divinely strengthened in the inner man for such experience.

The apostle expresses this thought in the conclusion of these verses. We sometimes think perhaps of verse 20 as though it were solely an encouragement for us in our general prayers, a thought founded upon a slight perversion of the text, “Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.” But the phrase is not as it is sometimes erroneously quoted, “above all that we can ask or think.” Hence the statement has not a strict application to the whole of our prayer meetings. It contains, of course, the assurance of Omnipotent resource, which is always an encouragement to needy saints.

But of what is the apostle especially speaking? Is not his phrase in direct connection with the subject of this particular prayer? Paul felt that the task of imparting these themes was a great one; he felt that the subject was so unlimited in scope that he bowed his knees humbly before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for aid, and in result he took comfort in the thought that there was One who was able to do exceeding abundantly above all that he was asking or thinking. And he has asked a great deal. To ask that “according to the riches of Christ's glory they might know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge,” was not this a great request on their behalf? But the apostle says, The One to whom I appeal is able to do not only what I am asking for you, what I am able to think, but He is able to do exceeding abundantly above it.

And surely, we too, as well as the Ephesian saints, need to have our hearts enlarged in this respect. When we come with our various prayers, we come to One whose power is utterly beyond our conception. And is not the reason why our prayers often fail in accomplishment because we have not realized whom we have been addressing? We know that one condition of success is that we must believe that we shall have the things for which we plead. But, searching our hearts, we sometimes find deep down that we are wondering whether we shall be answered. And going still further in our analysis we discover that we have mistrusted the almighty power and love of Him whom we do trust. Although we should fear to put the doubt into words, there is the feeling that perhaps we are asking something that He cannot grant. Let faith grow within us, and it will grow in proportion as we have Christ the glorified before us in our prayers, and the Father too who could do all abundantly above what the apostle asked or thought.

The clause— “according to the power that worketh in us” —shows us another phase of the subject upon the apostle's mind in this prayer. There was a power not of themselves available to work within them. It is well to be clear that there is a divine power that works in the hearts of believers as well as a divine power that works apart from them. God in heaven is for us, and if God is for us, who can be against us? This is the operation of His wisdom and energy outside of ourselves. But we ought not to overlook the power that works within us. For instance, we read elsewhere that God works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

It is a comfort to reflect, as we consider our own weakness that the Holy Spirit by His directing and controlling energy is fashioning our character and actions for that ultimate position which lies beyond us in accordance with God's appointment in the day of His purpose.

This work is altogether distinct from the work of propitiation which is necessarily outside of us as to time and sphere of action. The atoning work of Christ at Calvary is complete, and nothing can be added to His sacrifice. His blood of eternal efficacy was once shed at the set time, and we, in consequence, stand justified by faith before our God. But the Spirit of God is now actively at work in us, Day by day, He, the great Architect, is busy with us, forming us for the plan assigned to us in that holy temple which is growing up to completion as God's habitation, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone. When the headstone is added, the whole building shall be revealed in flawless beauty, a wonder to Israel and the nations at large. Then in glory each living stone will be fitted to the place for which it was modeled in the great temple of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, to shed the luster of Christ's glory upon the millennial world beneath. Thus God has a purpose for each called saint in connection with the church of Christ when the day of His glory comes. We know that the church today lies dishonored in the mire of worldly profession. It is not one body manifestly and expressively, and never will be such in this world. But it will be so seen and recognized when God's purpose is accomplished, and Christ is known to all men as the Head over all things to the church, His body. In that day also will be manifested what the Spirit of God is now doing in fitting us for that great consummation. I think an assurance of this kind should cheer and encourage us in our outlook upon the depressing condition of Christendom at present, God will reconstruct where man can only mar further, not mend. Imagine that by some great council or convention, the divisions and sections of believers were unified by the force of human influence or power of government and organization. What a hotch-potch the whole thing would be, when compared with apostolic teaching. Can man by reunion make the beautiful thing that was seen for one brief while at Pentecost? No, the oneness of the church is wrought not by might nor by power, but by the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the fact of the church's unity remains. The Lord amid the wildest confusion knows them that are His and the members of Christ are united with Him the Head, and nothing can sever living links in His body. Moreover, that unity, invisible today, will shine forth by and by when the Lord comes to present the church to Himself. Then, there will be a church in glory without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Who could bring about such a glorious consummation save the Lord Jesus Christ by His Spirit?

We ought to make sure that we understand this great purpose of God before we set ourselves to find what our testimony in church matters should be. If we follow our own ideas on the subject, we may land ourselves in great error. In this Epistle we have God's ideal; and what He means to do He will accomplish in His own time. Let us desire to know the truth in all its fullness now. If we have such a desire there is One who is ready to teach us and to give us the knowledge of the will of God.

The dominating object of God throughout the succeeding cycles of time is expressed in the final verse—“unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.” Paul not only looks up to the exalted Christ in His present heavenly glory, but he looks onward and sees in the ages to come in the sphere of heavenly glory the church, not Israel nor the Gentiles, who will have their fitting and allotted place upon the earth. Throughout the ages, world without end, the church will be the vehicle of glory to God.

There should even at present be a measure of that glory seen in the church. But how quickly the glory of unity faded after Pentecost, never to return. Where is it to be found to-day? God looking down sees the wretched and divided condition of His church. And there are some children of the Father, taught by the scriptures, who see the same thing. Indeed, any honest minded man might see the ruin and its effects, but those taught of God see the original purpose, and know its future final accomplishment. W.J.H.

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