



key
TO THE
UNDERSTANDING
OF THE
SCRIPTURES

LUKE 11:52
MATTHEW 16:19

ISAIAH 22:22
REVELATION 3:7

By H. P. Mansfield.

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THE KEY

The key to the understanding of the Bible is of a unique character. It is easily obtained, yet few possess it; it reveals the way of life eternal, yet few desire it; it is within the grasp of all to find, yet few seek it.

The key to the understanding of the Bible, can become the proud possession of men and women of character. It requires of them a determination to investigate the Gospel message, and embrace it. It calls upon them to reject preconceived ideas about salvation, and with independence of mind, ponder the principles of Divine revelation.

The Key Lost By Religious Leaders.

"Woe unto you lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourself, and them that were entering in ye hindered" (Luke 11:52).

In these words, Christ condemned the cold, formalised religion of his day, as being both repulsive and destructive. The leaders had rejected the crystal-clear teaching of Truth, and had dispensed with the key to knowledge. Worse, by their false teachings, they "prevented" others, from using it, who might otherwise have benefitted by the knowledge of Truth. Christ urged his hearers to avoid such an influence (Matt. 23:30).

The Key Possessed By Christ.

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

The Lord has the keys, or power, over life and death. Through him, alone, is the means of salvation. He proclaimed the Gospel without fear or favor, and reminded his disciples that he also possessed the "key of David" (Rev. 3:7) — the symbol of power, authority and kingship. Paul maintained that the "Gospel was the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16), and without this, humanity gropes in the darkness of ignorance, and in the shadow of death.

The Key Given to the Apostles.

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 16:19).

The Apostles had the ability to understand and proclaim the Gospel of the coming Kingdom. This constituted the basis of the community of believers, who are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20).

The Key Available To All.

". . . His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3).

The knowledge of the Gospel is the key to life eternal. Peter declared that it is through this means that we can attain unto "divine nature" (see verse 4), and an inheritance in the Glory of the Age to Come.

The key to the understanding of the Scriptures is the key to happiness and contentment in this life, as well as to glory and immortality in the future.

Contents

Foreword	5
----------------	---

Section 1

THE BIBLE: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT TEACHES	7
(1) The Bible: Inspired And Infallible	8
(2) Miracles Really Did Happen	16
(3) How To Interpret The Bible	19
(4) The Fundamental Message Of The Bible	23

Section 2

REDEMPTION IN CHRIST JESUS	29
(5) The Need Of Redemption From Death	30
(6) The Promise Of Redemption	41
(7) To Christ Through Baptism	48
(8) Hope Through A Resurrection	55

Section 3

BIBLE HISTORY	61
(9) From Creation To The Flood	62
(10) The Call Of Abraham	68
(11) Israel Called Out Of Egypt	78
(12) Israel Becomes The Kingdom Of God On Earth	84
(13) The Promise Made To King David	88
(14) The Kingdom Overturned: "Until He Come"	97
(15) The Ministry Of The Lord And The Call To The Gentiles	103

Section 4

MISUNDERSTOOD DOCTRINES	109
(16) God Is One Not Three	110
(17) The Devil And Satan	117
(18) The Purpose Of Christ's Second Coming	124

Section 5

NOTES ON PROPHECY	129
(19) The Modern Revival Of Israel	130
(20) Impending World Crisis And Divine Intervention	135

A Summary Of The "One Faith"	145
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WHY READ THE BIBLE?

The Bible is a storehouse of divine truth which will repay reading whether it be approached merely because of its literary value, its ethical teaching, or its practical bearing on everyday life (e.g. the Proverbs).

But for those who are prepared to study the contents of this wonderful volume with the object of learning what God desires of them, it offers present and future blessings beyond the ability of man to assess (Rev. 1:3), for "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).

This, however, requires study, that faith might be established and increased. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). With study there will be developed a love for the Book, and for its Author whose love will be revealed therein, and by this influence the Reader will be led to radiate that same love to others. Therefore, this divine Book is the greatest power for good in the hands of man — if it be read with understanding.

Our objective is to place the key to its understanding in the hands of the Reader that he might better comprehend its message, and so be drawn by the power of God's love.

The present edition has been completely revised and re-written.

Foreword

This series of studies is designed to present in connected form the fundamental teaching of the Bible. The reader is invited to examine it critically, with the Bible at his right hand, without which nothing can or ought to be determined in relation to God's truth. Though much that we have set forth may appear strange or new when compared with the teaching of most churches, we submit that it can all be substantiated by a "thus saith the Lord."

Is a correct understanding of God's revelation essential to salvation? Does it really matter what we believe, so long as our motives are sincere? The answer to these questions is in the affirmative, as attested by the Lord Jesus himself. He declared:

"True worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him . . . they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24).

The Lord thus discriminated between mere "worshippers" and "true" worshippers, and emphasised, by repetition, that the latter worship the Father in truth.

Surrounded by a multiplicity of sects and churches all claiming to set forth truth, it becomes incumbent upon the individual who would correctly worship the Father, to seek out the Truth for himself.

We believe that this series of lessons will help him in his search.

But why is such help needed? If a correct understanding of the Bible is essential to true worship, why did God set forth His revelation in a book so difficult to comprehend?

The answer is an important one. God's purpose is not merely to save people, but to make them worth saving. This can only be brought about by changing their outlook and characters to conform to His, and this can only be done by superimposing His mind on theirs.

To that end, it is essential for Him to make flesh think along the channel of His own mind so far as principles and precepts are concerned. If a person is induced to think as God would have him do, then such thoughts will color his outlook and ultimately his conduct. How often has the power of words swayed men and women! The case of Hitler, who changed the character of Germany by his use of words and oratory, is a typical example.

God desires to change the characters of individuals. He has thus provided a book sufficiently profound as to cause its readers to "think" in order to understand its message. As thoughts beget ideas, actions, habit, character, so this habit of thinking on God's word can change men, fulfilling the prayer of Christ: "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

Let the reader bear that fact in mind, as he ponders the pages of the Bible, and do not let him despair of understanding the basic simple message it contains. By perseverance and prayer (James 1:5), he will attain unto such an understanding as can change his life and win for him immortality in the Kingdom that God will ultimately set up on earth (Daniel 2:44; 7:27). May God's blessing be with this book, to the end that its readers will be drawn to the Bible, and come to better understand its life-giving message.

H. P. MANSFIELD.
November, 1968.

THE AIM OF THIS BOOK

In the following pages, we have set out systematic studies in the basic teachings of the Scriptures. Each section is followed by a series of questions, by which the reader can test his knowledge of the Bible, and thus maintain his progress in the understanding of the Truth.

But we have not attempted to answer every problem that might arise in Bible exposition. To do so, would involve far larger space than is at present available. However, we trust that the matter presented will be of interest to the reader, and should there arise any question or problem concerning the Bible, we invite the reader to write to us for further elucidation. All correspondence will be most welcome, and every question submitted will be promptly answered.

Direct enquiries to The Editor, Logos Publications,

Section 1

THE BIBLE: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT TEACHES

The Bible is pre-eminently the Book for today. Its prophecies clearly reveal that God guides the destiny of nations, that the great crisis of Armageddon is rapidly approaching, and what its aftermath will reveal.

But more than that, it is the Book of Life. It sets forth the true nature of man, shows that he is afflicted by the grim disease of mortality, and reveals what he must do to overcome it and attain unto eternal life. It points the way towards more abundant living now and immortality in the age to come, for godliness has "promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8).

To the Bible then let us turn, as to "a light shining in a dark place", and, with humility, teachableness, and independence of mind, let us diligently enquire into the things which it reveals for the obedience and confirmation of faith. The object before us will be, to present such a connected view of this truthful and wonderful book as will open the reader's eyes, and enable him to understand it, and expound it to others, that he may become "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"; and be able intelligently to "contend for the faith."

We trust that in so doing it will be the reader's lot to receive as much pleasure and profit as it has been our lot to obtain.

(1) The Bible: Inspired and Infallible

By "inspired" we mean that God was its Author; by "infallible" we mean that it is true in all its parts. We claim this in spite of minor errors that have crept in through transcription or translation. These are so insignificant that they do not affect the general teaching of the Book, and in any case are easily explained.

A Literary Miracle.

The Bible is a literary miracle, unique among all other books. It matters not whether you consider the wonder of its construction, the beauty of its unification, the marvel of its preservation, the truth of its prognostications, the claim of its inspiration, or the power of its teaching in transformation, it is outstanding and distinct among books, bearing the stamp of divine authorship.

The word *Bible* means book. The Bible is not one book, however, but a library of sixty-six books, the compilation of which extended over almost 1600 years. Its various authors, or amanu- eses rather (for God was the real Author), were drawn from every class of society. Kings, statesmen, priests, laymen, scholars, shepherds, fishermen and others co-operated in its production. One man wrote one part in Syria, another man wrote in Arabia, a third man wrote in Italy, a fourth man wrote in Babylon, others wrote in Palestine.

And yet, though these writers were divided by time, class and distance so that there was no possibility of any collusion, there is a wonderful harmony manifest in all that they wrote

that is quite unlike any other composite work in the realm of literature.

That is due only to the fact that God was the moving influence in its production, and in all that is recorded therein.

It was He Who caused the various authors to write as they did, so that each one, in his own individual manner, expressed that which Inspiration caused him to write. Thus all sixty-six books agree perfectly in teaching. Each one harmonises with the rest, supplementing or expounding upon what has gone before, so that by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13), the reader is brought to a complete understanding of the Divine will and purpose.

A Living Message For Today.

The Bible is also unique in that it provides for every kind of reader. It can guide the simple mind of a child, or satisfy the most profound student. As its writers were drawn from every strata of society, and expressed Divine truths from their individual standpoint, it is capable of helping and inspiring every type of person whether male or female, young or old, rich or poor, educated or ignor-

ant. What it demands of all, however, whether they be simple or profound, educated or ignorant, is a faith to accept its message, and a disposition to apply its precepts.

The Bible is unique in that more books, commentaries and concordances have been published about it than any other work; and yet, though they have been appearing for centuries, new works of exposition continue to pour forth from the press. In short, the depths of its significance are inexhaustible, so that the Bible never stales; it remains a best-seller year after year. There is always some deeper significance to be discovered, even in its basic message, that makes the reading of the Bible an exciting adventure in study.

How different that is to most books! I have, in my library, well over a thousand volumes, covering almost all subjects, some of which I have read more than once, though normally a single reading suffices; but the Bible I read through completely every year, besides giving close, detailed attention to sections of it, without ever becoming tired of doing so, nor losing my interest in its contents.

I know of no other book that I could read so often, without becoming completely bored by its contents.

Despite the great antiquity of the Bible, despite the fact that it was written primarily for a different age and a foreign people, it has a living message for today. Of what other book

can that be said? The Psalmist truly declared:

"I will never forget Thy precepts; for with them Thou hast quickened me" (or given me new life — Psalm 119:93).

This is the book we desire to study together. It can inspire us, purify our characters, give us peace of mind, and provide us with a glorious hope for the future. In its transforming influence is found, indeed, the stamp of its divinity.

Objections Considered.

The Bible challenges us with its divine origin. Five hundred times in the first five books, it prefaces or concludes its declarations with the assertion, "The Lord said," or "The Lord spake." Three hundred times again in the following books it does the same. Similar expressions occur no less than twelve hundred times in the prophetic books.

The Bible thus claims to be the inspired Word of God (Hebrews 1:1).

It must be judged upon that claim.

Some allow inspiration for some portions of the Bible, and deny it for others; but obviously, it must either all be true, or all be false, for its sixty-six books are indissolubly linked together. We must either accept all, or reject all; and, sooner or later, every person is forced to decide as to where he stands in this matter.

Some seek to belittle the Bible by pointing to inconsistencies revealed in the characters portrayed therein. They declare

that David was an adulterer, that Peter was a traitor, that Paul was a murderer. But surely the impress of Divine inspiration is stamped in the recording of such matters. Life is presented in its true light. The sins of Peter are not omitted because he was foremost of the Apostles; the crimes of Paul are not overlooked though he did take the message to Gentiles; the great apostasy of the Jewish people is revealed in all its wickedness, even though they constitute the chosen race, the "people of the Book."

In a merely human document, these blemishes, most likely would be deleted or explained in a way as to not so harshly reflect upon the persons concerned; but the Bible, being what it claims to be, reveals human nature as it really is. Because the Bible is true and Divine, the characters that are portrayed therein, are set forth as seen through the eyes of God.

No one has yet shown the Bible to be wrong in its outline of history. On the contrary, history and archaeology have confirmed it upon every point where they have touched. Nevertheless, we freely concede that the mere fact that a book is true does not establish it as Divine; a greater reason must be given for such a claim to be made.

Such a reason is found in the amazing fulfilment of Bible prophecy. Man can not predict ahead with any certainty; but God has done so in the Bible, and events have thoroughly vin-

icated what He has proclaimed. As predicted, Babylon is still in heaps (Jer. 51:37), Nineveh still lies empty, void and waste (Nahum 2:10), Egypt still remains a base nation (Ezekiel 29:15); Tyre has been submerged by the sea and literally remains a place for the spreading of nets (Ezekiel 26:5); Israel has been scattered among the nations (Deuteronomy 28:64), and Jerusalem given over to the Gentiles (Luke 21:24), but today the Jews are returning to their land and restoring the wastes (Jeremiah 30:18-24; Amos 9:14), and Jerusalem is gradually gaining more independence, as foretold.

The evidence of prophecy is an irrefutable argument for the Divine inspiration of the Bible, proving that it is more than a merely human document.

What About Contradictions?

It is a common fallacy that the Bible is full of contradictions. This we refute. We do not dispute that a few errors and interpolations, due to mistakes in translation or transcription, have entered the text of the Authorised Version, but they are by no means as frequent as is generally thought, and are so minor in importance that they do not interfere with the general teaching of the Book. We were once handed a booklet entitled *One Hundred Contradictions In The Bible*. Examination proved it to be a very shallow publication. The so-called "contradictions" existed in the mind of the author, rather than

in the pages of Scripture. The meaning of Scripture was distorted to create contradictions, and the writer did not appreciate that apparent discrepancies can be harmonised without doing violence to the record.

For example, let four men report on a specific incident, and the four accounts will differ according to the particular interest of the person concerned. A superficial examination of the four accounts would suggest that they conflicted, whereas, in fact, each one could be perfectly true, and revealed as such when the facts were thoroughly investigated.

This is the case with the four Gospel accounts of the life of Christ, and other records of Scripture. Though the writers were inspired, they expressed in their own words, or from their own standpoint, what Inspiration caused them to write. This is sometimes represented as contradiction by readers without discernment. On the contrary, we claim, with every assurance, that there is perfect harmony throughout the Bible, and would be pleased to show this to be the case.

Let us present a case of a so-called contradiction being harmonised when all the facts are brought to bear. The parallel accounts of the armies of Israel and Judah are recorded in the books of Samuel and Chronicles. The former provides figures that seem to be at variance with the latter. It states that there were 800,000 men in Israel, and

500,000 in Judah (2 Samuel 24:9); the latter gives 1,100,000 in Israel, and 470,000 in Judah (1 Chronicles 21:5). At first sight a discrepancy seems evident, but a more careful reading will show that the basis of computation is not the same in the two records. In Samuel, the figures relating to Israel concern "valiant" men only, and represented only portion of the army (the veterans), whilst the figures for Judah in 1 Chronicles 21:5 omitted some of Benjamin usually counted with Judah (see v.6).

Thus these two accounts which seem to contradict each other when read superficially, actually harmonise and supplement each other when studied properly.

The same two chapters record a transaction that took place between David the king of Israel, and Araunah, a Jebusite, wherein the former purchased some land from the latter. The accounts seem to be contradictory. In 2 Samuel 24:24, the price is given as fifty shekels of silver; but in 1 Chronicles 21:22-25, it is said to be six hundred shekels of gold. Critics of the Bible advance the seeming contradiction triumphantly to prove their contention that it is fallible. But a careful reading will show that both the accounts are correct, for the former price related only to "the threshing floor and oxen," whilst the latter price was for "the place," a term which included the whole site of what was later the Temple area.

