

FOREWARD

The work that follows was taken from the writings of our late brother E. Fred Higham Sr. based on the lectures given by Brother Robert Roberts in his work *Christendom Astray from the Bible*. They concisely summarize the First Principles revealed to us in the *Bible*.

These lessons were originally prepared for Sunday School use and later appeared in the *Berean Christadelphian Magazine* beginning in August 1978 under the heading *Search the Scriptures*. Their publication was cut short and never completed. They are reproduced here for any who will take the time to search out the Truth God has revealed.

It is our hope that these lessons may be of some benefit to those who are seeking out God's Way of Salvation. Though no substitute for reading *Christendom Astray* with the *Bible* in hand, we hope these lessons may be a companion to assist the reader in learning the First Principles of the Scriptures presented therein.

Included in these lessons are a series of questions on each topic, which, if meditated upon, and earnestly and diligently studied by comparing Scripture with Scripture, – will help the reader understand what the Truth is concerning God's message, and disclose to the open mind how far astray man has wandered from it.

The *Bible* is the only source we have for a revelation of God's Divine message to mankind. It alone is able to make us wise unto salvation. Fundamental writings based on the *Bible*, such as *Christendom Astray*, urge us each individually to search out for ourselves the way of salvation.

Just as prophesied, a great veil of darkness now clouds man's understanding of God's revealed Gospel of Salvation. We are greatly indebted to our pioneer brethren, Brother John Thomas and Brother Robert Roberts, who, by the grace of Yahweh, recovered the Truth in these last days. We strongly recommend reading all the pioneer works.

Sincerely, bro. J.P. Clubb

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THE *BIBLE*: WHAT IT IS

LESSON 1 — *Christendom Astray*, Chapter 1, Part 1

“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine . . . They shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

“Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them”
(Acts 20:30).

“Try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world”
(1 John. 4:1).

“Their word will eat as doth a canker” (2 Tim. 2:17).

“ALL nations deceived” (Rev. 18:23).

The above verses, quoted from the Word of God, stand as a warning to all men that the majority of the religious world claiming to be “Christian” would depart from the Truth of God. We are cautioned also that we cannot leave our instruction concerning the will of God to a separate class called the “Clergy”: ministers, priests and pastors. The only safe and scriptural course is for us to apply ourselves *individually* to the examination and study of God’s Word, as the “noble” highly-commended believers at Berea examined the Scriptures to check Paul’s words—

“They searched the Scriptures DAILY whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

During the present dispensation, the *Bible* makes no distinction between a priestly class and the common people. That ended when the Law of Moses ended. The responsibility of searching the Scriptures rests with each individual. A humble, prayerful, consistent study of the *Bible* itself is the best—the *only*—way to arrive at a firm conviction of its truth. We grow closer to God and Christ by this exercise; realizing as we read that the natural mind of man, without this Divine direction, is lawless and unruly.

In studying the *Bible*, we should always seek the assistance of God in prayer. It is important that we understand that it is God Who gives us wisdom in these things and can

open our minds to see the beauties of His Word, if we seek it humbly. We will realize that the final Purpose of all things is to fill the earth with the glory of God, and *that we are the very highly privileged means He is using to accomplish that Purpose*, if we work with Him, and submit completely to Him.

“Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it” (Psa. 127:1).

But Paul assures us that: *“Our labor is not in vain in the Lord”* (1 Cor. 15:58).

When we study the *Bible*, we should read it very carefully, keeping our minds centered on each word and phrase, and endeavoring to understand the relation of one verse to another. We must, in approaching the study of God’s Word, *want* to know AND OBEY the truth. There must be a strong desire on our part to investigate its pages so as to become very familiar with its loving message of instruction to us concerning the Way of Life.

Once we have this living knowledge, we will realize we have a duty to spread this information far and wide to other people. When we understand the glorious message which God’s Word conveys of eternal salvation and the blessing of all nations in the Age to Come, we will not rest until we have performed God’s work in completely devoting our lives to advancing God’s honor before all we meet.

To begin with, we must recognize and accept the *Bible* as the Divinely-inspired, *infallible* message of God to man. We must believe assuredly that—

“God IS, and is a Rewarder of all who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6).

Further evidence will strengthen our conviction of the truth of these propositions, as we advance into a study of the *Bible* as we see the internal evidence of its truth and divinity, and the sureness of its prophetic words. From what God *has* done, we will gain confidence that what He has yet to accomplish in the earth is man’s only means of salvation from himself and his natural end.

By our investigation of this matter with an open mind, we will learn that this book, the *Bible*, does not speak like other books, but speaks with absolute authority, in such phrases as: *“Thus saith the Lord”* and *“It SHALL come to pass . . .”*

The *Bible* is a compilation of a number of books, written by many different men over a long period of time: approximately 1,500 years. The times and circumstances of its being written—periods of prosperity, and captivity and servitude—combine, under God’s guiding hand, to bring forth a united message from book to book: unfolding a consistent plan of salvation, and

illustrating mankind's need of Divine mercy and salvation, unattainable by its own efforts.

The first five books (Genesis to Deuteronomy) were written by Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel. They are of first importance because they form the basis of all that follows. Herein we learn of the creation of the earth, and of its peopling by animals and mankind. We learn of man's sad fall, and his punishment, and God's loving provision for his redemption; and again of man's failure at the time of Noah. We see the beginning of the Jewish race, in Abraham, and the appointing of them as a "Peculiar People" to God's service and use—

"For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself above all the nations that are upon the earth" (Deut. 14:2).

We find in these books of Moses the laws which God gave Israel to regulate their national existence, yet which throughout beautifully teach higher lessons of the coming of a Savior for all mankind, and which make constantly clear the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the eyes of God.

The modern world, in its assumed "wisdom," generally questions the writings of Moses. But we will learn that we *cannot have Christ without Moses*—

"If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Lk. 16:31).

"Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he (Christ) expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Lk. 24:27).

"Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me (said Jesus), for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (Jn. 5:46-47).

If Moses is not true, then Christ is not true. They stand or fall together.

The next twelve books (Joshua to Esther) show Israel's history for 1,000 years. And they are much more than just history. They reveal God's attitude, His desires and principles of action in dealing with people and nations. We learn to love God and reverence Him for all He has done and is doing.

Job illustrates the way God chastens and corrects His true sons and daughters, but does not forsake them; but will purify and refine them as gold.

Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon are messages of Divinely-inspired wisdom, portraying acceptable conduct, character, and disposition.

The prophetic books, seventeen in number (Isaiah to Malachi), contain the Divine message for Israel nationally, being warnings of coming judgment because of disobedience to God; but also joyfully revealing a day when Israel and the world

shall rejoice in universal blessings and peace. The fulfillment of the prophecies on Israel in their *scattering* throughout the earth assures us of the *bright side* of these same messages, which tell us the day is very near when Christ will return to bless all nations, *in the earth*.

Turning the pages to the New Testament, we find first the four Gospel records of the life of Christ (Matthew to John), revealing the manifestation of God in His Son, showing us a Way, or manner, of Life, to develop the Divine character:

“BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT, EVEN AS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN IS PERFECT” (Matt. 5:48).

The book of Acts illustrates the practical application of Jesus’ command—

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned” (Mk. 16:15-16).

We learn from this book what it really means to devote our lives in all that we do to serve God and His Truth—and not ourselves and our pleasures.

The twenty-one epistles (Romans to Jude), letters to various ecclesias and individuals by the apostles of Jesus, expound the basic truths of the Gospel, the Divine purpose with mankind; and show us the way to a godly life, instructing and directing us in daily activities and associations in relation to each other and to God.

The final book, the Revelation of Jesus Christ, gives a panoramic view of nearly 2,000 years of world history, from the days of the Apostles to the establishing of God’s Kingdom on the earth. It is shown in signs and symbols, whose meaning and application is learned from other parts of the *Bible*, and is designed to instruct God’s servants concerning world events, so they may discern the Signs of the Times.

While the *Bible* is composed of sixty-six books, written over a period of many centuries, by different authors from kings to shepherds, it speaks one theme throughout, unfolding over the ages the eternal Purpose of God. Its very character and unity show it to be not possibly of human origin, and confirm the truth that—

“All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16).

Many of the writers sealed their testimony for God with their blood being shed by their enemies. The only way to account for the *Bible* is to see—in its composition, and its preservation to our time through the centuries—a supreme guiding hand inspiring and controlling the statements of its authors, causing them to be in complete agreement in all their

records. It is impossible to account for the *Bible* in any other way.

The *Bible* can be understood by the man who seeks God in humble faith without the need of theological or churchly training in colleges or seminaries. Such institutions only produce priests or ministers educated or trained to preach the particular doctrines of their sects; whose textbooks are the products of generations of traditions, rather than the *Bible* message.

We must not leave, we *dare* not leave, our understanding of *Bible* principles of salvation to such religious leaders. We must apply *ourselves* to its pages in prayerful, humble petition to God to open our understanding. Personal investigation in this manner will open our minds to the beauties of God's Word and Purpose.

Read the *Bible* daily and thoughtfully. Use the course of daily *Bible* readings suggested in the booklet, *The Bible Companion*. Stick to it faithfully.

If there *is* a book containing the revealed will of God and the plan of eternal blessing for man, IT IS THE *BIBLE*. It has no rivals. If it does not reveal a Way of life, there is none.

The *Bible* makes all who sincerely study it, better, happier, and wiser.

THE *BIBLE*: WHAT IT IS

LESSON 1 — *Christendom Astray*, Chapter 1, Part 1

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. What is the final and most important purpose in Creation, and in God's revelation in the *Bible*?
2. What frame of mind should we be in as we approach a study of the *Bible*?
3. What is our duty once we come to a knowledge of God's purpose?
4. In what way is the *Bible* different from books of the world?
5. By whom were the first five books written? State three things we learn from these books.
6. What New Testament evidence do we have for believing the words of Moses?
7. What do the books of Joshua to Esther illustrate?
8. What is the theme of the prophetic books?
9. Of what do the Gospel records speak?
10. What is shown in the book of Revelation?
11. What do we learn concerning the *Bible* from the fact that it was written over many years by different writers, yet telling a consistent and unchanging purpose?
12. Why can we not leave our religious instruction to church ministers or priests?

HOW TO INTERPRET THE *BIBLE*

LESSON 2 — *Christendom Astray,* Chapter 1, Part 2

“The Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15).

The *Bible* conveys ideas to our minds in various ways. It means exactly what it says. If the *Bible* is God’s revelation to man, it must be capable of being understood by man. And it is addressed to all men: not just a favored class, or a learned few. The *Bible* speaks to each one of us, directly and personally. It is meant to be understood by ordinary people. No special scholarly training is necessary. Its words convey certain ideas, using words and phrases with their ordinary, natural, common significance.

Let us compare its *literal* expressions with the *literal* events to which they refer. For instance, in Deut. 28:37 (addressed to Israel), we read—

“Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.”

The actual *literal* fulfillment of this prophecy by God through Moses is witnessed throughout the world in all nations and by all people. It is just as true today as it has been for centuries, since the Jewish nation was dispersed throughout the world.

No one, then, will question the despised and wandering condition to which the Jewish nation has been subjected, whether they accept the Word of God or not. We see that a literal prophecy—simple, easy words meaning just what they say—has been literally fulfilled. Now let us look at another simple, easy-to-understand prophecy about this same people, this time from Eze. 37:21, 22—

“Behold, I (God) will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel: and one king shall be king to them all. And they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.”

Here is another literal prophecy from the Word of God, about the same people. As the above words of God through Moses referred to a literal people and literal events which literally came to pass, so we must accept this statement from Ezekiel in as real and literal manner. Actually, we today see the

beginnings of the literal fulfillment of the latter prophecy, as the Jews return to Palestine. (At the time *Christendom Astray* was written one hundred twenty years ago, with this example, this was only an ancient and ridiculed Jewish hope).

Again, take a prophecy from Micah (5:2), and its New Testament fulfillment—

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel.”

“Now Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea” (Matt. 2:1).

Here again is a simple literal prophecy with a fulfillment in a literal manner. The whole so-called “Christian” world accepts this fact. The same rule of literal interpretation must prevail in all the Word of God, and will be found to do so.

Of course, this simple, reasonable literal rule of understanding does not exclude the normal use of *figures of speech*—a well-understood aspect of any language. We constantly use figures of speech in our everyday conversation, and are understood without confusing the literal basis of our speech; and so we naturally find the same in the *Bible*. These do not confuse us in our daily communications together so it should be no problem when we find them in God’s Word.

For example, we find Jesus Christ referred to as a Stone, a Branch, a Lamb, a Shepherd, as the Bread of Life. Such metaphor beautifies and broadens our understanding of the literal subjects which are discussed.

When we speak of tyrants “trampling the *rights* of their subjects under their feet,” we mix literal language with metaphorical language. But all understand us, and the literal part is not lost. No one is in danger of supposing that rights are literal substances that can be crushed to pieces under the mechanical action of the feet. And the literal tyrants and their literal subjects remain quite clear to our hearers. Similarly, a “black look” has nothing to do with color.

This may sound like over-simplification, and very elementary. It is important, nonetheless, because these simple and obvious rules of common metaphorical use, when appearing in the *Bible*, have been misused to distort the basic truth of God’s Word, and the literal has been denied because there is a metaphorical element.

Here are a few illustrations of the use of metaphor in the Scriptures, and we note that, interpreted reasonably as we would any book, the literal is quite clear—

“The Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the IRON FURNACE, even out of Egypt” (Deut. 4:20).

The land of Egypt was not an actual furnace, but the circumstances of Israel's sufferings there are likened to being in a furnace. Again—

“Behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them THE WATERS OF THE RIVER . . . even the king of Assyria . . . he shall COME UP OVER ALL HIS CHANNELS, AND GO OVER ALL HIS BANKS” (Isa. 8:7).

“The Lord shall make thee (Israel) the HEAD, and not the TAIL” (Deut. 28).

By the ordinary laws of language, there is not the slightest difficulty here in determining what is meant, what is literal, and what is figurative.

* * *

We also find the use of *symbolic* language throughout the *Bible*; but again there is no cause for confusion or confounding the basic, literal foundation of the Word of God. Symbols illustrate more vividly and clearly the true character of God's prophecies of the future.

A beast is put for an empire, horns for kings, waters for people, rivers for nations, a woman for world government. This can be illustrated from Daniel 7, when God revealed to Daniel and to us the long panorama of history from the days that Judah went into Babylonian captivity to the time when God will establish His Kingdom on this earth—

“The four winds of the heaven strove upon the Great Sea . . .”

—the sea is a symbol for people and nations in the *Bible*—

“ . . . and four great beasts came up from the Sea, diverse one from another: the first was like a lion . . . a second, like to a bear . . . and lo another like to a leopard . . . and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible” (vs. 2-7).

Then Daniel was told in literal language that these beasts represented four kings (or kingdoms) which should arise and rule over the earth, but that in the end of their dominion God's faithful ones would take over the government of the earth and rule it for ever—

“These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

“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. 7:17, 18, 27).

This illustrates the Biblical use of symbols, and shows there is no difficulty in distinguishing the symbols from the literal

message. We must treat the *Bible* as literal when by the ordinary rules of language it obviously is literal. We cannot, like many, deny the literalness of those clear statements that do not correspond with our own views.

Literal language is the basis of the *Bible*. Metaphor and symbol are simply employed to expand and illustrate the literal foundation. As the alphabet must be known and understood before we can learn words, so the literal basis of Scripture must be understood before we can grasp the metaphoric and symbolic.

* * *

There is another important principle of interpreting the *Bible*: the *whole of the Word* is essential to comprehend the divine plan of salvation. The Old Testament and the New are an inseparable unit, in perfect harmony. *All* is the revelation of God for our necessary instruction. Both have been preserved by God's providence to our times to provide the necessary information for our intelligent understanding, and obedient walk before God.

Some have questioned the present need and usefulness of the Old Testament. No more fatal error could be made. The Old forms the heart and explanation of the New. They are inseparable. If we take away the Old, we completely destroy the usefulness of the New. They stand or fall together. We cannot possibly understand the New without the Old. Paul wrote to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:15)—

"The SCRIPTURES are able to make thee WISE UNTO SALVATION."

He was speaking of the Old Testament. The New was not written at that time. Throughout the New Testament, the importance of the Old Testament, and an understanding of it, are constantly emphasized, as in the following—

"I (Paul) continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying NONE OTHER THINGS THAN THOSE WHICH THE PROPHETS AND MOSES DID SAY SHOULD COME: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:22-23).

"So worship I the God of my fathers, believing ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAW AND IN THE PROPHETS (Acts 24:14).

"Paul reasoned with them . . . OUT of THE (Old Testament) SCRIPTURES." (Acts 17:2).

"That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before BY THE HOLY PROPHETS (2 Pet. 3:2).

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto YE DO WELL THAT YE TAKE HEED as unto a light that shineth in a dark place . . .

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy is of any private interpretation. For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved the by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:19-21).

And Jesus himself said in exactly the same way (Jn. 5:46-47)—

“Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, HOW SHALL YE BELIEVE MY WORDS?”

Of the Old Testament, he said: *“The Scriptures cannot be broken”* (Jn. 10:35).

The basis which Paul, Peter and Jesus here set forth should be our approach to the Word of God—the *entire* Word. It will form the foundation of the lessons which will follow, if the Lord will.

HOW TO INTERPRET THE *BIBLE*

LESSON 2 — *Christendom Astray*,

Chapter 1, Part 2

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. Why are we sure that the *Bible* can be understood by the average person?
2. What nation has been dispersed throughout the world in fulfillment of a prophecy through Moses? What does the literal dispersion of this nation prove, as far as our understanding of the *Bible* is concerned?
3. Why do we say that the prophecy of Eze. 37 concerning the regathering of the Jewish nation is a real literal event to happen on the earth?
4. Is this literal prophecy of the return of the Jews happening today?
5. What prophet stated where Jesus should be born? In what town was he born? What do these things prove about the language of the *Bible*?
6. Why does the use of metaphor in the *Bible* not confuse our literal understanding of its message?
7. Give three illustrations of the use of metaphor in the *Bible*.
8. What ancient nation was referred to by God as an “iron furnace”?
9. What nation in the past was likened to a river coming up over its banks?
10. Why are symbols used by God in some places in the *Bible*?
11. Can we separate the Old Testament from the New Testament? Is salvation possible with only one or the other?
12. Why are we sure that the Old Testament is essential for salvation? From what source did the apostles obtain the information for their preaching?

HUMAN NATURE ESSENTIALLY MORTAL

LESSON 3 - *Christendom Astray*, Chapter 2

“He remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof is known no more” (Psalm 103:14-16).

The theory of the “Immortality of the Soul” is an unscriptural teaching. It prevents the believer of it from coming to an understanding of the truth concerning the work and teaching of Christ, who came to open and show the way to attain to immortality, which is not a present possession, but a promised gift of God.

Nowhere in the *Bible* do we ever find such expressions as: never-dying soul, immortal soul, or immortality of the soul. What is said about souls is always the very opposite. This can easily be confirmed by looking under soul in a concordance, or better yet, under “*nepshesh*” and “*psuche*” in Englishman’s Hebrew and Greek concordances, which list together every occurrence of the original words in order.

All the basic doctrines of Scripture are clearly taught in its pages, and are repeated over and over again. The existence of God and His creative power, His purposes in regard to the future, the position of Jesus as the Messiah, and the object of his first coming, the doctrines of Resurrection and Baptism, and others, are set forth in unmistakable language. But of the immortal soul theory there is absolutely no mention. Its supporters tell us this is because it’s so obvious.

But while the Scriptures are completely silent in support of the popular doctrine, they are not silent on the subject itself: they abound with references to the *absolute mortality and brief existence of man*.

Let us look at the *Bible* usages of the word “soul,” and determine its basic meaning. We find the word “soul” (Hebrew: *nepshesh*; Greek: *psuche*) simply means a breathing creature, without any reference to how long it will exist.

In Genesis 1 and 2, the original Hebrew words describing animals and man are the SAME. What is said of one is said also of the other. For example—

“God created . . . every living creature (chaiyah nepshesh) that moveth” (1:21).

“Let the earth bring forth the living creature (chaiyah nephesh)” (1:24).

These verses are speaking solely of the animals, before man was created. The first four occurrences of *nephesh* (translated “creature” and “life”) are applied to the animals (Gen. 1:20, 21, 24, 30). Now see what is said concerning the creation of man—

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed (neshamah) into his nostrils the breath of life (neshamah chaiyim), and man became a living soul (chaiyah nephesh)” (Gen. 2:7).

We see that exactly the same words are used to describe both animals and man though translated respectively “living creature” and “living soul.” Both are living creatures, creatures of life. But nothing in the original Hebrew carries the idea of a creature of everlasting life. If it did, we would have to agree to the same condition for both men and animals. They are identical in basic physical constitution.

In Gen. 2:7, we are shown that Adam was formed *out of the dust of the ground*, and when the breath of life entered his nostrils, HE (the dust form) “became a living creature,” a creature of life. The dust-formed object itself became (not received) a living soul or creature, just like all the rest of the animals.

The Bible tells us souls can be hungry, and can be satisfied with food—

“An idle soul (nephesh) shall suffer hunger” (Prov. 19:15).

“They gave their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul (nephesh)” (Lam. 1:11).

Souls can go to the grave, and come up from the grave—

“His soul (nephesh) draweth near unto the grave” (Job 33:22).

“He will deliver his soul (nephesh) from going into the pit (sheol: grave)” (v. 28).

“Thou hast brought up my soul (nephesh) from the grave” (Psa. 30:3).

This word *nephesh* occurs about seven hundred fifty times. It is rendered “soul” four hundred seventy times, “life” one hundred twenty times, person thirty times. It is applied to animals alone twenty-two times, and of men and animals together seven times. It is also translated: man, person, self, beast, fish, creature, body, heart, appetite.

It is *never* said to be immortal: always the very opposite. It is over three hundred times spoken of as being able to die, naturally liable to death, being killed (thirty-two times), actually dead (thirteen times), and going to the grave (thirteen times)—

“None can keep alive his own soul” (Psa. 22:29).

“*Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?*” (Psa. 89:48).

“*He spared not their soul from death*” (Psa. 78:50).

Ezekiel says conclusively: “*The soul that sinneth, IT SHALL DIE*” (18:4).

Lev. 24:17-18 is very striking and revealing—

“*He that smiteth the nephesh of a man shall be put to death, and he that smiteth the nephesh of a beast shall make it good, nephesh for nephesh.*”

And finally, souls actually dead—

“*He shall come at no dead body— nephesh*” (Num. 6:6).

“*Neither go in to any dead body— nephesh*” (Lev. 21:11).

And the New Testament picture is the same (where “soul” is *psuche*)—

“*The third part of the creatures that were in the sea and had life (psuche), died*” (Rev. 8:9).

“*Every living soul (psuche) died in the sea*” (Rev. 16:3).

“*Men that hazarded their lives (psuche) for the Name of Jesus*” (Acts 15:25).

“*Neither count I my life (psuche) dear to myself*” (Acts 20:24).

“*For the work of Christ he was nigh to death, not regarding his life (psuche)*” (Phil. 2:30).

“Immortal soul” in any of the above places would create an absurdity. Paul makes it inescapably clear that a “living soul” is a “natural body” when he says—

“*There is a natural (psuchikon: soulish) body, and there is a spiritual (pneumatikon) body. And so it is written, “The first man Adam was made a living soul (psuche); the last Adam was made a quickening spirit (pneuma)*” (1 Cor. 15:44).

The Scriptures show us clearly that, far from the common conceit of his being an everliving portion of the divine essence, natural animal man unguided by the commandments of God, is as absolutely *nothing*—

“*All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing*” (Dan. 4:35).

“*Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away*” (Psa. 144:4).

“*What is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*” (Jam. 4:14).

There is nothing anywhere in the *Bible* that makes a difference between a man and his body, or indicates a man can exist apart from his body. We have seen that God made *man* (himself) of the dust of the ground, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and “*HE (the man) became a living soul*” or creature. The dust-formed being itself *became* a living creature.

This certainly refers to the body formed out of the dust. God did not breathe *into it* a “living soul.” That is not what it says. It says the breath of life breathed in *made the dust-formed man a living soul*.

Because of disobedience to God’s law, Adam (this dust-formed man) was sentenced to return to the earth (Gen. 3:17-19)—

“Till thou return to the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust THOU art, and unto dust shalt THOU return” (v. 19).

The man himself was referred to as “thou” the conscious, guilty “thou”—

“Dust thou (the man) art, and unto dust shalt thou (the man) return.” Similarly Abraham said of himself: *“I am but dust and ashes”* (Gen. 18:27).

Man dies as the animals of the field. In constitution they are both alike. As we have seen that they were created alike, so we find they die in the same manner—

“I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy ALL flesh wherein is the breath of life (ruach chaiyim)” (Gen. 6:17).

“ALL flesh died that moved upon the earth: of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing, AND EVERY MAN. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life on the dry land, died” (Gen. 7:21-22).

Solomon adds the conclusive statement of God—

“That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts: even one thing befalleth them. As the one dieth, so dieth the other: yea, they HAVE ALL ONE BREATH (ruach: spirit, same word). So that a man hath NO PRE-EMINENCE ABOVE A BEAST . . . all go to one place: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Ecc. 3:18-20).

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit (ruach, breath, animating power, that which was breathed in to make the dust-formed soul live) shall return to God Who gave it” (Ecc. 12:7).

That this is God’s Own universal spirit, and not a personal conscious entity that ascends to God at death, is positively proven by exactly the same being said of the *animals* in Psa. 104 (see the whole context)—

“Things creeping innumerable, small and great beasts . . . all wait on Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season . . . Thou takest away their breath (ruach: spirit), they die and return to their dust” (vs. 25-29).

And in the book of Job we read (34:14-15)—

“If God set His heart upon man, if He gather to Himself HIS Spirit and HIS breath, all flesh shall perish together, and MAN shall return again unto his dust.”

Here again, it is clear that the spirit withdrawn is God's, and it is man himself who in consequence returns to dust. The statement loses all its force if it is taken to indicate that when God withdraws *His* Spirit, and all flesh *perishes*, and *man* returns to dust, then every immortal soul would fly up to be with God for ever.

Solomon, we saw, said that "man hath no pre-eminence above a beast" (as to his natural life and physical constitution). Similarly David says (Psa. 49:12)—

"Man, being in honor, abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish."

It is vitally important that we understand the truth of the *Bible* on this subject. This is the foundation. Without this clearly in our minds—what we are by nature and what our natural destiny is—we cannot understand God's plan of salvation.

The popular theory of the "Immortality of the Soul" blinds men's eyes to the only means of attaining to the true Eternal Life, which is not a present possession, but the GIFT of God (Rom. 6:23) to those who serve Him faithfully.

Once having clearly perceived and accepted the *Bible* truth that man is a mortal, dying creature, a brief passing vapor, then we can go on to see the beautiful love and mercy of God in the scriptural plan of human redemption.

HUMAN NATURE ESSENTIALLY MORTAL

LESSON 3 - *Christendom Astray*, Chapter 2 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. What is the basic meaning of the word “soul” as used in the *Bible*?
2. What terms are used in Gen. 1:20 and 24 to describe animals as created?
3. What terms are used in Gen.2:7 to describe man as created?
4. What are the Hebrew words used in Gen. 1:20, 21, 24, 30; 2:7 for “living soul” and “living creature”?
5. Are men and animals described (physically) by God in the same way?
6. Is there anything in the original words which carries the idea of never dying immortality when the *Bible* mentions “living soul” and “living creature”?
7. From what was Adam created?
8. Is a soul capable of dying? Give two scriptural verses to prove your answer.
9. How does God value all who are not guided by His commandments?
10. Does the *Bible* show any difference between a man and his body?
11. In the creation of man, what was it that “became a living creature”?
12. What happens to man when he dies?
13. In what manner did Abraham describe himself in Gen.18:27?
14. Quote verses to prove that animals and man all have the same breath of life.
15. In physical constitution, is there any difference between man and animals? Quote scripture to prove your answer.
16. What effect does the theory of the “Immortality of the Soul” have upon an understanding of God’s plan of salvation?

THE DEAD ARE UNCONSCIOUS

LESSON 4 — *Christendom Astray*, Chapter 3, Part 1

“The living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything; neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten; also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, are now perished: neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun”
(Ecc. 9:5-6).

The clear, unmistakable doctrine of Scripture concerning the death state is in perfect harmony with our previous discussion concerning the absolute mortality and frailty of mankind. Here again we must understand the *Bible* teaching to comprehend the principles and necessity of God’s plan of salvation.

The churches of the world are completely astray from the *Bible* on this doctrine, and therefore cannot appreciate the love of God in deliverance from death *through a resurrection* to newness of life. In fact, the popular belief of heaven or hell immediately at death, as reward or punishment, *removes the need for resurrection at all*, and makes void and meaningless all *Bible* references to this important subject.

“Death” has lost all its meaning if the dead are not dead, but “gone before” and “praising God now in heaven.” There is entire lack of scriptural evidence that the dead have gone anywhere, or are conscious. But there is abundant proof to show they have gone to the grave, and are totally unconscious, and have become as though they never existed—“as the beasts that perish” (Psa. 49:12, 20).

Death is the opposite of life. We know what life is by actual experience. “Death” is the word by which we describe the interruption or stopping of life. Life is manifested by the activities of breathing, circulation of blood, digestion. The heart, lungs and stomach provide activity which is called life in our bodies. Without these organs, this life is not present. If we shock our brain, we become insensible, and if we restrict our air supply, we suffocate. If we stop our food supply, starvation follows, and life ends. This process proves life depends on the organized arrangement of the functions of our bodies. Where is the supposed immortal soul so full of knowledge and consciousness when a man is unconscious from a blow on the head? Where, in fact, is this deathless “soul” when a man is asleep?

When we speak of animals, this is exactly how we use the terms “life” and “death”. We are not confused by theological obscurations. We have no difficulty with the clear obvious meanings of these words. The Scriptures say that in physical constitution, men and animals are the same: both are “living souls, living creatures”

We must recognize that there was a time in the past when each one of us did not exist at all, when the organization of our bodies did not prevail: it therefore follows that a disorganization of our bodies will bring about a condition when we will cease to exist again: “Dust *thou* art: to dust *thou* shalt return.” Death comes and reverses what began at our birth. Birth gave existence, death takes it away. How clearly we can see this in relation to the animals. We are just the same.

When the *Bible* speaks of the death of any of God’s people, it NEVER says they have “gone to their reward,” or “winged their way to glory,” or any such idea. The *Bible* speaks a different doctrine, directly opposed to this. The records of the deaths of the faithful fathers of the Jewish race are clear and unmistakable—

Abraham: “*Abraham gave up the ghost (gava: expired, breathed out), and died, and was gathered to his people*” (Gen. 25:8).

Isaac: “*Isaac gave up the ghost (gava) and died, and was gathered to his people*” (Gen. 35:29).

Jacob: “*Jacob . . . yielded up the ghost (gava), and was gathered to his people*” (Gen. 49:33).

Joseph: “*Joseph died . . . and they embalmed him, and HE was put in a coffin*” (Gen. 50:26).

Moses: “*Moses died . . . and He (God) buried him in the land of Moab*” (Deut. 34:5).

Of all those whose deaths are recorded in the Scriptures, they are *never* said to have gone away anywhere; but are always spoken of as *dying, giving up their life, and returning to the ground*, just as God said to Adam. Notice what is said of all the faithful by Paul:

“*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off*” (Heb. 11:13).

When Jesus spoke of the death of Lazarus, he was equally clear—

“*Our friend Lazarus SLEEPETH, but I go that I may AWAKE HIM out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death . . . Then said Jesus plainly, Lazarus is dead*” (Jn. 11:14).

How could Jesus possibly speak of Lazarus as being *asleep*, and needing to be *awakened*, if all the time he was wide awake in heaven, praising God?

Of Stephen, we read similarly, when he died: “*He fell asleep*” (Acts 7:60).

And when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians concerning the righteous who had died, to comfort them (surely one time above all others to tell them they were alive and happy in heaven!), he referred to their death as a *sleep*, and that they would be raised from the dead at the return of Christ—

“I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others who have no hope . . . The Lord shall descend from heaven, and the dead shall rise” (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

There are *no* exceptions to these cases in the *Bible* record. The *Bible* always speaks of death as the ending of life, never as commencement of another state. The dead are always represented as unconscious, knowing nothing (except in two places: one a poetic figure (Isa. 14:14), the other a parable using the Pharisees’ superstitions to confuse themselves (Lk. 16:19-31). In the plain, literal descriptions of Scripture, the dead are always spoken of as being in the “land of forgetfulness,” “land of darkness,” “silence,” “destruction,” unconsciousness. Solomon said—

“Whatsoever thy hand findest to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, in the grave whither thou goest” (Ecc. 9:10).

The patient man Job, in his distress of trial, said of the grave (3:13-19)—

“There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. There the prisoners rest together: They hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master”

He had just before expressed the wish that he had died when he was an infant. He had said that he would have “lain still and been quiet”—*not* have gone to heaven as taught by the churches of the world. He said he should have—

“SLEPT, been AT REST with kings and counselors, with infants that never saw light.”

He further added, a little later on in his trial—

“Wherefore hast Thou brought me forth out of the womb? O that I had given up the ghost (gava: expired) and no eye had seen me: I should have been as though I had not been” (10:18).

The inspired Psalmist David is equally plain (Psa. 88:10-12)—

“Shall the dead arise and praise Thee? Shall Thy loving kindness be declared in the grave, or Thy faithfulness in DESTRUCTION? Shall Thy wonders be known in the dark, and Thy righteousness in the land of FORGETFULNESS?”

The emphatic negative answer is provided by the same inspired pen (Ps. 115:17).

“The dead praise not the Lord; neither any that go down into silence.”

He stated that *life* is the time to serve the Lord, to do His will, to learn His Word and to sing His praises: “*WHILE I LIVE I will praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God WHILE I HAVE ANY BEING*” (Psa. 146:2)—clearly indicating that in David’s mind, his being would cease with the event of death. Consider what Solomon with divine wisdom declared (Ecc. 9:5-6)-

“*The living know that they shall die, but THE DEAD KNOW NOT ANYTHING: neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, are now perished neither have they any more a portion forever in anything under the sun.*”

This had been previously emphasized by his father David—

“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. For his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth: in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psa. 146:3-4).

“*In death there is NO REMEMBRANCE of Thee: in the grave, who shall give Thee thanks?*” (Psa. 6:5).

Hezekiah, righteous king of Judah, who was sick “nigh unto death,” and had recovered, praised God in the following manner—

“*The grave cannot praise Thee; death cannot celebrate Thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth: the living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day*” (Isa. 38:18-19).

The *Bible* teaches that death is the total eclipse of being, a complete stopping of our consciousness, a dreamless sleep in the “dust of the earth.”

These things establish the absolute *necessity of the resurrection*, for in view of the preceding scriptures, a future life is attainable *ONLY* by resurrection from the dead. It is difficult to see *any* use or purpose for a resurrection at all, if we accept the popular idea of heaven at death. In every instance, popular belief—in reference to the dead—is exactly contrary to the clear statements of the *Bible*. There is not a single promise of heaven at death in the whole *Bible*, and not a single hint that man has an “immortal soul,” or anything that lives on after death. The basic truth emphasized over and over is: “*THE DEAD KNOW NOT ANYTHING.*”

THE DEAD ARE UNCONSCIOUS

LESSON 4 — *Christendom Astray*,

Chapter 3, Part 1

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. What effect does a belief in heaven-going have on the doctrine of resurrection?
2. What do we understand about the meaning of life?
3. What do we understand about the meaning of death?
4. What began at our birth which is terminated at our death?
5. Does the *Bible* teach that we get a reward at the moment of our death?
6. What does the *Bible* say happened to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when they died?
7. How is the death of anyone described in the *Bible*?
8. What does Heb. 11 say concerning the faithful and their reward?
9. In what two ways did Jesus describe the death of Lazarus of Bethany?
10. How was the death of Stephen described in Acts 7:60?
11. Can any work be accomplished when we are dead?
12. What happens to our worries and weariness and fears when we die?
13. Can we praise God while we are dead?
14. When is the time to serve God?
15. What happens to our existence at death?
16. Do the dead know anything?

HEAVEN-GOING OR HELL-TORMENT AT DEATH UNTRUE

LESSON 5 — *Christendom Astray,* Chapter 3, Part 2

“Evil-doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord shall inherit the earth . . . The meek shall inherit the earth”
(Psa. 37:9-11).

HELL is the grave. Heaven is God’s throne. “No man hath ascended to Heaven.” The EARTH is the reward promised to man: “The meek shall inherit the EARTH” If the dead are really dead, as shown by the previous lesson from Scripture, they cannot have gone to any state of reward or punishment, because they do not exist to go. They sleep in the grave, awaiting the resurrection.

