

The Lamp of Prophecy

OR

Signs of the Times

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P R E F A C E

THE Apostle Peter tells us in the first chapter of his Second Letter that we do well to take heed in our hearts to the sure word of prophecy, which shines as a light in a dark place, while we are waiting for the dawning of the day and looking for the rising of the morning star. These words should be of special interest to the people of God in such portentous times as those in which our lot has been cast. It is a great pity that in many evangelical churches the study of prophecy is almost entirely ignored and sometimes even frowned upon: and yet there is nothing more calculated to rouse Christians to a sense of their responsibility to live for God and give the gospel to a lost world as the expectation of our Lord's imminent return.

In my own ministry, I have found untold blessing followed the proclamation of the great truths that are linked with this blessed hope. The pages that compose the present volume are either articles that have appeared in various periodicals during the past ten years or are stenographic reports of actual addresses delivered. While there is no exact order of presentation, yet they are all, in my judgment, intimately enough connected to form one whole, and may thus be read in order, as an attempt to open up the truth of the prophetic Word. I have in mind particularly those who have not given much attention to these things

or others who by wrong teaching have had their faith shaken. All I ask of each reader is that he read the messages with an open mind, and if at times he does not find himself in agreement with what is presented, that he search the Scriptures carefully to see whether these things be so. If they are not in accord with the Word, I would have no one receive them. But if convinced, as I am myself, that they do indeed set forth the truth concerning the near future as revealed in the inspired Writings, my hope is that under God they will prove to be for the edification and sanctification of those who accept their teaching.

H. A. IRONSIDE

Chicago, Ill.

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I

ALL SIGNS POINT—TO WHAT?

WE ARE LIVING in very remarkable times. Even statesmen of the world recognize this. We seem to be at the converging of the ages; one era appears to be closing and another already beginning. Apart from divine revelation, no man can tell what the next age holds in store for the human race. But any man or woman who has learned to accept the Holy Scriptures as divinely inspired finds here, in God's blessed Book, the key that solves the mystery, finds here a complete revelation concerning the times in which we live and the period that is to follow, which will be ushered in by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him. Everything shows that we are rapidly nearing the end of the present dispensation.

A THREEFOLD CORD

The Scripture says: "A threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Eccl. 4:12). There is a threefold cord that we shall do well to consider. It is what Scripture predicts will take place immediately before the coming of the Lord; first, in connection with the church of

God, then with the Gentile nations and, lastly, with the people of Israel. If we saw conditions prevailing in the church such as Scripture predicts will prevail before the coming of our Lord, but saw no such conditions in Israel or among the Gentile nations, we might well think there was considerable time to elapse before the closing of this age; or if we were to see fulfilled certain conditions predicted concerning the church and concerning Israel, and yet others in regard to the Gentile nations still unfulfilled, we might well say, "My Lord delayeth His coming." But when we see everything moving on in exact accord with Scripture in these three spheres, we may be sure that the end is near.

We see the church drifting into deeper and deeper apostasy. We see Israel already gathering back to the Land of Palestine, not by two and threes, but by tens of thousands. And we see prevailing over there conditions such as the Word declares will prevail immediately before the coming of our Lord. Then we look out upon the Gentile nations and see the various combinations predicted in Scripture already forming before our eyes. We see the great hordes of Slavic people banding together, as predicted in Ezekiel 38 and 39; we see the Roman nations entering into an alliance for the restoration of the Roman power; and we see movements of the kingdoms of the eastern countries getting ready for the Battle of Armageddon. All is moving on in exact accord with the sure word of prophecy, so we may be very certain that it will not be long before we shall hear the voice of the archangel, the shout of the Lord, and the trump of God, and we who are redeemed by the blood of Christ will rise to meet the Savior.

BROKEN LINES OF SEPARATION

Let us look particularly at one line of prediction, one prediction uttered by our blessed Lord Himself in regard to the end times. He said solemnly in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, where He was telling of the signs that would prevail before His coming: "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

What characterized those days of Noah? Were they days of great revival? Were they days of great awakening and of wonderful conviction? Nothing of the kind! They were days of fearful apostasy, days when men had turned away from the revelation divinely given after the fall of man in Eden's Garden. They were days, too, of brilliant achievement. I think this is implied in the words used elsewhere, "They planted, they builded." They were days when men built great works and prided themselves on their remarkable intelligence. They were also days of breaking down of moral barriers.

I do not know what is involved in that passage in Genesis 6, where it says: "It came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." I do not know whether that implies a strange mystic union of spirit-beings from the heavens with mortals here

on earth, as many eminent Bible teachers are sure that it does. I am not certain whether it means that the line of Seth forgot its separation and mingled with the line of Cain, that ungodly race—it may be that. But I do know that there was a complete breaking down of divinely set barriers. All through Scripture, God has been calling His people to walk in holy separation from the world that refuses His testimony. Whatever else this passage means, it certainly means this: that in the days of Noah definite dividing lines between the people of God and the enemies of God were no longer recognized. And what does Jesus say? “As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

What is the great business of the devil today? It is to destroy every barrier between the church and the world. We see it on every hand. After nineteen centuries of gospel preaching, instead of the world being converted, as Dr. Pierson used to put it, “the world has become a little churchy, but the church has become immensely worldly.” We may expect to see lines clearly laid down in Scripture deliberately obliterated by the enemies of the people of God as we draw nearer the end. At the beginning of the dispensation, the church of God went forth, a little separated company, to tell men, “Ye must be born again.” But we live in a day when the leaders of religious thought talk about the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man, a doctrine that leaves no room for the necessity of regeneration.

The world is that multitude of men and women who are dominated by the prince of this world, the devil, and they are going on to judgment. The church of God is a little company of redeemed sinners who

have been saved through the precious atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ—and how the devil hates to see them walking separately from the world! He would do anything in his power to break down all these barriers, for that would utterly destroy the church's testimony.

DAYS OF CORRUPTION AND VIOLENCE

In the days of Noah, there was a great coming together of people who should not have been linked together at all. Very few stood out against the amalgamation. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation. There were no mixed marriages in his family. His was a family that walked apart in separation to God; and God came to him and told him that He was sick of the whole thing, and that He was going to wipe it all out in a flood. He said: "Make thee an ark of gopher wood . . . pitch it within and without with pitch" (Gen. 6:14); and when the flood came, Noah had a safe refuge.

Then, Scripture tells us that the days of Noah were days of moral corruption and great violence. If you had lived a hundred years ago and acquainted yourself with the highest ideals of the fathers of this great nation, would you have believed it possible that in our day the United States of America would sink to such a condition of corruption and violence as we see on every hand? Would you not have thought that America would have been a kind of Utopia where people would come saying, "We want to come here to worship God according to our own convictions, to bring up our children in this happy place; of course, we will respect the laws of the country, for this will be for our own best interest"? We have lived to see the

laws of our country shamelessly broken on every hand—corruption and violence all about us. Pick up your morning newspaper, and you are treated to a record of lawlessness and immorality such as you would never have dreamed of a few years ago. Turn to what country you will, and everywhere you find loose ideals about morals, about the marriage relation, and all kinds of similar corruptions. Russia is in some respects the fountain head of all this iniquity and impurity, the devil's agency for distributing these evil principles throughout the world and for destroying civilization.

THE MILITANT GODLESS

The following is clipped from a recent number of a reliable journal:

The Soviet Government is doing everything possible to eliminate religion, especially Christianity. She is going to follow the Fascist example, by adopting her own calendar next year, when the Christian calendar will be abolished, and it will be called the year fifteen of the revolution. The changing of "time" is characteristic of Antichrist (Dan. 7:25).

The idea is to obliterate Sunday; the week is to consist of five days instead of seven so there will be no opportunity for any to come together on the Lord's Day; there will be no way to figure the time so as to know when the Lord's Day comes around.

All churches are to be destroyed throughout Russia, and religion eradicated. *The London Times* (December 28, 1929) states: "Five hundred seventy-six churches were closed from January to August, 1929, and it is expected that the number will reach 1,000 by the end of the year."

"The Militant Godless in Soviet Russia" is the name given to an organization formed, some eighteen months ago, by order of the ruling clique in the Kremlin, as a body for "the final destruction of every vestige of religion." Their president is Yaroslavsky, one of Stalin's henchmen and the chief of the Control Commission, an inquisitorial department of the Central Executive. For the past eleven years, this man has been disseminating the most blasphemous anti-religious propaganda ever recorded in history, and has in consequence been rapidly promoted to high offices in the Soviet State. . . . The Militant Godless are true followers of their president; they are young people of both sexes, reared and educated under the Soviets. At the second congress of the Godless at Moscow, Yaroslavsky, in order to inflame the passions of his followers, stated quite deliberately that "believers are the enemies of the Socialist State . . . and they must be exterminated."

The members of this powerful body are particularly happy when participating in organized campaigns for the demolition of churches and other places of worship and in orgies of blasphemy known as "Godless Carnivals." These consist of a series of spectacles specially written and rehearsed, ridiculing and insulting the belief in God in general and certain aspects of the Christian faith in particular. These spectacles cannot be described in an English newspaper; in fact, some of the Soviet newspapers take refuge in evasions.

The organization is said to be two millions strong, and its finances are described as excellent. This is not surprising, since by Stalin's orders the Godless are financed by the State, and special donations are allotted to them from party and trade union funds. The attempts to destroy religion are costly, but the Soviets disregard the question of finances since they are confident of success.

Since these statements were published, the Soviet program to destroy every thing holy has been carried

on with terrible success, though God still preserves in Russia His election of grace.

TEACHING BLASPHEMY

What is going on in Russia is simply the beginning of what may soon prevail all over the world. People say that this idea of Red propaganda dominating the world is just talk. I was speaking with a leading educator in Pennsylvania some days ago, and he said that the sad fact is that by far the majority of our professors are teaching Bolshevism to their students.

I am teaching in a theological college part of the year, and I find that atheistic literature is being poured into the mail of our students. The Reds of Europe are doing their best to send the atheistic literature through all the colleges and schools of America. They are doing their best to pervert our youth and to poison the very fountain of knowledge at its source. Societies are forming today in many of our colleges, named "The Society of Damned Souls"; that is their own name for it. Think of the blasphemy of it, the God-defying spirit of the movement—and it is spreading everywhere!

There was something like that in the days of Noah. God said: "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6:3). What do these words mean? They mean that God by His Spirit had sought to bring certain influences to bear upon the hearts of men. But we read: "Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood: which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them" (Job

22:15-17)? In the Book of Job, Eliphaz tells us how wicked men acted before the flood, and it is the way they are doing now.

GOD'S DAY OF GRACE

The wonderful thing is that a good God bears it all and that He still waits in mercy. This reminds me of the day when Ingersoll, after delivering one of his addresses, pulled his watch from his pocket and said: "According to the Bible, God has struck men to death for blasphemy. I will blaspheme Him and give Him five minutes to strike me dead and damn my soul." There was a period of perfect silence while one minute went by; two minutes passed, and people began to get nervous; three minutes, and a woman fainted; four minutes, and Ingersoll curled his lip. At five minutes, he snapped his watch shut, put it in his pocket, and said: "You see, there is no God, or He would have taken me at my word."

The story was later told to Joseph Parker, who said, "And did the American gentleman think he could exhaust the patience of God in five minutes?" The patience of God! He says: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6:3). It is just about one hundred and twenty years now since the truth of the second coming was revived; since then, God has been sending His servants into the world declaring, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." I wonder if there will be the same period of dealing with men and seeking to bring them to repentance ere the Lord returns for His own.

There is something to hold the evil in check today. Listen to the words of Jesus: "As in the days that

were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:38-39). What is it that answers to that in this day? The moment the redeemed will hear the cry, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away," and the true church of God is caught up, who can imagine the unspeakable corruption, the violence that will prevail? Then the Lord will descend in power with His saints and bring in the reign of everlasting righteousness.

If ever there was a time when men and women ought to be serious, this is the day; and yet the people today are pleasure mad. You find people all over the land turning away from the things of God and turning to fables or devoting themselves to pleasure in its most extravagant forms—anything to give them a new sensation, a new amusement.

Did you ever think of that word "amusement"? David said, "While I was musing the fire burned." "Muse" means "to think." But in "amuse," the "a" is the negative; so "amuse" means "to not think"—and the devil is busy today with all kinds of devices to keep men from thinking. If men think, there is some hope for their salvation. When the prodigal came to himself, he said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" (Luke 15:17). God, give us courage to face realities.

Unsaved one, the days of grace are very near their end; if you are ever going to be saved, you will have to be saved very soon. I have tried to visualize Noah getting that ark ready. When the last day and the last

hour of that day of grace came, he had to turn regretfully away, leaving them all behind. He entered into the ark, he and all his; and God shut them in. The hand that shut them in was the same that shut out the antediluvian world. Soon the redeemed of the Lord will be shut in up yonder, and men will come knocking, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us," only to hear Him say, "I never knew you." As the storms descended from above, and the water rolled up from below, I wonder if there were not some of Noah's neighbors who came and knocked at that door, saying, "Noah, Noah, open the door," only to hear him say, "It is too late; I did not lock the door. God did." "When once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut the door, who is there that will open it?"

You have been invited for years to enter the ark of safety, and yet you are still unsaved. How much longer are you going to go on resisting the Spirit? Why not flee to Christ for refuge while the door stands wide open, and then, in that day when the world's distress lowers, you will be safe in Christ.

II

THE CALLING AND DESTINY OF THE CHURCH

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.—EPH. 4:1-3

I. THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

IN VIEW of the exhortation of our text, we naturally raise the question, What is the vocation wherewith we are called? And that leads us to turn to various portions of the New Testament to consider what the Spirit of God has been pleased to reveal concerning that marvelous mystic society to which every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has been joined by the Holy Spirit. What is the church? How do we become members of the church? What are our responsibilities as belonging to the church? What is the destiny of the church of God?

I want to be very elementary and shall begin at the beginning by turning to the first place in the New Testament, where we read of the church—Matthew 16. Here, immediately after Peter's remarkable confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," we

read, "and Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven, and I say also unto thee that thou art Peter [thou art a piece of rock] and upon this rock [I take it this rock refers to the blessed truth that Christ is the Son of God] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Notice, "I will build" My church. Observe, our Lord Jesus Christ did not here speak of something that was in the process of building. He did not say, "I am building My church," or "I have been building My church," as though it had been in course of construction either throughout the centuries before Christ came into the world or during the time He was on earth as man, but He spoke of the building of the church as something still in the future.

"The gates of hell [that is, the gates of the unseen world] shall not prevail against it." I get great encouragement from that statement of my Lord, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church that Jesus builds. Sometimes people are very pessimistic regarding the future of the church. They see atheism and unbelief rolling in like a flood and the cults and isms appearing like mushrooms, and they are afraid that the true faith of the church of God will be over-thrown by all these things, but we have the assurance of the Lord Jesus Christ that so long as the church of God shall remain in this scene it will remain undefeated. Dr. Campbell Morgan says in this connection, "It not only suggests that the church will be able to hold her own ground to the end, but also will be able to wage an offensive warfare." An army does not take the gates of the city out to war with it, and the church does not sit on a hill and the gates of hell surround her, but

the church of God is a conquering army carrying on a battle against the powers of hell and they shall not prevail against her. A right-thinking man does not shut his eyes to the signs of the times and will not be ignorant of Satan's devices, but he knows that greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world and the church of Jesus Christ will not retire from the scene a defeated company.

Here Christ called it "My church" for the first time. He was not speaking of any separate company. He was not speaking of any particular sect or denomination. He was speaking of the aggregate of the redeemed in this dispensation of grace and called them "My church."

Now let us look farther: there were saints of God in the world from the beginning, right down to the time Jesus uttered these words. In a sense these saints constituted churches. Stephen spoke of the people in the wilderness as a church, an assembly, but we must distinguish between any such companies and that unique company that Christ called "My church." This church of which He spoke could not come into being until He had died on the cross, had been raised from the dead, was received up into glory, and sent the Spirit down into the earth, which He did at Pentecost.

Matthew 18 records the next place Christ spoke of the church, and this time it is about discipline in the church, and it would apply just as well to the congregation of Israel. He used the word "church" here in a narrower sense than He did in chapter 16. He spoke of trespass.

"If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone—if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more—

if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church.”

This is not very often done now. The command is to tell it to the called out company, not to the whole world. The church here is not the aggregate of all the redeemed but a local company in any given place. We are not able to tell it to the whole church of Jesus, but, meeting with a company of believers in a given place, which company of Christian people is an assembly of saints, we should go to them and bring the matter before them, and they will act on behalf of their glorified Lord.

There is not one other word regarding the church in Matthew. Christ presented Himself to Israel as the promised Messiah, but all the way through He met with increasing rejection until in chapter 23 He announced their rejection (vs. 37). In these words our blessed Lord brought home the solemn truth that God, for the time being, was through with Israel as a testimony in the world. “Your house is left unto you desolate.” He came presenting Himself as the promised Messiah. They refused to acknowledge His claim, even though they had to go to the length of imputing the works of His power to Beelzebub, and in that He saw the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. From this point on, Israel, as the people of God, had no longer any standing before God. They will have, by and by, when they are gathered back again and the Lord works upon their hearts and the veil is taken away, and when the Lord returns in glory they will cry, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” This is redeemed Israel. But, between the moment that the Lord uttered these words and that time, their house would be left desolate.

It has often been said that in the Book of Acts we have God still dealing with Israel and calling out from Israel a remnant people, and that He never gets to the end until we get to the last chapter of that book. I believe this view contradicts the words of Christ recorded in Matthew. Everything was settled; their trial was ended.

What then was He doing? In Acts we find, after the death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord, the advent of the Holy Spirit to become the vicar of Christ here in this world, and to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad, and to baptize into one body those of Israel and those of the nations who receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. In accordance with the divine order, it is necessary that this message first be preached to Israel so that they may side with Him instead of against Him. Every Israelite who accepts Jesus Christ puts himself on record as taking sides with the One whom the nation rejected and the people abhorred, and these find in Him a new place, and by the reception of the Holy Spirit are linked with Christ. In the first part of Acts the greater part is the calling out of this elect remnant of Israel, who forego the earthly hopes of Israel and accept the heavenly calling instead. In due time the gospel message was broadened out to the Gentiles, starting with Cornelius, when the Holy Spirit fell on them, and then linked these Gentiles and those of Israel who had accepted Jesus Christ into one body, and then the message broadened out to the ends of the world, and assures all who believe of their union with Christ.

II. THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

The Apostle Paul was the one chosen of God to unfold this teaching in the largest way. He was not the only one to whom this truth was revealed, but he received the largest revelation (See Eph. 3:1-6). Paul did not write by consultation with other believers, not even with the original Twelve, but he received his message as a direct revelation from Christ. The word rendered "mystery" here means, not something peculiarly difficult and mystical, but a sacred secret made known only to initiates. The mystery Paul speaks of is something not found in the Old Testament, not proclaimed by the former prophets; it is something new. It was revealed to a body of holy apostles and prophets. In God's due time it was opened up to the other members of the apostolic band and those associated with them. It is the special truth of what God is doing in this age, taking people from among the Jews and Gentiles and uniting them by the Spirit's baptism into one body. Into what body? The body that had been formed on the Day of Pentecost. There was no other body into which the Gentiles could be brought.