The "threshing floor" was a very important, but relatively small, part of the complete purchase, called in Chronicles "the place."

These are very minor matters, and even if it could be proved that they were contradictions, they would not affect the basic message of the Bible. We merely quoted them to illustrate what is advanced as some of the "hundred contradictions" in the Bible, as set out in the book handed to us. Other so-called discrepancies were even more easily rebutted than these. It is apparent that the "contradictions" existed in the biased mind of the critic, not in the pages of the Bible.

The Canon Of Scripture.

Another claim of the critics is that the Bible came into being by the caprice of man, and that fallible men decided what they thought was inspired.

That is not so.

It is true that fallible men were the medium that God used in establishing the canon of Scripture, but it was God Who overruled their decisions in determining what constitutes inspired writings.

Concerning the Old Testament, Paul wrote that the Scriptures were *committed* to the Jews, and therefore they did not select them. By that he meant that God guided the selection of what was inspired or not (Rom. 3:2).

A careful consideration of the evidence will show how true Paul's statement is.

In a merely human document,

the author of a piece of writing would determine whether it is to be considered "inspired." For example, some people speak of Shakespeare's writings as "inspired," and in so doing, they include all that he wrote.

That is not the case with the Bible. It was not considered sufficient for a man to write for his work to be included. For example, some of Isaiah's prophecies find a place therein, whilst other of his writings do not (2 Chronicles 26:22). Some of Solomon's proverbs are included, whilst others are not (1 Kings 4:32). The writings of an accredited prophet were not necessarily accepted as inspired. Some of the writings of acknowledged prophets, such as Samuel, Nathan and others were excluded (1 Chronicles 29:29; 2 Chronicles 9:29; 12:15; 20:34). Although "many accounts" of Jesus were written (Luke 1:1), only four found their place in the Bible. A Higher Power than mere human will was obviously at work, overruling the selection of the writings that were to be accepted or rejected.

Whilst determined attempts were made by influential men to exclude portions of the Scriptures with which they disagreed, all such attempts were thwarted.

In this, likewise, we must see the hand of God.

The historian Gibbon in his *Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire*, ch.15, records that "In the council of Laodicea (about the year 360), the Apocalypse (the Book of Revelation) was

tacitly excluded from the sacred canon by the same churches of Asia to which it is addressed."

The Book of Revelation is very severe upon those Asian congregations, and that, no doubt, was the reason why they opposed its inclusion at the Council. But God did not per-

mit it. He overruled the opposition of men, so that the Apocalypse was rightly included within the canon of Scripture.

A careful consideration of the evidence will reveal without doubt that the Bible is the inspired and infallible word of God.

THE LIBRARY WE CALL THE BIBLE

Question: What is the Bible?

Answer: It is a book written by the power of inspiration working in prophets and apostles who lived in Israel a long time ago. They lived at different times, and each wrote his part independently of the others; but one Spirit moved them all, and enabled them to make known to men the mind of God in history, precept and prophecy, so that the Bible though composed of many books and parts, is the one Word of God (from *The Christadelphian Instructor*).

Proof: *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"* (2 Tim. 3:16). *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son"* (Heb. 1:1). *"Which things we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth"* (1 Cor. 2:13). *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"* (2 Pet. 1:21). *"Thy word is truth"* (John 17:17). *"Thou testifiedst against them by Thy spirit in the prophets"* (Neh. 9:30). *"The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord"* (1 Corinthians 14:37).

The word *Bible* means "Book", but actually the Bible is a library of sixty-six books, thirty-nine of which are in the Old Testament, and twenty-seven in the New. The division of the Bible into Old and New Testaments is artificial and man-made. Both the Old and the New Testaments are to be equally accepted as God's revelation to man. There is no conflict between them, nor is one of greater importance than the other. The writers of the New Testament repeatedly quoted from the Old in support and proof of their teaching. Christ quoted extensively from the Old Testament to make manifest the things "concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

The Object of the Bible.

"Whatever things were written beforehand, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

The Value of the Bible.

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" (Christ — John 5:39).

"Preach the Gospel, he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

The Power of the Bible.

"My word shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

"Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth (John 17:17).

"Wherewithal shall a man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word" (Psalm 119:9).

"God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

An Epitome of the Books of the Bible.

Old Testament Books.

HISTORY

- | | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| Genesis | — | Recording Creation, and the beginnings of history from God's standpoint. |
| Exodus | — | How God saved Israel from Egypt. |
| Leviticus | — | The ideal that God set before Israel; to what the people were called. |
| Numbers | — | How Israel failed: the wanderings through the wilderness. |
| Deuteronomy | — | The unfailing mercy and love of God: Israel's further opportunity. |
| Joshua | — | How God made it possible for Israel to occupy the Land of Promise. |
| Judges | — | How the nation again failed God. |
| Ruth | — | How individuals remained faithful in the midst of a faithless generation. |
| 1 & 2 Samuel | — | The monarchy established and a righteous king (David) elevated by God. |
| 1 & 2 Kings | — | How the nation failed politically. |
| 1 & 2 Chronicles | — | How the nation failed theocratically, and was taken into captivity. |
| Ezra | — | Restoration of Israel from Babylon. |
| Nehemiah | — | Reconstruction of Israel from anarchy. |
| Esther | — | Preservation of Israel from annihilation. |

POETRY

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Job | — | A dramatic epic — blessing through suffering. |
| Psalms | — | Rejoicing in hope. |
| Proverbs | — | Practical wisdom for life as it is now. |
| Ecclesiastes | — | Set not affection on anything under the sun, but seek the treasure from on high. |
| Song of Solomon | — | Typical communion with Christ the bridegroom. |

PROPHECY

Eighteen books of prophecy: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

New Testament Books

HISTORY

Matthew	— Jesus from the standpoint of his royalty.
Mark	— Jesus from the standpoint of his ministry.
Luke	— Jesus from the standpoint of his humanity.
John	— Jesus from the standpoint of his divinity.
Acts	— The preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles.

PRECEPT

Paul's Epistles for the guidance of communities of believers — Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians.	
Paul's Epistles of Instruction for individuals — 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.	
Paul's exposition of the Law of Moses — Hebrews.	
James' Epistles	— Faith in action.
Peter's Epistles	— Courage in persecution.
John's Epistles	— Love in manifestation.
Jude's Epistle	— Contention against apostasy.

PROPHECY

Revelation	— Christ's outline of future events recorded by John.
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"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (1 Timothy 3:16).

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 1

1. *Who is the author of the Bible?*
2. *Were the author's thoughts recorded by more than one writer?*
3. *Whose will and purpose are expressed in this Book?*
4. *Can the things recorded in the Bible contradict?*
5. *Is it right to reject the Old Testament, seeing that both Old and New Testaments form the One Book and are God's revelation to man?*
6. *Could the men that were selected of God to record His will withstand the force of inspiration?*

(2) Miracles Really Did Happen

What Constitutes "Miracle"?

In the modern, scientific age of today, when man can boast great progress in knowledge of the hidden forces of nature, it is fashionable to be incredulous of miracle.

Indeed, the record of miracles in the Bible is perhaps the greatest reason why most people reject its authenticity.

They claim that miracle is an impossibility, and on that score repudiate the Bible as a whole.

We believe that this attitude is unreasonable in this age of scientific advancement.

Man can perform things today that would have been once considered miraculous; why limit God's power to do what seemingly is impossible, seeing that He completely controls all the forces of nature?

The Bible sets forth God as the primordial Force of all things: "In Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28), "Of Him are all things" (1 Cor. 8:6). Miracles are merely a higher form of the work we see performed every day by nature, and the recognition of this fact should reduce the difficulty some experience in receiving the testimony of them. As the late R. Roberts wrote:

"Jesus produced bread sufficient for the feeding of the multitude. The only difference between the bread so produced and ordinary bread was the way it was made. When made, the one was the same as the other. Both were equal mar-

vels when looked at rightly. The bread naturally produced was slowly manufactured from invisible elements in the light, rain, soil, etc. Because slowly conducted, the process does not strike us; but it is in itself as wonderful as any miracle. In the bread that Jesus produced, the elements were gathered and combined instantaneously, that was all the difference — a great difference truly, and one beyond the power of man, but still a difference more of mode than of essence. The mode is divine and wonderful in both cases, but in the one it is slow, and in the other quick. The quickness was necessary to show undoubtedly the presence and operation of divine power. This is the case in all miracles." — (From *The Trial*.)

Science Confirms Bible Miracle.

The science of archaeology has unwittingly given support to the record of Divine interposition in man's affairs, as recorded in the Bible. Take, for example, the Flood, referred to in Genesis 7. Though this was once refuted, it is acknowledged today that it has historical reality. In 1922-29 factual evidences of a flood of unprecedented proportions were discovered by the eminent archaeologist, Sir L. Woolley. In his book, *Ur Of The Chaldees*, he records how he unearthed evidences in the Middle East of a flood "of a magnitude unparalleled in local history," and which, he claimed, was that recorded in Scripture. In describing his findings, he declared:

"The clay bank marks a definite break in the continuity of the local culture; a whole civilisation which existed before it is lacking above it,

and seems to have been submerged by the waters."

He claimed that an entire generation was destroyed by the waters of this flood.

In short, a Bible story that was once dismissed as myth, is now recognised to have been a fact.*

Another notable miracle recorded in the Bible, was the fall of Jericho (Joshua 6). The city resisted the invading Israelites, and seemed impregnable to attack. Joshua was ordered to command the army to march around the city once every day for six days, with the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant. On the seventh day, they were to march around seven times, at the completion of which, the priests were to blow with the trumpets, the people were to shout, and the walls would collapse to permit entry to the Israeli soldiers.

For centuries sceptics ridiculed the story.

Archaeologist, Professor Garstang, however, excavating at the site of Jericho, claimed that the Bible record is true. He did not always believe it to be so, and originally believed that his re-

search would disprove the whole account. But, to his amazement, the excavations revealed that the walls had fallen down as recorded in the book of Joshua.

This seemed so incredible, that the Professor believed that they might have been undermined, and propped up by timbers, which were set on fire, during the seven perambulations round the city on the last day. In other words, he expected to find evidence of a pious fraud rather than those proclaiming a miracle.

But he found that the soil beneath the walls had been undisturbed, and that the only possible explanation is that which is recorded in the Bible!

Summing up the evidence, he declared:

"One conclusion indeed seems certain: the power that could dislodge hundreds of tons of masonry ... must have been superhuman."

The Professor, who had been sceptical of the Bible story, was convinced by the evidence of his eyes. God had interposed at the right time—possibly by earthquake (Psalm 114:3-6) — and caused the walls to fall! Thus modern science helps to confirm an ancient miracle.

*Archaeological research has confirmed Bible history upon every point where it has touched. It was once common to challenge that Moses wrote the first books of the Bible on the assumption that writing was not then known, but it has now been proved that writing was practised long before Moses' day. Critics of the Bible used to dispute the existence of Belshazzar (Daniel 5:30-31) because profane history taught that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon, but hundreds of cuneiform tablets of that period have now been found in Babylonia, and establish that Belshazzar was made co-regent with Nabonidus, his father. The Science of the Spade has enabled Bible students to fill in many details to the background of the Bible, and so create anew the environment in which men such as Abraham, David, Moses, Jeremiah, and others lived.

Modern Miracles.

Meanwhile, the world has advanced to the nuclear age: the epoch of radio, radar, television, nuclear power and space travel. Man is able to accomplish today what would have been considered miraculous a hundred years ago. If man is able to do so by his limited knowledge of what is possible, how much more can an omnipotent God accomplish!

Nothing is impossible with Him!

We can, therefore, with full assurance, extract the greatest measure of comfort and hope from that most wonderful and significant of all miracles: the resurrection of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:20).

On the other hand, if we reject belief in God what remains?

The hopeless theory of evolution: a theory that is not only unproven, but which demands more in the way of credulity than does belief in the Bible.

To imagine that the amazing creation about us, in its infinite variety, and its marvellous order, came into existence by mere chance, demands more in the way of faith than does belief in the miracles of the Bible.

Truly the Bible declares:

“The fool hath said, There is no God” (Psalm 14:1).

The utmost confidence can be placed in the record of the Bible. It is as a light shining in a dark place, illuminating the pathway that leads to salvation. Let the reader open his eyes to its wonderful teaching; let him step inside the portals of Bible knowledge, and drink deeply at the fountain of living water found within. Let him not be deflected from such a course by the ridicule of the so-called wise. Let him take heed to the counsel of Paul who declared that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but that God has seen fit to call humble men and women to a knowledge of divine wisdom to bring to nought the mighty, that “no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Cor. 1:26-29). The Bible teaches:

“Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord” (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

SUMMARY:

1. A miracle is a marvel which God is able to perform by His omnipotent control of the forces of nature.
2. Science has given partial confirmation of Bible miracles in certain instances.
3. Granted the existence of God, we must accept the probability of miracle.
4. This enables us to extract hope from the greatest of miracles — the Resurrection of Christ.

(3) How to Interpret the Bible

It Means What It Says.

Though the Bible is profound in its teaching, it is written in language capable of being understood. To this proposition all will agree. But suppose attention was directed to the following statements:

"This same Jesus which ascended into heaven, shall so come in like manner as he ascended into heaven" (Acts 1:11); "And the Lord God 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" (Luke 1:32). "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8, 11); "for He shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem" (Isa. 24:23). "In that day, the Lord shall be king over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9), for "the Kingdoms of this world become the Kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

And suppose, on the reading of these statements, the remark was made, "It seems plain from this that Christ is coming to earth again, and that on his return, he will set aside all existing rule upon the earth and reign personally in Jerusalem as universal king" — what answer would be given? It is not a matter of surmise. It is supplied by thousands of cases of actual experience. "Oh! No such thing!" is the instant response; "What the prophet says is spiritual in its import. Jerusalem means the Church, and the coming of Christ again to reign

means that the time is coming when he will be supreme in the hearts and affections of men."

This method of interpretation — which is quite a common one — is untenable. The Bible tells its message in a direct and sensible way, going at once to its work without any scholastic preliminaries, taking it for granted that certain words represent certain ideas, and using those words in their current significance. Take a prophecy:

"I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours, and I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it, and I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste" (Lev. 26:31-33). "And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee (the Jews)" (Deut. 28:37).

There is no dispute about the mode in which this has been fulfilled.

The sublimest spiritualism is bound to recognise that the subject of these words is the literal nation of Israel and their land, and that, in fulfilment of the prediction, the *real* Israelites were driven from their *real*, literal land, which became *really* and *literally* desolate, and that Israel became a *literal* byword and reproach throughout the earth. This being so, on what principle are we to reject a literal construction of the follow-

ing:

"I 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" (Ezek. 37:21-22).

It is usual, with this and other similar predictions of a future restoration of Israel and their reinstatement as a great people under the Messiah, to contend that they refer to the future glory and extension of the church. But such an interpretation will never be maintained in the face of fulfilled prophecy by a truly reflecting mind. The restoration of the Jews to Palestine, and the emergence of the nation of Israel in recent years, illustrates how literally these words are to be understood.

Take another prophecy:

"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" (Micah 5:2).

How was this fulfilled? Turn to Matthew 2:1:

"Now Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king."

The fulfilment of the prophecy was in exact accordance with a literal understanding of the words employed, as everyone is aware.

The Use Of Metaphor.

Figures of speech are also used in Scripture to garnish the literal. Thus the Messiah is des-

cribed as "a stone," "a branch," "a shepherd" and so forth. Both metaphor and literal speech have their functions, but each is so distinct from the other that ordinary discrimination can recognise and separate them, though mixed in the same sentence. This will be evident on a little reflection.