The dead not only do not go to the popular heaven or hell at death: they never go to heaven *at any time*. There is not a single promise throughout the whole of Scripture of going to heaven. The promise is *always* a rejuvenated earth, filled with the glory of God. It is true that Peter speaks of—

“An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, RESERVED IN HEAVEN for you” (1 Pet. 1:4). This may sound as if our reward will be in heaven. Likewise Jesus said—

“Great is your reward IN HEAVEN . . . Lay up treasure IN HEAVEN” (Matt. 5:12; 6:20).

Truly our reward is *now* “reserved in heaven,” awaiting its bestowal at the Last Day. When a thing is reserved, it is kept in safety in a specified place until it is required, and then it is brought forth: like the Federal Reserve Banks which *keep in reserve* sufficient funds to insure local bank deposits, to be *brought forth* on demand. Thus Peter goes on to say a few verses later that the reserved reward is a—

“Salvation to be BROUGHT UNTO YOU at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v. 13).

And Jesus says exactly the same—

“I COME quickly, and MY REWARD is WITH ME” (Rev. 22:12).

“Thou shalt be recompensed AT THE RESURRECTION” (Lk. 14:14).

And Paul gives the identical picture of reward when Christ comes—

“Jesus shall judge the quick and the dead AT HIS APPEARING AND KINGDOM . . . a crown of righteousness is LAID UP for me which the righteous Judge shall give me IN THAT DAY. . . and to all who love his APPEARING” (2 Tim. 4:1-8).

Certainly reward doesn't come before judgment (though orthodoxy seems to think so).

By the fact that Christ brings the reward with him, and that he is now in heaven, it can be rightly stated that the reward is at present *reserved* in heaven. One aspect of the reward is rulership of the earth with Christ, as we shall see. That no man has been so rewarded at present is abundantly clear.

Consider the judgment scene in Matthew 25:31-46, “When the Son of Man *shall come* in his glory” he *then* invites the righteous into his Kingdom. And consider also what he said in John 5:28-29: that the dead shall *come forth from the graves* to receive their reward of life or condemnation. How could that possibly be, if they are already recompensed in heaven or hell, ages before?

No descendant of Adam (except Christ himself) has ever been given, or even promised, entry into God's residence in “the heaven of heavens”. Jesus said to Nicodemus— “*NO MAN hath ascended up to heaven*” (Jn. 3:13).

Of faithful David, the “sweet Psalmist of Israel,” (referred to as a “man after God's Own heart”), it is specifically declared even he did not go to heaven. Certainly if any would have attained to such an honor, it would have been David. Peter says—

“The patriarch David is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day . . . David is NOT ASCENDED INTO THE HEAVENS” (Acts 2:29-34).

He is proving Christ is the Messiah by the fact that he ascended to heaven. But if *all* the righteous go to heaven, then Christ's ascension proves nothing as to this.

Paul agrees entirely with this statement of Peter, when he wrote to the Hebrew brethren of a long list of faithful, including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, etc.—

“These ALL, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us that they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb. 11:39-40).

Here we have Paul saying that David and all the others of the faithful haven't received the promises, nor been “made perfect” and *will not* till all the later faithful with them receive it *together* (at the resurrection at the Last Day).

There are two individuals who did not experience death. Of Enoch, it is stated:

“Enoch was translated that he should not see death” (Heb. 11:5).

And of Elijah: *“He went up by a whirlwind INTO HEAVEN”* (2 Kgs. 2:11).

“Heaven” is used in various senses (“birds of heaven,” “rain from heaven”), and this “heaven” Elijah ascended to is clearly not the “heaven of heavens” of God’s throne, for no man has ascended *there*, as we have seen. Where these two are we do not know. We are not told. They were exceptions: they did not die. What special provision God made for them, He has not revealed. Their exceptional case tells us nothing about those who *do* die (though “heaven-goers” always quote the case of Elijah as “evidence,” having no other case to refer to).

When Jesus was comforting Martha about Lazarus (who had died), he did not tell her, as moderns do, that he was happy in heavenly glory, but he encouraged her by saying, in true scriptural fashion: *“Thy brother shall RISE AGAIN”* (Jn. 11:23).

What a strange and pointless thing to say, if Lazarus was alive in eternal bliss!

Paul taught as comfort the *same doctrine of the resurrection*. Apparently he did not know anything about the modern comfort, that the dead had gone to instant bliss. To the sorrowing believers at Thessalonica, he said (2 Thess. 4:13-18)—

“I would not have you ignorant concerning them which are ASLEEP [note well!] . . . For the Lord himself shall DESCEND FROM HEAVEN . . . and the DEAD in Christ shall RISE . . . Wherefore comfort one another with THESE words.”

Again, an impossible thing to say, if they were awake in bliss in heaven.

The second coming of Christ, and the resurrection from the dead at the Last Day, comprise man’s only hope of life and reward. The EARTH is the destined place in which God’s great salvation will be manifested. The message of the entire Scriptures is to this end. David, Solomon and Jesus unite to emphasize it—

“Evil-doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord shall INHERIT THE EARTH . . . The meek shall INHERIT THE EARTH” (Psa. 37:9-11).

“The righteous shall be recompensed IN THE EARTH” (Prov. 11:21).

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall INHERIT THE EARTH” (Matt. 5:5).

Surely no statements could be simpler, plainer or more positive! What do the “heaven-goers” make of it? Do they believe the Scriptures, or reject them?

God's promise to Christ is (when his people shall be fellow-heirs with him)—

"I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the EARTH for thy possession" (Psa. 2:8).

And Jesus likewise promises to those who obey him—

"To him that overcometh will I give power over the NATIONS, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26-27).

And therefore they are symbolically shown as singing to him (Rev. 5:10)—

"Thou hast made us kings and priests, and we shall reign ON THE EARTH."

The Future Age of earth's glory is shown in Rev. 11:15—

"The kingdoms of THIS WORLD are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

—corresponding with what Daniel recorded by Divine inspiration—

"The kingdom and dominion 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. 7:27).

The result of Christ's coming the second time is summed up in the angelic announcement at his birth:

"Glory to God in the highest, and ON EARTH peace, good will toward men" (Lk. 2:14).

Therefore Jesus taught his disciples to pray:

"Thy will be done ON EARTH as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

Would he teach them to pray for something that God had no intention of doing? Certainly not! It is absolutely sure and determined. God swore (Num. 14:21)—

"As truly as I live, all the earth SHALL be filled with the glory of the Lord!"

How far it is from that today! *But it will come*, for God has sworn it.

* * *

The destiny of the wicked is to be destroyed from God's universe; not forever preserved in writhing torment, according to the wicked myths of Christendom. David said (Psa. 37:20) "The wicked shall PERISH." And Paul declares (Rom. 6:23) that "The wages of sin is DEATH." *Death—the extinction of all being—is the Divinely determined result of a sinful life: a life not devoted to God—*

"He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. 6:8).

But we observe that the righteous die as well as the wicked. The answer is that the death that all men die is not a

judicial death: not the *final* death to be dealt to those who are responsible to the judgment of the Last Day. Ordinary death just closes a man's mortal career. For the righteous, it is but a sleep in Christ, awaiting the Day of resurrection (1 Thess. 4:14-16)—

"Them that SLEEP in Jesus will God bring with him . . . for the Lord shall descend from heaven . . . and the DEAD in Christ shall rise."

"Many that SLEEP in the dust of the earth shall AWAKE" (Dan. 12:2).

There is a "Second Death": final and destructive (Rev. 20:6, 14; 21:8). The unjust are to be brought forth, at Christ's coming, for judgment. And their sentence is that, after the infliction of such punishment as may be merited (many or few stripes): (Lk. 12:47-48), they shall the second time, by violent and divinely inflicted means, be destroyed by death. As God said through Malachi (4:1) —

"Behold, the Day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the Day that cometh shall BURN THEM UP that it shall leave them NEITHER ROOT NOR BRANCH."

Again we read: *"They shall be punished with EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION"* (2 Thess. 1:9).

—that is, permanent annihilation: they shall be destroyed forever—

"As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked NO MORE" (Prov. 10:25).

"The wicked shall be cut off from the earth" (Prov. 2:22).

"Yet a little while, and the wicked shall NOT BE" (Psa. 37:10).

"All the wicked will God DESTROY" (Psa. 145:20).

* * *

"HELL" is the frequent AV translation of the Hebrew *Sheol*, and the Greek *Hades*. The English word "hell" simply means "a covered place," and comes from the Old English "*helan*": "to cover or conceal." It was used when speaking of putting a roof on a house, or a cover on a book. It is orthodoxy and mythology that has invented its modern ecclesiastical meaning.

"SHEOL" ("*a hollow place*") occurs in the Hebrew Old Testament sixty-five times, and in the AV is rendered "grave" and "hell" thirty-one times each, and "pit" three times. This varied translation is misleading and self-serving, according to the translator's theology.

Both righteous and wicked lie there together (Jacob, Job, Shimei, Joab, "the wicked," etc.—Gen. 37:35; Job 3:17-19; 17:13; 1 Kgs. 2:6, 9; Psa. 31:17). It is a place of silence,

darkness, corruption, forgetfulness, in the dust, no work, no knowledge, no love, no hate, no remembrance (Psa. 31:17; Job 17:13; Ecc. 9:10; Psa. 6:5; 88:11-12).

The mixture of pagan doctrines with the teachings of Christ and the apostles in the early centuries resulted in the current Church doctrines of Hell Fire and Eternal Torture as punishment for the wicked. Many verses of Scripture—when translated with the understanding of the meaning of the original words used by God—are thereby clearly understood, and are stripped of their popular teaching, as—

“Let the wicked be silent in the grave (sheol)” (Psa. 31:17).

“I (Jacob) will go down to the grave (sheol) mourning” (Gen. 37:35).

“Like sheep are they laid in the grave (sheol)” (Psa. 49:14).

“There is no work, knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave (sheol)” (Ecc. 9:10).

“In death, there is no remembrance of Thee; in the grave (sheol), who shall give Thee thanks?” (Psa. 6:5).

“The grave (sheol) . . . darkness . . . corruption . . . rest in the dust” (Job 17:13-16).

“HADES,” one of the New Testament Greek originals where the AV has “hell,” means “unseen”. It is the equivalent of Hebrew “*Sheol*,” being so used throughout the Septuagint, and in NT quotations from the OT (Acts 2:27, 1 Cor. 15:55). Like “*sheol*” the translators have rendered it “hell” or “grave” according to their fancy.

“GEHENNA” is another NT Greek word the translators render “hell.” Literally, it is the Valley of Hinnom (*Gai Hinnom*) outside Jerusalem, into whose continuous fires the rubbish of the city and criminal bodies were thrown. No one was tortured there alive: all were utterly *destroyed* there *dead*. Figuratively, it is the fiery divine judgments of the terrible Last Day soon to come on the earth—

“The Lord shall be revealed from heaven . . . in FLAMING FIRE taking vengeance on them . . . that obey not . . . who shall be punished with EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION when he shall come” (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

“The heaven and earth which are now (the present human constitution) . . . are reserved unto FIRE against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Pet. 3:7).

“The Lord will come with FIRE . . . for by FIRE and by sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many” (Isa. 66:15-16).

The latter (Isa. 66) is at a time when God shall “extend peace and the glory of the Gentiles” to Jerusalem; when He will

“make new heavens and new earth”; when “all flesh shall come to worship before Him” (vs. 12, 22, 23).

This final fiery, purifying judgment upon the earth is prefigured in the dreadful Gehenna judgment upon Israel in AD 70, when the Israelitish “heaven and earth” were swept away by divine wrath. But this time it will be worldwide, and will be followed by the establishment of universal peace and righteousness under Christ. Jesus said:

“I am he that liveth and was dead: and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (hades, grave), and of death” (Rev. 1:18).

This shows us that Christ is our reward, and it is he who—when he returns to the earth—has power to open the grave, and to bring to life those who have died in him. As the angel said to Daniel (12:2, 13) —

“Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt . . . But thou (Daniel), go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt REST, and stand in thy lot AT THE END OF THE DAYS.”

Resurrection from the dead awaits all the responsible who have died.

Resurrection at the Last Day is the only way to life beyond the grave.

Endless life after resurrection is the reward of all the faithful.

Complete destruction is the end of all who have been disobedient.

* * *

**HEAVEN-GOING OR HELL-
TORMENT AT DEATH UNTRUE**
LESSON 5 — *Christendom Astray,*
Chapter 3, Part 2

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. In what way is our reward “reserved in heaven” at the present time?
2. When is the “reserved” reward to be brought to us?
3. How was David, King of Israel, esteemed by God? Did he go to heaven?
4. What class of people are those spoken of in Hebrews 11 by Paul, when he said they had not been made perfect?
5. Where will God’s great salvation for the righteous be manifested?
6. What is the destiny of the wicked?
7. What is the root meaning of our English word “Hell”?
8. What is the meaning of the Hebrew word “Sheol”?
9. What is the meaning of the Greek word “Hades”?
10. What is the meaning of the Greek word “Gehenna”?
11. Who has the keys to unlock the grave? When will he do so?
12. What will happen to all the responsible (those who know God’s will) who have died?
13. What is the reward for all who have been faithful and obedient to God?
14. What is the destiny of all who have been disobedient to God’s will?

IMMORTALITY A CONDITIONAL GIFT TO BE BESTOWED ON THE RIGHTEOUS AT THE RESURRECTION WHEN CHRIST RETURNS

LESSON 6—*Christendom Astray,* Chapter 4

“The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation”
(Jn. 5:28-29).

Because man desires immortality is no proof that he has it (as Plato and his modern followers illogically argue). Rather it proves the very *opposite*: that he *doesn't* have it. Because a man is very hungry and craves desperately for food certainly does not prove he has food. Anyone can perceive that fact in this case. It is the same with immortality. And without food, man dies in short order. So with immortality: without it man soon dies and returns to the dust of the ground.

The Scriptures throughout constantly refer to man as mortal, and of brief, perishing existence: *never* as immortal and imperishable, or any words with that idea. “Mortality” comes from the Latin words *mors* (death), and signifies “deathfulness.” Anything that is “mortal” therefore, is subject to death, limited in power to continue in life, because of the inherent tendency to decay and dissolution.

Truly, the life-power that sustains man, the Spirit of God, is indestructible—but this is no proof that man himself is immortal, or has any “immortal spark” in him. If it were, it would prove the immortality of beasts, for they too are “living creatures,” just like man, sustained by this same universal life-power. The Spirit life-power itself belongs to, and is controlled by, God, Who gives it, and takes it away.

Men and animals both being alike “living creatures,” God has stated—

“That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts. Even one thing befalleth them. AS the one dieth, SO dieth the other: yea, THEY HAVE ALL ONE BREATH (ruach, spirit); so that a man hath NO PRE-EMINENCE (in this respect) above a beast” (Ecc. 3:19).

Moses also stated the same fundamental truth, speaking of the Flood—

“All flesh died that moved upon the earth: both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: ALL in whose nostrils was the BREATH OF LIFE, died” (Gen. 7 :21-22).

Here again, men and animals are all linked together in a common life-principle. They all breathe the *same* “breath of lives” (literally, here, “breath of the spirit of lives”: *neshamah ruach chaiyim*). The righteous man Job said—

“The spirit (*ruach**, breath) of God is in *MY NOSTRILS*” (Job 27:3).

“*Cease ye from man, whose breath (neshamah*) is in his nostrils*” (Isa.2:22).

[*“*Ruach*” and “*neshamah*” both mean, and are used for, “spirit” or “breath,” sometimes together, as: “*neshamah ruach*” (breath of the spirit of—Gen. 7:22). Hebrew scholars tell us “These words differ but slightly in meaning, both signifying primarily “wind,” then “breath.” As applied to persons, there is no clear distinction between the words.” A comparison of their use confirms this (see Englishman’s Hebrew Concordance). *Ruach* is by far the most prevalent (four hundred times); *neshamah* only twenty-five.]

“If God set His heart upon man, if He gather to Himself His spirit (ruach) and His breath (neshamah), ALL flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust” (Job 34:14).

Note that it is *God’s* spirit. Man, like the animals, is the dependent, receiving creature; the possessor *for a short time* of this animating life-power from God. As is said here of *man*, exactly so the Psalmist says of *animals* (104:29-30)—

“Thou takest away THEIR breath (ruach), they die, and return to their dust.

Thou sendest forth THY Spirit (ruach: same word), they are created.”

It is the animals’ spirit or breath while they possess it, but it returns to God when they die. Let us turn back to the *true* “origin of species,” as recorded in Genesis BY GOD through Moses. We need not be frightened away from this divine account by the impossible “evolution” speculation. It is an unprovable “scientific” guess: ever changing and unstable. The more men delve into and discover the infinitely intricate detail and delicate balance of all Creation—evidence screaming out of wisdom and power and design and purpose—mathematically impossible a million times over to be the random purposeless product of blind chance—the more utterly absurd and inadequate the strange evolution theory appears, invented and grasped at by wicked men to escape the authority of God and

obedience to His holy, flesh-crucifying laws. How can intelligent, grown men believe such impossibilities? But man has always had his fantasies, and has ever been willing to believe anything but the Truth. An intelligent person can see a million faces of God everywhere he looks in this glorious Creation: from the infinitely large to the infinitely small. What are these poor creatures thinking of to be able to believe all this beauty and wisdom and power came witlessly and purposely and spontaneously from nothing? How can they call such absurdity “science”?

If we accept Christ, and the direct words of God as spoken through him (Jn. 14:24), then we *must* accept Moses’ writings, for Christ endorsed Moses, and accepted his statements as true and divinely inspired. Jesus said (Jn. 5:46-47) —
“Moses wrote of me: if ye believe not his writings how shall ye believe my words?”

That is conclusive. And the New Testament Scriptures tie Adam and Christ inseparably together as the two poles in the divine plan. They stand or fall together as historic realities. So we see Adam and Eve as keepers of the beautiful Garden of Eden, in a “very good” state (Gen. 1:31), placed under law which required their submission, obedience and affection to divine requirements. And this condition prevailed with the purpose of showing that *this way alone* would produce eternal happiness for mankind, and the pleasure and glory of God.

Adam was prohibited from eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—

“But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17).

Here was the simplest and most convenient mode of *teaching and training* him in regard to his *position before God*. How long Adam continued obedient we are not told, but we are informed that in process of time he disobeyed (Gen. 3:6)—

“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat; and gave also to her husband, and he did eat.”

The result of this disobedience was exactly as God declared—

“Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken. For dust THOU ART, and unto dust shalt THOU return” (Gen. 3:17-19).

Adam, who had had *opportunity* of attaining immortality, was now doomed to return to his original nothingness: a condition which through physical inheritance has been passed on to all his descendants. We all possess the same corrupt, dying natures, on the principle that: "The clean cannot come of the unclean" (Job 14:4).

Thus we are all mortal, dying creatures. After the disobedience of Adam and Eve, and their sentencing by God, they were driven outside the Garden of Eden, and excluded from access to the Tree of Life, *for this reason*—

"Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and LIVE FOR EVER: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken" (Gen. 3:22-23).

Thus Adam's descendants, innumerable, sin-stricken and wretched, are mercifully swept away, generation after generation, like grass before the mower.

But, what reason for such a restraint, if they were already immortal?—if they were "immortal souls," *already* destined to "live for ever," either in heaven or hell? By this theory, it was not a matter of getting to live for ever: it was just a matter of where and under what conditions they would be living for ever. How could eating of the Tree of Life have anything to do with that?

From the *Bible* alone we learn the only logical account of man's present mortal condition. So also from this source alone we learn about his future destiny. Job asked—

"If a man die, SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN?" (Job 14:14).

The *Bible* alone answers this question. A seed placed in the ground "dies," to spring to life again: that power being inherent in the seed. Or a tree cut down may sprout again, as Job says (vs. 7-9). But not so with man, for he makes the contrast (v. 10)—

"But man dieth, and wasteth away. Yea, man giveth up the spirit (gava: expires), and WHERE IS HE?"

He is *nowhere*. He has returned to the dust of the ground, to remingle with all other dust. If he is to live again, it will be by a *new effort on the part of God*. That he *may* live again under *certain conditions* is the glad *Bible* message (1 Cor. 15:21)—

"Since by man came death, by man came also the RESURRECTION of the dead."

Christ declared himself the Resurrection and the Life, adding (Jn. 11:25)—

"He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Paul said that Christ, at his return to earth, would—

“Change our vile (low, base: tapeinos) BODIES, and fashion them like unto his own glorious BODY” (Phil. 3:21).

And to Timothy he wrote (2 Tim. 1:10)—

“Jesus Christ . . . hath abolished death (as the ultimate destiny of those who obey God), and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.”

The following verses teach the same thing (but why such statements, if man now has immortality?)—

“I am come that they MIGHT have life, and have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10:10).

“My sheep hear my voice . . . I GIVE them ETERNAL LIFE” (Jn. 10:28).

“The GIFT of God is ETERNAL LIFE through Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6:23).

“God gave His only begotten Son that whosoever BELIEVETH on him should not PERISH, but have EVERLASTING LIFE” (Jn. 3:16).

The alternative to receiving the *gift* of eternal life is *perishing*. As to the meaning of “perishing,” Paul uses exactly the same word, saying that if Christ be not risen, those who have fallen asleep (died) in Christ have “perished” (1 Cor. 15:18)—certainly not gone to eternal torments, but as the word simply signifies: “perished” —gone to nothing, ceased to exist. Look up “perish” (*appolumi*) in Young’s Concordance. The idea of it meaning eternal torments would make obvious and utter absurdity in practically every occurrence.

But this is what we must make ourselves believe if we accept the immortal soul theory: death doesn’t mean death, but an unpleasant form of life; perish doesn’t mean perish; destroy doesn’t mean destroy.

It is clear from these passages that eternal life is not a present possession of every human being, but a restricted, *future* gift of God to a selected few. All these passages, and many more, show us that immortality, or everlasting life, is a thing to be diligently sought for, a reward, something to be given to those who by—

“Patient well doing, SEEK for . . . IMMORTALITY” (Rom. 2:7).

We learn what immortality is by our daily association with mortality, which is deathfulness in relation to existence. A “mortal” is a creature capable of death, and whose natural end is death; dying; destined to death. We see it daily all around us. The Scriptures (and we too ourselves) speak of an animal “dying” just as they speak of a mortal man dying. We have no difficulty accepting the plain clear meaning as to the animal. But under the “immortal-soul, eternal torture” theory, when we come to the mortal man, we must give “dying” an entirely different meaning.

Immortality is just the reverse of mortality: deathlessness, endless *existence*. To be immortal, we require to be incorruptible in substance, just as now we are corruptible. Paul, speaking of the *body* of the righteous, present and future, in death and resurrection, says—

“It is sown in corruption, it is raised in INCORRUPTION . . . it is sown a natural BODY, it is raised a SPIRITUAL BODY” (1 Cor. 15:42-44).

And further in verses 51-53—

“We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed . . . This corruptible must PUT ON incorruption, and this mortal must PUT ON immortality.”

This is the only way the Scriptures ever say we can attain to eternal life: by *bodily* change at the resurrection *at the last day*. Till then the dead “sleep.” Note the Scripture’s constant emphasis on the BODY. It knows nothing of existence without a body. And this “spiritual BODY” the righteous will be changed to is a real substantial body which can be handled and felt. Our *bodies*, we are told, will be made like unto Christ’s “glorious BODY.” We learn what this is like by events which happened right after his resurrection. He said to his disciples—

“Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I MYSELF: handle me, and see: for a spirit (such as they imagined, an apparition) hath not FLESH AND BONES, as ye see me have” (Lk. 24:39).

The risen, immortal Christ had “flesh and bones.” “It is I myself.” The disciples handled Jesus, and he ate before them (v. 43). To Thomas he said later (Jn. 20:27)—

“Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands: and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.”

This same body was to continue forever—

“This SAME Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

What “same Jesus”? The very one with “flesh and bones”—I myself—whom they had handled a few days before. *Such* is the body like unto which our bodies will be fashioned at Christ’s return, if we are accepted of him.

Animal, or natural, bodies are sustained by the blood coursing through their veins—

“The LIFE of all flesh is IN THE BLOOD thereof” (Lev. 17:14).

NOT, we note, in some imaginary, abstract, immortal spark that is just using the body. Present animal life is not inherent and self-sustaining. It depends on all the continuing, uninterrupted, orderly functions of this animal system—breathing, digestion, blood circulation, etc. and is at the total mercy of the environment: heat, cold, pressure, lack of air,

poison, disease, violence, accident, all these can destroy it. And it is inherently, of itself, steadily tending to death. The cleverest doctor cannot cure this condition: he may merely postpone briefly death's victory.

Jesus is the only true doctor, who can heal eternally. He offers resurrection to a spirit body existence, independent of environment, and free from any possibility of accident, dissolution, disease or decay—

“That which is born of the Spirit IS SPIRIT” (Jn. 3:6).

—for the “mortal and corruptible” has “put on”—been transformed to—“immortality and incorruption” (1 Cor. 15:53). Paul told the Roman ecclesia (8:11)—

“He that raised up Christ from the dead (the Example and Forerunner) shall also quicken your MORTAL bodies BY HIS SPIRIT which dwelleth in you.”

Note well that eternal life comes only by a mortal BODY being “quickenened”—not by the flying off somewhere of some supposed “immortal essence” in man.

This “quickenening” (which means “being made alive”) is the second birth into literal life. (Scripturally, it is the *third* “birth”: birth from the womb, birth from water at baptism into Christ, birth from the grave by Spirit-transformation at the resurrection—Jn. 3:5). Daniel was shown the righteous would have glorious, shining bodies, radiating the Spirit of God (Dan. 12:3)—

“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.”

And Isaiah describes their tireless strength and vigor, a glorious gift of God to be like Himself (40:28-31)—

“The everlasting God, the Lord, Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary . . . They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”

This gift, so freely offered by God—for no man could possibly earn or merit it still (and very reasonably so) is conditional upon man's TOTAL submission to God and diligent obedience to His will. We do not expect our children to be perfect; but we do expect them—if we do *our* part properly (as God always does)—to submit and obey in love to the best of their ability.

God alone is the Judge and Prescriber of what is right and required in the way of obedience, as we have seen from Rom. 2:7—

“To them (and to them only) who by patient continuance in well doing seek for . . . immortality, (God will render) eternal life.”

“Patient continuance” is the key—a steady, consistent course *in the right spirit*—

“*He that DOETH God’s will shall enter into the Kingdom*” (Matt. 7:21).

“*He that OVERCOMETH shall eat of the Tree of Life*” (Rev. 2:7).

“*They that DO His commandments shall have right to the Tree of Life*” (Rev. 22:14).

“*Eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY him*” (Heb. 5:9).

“*If thou wilt enter into life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS*” (Matt. 19:17).

Such passages show that *only certain ones* who follow a specific course of life will be given immortality. They give the death-blow to Universalism—that flesh-pleasing theory that all at last will be *forced* to be saved, in spite of themselves. God desires love and freewill obedience. In direct connection with those who *will* be saved, the Scriptures speak of those who will be destroyed. Romans 2 verse 8 for example, says of the same final “day of wrath and indignation”—

“*But to them who do not obey the Truth, (God will render) indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man that doeth evil.*”

Contrary to Universalism, the *Bible’s* message is that only a few will be saved—

“*Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and FEW there be that find it*” (Matt. 7:14).

“*Cast him into outer darkness . . . many are called, but FEW chosen*” (Matt. 22:13).

Universalism is a gross over-exaltation of the importance of man. And it is an understandable, humane revulsion against the dreadful orthodox theory of hopeless, purposeless, never-ending torture for the great bulk of mankind.

God’s purpose, as revealed by the Scriptures, is not to perpetuate forever, every human being, willy-nilly, that ever lived. The divine plan is the development of a select, spiritually-minded, heavenly-charactered family for God’s Glory and Name. The world’s vast and teeming passing populations are merely incidental to that Plan. God graciously invites all, but He forces none. Let not dust-and-ashes animal man exaggerate his fictitious importance. God is—

“*Taking OUT OF the nations a people for His Name*” (Acts 15:14).

Jesus says, clearly defining the two FINAL destinies (Jn. 5:28-29)—

“*The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good*

unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.”

To many, indoctrinated in orthodoxy, “damnation” inescapably carries the picture of eternal hell flames. But it simply means “condemnation, rejection, judgment against”—and the judgment is total *destruction*—

“PUNISHED with everlasting DESTRUCTION” (2 Thess. 1:9).

Some again argue that if it is “destruction” then it is not “punishment”—that one must be conscious to be “punished.” Have they never heard of “capital *punishment?*” Deprivation of life—especially where perfect, endless life is at issue—is the supreme and ultimate punishment. And it completely rids God’s beautiful universe of the wicked without leaving billions screaming hopelessly in hell to all eternity. Any who can believe in eternal hell tortures is no fit material for the family of a loving God. God is just and stern, but He is not a fiend, as orthodoxy’s superstitions make Him to be. He is truly, to the wicked, a “consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29)—but it is a “*consuming*” fire not an ever-torturing one.

“He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap CORRUPTION” (Gal. 6:8).

—which ends in the triumph of death. The wicked are finally overcome and swallowed up by the Second Death. Being of no use in the divine economy, they are put out of the way—

“Where the wicked cease from troubling” (Job 3:17).

* * *

Beside the accepted and the condemned, a *third* class of people are those who never knew the will of God, never having seen the light of His Word. These will not be saved, as is commonly supposed. If such were saved, it would be wiser to remain in darkness. Knowledge would merely endanger their salvation. Preaching the Gospel would be the height of cruelty, if ignorance assures salvation. Catholicism is more logical than Protestantism in this respect, for it has its “limbo” for problem cases. But both are wrong. The *Bible* reveals that (Rom. 2:12)—

“As many as have sinned without law shall also PERISH without law.”

Perfectly just, perfectly reasonable: no obedience or disobedience; therefore no reward or punishment. Pagans, heathen, idiots, infants—are not responsible to law. Resurrection does not take place in their case. As Isaiah says, speaking of the heathen who had afflicted Israel (26:14)—

“They are dead: they shall not live. They are deceased: THEY SHALL NOT RISE: Thou hast visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.”

And of the same class, Jeremiah says—

“They shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake” (Jer. 51:39).

“The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead” (Prov. 21:16).

“Man that is in honor and understandeth not is like the beasts that perish” (Psa. 49:20).

(Does “perish” here, applied to beasts, mean eternal life in torture? Who would say so? If not, neither can it mean that for man, who is “like” them).

“ALIENATED (separated) from the LIFE of God through ignorance” (Eph.4:18).

“Having NO HOPE, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12).

All men are sinners in their natural state, though most are ignorant and non-responsible—

“The whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 Jn. 5:19).

“Whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom.14:23).

“The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).

“Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jam. 1:15).

Orthodoxy’s weird theories of saving these ignorant sinners en masse (they dare not send them to eternal torments) puts a premium on ignorance, and makes knowledge a thing to be avoided at all costs. But God is just, and herein is His justice shown. God could not with justice punish those who were not obedient to a law they did not know. Neither could He in justice reward them for that they did not do. Therefore He puts them aside. The true doctrine of the mortal, perishing nature of man, just like the beasts, solves the horrible orthodox nightmare of billions writhing in endless torture as the ultimate result of God’s purpose. What a travesty of a loving God! What a colossal divine failure that would be!

Everlasting Life is not a present, universal possession. It is a future reward to be bestowed upon the righteous and obedient, through the mercy of God, at the last day judgment seat of Christ, when he returns to the earth to reign.

IMMORTALITY A CONDITIONAL GIFT

**TO BE BESTOWED ON THE RIGHTEOUS AT THE
RESURRECTION WHEN CHRIST RETURNS**

LESSON 6—*Christendom Astray,* Chapter 4

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. Where does the life power come from?
2. What is the similarity in the death of men and of animals?
3. What book presents the TRUE “origin of species”?
4. If we accept Christ, why must we also accept the *Bible* record of Creation?
5. What words describe the physical condition of Adam before he sinned?
6. What event brought about the mortality of Adam?
7. In what way did the sentencing of Adam affect all mankind? What scripture proves this?
8. How do we know that Adam was not immortal?
9. Does man naturally spring to life again once he has died?
10. Through what man is resurrection made possible?
11. To what class will everlasting life be given?
12. Through what message is life and immortality possible to mankind?
13. What is the meaning of immortality?

JUDGMENT TO COME - SCRIPTURAL “RESPONSIBILITY”

DIVINE REWARDS GIVEN AT THE RETURN OF CHRIST TO
THE EARTH

LESSON 7 — Christendom Astray, Chapter 5, Part 1

“As many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law . . . in THE DAY when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel” (Rom. 2:12-16).

Orthodoxy and the “immortal soul” theory create the absurdity of all mankind being rewarded immediately at death by going to heaven or hell; and then, thousands of years later, being brought back to re-enter mortal bodies and stand before Christ for judgment to see what their reward (or punishment) should be. Has any immortal soulist ever attempted to explain this absurdity?

If “death” is actually a continuation of life, and the reward is settled and received as that portal is passed through, then the scriptural doctrine of last day resurrection is a mummery, and last day judgment is a mockery. But the Scriptures give a clear simple picture, telling us that the dead know nothing, but sleep unconsciously in the grave, awaiting Christ’s call back to life by bodily resurrection to be judged, and THEN rewarded. This is beautiful, harmonious, fitting.

NOT ALL WILL RISE FROM THE DEAD

God will not bring every human being to individual account. The vast majority of mankind fall into the group described by David in Psa. 49—

“Man being in honor abideth not; he is like the beasts that PERISH . . . Like sheep are they laid in the grave . . . Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away . . . He shall go to the generation of his fathers . . . THEY SHALL NEVER SEE LIGHT . . . Man that is in honor and understandeth not IS LIKE THE BEASTS THAT PERISH.”

This is reasonable and just. To bring the helplessly ignorant to judgment by a law they did not know is not reasonable.

JUDGMENT IS BASED ON RESPONSIBILITY

Judgment has its basis in responsibility. Our responsibility to God comes from our having come in contact with His law, and our ability to understand good and evil, and our power to control our actions according to this understanding. The *Bible* is the only source of sound knowledge regarding the principles and conditions of responsibility to God. Philosophy and human theory are useless.

ADAM FELL—GOD’S PLAN FOR REDEMPTION

Adam was made responsible for his acts because his actions were under his control and he was instructed what to do. He knowingly disobeyed, and God’s law of condemnation took hold of him. And he and all his descendants have been under the power of sin and death since that time. But God did not intend that His purpose of filling the earth with His glory should terminate with mankind’s failure.

In God’s great mercy and benevolence He conceived and is working out a plan of salvation for mankind, while preserving and maintaining His honor and holiness and righteousness and justice—a law involving “glory to God in the highest,” as well as “good will toward men.” This plan of redemption, outlined in the *Bible* through various promises, precepts and commandments, re-opened a relationship between God and man, and brought man under moral responsibility to God again. It is a divine principle that this result *is only for those who come within the sphere of the law of God*. Those who do NOT are in the class referred to in Ps. 49.

LIGHT (KNOWLEDGE) BRINGS RESPONSIBILITY

Paul said in Rom. 4:15—“*Where no law is there is no transgression.*”

And he told the Athenians—“*THE TIMES OF IGNORANCE God winked at*” (Acts 17:30).

While Christ told Nicodemus (Jn. 3:19)—

“*THIS is the (basis of) condemnation (krisis, judgment), that LIGHT is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.*”

And he said to the Jews who rejected him (Jn. 9:41)—

“*If ye were blind (that is, ignorant), ye should have no sin.*”

The Scriptures uniformly represent ‘light’ as the ground of responsibility and resurrectional judgment (Jam. 4:17)—

“*To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*”

“Better not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known, to turn from the holy commandment” (2 Pet. 2:21).

“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin. But now they have no cloak (RV: excuse) for their sin” (Jn. 15:22).

Under the Law of Moses, which Paul quotes as an example—

“EVERY disobedience received a just recompense of reward” (Heb. 2:2).

The men to whom this command went forth were not asked if they were willing to become subject to Moses’ Law. They were told, commanded. Similarly in the beginning with Adam: he was not asked if he wanted to make an agreement: he was commanded: put under law at God’s decision; and called to account for disobedience. *Now* the command is to “all men everywhere” (Acts 17:30). And every disobedience will likewise receive a just recompense of reward. And we know *when* the Scriptures tell us this will happen. And we know it does *not* happen in this life: we see it does not, and we are *told* it does not (Ecc. 7:15; Job 21:7, 13, 30).