"That the Gentiles should be made fellow heirs."

Fellow heirs with whom? Those Jews who were already converted. They entered into partnership with the Jews. Paul said, "I was made a minister of this." It was to tell the Gentiles who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ that they are no longer strangers and foreigners to the covenant promises of God but are made fellow citizens with the Jews of the household of God.

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints,

is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

I like the humility of Paul. What a lowly place this mighty man of God was willing to take! The implication is clear the gospel had already been preached among the Jews and many had believed, and now in a special sense it was given to him to go out and proclaim it among the Gentiles that they might enter into the same testimony and have the same blessing.

“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.”

This is unto angelic hosts, unfallen beings, who look on redeemed men and women and learn the riches of Christ.

Here are saints on earth, since the cross and Pentecost—many Jews, others Gentiles, come to the same common ground, God meeting them all as sinners approaching Him through the redeeming blood of Christ, which are cleansed from every stain, given a new life and nature, and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit Himself, and then everyone is linked up by the Spirit with their risen, glorified Head in heaven, and so intimate is that union that they are as close to Him as the members of my body are to each other.

The principalities and powers looking down on the world and seeing the work of God here, that is, grace picking up sinful Jews and Gentiles and making them one in Christ, are the angels who glorify God for the work He is doing, and they learn the wisdom of God. This is what God is doing now. This body relationship is spoken of in Eph. 4:15-16: “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which

is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

There you have this corporate union with Christ. He is the Head, and every believer is occupying some place in that body. I do not know what part of the body I am. The members of my physical body do not know what part they are. The consciousness is in the head; so with the spiritual body, the consciousness is in the Head up yonder, and He knows what each one is placed there for. My brethren, what a wonderful thing it is for each member to be in good working order! If one member of our body is not functioning right the whole body suffers, and so Scripture says of Christ's body, if one member suffers all the members suffer with it, and if one be honored, all the members rejoice together. If you are not going on with God and living for Him, if your life is not a godly life, you are like some member of the body out of order and failing to function. If you are living for God and walking with God, you may not be conscious of it, but you are a help and blessing to all the other members.

III. THE CHURCH AS A BUILDING

We are not only pictured in this wonderful epistle as members of the body of Christ, but in Eph. 2:19-22, we are pictured as each one part of a building. Here we have our heavenly citizenship. Here is a new household: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the founda-

tion of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Believers constitute that spiritual house. Notice how he used the word "fitly." In chapter 4, "fitly joined together," in chapter 2, "fitly framed together." A master builder is very careful that every stone fits properly, that every board is properly fitted together, otherwise the beauty and perhaps the safety is marred. It is the work of the Spirit of God fitly to frame the building together. Peter speaks of us as lively stones come to the Living Stone and thus are builded together into an house of God.

IV. THE CHURCH AS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Eph. 5:22-27, 30, 32: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish . . . For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. . . . This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

Here he has changed the figure. You do not sanctify and cleanse your body to present it to yourself;

it is part of you. He has changed the figure from the body to the bride, and I dare say as he penned these words he thought of Hosea when he was commanded by God to do something that was most repugnant, to illustrate God's dealings with Israel, and typically the Lord's dealing with the church. He had to go to the slave market to buy his wife, and the Spirit pointed her out. She was vile, filthy, contaminated, and a slave, but he took her and cleansed and clothed her, and presented her to himself, and yet she was not faithful to him, and he had to buy her back again. This is a picture of Israel. She is called the bride of God, and later on the wife. These are just symbols. Christ has to cleanse the church in order to present her to Himself a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle. It is a figure of a wife presented to her husband.

We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. This reminds us that when Adam received Eve he said, she is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. Paul is now quoting (verse 31) from Genesis. Paul is here telling us that the mystery of marriage illustrates the relationship between Christ and the church.

We have seen the church then as a redeemed company, as the body of Christ, as a glorious building in which the Spirit of God dwells, and as the bride soon to be presented to the Lamb, Who died to redeem her. That in itself speaks of her destiny.

V. THE DESTINY OF THE CHURCH

What, then, is the destiny of the church of God? Eph. 2:4-7: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were

dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

Sitting in heavenly places does not mean we are now sitting together "with" Christ Jesus. Now we are sitting "in" Christ, not "with." "With" Christ will be our happy portion by and by when Christ comes and takes us home, that in the ages to come He may show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Show means that He might exhibit. The church, then, called out of sin and darkness, redeemed to God with the precious blood of Christ, and linked to the Head with the Spirit, will be one with Christ throughout all the ages to come, and so whatever experiences our Lord may be called upon to go through we shall go through with Him. We shall reign with Him and be with Him when He is all and in all. Our portion will be with Him through all eternity. Let us, therefore, walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called.

III

“THE KINGS OF THE EAST”

THERE ARE certain aspects of prophetic truth that in the very nature of things could not be understood clearly until the time of the end drew near. This principle is indicated in the angel's instruction to Daniel when he said: “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. . . . But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days” (Dan. 12:4, 13). Many things were revealed to Daniel that it was not the mind of God for him to understand fully in his own days nor could they be comprehended clearly in the early centuries of the Christian dispensation.

The Book of the Revelation, contrary to the Book of Daniel, was to be unsealed, and thus this unsealed book of New Testament prophecy has to a very large extent removed the seal from Daniel, the outstanding book of Old Testament prophecy. But even in Revelation there is much that it pleased God to conceal from general understanding until the end had drawn nigh. Take, for instance, the prophecy relating to

the kings of the East and their apparent onslaught upon the powers of the West. In Rev. 16:12-16, we read:

“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of *the kings of the east* might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”

IDENTIFYING “THE KINGS OF THE EAST”

Who are “the kings of the east” here referred to? They are clearly distinguished from the powers of the West animated by the unclean spirits that proceeded out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. Armageddon is really the clashing of vast Eastern and Western armies contending for the possession of Palestine. This, I have no doubt, is all in the future and perhaps in the very near future, though not to take place until after the rapture of the church.

It has often been noticed that the trumpet and vial judgments [beginning in Revelation 8:6 and 16:1, respectively] run parallel, to a certain extent; that is, in each instance the same spheres or groups of people are referred to under the respective num-

bers. The first trumpet and the first vial are similar in character, and so on down through the lists. Now, if the prophecy of the sixth trumpet (Rev. 9:13 ff.) be compared with that of the sixth vial (Rev. 16:12-16), we may see that the kings of the East are the leaders of a tremendous Oriental army that will come down upon Palestine in the last days. For the sake of convenience, I quote the trumpet passage from Rev. 9:15-21, that it may be considered carefully in connection with what we have already read:

“And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”

SYMBOLISM IN THE REVELATION

In reading such a passage as this, we must recognize the fact that we have before us a very highly figurative vision. The angel made known the unveiling to John in symbols: "He sent and signified it by his angel" (Rev. 1:1). "Signified" is literally "*signi-fied*"—that is, symbolized. If this key is kept in mind when one is reading the Apocalypse, it will save from many erroneous interpretations.

The symbolic picture, then, of the sixth trumpet judgment is that of a great army—on land and in air belching forth fire and smoke—coming down over the eastern steppes and plains of Asia, across the Euphrates into the land of Palestine, with the cry, "Asia for the Asiatics."

Who will be the leaders of this horde? The definite explanation of the sixth vial makes this clear. The way of the kings of the East is to be prepared by the drying up of the great river that was once the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire. I am inclined to believe that this symbolizes the complete destruction of the Turkish power, which has acted as a buffer between the East and West for so long. Others think it refers to the actual drying up of the river itself, that river which was one of the four that of old went forth from Eden.

In either case, as a result of some great cataclysm, the way is to be effectually opened up for the onslaught of the kings of the East.

VIEWING THE EMPIRE OF THE RISING SUN

Who are these kings? It is not necessary to guess. The word for "East" is simply "sun-rising." The

kings of the sun-rising! Japan has been known as the empire of the rising sun for a millennium.

The last three decades have brought this nation to the front in a marvelous way, but recent events have shown up her malignity, her ferocity, and her evident determination to dictate all the policies and dominate all the nations of the Far East. The puppet king of Manchukuo, possibly Japanese-controlled rulers in other northeastern Chinese territories, perhaps at last an alignment with China itself, and there you have the kings of the sun-rising—all in readiness for the great day of God Almighty—the Armageddon conflict.

The instructed believer in the inspired Word of God knows that the fierce winds of the great tribulation will not be let loose on the earth till the church is raptured and the remnant of Israel sealed, but “coming events cast their shadows before,” and we may well look with bated breath upon the amazing and truly horrible developments in the territory of the coming kings of the East.

The tocsin of doom is sounding. The yellow peril becomes more and more ominous. The preparation of the day of the Lord goes on apace. Christian, lift up your head. “Your redemption draweth nigh.”

IV

REAFFIRMATION OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

BY THIS SUBJECT I have in mind certain objections that have lately been taken to the dispensational view of the Word of God. It has often been said that the dispensational teachers are quite unable to meet the new position, but I really think that most of us have too profound a regard for one or two of the brethren who are leading the new dispensational departure to like to appear in public against them; at any rate, to take sharp issue with them. We realize that in this age men and women who firmly believe in the inspiration of the Word of God ought to stand shoulder to shoulder as far as possible. It is always with greatest regret that I take issue with any who love the Lord Jesus Christ, who believe firmly in His true deity, who believe in His virgin birth, His sinlessness, humanity, His atoning work, the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification, and the full inspiration of the Word of God. We consider that however we may differ on other lines, if they agree with us on these, on our part we don't like to be found apparently in opposition to them. Therefore, many dispensational teachers have felt it hardly wise to say very much

about this issue, but in schools such as this school and similar institutions, it is well to make clear our position on dispensational truth and reaffirm it to the students.

For years I have read carefully and prayerfully nearly all the books written from the other side, and I see no reason to change my point of view. The Scriptures are plain on the subject.

Turn to Eph. 3:1-11: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ;) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel; Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ: And to make all men see, what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose"—literally, "according to the purpose of the ages." I call attention to that expression. There is in Scripture a doctrine of the ages—God working out

a very definite purpose of the ages—and we are now living in one particular age, the age of grace. “According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Eph. 1:8-10: “Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.”

I have quoted these Scriptures, to which many more could be added, to show in the first place that the word “dispensation” is an eminently Scriptural term. It comes from a Greek word that is translated in four different ways in the New Testament. In these passages and in several others, it is rendered “dispensation.” In the Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 12, it is translated “administration.” It is elsewhere rendered “order,” and in the Gospel of Luke it is rendered “stewardship.” “Give an account of thy stewardship . . .”

The only way really to understand our Bible and get things in their places so that we are not in confusion of mind as we read and study is by noticing the various dispensations or administrations or stewardships or other periods that run through the Scripture. But we have recently been told by some prominent writers that this is all a mistake. There is, they declare, no dispensational plan running through the Scripture, or, if there are any dispensations, there are only two—the dispensation of the Old Testament and the dispensation of the New; and that Dr. Scofield and others who have been glad to learn from him, and

many great men who have learned independently of him, are all wrong in thinking that the Old Testament presents a series of dispensations and that in the New Testament we find people passing out of one dispensation into another, and that there is still ahead of us a glorious dispensation of the "fulness of time." So when a position like this is challenged, we shall examine the foundations again and see if dispensational teaching rests upon any solid basis.

First, let us be very clear as to what we mean by a dispensation. The original word simply means the "ordering of a house." It is a word we have taken over bodily into English. The English word "economy" is but the Greek word *oikonomia*, anglicized, which is translated "dispensation," "administration," "stewardship," or "order."

We know what that word "economy" means. Our statesmen study political economy. What is that? It is the ordering of the affairs of the nation. If the affairs of all nations were ordered just exactly the same way, then the study of international politics would be very simple, but the affairs of nations differ. Take this great country of ours in contrast with Great Britain. We have largely the same civilization. It isn't the easiest thing to tell a Britisher from an American, yet their fundamental systems of governments are altogether different. We base everything on a constitution. Great Britain has no constitution. Here is this great government and it rests on its constitution, while in Great Britain the government rests on tradition. Their body of law has been built up century after century and changes have come very slowly, for the English people are strong for custom, and it is very hard to bring about a change. With

us in America, we just put up an amendment to the constitution and have the people vote on it, and if endorsed, it is added to the constitution. Whether we keep the amendments or not is another thing! The laws of nations differ. Each nation has its own peculiar economy. Now, I might be well versed in American economy and go over to Great Britain and find myself constantly at outs with the people there and yet be perfectly innocent about it. I have been brought up differently, and I don't understand. I have been taught from boyhood in the United States what to do under certain circumstances, but I find I have to learn a new dispensation over there.

Our children go to school, especially our girls, and they study domestic economy, which is the ordering of a house or a home. Sometimes I illustrate domestic economy like this: Suppose a young girl goes out to learn how to become a housekeeper. She takes a position in a certain home. By and by she becomes thoroughly adept and trustworthy. The mistress can depend upon her under all circumstances and feels that Mary knows just how she wants things run, and with a mere word from her, everything is understood. Well, after a few years, Mary feels that she is so proficient that she can get a better position. She is working in a little home where the people are working people who get up early in the morning, so she has to be up at five, have the breakfast ready at 5:30, on the table by 6:00, lunches prepared for the men by 6:30, etc., and she knows exactly how this house is to be run. But now she learns that the big house up yonder on the heights is in need of a housekeeper. They pay more and Mary wants to earn all she can, so she interviews the mistress, and finally, everything

being satisfactory, she leaves the one place and goes to work in the mansion.

She comes to the new home, and the mistress takes her into the kitchen and says, "Mary, let me tell you now what to do."

"Oh, you don't need to bother. I know exactly how a house should be run. I wouldn't have taken this position if I didn't understand how to run a house."

"But, Mary, not all houses are run the same way."

"Oh, that's all right; you needn't tell me anything. It isn't necessary. You can leave everything to me."

So the first morning Mary is up at five o'clock and the gong is duly rung at 5:30. The man of the house jumps up and calls to his wife, "My dear, whatever is the matter? Is the house on fire?"

"Why, I don't know," she replies, and rushes to the head of the stairs and calls down, "Mary, what is it?"

"Why, mum, it just means that breakfast will be on the table in half an hour."

"Breakfast in half an hour! Why, we don't sit down to breakfast here until nine o'clock. What do you mean?"

"Why, I mean that they always had breakfast at six o'clock where I have been working."

"That's all right, Mary, but I tried to explain to you yesterday that you must learn how to run things in this house. I can't have this sort of thing! Now, do your best until nine o'clock. Ring a rising bell at eight-thirty if you like."

Poor Mary bursts into tears because her thriftiness is not appreciated. She learns the importance of dispensational truth.

How do we apply this? Some of us remember the time when we read the Bible fervently and devoutly

prayed to understand it; but we were always in confusion of mind. Why? Because we were trying to apply the order that prevailed in the house of Israel to the church, the house of God, in this dispensation. Then we took the passages that apply to the dispensation of the "fulness of time," when Christ will come and "in his own times, show who is that blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and the Lord of lords," and we applied all those passages to the present dispensation, and we couldn't make them fit.

I am reminded of the Scotch Covenanters, those good old people among whom were some of my own ancestors. The Scotch Covenanters took their swords and were ready to fight for their religion. They entered into a solemn covenant to oppose Episcopacy and establish Presbyterianism, which they conceived as the only divine religion on earth. They did this with good conscience because they believed that God had set up His kingdom now, that Jesus Christ is King, and that those who rejected Presbyterianism were the enemies of the kingdom of God on earth. They did not understand dispensational truth. Then take Roman Catholicism in the Middle Ages. The church fought with sword and fire to destroy heresy because they did not understand the present age of grace.

When you come to the Word of God and you recognize this dispensational principle running through the Scriptures, everything opens up in a perfectly marvelous way.

In Ephesians, we have read of "the purpose of the ages." Augustine said, "Distinguish the ages and the Scriptures are plain." I saw a sentence in a book the other day that all this dispensational teaching has come about within the last fifty years. There was never a

greater mistake and blunder. Godly men in all the Christian centuries have taught it, but in our day, this light is shining brighter and brighter.

DISPENSATION OF INNOCENCE

Going back to the creation of man, we see that God placed Adam and Eve in the garden of delight. You can see that the economy under which our first parents were placed in the Garden of Eden was altogether different to the economy under which we are placed in this present day. What was the stewardship committed to Adam and Eve? They were to dress and keep the garden and have authority over all creation. The beasts were brought to Adam and whatever he called them, they were named. All was subject to them, but there was one stipulation—they were not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

That was their stewardship. That was the *dispensation of innocence*. Who would say for a moment that that dispensation, that stewardship, that administration fits with ours? They failed in their stewardship and were turned out. "Give an account of thy stewardship," the master says to the servant. "Give an account of thy dispensational responsibility." So they were turned out and that dispensation ended.

DISPENSATION OF CONSCIENCE

Take them outside of the garden—from the garden to the flood. Who would dare to say that the same dispensation, the same stewardship, the same administration was committed to the patriarchs in those so far distant millenniums as to us? For instance, we have no record of a Bible, a written revelation, though

there may have been one. We are told by Jude that Enoch prophesied concerning the second coming, so there may have been some written record, but as far as we know, writing was not invented before the flood. We have no record of any inspired Bible of any kind before the writings of Moses. The Book of Job may or may not have been written before Moses. Enoch's prophecy may simply have been spoken. It is certain that they had no body of rules and regulations in regard to conduct as we have in the law. The great thing that seems to stand out in that dispensation is that men now had *conscience*. They were able to discern between good and evil, and they were held responsible by God to choose the good and reject the evil. If men sought consistently after the good, God revealed Himself to them. Abel, bringing his lamb of sacrifice, we are told in Hebrews, offered it by faith. God from time to time revealed Himself to them, but they had no written law, no body of doctrine, no organized church. The line of Seth chose the ways of God and the line of Cain chose the path of evil, and the two were separated. One called upon the name of the Lord; the other refused obedience to the revealed will of God.

We often hear it said by people who don't think things through that we don't need a Bible; men need only to obey the dictates of their consciences. For a period of sixteen hundred years by the Hebrew Version, but nearly two thousand years by the Septuagint, men were left largely to the dictates of conscience. What was the result? Corruption and violence filled the earth. God said, "The only thing to do is to wipe it out with a flood." Thus that dispensation came to an end.