We use metaphor in common speech without causing obscurity. We are never at a loss to perceive the metaphor when it is employed, and to understand its meaning, nor do we confuse the metaphor with the literal. When we talk of tyrants "trampling the rights of their subjects under their feet," we mix the literal with high metaphor; but no one is in danger of supposing that rights are literal substances that can be crushed to pieces under trampling feet. When we say, "he carried a *high* head," we do not mean a height that can be measured by the pocket rule; a "*black* look" has nothing to do with colour; "*hard* times" cannot be broken with a hammer. These are well understood metaphors beyond the danger of misconstruction. But suppose we say, "The Jewish nation is to be restored," we use a style of language in which there is no metaphor. We speak plainly of literal things, and instinctively understand them in a literal sense.

Now with regard to the Bible, it will be found that, in the main, this is the character of its composition. It is not a revelation of words but of ideas, and hence everything in its language

is subordinated to the purpose of imparting the ideas. The peculiarities of human speech are conformed to in the various particulars already mentioned. For instance, a metaphor is used in Deuteronomy 4:20: "The Lord hath brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt." Here Egypt is metaphorically spoken of as an "iron furnace." In Isaiah 8:7-8 the power of Assyria is likened to "the waters of a river." Other examples could be given but these are sufficient to illustrate the metaphorical element in Scripture. It is a very different thing from the gratuitous and indiscriminating rule of interpretation which, by a process called "spiritualising," obliterates almost every original feature in the Bible, making the Word of God of none effect.

Metaphors enrich the language of Scripture with the beauty of their hidden meaning, and many interesting and profitable hours can be spent in searching out their significance. As an example Isaiah 11:1 refers to Jesus as a "Branch" that would grow out of the roots of the house of David. According to the Hebraist, Parkhurst, the original word (*Nehtzer*) implies, "A plant, sucker, or young tree springing from the old root, and reserved or preserved when the tree is cut down." What an apt illustration to describe Jesus. He came at a time when Jewry was spiritually dead, but in him the hope of Israel sprang forth to new life. Christianity was established,

to flourish even when the old Jewish tree had been cut down in the destruction of the Jewish State by Rome in A.D. 70.

The Use of Symbol.

In the Bible, symbols are often employed in what may be called political prophecy. In this case, events are represented in Hieroglyph. A beast is put for an empire, horns for kings, waters for people, rivers for nations, and so forth. Symbols can always be identified where they occur, and are always explicable on certain rules supplied by the context. The literal always remains the basis. The elementary principles of divine truth are communicated literally, whilst its deeper aspects are elaborated and illustrated metaphorically and symbolically. The one is the step to the other, and before the latter can be understood, we must understand the clear, literal teaching of the Bible. It is the alphabet of spiritual things, and the mind, established on this sound foundation, will be prepared to ascend to the comprehension of those deeper things of God which are concealed in enigmas, for the study of those who delight to search out His mind. Scattered throughout the Scriptures are sufficient interpretations of symbols so as to intelligently explain them (see, for example, Daniel 8:20; Daniel 7:24; Revelation 1:20; Jeremiah 1:11-15, etc.). Thus the Bible becomes its own interpreter to the one who is prepared to read and study it.

HELPS TO THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE

1. There is no substitute for the Bible itself. It is its own interpreter and should be carefully and consistently read to be properly understood. Its teaching is the manna of life, and is alone capable of successfully guiding men and women along the path that leads to salvation. We therefore recommend the *Bible Companion* for an admirable plan of daily readings. If the system of reading there laid down is followed, the old Testament will be covered once, and the New twice in the course of a year. A free copy will be sent on application.
2. A good Concordance is of great assistance in ascertaining the position of any given passage of Scripture. We recommend *Strong's*, *Young's* or *Cruden's* in that order, with particular emphasis on the first two.
3. A good Bible Dictionary is helpful. *Unger's* is recommended, though we do not endorse all that is contained therein by any means. In fact, extreme care needs to be taken in the use of these books, as false ideas are by no means rare in their articles. The Dictionary is mainly helpful for historical, geographical, and archaeological information.
4. A competent exposition, *Elpis Israel* (meaning "the Hope of Israel") is recommended as being sound and helpful. *Christendom Astray from the Bible* (from which the above study has been adapted) is also highly recommended. We can supply copies of these works on loan if desired.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 2

1. *Who is the basis of all created matter?*
2. *What is a miracle?*
3. *Which incidence in Israel's history was once considered a myth, but has now been established as fact?*
4. *What can rightly be declared to be the greatest of miracles?*

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 3

1. *How must the main contents of the Bible be understood?*
2. *What is occasionally used in Scripture to garnish the literal record.*
3. *Name three figurative expressions that are used to describe the Messiah of Israel.*
4. *Which symbols are used in political prophecy as recorded in the Bible?*

(4) *The Fundamental Message of the Bible*

The Basic Theme.

Although the Bible is a library of sixty-six books, it has a basic theme that unites them as one, and provides the key that will unlock the deeper secrets of this wonderful Book.

In Scripture it is termed "the Gospel," a word that literally means good news.* It is styled "the Gospel of God" because it is a good message emanating from Him. It announces a good time coming, when "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21).

The Gospel was associated by Christ with the establishment of a Kingdom in a time appointed of God. His mission was to preach "the gospel (good tidings) of the Kingdom of God" (Mark 1:14). He called on all men to "believe these good tidings," and announced himself as the King of the Kingdom they proclaimed (John 18:37). So much did he preach about this Kingdom that the people became impatient, and sought to "take Him by force and make him King." But he would not permit it, "and because they thought that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear, He spake a parable to them" (Luke 19:11). He gave them to understand that before the kingdom could be established, he must first take a journey into a far country to receive his full

authority, and then to return; when he would bestow upon his servants power over the cities of the world (Luke 19:11-26). According to this arrangement, Jesus was crucified, rose from the dead (Acts 2:23-24), and took his departure, when he ascended to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens (Acts 1:9-11), where he is now. He has not yet received the kingdom, glory and dominion, or he would have already returned. In the time appointed (now near at hand) he will return, to establish upon the earth his kingdom, and to rule as King over all mankind (Acts 3:20-21; Zech. 14:9).

The Gospel As Taught By The Apostles.

The Apostles were sent forth to preach the same "good tidings" unto mankind. "Go ye into the world, and preach the gospel," they were told, "he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). They were to be very careful only to preach the "good tidings" which had been divinely revealed to them. Paul used very strong language on this point. He declared: "Though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8).

If an apostle was not exempt

*The Revised Version substitutes the words "Good Tidings" in the margin wherever the word "Gospel" appears.

from the curse of God if he preached a perverted gospel, what are we to say of those who, under the cloak of religion, preach fables in the name of Christ, such as the immortality of the soul, heaven going at death, and similar theories? The curse of God has rested on Christendom because it has perverted His teaching. Its history is one of discord, trouble and bloodshed; true peace it knows not.

Some believe that the Gospel comprehends only the work of reconciliation between God and man effected by the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. But the term was associated by Christ himself, with the establishment of a Kingdom in a time appointed of God, and this is confirmed by his instructions to the disciples. During his lifetime upon the earth, he sent them forth to preach the Gospel (Luke 9:6), instructing them, however, that they were not to tell men of his coming decease until after his resurrection (Luke 9:20-22). Thus the Gospel preached by the disciples at that time did not include matters concerning the sacrificial mission of the Lord.

The Gospel, therefore, is prophetic of the purpose of God in the earth. It was styled by the Apostles, "the good tidings

of Christ" (Rom. 15:19), the "good tidings of God" (Rom. 1:1), and the "good tidings of peace" (Eph. 6:15). Paul taught that the Gospel had its roots in the Old Testament, and in its simplest form could be expressed in seven words. He wrote: "God . . . preached the Gospel (good tidings) unto Abraham, saying: "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3:8).*

These seven words† epitomise the purpose of God. They centre attention *on earth* and not heaven as the arena where His purpose will be manifested. They teach that He intends to intervene in world affairs and establish a Kingdom under the rulership of Christ which will bring blessings of peace and righteousness to men everywhere. In the same chapter (vv. 26-28), the Apostle shows also that God is calling men to Him by the power of the Gospel, that they may be the associates of Christ in the day of His glory, when He shall reign from Jerusalem (Jeremiah 3:17) over the whole world (Daniel 2:44).

The establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth with Christ as King, comprised the "good things" of both Old and New Testaments.

This is shown by the following quotations:

*Later in the chapter (v. 16), he showed that the promise to Abraham involved the Lord Jesus who is represented as the "seed of Abraham" and through whom the blessing would come.

†In the Bible, the numeral 7 is frequently associated with the idea of perfection and completeness.

"The Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations" (Isa. 61:11).

"He (Christ) shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares . . . nation shall not lift up a sword against nation neither shall they learn war any more" (Micah 4:3).

"The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (Daniel 2:44).

"I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see my judgment that I have executed" (Ezekiel 39:21).

"In his days (the days of Christ) shall the righteous flourish and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (Psalm 72:7).

"The Lord shall be king over all the earth" (Zechariah 14:9).

"The desire of all nations shall come" (Haggai 2:7).

"The Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel" (Joel 3:16).

"The knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters do the sea" (Habbakuk 2:14).

"The law shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-4).

"In that day Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord" (Jeremiah 3:17).

Hundreds of similar references could be quoted from different parts of the Bible, for all its sixty-six books proclaim the same grand message. Christ, the Apostles, and the Prophets were all united in one great hope. They looked forward to coming changes in human affairs when the evils of man's rule will be replaced by the wise administration of a theocracy ruled over by the Lord Jesus and his resurrected and immortalised followers. This will bring about

such an alteration in human relationships, as to cause men to become a mutual blessing instead of a mutual curse as at the present.

The meek will then inherit the earth as Christ promised (Matthew 5:5), peace will universally prevail (Psalm 72:7), and the good tidings of the Gospel will find their fulfilment in the conditions that will then be established. The prophet taught:

"He (Christ) shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law" (Isaiah 42:4).

How The Gospel Message Was Perverted.

Following the death of the Apostles, the teaching of the Gospel was gradually perverted by churches that fell into apostasy. Paul had predicted that this would be the case. He wrote:

"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 Timothy 4:3-4).

It is not difficult to trace this decline in history, and to see that the divided state of Christendom today is an heritage from such.

Gibbon in *The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire* (Chapter 15) traced this decline. He declared that originally the Christians believed in the millennial reign of Christ on earth. Belief in this thousand

years' reign of Christ "was carefully inculcated by a succession of fathers from Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, who conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles, down to Lactantius, who was preceptor to the son of Constantine."

In short, Gibbon clearly states, that evidence shows that the early believers looked forward to the physical and visible return of Christ to set up on earth the Kingdom of God.

These early believers, he declared: "Intimately connected the millenium with the second coming of Christ." They taught that "Christ, with the triumphant band of saints and the elect who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon earth."

This doctrine is clearly taught in Scripture, as the quotations we have advanced above show.

But, today, it is not taught by the churches.

They have inherited the results of a drift from this original Apostolic teaching.

Gibbon records:

"But when the edifice of the church was almost completed, the

temporary support was laid aside. The doctrine of Christ's reign upon earth was at first treated as a profound allegory, was considered by degrees as a doubtful and useless opinion, and was at length rejected as the absurd invention of heresy and fanaticism."

How significant is this statement of the historians, in view of the prediction of the Bible itself. It predicts:

"There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, saying, 'Where is the promise of his coming?'" (2 Peter 3:4).

This is the attitude adopted by many so-called Christians today, who thus fail to appreciate the key to the understanding of the Bible, and failing to understand the book, lose interest in its glorious, life-giving message.

Unfortunately, in so doing, they follow their religious leaders, to whom the words of Christ can surely apply:

"Woe unto you! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men" (Matthew 23:13).

They do this by distorting the teaching of the Bible, and closing men's minds against its teaching.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 4

1. *What is the basic theme of the Bible?*
2. *What is the Gospel? (Paul defines it in seven words!)*
3. *Is the Gospel taught in the Old Testament? Give Bible references to support this.*
4. *What dramatic changes will Jesus Christ bring to the world when he returns?*
5. *What is to be understood under the expression "the millennial reign of Christ"?*

SUMMARY

The fundamental message of the Bible is the Gospel, which signifies "good news" or "glad tidings".

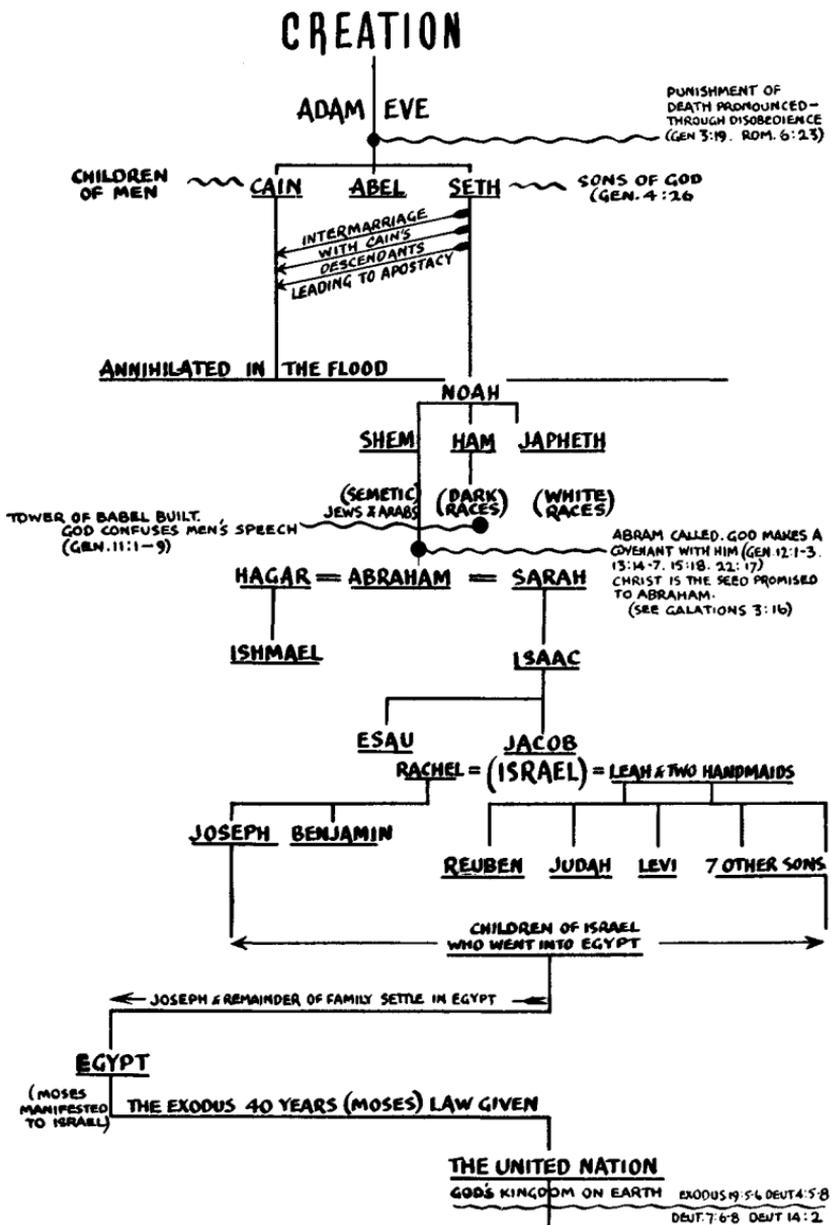
The Gospel announces a time of blessing for all nations (Galatians 3:8).

It concerns the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth (Mark 1:14; Luke 4:43; Luke 8:1; Daniel 2:44).

Christ will be its King (Luke 1:32-33), reigning from Jerusalem (Jeremiah 3:17). The scope of his reign will be world-wide (Zechariah 14:9). He will be assisted by his resurrected and immortalised followers who shall reign with him "on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10).