When men are in a state of ignorance, they are not liable to personal condemnation. God ignores (“winks at”) their doings, as He does that of the beasts of the field. They are without light and without law. They are on a par with the beasts: sunk through ignorance beneath the level of light and responsibility. That is the state of most of natural mankind. Paul wrote to the Romans (2:12)—

“As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law.”

If it is true (as the Scriptures state) that from those to whom much is given much is required, then from him to whom nothing is given shall nothing be required. Christ said that if he had not come and spoken to his generation, or to any through the Gospel, they had not had sin, for they would have been in helpless ignorance (Jn. 15:22). Therefore he said (Jn. 12:48)—

“He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him: the Word I have spoken shall judge him IN THE LAST DAY.”

Men cannot be judged by a “word” they have not heard. Responsibility to God is created only by contact with divine law. Noah’s descendants are an example of this sort. His immediate family received a law, and knew it. Yet as one generation of their descendants succeeded another they wandered farther away from the way of knowledge and understanding, gradually

sinking below moral responsibility, to the level of the beasts, bringing about those conditions Paul said God “winked at”.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM—A NEW RELATIONSHIP

Abraham—the father of the Jewish race—was called directly and openly by God to come out of the prevailing world darkness. This invitation made the direction of his life much more important than while he lived in the Chaldean darkness. Faith and obedience to God constituted him the “heir of the world” (Rom. 4:13) and subject to resurrection to immortality. And, being called, unbelief and disobedience would have made him subject to a more severe and far-reaching extension of God’s displeasure than fell upon Adam.

Paul told the Ephesians that in their former ignorance they were—

“Without God or hope in the world . . . strangers from the Covenants of Promise . . . aliens from the life of God through the ignorance in them.”

When one is called from this godless condition by the preaching of the Gospel, they cease to be “their own” (1 Cor. 6:19). All their activities come under God’s supervision, and become the basis of future accountability. As in the case of Abraham, all who become enlightened to the same truth come under the same responsibility as he. The Law of Faith had its origin in Eden, for we read (Heb. 11:4)—

“By faith Abel offered sacrifice, and obtained witness he was righteous.”

But the full and official initiation of the Law of Faith as a rule of salvation occurred in the life of Abraham. This was the basis of resurrectional responsibility. Of course, there are evidences of it in the lives of God’s people before the time of Abraham: Abel, Enoch, Noah, etc.

THE LAW OF MOSES SECONDARY—ITS PURPOSES

The Law of Moses was a national code for Israel. It was wholly subordinate to, and did not replace or override, the Law of Faith through Abraham, which goes back to the beginning in Abel. The Law of Moses was an interim administration, added for various divine reasons, including—

1. *To manifest all mankind as guilty before God;*
2. *To testify to God’s supremacy and unapproachable holiness;*
3. *To be a schoolmaster and guide to lead to Christ;*
4. *To be a foreshadowing, educational pattern and type of heavenly things;*

5. *To provisionally cover sins and provide for their forgiveness on the basis of obedience to the sacrificial ordinances, and faith in what they represented.*

Also it was a national code to organize and regulate Israel as a nation while they were the channel of God's manifestation to the world. It provided a foundation upon which the Abrahamic Law of Faith could have its perfect work.

THE LAW OF FAITH NOT SUPERSEDED—OLD TESTAMENT TESTIMONY ON RESURRECTION

While the Mosaic Law was in operation—from Moses to Christ—it is clear that the principle of resurrectional responsibility was in operation also. This principle runs through all that God did by His faithful servants from Abel to Paul. God's purpose from the beginning had reference to the mission of the Christ as the "Resurrection and the Life."

Christ said that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets are to appear in the Kingdom of God (Matt. 8:11). God revealed Himself to Moses by the Name which indicated the principle of resurrection, calling Himself the God of men already dead (Ex. 3:6). By this Christ argued (Lk. 20:37) to the silencing of the Sadducees that God would raise these men to life again. Thus we read—

"God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is A TIME there for every purpose and every work" (Ecc. 3:17).

"God SHALL BRING every work into judgment with every secret thing" (Ecc. 12:14).

"Judge nothing before THE TIME, till the Lord come . . . who will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and THEN shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5).

"They that feared the Lord spake often one to another . . . And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in the DAY when I make up My jewels . . . THEN shall ye discern between the righteous and the wicked" (Mal. 3:16-18).

And there are many similar passages throughout the O. T. Scriptures (as Psa. 37; 49:14; 58:10; 62:12; Prov. 11:18-31; Ecc. 5:8; 11:9; 12:14; Isa. 3:10; 26:19-21; 35:4; 66:4-5, 14; Mal. 4:1-3, etc.).

JEWISH NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Jewish responsibility was greater than the cast-off descendants of Noah, because of their close association with God as His chosen race, as He said—

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2).

Again the clear principle of responsibility through knowledge. The *national* punishment of the Jews by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Romans and Gentiles through the centuries is a full discharge of their responsibilities as a result of their *national* election. Yet it is very evident that there were varying degrees of *individual* responsibility here also, as when Christ said that certain of his generation would manifest weeping and gnashing of teeth when they witnessed the patriarchs being accepted for his Kingdom and “they themselves thrust out” (Lk. 13:28).

OTHER NATIONS IN DEGREE

As there was a degree of responsibility with Israel in relation to God, so we see also that as other nations came into contact with Israel and Israel’s God, so their responsibility rose. The nations of Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistines and Tyrians all were in this class, as were others, and have all been subjected to God’s wrath because of their responsibility to Him. This we understand from such testimonies as Ezekiel chapters 25-33, Amos chapters 1-2, etc.

But *resurrectional* responsibility is limited to those who have a knowledge of the Word of God. His promises and precepts confer privileges and impose responsibilities having reference to resurrection. They form a basis for that awakening from the dust to everlasting life, or to shame and everlasting contempt (Dan. 12:2).

But how can we make any sense out of these long ages of God-permitted heathen darkness that God “winked at” if every human being that ever lives is a precious “immortal soul” that has to be either “saved” by conversion or allowed to suffer eternally in hell torture? By this absurd and unscriptural theory, every human being that has ever lived, even for a mere moment, must exist somewhere consciously for all eternity.

If they go to hell because of ignorance (Eph. 2:12; 4:18)—what divine injustice! But if they go to heaven in ignorance because of helplessness, what cruelty then is the preaching of the Gospel, creating the very strong possibility of rejection (Matt. 7:21; 2 Cor. 2:14-16), when undisturbed ignorance guarantees salvation! What a dreadful dilemma the wicked and monstrous “immortal soul” theory creates! Natural ignorant mankind has no more to do with the future state prepared for God’s children than the decaying vegetation that passes away each year with the winter.

CHRIST THE “RESURRECTION”—AND THE JUDGE

Christ reveals himself as the only means of Resurrection and Life, the Judge of all the responsible, and the Giver of rewards or punishment when he returns to the earth. He said—
“*The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son*” (Jn. 5:22).

And further, Jn. 12:48, as quoted already—

“*He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him: the word I have spoken shall judge him IN THE LAST DAY.*”

This is a first principle of the faith of the Gospel. Paul (Heb. 6:1-2) linked eternal judgment with baptism, resurrection, etc., as the principles (“the beginning”) of the doctrine of Christ. Peter said Christ commanded them to preach that he was—

“*Ordained by God to judge the quick (living) and the dead*” (Acts 10:42).

And Paul told the Romans God had appointed a Day when He will (Rom. 2:16)—

“*Judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel.*”

The following verses illustrate the *Bible* picture concerning judgment to come—

“*It is appointed unto men once to die: AFTER THAT the Judgment*” (Heb. 9:27).

“*As many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law . . . in THE DAY when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel*” (Rom. 2:12-16).

“*Every man’s work shall be manifest for THE DAY shall declare it*” (1 Cor. 3:13).

“*God will render to every man according to his deeds*” (Rom. 2:5-6).

“*We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ . . . every one of us shall give account of himself to God*” (Rom. 14:10-12).

“*We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things in body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad*” (2 Cor. 5:10).

“*The Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom*” (2 Tim. 4:1).

MANY CALLED, FEW CHOSEN

God, by the method of preaching, is “taking OUT of the world” a people to honor His Name (Acts 15:14), “purifying to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit. 2:14). While this invitation has gone out to all kindreds, nations, and peoples, and the number who have answered the call over the

centuries is a great number, *all those who have been called will not be chosen*—

“Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt. 22:14).

This is because many who accept the Word preached *are not influenced sufficiently by it to present their bodies as living sacrifices*, holy and acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1). Or as Paul told the Hebrews (4:2)—

“The Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith.”

This is clearly shown in Christ’s parable of the Sower. The seed falls in various kinds of soil. As a result, it brings forth varying amounts of fruit, acceptable or unacceptable to God, or no fruit at all (Matt. 13:3-23).

Thus we find a great multitude, living and dead, each with an individual responsibility to God, according to His knowledge of them. We cannot judge anyone in this regard. We may think certain ones are sure of entry into the Kingdom or of rejection; but God alone knows. The decision rests with the true judgment of God, manifested by Christ when he appears.

JUDGMENT TO COME -
SCRIPTURAL “RESPONSIBILITY”
DIVINE REWARDS GIVEN AT THE RETURN OF CHRIST TO
THE EARTH

LESSON 7 —*Christendom Astray,*
Chapter 5, Part 1

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. What is the basis for divine judgment of an individual?
2. What made Adam responsible to God’s judgment?
3. What was the result of Adam’s disregard of the consequences of his acts: In relation to himself? In relation to his descendants?
4. What was the primary purpose of God in Creation?
5. What method did He provide to this end after the fall of Adam?
6. Are people in ignorance of God’s laws and commands answerable to judgment? What scripture supports your answer?
7. How does a person become responsible to do God’s will?
8. How did Abraham become responsible to God?
9. What feature of the Creator was impressed by the Law of Moses?
10. What made Israel as a nation responsible to the will of God?
11. In what way were other nations responsible to God?
12. What class of people are related to resurrectional responsibility?
13. Is the subject of resurrection and judgment a first principle doctrine? What scripture supports your answer?
14. Give two passages to prove that the responsible will answer for their deeds at the judgment seat of Christ.
15. Will all those who have received the call of God be accepted by Christ at the judgment seat?
16. When will the judgment take place?

CHRIST'S LAST DAY JUDGMENT SEAT

WHICH ALL MUST FACE – FURTHER EVIDENCE –
OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

LESSON 8 — *Christendom Astray,* Chapter 5, Part 2

“The Kingdom is as a man travelling into a far country. . . After a long time the lord cometh, and reckoneth with those servants . . . ‘Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.’”

The previous lesson showed there is a great community from through the ages, most of them resting in death, who await the divine verdict of approval or rejection. When and how will this verdict be manifested?

Some reply, “The Lord knoweth them that are His” (2 Tim. 2:19), implying there from that there is no necessity of standing at a judgment seat to answer; that the destiny of all is already settled in God’s mind. It is true that God knows, but this does not exclude a set time and place of open, official inquiry and declaration, before the entire host of the responsible, assembled for this purpose.

GOD’S WAYS MANIFEST HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

God does not presume on His foreknowledge to bypass arrangements *that manifest to man* His justice and His reasons. All His operations with man are designed to manifest and declare and teach. He knows the end of all, and could leapfrog right to that end if He chose, but this would not accomplish His purpose as far as man is concerned.

Why, for example, did He allow a faithless generation to escape Egypt under Moses, and long bear with their wickedness and rebellion, before destroying them in the wilderness? Why didn’t He just get rid of them summarily? He knew from the beginning they would be wicked and useless. We see much accomplished by the procedure He followed, both as to contemporary people and later generations. So it is with the judgment seat.

And why did He so long forbear with the Jews in their constant obstinacy foreknowing their rejection of all His messengers, and at last His Own Son? And why were such as Ananias and Sapphira brought into the presence of the apostles, and their guilt brought out by their own testimony,

before they were destroyed? (Acts 5:1-11). Surely the reasonableness of the process is obvious: so with judgment.

THE FAITHFUL WILL REJOICE THAT IT IS SO

It is true God knows, but is it not necessary that it should be openly demonstrated to responsible men the basis on which they were approved or rejected? Even apart from the intrinsic reasonableness of the matter, it is dangerous to argue otherwise, because it involves the rejection of a *declared first principle of truth*: the last-day judgment by Christ at his return.

To those who have, in this life, labored faithfully and patiently in the face of injustice and misrepresentation, it is comforting to know there will be at last an open, public, infallible tribunal to right all wrongs before all.

And it is gladdening to know that between this unjust, sin-triumphant, evil dispensation, and the glorious, just perfection of the Kingdom, there stands an ordeal and a scrutiny that will, to the vindication of God, prevent the entrance of anything that defileth, whatever its pretensions or claims of human prestige. Wrongful suffering will be avenged before all, unseen faithfulness will be openly acknowledged, unappreciated worth will be at last manifested, and all secret evil exposed and punished and held up to merited execration.

The object of the judgment is to mete to each his desert, whether good or bad—

“Many will say in THAT DAY, Lord, Lord, etc. . . . I will profess I never knew you: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity” (Matt. 7:22-23).

“Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall GIVE ACCOUNT thereof in THE DAY OF JUDGMENT” (Matt. 12:36).

“Every one of us shall GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF to God” (Rom. 14:12).

MANY PARABLES PORTRAY THE JUDGMENT SEAT

Another important line of evidence is in the parables of Christ. In many of them, he illustrates the relationship between himself and his servants, in connection with his departure for a period from the earth, and later return. In the parable of the nobleman who went away to receive the authority of a kingdom—

“When he was returned, having received the kingdom, he commanded his servants to be called . . . that he might know how much every man had gained by trading” (Lk. 19:15).

And it was not just a matter of “degrees of reward,” as so many contend, striving to get away from the divine truth of

that searching tribunal. Rather it was a matter of *acceptance or rejection*: two servants were commended and rewarded; the third had what he already possessed taken from him (v. 26).

In a similar “gathering of the servants to give an account” parable in Matthew 25, two are again rewarded, and the “unprofitable servant” is “*cast into outer darkness*” (v. 30): no possibility here of misrepresenting it as mere “degrees of reward.”

Another similar parable occurs in Matthew 22. A king invites guests to the wedding of his son (the “marriage supper of the Lamb”—Rev. 19:9). When the guests were assembled, the king inspects them to make sure they are acceptably attired. One is found without a wedding garment, and is “bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness” (v. 14). Again, no mere “degree of reward”, but *total rejection*.

Again, the parable of the net cast into the sea. When it was *full* (the total calling completed) they drew it to shore and *sorted the fish into good and bad*—“casting the bad AWAY” (Matt. 13:48)—not just giving them a smaller reward.

And again, the servants waiting for their Lord’s return. The Lord came suddenly (as Christ so often warns he will), and found one unfaithful, and “cut him in sunder” (Lk. 12:46)—hardly interpretable as just rewarding him less.

Then there is the parable of the Ten Virgins awaiting the bridegroom. The bridegroom came; the wise go in with him to the marriage; the foolish are excluded and the door is shut. And lest this be not clear enough for the “degree of reward” advocates, the bridegroom says to them through the shut door, “I know you not” (v. 12).

“Many are called,” says Jesus, “but few are chosen.” (Matt. 20:16). *When and in what way* are the chosen separated from the called? These parables all answer—

“*He shall judge the living and the dead AT HIS APPEARING and Kingdom*” (2 Tim. 4:1).

GOOD AND BAD RISE AND ARE JUDGED TOGETHER

Some say it is just the *living* wicked who are called to the judgment seat and punished: just the generation alive at his coming. But Daniel and Christ are in specific agreement in testifying that at that Day the *dead* shall rise, some to glory, some to shame; some to life, some to condemnation (Dan. 12:2; Jn. 5:29). Paul says (1 Cor. 4:5)—

“*Judge nothing before THE TIME, until the LORD COME, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness . . . THEN shall every man have praise of God.*”

The “things of darkness” and the “praise of God” are *both* made manifest at the same time—when the “*Lord comes.*”

Paul says further (2 Cor. 5:10) that at the judgment seat of Christ (where we “all” must stand) they are to receive in body “*good or BAD.*” And to the Romans he says (2:6, 9, 16) that “well-doing” will be rewarded with “eternal life,” and failure to obey will be rewarded with “tribulation and anguish” at the same time—

“*IN THE DAY when God shall judge the secrets of men ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL.*”

It is clear that the judgment seat of Christ is the great natural boundary line between probation and exaltation; the appointed time of revealing who is who, and separating the righteous from the wicked. Christ’s words, both at the beginning of his ministry (Matt. 7:22) and at the end (Matt. 25:37-44) show the issue is not known till then: the righteous are not assured of their acceptance till then, and the wicked are surprised at their rejection.

All, therefore, must stand at the judgment seat together in a physical condition susceptible of *receiving* eternal life or eternal death. They *cannot* be immortal until after having appeared at the judgment seat.

The idea, then, that the righteous dead spring from the grave into immortal being (based solely on a misinterpretation of 1 Cor. 15:52, “raised incorruptible”) is out of harmony with the entire, oft-repeated scriptural picture. Both good and bad are received “in body” (2 Cor. 5:10, omitting incorrect italics) at the judgment seat. The “raising incorruptible” is clearly a *process*—INCLUDING the judgment.

SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

It is argued from 1 Thess. 4:16 (“The dead in Christ shall rise FIRST”) that the righteous dead rise before the unrighteous dead, the latter being raised at a later time. But we have seen that they rise and stand before the judgment seat *together*. The “rising first” here mentioned is in relation to the taking away of the *living*, as the context makes clear. Paul is concerned with the relationship between the righteous dead and the righteous living. He is not thinking of the wicked at all, who are very unimportant in the eternal divine scheme. He is assuring his mourning readers that the dead are at no disadvantage: they rise before the living are taken away. The wicked are ignored in many passages, as all throughout 1 Cor. 15. This is reasonable, but they are mentioned enough to give the true picture, and their simultaneous rising and being judged with the righteous is clearly shown elsewhere.

Again, it is argued from Rev. 20:6 (“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection”) that the wicked do not then rise. But there is nothing here to contradict the resurrection and judgment of the wicked. “Having *part*” means to receive a reward and a portion in that resurrection: to be not turned away by Christ. And it is the “first” resurrection—the one at Christ’s return—in contrast to the second resurrection at the end of the thousand years.

The “rest of the dead” who “live not again till the thousand years are finished” (v. 5) are all who die *subsequent* to this time—during the thousand years: that is, there is no further resurrection until the Millennium’s end.

WE MUST HARMONIZE ALL THE TESTIMONY

When Paul says (1 Cor. 15:52) that the “dead shall be raised incorruptible,” he is obviously not contradicting his own divinely-inspired teaching elsewhere, and the words of Christ, that the dead shall be raised, assembled for judgment, judged, and *then* (if worthy) rewarded with eternal life. He does not mention the judgment in this chapter at all. Shall we say he is giving us a different story here than elsewhere? Of course not. We must harmonize all together, and make room for all aspects, though some are not mentioned here. To fill in the details, we must put the judgment into the place where he elsewhere says it belongs. Note v. 45—

*“The first man Adam was made a living soul:
The last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”*

If we did not have information from elsewhere, and know the whole history of Christ’s birth and growth and life and death, and *then* glorification into a “quickenning spirit,” we would naturally assume from this passage that he was *from the first* a “quickenning spirit,” just as Adam was from the first a “living soul.”

But we do not fall into that mistake, because we pay attention to fuller details given elsewhere. Neither should we fall into the mistake of thinking “raised incorruptible” is an instantaneous process right out of the grave, bypassing the judgment seat of Christ. A brief, *general* statement cannot exclude the involved *particulars* that are supplied elsewhere. This is just simple wisdom and commonsense in anything.

NONE RESPONSIBLE CAN ESCAPE FACING IT

Let us ever remember: “*There IS a ‘Day’ appointed when ‘God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ’*” (Rom. 2:16). None with knowledge can escape it. All will be there

whom God considers to have sufficient understanding of His will to be responsible and answerable and that is a determination only God can make in any individual case.

Nothing then will be hidden. All the “secrets of men” will then be exposed to searching publicity and light—except, of course, what has been truly repented of, struggled against, and forgiven, and in mercy “blotted out.”

It is a continual comfort to those constantly striving to be faithful and righteous and well-pleasing to God. It should be a continual warning to those who have not put, and maintained, themselves in the position of faithfulness and righteousness. Total devotion and service in this so very brief day of probation will mean escape from the cold grave, escape from the terrible last day punishments of the disobedient, and glory and joy with God for ever and ever. Who could possibly be so foolish as to hesitate to make the choice? *Tomorrow may be too late.*

CHRIST'S LAST DAY JUDGMENT SEAT

WHICH ALL MUST FACE – FURTHER EVIDENCE –

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

LESSON 8 — *Christendom Astray,*

Chapter 5, Part 2

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. What principle of God's operation shows the reasonableness and necessity of Christ's open judging and rewarding of the assembled responsible?
2. Why did God not destroy the wicked generation in Egypt without explanation?
3. What case in the New Testament illustrates the principle of calling to account?
4. What sayings of Christ show that the verdict is not known to the recipients until after examination and judgment?
5. When shall we give an account of every idle word which we speak?
6. In what chapter does Daniel say the dead shall rise together, some to eternal life and some to shame?
7. In what chapter does Christ say the dead shall rise together, some to life and some to condemnation?
8. In what chapter does Paul say we must all stand before Christ's judgment seat?
9. What two chapters in Luke, and two chapters in Matthew, give parables representing Christ's return, judging the responsible and rejecting the wicked (nobleman, waiting servants, son's marriage, ten virgins, talents)?
10. In what chapter does Paul say, "Judge nothing before THE TIME" (when Christ will come to bring to light both "darkness" and "praise")?
11. "The dead in Christ shall rise FIRST"—in relation to what others?
12. What does it mean to "have part" in the first resurrection? Can one be raised at the "first resurrection" without attaining a "part" or reward in it?
13. Who are the "rest of the dead" who do not live till the end of the thousand years?
14. What is the reasonable principle of interpretation that precludes making the error of assuming that the dead emerge from the grave incorruptible?
15. When was Christ made a "quickenings spirit"? Would we learn this from 1 Cor. 15 alone?

WHAT THE *BIBLE* REVEALS CONCERNING GOD

LESSON 9 — *Christendom Astray,* Chapter 6, Part 1

“This is Life Eternal, that they might know Thee, the Only True God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John. 17:3).

KNOWLEDGE of God is essential to Sonship to God. Without it, we cannot enter into the divine family. A knowledge of God can be found only where He has placed it: in the Scriptures of Truth. Nature around us tells us something: that all things are arranged with wisdom and understanding, and conform to laws of exceeding accuracy and regularity. It forces upon any reasonable intelligence the fact that *God really exists*—that there must be a great central Source of wisdom and power. But Nature tells us nothing of God’s being, character, purpose, or will concerning man. And blind human speculation, past and present, leads only to the monstrosities of ancient and modern heathen superstition.

How deeply impressed, how thankful, how joyful, we should be, to know that God, Who has created and controls the vast universe in all its splendor and magnificence, has condescended to reveal Himself to men, telling us of His glorious Purpose and His loving requirements. It means present peace, and future eternal joy.

While the knowledge of the Creator is clearly set forth in the *Bible*, and is beautiful in its profound simplicity and reasonableness, unhappily, the mixture of pagan theories with the original Christian teaching has resulted in confusion and darkness throughout Christendom on this subject, as on so many others. Error has so long held sway that the masses thoughtlessly accept the three gods of Christendom (an adopted pagan Greek speculation) as the God of the *Bible*.

The Encyclopedia Britannica, 9th ed., article “Theism” by a Trinitarian, says—“The propositions constitutive of the dogma of the Trinity were only formed through centuries of effort; only elaborated by the aid of conceptions, and formulated in the terms, of Greek and Roman metaphysics. The *evolution* of the doctrine of the Trinity was the most important doctrinal fact in the history of the Church in the first five centuries. The fusion of *theology and philosophy* was the distinctive feature of medieval Christendom.” That is the Trinitarians’ *own* explanation of the Trinity doctrine’s origin, not ours.

Thus popular theology, admittedly derived from Platonic Greek philosophy, teaches that there are three gods or three eternal parts of their god: all equally eternal, equally powerful, equally self-sustaining; and yet all parts of a single personal unity. Christendom's three gods are referred to as The Trinity (an utterly unscriptural expression): "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; each very God, each without a beginning, each omnipotent, each separate from the others, and yet all one." The confusion of this doctrine describes itself as not understandable: "*incomprehensible*" which indeed is true.

Our consideration will therefore be directed to the *Bible's* teaching on the subject of God, His Son, and His Holy Spirit.

Our first consideration, then, is about the Father. Contrary to popular teaching, we find that the Scriptures constantly emphasize the *Unity*, the Oneness, of God, as the most fundamental thing about Him—as if to warn us against theories such as the Trinity: for man has always multiplied his gods. Moses said—

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE Lord" (Deut. 6:4).

And Jesus, when asked what was the FIRST commandment of all, referred to these inspired words of Moses—

"The first of all commandments is, Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is ONE Lord" (Mk. 12:29).

Paul taught exactly the same to the Corinthians—

"There is but ONE God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him—AND one Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 8:6).

Note especially that, first, he says there is One God. And that, besides that One God, there is the Lord Jesus Christ. How could it be more clearly shown that Jesus is not part of that One supreme God? Paul says again—

"There is One God and Father of ALL, Who is ABOVE all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:6).

Jesus himself constantly addresses Him as Father, prays to Him, says he himself can do nothing: can only say and do as the Father instructs him. Again—

"There is One God, AND one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

Note again the clear and careful distinction Paul makes between the One God and MAN Christ Jesus. Christ is the mediator between the One God and man. He is not part of the One God. He is spoken of as something *other* than the One God. He is spoken of, even in his present glorified state, as a man.

Then, too, we find God Himself specifically and repeatedly emphasizing His Oneness through Isaiah, as in the following verses—

"I am the Lord, and there is none else: there is no God beside Me" (Isa. 44:5).

"I am the First and I am the Last, and BESIDE ME THERE IS NO GOD. Is there there a God beside Me? THERE IS NO GOD: I KNOW NOT ANY" (vs. 6-8).

"I am God, and THERE IS NONE ELSE . . . there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done" (Isa. 46:9).

The only passage in our *Bibles* which seems to support the doctrine of the Trinity is 1 John 5:7. *These words have been added by man, obviously with the purpose of supporting the popular doctrine.* This passage has been known to be spurious for over two hundred years (though some still use it, hoping their hearers will not know it is false.) Honest Trinitarians with any knowledge of the facts admit it is spurious. It is not found in any Greek manuscript of the *Bible* before the sixteenth century, and in four since then, none of which have any textual value.

This passage has not been found quoted by any writer earlier than the end of the fifth century. It was never mentioned by anyone on either side all through the fierce Trinitarian controversy that raged throughout the whole fourth century, when Trinitarianism was finally established as the state religion by the sword.

The Scriptures declare that all things are out of the Father (1 Cor. 8:6; 11:16; Rom. 6:36, etc.) This very name, "Father," indicates He is the Source. As the Source, He must be the Center. The Scriptures clearly teach that God has a located central existence (again in opposition to human religious philosophy), though He is everywhere present by His Spirit that fills heaven and earth. Paul says—

"God dwells in light which no man can approach unto" (1 Tim. 6:16).

If God dwells in *unapproachable* light, He must have a localized existence in some specific place, in a different and more personal sense than His universal presence being manifested everywhere (including here where men are) by His Spirit.

Thus Solomon says—

"God is *IN HEAVEN*, and thou *UPON EARTH*: therefore let thy words be few" (Ecc. 5:2).

Christ told his disciples to pray—

"Our Father which art *IN HEAVEN*" (Matt. 6:9).

David in the Psalms makes the same distinction of location, as—

"He hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary: *FROM HEAVEN* did the Lord behold the earth" (Psa. 102:19).

“The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s; but the earth hath He given to the children of men” (Psa. 117:16).

Repeatedly Solomon in prayer illustrates this truth in 1 Kings. 8—“Hear Thou in heaven, *THY DWELLING PLACE.*”

When Jesus rose from the dead, it is recorded that (Mk. 16:19)—

“He was received up INTO HEAVEN, and sat on the RIGHT HAND OF GOD.”

These statements have meaning, and can be understood, only on the principle that God has a personal manifested existence in the heavens. It is impossible to fairly evade the testimony of these verses that God is a Person Who exists in the “Heaven of heavens” as He exists nowhere else.

Popular religious teaching concerning God is that He is merely a principle or energy diffused throughout the universe, without bodily existence, without local concentration, “without body and without parts,” as their creed goes. But this is human philosophy as to what they think *ought* to be, not Scripture. The verses given indicate the direct *opposite* of this, taken in their simple, natural sense. And there are other evidences of the bodily existence of the Creator, as we shall see.

God revealed Himself personally to Moses as He has to no other human being except the Lord Jesus. In response to Moses’ pleading to see His glory, He said—

“Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock. And it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by. And I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts, but My face shall not be seen” (Ex. 33:20-23).

We further read the following concerning God’s manifestation to Moses—

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Ye have seen that I have talked with you FROM HEAVEN” (Ex. 20:22).

“With Moses will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches: and the SIMILITUDE OF THE LORD shall he behold” (Num. 12:8). (The word “similitude” here refers to a visual appearance).

“And the Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend” (Ex. 23:11).

“And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew FACE TO FACE” (Deut. 34:10).

While these references apply to an angelic manifestation of God, that which is thereby manifested is higher and greater than the manifestation. They are meaningless as “manifestation,” except as they bear testimony to the *reality*

and existence of that which was being manifested. The power and the pre-eminence of the Creator are often declared—

“He inhabiteth eternity” (Isa. 57:15).

“He is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29).

“From everlasting to everlasting” (Psa. 90:2).

“He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity (Hab. 1:13).

“He is the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth; Who fainteth not, neither is weary; and there is no searching of His understanding” (Isa. 40:28).

“All nations before Him are as nothing” (Isa. 40:17).

God alone has underived and self-sustaining existence. All other life, including that of the glorified Jesus, is but a part of His power, issuing as a stream from the one Great Fountain Head. Thus we read of Him—

“*King of kings, and Lord of lords, Who only hath immortality*” (1 Tim. 6:15).

“*IN HIM we live and move and have our being*” (Acts 17:28).

“*OUT OF HIM, and through Him, and to Him, are all things*” (Rom. 11:36).

“*There is but One God, the Father, OUT OF WHOM are all things*” (1 Cor. 8:6).

“*Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they (all creatures) are created . . . Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust*” (Psa. 104:30, 29).

Popular theology teaches that God made all things out of *nothing*. The *Bible* teaches that all things are made out of God Himself: His Spirit-power, as the passages above declare. God’s Spirit-power, issuing forth from Him in radiant effulgence, under the direction of His will, has developed all things in the material Creation which we behold.

The more deeply an analysis is made of the universe—the material objects of our daily existence and the distant galaxies—the closer man comes to the realization that all things are basically the same, a common “substance”: complex organization in a myriad forms of simple power-concretions; their variety arising from different arrangements of their smallest particles, which particles are in constant, speed-of-light motion in relation to each other*.

**Christendom Astray* was written over one hundred years ago. Natural man has crept forward a little in knowledge since that time.

It is now recognized that all “material” things are concretions, in a myriad of different forms, of one original common Power. An atom of any particular element (according to man’s present state of knowledge) is seen as simply a certain arrangement of common building blocks that men term protons, neutrons, electrons, etc., which in their essence are

power charges. The theoretical picture is constantly being refined as new facts emerge. And the deeper they dig, the more complex and infinite, and yet more basically unified and harmonious, the marvelous relations of Creation and Existence are seen to be. And yet with all this, they can still believe, or slavishly profess to believe, that all came out of an original nothing; and that all the infinite and endless variety of inter-balanced intricacies just “happened” without power, plan or purpose. How unscientific can supposed “science” be!

Presumptuous man, in breaking the atom and loosing the infinite nuclear power that is bound up in every speck of dust, is tampering with the forces of the universe, and is approaching that limit unto which the Creator will permit him to go before His wrath breaks forth upon him.

The Spirit-power of God is the basis of all creation and existence; the very essence and first cause of everything. In this way, God is always present (omnipresent). He is, therefore, aware of all that happens in any part of the universe (omniscient), knowing thereby our thoughts and desires and inclinations at all times.

In a word, He is All-knowing and All-powerful. To Him then belongs all our worship, all our service, all our thanksgiving; Who has mercifully revealed Himself so fully and gloriously to those who desire to know and be with Him for ever. What a wonderful blessing! What a tremendous responsibility!

WHAT THE *BIBLE* REVEALS CONCERNING GOD

LESSON 9 — *Christendom Astray,* Chapter 6, Part 1

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THE PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. Whom must we know to obtain eternal life?
2. Is a verbal confession of God and Jesus enough to assure salvation?
3. Where alone can we find the knowledge of God and of Jesus?
4. What has caused the knowledge of God to become confused in men's minds?
5. What is the popular church-heathen doctrine about three gods called?
6. Give three scriptural statements which prove that there is only One God, and that the church doctrine of three gods is false.
7. Has God a localized existence, though He is everywhere present? Give two proofs to support your answer.
8. Where is the throne of God? Who is at His right hand there?
9. Does God have a bodily existence? Give scriptural proofs to support.
10. In what way has God revealed Himself to mankind?
11. In what way do all parts of Creation receive their energy?
12. From what have all things been created?
13. How can God be everywhere, and know all things, if He dwells in heaven?
14. What effect should a knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ have on our lives?

THE *BIBLE*'S TEACHING CONCERNING THE SPIRIT OF GOD

LESSON 10 – *Christendom Astray,* Chapter 6, Part 2

“Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created; and Thou renewest the face of the earth” (Psa. 104:30).

The Spirit of God is very frequently mentioned throughout the *Bible*, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of Revelation. It is clear we must have true views concerning it if we are to understand the *Bible*'s message to us.

Jesus said, “God is a Spirit” (Jn.4:24)—more correctly, “God is Spirit.” This is His fundamental nature: perfect, unchangeable, indestructible existence.

But in describing God's workings, the Scriptures speak of “the Spirit” as that by which God works and manifests Himself. It speaks of it as “God's Spirit”, “Thy Spirit,” “the Spirit of the Lord,” etc., as Neh. 9:30—

“Thou testifiedst against them (our fathers) by Thy Spirit IN Thy prophets.”

GOD AND HIS SPIRIT ARE ONE — CREATION AND INSPIRATION

God and His Spirit are one, like the sun and its light, a fire and its heat, a magnet and its power. God, as we have seen, has a localized dwelling: He dwells “in heaven,” “in unapproachable light.” By His Spirit He is everywhere present—

“Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence?” (Psa. 139:7).

The Spirit is the agency of God's working. It was very active in the work of Creation, at the very beginning—

“The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2).

“By His Spirit He hath garnished (made beautiful) the heavens” (Job 26:13).

“Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit: they (all creatures) are created” (Psa. 104:30).

Very often throughout the *Bible* we read that the “*Spirit of the Lord* came upon the prophets,” and wonderful works were thereby accomplished. It was in this manner that all prophecies came to be uttered and the whole of Scripture written—

“I am full of power (says Micah), BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD” (3:8).

Peter declares—

“Holy men of old spake as they were moved BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.”

THE SPIRIT AND ELECTRICITY

If the Spirit is the basis of all Creation, of all “material” things, then should we not find some natural evidence of this in all man’s delving? Actually man knows very little about the world and the universe, though his pretensions are so great. But he has stumbled on to some facts, and the discoveries concerning electricity in modern times constitute a tremendous confirmation of the divinity of the Word. Natural man, until recently, has always thought that material substances and energy were two entirely separate things, and that the various material substances themselves were immutably different from each other.

The *Bible* has always taught that all things are made by and out of the force, energy, power or “Spirit” of God. Man has now discovered that electricity—electrical power—is that from which all material things are made: that all “material” things are simply intensely concentrated energy in various arrangements and patterns. Electricity is not the Spirit itself: electricity has limits, the Spirit has not.

The Spirit of God is of infinite power. It created the universe, and set the myriads of galaxies in motion. It could freeze the mightiest stellar explosion at the peak of its force. It could stop and reverse a nuclear blast, and in a moment restore everything as it was before the blast. It is infinitely greater than “electricity” as we know it. Man could never use it or control it: it would destroy him to approach it. But the picture of Creation has been shown to be *exactly* as the *Bible* has said, as to basis of pure power, and the very *opposite* of what man has always imagined.

“FREE” SPIRIT AND “HOLY” SPIRIT

Scriptural references to the working of the Spirit of God fall into two aspects or modes of operation (though of course in essence they are one)—

Spirit in general at the root of everything, operating in the domain of fixed law: the movements of the spheres, the chemical activities of the elements, the life cycle of plants and living creatures.

Holy Spirit: God’s power specifically operating, over-riding natural laws—in words of wisdom or works of power.