DISPENSATION OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT

A dispensation is a period of time, long or short, in which God is dealing with men in a different way than He has ever dealt with them before. He dealt with them one way in the garden. He dealt with them differently from the expulsion until the flood. Now, consider the period from the flood to the calling out of Abraham. What difference have we in God's way of dealing with men in this period? We do not yet have a written Bible. We do not yet have a called-out nation nor a called-out church, but we do have something added to check man's natural propensities and hold him in subjection. We now have the principle of *human government*. God constituted Noah the first magistrate, so far as records show, that the world ever knew. We have no word whatever of magistracy before the flood—no divinely given form of government. God, Himself, out of love for His creatures, seeing their need of Him, instituted human government. Brutal and wicked men came into the place of power, but the Apostle tells us that the institution was a divine one. God appointed a magistrate, and a new principle came into operation. With all the experience of the past and with the fearful warning of the flood, surely this little company coming out from the ark will remember the past and will be grateful to God for the new provision He has made, and will be in subjection to Him, and the authority He has instituted. What is the result? Follow it down, and again if you take the Septuagint, about one thousand years go by and at the end of the first millennium after the flood the whole human race has gone into idolatry. Instead of men obeying conscience and being subject to government

and authority, the governors themselves have become apostate. Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord, the hunter of the souls of men, is the first despot and first apostate. We find that men need more than conscience, need more than corrective power of environment and government to turn them to God. Of course, in all dispensations, God has undoubtedly saved thousands of men for heaven of whom we have no record in Scripture. I do not suppose that all of the people who lived before the flood were lost eternally. Wherever men in any dispensation have obeyed the light God has given them, He has revealed Himself to them so that they could believe and be saved. But the dispensation of government closed in the darkness of idolatry.

DISPENSATION OF PROMISE

With the call of Abraham we have the beginning of another dispensation, God calling Abraham out from an idolatrous people and revealing Himself and giving the promise of the coming Savior. Up to that time there had been only one promise given — the primeval promise made in the garden that the serpent should bruise the seed of the woman and He should bruise its head. Men could look forward, as they did undoubtedly, to the coming Seed of the woman, who was eventually to make propitiation for sin. When God calls Abraham and tells him, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," He gives Abraham the promise of the coming Savior. What we may call the dispensation of *promise* began with Abraham. We have something we have not had before. The old dispensation changes and the new dis-

pensation comes in. God is dealing with men in a different way.

How were men to be saved now? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and was glad," said our blessed Lord. He looked forward in faith to the coming Savior. That dispensation was a brief one. Our definition says "a period of time either long or short."

Now, the people of Israel go down into Egypt. They have the promise and are sure of it, and that promise is so well known even in Egypt that the time comes when the man looked upon as the heir to the throne of Egypt, the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, considers that promise. I suppose it had been told him by his own mother; we read, "He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Why? Because he was ready to assume the reproach of Christ. What did Moses know about the reproach of Christ? He knew that Christ was to come through the despised people, the seed of Abraham, and he said, "I will identify myself with them."

DISPENSATION OF LAW

Then we come to the scene on Mount Sinai. Now what? A new dispensation altogether, that of *law*. The moment the Law is given, God has committed an altogether different administration to them. Yet we are told there is only one dispensation in the Old Testament. What did Abraham know about the provision of Law? What did Noah know about the Law before the flood? Nothing whatsoever. They were given something they had never had before. Was the

Law given in order that men might be saved? The Law was given even at the very first in order to prove to man his helplessness. God always casts man upon His own infinite mercy and grace for salvation.

I attended a little church in a country village one Sunday and got there just as Sunday school was convening. I was asked to go into the Bible class. I do not remember the particular chapter they were studying, but the leader put this question: "Class, how were people saved before Christ came into the world?"

Someone answered, "By keeping the Law."

"Exactly," said the leader. He was going on, and I did not, as a stranger, want to interrupt, but I said, "I beg your pardon, but did I understand that correctly? Did you say that people were saved by keeping the Law before Christ came into the world?"

"Certainly, until Christ came that was the only way."

"Well, then, what do you do with this verse in Galatians, 'If there had been a law given which could have given life, then verily righteousness would have been by the law'?"

"Oh, yes, I hadn't thought of that. Well, class, we were wrong. What other suggestions have you?"

Finally a woman spoke up, "Why, by offering animal sacrifices."

"Exactly; I think the woman is right. Now, is that satisfactory?"

"It would be but for a verse here, 'It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should put away sin.'"

"Oh, yes, that's true isn't it? Well, then how do you think that people were saved before Christ came into the world?"

"Why, exactly as Abraham. He rejoiced to see the

salvation of the Lord. He saw it and was glad. They looked on in faith to the Seed of Abraham."

Wherever men will honestly judge themselves and repent, God will give them light enough to be saved. They were saved through the same sacrifice as that which saved us; they were saved through the coming Savior as we are through the risen Savior.

David lived in the dispensation of law. David committed a fearful sin, and he cried aloud, "Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." Why did he not hurry down to the temple and offer a sacrifice? "In burnt offerings and sacrifice [for sin] thou hast no pleasure. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." He depended upon the infinite sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ yet to be offered. The dispensation of law did not propose the Law as a means of salvation but proposed the Law as the expression of integrity of heart toward God. People honest toward God would seek to keep that Law, and failing to keep it, it would impress upon them their own sinfulness and the need of a Savior. Paul said, "The law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."

Our blessed Lord, when He died on Calvary, cried, "It is finished." What was finished? The work of saving poor sinners was finished. The dispensation of law was finished. On the cross, He bore in His own body all the penalty of that outraged Law.

DISPENSATION OF GRACE

There is a verse in Colossians that is rarely ever explained in a way that seems at all clear, and yet I believe it is a most striking picture. Col. 2:14:

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” In this connection we often hear the illustration used of the old-fashioned way of keeping books. There were nails on the wall, and when you bought something, the groceryman made out a slip and placed it on the nail. Then when you paid your bill, you presented your slips and he put them on another nail. They were nailed to the wall. But we learn from history that it was customary under the Roman law if a man were to be hanged on a tree for some crime, to write out the indictment, the law, the particular crime of which he was guilty and nail it on the cross above his head. Pilate did that. He placed a placard over the head of Jesus Christ, which read, “Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews,” which meant that He was a traitor to Caesar. He had dared to set Himself up as King of the Jews. That was the crime for which He hung on the tree. Over each of the robbers’ heads a placard was nailed upon which was written the crime of which they were guilty, the laws they had broken. They were suffering for having broken those laws. So our blessed Christ, hanging upon the tree, with Pilate’s statement over His head, was supposed to die because He had declared Himself King of the Jews! But, although His hands were nailed to that cross, yet in a spiritual sense they were free to nail His own accusation to that cross. He, as it were, nailed over His own head, the Law; the ten words given at Mount Sinai. He died because of the violation of that holy Law. Who broke it? Did He? No. He took it out of the way for us, nailing it to His cross. Now the penalty is paid. Everything is settled. So far as we are con-

cerned, we are under grace, and that brings us to the present glorious dispensation the Apostle Paul calls the dispensation of the *grace* of God, and the dispensation of the mystery, the dispensation of the grace of God because He is making known His free grace in Christ Jesus to all who believe. "By grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."

I remember some years ago preaching in Salt Lake City. I was younger then and had a little more fire and energy. Every night I would stand out in the snow and preach—it was during the winter time—and although I had a place with an awning where the people were protected, I was standing in the snow and preaching to them. One night I was preaching the gospel to about three hundred Mormons, when a surly man came along and said, "Look here, may I ask you a question?"

"Yes, if you will be prompt, please."

"I am an elder in the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints. I understood you to say that we could be saved by grace apart from human merit. I deny that, and I challenge you to show me a place in the Bible that says that anybody can be saved by grace without works."

I opened my Bible and read Rom. 4:4-5: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." I also read in Ephesians (chapter 2), "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."

"Let me see that," he said, and I handed him my Bible. "This is not in my Bible."

"What kind of a Bible have you? I think it is."

"I have read my Bible a good many times, but I never saw that."

"Well, when you go home tonight, you just look it up."

"What kind of a Bible have you?"

"This is the Authorized Version."

"Oh, well, that explains it all. I use the King James Version."

"Well," I said, "you know perhaps that the Authorized Version and the King James are the same."

"Is that so? I never knew that. Does yours have the letter to King James in the front of it?"

"Yes."

"Well, all I have got to say is that I have never seen that in my Bible, and if that is in the Bible, I would rather have the Book of Mormon any day," and he ripped out a fearful oath and cursed and damned the Bible.

I saw my advantage, and I said, "Look here, this is a practical demonstration of the thing that I have been preaching. Here is an elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, and he tells us that he is saved by his own works. We have just had a sample of his works—cursing and swearing. Now, I come to you as a younger in the church of Jesus Christ of the former-day saints, telling you that I am saved by grace alone, without works, and I challenge you to put a detective on my tracks, and if you can find one unholy thing that I am saying or one wicked thing that I am doing, you can proclaim it from the housetops." Grace makes us righteous.

This is also called the dispensation of mystery. This is the age when God had made known His eternal purpose to take out of Jew and Gentile a people and unite them into one body; His body and His bride. When He reigns, He will not reign alone. This secret was never revealed in the Old Testament period—that the church, brought out of Jew and Gentile, united by the Holy Ghost during this present dispensation, should some day reign with Him.

When this dispensation is ended, are there any others to follow? According to some of our recent writers, there are not. The next great event will be, they say, the coming of the Lord; that the rapture and the appearing will all take place at the same time and that God is then through with Israel; that the promises to Israel are now being fulfilled spiritually in the church; that we are to be called up to heaven and the earth is to be destroyed by fire; that there is no dispensation to follow this. They are telling us that we have been misled during all these years of dispensational teaching; that they don't know when the Lord may come; that all the things and signs of the times leading on to the end amount to nothing; that there will not be a millennium; that we may be here a few thousand years or less, that they don't know, but when this dispensation is ended, we shall enter immediately into our eternal state.

THE MILLENNIUM

What do we find when we come to this old Book? Paul points out to the Ephesians another dispensation. I shall not touch on the brief dispensation of *judgment*. Some think that hardly deserves the dignified name of a dispensation. I am thinking of this glorious dis-

pensation of the "fulness of time," commonly called the *millennium*. The time will come when our Lord Jesus will be King over all the world, and He will show the world a happy potentate. Shakespeare says, "Unhappy lies the head that wears the crown," but when Jesus comes, He will be a happy King. When He comes He will show us who is that blessed (or happy) and only potentate; there will be no other. Jesus alone will be King in that day. There will be no one to dispute His sway.

We are told that the term "millennium" is never found in Scripture. It is true that the Latin word is not found, but we have the English equivalent, "a thousand years," and this is found six times in the twentieth chapter of Revelation. We read that the serpent is bound for one thousand years. When did the binding of Satan take place? If this is all in the past, we have never known the time when Satan was really bound. He has always seemed active so far as our own day is concerned. He is to be bound for one thousand years and is not to deceive the nations any more until the thousand-year period is over. Rev. 20:4: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." This refers to the church and the martyred tribulation saints. Verse 5: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." This is the fourth time this is mentioned. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection:

on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Verse 7: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." And this is what we mean by "the millennium." This term has been used in the church from the very earliest ages, but now men rise up who profess to have increased light and suddenly discover that there is never to be a millennium. But this Scripture stands as a bulwark in the way of all who would deny that Christ is yet to reign for a thousand glorious years.

V

WAS THE KINGDOM OFFERED TO ISRAEL AND REJECTED?

ACCORDING TO THE teaching many of us are familiar with, John the Baptist came preaching the nearness of the kingdom of heaven, that is, proclaiming that the time had drawn nigh when the rule of heaven was to be set up over this world; when heaven was to take manifest control over human affairs. He predicted the coming of the King to set up this kingdom. When our Lord came, He himself proclaimed the same message as John, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." We have taught that during His ministry here on earth, He and His disciples went everywhere proclaiming the kingdom and declaring that the door into the kingdom now was open but the people must be regenerated to enter into it. The day had come when the kingdom of heaven was to be set up on earth, provided the people were ready to receive it. This is the message of the Gospel of Matthew. The offer of the kingdom met with ever-increasing rejection until finally it was completely set to one side, when our Lord Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is taken from you and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the

fruits thereof.” That nation is not the Gentiles as such, but that nation refers to regenerated Israel in a coming day, and, in the meantime, the kingdom has been, as it were, deferred, and the gospel of the grace of God is going out to all the world. God has not changed His purpose, but He is not now setting up His kingdom in this world. That kingdom awaits the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Recently these views have been challenged by some very respected people, and I want to examine a few Scriptures to see whether they hold or not.

Turn to the second Psalm. This is the great dispensational Psalm. It is referred to again and again in the New Testament. After our blessed Lord ascended to heaven, it seems that the Spirit of God directed the attention of the apostolic company to this second Psalm in a very special way. It revealed to them what God was doing.

In the second Psalm we have twelve verses divided into four sections, of three verses each. We have four different speakers. In the first section (verses 1-3) we hear the voice of the world. In the second (4-6) we listen to the voice of the Father. In the third (7-9) we hear the voice of the Son, and in the fourth (10-12) it is the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Notice the attitude of the world. “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?” You remember that the Apostle Peter applied this to what took place when our Lord Jesus Christ was rejected. He showed that both the Jew and Gentile were linked together in this rejection.

“The kings of the earth [represented by Caesar and his minions] set themselves, and the rulers [i.e., of the Jews] take counsel together, against the Lord, and

against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," i.e., they deliberately refused to acknowledge the kingly authority of Jesus Christ.

He was presented to them as the King promised through the Old Testament period, and when He came He offered Himself to the people in that character. It was in that character that He was rejected. Therefore, to say that the kingdom was not offered to Israel is nonsensical. They could only have received the kingdom by receiving the King. The King presented Himself, and in presenting Himself, He offered them the kingdom. He said, "The kingdom of God is among you." Sometimes this is rendered, "The kingdom of God is within you." Personally, I think this is a mistaken rendering. This is popular with Eddyites, New Thought people, and all the various esoteric systems. They like to think that the kingdom of God is something inside of all men; that the Lord addresses everybody, including the scribes and Pharisees, "God's kingdom is within you. Get into harmony with that and everything is all right." But it may well be rendered, "The kingdom of God is among you."

The Lord said, "You don't need to look for the kingdom of God. Here is the kingdom. While you are looking for it, here it is. Now the question is, Will you receive it or reject it?" They rejected it. It was set to one side.

"Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

What about the kingdom? Has God changed His plans or has He set up the kingdom among the Gentiles? Not at all. Hear the voice of the Father (verses 4-6): "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the

Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." It is as though He said, "I haven't changed my plans. My kingdom shall be established on Mount Zion." Mount Zion means Mount Zion. All the Old Testament prophets declared that the King's throne should be established there. Although the people of Israel have refused Him, His plans are unchanged, and the day is coming when the kingdom will be actually set up on Mount Zion, and regenerated Israel will accept the kingdom and bow the knee to the King.

Now, in the meantime, hear the voice of the Son: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." That is, although He has been rejected by His own nation, the Son now announces the fact that God the Father has not changed His plans. God owns Him as His Son, and though He is rejected of man, the day is coming when not only the people of Israel but all the Gentiles everywhere will be brought into subjection to His benevolent, yet righteous sway, when He will rule the nations with a rod of iron. When will that be? A multitude of Scriptures show that this will be at His second coming. He is not ruling the nations with a rod of iron now. Even where the gospel is believed, He is not ruling the nations. That awaits the day of the establishment of His kingdom in millennial glory. In the meantime, while He sits

exalted on the throne of Jehovah (110th Psalm) the voice of the Holy Spirit is heard, "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

When we come to the New Testament, as in the nineteenth chapter of Luke, we find our blessed Lord indicating the course of things in regard to the kingdom. Verse 11: "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."

Now, the writer of the book I referred to not only wrote that the kingdom of God should immediately appear, but he thinks that the kingdom did appear.

"Because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear," Jesus related a parable to show them it would not! "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." There is our blessed Lord. He has gone into a far country. He is seated on the Father's throne waiting to receive the kingdom and then to return. This is in exact accord with the 110th Psalm. The Father says to the Son, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Then comes the second time, when He is to establish His kingdom. While He is in the far country, the servants act for Him in His absence, as recognizing His rightful authority.

"And he called his ten servants and delivered them ten pounds and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after

him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound which I have kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man. . . . But the nobleman replied, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee. Thou knowest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."

The rule of the iron rod begins. The Lord said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The Lord was not only the truth in all the actions of His life, but He was the truth in everything He said. Our Savior never said anything that was false. He didn't

make up little fancy stories. These parables were actual facts. For instance, "A certain man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father," etc. What were the names of those two sons? He could have told you. He didn't make that story up. "A certain rich man was clothed in purple and fine linens." He names the beggar because He calls His own people by name, but He leaves the rich man unnamed.

And so here, this story is one of fact. Everyone listening to Him knew exactly to what He was referring. Just about the time that the Lord was born, Herod the Great had died. In his will he selected Archelaus, his son, to be king. The people didn't want Archelaus. They had suffered under the father and thought his son would be even worse. Archelaus attempted to take the throne, but finding the Jews so hostile, he determined to go to Caesar and put the case before him and have the title to his throne confirmed. Before leaving he distributed a sum of money to certain of his servants, and they were to work in his absence to make friends for him. Soon after the Jews heard that he had gone to Caesar to put the case before him, they sent messengers after him to say, "We don't want this man." But when Augustus heard the case he confirmed Archelaus in the title to the throne. He returned with a Roman legion to back him in taking his position. The servants who had acted in his absence were rewarded and given various places in the kingdom, while, on the other hand, he turned upon those who were out and out enemies and destroyed them. The Lord is not endorsing everything he did, but He uses this story to illustrate the present condition.

He was the rightful King, but they didn't want Him. They were not willing to submit to Him. So He says,

WAS KINGDOM OFFERED ISRAEL AND REJECTED? 61

“It is like the nobleman who went into a far country. I am going to leave the world, as the rejected one going back to the Father’s throne.” He is going to put the case in His hands. In the meantime He has servants in the world. “Now you take what I have committed to you and use it in my interest. Use it to make friends for me. Use it to prepare men and women to acknowledge my authority. When I come back, I am coming to reign.” He had scarcely gone to the Father when they sent messengers to say, “We don’t want Him.” We see these messengers in the stoning of Stephen. Stephen went into the very presence of God to say in behalf of the people, “They don’t want Thy Son. I preached the gospel to them and gave them opportunity to repent, but they don’t want Thy Son. See the treatment they gave me; they put me to death.” All through the centuries since, the servants of Christ have been working in His absence. We recognize Him as King. Does that not mean then that the kingdom is already set up? Not at all. It implies this: We believe that a usurper is dominating this world, that the rightful King is rejected. We acknowledge the authority of the rightful King. We own His authority, but that kingdom is not being displayed in any sense. When Christians try to exert the authority of the King over the world they always make a mistake. The kingdom is not set up yet. But those who are saved are translated into the kingdom of God in the sense that they own the authority of Christ. John writes, “I, John, your brother and companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.” We are waiting for the One whom we recognize to come back. He is not called our King. Christ is our Lord. He is our Lord. He is

our Head. But nowhere in Scripture is Jesus Christ said to be King of the church. He is the Head of the church and Lord of the individual believer. Our relationship to Him is that of His body and His bride, and therefore, you can see how incongruous it would be to speak of Him as King of the church. Take the queen of England. She doesn't speak of George VI as her King, but as her husband or her head. She recognizes him as the king of the realm of England. His word has all the force of law to her because she is his wife, and so the church sustains intimate relationship to Christ. She recognizes Him as the rightful but rejected King. When He comes back again the kingdom will be displayed. In the meantime, we are to work in His interest, to bring men everywhere to recognize Him as the rightful King. He wants men to submit to Him as Savior and as Lord. "Therefore, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." We are to preach the gospel of the grace of God.