Current political and social conditions will be drastically altered to provide for the following:

- The abolition of war and establishment of universal peace (Isaiah 2:2-4).
- The removal of fear and insecurity from civil life (Micah 4:4).
- The overthrow of all tyrants and oppressors (Psalm 72:4).
- The establishment of a universal Empire on earth (Revelation 11:15).
- The equitable distribution of the world's produce (Isaiah 23:18).
- The manifestation of justice and goodwill among men (Luke 2:14).
- The establishment of one universal religion in all the earth (Zephaniah 3:8-9).
- A new educational system based upon Divine principles (Isaiah 33:6).
- The uplifting of humanity mentally, morally, and socially (Isaiah 11).
- The restraining of sin (Isaiah 30:18-21).
- The elevation of God's way as supreme (Isaiah 60).



Outline of Bible History (continued on P. 108.)

Section 2

REDEMPTION IN CHRIST JESUS

The things of the Way of Life constitute RELIGION. As a word, it is derived from the Latin religio, which signifies "to bind again"; hence religion is the act of "binding again", or that which heals a breach previously existing between two parties. The two in question are God and man. Though man sinned from the beginning, God's love is such, that He initiated terms of reconciliation: "He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The fact that God instituted religion is proof of the love He bears towards the human race. He seeks to appease men by His goodness, which invites them to repentance (Romans 2:4). God would draw men by His love which is manifested in all that He has done for the world. He has sought to enlighten it, and to exalt it to a participation in the divine nature by the ameliorating influences of the Truth. This is styled "the Word of Reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18-20), and is contained in His Word. It reveals the fact and the effect of sin, the nature of man, the need of redemption, and the means whereby salvation unto life eternal can be obtained.

(5) The Need of Redemption from Death

The Reality Of Death.

Death is a reality that none can avoid. Sooner or later its grim shadow darkens every household, its chill hand stretches out to claim every person. The tears and sorrow that attend such occasions testify to death's reality, and constitute a repudiation of the alleged immortality of the soul, so confidently, universally, but also falsely taught by Christendom. A person's feelings around the graveside confirm the teaching of the Bible: "The living know that they must die, but the dead know not anything" (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

We wish to impress the fact that though belief in the theory of an immortal soul is so widespread, it is not found in the Bible. Instead, the Bible sets forth death as the cessation of all life, thought and action (Psalm 6:5; 30:9; 88:10-12; Isaiah 38:18-19); a state of silence (1 Samuel 2:9; Psalm 115:17); a condition of corruption and destruction (Acts 13:36; Job 28:22; Psalm 49:9, 12, 14, 19, 20). It teaches that Christ brought "life and immortality to light through the Gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10), which would not be true if man possessed an immortal soul from the beginning. It sets forth hope in a resurrection of the body from the grave unto life eternal, rather than in some immortal, intangible entity called the soul, ascending into heaven.

In no instance does the Bible set forth hope of immortal souls ascending into heaven on the death of the body; on the contrary, it dogmatically asserts that apart from a resurrection, those who have "fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*" (1 Corinthians 15:18).

Think on that statement! How could it be claimed that those who have "fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*" apart from a resurrection, if mankind possessed immortal souls? Their souls would have ascended into heaven, and it could not be claimed that they are *perished*, even though they may not be raised from the dead.

And notice, that it is those "*in Christ*" who are said to have "*perished*" if there be no resurrection!

The statement shows conclusively that death is a reality, not the gateway to glory, and that the need of redemption from death is urgent.

Furthermore, a testimony to death's reality is proclaimed in the fact that people don't want to die anyway—even though they may profess belief in an immortal soul! It is of the greatest significance, that despite the glowing picture of heaven frequently portrayed upon the canvas of a preacher's imagination, he evinces no eager desire to wend his way thither! He continues to look upon death as a calamity, and prefers to remain alive on earth, even though his

existence there might be attended with circumstances of frustration and difficulty.

Why is that so?

Because man subconsciously repudiates the false theory of life in death.

The theory of the immortality of the soul is a fallacy designed to minimise the reality of death. It is claimed that death is really the gateway to greater experience in heaven, but if that were true, it would transform the great Enemy into our best friend, and suicide, instead of being a crime, would be an act of wisdom! If mankind possess immortal souls, then death is no punishment as taught in the Bible (Roman 6:23), and the sacrifice of Christ to provide life was quite unnecessary, for long before his death, countless millions must have already ascended into heaven.

In contrast to this teaching, the Bible clearly teaches that the soul is mortal (Psalm 78:50; 89:48). Consider the following reasoning:

The Bible teaches: "The soul that sinneth shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). Obviously this refers to all mankind, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), and therefore all are mortal.

The Bible teaches: "He poured out his soul unto death" (Isaiah 53:12). The reference applies to the Lord Jesus Christ, a sinless man. So that even despite his perfect obedience, his soul died! If his soul died, we most certainly can conclude with

the Bible that "no man can keep alive his soul" (Ps. 22:29).

The Bible teaches: "Those who have fallen asleep in Christ are perished" if resurrection is not a fact (1 Corinthians 15:18), but this would be incorrect under any circumstances if man possessed an immortal soul. Therefore, to believe the Bible, we must believe that man is mortal — both body and soul.

The word "soul" frequently appears in the Bible, and is used in many different ways, but never as an immortal, divine spark in man that lives on after the death of the body. In Genesis 12:5 it is used for persons. In Numbers 31:28 it is used for both men and beasts. It is sometimes used in the sense of mind, disposition, life, etc. It is spoken of as being capable of hunger (Proverbs 19:15), of being satisfied with food (Lamentations 1:11, 19); of going into the grave (Job 33:22, 28); of coming out of it (Psalm 49:15).

In Genesis 1:20, 30, the word is used in connection with birds, fish and animals, as well as mankind, and all are said to have "souls" in common one with the other. Thus:

"God said, let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life (margin, soul)" (Gen. 1:20).

"God created great whales, and every living creature (or living soul)" (Gen. 1:21).

"Every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life (margin — soul)" (Gen. 1:30).

"God breathed into his (man's) nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7 — these words are the same in the Hebrew Scriptures as those rendered "living creature" in Genesis 1:21 quoted above).

Never once, in the 800 times that the word "soul" occurs in the Bible is it referred to as being immortal, or as living on after the death of the body. Never once do the words "immortal soul" occur in conjunction in the Bible.

Hell Signifies The Grave.

Perhaps the gravest indictment against the theory of an immortal soul living on after the death of the body, is the related doctrine of hell. If the soul is immortal, a place must be found for the souls of the disobedient as well as for those of the worthy; and as the Bible reveals that most men are in the former category, and "have no hope" (Ephesians 2:12), so hell must be the destiny of the majority.

This is true, but now we must establish what hell signifies.

Many churches interpret the term as describing a place of sulphuric flame and everlasting torture. Certain symbolic passages of the Bible are taken out of their context and given a meaning never intended, and upon this distorted foundation of Scripture, there has been built up the terrible doctrine that God consigns to everlasting misery, the souls of both the wicked and the ignorant.

Such a "hell" is a figment of

the imagination, and an insult to the God of love revealed in the Bible. The Christian world condemns a Hitler for the agony and torture that he instituted in the concentration camps of Germany, and yet teaches that God permits something even much worse and permanent in hell.

A consideration of the evidence, however, will show that the doctrine is false. False it must be, of course, if the soul of man is mortal as we have indicated above; for the two doctrines stand or fall together.

The word "hell" comes from an Anglo-Saxon root signifying "to cover." It finds its place in such words as "helmet" which signifies a covering for the head. The "place of covering" referred to as "hell" in most places where it is used in the Bible, is the grave.

The word "hell" has been used as a translation for the Hebrew word, *Sheol* in the Old Testament, and the Greek word, *Hades* in the New Testament. But these words have also been rendered "grave" as in Genesis 42:38; Psalms 30:3, and the following places:

"O grave (sheol) I will be thy destruction" (Hosea 13:14).

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave (hades — see margin) where is thy victory" (1 Corinthians 15:55).

To be consistent, *Sheol* and *Hades* should be uniformly translated "grave" throughout the Bible.

The hell of the Bible, therefore, is the grave. The Psalmist declared:

"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (sheol)" (Psalm 16:10).

"God shall redeem my soul from the power of the grave (sheol)" (Psalm 49:14-15).

Of Jonah it is recorded that he cried "out of the belly of hell (sheol)." This "hell" was the belly of the fish (Jonah 2:1-2), a place of covering which was to him a grave, but certainly not the "hell" of popular theology.

Peter used the term to teach

the doctrine of the resurrection declaring concerning Christ: "His soul was not left in hell (hades)" (Acts 2:31). It is obvious that Jesus never went to the place of torture, to which many churches refer "hell," but that he did go to a place of covering, into the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. This was the "hell" of Peter's discourse, from whence Christ rose after three days' burial.

BIBLE ANALYSIS OF THE WORD "HELL"

The Hebrew and Greek words, "sheol" and "hades" have been both rendered by "hell" and "grave", but should uniformly be translated "grave". The following references list where these words appear:

"SHEOL" is rendered "grave" in the following verses: Gen. 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31; 1 Sam. 2:6; 1 Kings 2:6, 9; Job 7:9; 14:13; 21:13; 24:19; Psa. 6:5; 30:3; 31:17; 49:14-15; 88:3; 89:48; 141:7; Prov. 1:12; 30:16; Eccl. 9:10; Song 8:6; Isa. 14:11; 38:10, 18; Ezek. 31:15; Hos. 13:14.

"SHEOL" is rendered "hell" in the following verses: Deut. 32:22; 2 Sam. 22:6; Job. 11:8; 26:6; Psa. 9:17; 16:10; 18:5; 55:15; 86:13; 116:3; 139:8; Prov. 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:11, 24; 23:14; 27:20; Isa. 5:14; 14:9, 15; 28:15, 18; 57:9; Ezek. 31:16, 17; 32:21, 27; Amos 9:2; Jonah 2:2; Hab. 2:5.

"HADES" is rendered "hell" in the following verses: Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14.

"HADES" is rendered "grave" in the following verse: 1 Cor 15:55. Two other Greek words have been translated "hell" in the New Testament:

"GEHENNA" is rendered "hell" in the following verses: Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6.

"TARTAROS" is rendered "hell" in the following verse: 2 Pet. 2:4.

It will be seen from the above quotations that the terms "hell" and "grave" are interchangeable words, and relate to the "covered place", the grave. The word "gehenna" comes from the phrase "valley of Hinnom", a place of destruction, just outside of Jerusalem, where the refuse of the city was destroyed in flame. Thus, this word relates to a state of utter destruction, from which no salvation is possible. "Tartaros" signifies a deep pit from which one would eventually be drawn out for judgment. It thus describes the death-state pending judgment.

Another word rendered "hell" in the New Testament is *Gehenna*. *Gehenna* was a valley outside the walls of Jerusalem (still called by this name) in which burned a fire that was fed by the refuse of the city. Anything worthless, and to be completely destroyed was consigned into *Gehenna*. The term thus became synonymous with the ideas of rejection, dishonour, judgment and utter destruction.

The Lord used the term in that way to describe the fate of the wicked.

Annihilation is a far more merciful end than the terrible fate of suffering eternal torment in a hell of sulphuric flame, presided over by a diabolic genius of torture, such as some have conjured up! The idea is completely foreign to the teaching of the Bible, and to the character of the God of love and mercy revealed therein.

The Bible sets forth death as the punishment for sin (Romans 5:12), and such passages as Mark 9:43 (where the word *Gehenna* appears) are properly interpreted as highly descriptive and figurative expressions representing the disgrace and total extinction that awaits the sinner at Christ's return (Psalm 37:10, 20, 36; 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10; Proverbs 24:20; Job 21:30).

Perhaps this is best illustrated by considering one use of this word, *Gehenna*.

It occurs, as we have stated, in Mark 9:43, and is there rendered as "into hell (*Gehenna*),

into the fire that never shall be quenched."

This continuously burning fire in *Gehenna* was the Jerusalem rubbish destructor that was always kept burning to consume the rubbish of the city, including the bodies of criminals.

That was clearly obvious to the people of Christ's day, though it may not be so to us today. However, a little research into Scripture will prove our point.

The Lord continued on from his reference to *Gehenna*, or hell, by stating:

"Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (v. 46).

In doing so, he was quoting from Isaiah 66:24, which speaks of a form of instruction that will be set up in the Promised Land, in the future age, when Christ will reign on earth. The prophet declares:

"They (worshippers — see v. 23) shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

If these worshippers are able to go forth and view the results of judgment and punishment, the place where the "worm shall not die," is certainly not the "hell" of current theology, but merely the grave or sepulchre of wicked men. Ezekiel 39:11, 15, 16 speaks of a great mausoleum being set up in the Holy Land, to commemorate the overthrow of those who will come up against Jerusalem to battle at the time of the end. This could

well be the place referred to literally in Isaiah 66:46 and figuratively in Mark 9:43.

One fact emerges, that the "hell" of the Bible is the grave.

Redemption Is A Dire Need.

We suggest that the reader therefore open his eyes to the great difference that exists between prevailing theology and the teaching of the Bible. The former is visionary, impractical, and fails to provide for the real needs of man; the latter is tangible, logical, and well adapted to his requirements. We all know what man has at the moment: a life of toil and frustration, ending in death. This, however, does not have to be his inevitable fate. The Bible proclaims a time when this need no longer be so; when immortality will be granted those who have faithfully kept the precepts of Christ, and when Christ will reign on earth with his resurrected and immortalised followers as his associates (Revelation 5:9-10).

Meanwhile, redemption is a dire need. Death, with a terrible finality, awaits all, unless we take the necessary steps to conquer the grave (Revelation 1:18). Accident or sickness can cut us down in the prime of life. The worthy and the waster find a common resting place together in mother earth (Job 3:14-22). The careers of all, whether useful or otherwise, end in the grave, so that often all the experiences of life seem futile and vain.

The philosopher then steps in,

and with a hopeless view of life and death proclaims his teaching: "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." The atheist proclaims his viewpoint, and questioning the existence of God, finds refuge in the fallacies of evolution. So the sceptic would get rid of God, and all responsibility towards Him.

Others, however, are not so foolish. Acknowledging the incontestable evidence that God exists, and yet oppressed with the prevalence of evil and the inevitability of death, they find fault with God. They ask, "Why did God create man thus?" In their ignorance, they question the love and wisdom of God, and failing to understand His purpose, turn completely from religion.

Why God Permitted The Exercise of Freewill.

It is often suggested that God would have done better if He had created man perfect from the beginning. Certainly, that would have prevented the record of trouble and evil that man has manifested since creation.

But it would also have interfered with the development of such virtues as faith, love, voluntary obedience, mercy, forgiveness, and so forth.

It is these that God desires to see manifested above all else (Hebrews 11:6; 1 Peter 1:7).

This is understandable. What do we desire and treasure most in our relationships one with the other? It is the spontaneous

affection and loving obedience of a child; the faithful loyalty of a friend in time of adversity; the free offer of pardon or forgiveness when we have sinned.

Is there any real pleasure in the mere forced obedience of a child, or loyalty from an acquaintance that we must buy to receive?

There is none.

So it is with God. If He had created man as a mere automaton who had to obey Him like some animated machine, it would mean that the greatest pleasure derived from the attributes of a loving character would be denied Him, so that He would find little pleasure in creation. God delights in voluntary acts of love and obedience extended towards Him (Deuteronomy 11:26-28; Psalm 71:13-15), and He will suitably reward them.

To that end, God gave man the attribute of freewill. Unfortunately, man has used this liberty as licence, and in general has turned his back upon his Creator, whilst, at the same time, blaspheming Him because he suffers the consequence of his own folly. Men violate natural laws, and yet blame God because they suffer the result of such laws. They gratify their lust without limit, and yet deplore the immorality that comes as a result. They manifest a ruthless indifference to the rights of others, and yet stand aghast at the conditions of violence and war that overshadow modern civilisation.

God does not force men to

sin, neither does He compel them to be obedient; but, as His just prerogative, He punishes the guilty and will reward the obedient.