Only a few among mankind have experienced the latter, at certain crisis periods in the working out of the Divine Plan. It is given to none today, though there are multitudes of pretenders (many doubtless sincerely self-deceived) who have no “spirit” but animal mesmerism and excited feelings—utterly unrelated to the true and holy operation of the Holy Spirit.

POSSESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The apostles were made possessors of the Spirit of God on the day of Pentecost. When it came upon them, the house they were in was greatly shaken. By it they were enabled to perform acts above natural laws. They could immediately speak in foreign tongues which they had never learned. The hearers said—

“Are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born? . . . We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:7-11).

The Spirit opened the understanding of the apostles to things they did not know naturally, as Jesus had promised them (Jn. 16:13)—

“When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he shall show you things to come.”

By the Spirit, the apostles could cure diseases, heal the sick, even raise the dead. Peter’s shadow had the power to cure (Acts 5:15). Jesus had this same power without measure. A diseased woman came secretly in a crowd of people and touched his garment, and was instantly healed. Jesus immediately realized that the Spirit of God had issued from him and healed the woman (Lk. 8:43-46).

Again (Matt. 14:36)—

“As many as touched his garments were made perfectly whole.”

LAYING THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIANITY—THE SPIRIT WITNESS

This power of the Spirit in the hands of the apostles was necessary to the accomplishment of the great work they had to do to witness to the resurrection of Jesus, and establish the ecclesial foundation, and complete the Scriptures.

While the disciples were *natural* witnesses for the resurrection, upon which the Faith was to be built, their words

would have seemed as the idle tales of men out of their minds, if God had not assisted them by the working of miracles by their hands. It was God's purpose at that time that their work should have a worldwide effect upon society—

"They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming their words with signs following" (Mk. 16:20).

"The Great Salvation . . . first spoken by the Lord . . . was confirmed to us by them that heard him: God also bearing them witness with signs, wonders, divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Heb. 2:4).

Peter declared in his defense before the Jewish Council (Acts 5:30-32)—

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree . . . and we are His witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit."

THE APOSTLES COULD CONFER IT ON OTHERS

The original apostles (including Paul—2 Tim. 1:6) were given the power of imparting the Spirit to others. It was their duty to develop and organize the Christian community, and establish it on a sound basis. There is no evidence of any others ever having the power to pass the Spirit on. This distinction is clear in the incident of Philip at Samaria (Acts 8). Philip was one of the seven helpers chosen as recorded in Acts 6, who had received the Holy Spirit from the apostles.

When he had preached to those in Samaria, and they had accepted the truth of the words he spoke, we do not find that he could pass the Holy Spirit on to them. Rather we find the apostles Peter and John sent from Jerusalem to do this—

"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, THEY SENT to them PETER AND JOHN; who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus). THEN LAID THEY THEIR HANDS ON THEM, AND THEY RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT" (Acts 8:14-15).

There is NO record in Scripture of the Holy Spirit being transmitted from the second person to another person. The gift of the Holy Spirit, as we have seen, was to establish the Word of God in the foundation preaching of the apostles until the Christian community was a living, organized entity well established, and the Scriptures were completed to guide it.

Any pretension on the part of a wide and conflicting variety of people today (all ignorant of the Gospel of the Kingdom) to possession of the Holy Spirit is completely unscriptural. If any

have the Spirit, they will be able to give uncontrovertible *proof*. And not just supposed “cures” based on excitement, emotion, mass hysteria and, often, downright deception. And they will have the TRUTH—

“To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not ACCORDING TO THIS WORD (the Word of God), it is because there is NO LIGHT IN THEM” (Isa. 8:20).

If they do not have the *Truth*, they most certainly do not have the *Spirit*. Many “wonderful” things can be done by strong personalities and animal magnetism. Many conflicting groups today claim to have the “Spirit.” They cannot all have it, for they are in conflict with one another, and the Spirit is unity and truth. So it is incumbent on any who make any such claims to give positive *proofs*, like the apostles. Without this, such claims should not be given a moment’s consideration.

It will be noticed that we have throughout changed the word “ghost” (as it appears in the AV) to “spirit” In the New Testament the original word is *pneuma*, and should in all cases be rendered “spirit.” “Ghost” is an obsolete Saxon term the churches use to conceal and mystify the idea expressed by the simple Greek word *pneuma* and Hebrew *ruach*—both meaning “breath, wind or spirit.”

NOT A PERSON BUT THE POWER OF GOD

A simple reading of the way “Spirit” is used throughout the *Bible* shows it to be not a co-equal Person of a supposed “Trinity” (an idea foreign to Scripture), but that limitless power and energy issuing forth from God by which He is everywhere present, and by which He does all things.

Personification is frequently used in the Scriptures, and so naturally we find some expressions concerning the Spirit which could be taken to indicate actual personality, as is true of wisdom, mammon, sin, etc. Paul personifies Sin—

“Let not Sin reign . . . Sin shall not have dominion . . . HIS servants ye are to WHOM ye obey, whether SIN unto death . . . Ye were servants of Sin . . . Sin deceived me and slew me . . . That Sin might become an exceeding great Sinner (literal translation)” (Rom. 6:12, 14, 16, 20; 7:13).

The power of God is personified in like manner, as the doer of His will: it is Himself in extension. But the Spirit never appears as an actual person in any scriptural record. God has used His Spirit through the angels, through men, through Christ Jesus. But manifestations of the Spirit have never been in human form. When it came upon Christ, it was in the form of a dove (Jn. 1:32). On Pentecost, it was as cloven tongues of fire (Acts 2:3). This would be a very strange way to manifest a

person, but it is a very fitting way to manifest the power of God in its working.

PERSONIFICATION—THE USE OF “HE” AND “IT”

The following is an interesting comparison as to translations of John 14:16, 17—

AV: *“The Father shall give you another Comforter (parakleetos: masc.) that HE may abide with you . . . even the Spirit of Truth WHOM the world cannot receive, because it seeth HIM not, neither knoweth HIM: but ye know HIM, for HE* dwelleth with you.”*

DIAGLOTT: *“The Father shall give you another Helper, that HE may be with you . . . the Spirit of Truth WHICH the world cannot receive, because it beholds IT not, nor knows IT: but you know IT, because IT* abides with you.”*

NESTLE: *“The Father will give you another Comforter, that HE may be with you . . . the Spirit of Truth WHICH the world cannot receive, because it beholds IT not, nor knows: ye know IT, because HE* remains with you.”*

This is instructive. All three have “he” for the first pronoun, because the word *parakleetos* is grammatically masculine in Greek. But, as is clear from the correct rendering in Diaglott and Nestle, the AV falsely and unjustifiably translates the next four pronouns “whom, he, he, he.” The original is specifically “which” and “it”—*neuter*.

The last (asterisked) pronoun can be either “he” or “it” and the translators have consequently rendered according to their own judgment and beliefs. This is very often the case where “he” (“him”) or “it” occur in AV, as when it is the implied but unwritten subject of a verb, or in some cases (not nominative) of *autos* (“him” “it”) or *ekeinos* (“that one”). In these cases it can be translated “he” (“him”) or “it,” optionally.

Sometimes the Scriptures use “it” and sometimes “he” for the Holy Spirit. This is perfectly understandable of the occasional personification of something that is not inherently personal, but it is incomprehensible in speaking of an actual person—especially of a supposed *divine* Person: a Person of the Trinity! Would we *ever* call God “it”? It is unthinkable. We speak of a ship or a country as “she” or “it” interchangeably, but we never so speak of a woman.

Jesus said, and it a very important, foundation statement of Scripture—

“This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, AND Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (Jn. 17:3).

If the Holy Spirit were the third co-equal Person of a Triune Godhead, it would be incomprehensible for it to be omitted from

this statement. Obviously the Holy Spirit is *not* a person in a Trinity. The *Bible* never mentions such a thing. Again—

“*There is but ONE God, the Father. . . AND one Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Cor.8:6).

Here again, inexplicably, according to the Trinity theory, no mention of the just-as-important, co-equal third Person. And even more explicitly to Timothy—

“There is ONE God, AND one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).

—but still no mention of that mysterious third Person who certainly would not be left out of these enumerations, if he existed. Consider the parallelism of the announcement to Mary—

“The *HOLY SPIRIT* shall come upon thee, and the *POWER OF THE HIGHEST* shall overshadow thee” (Lk. 1:35).

This is the consistent picture of Scripture: the Holy Spirit is God’s power.

THE *BIBLE'S* TEACHING
CONCERNING THE SPIRIT OF GOD
LESSON 10 – *Christendom Astray,*
Chapter 6, Part 2

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THE PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. Are God and His Spirit separate and distinct?
2. Give illustrations of the use of the Spirit of God in Creation.
3. By what means did the *Bible* come to be written?
4. Define the two aspects or manifestations of the Spirit of God.
5. Is the Spirit of God as “Holy Spirit” under the power of any man today?
6. In what way was the Spirit of God used by the apostles in the first century?
7. Why was the Spirit of God given to the apostles?
8. Could the apostles pass the Holy Spirit on to other people?
9. Could the second person to receive the Holy Spirit pass it on to others?
10. Is the Holy Spirit a separate and distinct person?
11. Has the Spirit of God ever appeared as a person in the *Bible*?
12. Mention two forms or shapes in which the Spirit of God has appeared.

WHAT THE *BIBLE* REVEALS CONCERNING THE ANGELS

LESSON 11 — *Christendom Astray*, Chapter 6, Part 3

“If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord”
(Heb. 2:2, 3).

ANGELS are prominent in both the Old and New Testaments. They are the messengers of God, as the name implies (Heb.: *malak*; Gr.: *angellos*—both words also being translated “messenger” and applied to ordinary men).

We must bear in mind that the basic Divine purpose is self-manifestation: the manifestation of God in a glorified multitude of perfected, purified and immortal beings. Man was made in the beginning in the physical image, or form, of God; and it is God’s purpose to perfect that image or likeness in every respect—mental, moral, spiritual, corporeal, in character and in substance—in the host of the Redeemed so that each will be a perfect manifestation of God, and will bear God’s Name (Rev. 3:12).

The angels—perfect, holy, immortal beings—are the medium of Divine manifestation throughout the Old Testament (and also in the New, though there the supreme manifestation of God among men is Jesus Christ). The angels often speak as God and bear the Name of God.

John said, “No man hath seen God at anytime” (Jn. 1:18). Yet Jacob says, “I have seen God (*Elohim*) face to face” (Gen. 32:30). The explanation of this apparent contradiction introduces the subject of the angels, those glorious beings through whom God has from the beginning manifested Himself and given His messages and commands to man. There are other places where God is said to have been seen. The explanation lies partly in the subject of God-manifestation, and partly in being aware of the loose and inaccurate translations of the names of God in the AV.

God uses three names for Himself in the Old Testament: 1) El, Eloah and Elohim; 2) Shaddai; and 3) Yahweh. There is also the title Adon or Adonai: “Lord”.

El (or Ail), Eloah and Elohim mean power or Powerful One(s). El and Eloah are singular, Elohim is plural in form (though

always used with singular adjectives and verbs, except where speaking of 1) false “elohim” or gods or 2) the rulers of Israel.) All three words are used occasionally of false “gods,” but overwhelmingly of the One True God and His manifestations. “El” is a few times translated “power” (as Neh. 5:5). Elohim is by far the most common of the three (about two thousand five hundred times); El about two hundred one times; Eloah about fifty times. In the OT, where the word “God” (not “GOD”) occurs in the AV, the original is almost invariably El, Eloah, or Elohim.

“Elohim” is used of angels, and of mortal men who represent God and stand in relation to Him. In Heb. 1:6, Paul quotes a statement from Psa. 97:7, in which the term “Elohim” occurs, rendered in AV, “Worship him, all ye gods.” Paul gives it as, “Let all the angels of God worship him.” Here, to Paul’s mind, “Elohim” represented angels.

Psa. 82:1, 6, says, “God judgeth among the gods . . . I have said, Ye are gods.” In Jn. 10:34-36, Jesus calls the Jews’ attention to this application of the term “god” (*elohim*) to Israel (those “to whom the Word of God came”) in justification of his own claim to be the Son of God, and in disproof of their charges of blasphemy.

Shaddai occurs about fifty times (mostly in Job, but also in eight other books) and is always translated “Almighty.” It is applied only to God. It carries the idea, with power, also of over-awing, totally controlling, productive of reverence and fear.

Yahweh is the personal Name of God, meaning “He Who Will Be.” It is the “Memorial Name”—the Name of Purpose: the Purpose of manifestation in a glorious multitude. It occurs about seven thousand times. It is translated “LORD” (all capitals) except in translating the expression *Adonai Yahweh*, which is rendered “Lord GOD” (the “GOD” in capitals for *Yahweh*. Thus “LORD” or “GOD” in capitals indicates *Yahweh* in the original. *Yahweh Elohim* (a very frequent combination rendered “LORD God”) means “He Who Will Be Mighty Ones.”

Exodus 3 records that the “angel of *Yahweh*” appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and said, “I am the God (*Elohim*) of Abraham, etc., and throughout the conversation we frequently find “*Yahweh* said” and “*Elohim* said”—the angel speaking just as if he were God Himself. This is God-manifestation, which finds its supreme fulfilment in Christ, who said the words he spoke were God’s words, and the works were God’s works, and that God was “in him” (Jn. 14:10). And so we read—

“*God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself*” (2 Cor. 5:19).

“*God was manifest in the flesh*” (1 Tim. 3:16).

“*He that hath seen me (said Jesus) hath seen the Father*” (Jn. 14:9).

And so we see how men can “see God,” and yet “No man hath seen God at any time.” Three angels came to Abraham (Gen. 18), and he at first mistook them for ordinary men. They are called “men” and “angels” interchangeably in the narrative. Two of them went on to Sodom. The third stayed with Abraham for a while, and throughout their conversation he is uniformly called “*Yahweh*,” and at the end it says “*Yahweh* went his way.” Here again is an angel representing and manifesting God, and speaking directly as God in God’s Name.

An “angel of *Elohim*” spoke to Jacob, and said, “I am the God (*Elohim*) of Bethel” (Gen. 31:11-13). A “man” wrestled with Jacob (Gen. 32:24), called elsewhere an “angel” (Hos. 12:4). Of him, Jacob said (Gen. 32:30), “I have seen God (*Elohim*) face to face.”

The angel who appeared to Gideon is spoken of as “*Yahweh*” (Jdgs. 6:14, 16, 23).

An angel appeared to Manoah, father of Samson, and he too, like Abraham and Lot, at first mistook him for a man. Later, when he realized it was an angel, said, “We shall surely die, because we have seen God (*Elohim*)” Judges 13:21. He knew it was not God Himself, for we are told in the previous verse, “Manoah knew he was an angel of the Lord (*Yahweh*).” But he knew that God was manifested in the angel, so he said he had seen God.

In Heb. 2:2, the Law of Moses is described as “the word spoken by *angels*,” though in the record Moses gives, it appears that God is giving it directly. Paul is making comparison between the means of manifestation used: the angelic to Israel, and the higher and more intimate manifestation through Christ in New Testament times.

The angels are not only messengers, but they are the guiders and protectors of God’s people; they control the courses of nations, and generally direct and supervise the events of the world, in the development of God’s purpose.

“The angel of the Lord encampeth around them that fear Him” (Psa. 43:7).

“He shall give His angels charge concerning thee: they shall bear thee up” (Psa. 91:11-12).

“They are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14).

Abraham naturally and clearly recognized and depended upon angelic care and supervision of his affairs, and the record proves him to be correct—

*“The Lord (*Yahweh*) shall send His angel before thee”* (Gen. 24:7).

Likewise Jacob, at his life’s end—

“The angel which redeemed me from all evil” (Gen. 48:16).

Angels cared for Elijah; destroyed the army of Assyria; ministered unto Christ; released Peter from prison; smote Herod with a fatal disease; appeared at times to Paul; invisibly led the armies of Israel (1 Kgs. 19:5; 2 Kgs. 19; Lk. 22; Acts 12, 27; Josh. 5).

Angels excel in strength. They are holy, pure, perfectly doing the will of God, in perfect, eternal harmony with the mind of God. The dreadful orthodox theory (in connection with their devil theory) that the holy angels of God could sin and fall from grace and become evil demons is a travesty inherited from dark paganism. It fits the pagan gods of Greece and Rome perfectly, from which it is derived, but not the immortal angels of God.

Immortality and sin are utterly incompatible. The orthodox theory gives us no assurance of eternal safety and joy. If holy, immortal angels can sin and fall, there is no assurance of God's eternal promise. What a debased conception of God's dwelling place, that it could be at any time the scene of rebellion and civil war! How low has man's religion sunk to contemplate such a possibility! No, the angels are totally, eternally, immutably in perfect harmony with God.

The angels are deeply interested spectators of God's works. They shouted and sang with joy at the creation (Job 38:7), and they "desire to look into" the glories that God has in store for the future of mankind (1 Pet. 1:12). Angels rejoice over every repentant sinner (Lk. 15:10).

They are spoken of as ten thousand times ten thousand, which would be one hundred million, the actual number could hardly with appropriateness be less than the typical figure used for them. There is distinction of rank, for we read of the "archangel." We are given the names of two angels: Michael (Dan. 10:13, 21; Jdgs. 9), and Gabriel (Dan. 8:16; Lk. 1:19, 21). It was the latter who appeared to Daniel, Zacharias and Mary.

The orthodox picture of angels as baby cherubs with wings is another dark relic of benighted paganism, utterly devoid of scriptural support. As we have seen, the angels uniformly appear as strong, mature, intelligent creatures, in form exactly like men, as naturally they would be, for all in God's family are created in His likeness. The promise is that the Redeemed will be equal to them (Lk. 20:36).

The orthodox representation of angels with wings is due to confusing angels with the cherubim and seraphim. These are purely symbolic figures, representative of the glorious host of the Redeemed—those taken from among men who in the Age to Come will manifest and glorify God in the perfection of immortal splendor. This identity is clear when the whole representation of them throughout Scripture is studied, and from the fact that in Rev. 5:9 the four Living Creatures (elsewhere called

Cherubim) sing to the Lamb (Christ) *“Thou hast redeemed us* to God by thy blood out of every kindred.”*

*Modernists, apparently to suit a theory, omit “us” and gratuitously insert “men” after “blood” though they admit that “us” is far better attested, and that the textual evidence for omitting it is “slight”—and for adding “men,” non-existent.

**WHAT THE *BIBLE* REVEALS
CONCERNING THE ANGELS
LESSON 11 — *Christendom Astray*,
Chapter 6, Part 3**

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. In what way did God speak to people in Old Testament times?
2. Did God speak directly to men?
3. How can we understand John saying “No man hath seen God” yet others said they had “seen God face to face”?
4. What are the three Hebrew names given for God, and what do they mean?
5. What is the meaning of “Yahweh Elohim” and what does it signify?
6. What is “angel” in Hebrew and Greek, and what is the meaning?
7. Give an example of the term “elohim” being applied to men.
8. What description does the *Bible* provide of angels?
9. Is there any scriptural justification for showing them as babies, and with wings?
10. Is it possible to mistake angels for men? Give three instances.
11. Have angels always appeared as glorious and bright in appearance?
12. What similarity will the righteous in the Age to Come have to the angels?
13. Is it possible for angels to sin? What would this mean as to the security and assurance of the permanence of our salvation? From where do the orthodox churches get these debased ideas?
14. Which two angels are named? Which appeared to Daniel and Mary?
15. On what principle can angels speak just as if they were God Himself?
16. Who was the supreme manifestation of God, through whom God spoke?

THE NATURE AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

LESSON 12—*Christendom Astray,* Chapter 6, Part 4

“Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise partook of the same” (Heb. 2:14).

There are two extremes of belief in the world of “Christendom” concerning Jesus. One places him equal in all respects to the Father from all eternity. The other holds him to have been a mere man, simply a good and godly example. The Truth of the Scriptures lies between these two extremes of error. The theory of the “Trinity,” placing Jesus on an eternal parity with God, is opposed to the whole tenor of Scripture, illustrated by the following quotations, which show the Son completely separate from, and dependent upon, the FATHER—

“I (Jesus) can of mine own self do nothing. As I hear I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek NOT MINE OWN WILL, but the will of the Father Who sent me” (Jn. 5:30).

If Jesus were (as according to the Trinity) an integral part of the “One God.” There could not possibly be two different wills—his and the Father’s. See Matt. 26:39.

“My doctrine is NOT MINE, but HIS that SENT me” (Jn. 7:16).

“This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the ONLY true God, AND Jesus Christ, whom THOU hast SENT” (Jn. 17:3).

“There is but ONE God, the Father AND one Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 8:6).

“There is ONE God, AND one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).

Note that this last quotation, specifically distinguishing Jesus from the “One God” and calling him a “MAN” was written long after Jesus arose and was glorified.

The Father is eternal and undervied. The Son is a manifestation of the Father *in a man* begotten by the Spirit’s operation upon Mary, born a babe and growing up and developing and learning as all other men. The Holy Spirit is the concentration of God’s power, His “free spirit” that which fills heaven and earth. “Holy” means separated for a special divine use. God is supreme above all, even above Christ—

“The Head of Christ is God” (1 Cor. 11:3).

“Then (eternally) shall the Son be SUBJECT UNTO HIM (the Father) Who put all things under him, that God may be ALL IN ALL” (1 Cor. 15:28).

The man Christ Jesus subject to God, that God may be over all: that is the final picture that we are given in the Scriptures. Again, God stately knows all things (Acts 15:18). Jesus, in the days of his mortal flesh, *did not know* the time of his return to earth in glory, though he says that *the One true God* knew it—

“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, NEITHER THE SON, BUT THE FATHER” (Mk. 13:32).

This is fatal to the Trinity theory. They try to evade its force by inventing two different Christs: one who is God and knows all things, and at the *very same time* does not know some things that the other does! This is an absurdity of which the Scriptures are totally ignorant and innocent.

* * *

The “Unitarian” theory—the other extreme to the “Trinity” theory—is that Joseph was the actual father of Jesus. But Joseph himself indicated that he was not Jesus’ father. He intended to put away Mary, to whom he was betrothed, when she was “found with child,” but was otherwise directed by the angel—

“Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 1:20).

Mary had previously been shown that God was to be the Father of Jesus—

“The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Lk. 1:35).

Unitarians are even less reasonable than Trinitarians. While Trinitarians ignore passages, or try to explain them away, the Unitarians deny altogether the authenticity of any passages that conflict with their theory. Because of the present faithless attitude in the churches toward the *Bible* as the infallibly inspired Word of God, this cavalier method of blue-penciling and re-writing Scripture is growing.

The Truth lies between the Trinitarian and Unitarian errors. The Truth is that Christ was a special man, begotten directly in Mary by God through the power of the Holy Spirit; especially strengthened by God for a special purpose—a man in whom God dwelt and manifested Himself to mankind—a perfect man who perfectly obeyed, and perfectly overcame the “motions of Sin”, “Sin in the flesh” “the *diabolos* that has the power of death”.

This was a work that no mere, unaided, will-of-the-flesh-born man could accomplish. Christ's perfect life-and-death sacrificial work was God's work in him—to which he perfectly submitted, even unto a horrible death, totally emptying himself of his own will, never for a moment ever allowing the flesh to have its way.

The declared purpose of God in bringing Jesus into the world was for the removal of sin from the world—

“Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world” (Jn.1:29).

And how was this accomplished?—

“He taketh away sin BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF” (Heb. 9:26).

Here is the Divine key to the meaning and purpose and efficacy of his death—he PUT AWAY sin BY *sacrificing himself*. He totally and perfectly during his entire life resisted, overcame, subdued, conquered, immobilized the “Sin-in-the flesh”, “motions of sin”, “law of Sin in the members” he shared with all mankind, shared with the entire Adamic race of which he was a part and which he himself embodied as the One True Representative Man—the Perfect, Ideal Man.

And then, in his voluntary death, lovingly submitting to the Father's will, he nailed that Sin-defiled, Sin-cursed flesh, that “Body of Sin”, to the tree—in total condemnation and repudiation of Sin's Flesh, and in total justification and glorification of God's righteousness and holiness in requiring the moral and physical crucifying of that flesh as the only narrow doorway—through the Death that has been brought on the race by Sin—into Eternal Life beyond, free from Sin and Death.

He, *in himself*, and first *for himself* (but *for the sake* of his brethren)—by offering the divinely-required cleansing sacrifice for the race—broke the iron grip of Sin upon the race, shattered the gates of Death, and rose to triumphant sin-free immortality—no longer oppressed by the motions of Sin's flesh.

And, in God's mercy and love, all who repudiate themselves and become entirely and wholly *one with him*, and faithfully *remain so unto death*, share in his victory, his sacrifice-bought redemption and cleansing, his resurrection, and his glorious life for evermore.

Jesus said—*“I lay down my life for my sheep”* (Jn. 10:15).

Paul said—*“Jesus Christ hath ABOLISHED DEATH, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel”* (2 Tim. 1:10).

And Peter—*“There is NO OTHER NAME whereby we can be saved”* (Acts 4:12).

—there is absolutely *no* possibility of life outside of Christ—

“He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath NOT life” (1 Jn. 5:12).

“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man . . . ye have NO LIFE in you” (Jn. 6:53).

“No man cometh unto the Father, BUT BY ME” (Jn. 14:6).

Salvation is directly connected with the first appearing of Jesus. And this is not just a “moral example” which Jesus set for all men to follow, but *on the basis of his once-for-all actions and accomplishments in relation to Sin and the Sin-nature—“Sin-in-the-flesh” “the law of Sin in the members” by the course of his life and death, and the resurrection and glorification that followed.*

The very use of the word “Son” as applied to Jesus—so frequent and so strongly emphasized—indicates that his existence was obtained from somewhere, and that he was not from eternity. The expression “Son of God” indicates the source of his life and existence. God declared to him prophetically—

“Thou art My Son: THIS DAY have I begotten thee” (Psa. 2:7).

Here is a *specific beginning*. Though Jesus now has inherent, endless life, it has been given to him by God—

“As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He GIVEN THE SON to have life in himself” (Jn. 5:26).

It was GIVEN to him—so clearly there was a time he did not have it.

Jesus was not born of the will of the flesh, but directly of the will and operation of God. Mary gave birth to Jesus through the begetting of the Holy Spirit. This is how he was “Son of God”, as we read in Lk. 1: 35—

“The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

But though he was Son of God by begetting, he was flesh and blood of Adam’s race—

“Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same . . . He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren” (Heb. 2:14-17).

“He was MADE SIN (of the Sin-nature) for us, who knew no sin” (2 Cor. 6:21).

In *character and action* he was absolutely sinless: *therefore this could only apply to his mortal, sin-cursed constitution, which from Mary was the Sin-nature of Adam. Therefore Paul could say of Jesus—*

“God sent His Son in the LIKENESS (identicalness) OF SINFUL FLESH” (Rom. 8:3).

“He was sent forth MADE OF A WOMAN” (Gal. 4:4).

“Of the seed of David, ACCORDING TO THE FLESH” (Rom. 1:3).

Christ’s great work and task was to deliver mankind from sin by a perfect, total victory over the Sin-nature: a holy, sacrificial life culminating in a divinely ordained sacrificial death to purge and cleanse that nature he bore in common with all, and which made him one with us all. This is God’s beautiful provision whereby he, *as one of us—our Representative and embodiment*—achieves in himself for the whole race the victory over, and cleansing from, Sin: so that we—totally obliterated personally, and totally absorbed into him—can in God’s wisdom, mercy and love, share that eternal, life-giving victory over Sin.

If we lose this concept, so clearly and repeatedly brought out and emphasized by our pioneers as the key to the Truth, we are on our way back to the Apostacy.

Jesus is repeatedly and consistently referred to as a “man”—

“A MAN approved of God . . . by miracles which GOD DID BY HIM” (Acts 2:22).

“The MAN Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5)—*there distinguished from the “One God.”*

“God will judge the world in righteousness by that MAN HE hath ordained” (Acts 17:30).

Note that all these statements wherein he is called a “man” were made *after* his resurrection, glorification and ascension to heaven. He is always called a man even in his present condition and position—NEVER God: though, in answering the Jews who objected to him calling himself the “Son of God” he pointed out to them that ALL who are related to God and who in any way represent Him are given the name “god” (Heb: *elohim*, Mighty Ones) in a derived sense—

“Is it not written in your Law, ‘I (God) said, Ye are GODS’? If He called them ‘gods’ unto whom the Word of God came . . . ” (Jn. 10:34-35).

And he promises to bestow the Name of God upon all who are faithful—

“Him that overcometh . . . I will write upon him the Name of my God” (Rev. 3:12).

But this is quite different from saying that Jesus is one of three co-eternal co-equals in a three part so-called “Trinity” and it must be carefully distinguished from it.

Jesus was tried and disciplined as was Adam, succeeding where Adam failed

“Though he were a Son, yet LEARNED HE OBEDIENCE by the things he suffered” (Heb. 5:8).

Consider that long and deeply: he LEARNED obedience through suffering. It fits beautifully into the true *Bible* picture: it is an absurdity in the Trinity view.

Jesus was the manifestation of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, but was not God Himself. The Holy Spirit descended *from* God *upon* Jesus in the bodily shape of a dove when John baptized him in Jordan. Thus we read (Acts 10:38)—

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.”

Again, this quotation shows 1) that God is above Jesus: *He* is the Decider and Giver; Jesus is the receiver and obeyer; 2) that Jesus is dependent on the Father, and is not part of a co-equal “Trinity”; and 3) that the Holy Spirit is not a Person and is not co-equal with God, but is a power with which God can anoint others in various measures and degrees (see Jn. 3:34). Jesus did no miracles before he was anointed with the Spirit-power. He had *no* power of himself. He said—

“I can of mine own self do NOTHING” (Jn. 5:30).

“The Father that dwelleth in me, HE doeth the works” (Jn. 14:10).

And his own expression of helplessness on the cross—

“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46).

Again, a dreadful, insoluble enigma for the Trinity theory: but a clear, simple, beautiful facet of Divine Truth. God withdrew the Holy Spirit from the *man* Jesus.

Jesus was the “body prepared” for the Divine anointing, and for the fore-ordained Divine work of salvation by overcoming and destroying and publicly crucifying the *Diabolos*, “Sin-in-the-flesh” (Heb. 10:5-7)—

“Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do THY will, O God.”

This is the “man Christ Jesus” addressing the One Eternal Uncreated God Who had created him, and in obedience to Whom he repudiated his own will, and lovingly submitted to the Father’s will. His own natural human will was to not suffer and die on the cross—

“Abba, Father! All things are possible unto Thee! Take away this cup from me! Nevertheless, not what I will, but what THOU wilt” (Mk. 14:36).

“My soul is troubled: what shall I say? FATHER SAVE ME FROM THIS HOUR! But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name!” (Jn. 12:27-28).

After Jesus was anointed, he was the full manifestation of God in flesh (2 Cor. 5:18-19)—

“ALL THINGS are of God . . . God was IN Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.”

When Jesus was glorified, his human nature was changed to immortal nature: the flesh-and-blood nature was changed to Spirit-nature. Thus, as he now exists—

“In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead (divinity, divine nature) bodily” (Col. 2:9).

But he has not lost his identity with his brethren and sisters, his memory and feeling of the probationary trials of learning and overcoming. He is still a MAN—though now a *glorified, immortalized man*—as all his brethren hope to be (Heb. 4:15)—

“We have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities”.

Therefore we can approach God through our mediatorial High Priest who knows our weaknesses and infirmities—

“For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted” (Heb. 2:18).

We know, of course, that God cannot be tempted (Jam. 1:13). So he is not God.

During the days of his first advent, as testified in the Gospel records, he *always* did the things which pleased his Father. He *always manifested the Father’s character and holiness and perfection*. He was Immanuel, “God with us”: “God manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). Therefore he could say to Philip—

“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (Jn. 14:9). Paul declared—

“Christ is the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15).

“He is the brightness of God’s glory, and the express image of His Person” (Heb. 1:3).

Those who saw the Anointed Jesus saw a perfect representation of God, open to human sight. And Christ is the embodiment of the Divine Purpose, the manifestation among men of the Divine Spirit and Power—

“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14).

“God gave not to him the Spirit by measure” (Jn. 3:24).

“In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead (divinity) bodily” (Col. 2:9).

The basic facts concerning Jesus Christ are these. He—

Was a *man*, of the Adamic race, begotten in Mary of the Holy Spirit, a *helpless baby*, born in Bethlehem.

Grew up to manhood, *increasing in wisdom, learning obedience*.

Remained a private individual, a carpenter, until anointed with the Spirit by God at his baptism by John the Baptist.

Was put to death in weakness, after performing the things recorded in the Gospels (God's works in him, reconciling the world).

Was deserted of God's power when on the cross.

Was raised from the dead *by the Father*, and is now alive for evermore a glorified and immortal *man*, as his brethren hope to be.

These are the consistent teachings of Scripture concerning Jesus. Such passages as "*Before Abraham was, I am*" (Jn. 8:58) are in full harmony with the overall revelation. *Jesus was the pivot point of the Purpose of God*. He was "before Abraham" in the Plan. Furthermore, he spoke *God's* words: God spoke through him as the Divine manifestation and mouthpiece, as he said. God Who was in him and spoke by him was the Everlasting Yahweh: the "I Am" or better, the "I Shall Be."

Abraham, realizing the need of the race, and that God would "provide a Lamb" to take away the sin of the world (Gen. 22:8), could look forward to the coming of Jesus, and "was glad" at seeing Christ's Day (Jn. 8:56).

This is the sense in which Jesus had "glory with the Father before the world was" (Jn. 15:7); even as, in a subordinate sense, his Body, the Redeemed, the Multitudinous Christ, had similar "glory" with God "before the world began"—

"God hath CHOSEN US in Christ BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD . . . having predestinated us unto the adoption of children" (Eph. 1:4-5).

"His grace which was given us in Christ before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9).

Similarly, God said to Jeremiah—

"Before I formed thee in the belly, I KNEW THEE . . . and sanctified thee" (1:5).

And He called Cyrus by name*, as if he existed, over one hundred years before his birth—

*Leading bemused and benighted commentators to divide the book of Isaiah into two parts!

"Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose hand I have holden" (Isa. 45:1).

Truly he said, and it is a glorious fact: "*I and the Father are one*" (Jn. 10:30). Christ and the Father were always in perfect unity and harmony. He could not have been "God manifest among men" if they were not; nor could he have been the perfect sacrifice required for the cleansing of the race from Sin in all its ramifications and aspects. He is now even more so "one with God" than when he made that statement, for he is now one with Him in glorious Divine nature.

Oneness with God is the goal and prize set before all. He himself prayed concerning his brethren and sisters of all ages of the world—

“That they all may be one, AS THOU FATHER ART IN ME, AND I IN THEE, that they also may be ONE IN US” (Jn. 17:21).

Jesus did not exist before his literal birth of Mary. We must accept the plain, literal, recorded facts of his conception and birth and growth to knowledge. But he was, from the beginning, the fore-ordained means of salvation to be provided by God, as manifested in the Garden of Eden, and through all the Scriptures.

The deep and symbolic sayings, based upon his central place in the Divine Purpose, and God’s dwelling in him and speaking through him, must be understood in the light of the undoubted, literal, revealed FACTS of his birth as a babe, gradual growth to manhood, “increasing in wisdom,” “learning obedience,” being “made perfect,” “overcoming,” etc. (Lk. 2:52; Heb. 5:8-9; 2:10; Jn. 16:33).

And he will return to earth in the Second Advent, soon to come, when he will subdue all nations to righteousness and the will of his Father. And when the work is completely accomplished, at the end of the Millennium, he will submit himself unto the Father, that God may be All in All (1 Cor. 15:28)—

“When all things shall be subdued unto him (Christ), then shall the son himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be ALL IN ALL.”

THE NATURE AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

LESSON 12—*Christendom Astray*, Chapter 6, Part 4

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. What two unscriptural theories are commonly held about the position of Jesus?
2. Was it possible for Jesus to do the works and miracles of himself, without God's power?
3. Who was the Father of Jesus?
4. What scriptural passages indicate that Joseph was not the father of Jesus?
5. What was God's purpose in bringing Jesus into the world?
6. Is salvation attainable simply by following the good moral life of Jesus, without his sacrificial death and resurrection? (Give passages)
7. What does the description "Son of God" teach about Jesus' existence?
8. Did Jesus have the same sin-defiled flesh and blood nature as we do?
9. Was Jesus lineally descended from David, Abraham and Adam?
10. Was Jesus a man? (Give passages). Is he still a man? (Give passages)
11. Was Jesus born with total knowledge, as he would have had if he had been part of an everlasting, co-equal, omniscient "Trinity"?
12. How did Jesus "learn obedience"? How was he "*made perfect*"?
13. When, and from whom, did Jesus obtain power to perform miracles?