In the Gospels, the Lord proclaims the gospel of the kingdom. After the church is taken out, the gospel of the kingdom will again be proclaimed, i.e., the gospel that the King is coming to reign. Now, the good news is that God is offering remission of sins. When the people accept that message, they are linked up by the Holy Spirit with the risen Christ, and when He comes as King, they will come with Him to reign over a regenerated universe.

Right here comes the question of the place of the Gospels in connection with our present message. We sometimes say that Matthew is decidedly a Jewish Gospel. When I say that, I am apt to be misunder-

stood on one side or on the other. Some people may think that I mean that Matthew has no interest for me because I am not a Jew and other people may go to the other extreme, namely, that all Christians are now spiritual Israel and, in that sense, the Gospel is for them.

But when I say that Matthew is the Jewish Gospel, it is practically the same thing in relation to the Gospels as when I say that Mark is the Roman Gospel, Luke, the Gentile, and John, the Christian Gospel.

Mark is the Roman Gospel. Of course, that doesn't apply as well today as the day it was written. When Mark was written, the Romans dominated the world. Mark had in view the instruction of the Romans. In those days, if you were to sit down with a busy Roman to prove to him that Jesus is the Son of God, you would turn to Mark's Gospel and meet him on familiar ground. But when he believed the Gospel and became a Christian, did that mean he no longer valued the Gospel of Mark? No. He found in that Gospel the expressed will of the Lord. He was thankful for it.

If you were to deal with a Greek, you would turn to Luke. Luke was written by a cultured, Greek-speaking physician. He may have been a Gentile, but I take it that he was probably a Jew. He was a cultured man of science. The Gospel was written in such a way as to meet the questionings of the cultured Greeks. But after this Greek believed the message, what did he become? A Christian. Did he discount Luke's Gospel? Not at all. He valued it to the end of his days, and would go over and over it. He would feed his soul on it.

Therefore, I say, Matthew is the Jewish Gospel.

Some of my brethren who do not understand dispensational truth think that this is casting a slur on it, that it is undervaluing it; that I mean that the Gospel of Matthew is not for a Christian. But I do not say this. I am saying that if I wanted to prove to a Jew that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, I would take him to—not Mark, not Luke, and certainly not to John—I would take him to Matthew, and I would sit down with that Jew, and I would point out to him how every claim made by Matthew is backed by the Old Testament. I would show him that Jesus Christ is in the direct order of the direct genealogical line of Abraham and David; how, in accordance with the Old Testament, the Gentiles came to greet Him at the brightness of His rising; that He was born in Judea as the Old Testament said He would be. I would show him how John came, the forerunner promised in Isaiah 40. I would show him how the King came and was baptized of John, anointed by God, proclaimed to be the Son of God, the One sent to redeem Israel. I would go on chapter by chapter and show how He was tested and how He came at last to the mountain and proclaimed the principles of His kingdom. I would give him the Sermon on the Mount.

There is a great deal of mistaken teaching about the Sermon on the Mount. Some people say that the Sermon on the Mount is the sweetest gospel found in the Bible. If it is the gospel, then everyone of us is lost forever, for the Sermon on the Mount puts before us the highest possible standard of morals and spirituality, and we have never come up to it.

A young student from a Bible college who had held some meetings in Nova Scotia was telling how he visited a blacksmith shop.

The blacksmith said to him, "I believe that if a man keeps the Ten Commandments and lives up to the Sermon on the Mount, that is all that will be required of him."

The young man looked at him quietly for a few seconds, and then said, "How are you getting along with the commandments and the Sermon on the Mount?"

"Oh, well, of course we all come short."

"That puts you in a rather bad way, doesn't it? Have you ever kept them?"

"Well, no, nobody could ever reach to that standard."

"Don't you see where you are? That is the reason God gave them—to show men where they are, and their need of a Savior."

The principles of the Sermon on the Mount will govern the entire world when the kingdom is set up. In the days of the tribulation, when the people of Israel will be afflicted, they will have every occasion in the world to fall back on exactly what we have here in the Sermon on the Mount, but only as regenerated Israel will they have the grace to live up to its principles.

As Christians, do we set it aside? Not at all. We come to it again and again to see the principles that are to characterize the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. So it is with everything in Matthew's Gospel. We dare not say that the instruction given there was given in behalf of the church. In chapter 10:5, we read: "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And

as ye go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils.'" There are some people today who profess to do this. They are living in the days of the Gospel of Matthew. They say that they "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead." I do not know that they have ever done that, but they profess to do something nearly as great. The funny thing about it is that they seldom, if ever, quote this, "Freely ye have received, freely give." It is very dishonest to take part of a passage and leave the other. "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat." People are ready to deceive themselves and deceive others. No, you cannot apply this today. The Gospel of Matthew gives us a definite message for a definite time. It is all linked with the presentation of the kingdom, but when they refused the King, they refused the kingdom.

When the Christian is linked with Christ, he asks himself, "What are the principles that characterized my Lord's life? What would He like to reproduce in me?" Turn to the New Testament Epistles, and you will be lifted far above what you get either in the Law of the Old Testament or in the Sermon on the Mount. May I put it this way? If you and I did not know one syllable about the law of the Old Testament, or one word of the teachings of the Lord on the earth, but had the Epistles of the New Testament, we would have everything we need to show us how to live lives of piety in this world.

So do not misunderstand when dispensational teachers say to you, "Don't go back to the Gospels to find

your rule of life. Go to the Epistles because there you have life in the energy of the Holy Spirit." Do not ignore the expressed will of the Lord.

I sometimes use this illustration in connection with the Christian's relation to the old question of law. Here is a man who is a bachelor and keeps up a large establishment. He hires a housekeeper who is rather self-willed; he endures her for a while, but he finally lets her go. The next one he gets is too careless, so he lets her go, also. By this time he is desperate; but by and by he takes a pen and a piece of paper, sits down and writes ten rules, or ten commandments, and puts them on the wall in the kitchen. Then he advertises for a housekeeper. A woman comes in answer to the advertisement. He chats with her for a few minutes, and then says, "Come downstairs with me. Will you kindly read those rules? I want you to understand that you have come to work for me and you must do exactly as I tell you. Will you agree to run this house in accordance with these rules?" She reads them over.

"Now," he says, "do you thoroughly understand that? Will you agree?"

I can imagine her looking at him sweetly saying, "All that thou hast spoken will I do and be obedient."

She is now under the law. As long as she is obedient and satisfactory, she holds her position. But suppose she is exceptional. She keeps the regulations pretty well and he is quite delighted with the change. By and by the acquaintance ripens into respect, respect into affection, affection into love; finally he tells her how lonely he has been, how wonderfully she has come to fit into the order of things, how he dreads the time

when she might terminate her engagement, and would she think of remaining with him permanently?

She exclaims, "Why, this is so sudden!" They are engaged. Then they are married. They are not master and servant anymore.

Does he take her down to the kitchen and say, "Now, look here, my dear, you remember that when you came to work for me, you promised faithfully to keep these rules and regulations. Now, although our relations are somewhat changed, you are still to keep these rules. Do you promise faithfully to obey these rules?"

I think I can see her laugh in his face. "Take them down, my dear. When I was your hired servant, I was under rules. Now that I am your wife, do you think that I will be less careful about running this house in a way that will please you?" You can depend upon it that she will be more concerned about running the house in a way that will please and gratify him because she loves him, than when she worked for wages.

Now, as Christians, as believers, when we say that we are not under law, but under grace; when we say that the Sermon on the Mount is not primarily Christian, but is instruction as to the kingdom principles, we are not ignoring the will of the Lord, the desire of the Lord as to holiness and lowliness of spirit; but we find in the Epistles the obedience of those who love Him because He first loved them. We delight to obey His commandments. We find the greatest joy in living according to His will, and we are enabled to do this in the power of the indwelling Spirit, who has come to control us for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So here we are, seeking to glorify Him. We are to endeavor to make Him known by life and word to the world which is still rejecting Him.

By and by He will come back again. When He comes, we will come with Him, having been already caught up to meet Him in the air. We shall share in His joy when the entire world is brought into subjection to Him, when men and women everywhere will bow at His feet. He will rule the nations with the iron rod of righteousness. There is no setting aside of the principles of holiness and righteousness because we seek to give things a dispensational place.

I have often felt when I have read the criticisms of some of these writers that they simply build their arguments upon some strong man's statement, for instance, Dr. C. I. Scofield. I know that no man more faithfully taught devotedness to Christ, nor did any man more faithfully live it. They seem to feel that now we are no longer under Jewish regulations, and that Dr. Scofield left us free to do as we please. If this had been presented to Dr. Scofield, he might have said quietly, with a smile, "We are free to do as we please now that we please to live for God. The new nature pleases to live for God." And if you understand what one means when he uses that expression, it is perfectly safe to use it. However, we all have the flesh within us. It is always ready to take advantage. But Paul said, "Brethren, we are called unto liberty, only use not liberty as an occasion for the flesh." We haven't been called unto the liberty of doing as the natural heart desires. We have been called unto the liberty of serving Jesus Christ in the freedom and joy of the Spirit of God. While we are doing this we are glorifying the absent King and showing to the world the principles that will be manifest when the kingdom is set up. It will mean suffering for us, but if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him

by and by. The kingdom has been offered, has been rejected, has been set to one side. God has not been taken by surprise. He saw from the beginning just what course things would take. It was His purpose to teach Israel in this way. He saw that men would crucify the Lord of glory, yet Christ was presented to them, and they were given the opportunity of accepting or rejecting Him.

In the second chapter of Daniel, we see that the stone will smite the image at the feet and toes. If this other theory is true, the stone would have to hit the image around the knees. Our Lord came in the days of the Roman Empire. His kingdom was not then set up. The stone falls not upon the knees, not on the ankles, but upon the feet and toes. In those days—the feet and toes—the God of heaven will set up His kingdom. Whosoever falls upon that stone will be broken. Israel stumbled over the stone, but on whomsoever it will fall, it will grind him to powder. Then all the kingdoms of this world will give way to the glorious kingdom of God.

VI

WILL ISRAEL BE REGATHERED?

AS YOU KNOW, I am trying to answer some questions that have been raised and answered negatively in some recent books that have had for their object the shaking of our faith in what some of us believe to be the dispensational teaching of the Scriptures.

We have already seen (I hope clearly) that God has dealt with man through a series of dispensations; that we are living in the dispensation of the grace of God, or the dispensation of the mystery, when God is taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name. He is gathering out a company to be for all eternity the body and bride of His Son. We have also seen (I hope clearly) that in due time God is going to fulfill the promises made to Israel. Will the fulfilment of those promises involve the return of the nation to the Land of Palestine? Must the Land of Palestine again become the acknowledged home of the people of Israel, and will Mount Zion, the actual city of Jerusalem, become the seat of the throne of the King in the coming day?

Let us first turn to the Book of Genesis and see what promises God made in regard to the land. Gen. 12:7:

“Unto thy seed will I give this land.” There is the first promise. It is very short and very clear. There are no conditions made. God simply appears to Abraham and says, “I am going to do a certain thing.” He does not say, “If you do so and so, I will do so and so. If your seed after you prove faithful to me, I will confirm this,” but “unto thy seed will I give this land.” He amplifies that promise in 13:14: “And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.” This is an added word to the promise, and it seems at least to imply that God will never revoke this land grant to the nation of Israel, to the seed of Abraham: “Unto thy seed will I give this land for ever, And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.”

Abraham has both a spiritual and a natural seed. But when God speaks of his seed as numberless as the dust of the earth, that necessarily refers to the earthly seed. When He speaks of his seed as the stars of the heaven, that refers to the heavenly seed. Here is distinctly the earthly seed, as numerous as the dust of the earth. Verse 17: “Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.”

In 15:18, we have the limits of the land divided in a fuller way: “In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Keniz-

zites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.” Those of us who are thoroughly familiar with ancient geography know where these “ites” lived; at any rate, the limits of the rivers tell us—from the river of the Euphrates on the one side to Egypt; that is all the way from Egypt on the west to the Euphrates on the east. Israel never possessed that much of the land. Even in the day of King Solomon, the land Israel possessed was not so great as that here promised to Abraham. So I take it that in the coming day, God will confirm this promise. Gen. 17:7-8: “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Now, to one who did not have a theory to maintain, it should seem perfectly clear that God meant what He said, when He declared that He would give this land to Abraham and his seed, to be their inheritance forever. The term “forever” means *forever*, as long as the world stands. Yet for nineteen hundred years they have not dwelt in their land. God foresaw all this. He warned Israel through Moses (Deuteronomy 28) that if they were not obedient to His Holy Word, the day would come when He would bring a nation against them from the ends of the earth. Italy was the very extreme of the world on the west in the days when Moses uttered these words: “The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from

the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand." They had no difficulty in understanding the tongue of the Chaldeans. That was almost like the Hebrew; very much as the Swedish is similar to the Norwegian, and the English to broad Scotch; but God was going to bring against them a people with a tongue altogether different, the Latin-speaking Roman, and these people were to destroy the sanctuary, and as a result of this desolation, "the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind." So at present, they are scattered, due to their disobedience to God. Does that invalidate, does that cancel the unconditional promise that God made to Abraham? It does not. We are told in connection with the Abrahamic covenant of grace, that the law which came 430 years after could not make that promise of none effect, so all the experiences of Israel through the centuries cannot suffice to annul the promise God made. We have been told by some that the land would have been theirs if they had been faithful to the Law; but God said nothing to Abraham about keeping the Law. The Law was not given at that time. But the inheritance was *forever*. They have forfeited the present possession of the land, but Scripture contains abundant promises that in due time they will return to that land and possess it again.

Let us turn to some of these promises. Jer. 30:18:

“Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry; and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them. And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them.”

This precludes the thought of the return under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah being the fulfilment. It was not true of the time after they came back from Babylon, because they came back subject to the Medes and the Persians; then later, to the various divisions of Alexander’s empire; and, at last, to the Romans. In the days of the Romans, Pilate, the representative of Caesar, exercised authority in Jerusalem, and Herod was king in Galilee. It is clear that the return in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah could not be the return contemplated when God opened up the way for as many as would to come back, for they didn’t have faith to take hold of the promise and very few returned.

See the next chapter (31:7): “For thus saith the Lord; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company

shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all." Notice the spiritual blessing that is to accompany their return in the latter days to Palestine—such spiritual blessings as they knew nothing of in the days of the former restoration. They will return in heart to God, as well as to the land. "Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord."

In verse twenty-three we have further instruction in regard to this return. In these two great chapters—Jeremiah 30 and 31—we have God's covenant with them concerning the land and His promise to fulfill all He has spoken concerning it. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; the

Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness. And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul."

Evidently God said this to Jeremiah while he was asleep, for in verse 26 he says: "Upon this I awakened, and behold; my sleep was sweet unto me," in other words, "I was refreshed by the good news God gave me concerning the testimony of my people." Now, God continues to enlarge upon the return. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord. In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge." That is, God will exercise judgment. He will clear the land by judgment and restore the faithful remnant to Himself in that day. For with the restoration of the people to the land, a new covenant will be confirmed to Israel. The blood of this covenant has already been shed. Our blessed Lord held the communion cup in His hand and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." This is the basis of all blessing both for Jew and Gentile. In this age all who believe are united in the one body of Christ. After the church age ends, God will take up the nation of Israel again and the New Covenant as such will be made with them. We come under the blessings of it because it is a covenant of

pure grace, but you could hardly speak of the New Covenant being made with us, inasmuch as the Old Covenant was never made with us. The Old Covenant was made between God and Israel at Mount Sinai, which covenant they broke. The New Covenant will some day be confirmed to Israel and Judah.

Jeremiah goes on in chapter 31, verse 31: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord." God never made any covenant with our fathers, nor took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. He is referring here to literal Israel, Israel after the flesh. "Which covenant they brake." This covenant was made with the house of Israel. "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

This is already true of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We who have been born again have a new nature, and we delight in the will of God.

Permit me to add an illustration as to what it means to have the law written in your heart. Some years ago I had a small school for Indian young people. I brought them up from the desert of Arizona to educate them in order that they might go back to their people as missionaries. John C—— was a bright young Navajo. The first Sunday we brought him home to Oakland, John was with us in the morning meeting,

and then he went home with one of the ladies for dinner and came back to the young people's meeting. We sat down in the back seat. They were just having a discussion on law and grace, and, frankly, they didn't get on very well. Finally the leader turned to the Indian and said, "John, what do you thing about this subject?"

John got to his feet and, slowly and methodically, said, "Well, you know I think this is a lesson to you all. I come here to try to learn things to go back and tell my people. I think if I tell my people what you were saying here, they look at me and wonder what it is all about, because I have been wondering what it is all about. I don't know whether you know what it is all about." Of course they were all rather taken aback. "Now," he continued, "this business of law and grace—let me tell you something I think make it plain to me so I can explain to my people. I come away from the desert with Mr. Ironside. I never take so long journey on the train before. It is wonderful. Every time the train stopped, I get out and walk around and look at everything, rubbernecking, very much interested. At Barstow I get out and see the great hotel that the Santa Fe railroad put up. I walked down to one end of this great hotel and on the nice cement wall I see a sign there, 'Please do not spit here.' I look at the sign and then look down at the cement walk, and I see many people spit there. Before I think what I am doing, I spit there myself. Then I hurry and walk away from the sign. I think a lot about it. That is quite a thing. If there was no sign, nobody pay attention to it. I come here to Oakland this morning for the meeting, and Mrs. A. take me to a beautiful home. I have never been in such a home before. I

am led into a room, such a wonderful room. I put my foot on the carpet; it is so beautiful and soft, and then I sit down in a big chair. My, I have never been in such a comfortable chair. I look all around at the beautiful pictures and at the grand piano. I just looking all the time till I am ashamed to be looking so much. By and by they all go out of the room, and I am sitting there thinking about something, and I get up and look all around. I look at the walls in those two big rooms, and I look for signs, 'Please do not spit here.' I look for that sign, and I can't find that sign, and I say to myself, 'Too bad, such a beautiful home and no sign here, "Please do not spit here."' Then I think, 'Let me look and see,' and I walk all around through those two rooms and look everywhere, and by and by I find that nobody has spit here. Then it comes to me in a moment, 'Now I understand this law and grace business. Outside there, there is the law, "Do not spit here," and some see it and it stir up the very thing it say don't do, but inside here it is grace. They love the beautiful home, and because they love it, they want to keep it pure and sweet and clean, so they do not need any sign on the wall. Nobody even think to do that. They love to keep it nice.' I think that is law and grace."

You see, God puts in the hearts of those born again a delight in His holy will. That is the very opposite to the "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." The law stirs up everything corrupt within our hearts. The soul won by the love of Christ delights in His holy will.