How Man Exercised His Freewill.

At this stage, we suggest that you read Genesis chapters 1, 2, 3. These chapters record the beginnings of Creation, the establishment of Law, the manifestation of sin, the punishment of death, and the promise of redemption.

Notice that when God looked upon His handiwork at creation, he pronounced it all as "very good" (Genesis 1:31).

At that stage, man was "at one" with God. He had the mental capacity to comprehend Divine principles, and the ability to manifest them. He was provided with all things necessary for life, and placed in a Garden of Delight (Eden), with but one simple law: to avoid the tree concerning which God declared: "thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

Adam and Eve were thus placed on probation, and though they were not immortal, neither were they at that time mortal as their descendants are today, for they had not then been brought under the power of the "law of sin and death" which afterwards worked "in their members" to inexorably bring them to the grave (Romans 7: 20-25).

This change was brought about by sin, or man's thought-

less and God-defying exercise of freewill.

Thus the very One who pronounced man "very good" at the epoch of creation (Gen. 1:31), later pronounced that he is "evil from his youth" (Genesis 8:21).

Meanwhile, Adam and Eve, the first human pair, were instructed concerning matters of worship and the Divine will. They were given a simple law, and granted a freewill, that enabled them to manifest obedience and respect for their Creator.

Unfortunately, they used the freewill granted them, the ability to obey or disobey, to sin against God, and so they earned the penalty of death.

The circumstances are outlined in the third chapter.

Tempted by the serpent, Eve succumbed to his suggestion and ate of the forbidden fruit, and then persuaded her husband to do likewise.

This record of the introduction of sin and death is very important, for it is basic to a correct understanding of the Bible as a whole. Many go astray at this point. They view Adam and Eve as possessing an immortal soul, and thus interpret death in a special way, or they consider the serpent as a figure of speech defining an immortal devil, the ruler of hell.

The serpent, however, is clearly defined as one of the "beasts of the field," though possessing unusual characteristics, and a

shrewdness uncommon among the brute beasts (see Genesis 3:1).

It was included among those designated "very good" by its Creator (Gen. 1:31). It was placed under the domination of Adam, but, wiser than other beasts, it sought to dominate him. It had heard of the prohibition that God had placed upon Adam and Eve in regard to eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, and, being "more subtle" than any other animal, it began, in its own clever way (Gen. 3:1), to reason upon the Law of God from a purely animal or fleshly standpoint. Why should not Adam and Eve eat of the tree? Why should not they please themselves? Would such eating necessarily result in death?

Thus it began to question both the need of such a law and the certainty of the penalty that God had threatened would be experienced.

With such philosophising, developed from observing and reasoning upon divine law from a merely animal or fleshly standpoint, the serpent urged Eve to please herself and eat of the forbidden fruit.

And Eve, instead of rejecting the temptation of the serpent, meditated upon his suggestion. That was her undoing. The idea of partaking of that which was forbidden found a lodgment in her mind. Desire to satisfy her curiosity for the forbidden fruit had been excited by the ser-

pent's reasoning. She began to look at things from a new perspective, created by the doctrine of the serpent. Previously she had viewed them only in the light of God's prohibition with which she had been in full accord. Why should she abstain? Would God really bring her under the power of death? What was death anyway? Had not the serpent said, "Thou shalt not surely die?" As she gazed at the tree she saw that it "was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and one to be desired" (Genesis 3:6). Thus lust conceived in her, and it ultimately brought forth sin; and sin, having been committed, earned the sentence of death (Genesis 3:19; James 1:15).

Eve partook of the tree, and induced Adam to do likewise. Thus sin was first committed, and through it came death: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Romans 5:12). Mortality became a physical principle of the flesh, which was transmitted to Adam's posterity (Romans 5:17-19). Man was no longer in his original "very good" state. Rebellion had been generated in his heart, death was now his destiny, and the fellowship that had previously existed between him and God had been broken by disobedience (Gen. 8:21).

God alone could institute the means of reconciliation and redemption; and this He proceeded to do in His mercy and His love.

Was God revealed as unjust

in all these transactions? By no means. Was He unjust in creating Adam and Eve "very good"? No, He was not. Was He unjust by placing them under a law? No, discipline is good for such as them. Was He unjust by fixing a penalty for disobedience? No, for without such, law would lose its power. Was He unjust by punishing them? No, for otherwise man would learn to defy God with impunity, and would hold His laws in contempt. Was He unjust by providing the means of reconciliation and hope of life? By no means, on the contrary the righteousness of God is upheld, and His mercy and love revealed, in those very principles.

What Resulted From Sin.

The introduction of sin produced a new set of circumstances, and resulted in drastic changes.

Man was no longer "very good" (Gen. 1:31), but was now subject to death, and possessed of a heart which "is evil from youth" (Gen. 8:21; see also Psalm 58:3; Jeremiah 10:23; Romans 7:18).

All creation came under curse.

The ground brought forth thorns and thistles, so that man could only reap its fruits by hard toil (Gen. 3:17-19).

The animal creation became subject to change, many becoming carnivorous (cp. Gen. 2:19 with Isa. 65:25), the serpent being cursed "above all cattle" (Gen. 3:14).

The woman, because of her

presumption in leading the way to sin, was now appointed to be subject to her husband. Death would prevail over her posterity, so that her sorrow and conceptions would be multiplied: the former, because death would overtake her children; the latter, to compensate for the wastage brought about by death.

The sentence of death was pronounced against the man because he had followed the woman into sin. From henceforth his posterity was subject to mortality. As Adam and Eve had been defiled mentally when they heeded the teaching of the serpent, morally when they applied it, and physically when mortality took hold of them, so there now existed a need for their redemption from this state into which they had fallen.

For the moment, sin was triumphant. However, God did not create the earth and man upon it that sin and death might reign thereon, but that it might reflect to His glory (Numbers 14:21). But with sin temporarily triumphant, what was He to do? He could destroy man, and commence again with, perhaps, the same result; or by the exercise of love and mercy in forgiveness, He could redeem man from the conditions of evil that he had brought upon himself and the earth by his folly.

God decided upon the second of these two alternatives. In doing so, He even made Sin His helper. For man was humbled by sin, and forced to recognise his dependence upon the mercy and forgiveness of God. It em-

phasised those virtues, so that by experiencing them from the Creator, man learned the need of exercising them towards his fellow-man.

Out of the chaos caused by sin, God again commenced His purpose. His plan is to restore paradise again upon the earth, and, in Christ, man obtains even more blessings than were lost in Adam. The time will ultimately come when there will "be no more curse" (Revelation 22:3); when the earth will bring forth its full increase (Ps. 72:16); when those called by God will be elevated to glorious unity in Christ (Galatians 3:28; John 17:21), and when death itself will be eradicated (1 Corinthians 15:25-26, 54-58).

The Plan Of Redemption Typified To Adam.

Before they sinned, Adam and Eve's conscience was good. They were naked, but not at all ashamed, or afraid, in the presence of the angels, who conversed with them in the name of God. But their conscience having been defiled through sin, they became conscious of their nakedness, and filled with shame and fear (Genesis 3:10). They tried to cover their nakedness by sewing fig-leaves together and making themselves aprons, but God stripped them of their fig-leaf device, and slaying an animal clothed them with its skin.

This was designed to teach an important spiritual lesson. Nakedness is used in Scripture as a symbol of sin (Revelation 16:15), and as man, since the

Fall, is born into a constitution of sin (Romans 5:19), so he is represented as being figuratively naked, and in need of a covering. It is a divine principle that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" of sin (Hebrews 9:22), and this was graphically illustrated to Adam when his fig-leaf device was stripped from him, and he was clothed with the skin of a slain

animal.

That sacrifice pointed forward to that of the Lord Jesus Christ who is figuratively represented as "the lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). In Christ, therefore, God has provided the covering adequate to hide our spiritual nakedness, and we must avail ourselves of it if we would be saved.

SUMMARY

Death is a state of unconsciousness, the cessation of all life, thought and action.

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is false.

The hell of the Bible is the grave, with the exception of those figurative passages which use the term to denote total rejection and destruction.

Sin came through man's exercise of freewill in defiance of the law of God.

Death, or mortality, came as a punishment of sin.

God's mercy is revealed in the provision He has made for the forgiveness and redemption of sin-stricken man.

This redemption provides for a cover which is found in Christ Jesus.

God is revealed as being both just and merciful. He was just in punishing man because of sin; He was merciful in providing for his redemption from the effects of sin.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 5

1. *What does the term "religion" signify?*
2. *Where, in the record of the Bible is the term "soul" applied to animals?*
3. *What did Christ bring to light through the gospel?*
4. *The Bible bears record that "the soul that sinneth shall . . ."*
5. *Paul states that even those who have died in Christ are perished, if there is no . . .*
6. *What do the words "sheol" and "hades" actually signify?*
7. *Why does God permit the exercise of free-will?*
8. *What was the most disastrous result of Adam's misuse of his free-will?*
9. *What was the condition of both man and beast at the time of creation — (very good, or perfect)?*
10. *How did God acquaint Adam with the means of redemption, after he had sinned?*
11. *How can mortal man be delivered from the power of the grave?*

(6) The Promise of Redemption

God's Three Great Covenants Of Promise.

Our previous study showed that due to the state into which mankind fell as a result of sin, redemption is a dire need. We now draw attention to the hope of Redemption. This is set forth in three great covenants of promise which form the basis of all Bible teaching.

References to them are found throughout the Scriptures, and particularly in such statements as the following:

"Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy" (Rom. 15:8-9).

"There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

"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" (Hebrews 11:13).

The first of these three covenants of promise was given in Eden, after Adam and Eve had sinned; and it promised life in contrast to the state of mortality to which they had become subject in consequence of sin.

The second was made to Abraham, as he wandered a stranger and homeless in the land to which he had been directed, and it promised him an eternal in-

heritance.

The third was made to King David, and set forth the hope of a settled, enduring throne of glory, free from the enmity that he had experienced during his lifetime.

There is progression in those three great covenants of promise.

The Edenic Covenant (Genesis 3:15) promised mankind what had been lost through sin: even LIFE.

The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12, 13, 22), promised that which Abraham lacked: an earthly possession where that life could be lived, even an ETERNAL INHERITANCE.

The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7), promised Divine RULE on earth, by which the inheritance will be efficiently governed.

The first offered LIFE; the second promised INHERITANCE; the third proclaimed eternal AUTHORITY.

In each case, that which was promised, and which is to be obtained only in Christ, is greater than that which was lost, or given up.

The LIFE promised in Eden is ETERNAL and therefore greater than that which was lost through sin.

The INHERITANCE promised Abraham will be FOREVER, and therefore more than compensates for that which he gave up when he left Ur to serve God.

The KINGDOM promised David will be both SECURE and

EVERLASTING, and therefore far more glorious than that over which he reigned and which was subsequently overthrown.

Moreover, these three covenants of promise which shall be outlined in detail in subsequent studies, form the basis of every doctrine, teaching and prophecy contained in the Bible.

Redemption Promised In Eden.

To gain the background to the first, or Edenic, Covenant of promise, please read Genesis 2:15-17 where God's law to man is stated, and Genesis 3 where the circumstances of the fall are outlined.

The promise of redemption is stated in Genesis 3:15:

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head; and thou shalt bruise his heel."

In seeking the true meaning of the Bible, it is always valuable to consider the background.

We recommend that you read again Genesis 3, observing the following sections:

1. **The Temptation** vv. 1-5.
2. **The Fall** vv. 6-7.
3. **The Inquest** vv. 8-13.
4. **The Judgment** vv. 14-19.
5. **The Token of Redemption**
vv. 20-21.
6. **The Expulsion** vv. 22-24.

It is not our intention to expound upon every detail of this chapter, though we shall be very happy to consider any questions you might ask in regard to it. Our main intention is to concentrate attention upon the covenant of promise contained in verse 15.

The passage should be interpreted figuratively and not literally. It proclaims the decree of God to establish "enmity" between the "serpent" and the "woman", and between the seed of both, and announces His intention of providing a "seed" from the woman who would completely destroy the "serpent".

Many make the mistake of teaching that the serpent related to satan as a fallen angel, but the punishment imposed upon it (v. 14), and God's description of it as being "cursed above all the *beasts of the field*" shows that this is wrong.

The serpent was an animal that temporarily had the power of speech. As a "beast of the field" it symbolised the flesh, and when it spake, it did so as one motivated only by the flesh, and not by reverence towards God or His word.

The serpent was the "father of lies" (John 8:44), for it had falsely declared: "Thou shalt not surely die" (Gen. 3:4), and by its insidious suggestion, it had led Eve into sin.

In the figurative language of Genesis 3:15, therefore, it stands as a symbol for the "thinking of the flesh" which leads to error, sin and death, and which is at "enmity with God" (Romans 8: 3).

On the other hand, though Eve had sinned, she had proclaimed the Truth that God had taught her (vv. 2-3), so that in this declaration of the Divine purpose, she is used as representing the Mind of God, which proclaims truth, and sets forth prin-

ciples of righteousness and life.

Between these two ways of thought: between Truth and Error, or the Mind of God and the mind of the flesh, there exists enmity; and God has so designed it because His ways are so much higher than those of flesh. This enmity has resulted in religious controversy throughout the age, so fierce and unrelenting, that the blood of thousands has been shed, whose only crime has been their refusal to bow before the forces of error which have often masqueraded under the name of Christ.

This enmity, or conflict, is also manifested within the mind of every individual who would seek to do God's will, for he will inevitably find that it is at variance with his natural desires. Paul's experience is that of all. He wrote:

"I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Romans 7:18-19).

He wrote of two modes of thinking which a person can manifest, and he showed the ultimate result of both:

"To be carnally minded (the minding, or thinking of the flesh — see margin) is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:6-7).

With a mind enlivened by the Truth, Paul desired to serve God, but he found that he constantly

fell short of the standard set him in Christ because of the strong impulses of the flesh. How could he obtain the victory over the flesh? That was the problem that daily faced him. The answer is, only by the forgiveness of sin that God grants in Christ Jesus (Romans 7:18-23).

A conflict raged in the mind of the Apostle as he considered the requirements of righteousness, and the demands of the flesh. All who would live in accordance with the precepts of Christ experience the same conflict, but through the strength available through him (Phil. 4:13), they can gain the victory.

It is a matter of encouragement to those who may be depressed with a sense of failure to attain unto the standard set by Christ, that even the great apostle Paul had to lament the same inability, and seek the forgiveness of God in Christ.

Thus we conclude that a state of antagonism exists between Truth and Error, and Righteousness and Sin, in which the latter are temporarily in the ascendancy, and that condition illustrates the first part of the declaration of Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman . . ."

The Woman's Seed And The Serpent's Seed.

The declaration of Genesis 3:15 states that enmity would also exist between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. These terms also should be interpreted figuratively.

The serpent's lie brought man-

kind under the influence of the "law of sin and death" (Romans 7:23, 25; 8:3). The effect was that man became subject to an intensification of fleshly desire, and to a state of mortality that ends in death. In a figurative sense, therefore, the serpent is used as a symbol of fallen human nature.

The term "seed of the serpent" represents those who are governed by the lusts of the flesh to the exclusion of God's way. The Lord Jesus used the figure in describing the religious-minded but self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the condemnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:33).

On the other hand, the "seed of the woman" are those who are governed by the teaching of God. The foremost of these is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is pre-eminently the seed of the woman who was provided to destroy the serpent power, and others become of that "seed" in a multitudinous sense by being inducted "into him" (see Gal. 3:26-29). Concerning him, Paul wrote that he was "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption (or status) of sons" (Galatians 4:4-5).

This first covenant, therefore, states the inevitability of conflict between two principles and two classes of persons, and its result. Those exclusively governed by the flesh, are in opposition to those ruled by the law of God. The conflict is unto death, al-

though, through the mercy of God, the ultimate victory of the righteous is sure.