THE *BIBLE* DEVIL NOT AN IMMORTAL, SUPERNATURAL BEING

LESSON 13 — *Christendom Astray*, Chapter 7, Part 1

“As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14).

The “Devil” is very prominent in Christendom’s religions. He amounts to a god of evil, and one who is far more successful than God Himself, on the basis of “souls” captured and eternally ruled over. Jesus tells us (Matt. 7:13) that—

“Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and MANY there be which go in thereat.”

In Christendom’s theory, this means eternal hell torture, under the control of the Devil, with never any hope of escape. While (v. 14) -

“Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and FEW there be that find it.”

These are those few that God is able to persuade to follow His Way. Remember, Christendom’s hell is for ever, and therefore their Devil is for ever. This is the dismal pattern now being set for all eternity for this beautiful universe: the vast majority of mankind hopeless slaves of the Devil in eternal tortures: billions and billions of people tortured forever for seventy years of sins!

Could there possibly be a more dreadful, wicked, God-dishonoring theory: that God has created the vast majority of people to the end that, after a brief unhappy life, they may scream in torture for ever after. It is true that Christendom soft pedals this today. But it is just as much as ever it was, an inescapable part of their official doctrine. They cannot escape this picture. They must face it as the inseparable consequence of their immortal-soul, burning-hell, personal-devil theories. Dislike it as they may, orthodox “Christians” must face up to this hideous eternal nightmare as the inevitable outcome of their dreadful theories.

THERE IS A *BIBLE* DEVIL

Truly the *Bible* does speak of a “devil.” The point is: who or what is the *Bible* devil? But first, does the answer matter? Yes, very much so. Both the *Bible* and Orthodoxy represent the Devil as *the* Great Enemy of mankind: subtle, evil and powerful—who *must* be faced and attacked and overcome to attain to salvation and escape eternal punishment. (However, while Orthodoxy’s “eternal punishment” is everlasting torture, the *Bible*’s is unconscious annihilation in everlasting death). The briefest consideration reveals that it is essential that we know who (or what) the Devil is, and how to successfully combat and overcome him (or it).

The orthodox Devil is to all practical purposes omnipotent and omniscient, for while supervising the eternal torture of billions already in hell, he is at the same time capable of simultaneously tempting the more than four billions currently living on the earth, and any expected multiplication of that number. Anyone who will be ruling increasing billions to all eternity is obviously very close to God in power.

The orthodox Devil is immortal. Some orthodox theories postulate this, some do not—but all logically necessitate it. For if hell and eternal torture is forever, then the Devil has to be forever. Obviously hell cannot just run itself: and to think of the Devil being destroyed, and hell running right on for ever without him makes the orthodox picture seem even more absurd.

AN IMMORTAL SINNER IS AN IMPOSSIBILITY

Now, an immortal sinner is an impossibility. If there is one thing the Scriptures make plain, *it is the inseparability of Sin and Death*—

“*The wages of Sin is Death*” (Rom. 6:23).

“*The soul that sinneth, it shall DIE*” (Eze. 18:4).

“*By one man Sin entered the world, and Death by Sin*” (Rom. 5:12).

“*Lust bringeth forth Sin: Sin bringeth forth Death*” (Jam. 1:15).

This is God’s immutable law. He is righteous and holy, and this universe is His. It has no place for immortal sinners. Immortality is related only to holiness. Immortal sinners are a pagan superstition. The myths of the heathen are full of them.

Similarly, and on the same premise, a sinning immortal is an impossibility. The depraved orthodox conception, derived from heathenism, that the Devil is a “fallen angel,” cast out of God’s holy heaven for rebellion, is a terrible, fleshly travesty of the true, beautiful Divine picture of the perfect relationship between God and the holy angels. If this horrible orthodox

superstition were true (which we fervently thank God it is not!), and if rebellion of holy immortals is possible, then the present heavenly condition among the angels, and the future promised immortal condition of the Redeemed, who are to be “equal to the angels” (Lk. 20:36), is no improvement on this present vale of evil, uncertainty and tears.

If sin is possible in the eternal, immortal state, then what is it all worth? What is all the striving for it about? Let us eat, drink, and be merry. The utter fleshliness of the orthodox Devil theory is nowhere more glaringly apparent than in this God dishonoring conception of his origin, and the debased idea of heaven it shows.

THE BIBLE DEVIL IS SIN PERSONIFIED

The *Bible* Devil is SIN: Sin in every aspect and manifestation—particularly the very root of Sin: “Sin-in-the-flesh” the “law of Sin in the members,” the inherent tendency of all human flesh (since Adam’s fall and sentence) toward evil, unholiness and opposition to God and His wise, holy, life-giving commands.

The Scriptures tell us that Jesus partook of human nature, and died, for the express purpose of DESTROYING THE DEVIL—

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14).

He partook of weak, mortal, human flesh so that *by dying* he could “destroy the devil.” Ponder that long and well. Be sure it fits your conception of what the devil is, and how Christ destroyed him. This passage contains the whole key. *What DID Christ overcome? What DID he nail to the cross in repudiation and condemnation?—*

“... that by death he might destroy THE DEVIL” (Heb. 2:14).

“... that he might TAKE AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD” (Jn. 1:29).

“He PUT AWAY SIN by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26).

“That the BODY OF SIN might be DESTROYED” (Rom. 6:6).

It is inescapably clear from these passages that the *Bible* devil is not the supernatural personal monster of Christendom. It would be an utter absurdity to say that Christ was made of weak human nature so that “*by death*” he could destroy such a powerful, immortal creature.

But, by his perfect life and his voluntary, sacrificial death, he *did* destroy in himself the *Bible* “devil” and his works. He totally overcame and held powerless the innate “motions of

Sin,” the “law of Sin in the members,” the “Sin-in-the-flesh” of which Paul speaks—finally in triumph nailing it to the cross in total defeat and condemnation of Sin and vindication of God.

And by this process he totally, eternally freed himself from the *Bible* devil who has all mankind in hopeless bondage, as far as their own efforts are concerned. And now he offers this freedom he has personally achieved, to all who repudiate and crucify the *Bible* devil in themselves—Sin-in-the-flesh—and make themselves part of him by baptism and total loving devotion and obedience thereafter.

THE DEVIL HAS THE POWER OF DEATH

And we learn here (Heb. 2:14) also that *the devil has the power of death*. This is a further positive proof that the devil is not a person. The power of death is manifestly the *ultimate* power. As a Person, only God has the power of death, as He has all power. The debased orthodox conception that God would *give* the supreme ultimate power of death to an evil creature like the orthodox Devil is an absurd and monstrous idea.

But the *Bible* says the devil *has* the power of death. Yes, that is true. SIN *does* have the power of death—not in the sense of possessing an authority that only God controls, but in the sense that Sin inevitably brings Death, and all who serve Sin receive Death as his (Sin’s) wages.

And, apart from this deliverance provided in Christ, Sin-in-the-flesh, the “law of Sin in the members,” inexorably takes every human being into eternal death. Here indeed is something possessing the “power of death” that is still in full harmony with God’s eternal, exclusive possession of all power.

Jesus’ mission was, by death, to destroy that which has the power of death: that is, SIN. Jesus’ mission is to totally destroy Sin from the earth, first in himself and then universally, and—with Sin—also Death—

“Behold the Lamb of God, which TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD” (Jn. 1:29).

“He PUT AWAY SIN by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26).

SIN IS PERSONIFIED

We find that Sin is vividly *personified* as a master, a destroyer, a deceiver—

“Sin hath reigned unto Death” (Rom. 5:21).

“Sin wrought in me” (Rom. 7:8).

“Sin deceived me . . . Sin slew me” (Rom. 7:11).

“To WHOM ye yield yourselves to obey, HIS servants ye are, whether of Sin” . . . (Rom. 6:16).

“Let not Sin reign in your body, that ye should obey it” (Rom 6:12).

And the *Bible* devil is this personification of Sin. Many things are personified in Scripture, with impressive effect and interest—

Riches: *“Ye cannot serve two masters: God and Mammon”* (Matt. 6:24).

Wisdom: *“Wisdom hath builded her house . . . hewn out her seven pillars”* (Prov. 9:1).

Israel: *“I will build thee, O Virgin of Israel”* (Jer. 31:4).

Jerusalem: *“Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem”* (Isa. 52:1).

The Redeemed: *“The marriage of the Lamb . . . his WIFE hath made herself ready”* (Rev. 19:7).

The elements of nature: Floods clap their hands, hills are joyful, waste places sing, etc.

The devil, or the “motions of Sin,” “Sin-in-the-flesh,” is also personified under the name of the “old Man”—

“Put off the OLD MAN with HIS deeds” (Col. 3:9).

“Put off the OLD MAN . . . put on the New Man” (Eph. 4:22-24).

“Our OLD MAN IS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM” (Rom. 6:6).

This last quotation is especially notable. Christ is the Pattern and the Example. He crucified the “Old Man,” the “Devil,” in both his *life* and his death. So must we—

“CRUCIFY THE FLESH with its affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24).

“If ye PUT TO DEATH the DEEDS OF THE BODY, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:13).

Jesus tells us to “take up the cross” and follow him (Matt. 10:38). And so we find Paul saying that (by his self-disciplined and sacrificial life) he was—

“Crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20).

WHY SO MUCH PERSONIFICATION?

Why do the Scriptures use so much personification? Is there not a danger of it being confusing and misleading, as with the common idea of the Devil and the Holy Spirit? Not for the right people. Not for the diligent, loving student of the Word. And these are the only ones who matter to God. God deliberately confuses the shallow, the fleshly-minded and the wicked—

“God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned that believe not the Truth” (2 Thess. 2:11-12).

These are very strong words, from a loving and merciful God. We do well to heed them. God is indeed a loving Father to those who *totally* seek Him, but to no others. Bro. Roberts says very effectively of the *Bible* principle of personification—

“Now these proofs and examples of personification furnish an answer to the question why Sin in the abstract should be personified. They show, first, that principles and things *are* personified in the *Bible*. And, second, that this is done with great advantage. A metaphoric dress to abstractions gives a palpability to them in discourse, which they would lack if stated in precise and literal language.

“There is a warmth in such style of speech, which is wanting in expressions that conform to the strict proprieties of grammar and fact. This warmth and expressiveness are characteristic of the *Bible* in every part of it, and belong to the oriental languages generally. Of course it is open to abuse, like every other good, but its effectiveness is beyond question.

“The subject in hand is an illustration. Sin is the great slanderer of God in virtually denying His supremacy, wisdom and goodness, and it is the great ground of accusation against man, even unto death. How appropriate, then, to style it the ‘ACCUSER, SLANDERER, LIAR.’ This is done in the word ‘devil’ But through the word not being translated but merely Anglicised, the English reader—reared with English theological prejudices—is prevented from seeing it*” —Christendom Astray, chapter 6.

*We plan, God willing, to look into the actual meaning of “devil” and “satan” in later issues.

NO DEVIL IN FOUR THOUSAND YEARS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is a record of God’s intimate dealings with man for nearly four thousand years. *Nowhere* throughout it does the popular doctrine of a personal devil appear. The Law of Moses is a very detailed system of ordinances and religious instruction. Nowhere in it is there the slightest hint of any such thing as the orthodox Devil. God is always represented as supreme and alone in power, Himself holding the power of death. The relationship is solely between man and God, and

man himself is held directly responsible for his sins. There is never a mention of any external, personal, supernatural tempter. Yet according to orthodoxy, this is the greatest danger man should be warned of. If there were such a thing as the Devil of orthodoxy, constantly seeking to trap man in his coils, it is impossible that God would not have constantly, urgently warned man against him.

The *Bible*—Old Testament and New—*does* constantly warn man over and over against the evil and deceptiveness of *his own heart*, which is the true *Bible* devil.

There are a very few scattered items in the Old Testament that are twisted into some kind of support for the orthodox idea, which we plan to look at in this article or later, as: the serpent in Eden, “Azazel” (to do with the scapegoat), Job’s “satan”, the parables of the kings of Tyre (Eze. 28) and of Babylon (Isa. 14), the contention for the “body of Moses” (Zech. 2; Jude 9). It will be seen that none of these give any support to the orthodox Devil theory, but rather against it.

REVELATION 12: DRAGON CAST FROM HEAVEN

Rev. 12 (Dragon cast out of heaven) is quoted to support the Devil theory. This, when looked at in detail and in context, is clearly seen to be part of the “things which must be hereafter*” (to John’s day, Rev. 4:1).

*Orthodoxy points to Rev. 1:19: “Things which ARE, *and* things which shall be hereafter.” True, John does speak of things which ARE, and of things which SHALL BE. The “things which are” are dealt with in chapters 2-3, the messages to the Ecclesias then existing in Asia Minor concerning conditions then existent. But when we come to chapter 4, we are told that NOW John is to be speaking henceforth of “things which must be HEREAFTER” (Rev. 4:1).

The Revelation is a book of symbol. It is stated to be in signs (Rev.1:1), and it obviously is so: seven-headed beasts, composite leopard-bear-lion beasts, six-winged creatures covered with eyes, burning mountains cast into the sea, crowned locusts with men’s faces and women’s hair and scorpion’s tails, etc., etc.

Chapter 12, which speaks of the Dragon cast from heaven, begins with a woman in heaven, clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet and crowned with twelve stars. The Dragon which opposes her has seven heads and ten crowned horns. This Dragon casts a flood after the Woman. The earth opens her mouth and swallows the flood. All this is obviously (and when looked into is seen to be) a part of the “signification” of

the *political events on earth* between John's day and Christ's return.

This chapter is, like most of the rest of the book, an animated political cartoon, prophesying in symbol the events to do with Europe and the Catholic Church, especially as related to the wellbeing of the true people of God, whom both the pagans and the Catholic Church persecuted. The chapter represents the rise of the Emperor Constantine and the Catholic Church to political power in the Roman Empire, and the consequent casting of the pagan Dragon-power out of the political heavens. A study of the whole book, in the light of a true understanding of the Gospel of the Kingdom, makes this quite clear and convincing.

THE SERPENT IN EDEN

The Eden narrative speaks of the serpent as the most intelligent of the "*beasts of the field*," endowed with the power of speech (as Balaam's ass was) to accomplish God's purpose. There is not the slightest hint of any Devil in the background motivating and manipulating the serpent. Its actions are attributed by Scripture entirely to its own "subtlety" and it—and not the Devil of orthodoxy—is sentenced for its presumption, while the presumed real offender is not even mentioned, let alone condemned as the true source of the evil.

ANGELS THAT SINNED

For "proof" of the Devil, we are referred to the "angels that sinned"—

"God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (Tartarus), and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4).

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6).

This is all we are ever told about these sinning angels or "messengers" They are clearly not of the holy "elect" angels of God, for such cannot sin. The idea that they can is derived from pagan mythology, wherein "gods" continually sin. God's holy angels are immortal, and sin and immortality are totally impossible associates in the pure *Bible* picture.

Note well that *these* sinning angels (whoever they are) are "*reserved in chains of darkness (obviously death) UNTO a (future) judgment.*" They certainly therefore cannot be the Devil's angels of orthodoxy that roam at will doing the Devil's

bidding. Whoever they are, they give no support to the Devil theory.

Who they are we are not told. Whoever they are, they *appear* to be the same “angels” spoken of in 1 Cor. 6:3, which the Saints of God are sometime in the future to judge. It is clear from the way Paul refers to them in that passage that at that time more was known about these angels: information we do not have. But seeing God has not seen fit to tell *us* any more about them than He has, it is wisest not to speculate. Certainly “angels” bound in chains waiting judgment give no support to the orthodox doctrine.

ISAIAH 14: LUCIFER, SON OF THE MORNING

Orthodoxy takes us to Isa. 14—

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” (v. 12).

Orthodoxy tells us this is their Devil, now a mighty victorious power, simultaneously tempting billions and torturing billions, eternally ruling over far more of the human race than God is at present or ever will be.

But the *Bible* says this Lucifer is a “man” (v. 16), become weak (v. 10), the King of Babylon (v. 4), in the grave and covered with worms (v. 11).

EZEKIEL 28: THE ANOINTED CHERUB

Then we are taken to Eze. 28—

“The anointed cherub . . . in the garden of God . . . perfect in beauty” (vs. 12-14).

But what are the *facts*? Who does the *Bible* say it is? The “prince of Tyre,” a “man” (v. 2), to die, be slain, and be brought to the pit (vs. 8-10). Why does orthodoxy have to seize on such wording—plainly referring in both cases to *men* whom God specifically identifies and is condemning—to try to put together a supposed teaching of a Devil? Simply because there is no legitimate scriptural support for this pagan idea adopted from the heathen mythology of Egypt, Greece, Rome, etc.

When we look into the checkerwork of passages stitched together to give a picture of Christendom’s orthodox Devil, we find there is nothing there but assumption and misapplication

THE *BIBLE* DEVIL NOT AN IMMORTAL, SUPERNATURAL BEING

LESSON 13 — *Christendom Astray*,

Chapter 7, Part 1

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. According to popular doctrine, who is more successful in securing men's lives, God or the "Devil"?
2. Is it important that we understand who or what the *Bible* devil is?
3. What was the purpose and mission of Jesus in relation to the devil?
4. Why did Jesus have the same nature as we have?
5. How did this enable him to "destroy the devil"?
6. Would being of flesh and blood, and dying, enable him to destroy orthodoxy's Devil?
7. What proves that orthodoxy's supposed Devil must be immortal?
8. Is an immortal sinner, or a sinning immortal, a scriptural possibility?
9. What is the *Bible* devil?
10. Can any person but God have the "power of death"?
11. How does Sin have the "power of death"?
12. What is Jesus' ultimate mission in relation to Sin and Death?
13. What was the first step in fulfilling this mission?
14. Why does the *Bible* use personification so much?
15. What about the danger of it being misunderstood (as orthodoxy misunderstands the personification of the Holy Spirit and of the Devil)?
16. To whom does God send a "strong delusion that they may believe a lie"?
17. Did God ever warn Israel about a personal, supernatural Devil? Did He ever warn them about their own evil hearts and tendency to sin?
18. What is Rev. 12 all about? How do we know it does not refer to orthodoxy's Devil's supposed fall from heaven?
19. Is there any mention of the Devil in connection with the events in Eden?
20. How can we be sure the "angels that sinned" had nothing to do with orthodoxy's Devil?
21. Who is Lucifer, of Isaiah 14?
22. Who is the "anointed cherub" of Ezekiel 28?

WHAT THE *BIBLE* TEACHES CONCERNING “SATAN”

LESSON 14 — Christendom Astray, Chapter 7, Part 2

“The angel of the Lord stood in the way for a satan against Balaam” (Num. 22:22).

“(Jesus) said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan;. . . thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matt. 16:23).

“Satan” is the common Hebrew word meaning “Adversary” and is so translated in most of its occurrences in the Old Testament. In some places the translators, for some reason, chose arbitrarily to transfer it rather than translate it properly. If they had been consistent, it would have been a severe blow to the “supernatural personal Devil” theory. Here are all its occurrences in the OT, as the AV translates them:

OLD TESTAMENT OCCURRENCES OF WORD “SATAN”

“The angel of the Lord stood in the way for an ADVERSARY against him” (Num. 22:22).

“I (the angel) went out to WITHSTAND (marg: be an adversary to) thee” (Num. 22:32).

“Let him (David) not go with us . . . lest he be an ADVERSARY to us” (1 Sam. 29:4).

“David said . . . Ye sons of Zeruiah should ye this day be ADVERSARIES to me?” (2 Sam. 19:22).

“Solomon said, God hath given me rest; there is neither ADVERSARY nor evil occurrent” (1 Kgs. 5:4)

“The Lord stirred up an ADVERSARY unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite” (1 Kgs. 11:14).

“God stirred him up another ADVERSARY, Rezon the son of Eliadah” (1 Kgs. 11:23).

“He (Rezon) was an ADVERSARY to Israel all the days of Solomon” (1 Kgs. 11:25).

“SATAN stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel” (1 Chr. 21:1).

“The sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and SATAN (marg: the adversary) came also among them” (Job 1:6)

“The Lord said unto SATAN” (Job 1:7, 8, 12—three occurrences)

“Then SATAN answered the Lord” (Job 1:9)

“So SATAN went forth from the presence of the Lord” (Job 1:12).

“Again the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and SATAN came also among them to present himself before the Lord” (Job 2:1).

“The Lord said unto SATAN” (Job 2:2, 3, 6—three occurrences).

“And SATAN answered the Lord” (Job 2:4).

“So went SATAN forth from the presence of the Lord” (Job 2:7).

“They also that render evil for good are mine ADVERSARIES” (Psa. 38:20).

“Let them be confounded and consumed that are ADVERSARIES to my soul” (Psa. 71:13).

“The wicked and deceitful . . . for my love they are my ADVERSARIES” (Psa. 109:4).

“Let SATAN (margin: an adversary) stand at his right hand” (Psa. 109:6).

“Let this be the reward of mine ADVERSARIES from the Lord” (Psa 109:20).

“Let mine ADVERSARIES be clothed with shame” (Psa. 109:29).

“Joshua the high priest . . . and SATAN (marg: an adversary) standing at his right hand to resist him (marg: be his adversary)” (Zech. 3:1).

“And the Lord said unto SATAN, The Lord rebuke thee, O SATAN” (Zech. 3:2).

There is much to be learned from a careful review of these passages. It will be noted, in every case but one (1 Chr. 21:1) that when it is translated “Satan,” the margin always shows “adversary.” (The margin just occurs for the first reference in Job, but applies all through). If this list is fairly and honestly examined, any apparent support for the personal Devil theory based on the word “Satan” completely disappears.

It will be noted that an angel of God is a “satan” (Num. 22:22, 32).

It will be noted that the Philistines considered David a “satan” to them (1 Sam. 29:4).

David spoke of his own nephews (sons of Zeruah) as “satans” (2 Sam. 19:22).

In two cases God stirred up human “satans” to punish Solomon (1 Kgs. 11:14, 23, 25), though earlier, when he was obedient, there were no “satans” to trouble him (1 Kgs. 5:4).

GOD A “SATAN” TO WICKED ISRAEL

In one case *God Himself* was a “satan” to Israel because of their disobedience. If an angel of God could be a satan (adversary) to a wicked man (Balaam), then it is quite appropriate for God Himself to be a satan (adversary) to wicked men. Compare the two parallel accounts of the same incident—

2 Sam. 24:1—“*The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He (the Lord) moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.*”

1 Chr. 21:1—“*Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.*”

God does not cause men to sin. He uses men’s own sinful tendencies to punish themselves and others needing punishment. David recognized his own guilt, and was punished for this act. God is always perfectly righteous and just, but He has a perfect right as Creator of all to enforce His law and punish sin in any way He wishes. If we deliberately entertain sinful ideas, He may arrange that we be moved to put them into action, so they may be brought out into the open and punished, for sinful ideas are themselves sin, and merit punishment (Matt. 5:28). God often punishes in kindness and love, to correct us and save us from worse sin, and rejection.

Why, when they knew from the parallel passage who the “adversary” was, did the AV translators use “Satan” here, rather than properly translating it, as elsewhere where they had no choice, and “Satan” would have been absurd?

It will be noted that in Psa. 109:6 and Zech. 3:1-2, where they have “Satan” in the text, they have “adversary” in the margin, dissolving any support for the personal Devil theory. In fact, in three other places in the same psalm, they have rendered the same word correctly as “adversary.” And even in v. 6 where they have “Satan,” the universal principle of *parallelism* in Hebrew poetry—(saying the same thing twice in different words: see Psa. 105 all through for a striking example)—even here, the context confirms the true meaning—

“*Set a WICKED MAN over him, and let SATAN (an adversary) stand at his right hand.*”

THE “SATAN” OF ZECHARIAH 3:1-2

The “Satan” of Zechariah 3:1-2 who resists Joshua in symbolic vision is clearly illustrated by the literal history of the same period (Ezra 3:2-3; 4:1-5)—

“*Then stood up Joshua . . . and builded the altar . . . for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries . . . Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that they builded the Temple . . . then they came . . . Then the people of the land weakened them, and troubled them, and hired*

counsellors against them to frustrate their purpose . . . and wrote an accusation against them.”

Here is a clear example of scriptural satanism. “Accuser” is one of the meanings of the Hebrew word “satan.”

THE “SATAN” OF JOB

This leaves only the record in Job where the word “Satan” occurs (but there again, AV has the revealing “adversary” in the margin). The introduction of the orthodox personal Devil theory into the Job picture is totally incongruous. *This* “Satan” or “adversary” was “among the sons of God” (the worshipers) who came to “present themselves before the Lord” (Job 1:6). To picture the orthodox Devil in such a situation is an absurdity, and betrays a very low concept of God.

To see it for what it really says—an adversary of Job, a professed worshiper of God who was jealous and envious of Job’s favor with God—is perfectly natural and reasonable, and is the picture anyone would get if it were translated correctly.

To suppose that God would thus dicker and argue with the orthodox Devil, and give him power to bring God’s faithful servant Job to the very gate of death, illustrates the depth of misconception to which popular religion has sunk.

As to the power used to bring all the calamities upon Job, a careful reading of the narrative will show that all the superhuman power manifested was entirely of God, and under God’s control—

“Thou movest Me (God) against him (Job), to destroy him” (Job 2:3).

“The hand of God hath touched me” (Job speaking) (Job 19:21).

“His brethren comforted him over all the evil THE LORD brought on him” (Job 42:11).

This last statement is by the inspired narrator, and confirms Job’s own words. True, it does say (Job 2:7) that—

“So went Satan forth . . . and smote Job with sore boils.”

The other passages above clearly show that this power was of God. We often find ordinary men being given power to do superhuman things, as it suited the purpose of God. And we find such cases spoken of as both *God* doing what was done, and the *human agent* doing it. Speaking of the plagues of Egypt (which included the infliction of boils), we are told (Ex. 8:5; 11:10)—

“The Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto AARON, Stretch forth thine hand AND CAUSE FROGS TO COME UP” . . . “MOSES AND AARON did all these wonders.” And yet in the same context (as here in Job), it is described as *God* doing it.

MAN'S GREAT ADVERSARY IS SIN

The great Adversary of all mankind is Sin-in-the-flesh: the evil, rebellious “motions of sin” within all human flesh; the “mind of the flesh” which, says Paul, is—

“Enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can be” (Rom. 8:7).

This ingrained evil principle of human nature led Paul to further say—

“I am carnal (fleshly), sold under Sin . . . Sin dwelleth in me . . . In my flesh dwelleth no good thing . . . Sin dwelleth in me . . . I see a law in my members . . . the law of Sin in my members . . . They that are in the flesh cannot please God . . . If ye live after the flesh ye shall die . . . The flesh lusteth against the Spirit” (Rom. 7:14-23; 8:8; Gal. 5:17).

Such could be multiplied many-fold, illustrating the Bible Satan. Here are a few—

“OUT OF THE HEART proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, etc.” (Matt. 15:19).

“The WORKS OF THE FLESH are: adultery, hatred, wrath, strife, murders, etc.” (Gal. 5:19-21).

“ALL that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father, but of the world” (1 Jn. 2:16).

So we find that in the New Testament, the term “Satan”, or “adversary” is applied to this evil principle in human flesh, in its various manifestations: personal and political. The word “satan” was carried over from the Hebrew language into the Greek of the NT. Here are all the occurrences of the word “satan” in the New Testament—

NEW TESTAMENT OCCURRENCES OF WORD “SATAN”

“Then saith Jesus unto him (the tempter), Get thee hence, Satan” (Matt. 4:10).

“If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: how shall his kingdom stand?” (Matt. 12:26)

“Jesus said to Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou savorest the things of men” (Matt. 16:23).

“Jesus was in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan” (Mk. 1:13).

“Jesus said to them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?” (Mk. 3:23).

“If Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand” (Mk. 3:26).

“Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the Word sown in their hearts” (Mk. 4:15).

“Jesus rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou savorest things of men” (Mk. 8:33)

“Jesus said unto him (the tempter), Get thee behind me, Satan” (Lk. 4:8).

“Jesus said, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Lk. 10:18).

“Jesus said, If Satan be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?” (Lk. 11:18).

“Jesus said . . . This woman . . . whom Satan hath bound these eighteen years” (Lk. 13:16).

“Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot” (Lk. 22:3).

“Jesus said, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat” (Lk. 22:31).

“After the sop, Satan entered into him (Judas)” (Jn. 13:27).

“Peter said to Ananias, Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?” (Acts 5:3).

“I send thee to the Gentiles . . . to turn them from the power of Satan to God” (Acts 26:17-18).

“God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Rom. 16:20).

“Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh” (1 Cor. 5:5).

“Defraud not one the other, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency” (1 Cor. 7:5).

“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11).

“Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14).

“There was given me a thorn in the flesh: a messenger of Satan to buffet me” (2 Cor. 12:7).

“We would have come unto you, but Satan hindered us” (1 Thess. 2:18).

“The Man of Sin . . . whose coming is after the working of Satan with lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2:9).

“Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan, to learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:20).

“Some are already turned aside after Satan” (1 Tim. 5:15).

“Them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan” (Rev. 2:9).

“To the church in Pergamos . . . Antipas, slain among you where Satan dwelleth” (Rev. 2:13).

“As many as have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak” (Rev. 2:24).

“I will make them of the synagogue of Satan . . . to worship before thee” (Rev. 3:9).

“The great Dragon was cast out (of heaven), that old Serpent called the Devil and Satan” (Rev. 12:9).

“Angel . . . laid hold on the Dragon, that old Serpent, the Devil and Satan, and bound him” (Rev. 20:2).

“When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison” (Rev. 20:7).

If these passages are examined, they will all be seen to fit into the pattern of standing for the Sin-principle, or for individuals or organizations serving and motivated by those principles (except in one case where Christ, speaking to the Pharisees “in parables” (Mk. 3:22-26; Matt. 12:24-27), adopts their own superstitious nomenclature—Beelzebub, Satan—and confounds them with it.

PETER WAS A “SATAN”

Peter, in love, misguided by the natural inclinations of the flesh (the Satan), remonstrated with Christ about the latter’s coming sacrificial death. Jesus said—

“Get thee behind me, SATAN, thou savorest THE THINGS OF MEN” (Matt. 16:23; Mk. 8:33).

Peter was motivated by natural fleshly feelings that in natural blindness were contrary to the will and purpose of God, and contrary to true wisdom and goodness. There was certainly no supernatural Fiend of Evil involved. To call him a “satan” in the scriptural sense was quite appropriate, and in harmony with his “good,” but misguided, intentions. But to call him “Satan” under these circumstances if it signified the evil, orthodox, God-hating Devil, would be an impossible thing for Christ to say to him in rebuke of his flesh-misguided love for his Master.

Peter was certainly an “adversary” to the purpose of God in his objection to the Sacrificial death of Christ, but the orthodox view requires us to believe that Christ identified him with a person who is the total focus and embodiment of the utmost and extremest depth of viciousness and evil.

There’s a similar illustration of what the *Bible* “Satan” really is in Acts 5. Peter said—

“Ananias, why hath SATAN filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?” (v. 3).

Then expressing the same thing more literally, he said (v. 4)—

“Why hast THOU conceived this thing in THINE HEART?”

And a little later to Ananias’ wife Sapphira, he said (v. 9)—

“How is it ye have AGREED TOGETHER to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?”

PAUL’S “MESSENGER OF SATAN”

These parallelisms are given us to show us the use and meaning of “satan.” Paul said that, because of his unique and high privileges in divine revelations—

“There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the MESSENGER OF SATAN to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure” (2 Cor. 12:7).

Here again, the debased orthodox view necessitates the idea that Christ was allied with and using an evil fiend, the arch-enemy of God, to torment Paul. And this co-operative service by the Devil was for Paul’s eternal benefit. Here is Christ and the Devil allied together for Paul’s good! Such are the results of orthodoxy’s view.

To any who have a scriptural conception of the relationship between Christ and Paul, this monstrous view that introduces the God of Evil into their relationship is impossible. But it is reasonable and harmonious that Christ, in love, laid upon Paul a bodily affliction—part of the general, present, passing Sin-constitution that afflicts the world (in hope—Rom. 8:20)—so he would be constantly reminded of his fleshly weakness and total dependence upon divine support.

According to the orthodox theory, God and “Satan” are in a partnership, and Satan faithfully does God’s bidding in gleefully torturing forever to all eternity those who have not pleased God in this present brief life. But while Satan is thus represented in this theory as allied with God, and used by God to torture the wicked, they are at the same time represented as in deadly conflict and competition, struggling for the “immortal soul” of each individual.

“DELIVERING UNTO SATAN”

Paul said (1 Tim. 1:20) that he had delivered Hymeneus and Alexander to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. And similarly, he instructs the Corinthian brethren, concerning offenders against the Truth who were in the Body—

“Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5).

The meaning of “delivering to Satan” is clear from the context (v. 2).

“That he that hath done this deed might be TAKEN AWAY FROM AMONG YOU.”

“PUT AWAY FROM AMONG YOU that wicked person” (v. 13).

And the stated purpose of removing such from the Body—

“For the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (v. 5).

—is similarly explained in the context (vs. 6-7)—

“Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? PURGE OUT therefore the old leaven (the ungodly members) that YE MAY BE a new lump.”

The “spirit to be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” is the spirit and purity of the Body, purged and preserved by removing from it the sinful and fleshly elements which, if not removed, would “leaven” and corrupt the whole lump.

For the Body’s self-protection from the leaven of sin, to “deliver someone to Satan” is to put them out into the world of Sin, where they belong as sinners, but with the hope of their awakening and reformation. But to give them to the orthodox Devil is to consign them to the hopeless, endless tortures of hell. Unless one were determining a man’s final judgment, the *last* thing to do would be to give him to the orthodox Devil. That’s clearly not the purpose of withdrawal. Other plain, literal commands concerning “delivering to Satan” are—

“A heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject” (Tit. 3:10)

“Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly. . . If any man obey not our word . . . have no company with him” (2 Thess. 3:6, 14).

“Mark them which cause offenses . . . and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17).

But the purpose is correctional, in hope, not consignment to orthodoxy’s fiend—

“Have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an ENEMY, but admonish him AS A BROTHER” (2 Thess. 3:14-15).

There is no way to reconcile this with giving him to orthodoxy’s Devil. Paul says to Thessalonica—

“I would have come to you, but SATAN HINDERED” (1 Thess. 2:18)

When we look into the history of the case, we find that that which hindered Paul was the opposition and evil designs of *wicked men*, men who lived and operated according to the sinful motions of the flesh. There were plenty of these in the record, but no appearance of the orthodox Devil.

“SATAN” IN REVELATION IS OBVIOUSLY MEN

When the general meaning of the Revelation is understood (and it must be understood for a proper grasp of the Gospel), the references in Rev. 12 and Rev. 20 will be seen to be conclusive against the orthodox personal devil theory; and that under the terms “Dragon, Serpent, Devil and Satan”, the

political power and dominion of the flesh—Sin's Flesh (Rom. 8:3)—is being represented.

This Dragon-Serpent-Devil-Satan power has seven heads and ten horns (Rev. 12:3), and we are told in literal explanation of these symbols (Rev. 17:12-14) that these ten horns are *ten kings* who, at the time of the end, fight against Christ when he returns to subdue the earth and set up his Kingdom.

And these kings are related (Rev. 17:18) to the "Great City which ruleth over the kings of the EARTH." This is a very *earthly* picture throughout. The Great City that ruled the *earth* in John's day, and for ages afterward, and for centuries beyond that in a different (but very real) form, was ROME.

So the Revelation establishes the Dragon-Devil-Satan power as the political embodiment of Sin's Flesh in its world-ruling manifestation.

WHAT ENTICES MAN TO SIN?

The orthodox view is that every man is tempted when he is enticed by Satan. This is true—if we understand what is meant by "Satan." The Scripture says—

"Every man is tempted when he is drawn away OF HIS OWN LUST, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, IT bringeth forth sin" (Jam. 1:14-15).

It will be noted that there is absolutely no mention of any "Satan" in the process. THIS is the *Bible* Satan, in its tempting and enticing activity: the "lust of the flesh," the "law of Sin in the members." Let us be sure we recognize and fight the *real* enemy.

SATAN'S "SEAT" IN PERGAMOS

The identification of Satan with the Sin-motivated opposition of wicked *men* to the things of God is further illustrated by Rev. 2:13, where the apostle John is conveying a message from Christ to the faithful believers who lived in Pergamos—

"I know where thou dwellest, even where SATAN'S SEAT is: and thou holdest fast my Name . . . even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, WHERE SATAN DWELLETH."

The orthodox Satan's "seat," or headquarters, was never in Pergamos in Asia Minor but in a fiery burning Hell. But Pergamos was at that time a center and stronghold of *men* who opposed the Truth of God, and persecuted His people.