So, by and by, it will be with Israel. They shall be restored to their land, but they will not only be restored as a nation; they will be regenerated and as a people they will be restored to God Himself, and

He will put His law in their hearts, and He says, "I will be their God and they shall be my people."

Verse 34—"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Ah, but if something goes wrong, if in the meantime they sin and grieve Him, may not God cancel all this? Does He not reserve the right to Himself to close the way to the Land of Palestine and leave them still scattered among the Gentiles? Oh, no! "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever." Could you get any stronger affirmation? As long as the sun and moon and stars remain, so long will Israel remain as a nation, a separated nation, a nation of His favor.

Verse 37—"Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord." Oh, well, maybe He only means spiritual blessings. No, lest anyone think that, something very literal follows: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And

the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever." Jerusalem was destroyed again and again; it was practically dismantled over twenty-eight times, but when these words are fulfilled, it will be restored, never to be demolished again.

I think it is very striking that God refers to this corner of the land for us to realize how literally this promise will be fulfilled. In Zech. 14:9, we have another reference to the same corner. Zechariah describes the return of the people to the land, the coming of the King, and he adds, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's wine-presses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited."

I wonder if you are familiar with this fact. Sometime before the breaking out of the World War, I read a letter published in the "Christian Herald." A party of German capitalists made an arrangement to open up a new subdivision outside the wall of the ancient city of Jerusalem. When they sent a surveyor to run the lines and divide the lots, etc., the very first stake he undertook to drive down hit something so hard that he couldn't drive it deeper than a very short distance, so he cleared the earth away and found the top of an ancient stone, a surveyor's mark, one of the land-

marks of olden days. He cleared away more of the earth until the whole stone came into view and found some Hebrew characters quite different from the square letter in use today. He sent for an expert, and when he read these characters, to the surprise of all concerned, they explained that this was the corner of Hananeel. They had come to the very place referred to in Zechariah. "The measuring-line shall go forth from the corner of Hananeel." God leaves an old surveyor's stone that He might prove to the people who would not believe that He would fulfill His Word to the letter when the day should come. I saw a photograph of that stone.

I mentioned this fact at a lecture I gave at Lake Geneva. When I was through, a man came up and said, "I was most interested in what you told us about the stone of Hananeel. I am a native of Jerusalem. I was born in the city of Jerusalem and I was a Mohammedan until about six years ago. After my conversion I emigrated to America. I was present the day they dug up that stone of Hananeel and with a great company of people went out to see it." This shows that God's Word can be depended upon.

Now, someone may say, "Well, these passages do not convince me that there will be any future restoration of Israel. I do not see anything more than the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah. Just as God gave them the land in the first place, then fulfilled His promise and gathered them back to the land, may they not again have forfeited it, and may we not say that possibly God's patience has been exhausted and they will never again be restored?"

Let us turn to Isa. 11:10, which is clearly the millennial chapter. The chapter begins: "And there shall

come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse," etc. This gives us the seven spirits of the Lord. How can there be seven spirits if there is only one Holy Spirit? Second verse: "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." The spirit of Jehovah is one; wisdom, two; understanding, three; counsel, four; might, five; knowledge, six; of the fear of Jehovah, seven. Of course there is one Holy Spirit. Now, verse ten, "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Greeks seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall *set his hand again the second time* to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left." Oh, but He has done that already! Yes, He brought them back once, but they forfeited the land again and crucified the Lord of glory. God in infinite grace will set His hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people. Where are they coming from? They are to come from Assyria, Egypt, Elim (Persia), Sinim, Mesopotamia, the islands of the sea. This expression as used by the Hebrews included all the indefinite lands of which they knew very little, beyond the limits of the Roman Empire. Of course Great Britain and all the Western Continent were unknown at that time.

The Lord was to recover His people from lands to which they had never traveled when they came back the first time.

"And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather to-

gether the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

“And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away.”

It is restored Israel, who had been scattered so long, eventually returned to God and His land. They are singing, “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song: he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. . . . Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”

Now, I have only touched this subject. There are scores of other passages just as clear and definite as these that declare that He that scattered Israel will gather them. If I can't trust the promises God made to His earthly people, how can I dare trust the promises that He has made to His heavenly people? Our Lord Jesus Christ said to Nicodemus, “If I had spoken to you of earthly things and ye believed not, how can ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?” We come thus to the Book and see the promises that God made to His earthly people and we look back over the centuries and find that not one has failed that should have been fulfilled up to date. Everything has been fulfilled in exact accord with the prophetic Word, and so we may be quite certain that the last promises will be fulfilled.

I shall read one more passage as I close. We have the whole history of Israel for nineteen hundred years epitomized for us in one verse (Hos. 3:4), and we have the promise for the future in the next verse:

“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.” Has not verse 4 been fulfilled to the letter? For nineteen hundred years Israel has had no king, no pretender to the throne, no sacrifice. Think of it!

When Hosea wrote these words, the sacrifice was the very center of their ritual. The Roman Catholic Church is built around the sacrifice of the mass. Take the mass away and the church will go to pieces; take the sacrifice away from Israel, and one might suppose the nation of Israel would go to pieces! But no, they abide in the world today as a witness to the unity of the Godhead. Without sacrifice, they would be very likely to go into idolatry, but they abide without images. In all Israel today there is no priest, and yet the nation abides. Truly as verse 4 has been fulfilled, so verse 5 will be—“Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.”

VII

ISRAEL, JEHOVAH'S WITNESS

IN ISAIAH 43:10, we read "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." It is customary to use these words in order to stir up Christians to give public testimony for Christ, but while it may be legitimate so to use them, a careful study of the context makes it evident that this is not their true and primary import. When Jehovah said to Israel, "Ye are my witnesses," He meant that the history of this particular nation is the proof that He was speaking through the prophets. In the Scriptures, we have set forth the past, present, and future of this remarkable people, and their history for thirty-five hundred years has been a positive authentication of the inspiration of the Bible. Let us briefly notice how wonderfully this comes out in the Word of God.

THEIR PAST CONDITION

We have to go back to the Book of Genesis from chapter 12 on to get the beginning of this nation. There

we have the Abrahamic Covenant with its solemn and unconditional promises to the "friend of God and his seed." Note the exact promises made:

- (a) "I will make of thee a great nation."
- (b) "I will bless thee, and make thy name great."
- (c) "Thou shalt be a blessing."
- (d) "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee."
- (e) "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen.12:1-3). An additional promise is given in verse 7—"Unto thy seed will I give this land."

In various forms, these promises are repeated again and again to Abraham, Isaac, and to Jacob. To what extent have they been fulfilled? As we follow the history of the record in Genesis to II Chronicles, we see the people in the Land of Palestine, the objects of God's peculiar care. To them was committed the Oracles of God, and thus they were blessed and made a blessing. When we turn to the four Gospels, we come face-to-face with the "Promised Seed" through Whom the blessing was to come to all the world. But alas, "He came unto his own and his own received him not." So we have the sad record of His rejection and crucifixion and, for the time being, Israel's national history as a divinely favored people comes to a close. Have, then, the promises of God failed? Not at all, for in the prophetic writings of both Testaments it is clearly predicted that because of their sins they would be scattered throughout the entire world, and this is and has been their state for nineteen hundred years.

THEIR PRESENT CONDITION

Moses plainly predicted this when on the plains of Moab, and said to them: "The Lord shall cause thee

to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth" (Deut. 28:25). He depicted the Roman invasion and destruction of their cities in unmistakable terms in the same chapter from verse 48 to the end. Space forbids quoting it all, but the following verses are too plain to be misunderstood:

"The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand: a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young: and he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee . . . And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind" (Deut. 28:49-52, 64-65).

One might almost think these words must have been written in the present century, but for thousands of years they have been in the hands, first of Jews, and then of Christians, a solemn witness to God's dis-

pleasure with His people because of their great sin and a conclusive proof that Moses wrote by divine inspiration. The Jew ordinarily takes it for granted that the greatest sin of which a Hebrew can be guilty is that of idolatry. Because of this sin their fathers were carried into Babylon and not permitted to return to their land until seventy years had expired. But the greater sin was committed nineteen hundred years ago as a result of which they have been out of the land all the centuries since, and that sin was the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

During all these years, Israel as a nation is set to one side and "blindness in part has happened to them," so that even when they read their own Scriptures there is a veil over their hearts and they cannot see the many references to Jesus, their rejected Messiah. But while this is true of the nation as such, an individual Jew may be saved if he will put himself on the same ground as the Gentile sinner. He must come to God owning his guilt and putting his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the One whom his fathers rejected.

Our blessed Lord referred to this present time and their wretched spiritual condition when He declared "Your house is left unto you desolate. Ye shall not see me again until ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Thank God, that day is not very far distant.

During all this time of Israel's national rejection, God is taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name. From Jew and Gentile saved by grace, He is forming one new man, the body of Christ. When this special work is finished, He will turn again to Israel who are still beloved, for the Father's sake. We read in Rom. 11:25-27: "For I would not, brethren,

that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

This brings us then to think of

THEIR GLORIOUS FUTURE

concerning which the prophetic Scriptures have much to say. Unfortunately a great deal of this has been lost to the average Christian through the pernicious habit of calmly appropriating to the church the wonderful prophecies of blessing for Israel and Judah and Jerusalem, with which the prophetic writings abound. Most illogically, many expositors apply all such Scriptures to the progress of the church in this age, ignoring completely their true relationship to Israel, God's earthly people. As someone has well said, "They give all the curses to the Jews and take all the blessings for the church," whereas it should be perfectly plain to any thoughtful person that if the judgments predicted as about to fall on Israel were fulfilled in the sufferings of that people, then the prophecies of their future restoration and blessing must be just as literally fulfilled in the Lord's appointed time.

It is plainly predicted that there will be a great national return to God when they shall recognize in the once rejected Jesus their rightful King and Savior. Then they will be restored to their own land and the Abrahamic covenant fulfilled in the largest possible way.

Already we see a great stirring among them. Thousands in recent years have returned to Palestine, and vast changes are going on in that country, but this is not yet the great return spoken of by the prophets. It is rather that preliminary movement in unbelief that will result in the reestablishment of a Jewish state to be eventually dominated by the Antichrist, but when the Lord Jesus Christ descends from heaven at the close of the Great Tribulation, then will come the great recognition and the great ingathering, and then through the "Promised Seed" will all nations be brought into fulness of blessing. The world's redemption hangs upon the restoration of Israel.

"Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? . . . For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11:12-15).

Well may Christians heed the Psalmist's pleading: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee." For in Jerusalem's peace will be found the peace of the world, when the Prince of peace reigns in righteousness and all nations will know Him and be subject to His scepter.

VIII

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

THOSE WHO have been attacking dispensational truth in the manner in which I have been referring, tell us that the Great Tribulation is all in the past. They declare that the truth we have been teaching people for years—that the Christian dispensation now on the verge of closing will be followed by the Great Tribulation—is all wrong. They say that it is just a fantastic notion unsupported by Scripture. I want to turn, therefore, to the Book, and try to answer this question: Is the Tribulation in the past? Of course, if it is not in the past, it is still in the future.

And first I must speak briefly of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9. Let me say that, having been familiar with these things for thirty-three years, and having examined very carefully much that has been written contrary thereto, I am absolutely convinced that the seventieth week of Daniel is yet unfulfilled. It is the only view that, to my mind, harmonizes with all the prophecies in Scripture. It makes the Book of Revelation perfectly clear. It explains the difficult things in the Book of Daniel and other prophetic books. Until you see the break between the 69th and 70th week,

all is confusion. The Great Tribulation is to occur in this seventieth week and the time of the end for the Jewish people. This I know is what is denied, but this is what I want to show is clearly taught in the Word.

Those who teach that the Tribulation was in the past are divided into several distinct schools. One is called the Preterist. They maintain that the Great Tribulation was at the time of the trouble which the Jewish people passed through when the Roman armies, under Titus, destroyed Jerusalem and wrought havoc throughout Palestine. The Great Tribulation, according to them, began in A.D. 70, and ended a very short time after. The Roman Catholic view ordinarily held refers to the two hundred or more years' persecution under pagan Rome, which ended with the Church's triumph over the paganism of the empire. The other view, commonly called the historical interpretation, holds that the Great Tribulation referred to the period of trial during which those who protested against the Romish dogmas were persecuted. Those who are called Futurists maintain that the Great Tribulation has never yet taken place and cannot begin as long as the church of God is in the world. It will not take place until we have been called up to meet the Lord in the air. This is the view I hold. Now, we shall turn to some passages and see whether it is at all possible logically to believe that the Great Tribulation is in the past.

Jeremiah 30: In the opening verses of this book we have a prophecy in regard to the restoration of Israel to the Land of Palestine. Scripture shows that they are restored to the Land of Palestine still in unbelief. Conviction and regeneration take place after

the restoration to the Land of Palestine when the church has been caught up.

Here in Jeremiah 30, verse 3, we read: "For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." This does not refer to the temporary return under Ezra and Nehemiah. "They shall possess it," indicates that they will enter into possession of the land, not to surrender it again to any other people.

We have, beginning with verse 4, a description of the hour of trial coming upon the land. "And these are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." Now, observe that this is not the time of the church's trouble; it has nothing whatsoever to do with the church. It is the time of Jacob's trouble; and what must be the result? That Jacob is scattered and broken and practically destroyed? No, the very opposite. *He is saved out of it.* The Great Tribulation will end with the deliverance of Israel rather than the scattering of Israel. Now, that doesn't fit in at all with what took place in the Land of Palestine in 70 A.D., and the years that followed. Instead of Jacob being saved out of it, Jacob was scattered throughout the entire world as a result of it.

Follow on: "For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke [Whose yoke? The yoke of the Gentiles] from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him." They will no more make a servant of him, for he is the true Son of David. "Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid."

Now, turn to Daniel (chapter 12). Chapter 11 gives us a very remarkable prophecy that reaches right on down to the end of the Jewish dispensation, to the "time of the end," a term used again and again. We read of Israel's sorrows and sufferings under the Antichrist. We have a description of the Antichrist in 11:36-39: a "king which shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished."

Daniel 12:1: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Is it not true that there has never been a time of more dreadful suffering than Israel endured under Rome? Read Josephus, filled with the horror which the people of Israel endured in those days. That might be the time referred to so far as Israel is concerned, and many think it is.

But notice the last of the verse, "And at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Now, they weren't delivered at the time of the Roman persecution. Instead of that, they were scattered everywhere throughout the world. That this goes on to the kingdom is clear—"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Some do not think this is the literal resurrection. It may be the picture we get in the Book of Ezekiel, the dry bones of Israel springing into life, coming up from the dust of the earth, from being scattered among the Gentiles, some to everlasting life, and some, who are apostate, to shame and everlasting contempt. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

To what time does this refer? "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." One mark of the time of the end is vastly increased running to and fro throughout the world and a wide diffusion of knowledge.

Commenting on these words over one hundred years ago, Sir Isaac Newton said, "Personally, I cannot but believe these words concerning the end of the times. One sign of the end will be a remarkable increase in means of getting about. Men will travel from country to country in an unprecedented manner. There may be some means of travel invented which will enable people to go much more quickly than now." Sir Isaac Newton affirmed the opinion that, in accordance with this word, he believed it possible as the end drew near that some-

body might invent some means of locomotion enabling people to travel at the astonishing rate of fifteen or twenty miles an hour.

Voltaire said, "See what a fool Christianity makes of an otherwise brilliant man. Here a scientist like Newton actually writes that men may travel at the rate of fifteen or twenty miles an hour. Has he forgotten that if a man would travel at fifteen miles an hour, he would be suffocated; the heart would stand still?" And yet think what took place at Daytona—a man traveled at the rate of 231 miles an hour, and his heart didn't stand still.

The last part of Zechariah, from chapter twelve on, seems to deal almost entirely with this period, this time of great trouble. In chapter 14, Jerusalem itself is affected. 14:1, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." Of course, the Preterist interprets this by a system of accommodation, and says, "Well, were not the Roman armies the representatives of all nations, all fighting under the banner of Caesar?" That is not what we have here. Here we have the definite armies of all the nations of the world gathered together against Jerusalem in that last great conflict. When this takes place, "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle."

Notice the order here—Jerusalem surrounded by the armies of the nations, a time of great distress, and great trouble; the people crying to God for help;

the Lord going forth to destroy the armies, as we also see Him in battle in the nineteenth of Revelation, and coming right down to earth, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives." The Preterist tells us that this has already been fulfilled; that His feet have already stood on the Mount of Olives, before He went up into heaven. But here He descends at the close of this period of trouble, and His feet stand on the Mount of Olives. What happens? "And the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

Some years ago there was a great earthquake in Palestine. The Mount of Olives was badly shaken, and many buildings were shaken down. Some English scientists investigated this. After making an examination of the geological strata in Palestine, they said, "We have found the occasion of the earthquake. There is a geological fault running right through the mountains of Lebanon, particularly evident in the Mount of Olives. There is a great shifting of strata, and some of these days there will undoubtedly be a greater earthquake in Palestine, as a result of which the Mount of Olives will be torn in two." We knew about that long ago. We know just what will make it break in two. The blessed feet of my Savior will again touch this earth, and the moment He takes His stand on the Mount of Olives, there will be a great earthquake, and the Mount of Olives will be torn asunder, at the close of the Great Tribulation. Then Israel will be delivered.

This is enough from the Old Testament. Let us

turn to the New Testament (Matt. 24:21), and we have the events that will take place before His second coming: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." How manifestly He chose to use almost the identical language that the angel used in talking to Daniel in order that we may understand that it refers to exactly the same event: "And except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Men look for the return of the Lord, and there are all sorts of false theories proclaimed. "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is there will the eagles be gathered together." The carcase will be Jerusalem, the apostate part of Israel found in the Land of Palestine. There the vultures come, the armies of all nations, and while things are in this condition, the Son of man will appear. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect [i.e., the elect of

Israel] from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Now, the Preterists interpret our Lord as depicting the desolation of Palestine under Rome, but did the events here predicted follow the desolation? The historical interpreters tell us that these events took place during the persecution of the Christians under the papacy for something like twelve centuries and a half. Well, when the persecution came to an end with the destruction of the Spanish Inquisition, did these events take place? Even supposing that one could spiritualize everything in the 29th verse, what about the 30th? One could take the 29th to mean a great imperial power darkened, etc. But what about the next verse? “Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.” This is to take place when? Immediately after the tribulation of those days!

Now turn to Luke’s account and notice a very important distinction there between the Great Tribulation and the sorrows of Palestine under the Romans. Chapter 21, verse 20: “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.” Here, unquestionably, our Lord predicted the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus. All of this prophecy has been fulfilled with the strictest literality.

We have no way of judging the future but by the past. If in the past, prophecy has only had a spiritual fulfilment, then in the future it will have only a spiritual fulfilment. But if in the past, prophecy has had a strictly literal fulfilment, then it is absolutely certain that prophecy will have a strictly literal fulfilment in the future.

Here our Lord prophesied what will come to Jeru-

saalem, and if you are familiar with the history of the fall of Jerusalem, you will know how definitely the events predicted came to pass. We read, "Jerusalem compassed with armies," and in accordance with this, three Roman armies besieged Jerusalem. "Then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto."