In the warfare between the two seeds, God declared that the serpent would "bruise the heel" of the seed of the woman. A bruise on the heel may cause inconvenience, and incapacitate one, but it is not fatal; a person will recover from it.

This was the case with the Lord Jesus Christ. He was figuratively "bruised by the serpent" inasmuch as he suffered the penalty due to sin. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). As Saviour of mankind, he inherited the nature common to all, a nature that had been brought under the power of death, from which he, also, had to be redeemed that he might redeem others. In his ministry, he experienced all the hostility, the enmity, that righteousness has ever experienced from the sinful and wicked, and, finally, was crucified by the serpent power of sin manifested through Jewish and Gentile rulers.

But the triumph of sin was only temporary, even as a "bruise on the heel" is not fatal. Thus the Lord Jesus rose from the dead unto life eternal, having gained the victory over sin and death.

On the other hand, the serpent was warned that the seed of the woman would "bruise thy head" (Genesis 3:15).

A fractured skull can be a

fatal wound, so that in this declaration, God was predicting that the seed of the woman would destroy what the serpent had brought into being: sin and death. Though Jesus, as the seed of the woman, inherited the consequences of Adam's sin, in that he possessed a nature common to all, he triumphed over it, and opened the way to victory for all who will come unto God through him. Thus Paul taught:

"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" (Hebrews 2:14).

The devil is described as that "which had the power of death." What has the power of death? As far as the Bible is concerned it is sin. Thus:

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:55-57).

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

But from whence come the promptings of sin? The answer is, from within, from the flesh, Jesus being witness. He declared:

"From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, wickedness . . ." (Mark 7:20-23).

Paul taught:

"I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Romans 7:18).

He spoke of "sin that dwelleth

in me" (Romans 7:17), thus using the term as a synonym for human nature, the promptings of sin which reside in the flesh.

Christ conquered sin by triumphing over the flesh in his lifetime, and by submitting to the death upon the cross. He rose from the grave to life eternal. With this change of nature, the serpent power of sin had no longer any hold on him. It had bruised him on the heel, in that he had been put to death, but in rising from the grave, he had recovered from the blow, and in attaining unto life eternal he had administered a fatal blow to the "serpent" power as far as he was concerned.

No longer did death, which, originally had come through sin, have any claim upon him. He had been saved out of it, and made it possible for others to do so also (see Romans 5:17-19; Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15; 5:7-9).

He rose to life eternal because of his perfect obedience to the will of his Father (Acts 2:24); and he opened the way to victory and life eternal for all who would come unto God through him. Not that they will render perfect obedience, but in him they can obtain the forgiveness of sins, and the incentive to a change of life, which is impossible apart from Christ.

"He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9).

A SUMMARY OF THE SYMBOLOGY OF THE EDENIC COVENANT

The Serpent As A Symbol.

In the declaration of Genesis 3:15, the serpent is used to represent that which he manifested and produced. He gave expression to the thinking of the flesh, which led to error and sin, and finally resulted in death. As a symbol, therefore, he represented the flesh under the law of sin and death which now resides in every mortal. The following are some Bible references to the serpent in such symbology:

"I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman" (Genesis 3:15).

"Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived" (Numbers 21:9).

"The sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. 15:56).

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

The Woman As A Symbol.

She represented that which she proclaimed. She spake truth (see Genesis 3:2-3) which had been revealed to her from God, and in this she proclaimed the mind of God. Adam called her name Eve (or LIFE) because the hope of life had been promised through the seed that would come through her. She therefore represented a community that is associated with the Truth of God, and who are related to the life that it set forth. References to the woman as a symbol, representing the community of believers, are found throughout Scripture:

"I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2).

"Therefore as the church (Gr. Ecclesia) is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands . . . Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it . . . For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great secret: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ecclesia—or company of believers—Eph. 5:23-32).

"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7).

The Seed of the Serpent As A Symbol.

They represent those who allow the flesh in all its weakness to govern their lives, e.g.,

"Their (the wicked) poison is like the poison of a serpent" (Psalm 58:4).

"They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent: adders' poison is under their lips" (Psalm 140:3).

"Ye serpents, ye GENERATION of vipers, how can ye escape the condemnation of hell" (Matthew 23:33).

The Seed of the Woman As A Symbol.

The seed of the woman points directly to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God who administered the death blow to sin and death through his personal sacrifice, but the term is extended to all those

"in him", and in whom the Word of God resides, producing fruit to His glory. As Christ was begotten by the Spirit of God, so they, in a spiritual sense, are begotten to a new life by the spirit-word. Thus:

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23).

"Ye must be born from above" (John 3:7 - mg).

"A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation" (Psalm 22:30).

"When thou (God) shalt make his (Christ's) soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand" (Isaiah 53:10).

Genesis 3:15 — Paraphrased.

"And I (God) will put enmity between thee (the serpent representing sin and death) and the woman (representing the community embracing the truth of God and seeking to obey His will), and between thy seed (the serpent's seed, representing those who allow the flesh to govern their thinking and actions) and her seed (those moved by the principles of God's Word and will, chief of whom was the Lord Jesus Christ). It (should be rendered, 'he' — the Lord Jesus) shall bruise thy head (shall bruise the serpent on the head by destroying both the power of sin through providing the atonement for it, and the inevitability of death through a resurrection to eternal life), and thou (the serpent, representing sin and death) shalt bruise his heel (or incapacitate him by bringing him temporarily under its influence)."

The Symbology Demonstrated To Adam.

Read Genesis 3:17-23, and notice how that the symbology and teaching of Genesis 3:15 was impressed on Adam. He was told that he would be brought under the influence of death because of his sin (vv. 17-19), but immediately he responded by calling his wife's name Eve, or Life. This was because she is symbolically "the mother of all living," or those related to life. By naming his wife as he did Adam revealed his faith in the promise made.

God then revealed what this entailed: a sacrifice for sins. He made "coats of skins and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21). This pointed forward to the offering of the Lord Jesus who is described as the "Lamb of God (typically) slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).

The chapter thus shows the origin of sin, the punishment of death in consequence of it, the hope of life in the mercy of God, and what is required in the sacrifice of atonement.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 6

1. *How is Genesis 3:15 to be understood? Literally or figuratively?*
2. *Name the parties between which there would be manifested enmity according to God's decree.*
3. *Who is the principal "Seed of the woman"?*
4. *How did Christ "bruise the serpent's head"?*
5. *Why did Adam call the woman "Eve" after God had revealed His plan of redemption to them?*
6. *Why did He cover them with the skin of an animal?*

(7) To Christ Through Baptism

How Christ Fulfilled The Edenic Promise.

In fulfilment of the promises of God, Jesus, as "the seed of the woman," was born of the virgin Mary by the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit. His mother was told:

"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." (Luke 1:35.)

Christ had no corporeal existence before that point of time. Though he was in the mind and purpose of God from the very beginning, and in that sense was "with God," he did not exist as a person until the "word was made flesh and dwelt among" the Jews 1900 years ago (John 1:14).

Unfortunately, confusion reigns concerning the person of the Lord Jesus, and his purpose and place in the plan of God, as a result of the teaching that claims he is the second person of a Trinity, or that he pre-existed before his birth.

We ask that if the reader believes either of these doctrines, he suspend judgment upon what we have stated above, until all the evidence is before him. We undertake to explain any verse of Scripture in the light of the teaching we have set down, but we fail to understand how anybody can logically believe that Jesus and God are two persons and yet one, or that the Lord

Jesus existed before he was born.

Jesus was born of his mother, and grew up to reverence God, his Father. We learn that he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). This expresses normal development; but if Jesus were God such a statement is incomprehensible; or if he pre-existed, it meant that he must have forgotten everything he knew in his previous existence, and had to learn it all again!

Born of a human mother, he inherited the nature common to all mankind. This is a nature subject to death, so that the Lord was in need of redemption from death, just as much as those he came to save. He was subjected to the same trials and temptations as is mankind generally, but whereas all others have failed, he triumphed over the nature he possessed, and rendered sinless obedience to God.

Where did Christ derive the strength to conquer, whereas all others possessing the same nature have failed? The answer is: from God. God was his Father and a spiritually-minded woman was his mother, so that from birth the Lord inherited qualities that he was able to develop by his own independent freewill as he grew towards maturity (see Luke 2:40, 42-47, 52). In addition, he was granted the spirit of God without measure (John 3:34), and this quick-

ened him in the understanding of God's will and purpose (Isaiah 11:2-3; Luke 4:18-19). By these means, Jesus, who was the "only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth" (John 1:14), received strength that enabled him to render sinless obedience to the requirements of his Father, and manifest a character which reflected the Divine image (1 Peter 2:21-24).

This was necessary for the work of redemption, so that it is not solely the work of Christ, but that of the Father and the Son acting in conjunction one with the other. The Bible teaches: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). Jesus leaned heavily upon the Father, and God strengthened him, with the result that the fulness of the Divine character was revealed in a human body, that inherited the consequences of the first sin.

The lesson of redemption, therefore, teaches that we must seek a Strength apart from flesh, even that which comes from God (James 1:17), if we would develop a character pleasing unto Him. Moreover, such Strength is available to us, as Paul taught. He declared: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

How The Seed Of The Woman Was Bruised On The Heel.

Thus, being the "begotten son of God," Jesus was the perfect "seed of the woman" promised in Genesis 3:15. In accordance with that prophetic covenant, his righteousness so excited

the enmity and malice of his fleshly contemporaries, that they conspired to put him to death. They, (the seed of the serpent), by "wicked hands" brought him to the cross, thus, unconsciously, fulfilling "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23-24). God had decreed he should thus die (Psalm 22:16; Zechariah 12:10) as a sacrifice for sin (Psalm 40:5-9; Heb. 10:5). They did not realise that he was the "lamb of God" to "bear away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), and therefore, they imagined that once they had crucified him, they had seen the last of him.

How mistaken they were was revealed three days later when he rose from the dead.

Why did God permit His son to die upon the cross? What was accomplished in his death? First of all, it constituted a public exhibition of what is due to flesh which the history of mankind has revealed to be evil and sinful in its tendency.

Jesus rendered perfect obedience to the Father, in spite of the flesh, not because of it (John 6:63). If Jesus had yielded to his own will instead of that of the Father, he would not have rendered perfect obedience "even unto the death of the cross," for in submitting to the requirements of God, did he not say: "Not my will but Thine be done."

Flesh which has proved so rebellious against God throughout the ages, could only be atoned for by one way: the

shedding of blood (Heb. 9:22).

The flesh of Jesus, hanging lifeless upon the cross, presents the lesson of salvation to humanity. Being of our nature, he had to conquer it in order to attain unto immortality. This he did by rendering perfect obedience unto God through the strength he derived from that source. In a figurative sense, therefore, he had crucified the flesh in life by controlling its desires, and subjugating his will to that of his Father. When, at last, he hung lifeless upon the cross, the struggle was at an end. In that final act of dedication, the flesh had been silenced for ever, and no longer could assert itself against the will of God.

The "crucified Jesus" is a public exhibition of what God requires of mankind if they would seek after salvation, whereas the "risen Christ" is the symbol of hope for those who are "in Christ."

How The Serpent Power Was Bruised On The Head.

Peter taught that whereas "wicked hands" crucified and slew the Lord Jesus, God raised him up, "having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24).

Why was it "not possible that Jesus should be holden of death"?

Because God is just (Romans 3:26), and it would have been quite unjust of Him to have allowed death to retain its power over one who had rendered

such perfect obedience.

But He raised him from the dead, and the risen Christ becomes the token of hope for all who believe in him. Paul wrote that the Lord was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). In another place (1 Corinthians 15:22-23), he showed that the fact that Jesus rose from the dead is a guarantee that all those "in Christ" will rise also: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Though all mankind die, only "all those in Christ" will be granted eternal life.

As he triumphed over the serpent power in himself, so he has made it possible for mankind to triumph likewise.

Christ Triumphed — How Can We?

Jesus rendered perfect obedience even unto death, and thus triumphed over the flesh, but we do not! How then can we gain the victory and avail ourselves of God's salvation?

The answer is, Through God's mercy. He is not only just but "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

How can a just God justify us if we sin?

The answer is: Only by the forgiveness of sins. And God is merciful to extend such forgiveness in Christ Jesus (Psalm 103:8-14). The process was symbolically revealed to Adam and Eve, for the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice reached backwards as

well as forwards (Hebrew 9:15).

Our last study showed that after Adam and Eve had sinned, and had become conscious of their nakedness, God slew an animal, and with its skin He clothed them, thus teaching them that sin must be covered over, or blotted out, before He can be acceptably approached. The Bible declares: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are COVERED. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:7-8).

Jesus also declared: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15).

How can sins be blotted out, or forgiven? Peter explained the process. He declared: "Repent, and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38. See also Acts 3:19). Paul taught: "Ye are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ..." (Gal. 3:25-26).

Those who have been properly baptised, have put on Christ as a garment, and as he is styled the "lamb of God," it can be said of them that they have been figuratively clothed in the skin of the sacrificial animal provided them by God, as Adam and Eve were literally.

We speak of being "properly baptised," for true baptism demands a sound understanding

of the basic principles of God's word, followed by total bodily immersion in water. Such a baptism is essential to salvation, as the Bible reveals by precept and example.

Jesus was baptised, saying: "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). Paul was baptised at the bidding of Ananias: "Arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, was baptised after Peter had declared "He (Jesus) commanded us to preach unto the people... that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:42-43). The Lord commissioned the Apostles to go forth with this command: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16).

Outside of baptism, a man is said to be "a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:11-13).

Why Baptism Is Required.

Baptism is a symbol of sacrifice. As Jesus gave up his life on the cross, the true believer, by submitting to baptism publicly proclaims that he will figuratively "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof" (Galatians 5:24). A person does this when he subordinates his personal desires to perform the will of God.

Baptism is the first act of obedience; it is an act whereby

the believer humbles self to please God.

The word "Baptism" comes from the Greek *bapto*. Concerning this word, one authority has written: "*Bapto* signifies 'immerse, dip, plunge.' No translator has ever ventured to render the word by 'sprinkle' or 'pour' in any version."

That being so, it is obvious, that what is styled "christening" is not a Scriptural baptism.

But though baptism requires complete immersion, it is in itself much more than mere immersion in water. A person may be completely immersed when he takes a bath, but he is not baptised when so doing. The Greek word *baptiso* comes from a word that signifies not merely immersion but also the act of dyeing; which process, of course, changes the colour, or appearance, of a garment.

Now immersion in water will not change a person unless it is prompted by an understanding of the will and purpose of God; and so, the first essential to a true baptism, is an understanding, and an acceptance, of the first principles of God's revelation (John 3:16; 11:25; 17:3; Acts 8:37). It is this belief that transforms mere "immersion" into "baptism," and causes a person to be figuratively "died" with the blood of Christ.

Immersion without knowledge would be like trying to dye a garment in clear water!

Only a knowledge of God's way will transform a person's perspective. He then will view

things from God's standpoint. He will begin to think along the channel of Divine ideas and ideals, and will strive to attain unto a higher way of life than is normal with most. The serpent impulses within him will become subdued by Christ who by his knowledge will "dwell in his heart by faith."

So important is a pre-baptismal understanding and belief, that there is recorded in the Bible an instance where some were re-baptised when it was brought home to them that they had lacked certain essential beliefs previously (Acts 19:1-5).

A Symbol Of Sacrifice.

Concerning the significance of baptism, Paul wrote:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Romans 6:3-6.)

The terms "baptised into his death," "crucified with him," "the likeness of his death," identify baptism with Christ's death. His death was sacrificial, so that baptism is a symbol of sacrifice. In submitting to the act, a person publicly indicates his intention of endeavouring to

follow in the footsteps of his Lord, in the hope of attaining unto life eternal at his return. As the death and resurrection of the Lord to life eternal bruised the head of the serpent power as far as he was concerned, so baptism is for believers the beginning of a process that will enable them to triumph over sin and death. The "body of sin" (or human nature) will be held in check morally as they imitate the example of Christ, and they will be physically changed at his return so that their present state of mortality will be clothed upon with immortality (1 Cor. 15:51-54).