The simple picture is clear. Man's great Enemy and Adversary is the fleshly mind: both his own from within, and the individual or organized opposition and antagonism from

without. The Enemy of the Truth and the people of God is Sin in all its world-filling, world-ruling forms. And this is how the Scriptures present it.

STUDY ROMANS SEVEN FOR THE TRUE *BIBLE* PICTURE

Read Romans 7, where it is analyzed most deeply. There is absolutely no hint or mention of any supernatural evil creature, nor any room in the argument for him. But we do find Sin—the Sin-principle in the flesh—very vividly *personified* as the great Enemy and source of evil.

Introduce the sulfurous hooped and horned Fiend of popular superstition, and the whole picture is confused and contradictory. He is of necessity an accepted partner of God, and at the same time an immeasurably more successful snarer of “immortal souls” than God. A personal Satan, a monster of evil, torturing the vast majority of mankind forever without end, makes the Divine purpose with man a hideous, monstrous failure. Yea, far worse than a mere failure—a terrible, tragic, monumental multiplication of suffering and evil, world without end. How can *anyone* really believe that this is the eventual, eternal culmination of the Divine Purpose with mankind? But the orthodox personal Devil, eternal Hell theory necessitates it. Happily, the Scriptures do not.

WHAT THE *BIBLE* TEACHES CONCERNING “SATAN”

LESSON 14 — *Christendom Astray*, Chapter 7, Part 2

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. From what language has the word “Satan” been derived?
2. What is the basic meaning of the word “Satan”?
3. Have righteous individuals been called “satans”? Give illustrations.
4. What other word appears in the AV for “satan”?
5. Have wicked men been classed as “satans”? Give illustrations.
6. In what way have the translators not been entirely faithful in rendering “satan”?
7. Who constituted the “Satan” of Zech. 3?
8. Who brought all the evil upon Job? Give Scripture in proof.
9. In what way was Job’s adversary able to bring affliction on Job?
10. Has God ever been a “satan,” or adversary? When?

11. Was any righteous person in the New Testament ever called a “satan”?
12. How did the Hebrew word “satan” happen to be used in the NT, which is in Greek?
13. Who was the “satan” that opposed Paul visiting the believers at Thessalonica?
14. Can we be “satans” in opposing the will of God, if we are sincerely trying (in ignorance) to do what is right? Give a scriptural example.
15. What is meant by “being delivered to Satan, to learn not to blaspheme”?
16. How do we know the “Satan” of Revelation is a symbol of human organizations?
17. What was the “satan” that influenced Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5?
18. What is the tempting and enticing force in the lives of all men?
19. From what source does all the evil of the world proceed?
20. What is the great “Satan” we must all fear and oppose and overcome?
21. What force alone is able to assist us to overcome this great Adversary?

BIBLE TEACHING CONCERNING THE TERM “DEVIL”

LESSON 15— *Christendom Astray,* Chapter 7, Part 3

“Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil (diabolos)?” (Jn. 6:70).

“Even so must their wives be grave, not devils (diabolous) (1 Tim. 3:11).

We have seen that “satan” is the common Hebrew word meaning “adversary” and is so used throughout Scripture, angels and even God Himself being “satans” or adversaries, as circumstances required. The word “devil” is used interchangeably with satan in many places in the *Bible*. But it should be noted that the term “devil” while applied like “satan” to different people, is never used in a good sense, while “satan,” adversary, sometimes is.

“DIABOLOS” A COMMON NOUN MEANING FALSE ACCUSER OR SLANDERER

The word “devil” is a translation of (and is derived from) the Greek *diabolos*, a common noun meaning “false accuser, slanderer.” It is a compound of *dia*, “through,” and *ballo*, “to cast.” It therefore means “to strike through.” In a figurative sense it means to “stab with an accusation or evil report.” Parkhurst’s *Lexicon* defines *diabolos* as “an accuser or slanderer.” Strong gives “traducer,” which means “false accuser.”

We note that *diabolos*, like *satan*, is a common noun, and not a proper name. As Jesus applied “satan” to Peter, so he applied “devil” to Judas (see Jn. 6:70 above). Judas was a liar, a betrayer and a false accuser. Therefore he was a “devil.” Paul used exactly the same word (*diabolos* in the Greek) to describe both men and women who would not be led by godly characteristics—

“Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers (diabolous)” (1 Tim. 3:11).

“Men shall be . . . without natural affection, false accusers (diaboli)” (2 Tim. 3:2-3).

“Aged women, likewise . . . as becometh holiness, not false

accusers (diabolous)" (Tit. 2:3).

The word "devil" in these three places does not so appear in the common versions of the *Bible*, but has been translated properly in a manner to convey the right meaning. But the translators have not been so faithful in other places, and have thus caused confusion. If they had translated it *consistently* all through, either as "false accuser" or "devil" then the *Bible* could have been its own interpreter.

A POLITICAL SYMBOL: TEN HORNS = TEN KINGS

We see this by what Christ said to his faithful followers about the Pagan Roman authorities persecuting and afflicting them—

"The devil (diabolos) shall cast some of you into prison" (Rev. 2:10).

It was certainly the *political authorities* who put the disciples in prison. We know how the Roman government persecuted the early Christians. This world power, politically organized as the Pagan or Papal authorities, is in the same book called—

"The Dragon, that old serpent, the devil (diabolos) and satan" (Rev. 20:2).

This was the "Dragon" that had ten Horns, which were explained to be "ten kings" (Rev. 17:12): obviously a political symbol. These are the political-religious forces of the sinful world, made up by the aggregation of sinning men and women, which are the basis of the separation between God and man. As an entity, they are collectively the slanderer of God and destroyer of mankind.

IN GENERAL, THE "DIBOLOLOS" IS THE SIN-PRINCIPLE IN ALL MANKIND

In its general use, the term "devil" (*diabolos*) is applied to the sin-tending *principle in each individual of Adam's race*, as the root of all organized and manifested diabolism. This is illustrated in its application to Christ in Heb. 2:14—

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he (Jesus) also himself likewise took part of the same; that THROUGH DEATH he might destroy him that had the power of death, THAT IS, THE DEVIL."

On the orthodox supposition that the "devil" is a super-human, age-living, practically all-powerful monster, able to tempt and harass millions all around the earth simultaneously, and at the same time presiding over the torture of billions in hell, this creates at least four absurdities—

1. Orthodoxy's Trinity-God had to take on the weakness of human flesh to be able to destroy the devil. Paul here emphasises this necessity, and expressly says he did not for this purpose take on the powerful immortal angel-nature (v. 16).
2. The devil was to be destroyed by this weak human creature dying!
3. If Christ "by death destroyed the devil" the devil should be dead, destroyed.
4. But he is admittedly more active than ever, indeed, "old-time religion" would be nothing without him. (The *Bible* "devil" was destroyed in Christ's death, and—as applies to Christ himself—is eternally dead and destroyed. That "sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3) with its "law of sin" (Rom. 7:23) is forever destroyed for him personally (that was his victory), and it will at last also be destroyed for all who become part of him.
5. The devil has the "power of death." The *Bible* devil—the sin-principle in man—has the power of death. This is reasonable. The Scriptures tell us that until Jesus broke its prison gates, it held every descendant of Adam in its inescapable iron grasp: "The wages of sin is death" and all without exception sinned.

But to think of an immortal monster—the arch-enemy of God and man—as having the power of death is both dreadful and impossible. God, and God alone, has the power of death. Certainly the "power of death" is the ultimate and supreme power, as far as man is concerned. Or are we to believe that this fiend who tortures billions eternally for his own amusement is God's agent, and that God has *given* him the power of death over mankind? This indeed fits the Greek and Roman gods and superstitions from which orthodoxy's picture is taken, but not the holy God of Scripture and of Truth. He says—

"I kill, and I make alive" (Deut. 32:39).

CHRIST'S DEATH WAS TO DESTROY SIN

Similarly to Paul in Heb. 2, John states that Jesus—
"Was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil"
 (1 Jn. 3:8).

The devil which Christ came to destroy is Sin—

"He was manifested to TAKE AWAY OUR SINS" (1 Jn. 3:5).

"He PUT AWAY SIN by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26).

"Behold the Lamb of God that TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD" (Jn. 1:29).

“His own self bare our sins IN HIS OWN BODY on the tree”
(1 Pet. 2:24).

This last quotation is especially significant. It was done “IN his own body” whatever it was that was accomplished in his life and death. This ties in closely with the necessity of his being “flesh and blood” and of “sinful flesh” for the purpose of destroying the devil by and in his death.

Christ, through death, destroyed “the sin of the world.” He destroyed the *Bible* devil. In his own person, as the representative man (a man with sinful flesh), a man representatively incorporating the whole race within himself, he destroyed the power of sin by perfect obedience to the will of God all his life, completely resisting and overcoming the tendency to sin; by nailing the death-body to the tree; by escaping from death through resurrection because he was perfectly righteous in all his ways; and by living for evermore, henceforth eternally free from the diabolos sin-motions and the power of death. This is Biblically stated as—

“God sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3).

IT IS SIN THAT HAS THE POWER OF DEATH

“Sin in the flesh” is the devil that was destroyed by Jesus in his death. *This* is the devil “having the power” of death for it is sin, and nothing else but sin, that causes death to men. Thus we read—

“By one man sin entered the world, and DEATH BY SIN”
(Rom. 5:12).

“By MAN came death” (1 Cor. 15:21).

“The wages of SIN IS DEATH” (Rom. 6:23).

“SIN hath reigned unto DEATH” (Rom. 5:21)

“SIN bringeth forth DEATH” (Jam. 1:15).

“The sting of DEATH is SIN” (1 Cor. 15:56).

Of course, literally, it is *God* Who has the “power of death,” as He has *all* power. No other *person* (certainly not an *evil* one) could possess or control that power. But inasmuch as sin brought death in the first place, and sin *inevitably* (in the natural course) produces death, and sin is that deadly, evil principle that *inevitably* (in the natural course) causes a holy God to inflict death—it is perfectly correct and understandable to speak of sin as “having the power of death”

“THE LAW OF SIN IN MY MEMBERS”

But who or what prompts men and women to sin against God? What causes sin? James answers this very clearly and

specifically (Jam. 1:14-15)—

“Every man is tempted when he is drawn away OF HIS OWN LUST, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, IT bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Paul refers to this as—

“A LAW IN MY MEMBERS, warring against the law of my mind” (Rom. 7:23).

The whole world obeys or serves this law, and therefore it “lieth in wickedness” (1 Jn. 5:19). John thus describes this condition of the world—

“ALL that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn. 2:16).

This law can be overcome only by the power of God’s Word. Thus Jesus said—

“The WORDS I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are LIFE” (Jn. 6:23).

The enlightenment of God’s Truth, coming from without, introduces a new law into the mind: the holy, life-giving law of the Spirit of God. This creates an inner conflict—

“The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are CONTRARY the one to the other” (Gal. 5:17).

The successful battle against this fleshly law, or ingrained principle of disobedience throughout Christ’s entire life, was how he overcame sin in the flesh, or the devil (*diabolos*). So also we must constantly strive to overcome this law of sin in our members. Thus we are repeatedly warned and commanded—

“Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Rom. 6:12).

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16).

“To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness” (Rom. 6:16).

“If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die. But if ye through the Spirit do MORTIFY (put to death) the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:13).

There is no external, personal devil, with fiery breath and horns and hooves. It is *man’s own flesh-rooted inclinations*, the “law of sin in his members” which pulls toward disobedience to God’s holy, righteous and reasonable commands—

“He that COMMITTETH SIN is of the devil” (1 Jn. 3:8).

PERSONIFICATION A COMMON *BIBLE* FIGURE

There should be no difficulty in the *Bible* devil being personified. Many things and ideas are colorfully and very effectively personified in Scripture—

Wisdom: “*Wisdom . . . SHE is more precious than rubies . . . Length of days is in HER RIGHT HAND, and in HER LEFT HAND riches and honor*” (Prov. 3:13-15).

Riches: “*Ye cannot serve two MASTERS: God and MAMMON*” (Matt. 6:24).

Our character: “*Ye have put off the OLD MAN with HIS deeds*” (Col. 3:9).

“*Put off the OLD MAN . . . put on the NEW MAN*” (Eph. 4:22-24).

“*Our OLD MAN is crucified with him*” (Rom. 6:6).

Nature: Trees, the sun, floods, hills, waste places, etc. are spoken of as singing, clapping, rejoicing, dancing, skipping, and other human actions.

And, above all, *Sin itself*—the *Bible Devil*—is so strikingly personified—

“*SIN hath reigned unto death*” (Rom. 5: 21).

“*SIN wrought in me . . . SIN slew me . . . SIN deceived me*” (Rom. 7: 8-11).

“*WHOM ye obey, HIS servants ye are, whether of SIN*” . . . (Rom. 6:16).

“*Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of SIN*” (Jn. 8:34).

“*Let not SIN reign in your bodies, that ye should OBEY it*” (Rom. 6:12).

In the light of this, we should *expect* the diabolos, the sin-nature, the “law of sin in the members” to be personified, and be surprised if it were not.

THE SERPENT-ORIGIN OF SIN

Sin is the great Slanderer of God, in denying His supremacy, wisdom, goodness, and the Truth of His Word. Thus Sin is termed the “accuser, slanderer, liar” and these thoughts are carried in the *Bible* word “devil” properly understood.

The origin of Sin shows the fittingness of the terms used concerning it. Adam’s original transgression did not arise from within. It was suggested by Eve; and hers suggested by the serpent—

“*The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made*” (Gen. 3:1).

The serpent, given temporarily the power of speech by God, reasoned falsely concerning the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, that by eating of it Adam and Eve would not die but live

forever, because (he assumed) they would “become like the angels,” and the angels *do* live for ever. Therefore the serpent said, “Ye shall not surely die.” It is true that eating of the Tree did make them like the angels in *some* respects (Gen. 3:22). The serpent may have learned this from overhearing the angels conversing, and then reasoned unsoundly beyond it.

The serpent therefore was a slanderer and a liar in saying that God’s statement “Ye shall surely die” was not true. The serpent thus became the *symbol* and “father” of all that resulted from that lie: the ingrained principle of disobedience, and all attendant sin.

Arising from man’s serpent-caused fall, God said (Gen. 3:15) there would henceforth be enmity between the serpent’s seed (wicked men, the liars and disobedient) and the Woman’s seed (righteous men, centered and embodied in Christ) till the Woman’s seed finally should destroy the serpent’s seed. Like produces like. That is why the whole world of human nature is spoken of as the serpent and devil.

The thought of disobedience implanted in the minds of our first parents by the serpent, and which became a law of their nature (Rom. 7:23), has developed a world of men and women whose natural, fleshly tendencies are to disobey God. Thus they are by nature and natural conduct a “generation of serpents” (Matt. 23:33), even as Christ said—

“Ye are of your father the devil (slanderer), and the lusts of your father ye will do” (Jn. 8:44).

ALL ARE BY NATURE THE “CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL”

All who are Adam’s descendants are by nature “children of the devil.” Their mortality illustrates this, because mortality is the fruit of the serpent (devil, slanderer) lie, causing Adam to disobey. But all who become related to the “second Adam” (Christ) are released from the family of the devil, and become sons of God.

The destruction of the devil by the work of Christ is the overcoming and final removal of the sinning human nature. This was accomplished in Christ himself by perfect obedience to his Father, and by submission to the death of the cross: the obedient, voluntary, public crucifixion and repudiation of the sin-cursed nature in justification of God’s law and God’s holiness; and by his resurrection to unending life: and so—

“Death hath NO MORE dominion over him” (Rom. 6:9).

THE AGES-LONG PROCESS OF DEVIL DESTRUCTION

The process of devil-destruction is going on through the centuries, as those who have become related to Christ's sacrifice in the appointed way of *belief, baptism and lifelong obedience* have set their whole course of life to overcome the sinning nature by the strength of God's Word operating on their minds and in their lives. To such who have, *with their whole energies*, endeavored to please God, will be given unending life at Christ's judgment seat when he returns to earth. They will have faithfully and successfully (though admittedly never perfectly) labored to subdue or "keep under" (1 Cor. 9:27) their sinning impulses—the devil within them—all of their lives. Their change to immortality and the "divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4) will be the final destruction of the devil for them.

The responsible wicked of this and past dispensations (the dead raised, the living assembled) will also at Christ's return be judged, and then punished in measure, in accord with their deeds (Lk. 12:47), and finally completely destroyed—removing forever this aspect of the devil-nature from the earth.

Then during the thousand-year reign of Christ over the earth, teaching the nations righteousness, *all* will know God (Jer. 31:34), and will be called on—through faith and love of God, to overcome the impulses of their fleshly bodies, and live in holiness.

At the end of the thousand years will be another judgment, of all who have lived during the thousand years. All who have died in that period will be raised, and all—living and dead—will be judged. Those who have been obedient will be given eternal life (as those of *this present* dispensation will be at Christ's return), and those who have been disobedient will be destroyed.

Thus, all who are then left alive will be immortal. Sin and death will have been eliminated from the earth. The present sinning, dying, mortal nature of mankind—brought upon the world by Adam's sin—will be for ever gone. The "devil" will thus have been destroyed completely, in every aspect and manifestation. The great work of Christ will thus have been triumphantly completed, and he will turn all things over to God, that God Himself may henceforth be "All in All" (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

ALL THE OCCURRENCES OF "DIABOLOS" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

These are all the appearances of the word "diabolos*" in the New Testament—

*We use "diabolos" (singular) and "diaboloï" (plural), though actual Greek forms vary for case and gender.

“Led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the diabolos” (Matt. 4:1). “Then the diabolos taketh him up . . . on a pinnacle of the temple” (Matt. 4:5).

“Again the diabolos taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain” (Matt. 4:8).

“Then the diabolos leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him” (Matt. 4:11).

“The enemy that sowed them (the tares) is the diabolos” (Matt. 13:39).

“Everlasting fire, prepared for the diabolos and his angels” (Matt. 25:41).

“Led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the diabolos” (Lk. 4:2).

“The diabolos said unto him, If thou be the Son of God...” (Lk. 4:3).

“And the diabolos, taking him up into an high mountain . . . ” (Lk 4:5).

“And the diabolos said unto him, All this power will I give thee” (Lk. 4:6).

“When the diabolos had ended all the temptation, he departed” (Lk. 4:13).

“Then cometh the diabolos, and taketh away the word out of their hearts” (Lk. 8:12).

“Jesus answered, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a diabolos” (Jn. 6:70).

“Ye are of your father the diabolos, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (Jn. 8:44).

“The diabolos having now put into the heart of Judas . . . to betray him” (Jn. 13:2).

“Jesus . . . went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the diabolos” (Acts 10:38).

“Thou child of the diabolos, thou enemy of all righteousness” (Acts 13:10).

“Be ye angry, and sin not . . . neither give place to the diabolos” (Eph. 4:26-27).

“Put on whole armor of God, that . . . be able to stand against the wiles of the diabolos” (Eph. 6:11).

“Not novice . . . lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the diabolos” (1 Tim. 3:6).

“Good report . . . lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the diabolos” (1 Tim. 3:7).

“Their wives must be grave, not diaboloi, sober, faithful in all things” (1 Tim. 3:11).

“Snare of the diabolos, who are taken captive by him at his will” (2 Tim. 2:26).

“Men shall be . . . without natural affection, truce-breakers diaboloi” (2 Tim. 3:2-3).

“The aged women likewise . . . behavior as becometh holiness, not diaboloi” (Tit. 2:3).

“Flesh and blood, he took part of . . . that through death he might destroy . . . the diabolos” (Heb.2:14).

“Resist the diabolos, and he will flee from you” (Jam. 4:7).

“Your adversary the diabolos, as a roaring lion, seeketh whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

“He that committeth sin is of the diabolos, for the diabolos sinneth from beginning” (1 Jn. 3:8).

“The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the diabolos” (1 Jn. 3:8).

“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the diabolos” (1 Jn. 3:10).

“Michael the archangel, when contending with the diabolos about the body of Moses” (Jude 9).

“The diabolos shall cast some of you into prison” (Rev. 2:10).

“Great dragon, that old serpent, called the diabolos and satan . . . was cast into the earth” (Rev. 12:9).

“The diabolos is come down unto you, having great wrath . . . knoweth hath short time” (Rev. 12:12).

“Laid hold on dragon, old serpent, which is the diabolos and satan, bound him thousand years” (Rev. 20:2).

“The diabolos that deceived them was cast into lake of fire . . . tormented for ever” (Rev. 20:10).

CHRIST’S TEMPTATION

It will be noted that a fair proportion of the appearances of the word *diabolos* occur in the record of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, immediately after his baptism and the descent of the Spirit upon him. The orthodox idea that he was “*led by the Spirit*” (Matt. 4:1) to be tempted by the orthodox Devil, *God’s arch-enemy*, is an unconscionable debasing of the whole divine picture, like its war in God’s holy heaven between loyal and rebellious angels.

And that it would be any real temptation to Christ—with his knowledge of, and closeness to, God—to receive a proposition from God’s avowed enemy, is impossible to credit. No, it is deeper and more reasonable than that. It had to be a credible temptation, in harmony with Christ’s character and knowledge. Just who provided the external aspect of the temptation we are not told. The Roman authorities have been suggested as the most likely possibility, and they fill the requirements. Certainly they were the then current political embodiment of the *diabolos*.

“OPPRESSED OF THE DIABOLOS”

“Oppressed of the *diabolos*” (Acts 10:38) is used generally of all illness, because Sin, and the curse and evils that came on the race by Sin (Gen. 3:17-19) is the root cause of all disabilities and diseases.

DAIMONS: ILLNESSES AND AFFLICTIONS

The word “devil” occurs many more times in the English of the AV in the New Testament (usually in the plural), but the original in these cases is not *diabolos*, but *daimon*, and it is used in reference to illnesses, physical and mental. This is mainly due to the peculiarity of the Greek language, and of the conceptions that lay in the origins of the speech of the period.

It was customary to speak of the *daimon* speaking or acting when the sufferer spoke or acted under the influence of the malady; as when we say “The drink is speaking” when we wish to indicate that a drunken man’s statements are the result of intoxication and not of rational thought. Those who used this form of speech recognized that the words and actions were actually those of the sufferer himself, but were indicating that he was caused to so speak or act by the malady. The maladies were referred to as *daimons* because the phraseology arose from a superstitious belief in creatures called *daimons* causing illnesses. But anyone using the common phraseology would not necessarily be endorsing its origin. We could trace the origins of a host of English words to the most bizarre and superstitious origins, but we use them without any thought for, or even knowledge of those origins.

It will be noted that there is no such phraseology in discussing illness all through the Old Testament, which is in Hebrew. In English we have similar expressions describing certain maladies that we use freely without the slightest endorsement of their literal origin or connotation, as “lunacy” (struck by the moon), “St. Vitus’ Dance” (curable by worship of its patron saint), and such other physical afflictions as “Devils Grip,” etc.

BIBLE TEACHING CONCERNING THE TERM “DEVIL”

LESSON 15— *Christendom Astray*, Chapter 7, Part 3

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THE PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. Is the word “devil” ever used in a good sense in the Scriptures?
2. What is the basic meaning of the original Greek word “diabolos”?
3. What is the meaning of the Greek root words from which “diabolos” has been derived?
4. In what ways, other than “devil,” has the word “diabolos” been translated?
5. What was the “devil” that would cast the faithful into prison?
6. In what way is the sinning principle in each person personified?
7. Why did Christ have the weak, sin-cursed nature common to all mankind?
8. In what way did Christ destroy the devil?
9. What is the cause of death in all men?
10. What tempts men to sin and to do those things that are opposed to God?
11. Do righteous people have the same “law” or tendency to do evil in their members (or bodies) as do the wicked? Quote scripture to prove.
12. Was Christ successful in overcoming this tendency to sin?
13. Why did the serpent become the symbol of all who sin against God?
14. Give illustrations of things which are not living, being represented as alive, or personified.
15. If Christ destroyed the devil, or sin in the flesh, by his death, why are we still subject to this law in our members?
16. When shall the “law of sin” in the flesh of the righteous be destroyed?
17. What is required of men and women to have the law of sin destroyed from their bodies?
18. When will this “devil,” or law of sin, be finally removed from the earth?

THE KINGDOM OF GOD NOT YET IN EXISTENCE:

TO BE ESTABLISHED ON THE EARTH,
SUPPLANTING ALL PRESENT GOVERNMENTS.

Lesson 16: Christendom Astray, Chapter 8, Part 1

“Jesus went about all Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God” (Matt. 4:23).

The Kingdom of God—the “earth filled with God’s glory” (Num. 14:21; Psa. 72:19; Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14, etc.)—is the joyous theme of the whole *Bible*, the very heart and backbone of the divine Purpose, from Genesis to Revelation. It was the basis of the preaching of Christ and the Apostles. This is incontrovertible, from the above quotation and many others, as these—

“Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD” (Mk. 1:14).

“Jesus went about all the cities and villages, preaching the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM” (Matt. 9:35).

“I must preach the Kingdom of God, for THEREFORE AM I SENT” (Lk. 4:43).

“Then he called his twelve disciples together, and he sent them to preach THE KINGDOM OF GOD” (Lk. 9:1-2).

DISCIPLES PREACHED GOSPEL NOT KNOWING ABOUT CHRIST’S DEATH

The Kingdom of God—God’s coming Kingdom on earth—IS the gospel message, without which we have no Gospel at all. This Gospel preached by Christ all through his ministry *did not include the facts concerning his death*. This is positively proved by the fact that his disciples, who preached the Kingdom with him during his ministry, *did not realize that Christ had to die* until after his resurrection, and even then it was very hard to convince them of the resurrection, the death having hit them so severely and unexpectedly. This is clear from the following—

“The son of man” (Jesus said to them) “must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day. But they UNDERSTOOD NOT THIS SAYING, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not” (Lk. 9:22, 44-45).

Note that this is *after* they had been sent throughout the land preaching the gospel of the Kingdom (see Lk. 9:1-2 above). Again, after his resurrection, Jesus spoke to two disciples, asking them why they were sad. And they said—

“Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people . . . The chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel” (Lk. 24:19-21).

We find that even when his resurrection was reported to them by dependable eye-witnesses, they *still* did not believe it (Lk. 24:11). When even the other ten apostles were convinced by Jesus’ actual appearance, and told Thomas, he *still* would not believe them (Jn. 20:25). And yet they had all been preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom for up to three years.

Their preaching, long before Christ’s death, comprised the Gospel of the Kingdom. So their Gospel must have been far *different from that preached by churches today*, which only speaks of the death of Christ as their “gospel” message.

SAME GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM PREACHED AFTER CHRIST ROSE

The preaching of the Apostles after Christ ascended to the Father continued to be the Gospel of the Kingdom, which had now *added* thereto the things concerning the death and resurrection of Christ. Therefore it is vitally important that the Gospel they preached be *ours*, if we would attain to salvation and life—

“When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized” (Acts 8:12).

“He (Paul) expounded and testified THE KINGDOM OF GOD, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses and out of the Prophets, from morning till evening” (Acts 28:23).

The Gospel did not begin with Christ. It was preached to Abraham (Gal. 3:8)—

“The Scriptures preached before (RV: beforehand) the Gospel to Abraham.”

The Gospel was preached to Israel in the wilderness by Moses—

“To us was the Gospel preached, AS WELL AS UNTO THEM (Israel under Moses: see context). But the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Heb. 4:2).

FALSE GOSPELS—AND A CURSE ON ANY WHO ALTER THE TRUE ONE

That we must maintain this original Gospel of the Kingdom unadulterated and unchanged, was vehemently insisted on by Paul in writing to the Galatians. He said that even if an *angel from heaven* should preach any other gospel than that which he (Paul) preached, he should be *accursed*. (Gal. 1:8-9). Where does this leave those who have abandoned the true Gospel of God's Kingdom upon earth, and preach "another gospel"? Paul said that the Gospel was the "power of God *unto salvation*" for everyone that believes it (Rom. 1:16). How vital then that we know and keep this Gospel clear and unconfused! It means our eternal salvation.

Various conflicting interpretations of the "Kingdom" are held in Christendom—denying that it will be a real literal Kingdom on the earth. Some define the Kingdom as the state of the heart, and doing good works for men. Truly this is necessary, but it is not the Kingdom. Others claim that the religious organizations of the world are the Kingdom of God, and that they will at last convert the whole world to righteousness and holiness. But what an increasingly corrupt Babel they are themselves! And they have been at it for nearly two thousand years, and the world is obviously further from peace and righteousness and holiness than ever.

CANNOT BE AT PRESENT: FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT

The Kingdom of God cannot be in existence at present. Paul said—

"Flesh and blood CANNOT INHERIT the kingdom of God: neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. 15:50).

And he goes on to explain that, at the "last trumpet," when the dead shall be raised, the righteous shall be changed from corruption to incorruption, so as to be able to inherit the Kingdom. This is positive proof that it is no present condition or possession. And Jesus said, referring to the same bodily change from flesh and blood to spirit nature (Jn. 3:5-6)—

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit . . . Except a man be born of water (baptism), AND OF THE SPIRIT (at the "last trumpet," as Paul explains), he CANNOT ENTER the Kingdom of God."

And Jesus likewise again tells us the Kingdom is when he comes (Matt. 25:31)—

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory . . . then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be

gathered all nations.”

And in the judgment scene that follows (vs. 32-46) he says to the accepted (v. 34)—

“Come, ye blessed of my Father, INHERIT THE KINGDOM.”

Again, *positive proof* that the Kingdom is not inherited or possessed until Christ returns, raises the dead, judges them, and THEN gives inheritance in the Kingdom to the immortalized righteous, as their reward. Paul similarly told Timothy—

“Jesus Christ shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing AND HIS KINGDOM” (2 Tim. 4:1).

“THY KINGDOM COME”: THIS WILL BE FULFILLED

The Kingdom is the world filled with God’s glory, ruled over in righteousness by Christ and his raised and glorified brethren and sisters from this present age of probation. Obviously NO ONE can inherit it or possess it until it is established on the crushed ruins of the present kingdoms of men. It does not yet exist. It is “to come,” as Christ instructed his disciples to pray. And when it “comes,” then will be fulfilled the parallel and necessary part of the same prayer—

“Thy Kingdom COME: Thy will be done on earth AS IN HEAVEN” (Matt. 6:10).

Are we to say Christ would teach his disciples to pray for two thousand years for something that’s never going to happen? Impossible! That is to make a mockery of him and of them. God’s will *must* be done on earth as in heaven. *And it will!*

The whole theme and promise and hope of the Scriptures is based on a *literal Kingdom of God on earth*, ruled by Christ and the saints, over a people who will be taught to worship God in the way He has appointed.

The “Kingdom of God” is a *Bible* expression, and it appears in contrast with the “Kingdom of men.” The expression “kingdom of *men*” refers to the whole rule of all the nations of the earth, in whatever age. It is called the kingdom of men because the basis of all its laws and decisions and power is rooted in man’s natural desires and impulses, in the will of *man*, and the arm and strength of the flesh.

Though some parts of it give God lip-service, they are not directed in their thinking and doing by any desire to learn God’s will, or to serve Him. God permits this condition for the present, while maintaining an over-all control to gradually bring to pass His gracious plan of blessing the earth through Christ and the faithful who have been, and are being, called *out of* this fleshly Kingdom of Men which has existed for six thousand years. God declared to the mighty king Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled the Babylonian world empire, 2,500 years ago—

“The Most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will” (Dan. 4:32).

NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S DREAM—FOUR WORLD EMPIRES

In Daniel 2, we learn of the dream this king of Babylon had, which was both described and explained by the prophet Daniel at God’s instruction. By this means, the king (and all the faithful, which is more important) are informed of the purpose of God with the earth. We learn here that there were to be four great world empires upon the earth (as it was known in the time of each). The fourth was to be broken up in small divisions. Then, in the “latter days” (v. 28), these remnant-nations were to stand up together as a great Image against Christ. Thereupon God, through Christ, would totally destroy their power, and establish a divine Kingdom filling the earth.

These nations of the image were real, literal nations, which have taken their places upon the world’s stage of human events: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome; and then the divided state of Europe since the fall of Rome. History confirms that these nations ruled over the earth as then known, as revealed by God.

Babylon existed from 606 to 536 BC, and was destroyed by Cyrus the Persian. Medo-Persia existed from 536 to 330 BC, and was destroyed by Alexander the Greek. The Greek empire existed from 330 to about 150 BC, being then gradually destroyed and absorbed by the Roman Empire. Rome existed as a world power from about 150 BC to 476 AD, and was destroyed by the barbarian kingdoms that finally developed into modern Europe. There was to be no fifth empire.

It is notable that the Roman Empire, though broken up, has never been superseded. The present political, social, legal, and religious constitution of Europe, and all the lands developed by Europeans, are a prolongation of Rome. The Pope of Rome, who inherited the Imperial Power for centuries (as divinely predicted), still officially claims jurisdiction over the lives of all mankind. All “Christendom” is composed of offshoots of the Roman Church and hold its doctrines. Latin is still the official language of the Roman Church.

“LATTER DAYS”—THE IMAGE STANDS AGAIN

The divided state of Roman Europe has existed from 476 AD to the present. We now see them being drawn together into a world confederation. We see the power that is divinely destined to lead them — Russia — rising rapidly to world prominence and might. This world power we know to be real,

as our daily news events tell us. What did the prophet Daniel say would happen when this condition was upon the earth in the “latter days”? (Dan. 2:44)—

“In the days of these kings (the divided state) shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed. And the Kingdom shall not be left to other people (never be superseded, as previous powers), but it shall break in pieces and consume ALL these kingdoms, and it shall STAND FOR EVER.”

This is the *literal interpretation and explanation* by Daniel of the symbolic vision the king saw, so *it* cannot be dismissed as symbolic, or spiritualized away.

Here, then, is a Kingdom 1) to be set up on the earth by God, 2) taking the place and power of ALL other kingdoms of the world, and 3) lasting for ever. The world conditions today tell us that this is soon to happen. It is a warning for us to be prepared for the return of Christ, and to be sure to be on God’s side when He “shakes terribly” the nations of the earth.

Daniel elsewhere gives us much more evidence identifying these world powers, and showing us in prophecy the details of their history, telling us that God knew in advance what the nations would do, and that He controls them—

“Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

ALL PRESENT GOVERNMENTS TO BE DESTROYED

That the real literal world powers are to be destroyed is often testified—

“Ask of Me (God), and I will give thee (Christ) the heathen (goyim: nations) 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” (Psa. 2:8-9).

“The Lord at thy (Christ’s) right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He shall JUDGE AMONG THE NATIONS. He shall fill the places with the dead bodies. He shall wound the heads over many countries” (Psa. 110:5-6).

“I will shake the heavens and the earth. And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms. And I will DESTROY THE STRENGTH OF THE KINGDOMS OF NATIONS” (Hag. 2:21-22).

“He that overcometh, to him will I give POWER OVER THE NATIONS, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron. As the vessels of a potter shall they be BROKEN TO SHIVERS” (Rev. 2:26-27).

“To execute vengeance upon the nations, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written—

this honor have all His saints” (Psa. 149:7-9).

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit THE EARTH, and DWELL THEREIN FOR EVER” (Psa. 37:9, 11, 22, 29; Matt. 5:5).

This Kingdom of God over the earth, established on the ruins of all present world powers, is to be given to the servants of God (Dan. 7:27)—

“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.”

These “saints of the Most High,” together with Christ their Head, are shown to be rulers in the Kingdom. Thus we read in Rev. 5:9-10—

“Thou (Christ) hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation: and hast made us unto our God KINGS and priests, and WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH.”

“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” (Rev. 20:6).

THE “SUBJECTS” ARE THE MORTAL NATIONS THAT REMAIN

The *subjects* of the Kingdom are the peoples of the nations of the world, subdued and humbled by God’s judgments upon them, and then purified and blessed. The Jewish nation, brought back to Palestine and cleansed of their present wickedness, will be the world’s leading dominion, or first kingdom, under the glorified saints. And all nations shall journey to Jerusalem yearly to worship God—

“Many people and strong nations shall come to seek the lord of hosts IN JERUSALEM, and to pray before the Lord. In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:22-23).

“In the last days . . . I will gather her that is driven out . . . and make her a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mt. Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the FIRST DOMINION. The Kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem” (Mic. 4:1-8).

“The Day of the Lord cometh . . . all nations gathered against Jerusalem to battle . . . the Lord shall smite them . . . and every

one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and keep the Feast of Tabernacles” (Zech. 14:1-16).

“Come, behold the works of the Lord: what desolations He hath made in earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth . . . I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted IN THE EARTH” (Psa. 46:8-10).

“By fire and sword will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many . . . I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see My glory . . . from one new moon to another shall ALL FLESH come to worship before Me, saith the Lord” (Isa. 66:16-23).