You remember how when Titus was to make his final onslaught, he first proclaimed an armistice and allowed anyone who desired to do so, to leave the city. He appointed Pella, a mountain city, as a place of refuge for them. They left—everyone who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone who honored His name left the city. There was not a Christian left in that siege. Our Lord gave them instructions: "When ye shall see this . . . flee," and they went to Pella for protection. "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Now, did this tribulation under Titus result in the deliverance of Israel? No, it resulted in the scattering of Israel. Israel was led captive of all nations. Very well, what about centuries since? "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Here is a long period during which Jerusalem, the Land of Palestine, and

the people of Israel are under Gentile dominion. That period is known as the times of the Gentiles and will run until its fulfilment, and then what? How will they know they have come to the end of that period? Verse 25: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring; . . . and then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." So the tribulation will come at the end of the times of the Gentiles and will close with the descent of the Lord from heaven.

What will characterize the time of the tribulation? It will be the day of Antichrist. Turn to II Thessalonians. The Thessalonians were perplexed and troubled because of the sufferings they were passing through, and they feared that already they were in the time of the Great Tribulation, which is also called the Day of the Lord's Vengeance. Paul wrote in chapter two: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us [someone had evidently forged a letter from Paul telling them that the tribulation was already upon them] as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Somebody might say, "Surely, the Great Tribulation began when Gregory declared

himself to be the head of all the churches of Christendom; therefore, it refers to the papal persecution." However, we have seen that the Great Tribulation will end with the deliverance of Israel and the visible return of our Lord to this earth, a return so literal that His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives. Surely this cannot refer to the papacy: "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Now, in order to believe that it is the papacy, the pope would have to sit in the temple of God. I don't believe that St. Peter's Cathedral is the temple of God. It is a temple of idolatry. Nor do I believe that the Roman Church is the temple of God. It is an apostate system. But the temple of God is the temple frequently spoken of by the prophets as the temple yet to be built. The Antichrist sits there and declares himself to be God. "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." Some say that this meant that the Roman Empire would be dissolved first. Paul was talking about something here that every Christian ought to know, because the Bible reveals it. What hinders full development of evil in the world? The Spirit of God restrains now. The Spirit of God is here in the church of God restraining the full development of evil. Some day the church of God will be gone. The Spirit of God will no longer be active on earth as a divine person in the church of God.

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the

Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." These signs and lying wonders are pictured in Revelation 13.

Now, Revelation 7: What will be the outcome when the period of tribulation comes upon the earth? A great part of Revelation evidently has to do with the Great Tribulation, ending with the personal appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. It fits so perfectly with what we read of the Great Tribulation that I am sure it is the same time. Not all of Israel are really Israel. It must be regenerated Israel in that day to be really Israel and to be so counted, just as today, the Israel of God are those regenerated. In the first part of Revelation 7, you have the remnant of Israel 1-8: "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads," i.e., the four angels are seen sealing the servants of our God before the Great Tribulation begins. "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."

Now, in the fourteenth chapter, the Savior actually appears, and we find the one hundred forty-four thousand delivered out of the tribulation waiting to

receive Him, and they form what we might call a royal bodyguard in the coming day when He will establish His glorious millennial kingdom. We have Israel sealed by God at the beginning of the tribulation in chapter 7; Israel preserved for the kingdom at the end of the tribulation (chapter 14).

The one hundred forty-four thousand are out of every tribe of Israel. No one can possibly be misled on this. Look at the latter part of the 7th chapter. I do not know whether the number one hundred forty-four thousand can be taken literally or not. Verse 9, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" John answered, "Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Literally it is the "tribulation, the great one."

"And have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." How are people saved in the tribulation day? Just exactly as they are saved today, through the same precious blood of Christ. Every soul saved in any dispensation from the day of Abel down to the end of the millennium owes all its blessing to the precious atoning blood of the Son of God.

"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They

shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Now the company saved in the tribulation days are not saved for heaven but to share in the millennial kingdom. In Isa. 49:8, we have a prophecy that refers to this very same company: "Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from afar; and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim"—the ancient name for China. There will be a vast throng of Gentiles to whom the light will come in those dark days of the tribulation to prepare them for the glorious kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So I think that the Scriptures looked at, and there are many more that could have been added, are sufficient surely to show us that the Great Tribulation did not take place when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans; did not take place under pagan Rome,

nor under papal Rome, but will take place by and by immediately before the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ to establish His glorious kingdom in this world. It will not take place before the church has gone to heaven.

Proof 1. The tribulation cannot take place before the Lamb opens the book with seven seals. Revelation 5—When the seals are broken, troubles begin to come.

2. The Lamb does not receive the seven sealed book from the hand of the Father until the crowned saints are seen in heaven. In Revelation 4 and 5 we have the twenty-four elders seated about the throne wearing crowns of gold upon their heads.

3. No saints will be crowned in heaven until the Apostle Paul gets his crown. "Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

4. The Apostle Paul and other saints with him do not get their crowns until the judgment seat of Christ. That is referred to as "that day."

5. The judgment seat of Christ is immediately after the rapture of the church. Jesus says, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

Deduction, therefore: There will be no Great Tribulation before the church has gone to be with the Lord. The Rapture must take place first before the time of the Great Tribulation can begin here on the earth.

IX

ARE THE JEWS AS A PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SO-CALLED "PROTOCOLS OF THE ELDERS OF ZION"?

Much discussion pro and con has raged in recent years regarding the mysterious documents with which many are now somewhat familiar, known as the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion." These are supposed to be the findings and plottings of Jewish leaders who are aiming to destroy all Gentile governments and debauch the so-called Christian nations of the world. That is, these records purport to be the secret minutes of the meetings of a group of influential Hebrews known as the "Elders of Zion." The history of the documents so far as it can now be verified, indicates that they were first made public in Russia shortly before the downfall of the Czarist régime. In a rather remarkable way, they indicate the course of extreme Marxian activity. There can be no question but that they are the production of Sovietizing leaders intent upon destroying all orderly government and substituting Bolshevism in its place. No one questions, so far as I am aware, the fact that some apostate Jews may have been associated with apostate

Gentiles in the preparation of these remarkable documents. But it is a matter to be greatly regretted and something that has caused deep chagrin to many instructed Christians, who are lovers of Israel, to find that the Protocols are being used not only by godless Gentiles but even by some fundamentalist Christians to stir up suspicion and hatred against the Jewish people as a whole. This is most unfortunate for it cannot but work against the earnest efforts of Hebrew Christians and Gentile believers to bring the Jews to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, it is already having this effect. A wave of anti-Semitism is sweeping over Central Europe, and its blighting influence is even now being felt on this side of the Atlantic.

INNOCENT JEWS SUFFER

No matter how patriotic and disinterested Jewish statesmen, business men, literati, and professional men may be, they are being looked upon with suspicion as enemies of the human race apart from their own group, simply because they are of Jewish descent. In Germany, Hebrew Christians are suffering as bitterly as their brethren after the flesh who have not accepted the Messiahship of Jesus.

Is there any legitimate reason for this amazing change of public opinion toward the Jewish people as a whole? It is a fundamental of the Hebrew religion as expressed in their own Scriptures, that they should pray for the peace of the nation in which they dwell, and history abounds in instances of the splendid patriotism and loyalty of the Jews in various lands where they have been permitted to enjoy the privileges of enlightened government. Is it conceivable that now

there is a movement on foot to which practically the whole of this people are privy, to overthrow these governments and substitute for them a world-wide Jewish Soviet state? It seems to me to ask the question is to answer it. Such a thing is absolutely unthinkable in the light of past history and particularly in the light of the remarkably fine spirit shown by the Jews in the various nations during the World War. Thousands of Jewish soldiers were in all the armies of Europe faithfully contending for the ideals of the countries in which they lived. Jewish bankers and other financiers manifested the most philanthropic interest in the welfare of Gentile and Jew alike during those trying times. So that whatever may be said for the Protocols and whoever their authors may be, it ought to be clear that they do not represent the aims and ambitions of the Hebrew people as such.

NO ELDERS OF ZION

Then again, who are the Elders of Zion? Those of us who refuse to credit the authorship of the Protocols have been asked to name these mysterious personages if we do not believe that they are Jews in a position to speak for their coreligionists. But it is not necessary to name them. Personally, I have no idea who the actual authors of the Protocols may have been, but of this I feel sure, there is no Council of Israel operating anywhere in the world holding the title of the Elders of Zion by authority of the Jews as a people.

There are in the world today many thousands of sincere Christians who are Jews after the flesh but are adorning the Gospel of Christ by devoted lives in accordance with the teachings of our Savior. Ask any

of these honest men and women, who certainly ought to know of such leaders, if they exist or have ever existed, "Have you ever heard of the Elders of Zion?" I have put this question to scores of them. In every instance the answer has been, "Never; neither in my unconverted days nor since I became a Christian have I heard of such a group of Jewish leaders, until these Protocols were brought to my attention."

It is, therefore, it seems to me, not only most unfortunate but really wicked to attempt to foist responsibility for the Protocols upon the people of the Jews. Whoever may have written these documents, certainly they were not penned by Jews entitled to speak for the race. In my judgment, Christian teachers would do well to stress this fact in order that they may not participate in putting upon Christ's brethren after the flesh a responsibility that does not belong to them and thus expose them to a persecution they do not deserve.

THE CURSE OF EDM

It is true that blindness in part has happened to Israel because of their rejection of their Messiah when He came to them in lowly grace. It is true that they joined with the Gentiles in crucifying the Lord of glory. It is true that many of them hate Christianity and Christians as much as some professed Christians hate them. It is true that they have been scattered among the nations in accordance with the prophetic Word, and are suffering to this day because of their sins in the past. It is true that they are still under the hand of God in government. But to Edom of old, God said: "But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest

thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity; neither shouldest thou have stood in the cross-way, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress" (Obadiah 12, 13, 14).

These are solemn words and may well be taken to heart by the Gentile nations at the present time. Surely no real Christian wants to be found in such company but rather would seek to manifest the grace of Christ to those through whose fall salvation has come to us. A number of Jewish brethren have put forth very clear and helpful statements both orally and in print, exposing the real nature of the plot of the Protocols. To these utterances and booklets I would refer any inquirer who is perplexed regarding them. I do not attempt to speak with any authority as to the true origin of these Protocols, but after reading them several years ago, the impression left on my own mind was that they could not be in any possible way the Protocols of Jewish leaders as such. As already intimated, I quite recognize the fact that some Jews have been more or less connected with the group that produced them, but what I mean is they do not represent Jewish thoughts or Jewish schemes characteristically.

UNFAIR AND FALSE

I have noticed of late that certain teachers are constantly drawing special attention to anyone opposed to orderly government who happens to have a Jewish name. But in all fairness such should surely point out that there are far more men of Hebrew parentage who are in the forefront of civilization and progress than are to be found among those who are seeking to destroy the present order. The idea seems to be prevalent in many quarters that practically all the great financiers of France, Britain, and America are Jews. Look over the roster for yourself. Take the great banking houses of America and England with which I am personally more familiar than with those of France. How many Jewish names do you find among them? How large a proportion of the money barons of Wall Street are Jews? How many of the millionaires still left in America are Jews? By far the great majority are Gentiles, and it is absurd to think that the small minority of Jews could even if they would overthrow this or any other Gentile government.

THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY

It should be the business of Christians not to sow seeds of distrust and dissension among men, but to exemplify so far as they possibly can, the grace that is in Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all, Whose Gospel is to be proclaimed to Jew and Gentile alike and in Whose mystical body, the church, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but all are one in Christ Jesus. Let us then devote ourselves to preaching the glad tidings in the power of the Holy Spirit of God, seeking to

reach as many of all classes as we possibly can ere the coming of our Lord Jesus and our gathering together unto Him. "The night cometh when no man can work." Christendom is fast nearing its end. The return of our Savior is drawing nigh. We cannot afford to waste our time stirring up racial hatreds instead of seeking by all means to save some, "giving none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles nor to the church of God."

X

WILL THERE BE AN AGE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ERE THE CLOSE OF TIME?

IT HAS BEEN the generally accepted teaching of Christian leaders throughout all the centuries since apostolic days, that the Scriptures teach there will be an era when righteousness will prevail over all the earth and all nations be subject to the Lordship of Christ ere time has run its course. Some have taken literally the indicated number of years mentioned in Revelation 20, and therefore have designated the period in question as the millennium. Others, while questioning the literalness of the thousand years, have, nevertheless, believed and taught that God's kingdom would spread throughout the entire world, that wickedness would be abolished and righteousness become triumphant. For convenience sake, we shall use the term "millennium" in this article for both of these views, meaning thereby the reign of righteousness over the earth.

Recently, a group of theologians, who make great claims as to their orthodoxy, declared that they have discovered that the views in question are utterly unscriptural and that there is no reason to expect any

such glorious condition to prevail in this world before time comes to an end and the eternal state begins. In addition to the two classes, which have been known for many years as premillennial (if they believe that Christ Himself will come before the age of righteousness) and postmillennial (if they believe this age will be brought about by the preaching of the gospel and Christ will come only to wind up earth's affairs), we now have the additional group who call themselves "amillennialists," the word, of course, implying that there will be no millennium at all.

If it were simply a matter of difference of opinion in regard to the prophetic program, there would be abundant room for toleration here and no one need feel unduly disturbed because of differing eschatological conceptions. But there is far more involved than the mere question of prophetic interpretation. If the amillennialists are right, much precious sanctifying truth must needs be relinquished or explained away, for if their position is correct, there will be no rapture of the church or judgment seat of Christ preceeding the resurrection of the wicked dead and the judgment of the Great White Throne. Hence, no one can speak with assurance as to his final salvation, because that matter awaits settlement at the judgment day, and the saints will not reign with Christ over this world, because His kingdom will not be established until eternity begins. The whole dispensational outline of Bible truth is destroyed if Christ is not to reign over the earth and be acclaimed by all peoples as "King of kings and Lord of lords."

It behooves us then to turn once more to the Word of God and examine carefully the Scriptures which

millennialists have taken as proof of a "good time coming," when

*Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.*

Isaac Watts's magnificent hymn is based upon and is almost a paraphrase of the Seventy-second Psalm, a portion of inspired Scripture which certainly depicts the kingdom of God everywhere triumphant. While originally written for Solomon and possibly sung at the time of his coronation, we realize as we read it that a greater than Solomon was in view. The following verses were never fulfilled in the days of David's own son, but unless the truth of inspiration is to be denied, they must of necessity have their fulfilment in and through "great David's greater Son, our Lord Jesus Christ":

"He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. . . . His name shall endure

forever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed" (Ps. 72:4-11, 17).

No wonder, in view of such a glorious reign, the Psalm concludes with the words, "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." So far as earth's blessing is concerned, there will be nothing left to pray for when this Psalm has its complete fulfilment.

Now, it has never been true in the past that all kings have made obeisance to Him and all nations have served Him, or that all nations have called Him blessed. But as truly as God is God and as this Psalm is part of His inspired Word, such a time of blessing must yet come for this poor world.

It has been said that the whole doctrine of the millennium rests upon a misapprehension inasmuch as the very word "millennium" is unknown to the English Bible. Because of this, we are told, the doctrine of the millennium is an unscriptural fallacy. But such reasoning would rob us of many other precious truths which even our amillennial friends hold to be self-evident and important. The word "trinity" is not found in the Bible, but the doctrine of one God existing eternally in three persons, revealed to us by our Lord Jesus Christ as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, is clearly taught in the Bible. The word "substitution" is not found in Scripture, but Isa. 53:5 clearly teaches it, and when Paul exclaims, "The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me," he is proclaiming the truth of a substitutionary atonement. And though the word "millennium" is not found in the Bible, yet it is a fact not easy to explain away that the expression "a thousand years," which is the

English equivalent of the Latin form *millennium*, is found six times in Revelation 20.

There we learn that a time will come when Satan, the great enemy of God and man, will be bound for a thousand years and unable to go out and deceive the nations until the thousand years are finished. The first resurrection we are told, will take place at the beginning of that thousand years and the resurrected saints will live and reign with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead will not be raised until the thousand years are finished, and after the thousand years we have the judgment of the Great White Throne.

Certainly, nothing answering to this thousand year period, whether we take the time literally or not, has ever been known on this earth. It is folly to say that Satan was bound at the beginning of the Christian era, as some do, and that now we are living in the time of his loosing. He has had fearful and awful power throughout all the centuries since Christ died on the cross. But if Revelation 20 is to have a fulfilment at all, the day must come when Satan will be not only restrained in measure, but will have no power at all to deceive the nations, and during that time the saints of God are to reign over this world.

This is in accord with the former prophecies found in the Old Testament. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44).

This is the fifth great dominion that will bear rule over all the earth. It would be absurd to say that Christianity has been the fulfilment of this prophecy.

The same is true concerning the similar predictions in chapter 7: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. . . . Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan. 7: 13-14, 22, 27).

The kingdom spoken of in those verses and designated as everlasting is certainly not a kingdom set up in eternity, but in the very world where the beast powers have exercised their dominion. It is called everlasting because it will never come to an end, that is, it will never be superseded by any other dominion.

The characteristics of this time of blessing come before us in many other passages. For convenience sake, we may notice them under seven distinct heads:

1. *The regeneration of Israel, who will become a blessing to all the earth.* This is clearly predicted in Isa. 60:1-22: "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. . . . For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. . . . Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall

inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time."

Chapter 61 takes up the same wondrous story, as do many other parts of this great prophecy.

Jeremiah 31 declares the inviolability of God's covenant with Israel and shows that when their day of blessing comes, the entire world will be blessed through them.

Zech. 14:16-21 depicts a time when Jerusalem will be a great spiritual center and the representatives of all nations will go up there to worship the King, the Lord of hosts. To these many other Scriptures might be added.

2. *A warless world.* Our Lord Jesus Christ, in answer to the disciples' question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?" tells us that wars and rumors of wars should characterize the entire present period (Matt. 24:6).

"Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong" (Joel 3:10).

Here we have the nations called upon to beat their agricultural implements into weapons of war, but note the wondrous contrast in the twin passages of Isa. 2: 2-5 and Mic. 4:1-5. Notice particularly:

"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4).

"And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their

swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Mic. 4:3).

Who would presume to say that anything like this has ever yet come to pass? Yet it is clearly predicted for this world before time will come to an end.

3. *Poverty abolished.* The same Scriptures to which we have just called attention also tell us of a time when all men will enjoy temporal comfort, when "they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid" (Mic. 4:4).

Zechariah gives the same testimony, and Isa. 65: 21-23 confirms it: "And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them."

4. *Changed conditions of the lower creation.* When this time of blessing comes, even the lower creation will share in it.

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord" (Isa. 65:25).

The eleventh chapter of the same prophecy is entirely millennial and there, too, we learn of the change that will take place in the very nature of the beasts of the field and of the forest.

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and

the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:6-9).

5. *Sickness will practically disappear from the earth.*

"And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Isa. 33:24).