By baptism, therefore, believers identify themselves with the offering of Christ. They confess their sins, acknowledge that death is the just penalty for sin, and recognise that the flesh is evil and needs to be overcome. Seeking the forgiveness of God for sins committed, they will try to build into their lives those Divine attributes revealed in the character of the Son of God.

Baptism is a token of personal sacrifice; it is the etiquette required of God in order that we might acceptably approach Him. It is the outward symbol of an inward washing "by the Word" (Ephesians 5:26), the humble acceptance of God's will, the first act of obedience for the "remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Henceforth believers have an Advocate through whom they can approach the Father, an Advocate who "knows the feelings of our infirmity, for he was in all

points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" and through him they "can obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:15-16).

Believers commence a "new life" once they have accepted Christ through baptism (Colossians 3:9-10), thus beginning a process that will end with the complete conquest of the serpent power as far as they are concerned, by attaining unto life eternal at Christ's coming.

Paul taught: "IF we have been planted in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:5). Let Christ guide us, and we shall ultimately win through to life eternal, and an everlasting abiding place upon this earth.

Meanwhile, that fellowship that existed between God and Adam, but which was broken by sin, is restored in Christ (1 John 1:3), and provision made for the forgiveness of sins when they are confessed before Him (1 John 1:9). By this means, and by the ultimate change to immortality, the serpent power of sin and death will be conquered, and the triumph of redemption will be complete:

"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy (serpent's) sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:54-57.)

As Eve was first mentally corrupted by the lying doctrine of

the serpent, then morally corrupted as she put it into execution, and, finally, experienced physical corruption when death lay hold on her, so those who attain unto life eternal will have reversed the process. They are mentally cleansed by endorsing God's truth (John 15:3), mor-

ally cleansed as they put it into practice, and will be physically cleansed when they are delivered from death, to attain unto the victory in Christ Jesus at his coming.

Thus the road to that victory leads to three developments, Belief, Baptism, and Obedience.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 7

1. *Is flesh good or evil?*
2. *Did Christ's nature differ from those whom he came to save?*
3. *Why could not the grave hold him if he was mortal?*
4. *Why was he raised from the dead, and clothed with immortality?*
5. *What did Adam and Eve need, after they had sinned, and realised their nakedness?*
6. *What provision has God made for the covering of our sins?*
7. *What is baptism?*
8. *How can we conquer sin?*

THE NEED FOR REPENTANCE

Man has departed from the right path, and become hardened in ways as hurtful to himself as they are abhorrent to God. A halt and a right-about-face are indispensable. The Gospel contains the call in this direction — the command to “repent” — as a preliminary to acceptance and salvation. Man hates this condition — the insistence on the part of God that He shall be heard, believed and obeyed. This weakness accounts for the sad words of the Lord Jesus: “Many are called, but few are chosen.” How solemnly, and in what manifold ways, has God inculcated the essentiality of obedience. It is this feature that largely makes the Bible a neglected book. People who have no relish for submission will not endure the chafing and pricking which a proper reading of it entails, and hence relegate it sooner or later to an unreachable shelf. Repentance, it must be remembered, means a change of mind — a change from the human to the Divine.

(8) Hope Through A Resurrection

Immortality Is Not Inherent.

Previous studies have shown that sin brought death, and that death became the common lot of all mankind, so that even the Lord Jesus was subject to it. At the same time, God, in His mercy, promised a Redeemer (Christ Jesus) who would triumph over sin and death, and by his own glorious resurrection to immortality, lead the way to life eternal.

This teaching is quite contrary to the widespread theory of an immortal soul that lives on after the death of the body. As we have shown, such a doctrine is not taught in the Bible, and mankind instinctively turns from it.

Despite the glowing pictures of heaven painted by preachers upon the canvas of their imagination, no one desires to taste of death in order to go there.

The Bible teaches that eternal life is not the natural inheritance of man, but something that must be sought (Acts 13:46-48; Romans 8:13; Hebrews 5:9). Paul taught:

"God will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." (Romans 2:6-7.)

If eternal life is something a person must seek, and which God will grant only on conditions, obviously it is not inherent in man in his natural state. And that fact is clearly taught throughout Scripture.

Consider the following well-known text:

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.)

Here the alternative is to "perish" or have "everlasting life" conditional upon belief and obedience—for the word has that dual significance. If the latter were a natural heritage, however, a person could not utterly perish, whether he believed or not.

The Bible teaches that those who do not fulfil the conditions set by God will not receive eternal life (Romans 2:12; Galatians 6:8; Luke 12:46; Heb. 10:28-29; 2 Pet. 2:12). They will "perish" or be given over to death.

A Resurrection — The Only True Hope.

It follows from logic, and from clear Bible teaching, that if man is mortal, and yet the reward that God has set before him is immortality, the only possible way to life eternal is through a bodily resurrection.

This is the clear teaching of the Bible. Paul taught:

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man (Adam) came death, by man (Jesus) came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam (and all are in him by natural birth) all die, even so in Christ (and we become such by baptism) shall all be made alive.

But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Corinthians 15:19-23).

There is no mistaking the meaning of these words; they teach the doctrine of a bodily resurrection at Christ's coming. Again, Paul taught:

"The dead shall be raised incorruptible*... for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:52-57).

This teaching is clear, and needs little explanation. It proclaims the doctrine of a bodily resurrection from a state of death to one of eternal life. It provides no scope for belief in an immortal soul.

This is the consistent teaching of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. It reveals that the first work of Christ at his return is to raise responsible believers from death, with the object of judging them, and rewarding them according to their

works. Here is some of the evidence to that end:

"Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:1).

"Judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17).

"Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2).

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust... the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isaiah 26:19).

"For we (believers) 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 Corinthians 5:10).

"He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:8).

Hope in a bodily resurrection unto life eternal is the basis of all Apostolic teaching. Paul declared that he counted all things but loss, "if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Philippians 3:11). He was using the expression in its complete sense, as denoting a resurrection to life eternal, and he continued by declaring that this was the great objective of his life, for which he was prepared to sacrifice all else.

On the other hand, the Bible will be searched in vain, for a single reference to the alleged immortal soul. Not once are mourners comforted with the idea that the souls of the de-

*Paul is here referring to the completed process. Actually believers will be raised mortal (Romans 8:11) to be brought before the Judgment Seat and granted immortality if worthy (Romans 14:10), thus being raised "to everlasting life" (Daniel 12:2), not with it.

parted are in heaven, but rather that, if believers, they will rise from the dead at the return of Christ (1 Thess. 4:16, 18). The Bible teaches that "no man hath ascended into heaven" (John 3:13), not even David, the man after God's own heart (Acts 2:34).

Paul made the hope of the resurrection a key-note of his defence of the faith. Before the Sanhedrin he declared: "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question" (Acts 23:6). Of Agrippa, he asked: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8). Before Festus he proclaimed: "There is a resurrection of the dead both of the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15).

That was the belief and teaching of the Apostles. If our belief does not provide for a bodily resurrection from the dead, it is not in accordance with the revelation and purpose of God. And there is no room for both belief in a bodily resurrection, and the immortality of the soul. If man goes to his reward at death, for what purpose is a bodily resurrection and judgment at Christ's coming?

Who Will Be Raised?

The Bible teaches, however, that whilst all will not be raised, and, in fact, comparatively few will be raised, all responsible believers will be resurrected to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

This fact was simply and

clearly proclaimed by Jesus. He declared: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that *believeth* in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

"Believers" shall rise, taught Jesus. He thus showed that "light" or "knowledge" is the ground of responsibility towards God. A person who understands the will of God has a responsibility to perform it on pain of condemnation if he does not. "That servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes" (Luke 12:47-48). Again, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). See also John 3:19; 9:41; 15:22.

On the other hand, many know not the purpose of God, nor His will. They "wander out of the way of understanding" and, according to Bible teaching, "shall remain in the congregation of the dead" (Prov. 21:16).

That is both just and merciful. The fundamental purpose of the resurrection is for judgment, and where there is no knowledge of what is required, there is no basis for proper judgment. The Bible teaches that such die, never again to live:

"Man that is in honour, and UNDERSTANDETH NOT, is like the beasts that perish... they go to the generation of their fathers (in the grave); they shall NEVER

SEE LIGHT" (Psalm 49:18-20).

"They (those without understanding) are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise; therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish" (Isaiah 26:14; 43:17).

"They shall sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake" (Jeremiah 51:57).

"The slain that lie in the grave, whom Thou rememberest no more; and they are cut off from Thy hand" (Psalm 88:5).

"Without hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12).

"The understanding darkened, alienated from the life of God THROUGH THE IGNORANCE that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:17).

Unfortunately, the majority of mankind are in a state of ignorance before God, being blinded in heart. That being the case, they are without hope. The serpent power of sin and death, remains triumphant. They live their little life "as a vapour" (James 4:14), and are soon gone. They experience their moments of triumph and disaster, of pleasure and pain, of success and sorrow, and then pass into oblivion, becoming as though they had never been. Their existence becomes but a rapidly fading memory which, to use a Bible term, finally "is forgotten" (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

Therefore, whilst believers will yet live again, those who remain in ignorance or in error shall pass into oblivion.

The Judgment Seat.

But those who have come to an understanding of God's will, both just and unjust (Acts 24:

15), will be raised mortal from the grave, and together with living believers, will be brought before the judgment seat of Christ. This will be set up on earth, at some secluded spot (2 Thess. 2:1), such as Sinai (Deuteronomy 33:1-2), where Christ will adjudicate over those who have "learned of him" (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12). Those who "by patient continuance in well doing have sought for glory, honor and immortality" will receive eternal life (Rom. 2:7; Gal. 6:8). Those who have wilfully rejected the precepts of Christ, either by refusing baptism, or by failing to practise the principles set before them in his teaching, will experience "tribulation and anguish" as they are condemned and consigned to "the second death" (Revelation 2:11).

The righteous, however, will be given immortality (1 Cor. 15:53), by the bestowal of "divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), and thus will be changed into the likeness of Christ's present glory (1 John 3:2; Philippians 3:21). Their victory over the serpent power of sin and death will be complete and lasting, and the power of the grave will lose its hold on them.

As the immortal associates of Christ, they will reign with him on earth. That is what Christ promised Peter. The Apostle had claimed that he had left everything to follow Christ, and demanded to know what he would receive in consequence. Christ replied:

"Ye which have followed me in

the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold (i.e. more than he sacrifices), and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matthew 19:28-29).

The song of the Redeemed to be sung in the Age to come expresses the terms and status of the saved:

"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10).

"They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4).

Having conquered self, and gained the victory over the serpent power of sin and death, they will be competent to rule with Christ, and to assist in bringing all nations to God, that He might become "all in all."

"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death... and when all things shall be subdued unto Him (God), then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him (God) that put all things under

him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

"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" (Rev. 21:4).

At the end of the thousand years reign of Christ on earth, a perfected world, in which sin and death will have been completely eradicated, and all will be made immortal, will be offered unto God, that He might be triumphant everywhere, being "all in all."

Meanwhile, Christ has triumphed over the serpent power of sin and death, and offers to us the means whereby we can do likewise. In Revelation 1:18 he is represented as saying: "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore; and have the keys (i.e. the power to unlock) of hell (the grave) and of death" (by a resurrection to life eternal).

Our wisdom lies in taking hold of those means that are extended to us, and using them to attain unto the life eternal that will be granted us at Christ's coming if we do his will.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 8

1. *Having established that man is mortal, what then is man's only hope?*
2. *Prove from the Bible that eternal life is only granted on certain conditions.*
3. *Where did the Apostle Paul give public account that the Hope of the Resurrection was the basis of Apostolic teaching?*
4. *What will be Christ's first work when he returns to the earth?*
5. *Who will be raised from the dead?*
6. *Under which conditions will those raised from the dead receive eternal life?*

SUMMARY OF SECTION 2



1. God created man "very good" and placed him under law.
2. Man disobeyed God's law, and was brought under the power of the law of sin and death.
3. Man is now a death-doomed creature in need of redemption.
4. God promised He would redeem man from the state into which he had fallen by sending a Son who would triumph over the serpent power of sin and death (Gen. 3:15).
5. In due course Jesus was born, and rendered complete obedience unto God even to the laying down of his life on the cross; thus being "bruised on the heel" by the serpent power.
6. But God raised him from the dead, and gave him life eternal, thus completely destroying (bruising on head) the power of sin and death over Christ.
7. Acknowledgment of the true nature of flesh is the basis of forgiveness of sins. God extends mercy and forgiveness to all who come unto Him through Christ, and acknowledging their fallen state, seek to overcome through the means He has provided.
8. Baptism is the first act of obedience. It is only valid after an understanding and acceptance of the first principles of God's purpose. It is absolutely essential to salvation. See Acts Ch. 10. Despite the righteous character of Cornelius (V.2), he had to submit to baptism (V.6). He came to a true understanding of the divine purpose in Christ (V.37), and was subsequently baptised (VV.46-48).
9. Though the grave may claim us, our resurrection to life eternal is assured if we seek God in the way appointed. We, too, therefore, can likewise triumph over the serpent power through Christ.

Section 3

BIBLE HISTORY

Bible history has an importance and significance far transcending that of profane history. It illustrates the development of God's purpose with man, and, at the same time, typifies His future intentions. For example, Paul declared that the history of God's dealings with Israel revealed important lessons for the guidance of all those who would approach Him in truth. He declared: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope" (Romans 15:4). Again: "All these things (and he referred to the history of Israel) happened unto them for ensamples (or types — margin); and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Therefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:11-12).

Such statements show that God has revealed His purpose in the Bible both by direct teaching, and through the dramatic experiences of individuals and the rise and fall of nations.

A knowledge of Bible history, therefore, is important to a correct understanding of the character and purpose of God. The Gospel itself is a national hope, connected with Israel. The Scriptures declare: "God at the first did preach the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, 'In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed'" (Galatians 3:8). The promise made to Abraham formed the basis of a national hope, so that Paul, in defending himself before his accusers, claimed: "I stand, and am judged for the hope of the promise, made of God unto our fathers, unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come" (Acts 26:6). Later, as a prisoner in Rome, he told the elders of the Jewish community in that city: "For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain" (Acts 28:20).

Some knowledge of Bible history is therefore necessary for a complete understanding of the Gospel, and the hope that Paul embraced, and, of course, such understanding is essential to salvation (Romans 1:16).

(9) *From Creation to the Flood*

How Enmity Developed Between The Two Seeds.

The introduction of sin (considered in our previous section) was followed by the ejection of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Religion (which signifies "a re-binding again") was then introduced that mankind might have hope, and a system of worship at specified times (Genesis 4:3—margin) was set up.

In course of time, sons and daughters were born to Adam and Eve, including Cain and Abel.

In the birth of Cain her first-born, Eve had hoped that she had been blessed with the promised seed (Genesis 4:1—margin).

How wrong she proved to be was revealed when he grew to manhood.

Instead of the promised seed who would conquer sin and redeem mankind from death, Cain was conquered by sin, and in hatred committed the first murder.

Unfortunately, this all arose out of a false conception of religion. Cain became jealous of the favor that God showed towards his brother, and in hatred slew him.

Thus Cain and Abel typified the Seed of the Serpent and the Seed of the Woman. The bitter enmity of Cain for his brother erupted into violence, and by slaying Abel, he typically "bruised" him "on the heel." We say

this because Abel is yet to rise from the grave to life eternal (Hebrews 11:4), and this was revealed to Eve in that God gave her another son instead of Abel, whose name was called Seth, meaning appointed. "God," she said, "hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew" (Gen. 4:25).

In a figure, the risen Abel was seen in Seth, pointing forward to the resurrection of Christ Jesus who was slain by the anti-typical Cain (see Matthew 23:35), and, significantly, also as the result of a religious quarrel!

A Form Of Religion Is Not Enough.