PALESTINE THE CENTER—JERUSALEM THE CAPITAL

The central territory of God’s Kingdom over the earth is the land of Palestine, the Holy Land, the Promised Land; and its capital is Jerusalem, the Holy City, the “City of the Great King” (Matt. 5:35). We are told that this land is—

“A land which the Lord thy God careth for. The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end” (Deut. 11:12).

“The glory of all lands” (Eze. 20:6, 15).

This is the land promised to Abraham for an everlasting possession—

“Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, southward, eastward and westward. All the land which thou seest, to THEE will I give it, AND to thy Seed FOR EVER” (Gen. 13:14).

This is the land to be bestowed when all the nations of the world are blessed in Abraham and his Seed, which is Christ. The Jews occupied this land many years ago: not under the eternal Abrahamic Covenant, but under the temporary Mosaic, conditional upon obedience. But they were driven out for disobedience, as Moses foretold from the beginning they would be.

JEWS TO BE GATHERED, PURGED, PURIFIED, AND BLESSED

The land has for centuries lain desolate, again exactly as foretold. But there are many promises and prophecies of a final regathering. The Eternal Promise to Abraham and his Seed requires this land to again be the scene of God’s restored Kingdom, and the center of the world-dominion promised to Abraham (Rom. 4:13).

“In the day that I (God) shall have cleansed you (Israel) from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and

the wastes shall be builded . . . And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are inhabited . . .

“I will make them one nation upon the mountains of Israel, and one King shall be King to them all . . . They shall walk in My judgments and observe My statutes . . . they shall dwell in the land I have given unto Jacob, where your fathers have dwelt . . . I will set My Sanctuary in the midst of them . . . and the nations shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when My Sanctuary shall be in the midst of them FOR EVERMORE” (Eze. 36:33-35; 37:22-28).

This land will become the center of world government and laws (Isa. 2:2-4).

“It shall come to pass in the LAST DAYS that the Lord’s House shall be established in the top of the mountains . . . and ALL NATIONS shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the House of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways . . . For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

“And He shall JUDGE AMONG THE NATIONS, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares . . . nation shall not lift up sword against nation: NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANYMORE.”

What a tremendous, glorious change is in store for this war-torn old earth!

The Jews are to return to Palestine, and there to become the first dominion of the world, under the rule of Christ and the immortalized servants of God—those who have believed the Gospel of the Kingdom, and have striven to obey God in all things in this present day.

WE SEE SIGNS THAT IT IS NEAR

We see these things coming about by world events in our days. The Image of Nebuchadnezzar is quickly coming together, and being prepared for Christ and the Saints to destroy it with divine power. Christ is now at God’s right hand, awaiting the time appointed by God when, as the Stone in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, he returns to strike the Image on its latter-day feet, and completely break it up, grinding it to a powder that the wind blows away. Then (Rev. 11:15)—

“The kingdoms of THIS WORLD are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign FOR EVER AND EVER.”

It is clear again from this, as from such passages as Daniel 2 and 7, that the Kingdom of God does not yet exist; for when it does, all the present kingdoms of men will have been completely destroyed and ceased to exist. God’s Kingdom, when

it is established, is to utterly destroy all present governments, and wholly fill the earth.

Then will be brought about that glorious reign of Christ for a thousand years, teaching all nations righteousness and leading them to God, at last eliminating all sin and death. The government will be firm, just, equal, and allwise: the every opposite of today's blind, stumbling, erring fleshly Powers. All will know God, and serve Him with one consent. And at last will be brought about the fulfilment of the angelic prophecy: "*Glory to God in the highest: on earth peace, goodwill toward men.*"

This glorious promised condition formed the basis of the Gospel. Without it, there is no true Gospel. Jesus commanded his disciples to preach *this Kingdom* as the Gospel message, and this is what all must believe to be saved (Mk. 16:15-16)—

"Go ye into all the world and PREACH THE GOSPEL to every creature. HE THAT BELIEVETH and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

A belief in these Divine Promises is necessary to have part in this blessed and happy world condition to come. Do we believe them? Are we ready?

THE KINGDOM OF GOD NOT YET IN EXISTENCE:

TO BE ESTABLISHED ON THE EARTH,
SUPPLANTING ALL PRESENT GOVERNMENTS

Lesson 16: Christendom Astray, Chapter 8, Part 1

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THE PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. What was the theme of the preaching of Christ and the disciples before the death of Jesus?
2. Did Jesus' disciples realize their Master had to die and be raised? Give quotations to prove your answer.
3. What feature was added to the preaching of the Apostles after Christ ascended to the right hand of God?
4. What was the source of Paul's information when preaching about the Kingdom of God and about Jesus Christ? (To what did he refer?)
5. What did Paul say of any who presume to change the Gospel message?
6. Where will the Kingdom of God be established?
7. Who will rule over the Kingdom of God?
8. What is the "Kingdom of Men"?
9. What is the natural directing force behind the Kingdom of Men?

10. What was God's purpose in causing the King of Babylon to dream of the Great Image of various metals?
11. What four world nations ruled as world empires? (Give in order).
12. What happened to the fourth world empire?
13. What is to happen when the present world powers are destroyed?
14. How long will the Kingdom of God last?
15. What is the purpose of its first preliminary thousand years?
16. Has God told us what He intends to do in the earth, and to its people?
17. Will the Kingdom be established with persuasion or with force?
18. What position will the Jewish nation hold in God's Kingdom?
19. From what center will world laws be issued?
20. What will all people be required to do each year?
21. Can we believe the Gospel without understanding and believing the things concerning the Kingdom?
22. Can we be saved without knowing and believing the true Gospel?

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE GOSPEL OF OUR SALVATION

Lesson 17: Christendom Astray, Chapter 8, Part 2

“He (Paul) expounded and testified the Kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the prophets” (Acts 28:23).

No man can believe the Gospel who is ignorant of what the prophets have said about the Kingdom of God. Before the death of Christ, his death and resurrection were not included as part of the Gospel. In apostolic times, after the resurrection of Jesus this feature was added to the Gospel message. Thus of Christ’s preaching we read—

“He went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God” (Lk. 8:1).

In Acts 8:12 we read—

“When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, AND THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, they were baptized, both men and women.”

The glad tidings of the coming Kingdom of God would have been no value to us, if provision had not been made for us to enter into a possession of that Kingdom. But though the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ were added, there was no change in the Gospel message.

The message of the New Testament makes constant reference to the Kingdom of God. We cannot say therefore that God’s Kingdom referred to the Jewish nation alone, and has no further application. Christ said—

“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33).

When Christ instructed his disciples to pray one of the first aspects he exhorted to pray for was the coming Kingdom—

“Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

The generality of church goers are instructed that the Kingdom of God is the church and that the extension of the Kingdom in the earth is the expansion of the church. No relationship is made between God’s Kingdom in the past with anything He intends to do in the earth in the future.

In faith we are exhorted to accept the Kingdom of God as little children and that a failure to do so will exclude us from a part in that Kingdom.

The basic essentials of this Kingdom are included in the following passages of the Bible and are in complete harmony with all of the Word of God.

1. *Jesus Christ is to return from heaven to earth to restore the throne of David, and build up his Kingdom as in the days of old. (Acts 3:20) This had been prophesied by Amos 9:11, and the work of Christ is, by the apostles, shown to be related to this prophecy.*
2. *Jesus Christ is to remove the mighty and proud from their authority and exalt those who are humble in God's sight to rule the earth. (Lk. 1:52)*
3. *He will humble all the rulers of the earth and compel service to him as King of all the earth. (Isa. 24:21; Psa 72:8-11; Dan. 7:14; Psa. 2:9)*
4. *Christ is to reign as King in a restored Jerusalem, as ruler from this point over all the earth. (Isa. 24:23; Jer. 3:17; Mic. 4:2-7)*
5. *Christ will give power as co-rulers with him, to those who are accepted at the judgment seat. (Rev. 2:26-27; Rev. 5:9-10; Psa. 149:5, 9; Dan. 7:27)*
6. *Jesus will regather the dispersed tribes of Jacob from all nations of the earth to the land of their fathers, and to constitute them a glorious nation, served and honored by all other nations, as they have been scorned and despised by all nations. (Isa. 49:6; Eze. 37:21-22; Zeph. 3:19-20; Isa. 61:5, 7; Isa. 60:10, 14)*

On the things of the Kingdom, we find Jesus placed great importance. He spent the last forty days on earth speaking of them to his disciples.

"To whom he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3).

If this was so important how necessary that we understand clearly the relation of the Kingdom of God to the Gospel message which is our only means of salvation.

"Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

The "Kingdom of Heaven" and the "Kingdom of God," are the same thing. This Kingdom is the opposite of the kingdom of men, which has ruled the earth for six thousand years unsuccessfully. It is to be a heavenly Kingdom of God, because it will be ruled by Christ, who will have returned from heaven,

ruling in the righteous judgments of God, assisted by those who have been faithful to God throughout all ages of man's rule.

Belief of these things together with a constant effort to do the will of God at all times will prepare a man or woman for association with Christ in ruling the world in the age to come. To stand firm in this determination of the present time takes courage. We shall be considered "peculiar", "old-fashioned" and "simple" for adhering to the words of God, rather than "going along" with the worldly crowd.

We must determine what we want the most, either "the pleasure of sin for a season", "the lusts of the eye", "the lust of the flesh", "the pride of life" (which all are to perish) or the "crown of life that fadeth not away."

"The things which are seen are temporal, the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18).

"The unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9).

"Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14).

"How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God" (Mk. 10:24).

The opposite side of this picture is joy and happiness.

"Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him" (Jam. 2:5).

Riches of themselves do not bar a man from God's Kingdom. But the circumstances which come upon those who have them make it difficult for a walk in harmony with the will of God. Their lives are not favorably set to see the values and need for the Kingdom of God. But to those who must labor diligently for the necessities of an existence in the present age, the blessings of the age to come stand out as something to be desired.

To those who have the promises of God before them, men and women are blessed even in this present time, for they possess a peace of mind which others do not have; knowing that the present struggle will soon end, and give place to a blessed condition throughout the earth; that though the sea and waves of world troubles make a roaring and frightening sound, the one who will speak peace to the nations is soon to return.

That the world of Christendom would turn from the beautiful truth of God's promises was prophesied by Paul and others, and that which we see today and has been for centuries establishes the foreknowledge of God and the truth of what He said—

"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their

ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

We are exhorted to save ourselves from this untoward generation, to gladly receive the gospel message and be baptized; thereafter to continue faithfully in the will of God unto the coming of the Master; and thereby—

“An entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:11).

* * *

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE GOSPEL OF OUR SALVATION

Lesson 17: *Christendom Astray*, Chapter 8, Part 2

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. Can a man believe and understand the gospel without a knowledge of what the Jewish prophets have spoken?
2. What feature was incorporated in the Gospel message after the ascension of Christ?
3. Why was it necessary to add the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ to the gospel?
4. Is the Kingdom of God only referred to in the Old Testament or does it form the basis of all Old and New Testament teaching?
5. What is the common church theory about “the Kingdom of God”?
6. Will the throne of David be re-established in Jerusalem?
7. Who will take part in ruling the world during the Kingdom age?
8. What will happen to all the natural Jews in the Kingdom age?
9. What will happen to all human world rulers?
10. Concerning what things did Christ instruct his disciples for forty days after his resurrection?
11. Is there any difference between the “Kingdom of heaven” and the “Kingdom of God”? Why is it so referred to?
12. What will make us prepared to associate with Christ in ruling the world?
13. What present advantage is there to those who know the truth and obey God’s precepts?
14. Was the departure from the truth of God known about before it came to pass?
15. What is the commandment to the true believer to assure their possession of the Kingdom of God?

THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB

TO BE FULFILLED WHEN GOD'S KINGDOM IS ESTABLISHED ON THE EARTH

Lesson 18: Christendom Astray, Chapter 9, Part 1

“Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old” (Mic. 7:20).

Constantly throughout the writings of the apostles we find references to “the promises made to the fathers.” The mission of Christ is linked with these promises. Paul declared—
“Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the Truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. 15:8).

It is important therefore that we know about these promises if we would understand the work of Christ clearly. Paul indicates that we become related to these promises when we are baptized into Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16, 29)—

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, ‘And to SEEDS,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to thy SEED,’ which is Christ.”

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Abraham emigrated from Chaldea at God’s command, and became a sojourner in Canaan, where God promised to greatly multiply his posterity, making them a great nation in the country where he was then a stranger.

He was promised that a son would come in his line of descendants as a Savior of the world, through whom the whole world should be blessed.

While it is generally believed by Christendom that these promises only had reference to the Jews in the past, there is abundant evidence that they have yet to be fulfilled by a wonderful blessing of all mankind, during a reign of Christ on the earth for a thousand years. These promises had not been fulfilled in the days of the apostles, as we see in Hebrews 11—

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb. 11:13, 35).

This is repeated in vs. 39-40—

“These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

These promises relate to the very foundation of the salvation through Christ. Paul said (Acts 26:6)—

“I am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers.”

Similar illustrations we find in Luke 1—

“He hath holpen His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy, as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever” (vs. 51-55).

“To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham” (vs. 68-73).

These passages indicate that those in the first century were still looking for a fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises.

* * *

Let us look at those promises. The record is contained in Genesis. God said to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3)—

“Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee. I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.”

“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. Arise, walk through the land in the length, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee” (Gen. 13:14-17).

“I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth, be blessed” (Gen. 22:16-18.)

These same promises were repeated to Isaac and Jacob, the “heirs with Abraham of the same promise”—

“And the Lord appeared unto Isaac and said: Unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father” (Gen. 26:2-4.)

And to Jacob the same promise was made when he fled from Esau, his brother—*“I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed ... In thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed”* (Gen. 28:13).

These promises consist of several different items, which we will consider separately, and we shall see that they can only be fulfilled in the future—when Christ returns to establish God’s Kingdom and bring blessings to all nations.

ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS SHOULD BECOME A GREAT AND MIGHTY NATION.

While it is true that Abraham's natural descendants became a great nation, this was not the real sense of the fulfillment of the promise. These descendants were in most cases an evil generation who constantly rebelled against God. It would have been no blessing to Abraham to surround him with such a wicked people. And Paul tells us that not all the natural seed of Abraham are the seed intended in the promise (Rom. 9:6-8.)

"They are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but; In Isaac shall thy seed be called."

"That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob pleased God by faith and obedience. Those of their descendants who did not were not counted of Israel. But there has been in every generation of Abraham's natural descendants a small remnant who were like Abraham in service to God and trust Him. These are the children of the promise.

But these are not the only seed of the promise. The rest will come from the Gentiles who have received the invitation to become adopted Jews of Abraham's stock by the preaching of the apostles. This is explained by Paul in the following verses—

"God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14).

"That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ, by the gospel" (Eph. 3:6).

"Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only but also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised" (Rom. 4:11-12).

Paul told the Galatians that if any are baptized into Christ they have "put on" or become related to Christ, and that in this position they are the seed of Abraham and thus heirs of the promises made to Abraham. This is in Gal. 3:28.

The present time is not the fulfillment of the promise. Most of the class both of Jews and Gentiles who are the seed of Abraham are now sleeping in the dust of the earth. They must be resurrected to receive the promise. The time of the promise is when, as Christ stated in Matt. 8:11—

“Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”

This time is referred to in 2 Thess. 2:1 as—*“The coming of the Lord Jesus and our gathering together unto him.”*

Then shall Abraham see his seed as a great and mighty nation, as the stars of heaven and the sand by the sea for multitude; for his faithful seed, raised from the dead of all ages, will be immortalized and be seen as a multitude which no man can number (Rev. 7:9)—

“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 Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.”

Abraham’s natural descendants who are alive at this time, having turned to the service of God, will be the leading nation on earth, all righteous and inheriting the Holy Land. Isaiah 60:21 tells us—

“Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever.”

And Zephaniah foretells (3:19) —

“Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame.

“At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord.”

THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB

TO BE FULFILLED WHEN GOD'S KINGDOM IS
ESTABLISHED ON THE EARTH

Lesson 18: *Christendom Astray,* Chapter 9, Part 1

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. What relationship does Paul say exists between the promises and the mission of Christ?
2. In what way can we become related to the promises?
3. From what country did Abraham originally come?
4. How do we know that the promises were not fulfilled in the days of the apostles?
5. Did Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ever receive the fulfillment of the promise?
6. Did Paul hope for a fulfillment of the promise?
7. In what way did certain faithful connect the birth of Christ with the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?
8. Was the same promise made to Abraham, Isaac and to Jacob?
9. Where will the promise be fulfilled? When will they be fulfilled?
10. Did Abraham's natural descendants, the Jews, grow into a great nation in the past?
11. Why is this not a fulfillment of the promise?
12. Who are the real seed which are intended in the promise?
13. Just because any are naturally descended from Abraham are they the real seed of the promise?
14. What is necessary to make a man or woman of the real seed of Abraham?
15. Can a Gentile become part of the seed of Abraham?
16. At present where are most of the seed of Abraham, who will make up the great nation of the promise?
17. In what way can those who are now dead, who became related to the promise, receive the promise?
18. What position will Abraham's natural fleshy descendants, who are alive when Christ's kingdom

THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM REFER TO POSSESSION OF THE EARTH

Lesson 19: Christendom Astray, Chapter 9, Part 2

“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” (Gen. 17:8).

The Biblical record clearly shows that this promise has never been fulfilled. Moses tells us that ABRAHAM HAD TO BUY A PLACE TO BURY HIS WIFE SARAH. At that time Abraham told the people of Canaan (Gen. 23:4)—

“I am a stranger and a sojourner with you.”

Paul the apostle said Abraham—

“Sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country” (Heb. 11:9).

Stephen confirms the same—

“God gave Abraham none inheritance in it; no, not so much as to set his foot on, yet He promised that He would give it him for a possession” (Acts 7:5).

The promise WAS NOT FULFILLED when Abraham’s natural descendants occupied the land under the leadership of Joshua. The inheritance of Canaan by natural Israel in the past was conditional on their obedience to the Law of God through Moses. But God promised the land to Abraham and his righteous descendants freely and unconditionally—that is, they were assured possession with no reversal or casting out, as in the case of the law (Gal. 3:16-18)—

“If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.”

And Paul further said to the Romans (4:13-14)—

“The promise that he should be heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith; for, if they which are of the Law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.”

In the Epistle to the Hebrews Paul tells us Abraham was called to go into a country which he should AFTERWARDS receive for an inheritance. This country is without question the land now known as Israel, Palestine or “The Holy Land.” We are further told that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—

“All died in faith, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISES, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them.”

Stephen pin-points the land referred to in the promise, when in Acts 7:3-4 he says—

“He removed him (Abraham) into this land, WHEREIN YE NOW DWELL. And He gave him none inheritance in it, no not so much as to set his foot on.”

“Yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him.”

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob saw the promises as an assurance that God would set up a Divine government on this earth, which would not be removed. They saw that the promises referred to a future age from their time. Paul tells us they died without receiving the promises. This shows that they believed in resurrection from the dead to everlasting life.

The time of the fulfillment is as expressed in Rev. 11:18—

“The time of the dead that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants, the prophets.”

In the same place we see another feature of the promise in fulfillment (Rev. 11:15) —

“The kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ.”

It is the time of which Paul said in 2 Tim. 4:1—

“Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom.”

* * *

Christ speaking to the rulers of his time clearly indicated the prospect in store for the Jewish fathers—

“Ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out” (Lk. 13:28-29).

There is a constant message from the prophets of Israel that the land in which Abraham sojourned is the land of the promise. Here are a few examples—

“The Lord shall inherit Judah, His portion in the Holy Land” (Zech. 2:12).

“Saviors shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord’s” (Obad. 21).

“The Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from hence forth, even for ever” (Mic. 4:7).

And from the kingdom prophet Isaiah (51:3)—

“For the Lord shall comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.”

Paul tells us in Hebrews 11, that Abraham looked for a city “which had foundations,” and a “heavenly country.” Palestine will be a heavenly country, when Christ, having re-established the kingdom of David, rules in it as king over all the earth; and

his kingdom will be a city having foundations, for it will stand upon a rock which no rebellion can overthrow.

Abraham's seed are linked with him in the fulfillment of these promises. Paul says in Gal. 3:16 that Christ is this seed of Abraham, and also all those who become related to Christ by belief and baptism (Gal. 3:29). Christ and the saints are the appointed possessors with Abraham of the land of Israel.

* * *

If Christ and his faithful are to rule the earth in the future it is necessary to have a capital as the center of operations. Palestine is situated at the conjunction of the three great continents of the earth. It can be approached from any quarter on the great oceans. It is the natural center of a world government. It is the finest situation on the earth.

It has been the scene of all God's operations among men in the past, to the time of the crucifixion of His Son.

What more befitting than that the scene of Christ's humility should be the place of his glorification! The prophets tell us this will be the case—

"The law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Mic. 4:2).

"The redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion" (Isa. 51:11).

"Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down" (Isa. 25:7).

"At that time, they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord" (Jer. 3:17).

These quotations show that the fulfillment of the promise is intended in a literal sense. Ezekiel the prophet devotes his last eight chapters to describing the glorious Temple and its service which will be built in the Holy Land; unto which all nations will journey yearly to worship God. From this center Christ and the saints will operate to bring blessings to all the earth.

THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM REFER TO POSSESSION OF THE EARTH

Lesson 19: Christendom Astray,

Chapter 9, Part 2

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PROCEEDING MATERIAL

1. Did Abraham possess the land of promise when he came out of Ur of the Chaldees?
2. Did Abraham consider his life in Canaan as a fulfillment of the promise?
3. Did God ever give Abraham the land of promise?
4. Was the possession of Canaan by Abraham's natural descendants the fulfillment of the promise?
5. What was the basis of Israel's possession of Canaan in the past under the Law of Moses?
6. Was the promise of the possession of the land to Abraham in any way conditional? Would the possessors under this promise ever be removed?
7. How does Stephen identify the land of promise to his hearers, which proves it refers to the earth?
8. If the Jewish fathers died in faith of receiving a fulfillment of the promise, what must happen to them?
9. When will the fulfillment of the promise take place?
10. When the promise is fulfilled what will happen to all world governments?
11. How do we know that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be in the Kingdom of God?
12. What do the prophets of Israel say will happen to the Holy Land in the future?
13. What is the meaning of the quotation "a city which hath foundations"?
14. What is the meaning of "a heavenly country"?
15. Who are the seed of Abraham?
16. What place will be the center of world government?
17. What geographical feature makes this place suitable for a future world capital?
18. Why from two historical aspects is this place most appropriate as the radiating center of all future laws and government?
19. What does Ezekiel say will happen in the Holy Land in the Kingdom Age, which will bring about the blessing of all nations?

THAT CHRIST, ABRAHAM'S SEED, IS TO CONQUER THE WORLD AND BRING BLESSEDNESS TO ALL NATIONS

Lesson 20: Christendom Astray, Chapter 9, Part 3

"Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies"
(Genesis 22:17).

The gate of ancient eastern cities was the place of authority. For one to sit in this position in an enemy city was to have conquered and to rule over their enemies. In no way can we say that Christ has possessed the gate of his enemies, for wicked and ungodly men still rule the world. The capital of Christ's kingdom, Jerusalem, is still trodden down of the Gentiles, and will be so until Christ's return (Lk. 21:24).

When the Kingdom of God is about to be established, God will subdue all world kingdoms—

"He shall break them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psa. 2:9).

"Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle" (Zech. 14:3).

"I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands . . . an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone" (Eze. 38:22).

"All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him" (Psa. 72:11).

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psa. 72:8).

Then shall this world proclamation be made for all peoples to know and accept—

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

Paul said that the Gospel was the blessing of all nations in Abraham's seed (Gal. 3:8). This agrees with the preaching of Christ and the apostles who spoke of "the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ" (Acts (8-12)). They explain in detail the way the blessing of all nations is to be brought about.

First it applies to individuals and then to nations. This has not yet been established, for we see nations subjected to wicked rulers and cruel leaders. In some countries there is an appearance of good government, but underneath, as we watch daily events, we see that it is rottenness and corruption, the will and lusts of the flesh and not the will of God. There is no fear of God before these leaders. All nations are NOT now blessed in Abraham and his seed Christ, but they WILL be; for we read—

“Behold a king shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment . . . the eyes of them that see shall not be dim and the ears of them that hear shall hearken” (Isa. 32:1-3).

“In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book; the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness” (Isa. 29:18).

“Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.”

“Many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.”

“He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. His name shall endure for ever. His name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed” (Psa. 72).

The blessings which are illustrated in these verses of Scripture are the very things the world has been crying for. It can never come by human efforts. It can never come until nations learn righteousness.

But this very proclamation indicates that a great need exists in the world, even in a highly developed country like America. It requires Christ with Divine power at his command, to take the administration of the world’s affairs into his hands.

The promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will never be established until these men inherit the land, and Abraham’s seed possesses the authority over his enemies. It requires a righteous and resistless ruler to remove all other rulers from their positions of power and authority.

* * *

God gave a law to the natural descendants of the patriarchs, the Law of Moses, which was primarily designed to lead them to a deeper understanding of God and the way He intended to remove sin from the earth. It was arranged by repeated sacrifice and offerings to show the terrible effects of sin and the coming of Christ to remove this condition.

This was to prepare their minds for the acceptance of a coming Savior, and a realization of the need for a Savior. Without this law the knowledge of God would have passed away, and a similar condition to the times just before the flood

in Noah's time would have again appeared. So the Law was to keep God in the minds of the people, preparing a condition whereby God could bestow the blessings promised to Abraham.

God had to make the first move. He had to create a title to these blessings, which, because all men are sinners, men could not create themselves. Abraham was selected by God because of faithfulness to an unconditional promise the Creator had made to him. This gave Abraham and his seed sole right to the things promised. This shows why we must become Abraham's seed if we as Gentiles hope for a future life and inheritance—

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made."

"For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

"And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:13, 27-29).

But this promise had to be "confirmed" or "made sure." The Jewish Fathers were promised the land of Palestine as an everlasting possession. Therefore these men must be raised from the dead and made to live forever. Because of this feature of the promise we can conclude that resurrection and eternal life are taught by the promise.

Christ showed this by quoting God's words to Moses at the Burning Bush, when speaking to the Sadducees who did not believe in resurrection—

"But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

"I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?"

"God is not the God of the dead but of the living."

By God declaring He was the God of three men who were already dead and buried was proof that He was going to raise them from the dead, and this illustration by Christ, completely silenced the Sadducees. Because those men were "in Adam," in whom all die, and were sinners by failure to do always those things pleasing to God, therefore they could not naturally rise from the dead to immortality.

How could they be brought to life, for God (Who cannot lie) to fulfill His promise to them? God had promised and also sealed His promise with an oath.

The way was provided through Christ. He confirmed the promises to these men by making the fulfillment possible. Christ "shed his blood (the blood of the new, or Abrahamic Covenant) for the sins of many."

By Christ's perfect obedience to God in all things and by the sacrifice of himself, he unsealed the gates of death, opened up

the way to everlasting life, made it possible for the promises to the fathers to be fulfilled.

This was the great event, shown when Abraham offered his son Isaac, shown by the sacrifices of the Law of Moses—all pointing forward to the coming of “The Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.” All those who looked forward with faith in God to the provision of this great Sacrifice had their sins covered and were in a position to receive the fulfillment of the promise.

So to those who, as Paul says, “are baptized into Christ,” in faith believing the things promised and walk in obedience to the commandments, the way to everlasting life (by escape from death) is provided.

“The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ,” preached by Christ and the Apostles are simply a fuller explanation of the promises made unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

We can see hereby how we can be the seed or children of Abraham. And we can see in its completeness the Plan of God, covenanted with Abraham, shown in the Law, unfolding through the prophets and fully elaborated in the preaching of Christ and the apostles.

THAT CHRIST, ABRAHAM'S SEED, IS TO CONQUER THE WORLD AND BRING BLESSEDNESS TO ALL NATIONS

Lesson 20: *Christendom Astray,* Chapter 9, Part 3

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. What is the meaning of "possessing the gate of the enemy"?
2. Has Christ, as the seed of Abraham, ever possessed the gate of his enemies?
3. What is the present position of the Capital of Christ's kingdom?
4. What have the prophets declared God will do to world powers?
5. How extensive will Christ's dominion be?
6. How will the world rulers finally receive Christ?
7. In what way will all nations be blessed in Christ's future kingdom?
8. Are there any evidences today of a need for the world to be blessed?
9. Why cannot man, unaided by God, bring about these blessings?
10. What was the primary purpose of the law of Moses given to Israel?
11. Why could not man create a right to the blessings which God promised to Abraham?
12. How can we become related to the promises made to Abraham?
13. For anyone to inherit the blessing promised through Abraham, what must happen to their physical nature?
14. If anyone has died with faith in the Abrahamic promises, what must happen to them to have a part in their fulfillment?
15. What incident from the Old Testament did Christ use to prove the resurrection?
16. How did Christ's quotation to the Sadducees prove the resurrection?
17. Why could not Abraham, Isaac and Jacob rise from the dead naturally to receive the blessings?
18. In what way was a provision made to open the grave of all the righteous to come forth to be given everlasting life?
19. What great event was foreshadowed by all Old Testament sacrifices?
20. In what way was the promise to Abraham made known by the preaching of Christ and the Apostles?

GOD'S KINGDOM: FINAL STAGE IN PLAN OF HUMAN REDEMPTION

Lesson 21: Christendom Astray, Chapter 10

“In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed . . . It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (Dan. 2:44).

Everything that God does is orderly and useful. There is no wasted energy or motion. This is clearly visible by observing nature around us. How much more so in spiritual things for whose furtherance all the things of the universe are arranged.

We have seen that it is God's intention to intervene in world affairs, to destroy all human governments and to establish His Own Kingdom on the earth.

This being so, what is the object of such a Kingdom and what are to be its results? God has a higher purpose than just illustrating to mankind a perfect government controlling mortal individuals.

God's Kingdom is itself to be a stepping stone, the final drama of His plan of salvation for mankind.

The object of God's dominion is to subdue every form of evil. Paul referred to it as—

“In the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ” (Eph. 1:10).

This Kingdom is only to last a thousand years. During this time it is the purpose of Christ to subdue “all enemies.” These enemies are not only persons who may oppose Christ and his government, but even death, which is described as the “last enemy” (1 Cor. 15:25-26)—

“He (Jesus) must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

The “all enemies” are of various kinds. The first class of enemies to be subdued are the governments of the world—

“It (God's Kingdom) shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms” (Dan. 2:44).

The greatest evil that affects mankind at present is bad government. Violence rules the people in most countries, and is thinly covered in so-called civilized countries, with which we are acquainted. As we read in Psa. 74:20—

“The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.”

The Psalmist pleads with God in this place to have respect to, or to consider, His covenant with Abraham, because of the cruelty which is in the earth. The confusion in Africa as the new nations rise to power without democratic form of government is evident every day in the news. The despotism in Russia, China, Indonesia, Cuba and many South American countries, are illustrations of the result of human power in a few hands, oppressing the poor.

And even in Britain, United States, Canada, and the Commonwealth countries, corruption in government is always being revealed. These conditions will only disappear when the proper means is supplied by the Kingdom of God.

* * *

The first step of God's Kingdom is to subdue this great enemy of man, human government.

This will result in (Rev. 11:15)—

"The kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

One government will take the place of many: God in Christ will reign, instead of mortal man (Zech. 14:9)—

"The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His Name one."

There will be worldwide government, controlled with wisdom and compassion. Nothing will be too difficult of attainment, nothing too small to be noticed. Thus will the world experience the blessings of true government for the first time. Notice the clauses of the beautiful kingdom psalm, Psa. 72—

"He shall judge the poor."

"He shall break in pieces the oppressor."

"In his days shall the righteous flourish."

"Abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth."

"Dominion to the ends of the earth."

"His enemies shall lick the dust."

"The kings . . . shall bring presents."

"All kings shall fall down before him."

"All nations shall serve him."

"He shall deliver . . . and spare the poor and needy."

"He shall redeem the needy from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight."

"Men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed."

* * *

With the removal of all world governments there is the necessity for the elimination of false and deceptive religions of every kind.

The object of pagan and Christian religions to reclaim men's lives and bring about a glorious society under present human

rule are utterly vain and useless. Temporary benefits may be accomplished, but are of no permanent and lasting good for mankind generally.

Knowledge has been increased it is true, even as prophesied (Dan. 12:4), but it has not increased morality. Rather the reverse is on every hand. The world, while getting more clever, is going backward in righteousness. Only when God's judgments are in the earth will its inhabitants learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9). The prophet Habakkuk (2:14) declares—

“The earth SHALL be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

The ignorance and barbarism of the present age will disappear. God's Kingdom will have removed all earth's governments and have established divine authority with a firm hand in every part of the globe. Thus it will be an easy matter to bring enlightenment and liberate all “peoples, nations and languages,” and thus develop allegiance to Christ as earth's future king.

* * *

Jerusalem will be the center of world authority, the capitol of the kingdom (Jer. 3:17)—

“At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the Name of the Lord, to Jerusalem.

“Neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil hearts.”

Men's hearts will be turned from evil to serve God with one consent. God's laws shall issue forth from Jerusalem, providing instruction in the ways of the Lord, working out intellectual, moral and social reformation. Isaiah declares the people of the world will say—

“Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.

“For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

“And He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks:

“Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:3-4).

World ignorance of the ways of God will be removed by people being brought in contact with this new center of instruction. The superstition of popular “Christianity,” and pagan idol-worship will be swept away (Isa. 25:6-9)—

“God will destroy in this mountain (Jerusalem) the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

“And it shall be said in that day,

“Lo, this is our God: we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”

This gathering of all nations to Jerusalem is shown to be a pilgrimage throughout the whole year, with each nation taking their turn. Jerusalem could not contain all the earth's inhabitants at one time, and— *“God is not the author of confusion.”*

* * *

Zechariah shows us that the people who survive the judgments of God upon all nations will make a yearly visit to Jerusalem—

“Everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

“And it shall be that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.”

This annual journey to Jerusalem will provide a pleasant change from the routine of everyday activity, a yearly refreshing journey, as the people rejoice in the purposeful reason of their pilgrimage. There will be a strengthening of happy allegiance to the throne of the Lord, occupied by Christ Jesus—

“Thy servants take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof.

“The heathen shall fear the Name of the Lord.

“He will regard the prayer of the destitute.

“The people which shall be created shall praise the Lord” (Psa. 102:14-18).

This is a bringing about of the condition the righteous have petitioned of God—

“Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.”

And the fulfillment of the angelic song—

“Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and goodwill toward men.”

* * *

Death will continue during the thousand year Kingdom Age. Not for Jesus and the saints who rule the earth with him, but among the subjected nations who continue in their present death-subjected natures.

But life will be greatly prolonged. Death may happen at one hundred years, but such an individual will be considered as a

child. The term “old man” will not be used of anyone who has not lived for centuries, as before the flood.

Because of this long life men with certainty shall build houses and inhabit them, plant trees and eat the fruit of them. As the days of trees (which continue for centuries), shall be the days of God’s people (Isa. 65:20-22).

But the rulers (Christ and the saints) will be immortal, neither can they die any more. (Lk. 20:36)—

“They that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage.

“Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

* * *

Ultimately death will be removed from the earth.

It is the last enemy which shall be destroyed; all other enemies, of whatever kind, being removed beforehand. All the mortal inhabitants of the Kingdom Age, will be made aware of God’s principles of salvation, and as such they will all be responsible to judgment at the end of the millennium. Such a judgment will determine if they are worthy to receive eternal life—

“And when the thousand years are expired . . . the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (the grave) gave up the dead which were in them;

“And they were judged every man according to their works”
(Rev. 20:7-15).

Those who are to be judged at the end of the thousand years are those who have lived as mortals during the same period. While there will be a great blessing of all people during the Kingdom Age, there will still be scope in the operations of God for the manifestation of faith on the part of the people. There will still be the exercise of the principle of all ages (Heb. 11:6)—

“He that cometh to God, must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

“For without faith it is impossible to please God.”

Those who please God in that age will be rewarded with unending life. Those who have not pleased God will be destroyed (Rev. 20:14-15)—

“Whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire . . . This is the second death.”

The Revelation is a book written in symbolic language. The “lake of fire” is a symbol of the final destruction of the rejectors of the Kingdom Age—

“The fearful, and unbelieving and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

Death comes in natural course of life to all the living—

“It is appointed unto men once to die” (Heb. 9:27).

A wicked man dies in like manner, but if responsible to judgment he will be restored to life for judgment and punishment.

After punishment, death the second time comes upon him—a death inflicted by divine displeasure, a death which wipes away every evidence of such individuals from God’s creation. This is the “Second Death”—

“The day that cometh shall burn them up, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch” (Mal. 4:1).