In Zechariah 14, a passage we have already noticed, we find that even in that wonderful age there will be the possibility of sickness, but only for any who wilfully disobey the Word of the Lord.

6. *Death will no longer be prevalent, but inflicted only judicially.* Let us notice carefully Isa. 65:18-20. It is very evident from this Scripture that in the coming day of Jehovah's power those who enter into millennial blessings on the earth will, under ordinary circumstances, be granted the gift of long life, such as the patriarchs enjoyed before the flood. In fact, it would seem as though they will live right on through the entire period, unless there be some wilful sin that will be dealt with immediately in judgment, and under such circumstances we read that a sinner dying at the age of one hundred years will be accursed and his death will be as the death of a child. This shows us that the kingdom age will not be like the eternal state in which sin can never again lift up its head and

death will be absolutely unknown. It will still be possible for man to sin against divine light even though there be no adversary to tempt him, but such behavior will not be tolerated when righteousness reigns, without immediate judicial dealing.

7. *Righteousness will be everywhere triumphant.* During the present time we are called upon to suffer for righteousness' sake. In the day of which we speak "a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment" (Isa. 32:1). This will be the time when God's "judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). "Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isa. 32:16-18). For we read, "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land" (Jer. 33:15). "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

These are but a very few of the passages that declare the same general truth, that ere God closes up the history of this world He will give to man a demonstration of life on earth at its very best—no tempting devil, no poverty and distress, no wasting sickness and disease, no wickedness and corruption prevailing, death itself practically banished, and the divine authority everywhere established. This it is that God is going to bring to pass in His own time, in accordance with the prophetic Word.

In the face of the Scriptures we have noticed, to which scores of others might be added, how can any Bible believer declare that the millennium is but an idle dream, hopeless of fulfilment?

As to whether this glorious state will be brought about through the preaching of the gospel and thus the world prepared for Christ's postmillennial coming or whether it can be ushered in only by the personal premillennial return of the Lord, is not the question I am attempting to take up in this chapter. Most of my readers, I am sure, hold with me that the latter view is correct. All I have been trying to do now is to demonstrate that Scripture does indeed teach that there will be an age of righteousness on this earth before time ends and eternity begins.

XI

WILL THERE BE A MILLENNIUM BEFORE CHRIST COMES?

I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.—I TIM. 6:13-15

I WANT TO try to let Scripture answer this question: "Will that glorious period be brought about through the efforts of the church of God before the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ or will it take place after our blessed Lord appears?" We have read of the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, "which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." What does this really mean? In what time or times will He thus be manifested as King of kings and Lord of lords?

Here we find two schools of thought among Christian teachers—those who believe that the Lord Jesus Christ must come first before the millennium can possibly be ushered in are generally called, for conveni-

ence sake, "premillennialists," while those who believe that the kingdom must first come and then that the Lord will come at the close of it to wind up the affairs of this world are generally called "postmillennialists." Let me make myself clear as to one thing: I do not question for a moment the sincerity of brethren who hold views differing from me in regard to the prophetic future, but I quite recognize the fact that there are many of my postmillennial brethren and my amillennial brethren who doubtless love the Lord Jesus Christ far more intensely than I do and who would be willing to endure far more for His name's sake than I have ever endured. I do not question their piety; I do not question their love for Christ; I do not question their orthodoxy.

Some few years ago it was my great privilege to sit at the feet of Dr. A. T. Robertson as he gave a course of lectures on the Epistle to the Colossians directly from his Greek Testament in Calvary Baptist Church in New York City. He was conducting a ministerial conference, and it was my privilege in that conference to give a series of addresses from my English Bible (because I am not scholar enough to give them from a Greek Testament and most folk are not scholars enough to follow me if I were) and I was rather gratified to see the great man sitting down before me every day. I recognized Dr. Robertson as undoubtedly the outstanding Greek scholar of America, if not of the world, and yet that dear, kindly man of God sat and listened to a poor insignificant person like myself, and he was just as gracious and just as attentive as anyone could possibly be. I went through the two letters to the Thessalonians, and at the close of the last address, Dr. Robertson came to me and

said, "Well, this is the first time that I have ever listened to anyone go carefully through those epistles from the premillennial standpoint, and I must say that my judgment has gone with you through the entire series. I have never definitely declared myself as a premillennialist, but I think if I had my life to live over again I would be much more positive concerning this for I have never in all my ministry known a premillennialist who was a Modernist." I thought that was an interesting testimony. There is that about the premillennial position that necessitates a belief in the full inspiration of this Book. Everything is based upon that. And that is one reason why, though I can respect the views of brethren who look at it from another standpoint, I think it is important to reiterate from time to time the premillennial teaching of Holy Scripture.

I remember a great many years ago, I do not think I could have been more than twenty-two years of age, it was my privilege to participate in a Bible conference in San Francisco. On that occasion I listened to one of the biggest preachers I have ever known in my life, Dr. A. J. Frost. I may have been so small then that he looked bigger, but I think he must have weighed three hundred pounds. In those days, everyone rode bicycles, and he had to have one made to order to hold his immense body. He was one of the greatest Bible teachers I have ever listened to, and I recall his giving an address on eight reasons in proof of the premillennial coming of Christ. Unfortunately I did not have the good habit of taking notes and so did not get all of his points clearly in mind, but the general idea has never left me and the impression made has been with me all the years since. While I cannot fol-

low exactly the order he did, I want to take this up in a similar way.

There are clear, definite, logical reasons for believing that the Lord Jesus Christ must come before the millennium dawns. First, there can be no millennium until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again because there can be no millennium until Satan is bound. I wish you would think that through, because if I am wrong there, I shall be wrong in the next point. There can be no millennium until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again because there can be no millennium until Satan is bound. Is that not clear from Scripture? Is it not evident from the study of the twentieth chapter of Revelation that if we are to believe in a millennium at all we have to believe that that millennium cannot begin until Satan is bound? Very well, that is the major premise. But Satan is to be bound at the second coming of Christ; consequently there can be no millennium until Christ comes. Is that not perfectly clear? Turn back to the nineteenth chapter of Revelation, and you have that glorious vision of the descending Christ. He is pictured there as a mighty warrior riding on a white horse clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God. He is riding forth conquering and to conquer, and it is as He descends that the mighty angel lays hold of Satan and binds him for one thousand years, and that is the beginning of the thousand years of blessing.

Then again, there can be no millennium until the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, because there can be no millennium until the Antichrist is destroyed. Think that through. You cannot conceive of Christ and Antichrist reigning at the same time, can you? And if the time is coming when Christ is going to

reign supreme over all the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, manifestly Antichrist, the false Messiah, must be destroyed first. But now the Antichrist is to be destroyed at the second coming of Christ, consequently there can be no millennium until Christ comes. I do not care who you may understand the Antichrist to be. It does not alter the argument in the least. You may think that the Antichrist refers to some false religious system like, for instance, Mohammedanism, or if you are a Catholic, you may think that the Antichrist is Protestantism. If you are a Protestant, you may return the compliment and think of the Antichrist as the papacy. You may think it refers to some specific individual. Some of us believe the Antichrist will be a personality, an individual who will yet arise in this world and will be recognized and owned by many as the Christ of God. But it does not make any difference as to who he may be. The point I want to bring out is that there can be no millennium until Christ comes because there can be no millennium until the Antichrist is destroyed, and Antichrist is to be destroyed at the second coming of Christ. The Scripture that deals most fully with this is the second chapter of Second Thessalonians. In that chapter you have the description of the lawless one who "exalteth himself above all that is called God, . . . whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (II Thess. 2: 4, 8) and the coming refers to that second coming of Christ. So it is at the second coming that Antichrist is destroyed. And then we have this wonderful, glorious kingdom age.

There can be no millennium until Christ comes because there can be no millennium until Gentile power and authority is abolished; Gentile power and authority

will be abolished by the second coming of Christ. I could refer to many Scriptures to demonstrate the proof of that, but take the second chapter of Daniel, where you have that great metallic and mud image representing the times of the Gentiles. There you come on down to the last condition of Gentile dominion, ten kingdoms bound together acting under one head, like the ten toes on a man's two feet, representing the last Gentile powers. And then you read this: "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, . . . and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:34, 35). Our Lord Jesus Christ applies that falling stone to Himself; He says, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder" (Luke 20:17-18). When He was here on earth, Israel stumbled over the stumbling-stone; they have been broken to pieces and scattered all over the world, but when He comes again Gentile power and authority will be arrayed against Him, but He shall smite them all in judgment. Therefore, there can be no millennium until Christ comes.

Then again, in the fourth place, we believe there can be no millennium until the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ because there can be no millennium until Israel will be restored to the Lord and to their own land, but Israel will be restored to the Lord at the second coming of Christ. Consequently there can be no millennium until Christ comes. We turn to the Book of Zechariah for proof of this, and there see the people of Israel at last brought to repentance, broken down before God, confessing their sins and failures. That is the trouble with them now. They are going back

to the Land of Palestine, but the greatest trouble with Israel is they are constantly justifying themselves instead of owning their sin before God. I have talked with hundreds of God's earthly people and have expressed my sincere sympathy with them in their suffering, but the moment I try to bring before them the suggestion that this is because of their rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are on the defensive. They do not want to confess that; they seek some other reason for their sorrow; but some day the nation as a whole will be brought to repentance. And when will that be? When they look upon Him Whom they have pierced. And when will they look upon Him Whom they have pierced? In the first chapter of Revelation we read: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (verse 7). It is when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again, when His feet will stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, when He presents Himself the second time to His people, that "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10) and cry, "What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. 13:6). Then they break and confess their sins and "mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born" (Zech. 12:10). Then the Spirit from on high will be poured out on them and their hearts will be turned back to God, a nation will be born in a day, there will be a regenerated Israel, and they will be gathered back to the land of their fathers, and God

will fulfil all the promises made to them through the prophets throughout the centuries.

Let me remind you of this—there can be no millennium until Christ comes because there can be no millennium until the first resurrection, that is, the resurrection of the saints who have died all down through the centuries. These saints who have died are to have part in that great kingdom; they are to reign with Christ when He reigns. Manifestly they must be raised from the dead before that can be true, but the resurrection of the saints will take place at the second coming of Christ, consequently there can be no millennium until Christ comes. Whether one thinks of Old Testament saints or of the saints of the church age or whether he thinks of those who shall die under the Antichrist in the days of the Great Tribulation yet to come, they will have part in one of the cohorts of the first resurrection. That term includes all the people of God who will be raised prior to the reign of Christ. Our Lord's own resurrection was the beginning of the first resurrection. Turn to the twentieth chapter of Revelation, and see how two very distinct cohorts are brought before us there. In the fourth verse, we read: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them [or sitters upon them] and judgment was given unto them." There you have the saints of the Old Testament times and the present church age who will be raised when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:16-17).

"I saw thrones, and sitters upon them." But look at the next company: "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4). That is the last cohort. What about the wicked dead? "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." There can be no millennium then until after the first resurrection. The saints who have died must be raised because they are to have part with Christ in that glorious kingdom era, and they will be in their physical, resurrected bodies.

Further, there can be no millennium until Christ comes because there can be no millennium until the Rapture, the change of the living believers of this dispensation, for we are promised a part in that glorious kingdom. We are not to be down here for Christ to reign over us, but yonder with Him in the heavenly Jerusalem to reign with Him over a regenerated world. "This I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"; so we must have our glorified bodies, our changed bodies in order to participate in that wonderful reign of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Daniel says that "the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Dan. 7:22) and we will be fitted for our part in that kingdom by the Rapture, that is, those who live until the

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle tells us in the fifteenth chapter I Corinthians, "Behold, I show you a mystery [I tell you a secret]; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (vss. 51-53). That glorious event will take place when? At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then there can be no millennium until Christ comes because there can be no millennium until that event has already taken place.

And then, linked very intimately with that, there can be no millennium until after the judgment seat of Christ. But the judgment seat of Christ takes place at the second coming of the Lord; therefore there can be no millennium until Christ comes because the judgment seat of Christ is the place where the works of saints are judged. Saints are going to stand before the Lord Jesus Christ in order that He may give them their rewards and tell each just what part he will have with Him in that coming kingdom. Therefore, you cannot have the millennium until the judgment seat of Christ. He will say to one, "You were faithful in a few things, have thou authority over ten cities:" and to another, "Have thou authority over five cities." And you must stand there before His judgment seat and have your works appraised. You are saved by grace, but you are awarded according to your works. Think of one who has lived in a great city and perhaps never was heard of beyond a few blocks from his home, but this one lived devotedly for the Lord Jesus Christ. Imagine that one standing in the presence of the Lord

at His judgment seat, and Him saying: "I took note of you when you lived down there in Chicago. You were faithful in a few things; you were real, true, devoted, and so I tell you what I am going to do. I am going to reign in righteousness for one thousand years, and I am going to make you mayor of Chicago. You go back to that city where you were unknown but where you lived for Me, and take charge of it." The Lord is going to fit His servants, each one, for the place He has for them, but you see, there can be no millennium until this inquiry into the works of the believers has gone on, until the Lord has brought everything to light and has apportioned everyone's reward.

And then let me go a little further. There can be no millennium until Christ comes because there can be no millennium until the judgment of the living nations. The nations as such are not going to be destroyed when Jesus comes to reign. There will be millions of earth's inhabitants living in ignorance of His Word when He will begin His thousand-year reign, and the people composing these nations are to enter into the kingdom, but before they do there must take place the judgment of the living nations. But that is to take place at the second coming of Christ. Consequently there can be no millennium until Christ comes. Turn to Matthew 25: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations" (verses 31, 32). Do not make any mistake about this. This is not the judgment of the wicked dead; this is the judgment that takes place when Christ comes; and in accordance with the decisions of this judgment the nations will have their place in His coming glorious

kingdom. "Before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." And you remember how He will reward the one and deal in judgment with the other according to their treatment of His brethren. That must take place before His kingdom is fully established here on the earth and in accordance with that the nations that have His blessing will go into the kingdom and have their place in it and enjoy the benefits of His righteous reign.

While Scripture tells us of a glorious era when righteousness will prevail over all the earth before the close of time, it also tells us that when our Lord comes back again He will find a very different condition of affairs. There is not one Scripture that intimates that our Lord will return to find a converted world, that He will find nations subject to His holy will, but the very contrary. What did the Lord Jesus Himself say? "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:37-39). If you admit that there must be an age of righteousness before this world comes to an end, you must also admit that that cannot be until after Christ comes, because when He does come He will not find the earth in any such condition. How was the world in the days of Noah? Corruption and violence filled the earth. And what do we see all about us today? Corruption and vio-

lence everywhere. The people of God are still just a little flock. After nineteen centuries of gospel preaching, the conversion of the world seems as far off as ever. We have seen in our own day whole nations who once professed to receive the gospel trampling the truth of God beneath their feet. Europe has become a foreign mission field to which we send missionaries in order to carry the gospel to a people sitting in darkness, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 4:6).

We thank God for every victory of the cross in pagan lands. We thank God for the thousands and millions who have been brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we are not going to shut our eyes to facts. There are more heathen in the world today than when Jesus said to His disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19). His servants have carried the message; millions have believed it; but the converts to Christianity have not kept even with the birth rate. So if we had to bring in the millennium with our best efforts, we might well become discouraged. But we realize that conditions are exactly as our Lord predicted they would be. He says: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). And so instead of becoming discouraged, we are encouraged. Jesus will soon be here. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

XII

MAY WE EXPECT A GREAT REVIVAL BEFORE THE COMING OF CHRIST?

O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.—HAB. 3:2

MAY WE expect a great revival before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ? In attempting to answer the question in a Scriptural way, there are some things that need to be defined. First, what do we mean by revival? I do not know any term that is more misused than this term. A series of meetings may be announced and called "revival meetings," and if it were not so sad, it would be almost ludicrous to see the way the advertisements sometimes read. I have picked up a newspaper and read that on a given Sunday night a "revival" would begin in a certain church. How does anybody know that? Then I have read, a few weeks later, "The revival which has been in progress at such a church during the past few weeks will close on such and such a night." If there had been a revival, what a pathetic thing to have it broken off so suddenly! A revival is not simply a series of well attended meetings where there is good preaching,

good singing, and possibly a number of people coming to Christ. A revival is something far more than that.

Some years ago, I found myself in a strange town on Sunday morning. I went to the largest Protestant church I could find, and I shall never forget an announcement the pastor made. Outside was a striking placard announcing revival meetings under the leadership of a well-known evangelist, but the evangelist was not there, and the pastor was evidently rather humiliated over it. Coming to the front, he said:

“My dear friends, I was very confident that our revival was to begin today. You remember I announced that it would begin last Sunday, but on the Saturday night previous I received a telegram from the evangelist saying he was in a great meeting in Indiana and could not leave for another week. I wired him giving permission to remain, but said we would expect him for this Sunday. Last night, to my disgust, I received another telegram saying the meetings were going on with such interest he could not come for another week. My patience is about at an end. I am going to send him a night letter this evening telling him he must be here next Sunday without fail, or *there will be no revival in this church this year!*”

It was very evident that revival, to that minister, meant just a special series of meetings under the leadership of an evangelist. I have no hope whatever that there will be anything like a great world-wide demonstration under the leadership of some one or more particular preachers in our day or generation.

REVIVALS IN SCRIPTURE

What do we mean, what does Scripture mean when it speaks of revival? In the Psalms, we hear David

saying, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble thou wilt revive me," and again he cries out, "Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee?" And here Habakkuk prays, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years." What is meant by revival in these passages of Scripture? The word itself is most suggestive. It means to stir afresh that which is already alive. There is a life in every born-again person that needs from time to time to be freshly stirred and roused up, and when this takes place, it results in increased devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, in greater carefulness as to one's own individual walk before God, and in deeper exercise in getting the gospel to those who are out of Christ.

We are not to think of meetings for only the unconverted as necessarily revival meetings. It is God's people who need to be revived. There never was a time, and there never will be a time until our Lord Jesus Christ comes back again, when the people of God will not do well to cry, "O Lord, revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee."

It is folly for anyone to say, "We are so near the end of the dispensation; the coming of the Lord has now drawn so near that it is useless to think of revival and of awakening to any great extent." Why, the very fact that the coming of the Lord has drawn so near, the very fact that we are so near the close of this dispensation of the grace of God, is the very reason why people of God all over this globe ought to be on their faces crying out, "Wilt thou not revive us again?" We are expecting to meet our Lord very soon; we are expecting to hear His voice, to rise to meet Him in the air, but many of us are far from being in that condition of soul in which we would like to be found

when Jesus comes, and therefore we should be praying, "Wilt Thou not revive us again?" It is God's will that His people should be duly exercised. I take it as one of the signs of the times, one of the evidences that the Lord is preparing His people for His return, that all over this and other civilized lands, and in every land where missionaries are carrying the gospel to a heathen people, there seems to be a growing sense of the need of a special arousing, an awakening, and a revival. It is unthinkable that when tens of thousands of God's beloved people are crying from the depths of earnest hearts, "Revive thy work in the midst of the years," that God does not intend to bring revival and blessing.