“The enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs. They shall consume; into smoke they consume away” (Psa. 37:20).

This is not eternal torment, but complete destruction. How fittingly descriptive is a lake of fire! Such a thing is seen in a mass of molten iron. To be cast into such a mass would be complete, immediate destruction, from which there is no return. Such is “the Second Death.”

We see then the purpose of the Kingdom Age in what Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 15:24-28—

“Then cometh the end, when he (Christ) shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.

“For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

The final picture is illustrated in Rev. 21:4—

“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.”

GOD'S KINGDOM: FINAL STAGE IN PLAN OF HUMAN REDEMPTION

Lesson 21: *Christendom Astray,* Chapter 10

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. How can we observe that all God's ways are orderly by natural events?
2. Is Christ's rule in the Millennial Age the end of God's purpose?
3. What is the purpose of the Kingdom of God for a thousand years?
4. Who are the first class of enemies to be destroyed by Christ?
5. What is one of the greatest evils which affects the lives of millions of the earth's inhabitants today?
6. What is to happen to all world governments?
7. What features of Christ's reign over the earth will bring blessings to all people? Compare Psalm 72.
8. What will happen to all false Pagan and "Christian" religious systems?
9. What place will be the center of world government?
10. How will the peoples of the Kingdom Age learn righteousness?
11. What yearly event will bring all peoples to pay homage to Christ as their King?
12. What will happen to those people who refuse to accept Christ during the Kingdom Age?
13. Will death for the mortal inhabitants continue to happen during the Kingdom Age?
14. Will anything happen to the normal life span of people in the Kingdom?
15. Can the rulers of that age (Christ and the saints) die?
16. When will death be removed from the earth entirely?
17. Why will all the mortal inhabitants of the Kingdom Age be brought to judgment at the end of the thousand years?
18. What is "the Second Death," and to whom does it apply?
19. What is the last enemy destroyed by Christ?
20. After the final judgment at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ, what is the nature of all earth's inhabitants?

CHRIST WILL RETURN FROM HEAVEN TO REIGN AS A KING OVER ALL THE EARTH

Lesson 22: Christendom Astray, Chapter 11

“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven”
(Acts 1:11).

There is a time coming when the Son of God shall return from the heavens to the earth as a visible person to remove all man-made governments and religious organizations. In their place he will rule the entire world as a God chosen king.

A reasonable study of *Scripture reveals a greater message concerning the Kingship of God’s Son than any other official business given into his care.* There is much more recorded in the Old Testament about the kingship of Christ than in the New Testament. The Old Testament mentions very little about the sufferings of Christ brought upon him because of sin. *The clearest message of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah (which means anointed as a king or priest) is the glory which is to cover the earth when he shall reign as a righteous king.*

The New Testament does not neglect this all-important duty but it tells more of the sadness and pain endured by God’s Son from his birth to his crucifixion.

Every admitted believer in Christ will accept the *Bible teaching that Christ is a king.* However, *the popular understanding of his kingship is that he is now reigning as a spiritual king from heaven.*

To this very day *Jews who still accept the Old Testament as the inspired Word look for the actual visible Messiah to appear on the earth and rule over all the nations.* Christ’s disciples also looked for a real Messiah that they could see and touch.

John 1:41 *“He (Andrew) first findeth his own brother Simon and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah which is being interpreted, the Christ.*

Jesus said—

“I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets, (the Old Testament), but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17).

Look at some of the *statements* made by the prophets concerning him, that he *came to fulfill—*

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands in Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be RULER IN ISRAEL” (Micah 5:2).

We know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem from the record of his birth recorded in Matthew 2. *We also know that the chief priests and scribes were aware that this prophecy of Micah referred to the Christ.*

“And he (Herod) demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem . . . (Matt. 2:5, 6).

It would be difficult to misunderstand the meaning of Jeremiah’s words in Jeremiah 23:5, 6—

“Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a KING SHALL REIGN AND PROSPER, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth: in his days, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely.”

It is this kind of statement repeated over and over again in the Old Testament that gave the nation of Israel hope for a deliverer from the nations that ruled over them and oppressed them from the time of the prophets to the present day. *The “righteous branch” spoken of in the previous quoted verse was none other than Jesus. He claimed that title for his own. He said—*

“I am the root and offspring (BRANCH) of David and the bright and morning star” (Rev. 22:16).

If Christ is this *“righteous branch”* as he claimed to be then it follows that in order to *“fulfill the Law and the Prophets,”* as he said he must, he will *“reign and prosper and execute judgment and justice in the earth”* just as Jeremiah had foretold in the same quotation.

The following verses further demonstrate the kingly duties of Christ—

“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, UPON THE THRONE OF DAVID AND UPON HIS KINGDOM, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this (Isa. 9:6, 7).

“Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place . . . and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne” (Zech. 6:12, 13).

“The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious” (Isa. 11:9, 10).

“He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him” (Psa. 72:8, 11).

If the Jews were wrong in looking for a fulfillment of these prophecies it was no fault of theirs. The language used by the “holy men of old” as they were moved by the Holy Spirit excluded any other understanding of their words.

The New Testament unmistakably supports this view of the prophets teachings. *At the very start we find the message given by the angel Gabriel to Mary supporting this view—*

“And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall GIVE UNTO HIM THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his Kingdom there shall be no end” (Lk. 1:31-33).

Here we must understand what is meant by the expression *“the throne of his father David.”* David, we know, was the most mighty and righteous king to reign over the twelve tribes of Israel. He was a mighty warrior, a prophet, and a poet. Christ, through his mother Mary, was a descendant of this great man. Peter on the day of Pentecost said—

“Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his (David’s) loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ TO SIT ON HIS THRONE” (Acts 2:30).

Peter has then identified Christ’s duties as having something to do with David’s throne. What was “DAVID’S THRONE?” It was not an object occupied by a king as a seat while making decisions affecting the nation.

The throne that Peter and the angel Gabriel spoke of was not the actual seat that David sat on. That seat has long ago crumbled into dust.

Christ told the people that the scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses’ seat (Matt. 23:2) He could not have meant that they sat in a 1,450 year old chair once owned by Moses. *He obviously meant that these men had taken over the authority and responsibility of carrying out the laws given by Moses.*

We read in 1 Kings 2:12, “Then sat Solomon on the throne of David his father.” But later in 1 Kings 10:18 we read that “he (Solomon) made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with the best gold.” From this we can conclude that while *Solomon sat on the throne of his father David in a symbolic sense because he was given authority to rule Israel;* he did not actually sit on David’s chair but occupied a different throne which he caused to be made for himself.

What was it that David was given authority to rule over? The nation of Israel and the surrounding nations. David was never given any authority to rule over the heavens or from them. All of his activities were confined to the earth. Peter said, "DAVID IS NOT ASCENDED INTO THE HEAVENS."

When the right time arrives David's throne, (actually the authority to rule over Israel and all the nations) will be set-up on earth again.

"In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen" (Amos 9:11).

Before Christ rose to his Father's right hand, he said—

"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" (Matt. 25:31).

Clearly from this passage we see that Christ must FIRST RETURN TO THE EARTH before he fulfills the prophesy that he will sit on David's throne to exercise the authority given to him to rule the earth as KING OF THE JEWS.

The last prince to sit on the throne of David was Zedekiah who proved unworthy of the authority granted to him. Ezekiel was told by God to speak about Zedekiah's approaching punishment—

"And thou profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come when iniquity shall have an end; thus saith the Lord of Hosts; Remove the diadem and take off the crown; this shall not be the same: exalt the low and abase the high: I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more until HE COME WHOSE RIGHT IT IS: and I will give it him" (Eze. 21:25-27).

Jewish history shows that *about a year after Ezekiel spoke these words, Zedekiah was uncrowned by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the Hebrew princes were killed, and part of the Jews were killed and those that were left were taken by force into Babylon.* In their absence the land was overrun with wild animals and thorns and thistles.

Seventy years later, the Jews returned to their land with Ezra and Nehemiah as their leaders but they never again had their own king. They only had governors which were appointed by the nations which came after the Babylonians and ruled over them.

The last nation to rule over them was Rome and shortly after Christ's resurrection a *Roman general completely destroyed Jerusalem again and killed over one million Jews. The rest were sold as slaves and scattered all over the world. It has only been in the last fifty years that we have seen the Jews returning to their land.*

There has been no "throne of David" for over 2,600 years, ever since it was taken from Zedekiah, the last king of Judah.

When the angel Gabriel visited Mary before the birth of Jesus he supplied the missing detail of Ezekiel's prophecy that the Jews had been looking for. *The essential detail* was—the Name of the man who would COME and have a RIGHT to the CROWN of Zedekiah. The angel said—

“The Lord God shall give unto JESUS, THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his KINGDOM there shall be no end” (Lk. 1:31-33).

The wise men from the East also mentioned this fact when they asked Herod—

“Where is he that is born KING OF THE JEWS?” (Matt. 2:2).

Some have said that this means that Jesus will reign over spiritual Jews, that is, those of all nations which accept Christ and are obedient to his commandments. *They are mistaken*, however, because these are spoken of as the “bride of Christ” (Eph. 6:23) and Christ said that these are those who would reign *with him* a thousand years (Rev. 20:6). There is a great difference in *reigning with Christ* and *being ruled over by Christ*.

Herod did not think the wise men were speaking about a spiritual Israel made up of all nations. He was very concerned about the infant king.

“And (Herod) sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under . . .” (Matt. 2:16).

If Christ was only to be a spiritual ruler as is commonly believed, it is not reasonable that Herod should be so jealous of him as to kill all the infants under two. If Christ's kingdom were spiritual it would not have interfered with Herod's kingdom given him by the Roman government.

As time goes on and we observe the *present rulers failing to deal with the problems facing their people*; pollution of the air, land and water; hunger and poverty, disease and crime; we can be thankful that Christ is to return from heaven and replace all these rulers and governments with his own and *bring about the changes necessary to fill the earth with the glory of God.*

CHRIST WILL RETURN FROM HEAVEN TO REIGN AS A KING OVER ALL THE EARTH

Lesson 22: *Christendom Astray,* Chapter 11

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THE PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. What will be the most important official business of Christ when he returns to the earth?
2. What is the clearest message of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah?
3. Quote two Old Testament Scriptures which would have caused religious Jews to expect a real God-given king.
4. Did the chief priest and scribes know that they should expect a king born in Bethlehem?
5. Quote Scripture to prove your answer.
6. To whom was Jeremiah referring when he spoke of a “righteous branch”?
7. Did the person to whom this referred know it was about him?
8. Quote Scripture to prove your answer.
9. Quote two Old Testament verses to show that the Messiah will have kingly duties.
10. What does Messiah mean?
11. Quote a New Testament verse to show what Mary was told about Christ’s duties.
12. Did the apostles think that Christ would “sit on David’s throne”?
13. Quote Scriptures to prove your answer.
14. What was “David’s throne”?
15. What was Moses seat?
16. Did Solomon sit on David’s throne?
17. Who was the last king of Judah?
18. What did Ezekiel say would happen to this king’s throne?
19. What did the wise men ask Herod?
20. Why was Herod jealous of Jesus?

JERUSALEM WILL BE THE CENTER OF WORLD GOVERNMENT WHEN CHRIST RETURNS

Lesson 23: Christendom Astray, Chapter 11, Part 2

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces” (Psa. 122:6, 7)

Both here and other Scripture passages record the concern and prayers of God’s prophets for Jerusalem, the Holy City. *However, before the days of her glory she would suffer centuries of disgrace and shame.* The city that had been the site of David’s throne was destroyed by the Babylonians when Zedekiah, the last king of Judah was captured and taken to Babylon.

Christ knew that his kingship would not take place immediately from this promised ruling center. He said—

“They (the Jews) 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” (Lk. 21:24).

It is important when reading these words of Christ to notice that a *time limit* has been placed upon the TRODDEN DOWN condition brought about by the Gentiles. The word UNTIL tells us that this condition will not last forever. *The prophesy tells us that the condition will end when, “THE TIME OF THE GENTILES IS COMPLETED.”* Other Bible prophesy tells us that this period of Gentile domination is a set time and is quickly coming to an end. (see Dan. 7:25-27; 9:24-27; Rom. 11:25).

Instead of wanting to kill Jesus, the *Jews of Jerusalem will regret their past actions.*

“I will pour upon the House of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for an only son” (Zech. 12:10).

After these things have been accomplished Jerusalem’s importance will be restored. The Old Testament is full of statements related to the city of Jerusalem after the times of the Gentiles has been completed. *The “Times of the Gentiles” is a Biblical expression which means the period of time that other nations ruled over Israel either directly or indirectly such as the*

present time when Israel is not free to make her own decisions without the approval or co-operation of world powers.

Here are four Biblical statements related to the *future conditions of Jerusalem* when she is no longer responsible to Gentile governments.

“The Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the Holy Land, and shall choose Jerusalem again” (Zech. 2:12).

“The Lord shall comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord” (Isa. 51:3).

“The Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously” (Isa. 24:23).

“For the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and He shall judge among many people and rebuke strong nations afar off;” (Micah 4:2, 3).

There is no doubt that Jerusalem has an important place in God’s purpose with the earth. It is to be the “*seat*” of God’s government which will bless the earth in the near future.

The prophets tell us that all the *nations will visit Jerusalem yearly to be educated in God’s laws.*

“And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3).

“And it shall come to pass that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles” (Zech. 14:16).

The parable of the vineyard in Luke chapter 20 beginning at the 9th verse shows that Jesus knew that he was to receive the authority and responsibility of ruling over David’s people.

“THE PARABLE”

A vineyard was planted by a certain man and rented out to farmers. The man then went away to a distant land to live. When harvest time came, he sent servants to the farmers to collect his share of the crops. However, the farmers beat them and wounded them and sent them back empty handed. The owner then sent his own son hoping that they would respect him, but when the farmers saw him they killed him, thinking that if there was no HEIR they would inherit the land when his father died.

This parable was about the nation of Israel and it’s rulers. We know this because even the *chief priest and religious leaders were aware that the parable was about them.*

“And the chief priest and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them” (Lk. 20:19).

The scribes and chief priests were the murderous farmers who killed the son. The servants sent to receive the crops were the prophets. Here is how Christ spoke of the prophets—

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee . . .” (Matt. 23:37)

The vineyard was the nation of Israel.

“. . . for the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel” (Isa. 5:7).

Paul identifies the Son in his letter to the Hebrews.

“God, who at sundry times and divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His son, whom He hath appointed HEIR of all things, by (on account of) whom also he made the worlds.” (Heb 1:1, 2).

If Christ is the Son and HEIR, what was it that he was to possess? The answer is the land that the farmers were caring for, the NATION OF THE JEWS, which the Pharisees were ruling. It was teachings like this which made the Pharisees hate Jesus so very much. If it was true that Jesus was the HEIR to David’s throne then they would lose all their ruling authority when he began to reign.

Shortly after Christ told this parable they fulfilled their part of the parable by killing Christ, the HEIR but in carrying out the sentence of death, Pilate, who was the Roman governor, placed a sign over the cross which read—

“Jesus of Nazareth, THE KING OF THE JEWS” (Jn. 19:19).

The apostles too, made reference to the KINGLY DUTIES OF CHRIST.

When Paul and Silas were preaching the gospel in Turkey, the Jews in the city of Thessalonica were troubled because of Paul’s teachings. They caused a public disturbance and said—

“These all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that THERE IS ANOTHER KING, ONE JESUS” (Acts 17:7).

There was no doubt in the minds of these men about what Paul and Silas were saying. Paul and Silas had made it perfectly clear that a king by the name of Jesus Christ was coming back to earth after being raised from the dead to rule over all nations. In the eyes of these people these statements were disloyal to the Roman king, Caesar. To them Paul and Silas were suggesting the overthrow of the Roman government.

Later at Athens, Paul spoke the same message.

“And the time of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath

appointed a day in which He will judge (rule) the world in righteousness BY THAT MAN WHOM HE HATH ORDAINED, whereof He hath given all men assurance, in that He hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:30, 31).

The real New Testament teaching is that Jesus is “the Christ.” The word Christ means ANOINTED ONE. It was he that was anointed to be king over Israel like Samuel anointed David his ancestor, to be king so many years before.

Without this hope of a righteous king to rule the earth the thought of immortal life on earth would not be a pleasant one. Most people on earth live in poverty, with no education and endure suffering pain and cruelty while a few wicked, godless men, rule over them hoarding the God-given riches of the earth for themselves. This has always been true, just as it is now.

Our only true hope for the future is that the HEIR of David’s throne, the promised descendant of Abraham, will OVERTURN all these rulers, just as God overturned Zedekiah’s government. We hope for the reorganization of the world governments when Christ will replace the leaders with his people. This will be the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham.

“In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 22:18).

JERUSALEM WILL BE THE CENTER OF WORLD GOVERNMENT WHEN CHRIST RETURNS

Lesson 23: *Christendom Astray,* Chapter 11, Part 2

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THE PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. What must happen to Jerusalem before the days of her future glory?
2. Did Christ think his kingship would begin immediately?
3. What did Christ say must happen to Jerusalem before he ruled over it?
4. What is the time limit of the “trodden down” condition of Jerusalem?
5. Will the Jews always hate Jesus?
6. Quote Scripture to show what their attitude will be towards Jesus.
7. What does the expression, “Times of the Gentiles” mean?
8. Quote two Biblical statements which tell of the future condition of Jerusalem.
9. What yearly event will take place in Jerusalem during the reign of Christ?
10. Quote Scripture to show that God’s laws will be issued from Jerusalem.
11. What does the parable of the Vineyard show about Jesus future responsibilities?
12. Who was the heir in the parable?
13. Who were the murderous farmers in the parable?
14. What was the vineyard in the parable?
15. Who was the Son in the parable?
16. How did the Pharisees fulfill a portion of the parable?
17. What did Pilate, the Roman governor, write over the cross?
18. What is the real New Testament teaching?
19. Why would immortal life without Christ’s reign NOT be pleasant?
20. How will Christ as the seed of Abraham bring about blessings to all nations?

THE COVENANT TO DAVID LOOKED FORWARD TO A RIGHTEOUS KING WHO WOULD LIVE FOR EVER.

Lesson 24: Christendom Astray, Chapter 12

“Therefore . . . being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, HE WOULD RAISE UP CHRIST to sit on his throne..”
(Acts 2:30).

After reading this statement made by Peter on the day of Pentecost, it cannot be denied that God made a covenant with David that referred to Christ.

In the Psalms David mentions this covenant many times. Here are just a few of them—

“I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations” (Psa. 89:3, 4).

“My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever and his throne as the sun before me” (Psa. 89:34-36).

“The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne” (Psa. 132:11).

Paul told the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia that Jesus was the fulfillment of this covenant.

“Of this man’s (David’s) seed hath God, according to his promise raised up unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus” (Acts 13:23).

When John the Baptist was born, his father, Zacharias, was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke about his nephew, Jesus, as being the fulfillment of these promises to David.

“And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David: As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began” (Lk. 1:69, 70).

The above quotations from the Old and New Testaments read together prove that: (1) God made some kind of promise to David and (2) this promise referred in some way to Christ.

When David was an old man he wrote the following words by the Spirit. The *Bible* tells us that these were David’s “last words.”

“The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue . . . HE THAT RULETH OVER MEN must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining, after rain. Although my house be not so with God, YET he hath made with me an everlasting covenant” (2 Sam. 23:1-7).

If we examine these verses closely we find sufficient proof that Solomon could NOT have been the fulfillment of the promises to David. Solomon sinned greatly, and led Israel away from God. He treated the people unfairly and made military agreements with other nations. He could not have been called a JUST MAN RULING IN THE FEAR OF GOD.

David concluded the above quotation by saying: *“this is all my salvation and all my desire.”* David’s salvation was certainly not secured by any of Solomon’s achievements. Solomon’s actions brought shame on the family of David and caused the kingdom to be torn away from the family of David.

Solomon’s reign was NOT, *“as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds.”* Solomon’s name came to be hated and feared by all Israel.

David admitted that his house (or family then living) was *“not so with God.”* “YET”, he said, “he hath made with me an everlasting covenant.” Because *Solomon was mortal and dying he could NOT have been the fulfillment of an everlasting covenant.* Only someone capable of living for ever could properly fulfill this promise.

THE COVENANT

The covenant to David is found in the 2nd book of Samuel, 7:1-16. David commented to Nathan, the prophet, that although he (David) had a beautiful house in which to live, God’s ark was still kept in a tent. Nathan knowing that David desired to build a temple of stone and wood encouraged him to begin the building.

That night God’s word came to Nathan and commanded him to return to David and tell him that God had no need of a house, and that all through the wilderness wanderings God was content with a tent.

David was to be reminded that he had been taken from being a shepherd of sheep to a ruler of men and that God had made him a great man. God promised that a day would come when Israel would not move any more; and they would not be attacked by wicked kings and nations.

Then Nathan continued to tell David about God’s promise of a Saviour. He said—

“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son . . . And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee.”

There was a *superficial and temporary fulfillment* of these words in the days of Solomon.

A. God in a sense was his father. He took him under his special care, gave him wisdom and made him famous.

B. He sat on David’s throne even before David had died. Thus reigning in David’s sight.

C. He built the temple at Jerusalem by following the plans given to him by his father, David.

D. He was a man of peace. There were no wars during his lifetime.

But to say that this was the complete fulfillment of the prophesy, is to ignore other Scripture.

– In Hebrews 1:5, Paul applied this promise to Christ, *“I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son.”*

– In Acts 2:30, Peter applied this promise to Christ, *“Of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.”*

– Christ applied the prophesy to himself when he said: *“The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.”* (Matt. 22:44).

– After listening to the words of Nathan, David said, to God, *“Thou hast spoken of thy servants for a great while to come.”* (2 Sam. 7:19).

A portion of the covenant has been fulfilled. *Long after David was dead and buried, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, David’s native city. His mother was Mary, a virgin, descended from David. She was the promised bride of Joseph, also a descendant of David. Jesus’ birth was announced by an angel to shepherds watching their flocks at night.*

“Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a SAVIOUR WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD” (Lk. 2:10-11).

Jesus had no human father. The Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary causing her to conceive and bring forth Christ. The angel said—

“Therefore shall he be called the Son of God” (Lk. 1:35).

Nathaniel, one of Jesus’ disciples said—

“Thou art the Son of God, thou art the KING OF ISRAEL” (Jn. 1:49).

The apostle John said—

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD?” (1 Jn. 5:5).

God spoke from heaven twice to identify Jesus as His Son. First at Christ’s baptism and then again at his transfiguration; the voice was heard to say—

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased . . .” (Matt. 3:17; Lk. 9:35).

The Pharisees of Jesus’ day admitted that the Christ was to be the son of David. Jesus asked them this question: “What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?” The Pharisees answered correctly, “THE SON OF DAVID.” What they could not understand was how he could ALSO be the Son of God. They looked for a natural descendant of David which would become a national leader and release them from the oppression laid on them by other nations.

Psalms 89 repeated the covenant to David but spoke in a way that could NOT be applied to Solomon.

“Also I will make him MY FIRSTBORN, higher than the kings of the earth; my mercy will keep him for evermore . . . His seed also will I make to endure for ever; and his throne as the days of heaven” (vs. 27-29).

There is no way in which we could consider Solomon as Jehovah’s first-born but this is how Paul describes Jesus—

“He is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence (superiority)” (Col. 1:18).

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His son, that he might be THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN” (Rom. 8:29).

There were some things in the covenant made with David that were not fulfilled by Christ during his mortality. He has not sat on the throne of David as yet. That throne was overturned during the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, descended from king David, in about 593 B.C.

It continued to be overturned during the period of Greeks and Romans. In A.D. 70 some thirty or more years after Christ’s death the Roman general, Titus, completely destroyed Jerusalem. From that day until 1948 the people have remained scattered as fugitives all over the earth. Even since they became a nation again they have been dependent upon aid from foreign nations and are subject to the will of those countries.

The obvious conclusion drawn from these facts is that at some future date, Jesus must return and re-establish the kingdom of David and rule over it as David did.

James understood the covenant in this way. The twelve apostles had come together to consider the contention of some

of the baptized Pharisees, “that the Gentile believers keep the ‘Law of Moses’.” He quoted from the prophet Amos to show that Jew and Gentile would someday worship together in a new temple.

“After this I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called” (Acts 15:16, 17).

This is what Jeremiah prophesied during the last days of the Jewish community before they went into captivity for seventy years in Babylon. Even though David’s temple and city of Jerusalem was to be destroyed during this period, God promised that a time would come when a child, as yet unborn, would govern a new and perfect community from this same location.

Jeremiah said—

“In those days and at that time, will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, AND HE SHALL EXECUTE JUDGEMENT AND RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE LAND” (Jer. 33:15).

Isaiah said—

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder . . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end; UPON THE THRONE OF DAVID AND UPON HIS KINGDOM, to order it and to establish it with judgment, and with justice, from henceforth even for ever” (Isa. 9:6-7).

Jesus attempted to dismiss the belief that he, the Messiah would set up the kingdom *during his first advent*. He said—

“When the Son of man shall COME IN HIS GLORY and the holy angels with him, THEN shall he SIT UPON THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY” (Matt. 25:31).

The covenant to David guarantees that the kingdom would be set-up *in David’s presence*. The exact words are, “Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee.” This was PARTIALLY fulfilled *when David witnessed Solomon’s coronation* before his death.

God promised that *all the faithful* of whatever generation would inherit the kingdom.

“Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love him?” (Jam. 2:5).

David, of whom this was recorded, was a man after God’s own heart, was a prophet and therefore included in the list that Jesus says will be in the kingdom.

“Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God.” (Lk. 13:28).

This was the bigger view of the covenant to David when he would see a greater son than Solomon sit on his throne. The time for this to happen is not far off, now. David will be raised from the sleep of death with all the faithful to witness and take part in the continuation of the Kingdom of Israel. This is God’s Kingdom and has been waited for by all those who look forward and love the appearing of the Son of David, Jesus the Christ.

THE COVENANT TO DAVID LOOKED FORWARD TO A RIGHTEOUS KING WHO WOULD LIVE FOR EVER

Lesson 24: *Christendom Astray,* Chapter 12

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THE PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. Who was it that Peter said was a prophet and knew that Christ would sit on David's throne?
2. Quote two Scriptures from the Psalms which show that God promised David a descendant to rule over the kingdom for ever.
3. What did John the Baptist's father have to say about his nephew Jesus?
4. What were the last words of David?
5. Could Solomon have been the fulfillment of the promises to David?
6. Give three reasons why.
7. What were the circumstances which led up to God's covenant to David?
8. What was the superficial and temporary fulfillment of the covenant made to David?
9. What was the complete fulfillment of the covenant to David?
10. What did David say which shows that he did not expect the immediate fulfillment of the covenant?
11. What portion of the covenant has been fulfilled?
12. How could Jesus be the Son of David and also the Son of God?
13. In what way could the repetition of the covenant in Psalm 89 only refer to Christ?
14. What portion of the covenant to David has NOT been fulfilled?
15. What common belief about the Messiah did Jesus attempt to dismiss during his ministry on earth?
16. How do we know that David will witness the setting-up of the kingdom?

CHRIST WILL BUILD A HOUSE OF WORSHIP FOR ALL NATIONS

Lesson 25: Christendom Astray

“He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever” (2 Sam. 7:13).

We understand this verse to mean that a part of Christ’s work during the Kingdom Age will be the construction of a place on earth for the worship of his Father. One of the regular events of the age will be the yearly journey to that building by all people to worship the Lord.

After the Jews returned from the seventy years of captivity in Babylon the prophet Zechariah prophesied that David’s greater son, Christ, would construct that building.

“Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne. And he shall be a priest upon his throne” (Zech. 6:12, 13).

The use of the term “BRANCH” establishes this statement as referring to the Messiah. It is used in no other way in any of the Old Testament prophesies. The verse shows the subject of this prophecy to be *both priest and king* which has only one fulfillment in the future rule of the promised Messiah.

Our belief in the nations worshipping at Jerusalem at some future time is justified by the following Old Testament prophesies—

“Many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord” (Zech. 8:22).

“They shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it to the Name of the Lord” (Jer. 3:17).

“And it shall come to pass that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles” (Zech. 14:16).

If the nations were to travel to Jerusalem for the purpose of worship it is reasonable to suppose that there will be a place that this act of worship can suitably be performed. It would be difficult to imagine thousands of people converging on Jerusalem from all over the world without some convenient and comfortable way to present their offerings and gifts which have been a part of the customary worship of Yahweh in times past.

If there were no temple at Jerusalem the nations would have no need to visit Jerusalem. They could pray and conduct religious worship in whatever portion of the world they might be from.

The Divinely appointed arrangements and furnishings for the proper and acceptable worship are to be in one central place. This is indirectly referred to by Zechariah, Joel and Haggai.

“The pots in the Lord’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar . . . and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them and see the therein.” (Zech. 14:20, 21).

“The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts” (Hag. 2:9).

“So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain . . . and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord” (Joel 3:17, 18).

These verses lay the foundation for the most convincing evidence in Scripture establishing the fact that a great house of worship will be built in Zion, the Mountain of the Lord. This evidence is found in the fortieth through the forty-eighth chapters of Ezekiel’s prophecy.

The chapters referred to were written by Ezekiel after Solomon’s temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians and Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel described a temple which has never existed anywhere on earth. The original temple was rebuilt after the Jews returned to Judah, after seventy years of captivity. The temple that they built, however, was far from being greater than the original. It was, in fact, greatly inferior to it. The *Bible* supports this in Ezra 3:12, 13—

“But many of the Priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice. And many shouted with joy: so that the people could not discern the noise of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people.”

The forty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel shows that the temple of his prophecy was to be current with the division of the promised land to the twelve tribes of Israel. Those who know the history of the Jews are aware that the ten northern tribes had been scattered all over the earth by the Assyrians and that the tribes of Judah and Benjamin had been taken captive later into Babylon.

After seventy years only a few of these two tribes had returned to the land. We may easily draw the conclusion that the land has NEVER since been divided among the twelve tribes as it will be at the time when Ezekiel’s prophecy will be fulfilled.

Another fact which sets the prophecy in the future is the forty mile square portion of land which Ezekiel describes as being for the temple, the holy city, and the dwelling place of the priests (Ezek. 45:1, 4). Nothing of this sort has been set up to date in the land of Palestine.

Let us imagine ourselves joining Ezekiel and observing what he saw and heard in a vision. We are brought to the land of Israel and set on a very high mountain, from which we can see the structures of a city to the south of us. We find ourselves in the company of a man, "whose appearance is like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand and a measuring reed." This man is standing in the entrance gate of the temple buildings. He is instructing Ezekiel to be attentive to what he sees and hears so that he can share the vision with the Israelites (Ezek. 40:4).

Ezekiel's guide begins to make a series of measurements with the measuring tools in his hands. In chapters forty through forty-five Ezekiel records all of these measurements and through his words a temple rises before the eyes of his listeners. This temple is greater than any building ever made by Israel or any other nation. The outside wall is about one and a quarter miles square. Along each side are many gates and chambers for the temple service.

As we mount the steps to one of these gates with Ezekiel we see an inner wall, about 150 feet nearer to the temple. The space between the inner and outer wall is called "the outer court." The inner wall and gates are the same design as the outer wall. As we go through one of these inner gates we find ourselves facing THE TEMPLE. This is a giant circular building, three stories tall.

Next we witness a spectacular event with Ezekiel. Here is how he describes it—

"Behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east, and His voice was like the noise of many waters, and the earth shined with His glory . . . and the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east" (Ezek. 43:2, 4).

Now we proceed with Ezekiel to the inner court and as we stand there we notice the house filled with the glory of the Lord. The voice of God addresses Ezekiel and says—

"Son of Man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile" (Ezek. 43:7).

Afterwards we notice as does Ezekiel that the eastern gate is now shut. We are informed—

“This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut: it is for the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord. He shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same” (Ezek. 44:2, 3).

Later we overhear Ezekiel being told more detail about the use of this east gate—

“The gate of the inner court that looketh towards the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened. And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate. And the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings; and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate; then he shall go forth: but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the Lord, in the Sabbaths and in the new moons” (Ezek. 46:1-3).

Ezekiel’s guide measures the area surrounding the temple and informs Ezekiel that from east to west the area is forty-two miles long and from north to south, seventeen miles wide. The occupants of this area are a group of immortal beings called “the seed of Zadok”. This group includes those of our own generation and past generations who were judged faithful and given eternal life at the judgment seat of Christ.

To the south of this is a similar portion of land for the use of the mortal priests. Their duties will be more physical and indirect than those of the “seed of Zadok”. All temple service will be important, however. The difference between the service of the mortals and immortals is determined by their ability due to their nature to approach the glorious temple.

The most southerly portion, again forty-two miles long is a strip of land approximately ten miles from north to south. This area is set aside for gardens and fields. The city is no longer called Jerusalem. The new name is *JEHOVAH SHAMMAH*, which means, *the Lord is there*.

The temple stands in the same spot as the original temple of David and the city of Jerusalem. This is the hill called Zion.

“For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation! This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it” (Psa. 132:13, 14).

Returning to the present, we find that many theologians cannot accept the actual construction of such a temple on the earth. Their basic objection comes from their illogical belief that the reward of the righteous is in Heaven or the wicked in Hell. In addition to this objection they see no valid reason for the

various burnt offerings and sin offerings and a return to the worship connected with the Law of Moses .

We have already quoted Zechariah's prophesy that—

"The man whose name is the Branch, shall be a priest upon his throne" (Zech. 6:12, 13).

In Paul's letter to the Hebrews he refers to Christ as a priest over two dozen times. Here is one of them—

"Even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec" (Heb. 6:20).

The book of Revelation shows that the righteous will reign with Christ performing similar responsibilities.

"And hast made us kings and priests unto God and his Father" (Rev. 1:6).

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10).

It is reasonable to suppose that if Christ and his saints are to be priests then there must be something for them to offer and a mortal population for them to make offerings for. *The Mosaic offerings pointed forward* to the "Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world." The offerings made during Christ's future reign will likewise *point back to what he did 2,000 years ago*.

The prophet Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets shows us that a feature of the age will be the continuance of sacrifices.

"For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles: and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Mal. 1:11).

It is part of the eternal truth that without faith and trial it is impossible to be accepted with God. This principle will be just as true for the mortal population of the kingdom as it has been for the population of the earth from Adam to the present. *There must be a way for subjects of the kingdom to demonstrate their faith and for their obedience to be tested.* They will be living in the presence of God's visible power and glory rather than in a time of hope for things not yet seen.

When the subjects of the kingdom are called upon to perform these acts of worship which to them appear useless and unsuitable, *the performance of these acts will require as much faith and obedience as in times of old.* These people will be in need of spiritual education just as now. As they grow in their understanding of the significance of these offerings and feasts, their desire to obey will also increase. *The yearly visit to Jehovah-Shammah (the Lord is there) will serve as a continual*

reminder of their lowly position in relation to the King of all the earth.

The actual, physical labor for building the house of God will be supplied by the mortal population from all over the world. Christ will supply the plans and supervise the construction just as Solomon did for the first temple.

“The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee . . . The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel” (Isa. 60:10, 14).

Popular religion has been blinded to the magnificent truth of Ezekiel’s vision through their own myths of heaven going and the destruction of the earth. Once that darkness has been taken away the true glory of the Kingdom can be appreciated.

As Paul says, it is impossible for men to fully imagine or understand the things concerning the time ahead.

“Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (Heb. 4:11).

CHRIST WILL BUILD A HOUSE OF WORSHIP FOR ALL NATIONS

Lesson 25: *Christendom Astray*

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THE PRECEDING MATERIAL

1. What will Christ build during the kingdom age? Give two proofs.
2. Who is “the Branch”?
3. What will all nations do yearly during the kingdom? Give two proofs.
4. What is it that Ezekiel describes in the fortieth to forty-eighth chapters of his book?
5. Show from Scripture that this prophesy of Daniel could not have referred to the reconstruction after Judah returned from Babylon.
6. Has anything like what Ezekiel describes ever been built anywhere in the world?
7. What is the shape and dimension of the outer wall around the building?
8. How wide is the space between the inner and outer walls?
9. What did Ezekiel see coming into the inner building and from what direction did it come?
10. What does Ezekiel call the group of people who live in this area?
11. Who does this group include?
12. What group of people live in a section of land south of this area?
13. What will be the new name of Jerusalem and what does it mean?
14. What will the animal sacrifices during the kingdom be a symbol of?
15. What eternal truth explains why they will be necessary?
16. Who will perform the actual physical labor of making the building?
17. What is it that blinds popular religion to a correct understanding of Ezekiel’s building?