But people ask, "Where do you find in Scripture any definite prophetic word saying that the Christian dispensation will close with a great revival?" I do not know with what the Christian dispensation will close. I do not find any prophecy that has to do particularly with the Christian dispensation as such. Prophecy has to do largely with God's dealings with His earthly people, Israel, and with the great Gentile nations; but the church does not belong to the ages; it does not belong to time; it is a thing of eternity; it is the mystery that was hid in God from before the foundation of the world, and that has now been made manifest. God is taking out of Jew and Gentile those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and is bringing them into one new Man, the body of Christ, and prophecy does not have to do particularly with the experiences of the church of God as such. All we know is that the church is taught to be constantly waiting for the coming of the Lord. There never was a century since apostolic days when the church could be absolutely certain that

the Lord Jesus Christ would not return in that day; and while we have no absolute assurance that He will return in our day or in the day of our children, yet we are taught to look for His coming, so that whether He return at midnight or at cock crowing or at noon, we shall be ready. In the meantime, He says, "Occupy till I come." We are set here to glorify Him, and it is only as a revived, quickened people that we can glorify Him as we should.

HOW A REVIVAL BEGINS

What would be the evidences of revival? If God were working in some large way, one of the first evidences would be great humiliation before Him because of our past sins and failures, because of our unbelief, because of our slowness to send out the gospel to the heathen world, because of the way we have hoarded our money and made ourselves comfortable and forgotten the needs of those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. In other words, the first evidences would be deep and sincere repentance on the part of the people of God. Often we hear people singing the chorus:

*O Lord, send a revival,
Lord, send a revival;
O Lord, send a revival,
And let it begin in me.*

When I hear them singing that, I say to myself, "I wonder now what they really mean!" When one and another says, "Lord, send a revival, and let it begin in me," do they mean, "Lord, strike me down in some strange sort of way; give me some very vivid emotional experience in order that I may feel wonderfully exalted and wrought up, and I shall consider I am being revived"? I think that is why wild-fire emo-

tionalism of the most unscriptural character prevails in many places today, and people call it the reviving work of the Spirit of God.

If revival is going to begin in me, if it is going to begin in you, it is going to lead us to self-judgment in the presence of God; it is going to lead us back over our lives, to examine conditions, to ask ourselves and honestly to answer the questions in the presence of God, "Have I really been living a yielded life? Have I truly been holding all that I possess as that which belongs to the One who has redeemed me? And have I been so speaking and so acting from day to day that my words and my life have been a testimony for Christ?" And wherein conscience convicts me of failure, wherein the Spirit of God shows me that I have not been manifesting the Spirit of Christ as I should, it will lead to contrition, to repentance, to confession, and to humiliation. As long as the people of God can sit calmly and sing, "O Lord, send a revival," and nobody gets down before the Lord to confess his failure and put things right that have been wrong, revival will never begin in them. Singing hymns is not going to bring revival, but doing faithfully that which the Spirit of God puts before one will bring it.

THE KOREAN REVIVAL

How did the great revival in Korea begin? Years ago, I listened to Dr. Underwood, who has since gone to glory, as he told something of the beginning of the work of God in that land. Many hundred Koreans had gathered together to pray for revival and blessing upon the people of God and upon the people of Korea, and as the prayer-meeting went on, an elder of the church got to his feet and said with a broken voice,

"My friends, let me interrupt the prayer-meeting. I have something I must say. God has been speaking to me. I did something the other day that is troubling me, and I feel if I do not confess it, I am going to hinder this work. I feel like Achan in the camp. I have the unclean thing hidden away, and the people of God can never triumph over their foes until this is made right. I have to confess that I am a thief."

They looked in amazement, and then he said, "On a certain occasion, I was passing the home of such and such a brother; I saw lying out in front of his home an ax. I wanted one very badly. I knew this one wasn't mine; but it was his. As nobody was around, I slipped over and carried it home. It is back in my woodshed, and it is like Achan's wedge of gold; I am here to confess and apologize to my brother, and I will return the ax."

Dr. Underwood said another and another stood up, with burdened hearts and tears streaming down their faces, and confessed their sins. That thing went on for hours, and by and by the heathen outside heard what was going on among the Christians, and then a great work of grace began that brought hundreds and thousands into the flock of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE BACKWARD LOOK

If there is going to be a revival now or at any time, we must judge ourselves in His presence. I am afraid that our consciences are terribly dull; we have become used to so many things that we take for granted they are all right and never stop to think how they look in the sight of our blessed Lord.

Glance back over one week of your life, you who are Christians. Just imagine as you do so that at any

hour of that week the Lord had suddenly come upon you, had beheld what you were engaged in, had heard what you were saying, and had given you to know that He was taking note of all that you were doing. Are you quite sure you would have been well satisfied with yourself and with your life, even for one week? Then let me ask another question. Have you been definitely to God during this past week and have you been facing these things from day to day? You say, "Well, I kneel in prayer at night." What do you pray for? To ask the Lord to take care of you in the dark? Before you ask Him to take care of you in the dark, do you talk to Him about what you did in the light? Do you go over your life in His presence? Do you bring out everything before Him? Do you let the full clear light of the sanctuary shine upon your words and your behavior? And then as He shows you things that are so opposed to His own infinite holiness, to His tenderness, to His compassion for men; as He shows you things that are so contrary to the Spirit of an unworldly Christ, do you make your frank, honest confession before Him and seek His grace to turn from these things once and forever, henceforth to be devoted alone to Him? If you do, you are on the way to revival, for that is how God works.

HABAKKUK'S PRAYER

As a rule, when people use this word "revival," they mean "awakening." They are not really thinking so much of revival among the people of God as an awakening of the unsaved, and it is very good that we should be thinking of that. It is right in that connection that we have the prayer of Habakkuk, "O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid."

If there ever was a man who might well have asked, "Is there any use praying for revival in days such as mine?" it was this man. He lived just a short time before the Babylonian captivity of the people of Judah, and he knew that, in a very little while, God was going to give the people over to the Gentile avenger. Judgment would shortly be meted out to the people of Judah; and therefore Habakkuk might have been excused if he had shaken his head and said, "It is no use trying to do anything now. We are just at the end of one of God's dispensations with us; the enemy is coming, and God will not defend this city anymore. There is no use expecting revival or blessing." But, no, he said to himself, "The very fact that we are down to the end of one of God's dealings with us is the reason we need Him more than ever; it is the very reason why intercessors should be before Him to cry out, 'In wrath remember mercy.'"

If you and I and the people of God throughout the world come to Him with earnest purpose of heart to cry like this, we can be assured that He will be delighted to answer. I am not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but if there is world-wide brokenness of spirit on the part of the people of God, if there is repentance and crying to Him, God will delight to do some mighty work before the coming again of His blessed Son. And when the people of God are thus stirred, there will be an awakening outside.

REVIVAL AND AWAKENING IN INDIA

I read of a little group of missionaries in India, associated with a company of believers with whom I happened to be intimately in Christian fellowship. They were what we might call hyper-Calvinistic. They

not only believed in the sovereignty of the Lord, but their belief was almost akin to the Mohammedan doctrine of fatalism. They had been in one district for sixteen years and had not found one convert. They tried to comfort themselves with Judson's answer to the Baptist Board when they asked him, after he had labored in his field for twenty years, "What are the prospects?" His answer was, "The prospects are as bright as the promises of God." That was real faith on Judson's part, and it was not long until God rewarded his faith. And so with this they tried to comfort themselves. But they were put to shame by the fact that, not very far from them, another mission started work, manned by a people who did not have anything like the same knowledge of the Bible that these people had. They were overgiven to emotionalism and yet simple earnest Christians who believed God and sought to walk before Him in simple faith. These people soon had one and another and even whole families come to them in brokenness of spirit, confessing their sins and trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

The hyper-Calvinistic missionaries went over to visit the newcomers, for they felt it could not be a real work. But to their amazement they got into a testimony meeting, and one after another the heathen got up and, oh, the stories of redeeming grace they told! These brethren went back humbled before God and said, "The fault cannot be with God; it cannot be with the gospel we preach; it must be in ourselves." So they put up a placard outside which read, "No public services for the present; the missionaries will gather for prayer and humiliation before God." They began with a day of prayer and went on, eating as little as they could, till six days had gone by, and then on the

seventh day there came a knock at the door. During these days, there had been great confessions, much self-judgment, many idols torn down, getting right with God themselves, and they were amazed to find how much there could be in the life of a missionary that needed to be made right.

When one of them answered the knock, he found a native standing there who said, "I want to get into the meeting."

"But," said the missionary, "this is just a meeting for the missionaries."

"Oh, but I must get in," the man said. "I have lain awake for two nights, I am so miserable. You must let me in and show me the way of life." And of course they all gathered around him and pointed him to Christ. The dear fellow was hardly saved when someone else came to the door.

He said, "When I found the chapel closed, I wondered if God had given us up. The missionaries have been here for sixteen years, and I have heard the message and have never received it; but I never thought the chapel door would be closed in my face; so I wondered whether God was through with us, whether He had given us up."

Of course the door was thrown open. Just after that, I read an article in a certain periodical and it said, "Six weeks have gone by since we began our time of prayer, and already we have baptized sixty converts. There are scores more inquiring the way of life."

Awakening follows revival, that is, revival among the people of God comes first, and then an awakening among the Christless. You do not have to hold special meetings to bring this about. All that is needed is integrity of purpose and honesty of spirit before God.

XIII

WORLD-WIDE MISSIONS AND THE LORD'S RETURN

And the gospel must first be published among all nations.
—MARK 13:10

YOU WILL remember that our blessed Lord Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem because its people knew not the time of their visitation. His disciples showed Him the magnificent buildings of the temple area, and they said, with pardonable pride, "Lord, behold what great and glorious buildings are here." But He had no eyes for their beauty for His heart was burdened because of the sins and the sorrows of the people. He said, "There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Mark 13:2). With prophetic eye He looked forward to and pictured the time when their enemies should throw a trench around the city, when the dwellings and the marts of commerce, the palaces, and the very temple of God should be in ruins, when at last the desolation should be so complete that, as Isaiah had predicted, Zion should be ploughed as a field. When this prophecy was spoken, it seemed that there was no possibility of its fulfilment, and yet within a very

short time it was fulfilled to the letter. One of the striking evidences of its accuracy is that for over fifteen hundred years Mount Zion has been as a great wheat field and has been ploughed from year to year, as the prophet predicted, while the stones of the sacred buildings in Jerusalem were so truly cast down that not one was left upon another.

When our Lord spoke these words, the disciples found them almost unbelievable and afterward, when they stood with Him on the Mount of Olives, overlooking the city, they asked Him three questions. Notice these questions and their import:

“When shall these things be? When shall Jerusalem be destroyed, when will the city be so utterly ruined as Thou hast predicted?”

“What shall be the sign of Thy coming? How will we know that Thy coming has drawn nigh?”

“What shall be the sign that the end of the age is upon us—the end of the age of Gentile times during which Israel is suffering affliction and the Land of Palestine is under alien domination?”

Our Lord answers these questions, but in order to get His answers in their fulness, it is necessary to read the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, the thirteenth chapter of Mark, and the twenty-first chapter of Luke. In these three great prophetic passages He goes into these questions and answers them in detail.

“When shall these things be?” In Luke 21:20, He says: “When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.” Notice again the accuracy of prophecy; not merely when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with an army but — with *armies* — in the plural. The Lord says,

“When you shall see that, you will know that all hope for the city is gone.” “Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. . . . Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” These things have already taken place. In A. D. 70, Jerusalem was compassed about with the armies of the Romans, under Titus, and was destroyed and for nineteen hundred years since, it has been trodden down of the Gentiles. The day of its deliverance is very near. Already God has begun to make bare His arm in behalf of Jerusalem; marvelous things have taken place there and in the Land of Palestine within the last fifteen years. God is working for the complete restoration of His people Israel, as predicted in prophecy.

“What shall be the sign of Thy coming?” Our Lord’s answer to this is, “Consider the fig-tree”; and the fig-tree is the well-known symbol of Israel—of the Jews. That fig-tree for nineteen hundred years has been dried up from the roots like the fig-tree that Jesus pronounced a curse upon that day when He was seeking fruit and found nothing but leaves. In our day the fig-tree is beginning to manifest signs of life. National consciousness has come back to Israel; they have a flag of their own. Today their own country has been opened to them as a Jewish homeland, and the Jews of the world are looking toward it. But this is not all that is involved in the budding of the fig-tree, because there must be more than mere national movement to indicate that the end times are right upon us. There

must be a spiritual awakening in Jewry. That full awakening will come after the church of God has been caught up from this scene. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25). The fulness of the Gentiles will come in when God has finished His present work of grace, and taken out from among the Gentiles a people for His name—when the Body of Christ is completed and "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:16-17). That will be the fulness of the Gentiles. Then God's present work will come to a close, and the scales will fall from Israel's eyes. The veil will be torn away from their hearts, and they will discern Christ in their own Bible and will realize that the Jesus whom their fathers crucified was indeed their Messiah. But the marvelous thing is that already there are great movements in Israel. It is estimated that more Jews have turned to Christ and have been baptized in the thirty years of this century than in perhaps a number of centuries before this. Thousands of Jews, yes, scores of thousands have turned to Christ in Central Europe and in other parts of the world; and so the fig-tree is beginning to bud and blossom, telling the story that He is near, even at the door.

But the Lord gave them another word. He as much as said, "You are not to be constantly watching for signs, constantly straining your eyes to see just when the end of the age will come, thinking all the time

about when the new age will begin. You have the responsibility in this present age of evil and it is this, to 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.'” You remember how His disciples came to Him after the resurrection and said, “Master, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?” That was just another way of putting the old question: “What will be the sign of the end of the age?” Our Lord says to them, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:7). How I wish that I could sound that word down into the very soul of everyone who is trying to set dates for the coming of the Lord! It is not for you to know! That is what Jesus said, and He has never revoked it. *It is not for you to know.* After this, if you try to figure out the date for the close of this age, if you try to find out from the mystic numbers of Daniel and Revelation just when the times of the Gentiles will end, remember, you are sure to be wrong, for it is *not* for you to know that. “*But,*” He says, “ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). It is as though He said to them, “While you are looking on to the time when I am coming to reign, you are not to sit down and watch for signs, but you are to keep busy carrying my gospel to the ends of the earth,” and so in Mark 13, after He has given them a great many signs, He says, “And the gospel must first be published among all nations.”

I have purposely read Mark's text because I know very well that if I read the text from Matthew, some

of my ultra-dispensational brethren would come to me and say, "My dear brother, do you not know the difference between the gospel of the grace of God and the gospel of the kingdom?" The gospel of the kingdom is the announcement of the Lordship of Christ. The gospel of the grace of God is that great and glorious message that I have been trying to carry throughout the world for forty years, that glorious message of free grace through a crucified, risen, and glorified Savior. But on the other hand, I remember that the Apostle Paul went everywhere preaching the kingdom of God as well as proclaiming the grace of God. But here in Mark's gospel you notice how careful the Holy Ghost is; He does not speak of the gospel of the kingdom. He simply says, "And the gospel must first be published among all nations." We are looking for Him. Would you like to bring Him back? Remember, "The gospel must first be published among all nations." We say sometimes that there are certain closed countries where the gospel has not gone; but, of course, we do not actually know whether the gospel has gone there. God may have many witnesses of whom we know nothing. Our responsibility, however, is this—to go with the gospel into all the world, to every nation of the earth. If we cannot go ourselves, we are to have fellowship with others who do go, and to pray the Lord of the harvest that He will thrust forth workers into the field. Then, after He thrusts them out, we are to help keep them out by sending the means needed. This is our part and our responsibility. Are you looking for the coming of the Lord? Do you love His appearing? The quickest way to bring Him back is to send out the message to those who have never heard.

The Holy Ghost tells us that the reason Christ has not returned is that there are still people to be reached with the gospel. In II Pet. 3:4, we read of those who asked, "Where is the promise of his coming?" And He declared, "Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But the Apostle says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." We are no more anxious for Him to come than He is to return. "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (James 5:7). I am quite sure that He intends us to see something symbolical there. I believe the early rain was when the Apostles went unto the ends of the earth with the gospel of Christ. They started out as a little band of twelve men, and in three hundred years had overthrown the idolatry of the Roman Empire. They had carried the gospel to every part of the known world. But declension and worldliness followed. Then there came the dark ages when the church left her first love and gross superstition prevailed. Then the Spirit wrought afresh and produced the glorious reformation when the precious truth of justification by faith alone was preached, and with that came the opening of the Word of God, and one truth after another was brought before the people.

The last one hundred and fifty years have been the greatest missionary years since the days of the Apostles; and what marvels God hath wrought! You hear people talk about "signs and wonders," about miracles, etc., and they look at you solemnly and quote, "He

that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do also; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12); and they take this to mean the miracles of healing and talking in tongues! Put all those miracles together, and you would not have anything so great as that miracle when Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb after he had been dead four days, and that other remarkable sign when He and His disciples were in the little ship and the storm came up, and they said, "Lord, save us; we perish." And Jesus said to them, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" and to the wind, He said, "Peace"; and to the waves, "Be muzzled." Immediately there was a great calm. Whoever wrought miracles like these? But Jesus spent all of His days in Palestine, except when as a babe He was taken to Egypt. There He did all His works, and when at last He ascended into heaven, as a result of His glorious ministry on earth, about five hundred brethren were there to see Him go up. But ten days later, when the Holy Ghost came, at the very first meeting of the new dispensation, three thousand were converted, and a few days afterwards the number of those who believed became about five thousand, and then the work went on and on till millions knew the Savior's love. And just think what has been wrought in these last days, in these wonderful missionary days, just before He comes back again! I am persuaded that what He is doing now is sending out the last call to the Gentiles in order to complete the bride of the Lamb and then He is coming to take His own to be with Himself. I know that after that Jewish missionaries will carry the gospel to the ends of the earth, but I want to impress upon you our

responsibility to publish the gospel to the people of our day while we are waiting for His return.

Think, for instance, of John G. Paton going to the New Hebrides (the cannibal islands) and years after being able to say, "When we came, there wasn't a Christian; when we left, there wasn't a heathen." That did not mean that everybody had been born again, but that cannibalism had disappeared and all of them had the light of the gospel. Think of the miracles that have been wrought in China, India, Africa, and the Islands of the Sea. As I have heard the missionaries of the cross tell of the marvelous things that God has done in these heathen lands, I have thought, "These are the 'greater things' that we are to do because Christ has gone to the Father."

Unsaved one, God is not willing that you should perish. His great loving heart looked upon you and saw you in your sin and "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He wants you to come and be saved and is waiting until the last soul of this dispensation says, "I won't have Him; I don't want Him"; then He is going to rise and shut the door and the day of grace for Christendom will be over. Hear Him saying, "Turn ye, oh, turn ye, for why will ye die?" Why die in your sins when Christ has died that those sins may be forever put away?

The heralds of the cross are fast publishing the gospel in all nations. Soon this witness-testimony will be completed. If it ends tonight, what about your soul? Then the door will be shut for guilty, apostate Christendom. Enter now while the day of grace is still here.