It is important to recognise that both Cain and Abel were religious men. Both desired to serve God; both brought their offerings before Him. But God accepted Abel's offering and rejected that of Cain. Why? Because the former took the trouble of seeking out what God required of him; whereas the latter worshipped according to his own conscience or idea.

Cain's worship, therefore, was like that of the serpent: the emanation of fleshly thoughts. Abel, on the other hand, reverently sought out God's way, and recognised the need of a slain offering in atonement for sin.

So Cain brought of the fruit of his own labor: the fruit of the field; and Abel offered an animal of the herd, shedding

its blood in acknowledgment of the fact that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" of sins (Heb. 9:22).

God had respect unto Abel's offering, but rejected that of Cain, thus revealing that something more than the mere desire to worship is required, and that God desires a person to do so "in truth" (John 4:23). It might be reasoned that Cain's motives were sound, even if he did not apply principles that God had revealed, but God's rejection of his offering shows that motive is not sufficient, a person must offer "in faith." Paul makes the point that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6), and that "faith cometh by hearing the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). It is recorded:

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead speaketh" (Heb. 11:4).

What is faith? It is a manifestation of a way of life founded upon a "confident anticipation of things hoped for, a full persuasion of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1 — margin). Abel looked forward to the consummation of the Divine purpose, and so presented his offering. Without this faith, this confident anticipation of things hoped for, his sacrifice and worship would have been in vain.

So would ours also be today. Paul declared:

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that

cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

Abel's faith stemmed from his understanding of God's revelation; Cain's failure resulted from fleshly thinking which caused him to reject Divine instruction. In these two sons of Adam, therefore, there was revealed the Seed of the Serpent in opposition to the Seed of the Woman, an enmity such as God had declared would exist between these two diverse ways of thought.

In the murder of Abel, there was foreshadowed the murder of Christ (Acts 7:52), whilst in the appointment of Seth to take his place, there was typified the resurrection of Christ to newness of life.

Thus, at the very epoch of history, in this incident in the family of Adam, there was dramatised the enmity that has ever since existed between the way of God and the way of the flesh, and the ultimate triumph of the former over the latter.

Meanwhile Cain was driven away from fellowship with God, to dwell in the Land of Nod (or Exile, as the word signifies), there, with his posterity to build up his own form of civilisation based on the flesh (see Gen. 4:7), whilst Seth and his posterity remained to worship God.

The Antediluvian World.

Some 1656 years are briefly covered from Genesis 3 to 6. The population of the earth rapidly increased. Mankind was

divided into two groups: men of the flesh and the sons of God. The first were the descendants of Cain; the second sprang from Seth.

Cain and his posterity built up their own civilisation independent of that of Seth and his descendants. They progressed in material wealth, so that soon a sophisticated, Godless society arose which made rapid progress in commerce, pleasure and power (Gen. 4:19-24).

This gradually became the envy of the "sons of God," who were attracted by the seductive forms of pleasure and power that were displayed before them by their contemporaries. They began to question the need for separation between the two ways of thought, and soon began to imitate what they saw, and so were drawn "into the way of Cain" (Jude 11).

Godly men protested against this spiritual decline, and warned that it could only end in disaster. They reminded the sons of God of the Divine purpose to be ultimately manifested in the earth, and exhorted them to stand aside from a generation that would inevitably be overthrown (Gen. 5:24; Jude 14-15).

But in vain; the protest went unheeded by the majority.

The state of the world worsened spiritually; mankind became completely abandoned in its pursuit of materialism at the expense of God's requirements. Crime increased; violence became more common; principles of morality were held up to

scorn.

A hard, brittle, godless civilisation arose very similar to that which is in evidence today. The "wickedness of man was great" (Gen. 6:5); the "imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (v. 5); God's way was "corrupted" (v. 12); the "earth was filled with violence" (v. 11).

That evil, adulterous, violent, Godless age became a type of that which Christ warned would exist at the epoch of his second coming. He taught his disciples:

"As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:37-39).

The antediluvian world was destroyed by a flood, evidences of which have been found by archaeologists throughout the world.

The present civilisation faces a similar crisis which shall destroy its political, religious and social structures, and replace them with a Divine Kingdom set up on earth. The Apostle Peter, writing of these matters declared:

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God..." (2 Peter 3:11-12).

This present age of wickedness has no more hope of sur-

vival than that which existed before the flood. The antediluvian world, however, was noted not only for the widespread wickedness of the descendants of Cain, but the folly of the line of Seth whose posterity eagerly sought the pleasures and powers of a world from which they should have separated themselves. The record declares that the "sons of God"* intermixed with the "daughters of men"† instead of keeping separate from them (2 Cor. 6:16-18).

The flood that God sent upon the earth at that time completely destroyed civilisation, blotting out of existence all mankind with the exception of the family of Noah who had been found righteous in His eyes.

When the waters finally receded, a new world was revealed. Mankind, washed clean from the pollution of the past, started anew in the family of Noah. A new way of life was commenced that honored God (Genesis 8:20).

At that stage, God proclaimed a promise that has a far-reaching effect upon the future destiny of the world; He declared that He would never

again destroy civilisation so completely as He had then done. His words are:

"I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done" (Gen. 8:21).

The words "again curse" in the Hebrew are *lo asiph*: "I will not add to curse the earth..." God had "cursed the earth" when Adam and Eve sinned (Gen. 3:17-19), in consequence of which, it produced thorns and thistles, and made productivity more difficult. He now promised Noah that he would never again add to that curse so as to destroy every living person, as He had moved to do in the days of Noah.

That means that this earth will never be destroyed. Elsewhere He taught that "the earth abideth forever" (Eccles. 1:4); that He "created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited" (Isaiah 45:18), and that ultimately "the whole earth shall be filled with His glory" (Numbers 14:21).

Will The Earth Be Destroyed?

What of that doctrine, so

*Jehovah's Witnesses claim that this expression relates to fallen angels of heaven, but the same expression is used throughout Scripture for mortal believers in God. See Deut. 14:1; Hos. 1:10; Isa. 43:6-7; 1 John 3:1-2. On the other hand, the Bible teaches that angels do not marry (Luke 20:35-36), whereas the "sons of God" did.

†The same expression in the Hebrew has been rendered "other men" (Jer. 32:20; Ps. 73:5), so Genesis 6:2 could be rendered: "The sons of God (mortal believers) saw the daughters of other men (i.e. those who were not believers), that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."

persistently taught, that announces the impending destruction of the existing heavens and earth, to be replaced by new ones?

It is completely false, and is based upon a wrong interpretation of certain symbolic passages of Scripture, and mainly 2 Peter 2. This passage certainly speaks of the "heaven and earth" being overwhelmed by fire, and this is frequently interpreted as relating to the literal heavens and earth.

But why should God destroy His creation—and especially the heavens? There is nothing wrong with the literal heavens and earth; in fact, they testify to the glory of the Creator and show forth His handiwork, as the Psalmist teaches (Psalm 19:1-2). Why destroy them?

We have seen that God has declared that He will not destroy them; that the earth abides forever, and is formed to be inhabited.

Does Peter's teaching contradict this?

It does not!

He was referring to symbolic "heavens" and "earth," as his own words reveal. For example, writing concerning the Flood, he declared:

"The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished..."
(2 Peter 3:6).

Did the literal "world" perish in the days of Noah?

No, it was civilisation upon the earth that was blotted out, so that basically the literal heavens and earth were left as they were.

And it will be the civilisation

of today (such as it is) that will perish in the future.

The Bible uses the terms "heavens" and "earth" in a symbolic as well as a literal sense, and it is obvious that Peter was using them in a symbolic sense in his 2nd Epistle. The rulers and the ruled in Israel were described as "heavens and earth." Hear the words of Isaiah:

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth..." (Isa. 1:2).

To whom was he speaking? Listen:

"Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers... and give ear unto the law of our God, ye people..." (v. 10).

The heavens were the rulers; the earth constituted the ruled. See also Deuteronomy 32:1; Isaiah 13:10. Consider, also, the following statement of God's future intentions:

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind..." (Isa. 65:17).

What do those words mean? The very next verse tells us:

"But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy."

These words show conclusively, that the new heavens and the new earth which God will create, are new political, social, and religious orders on earth "in which will dwell righteousness." In that day, Jerusalem will be called "the throne of the Lord" (Jeremiah 3:17), the nations will ascend there for worship (Zechariah 14:16), and the conditions that will then be established on earth will reflect to

the glory of the Father (Isaiah 61:11).

The new heavens and new earth, therefore, refer to a new way of rule, and a new order of society, and have nothing whatever to do with the literal heavens and earth.

The Flood As A Symbol Of Baptism.

The flood washed away the old world with all its widespread evil and wickedness, and in the preservation of Noah and his family, laid the foundation for a new order in which God was worshipped.

Peter, in his 1st Epistle, likens it to baptism:

"The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water. The like figure, whereunto even baptism does also now save us (not the putting away of the

filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:20-21).

As the Flood swept away the record of past wickedness, so through baptism there is granted forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). As Noah under those new conditions commenced to worship God anew, so also does the person who is baptised. But, unfortunately, as the postdeluvian world soon reverted to ways of wickedness and apostasy, so do those who are baptised. However, there is forgiveness of sins in Christ (1 John 3:1), and for the person who conscientiously strives to obey God in word and deed, the assurance of ultimate deliverance from the nature of flesh (Phil. 3:21), to the glorious Divine nature of immortality (2 Peter 1:4).

The lesson of salvation was thus illustrated by the Flood.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 9

1. *Name two sons of Adam and Eve who represented the "seed of the serpent" and the "seed of the woman".*
2. *What is the meaning of the word "religion"?*
3. *Who, in Biblical language, are "sons of God"?*
4. *Why did Jesus Christ liken the days of his second coming unto the days of Noah?*
5. *How can we know for certain that the apostle Peter uses the words "heaven" and "earth" in a symbolic sense, when he speaks of heaven and earth being "dissolved"?*
6. *Whom only did God find righteous in the days just prior to the flood?*
7. *In which book of the Bible is the flood referred to as a symbol of baptism?*
8. *By what means can man be saved from the destruction that is to come upon this civilisation?*

(10) The Call of Abraham

His Importance In The Divine Purpose.

Abraham figures largely in the Divine purpose with humanity. In Romans 4:11 he is called the spiritual "father of all those who believe," the "father of us all" (v. 16), and his experiences are set forth as typical of those who would walk in faith towards the Kingdom of God (vv. 23-24).

On another occasion, when Paul was arraigned before his accusers, he declared: "I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers" (Acts 26:6), and by the latter, he meant, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

He also taught that whereas Israel after the flesh are enemies of the gospel, they are "beloved for the fathers' sakes" (Romans 11:28), and once again, he had Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in mind.

Abraham is referred to over seventy times in the New Testament alone, and Paul taught that the Gospel was proclaimed to Abraham in the important promises that God made unto him (Galatians 3:8).

Some knowledge of the circumstances of Abraham, and the wonderful promises that God made to him, is absolutely essential if we would understand the truth of the Bible.

The Post-Diluvian World Drifts From God.

Though righteous Noah and his family were saved from the destruction of the Flood, their

posterity, in common with humanity in every age, failed to learn the lesson of that disaster, and soon drifted from God. Man followed the "evil thoughts of his heart" as eagerly as before, and the worship of God in truth was soon forgotten.

It was not long before complete spiritual darkness prevailed.

Bible history records three important events of that time, all of which are recorded in Genesis 11.

There was the building of the tower of Babel by a people who had apostasised from the worship of God, and who resisted His will that they should go forth and subdue and replenish the earth.

There was the confusion of tongues which God imposed upon them to defeat their attempt to defy Him.

There was the call of Abram from out of Ur of the Chaldees.

These three interventions of Providence resulted in:

The peopling of the earth, as the people were scattered from the one centre that they desired.

The preservation of the true religion by the call of Abram.

The continuance of the line of descent through which the promised Seed of the Woman, the Redeemer of mankind, would come.

The Gospel Is Preached To Abram.

Abram dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees, a city whose ruins can be seen today not far from the River Euphrates in Iraq. It was a city of idolatry, and it was

from this environment of spiritual darkness that Abram was called to separate himself (Joshua 24:2-3).

God made certain promises to him, conditional upon him severing himself from his idolatrous surroundings, and migrating into a new country which would be revealed unto him.

Paul, in commenting upon this, states that in these promises, the Gospel was preached to Abraham (Galatians 3:8), and that they involved the purpose of God in Christ (see v. 16).

These promises having been made unto him (Acts 7:2-4), Abram left Ur of the Chaldees, and moved to Haran (Genesis 11:31), about 800 miles northwest of Ur of the Chaldees, and north of the River Euphrates. Here he remained for a time, and during that period, his father Terah died (v. 32).

The Voice of God again came to Abram, urging him to leave Haran, pass over the river Euphrates, and come into the land that God would reveal unto him.

Before considering the promises that God made to faithful Abram, let us emphasise that Paul has stated that the experiences of Abraham are typical of those of any believer who desires to please God.

Abram turned his back upon Ur of the Chaldees, and migrated to Haran.

Ur of the Chaldees signifies the Light of the Chaldees, and the latter were a religious sect of Babylon. He turned his back

upon their teaching, and true believers must do so in relation to much that passes current in the world for religion. Abram literally separated himself from his evil environment, and whilst true followers of Christ are not called upon to literally sever themselves from humanity they are required to stand aside from the evil in the world about them (John 17:15; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

He "came unto Haran," which name means "enlightened," and so they are called upon to come to an understanding of God and His purpose (John 6:29).

As he was urged to pass over the river Euphrates into the Land of Promise, so believers are urged to pass through the waters of baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

As he remained a "stranger and a pilgrim in the land" looking forward to the time when the promised Seed should establish God's kingdom upon the earth (Hebrews 11:9-13), so those who walk in the steps of faithful Abraham do to this day (1 Peter 2:11).

As he died in hope of a resurrection to life eternal (Gen. 13:14-17; Acts 7:1-3), so also do they (Acts 23:6; 26:7-8).

He is described as the "friend of God" (James 2:23). He was called, chosen and faithful, and that is the essential characteristics of all those who will be with Christ in the Age to come (Revelation 17:14).

When Abram left Ur of the Chaldees, he did so in company with his father, Terah, his

brother, Nahor, and his nephew, Lot. These four men all had the same opportunity, for all had heard the Divine promises. But only two obeyed. Terah died at Haran; Nahor refused to pass over the river; only Abram and Lot did so, and even Lot, for a time, did not maintain that separateness from the world that God required of him.

These four men are types of those who hear the Gospel sound even to the present time. So many hearken to the Word of God, and come to a state of enlightenment, and act like Terah or Nahor: either delay until it is too late, or are too indifferent (like Nahor—whose name means “a snorer”!) to act upon the instructions of God.

The Four-Fold Promise Of Hope.

But Abram did act on the urging of God. Genesis 12:1 declares:

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee.”

He was to separate himself even from his kindred to obey God.

Hebraists state that the verb in this declaration is in the imperative mood, signifying a command, and indicating that the person’s own interests and advantage lay in following the advice. Thus the declaration can, and has, been rendered: “Go for thyself . . .”

Abram acted on that advice.

The biography of Abraham

(as he was ultimately named) occupies about twelve chapters of the Bible (Genesis chapters 12 to 25), and takes less than an hour to read. We counsel the reader to pay himself the compliment of reading this portion of the Bible, carefully noting the various promises that God made to the patriarch.

The first of these is contained in Genesis 12:2-3 thus:

“I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

These promises can be divided into four distinct sections, thus:

A National Promise: “I will make of thee a great nation . . .”

A Personal Promise: “I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing . . .”

A Family Promise: “I will bless them that bless thee . . .”

An International Promise: “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

None of these promises have had their complete fulfilment, for they await the setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Consider the National Promise, for example. Abraham’s descendants, the Jewish people, are not a “great nation” as yet, and never have been. True, the nation rose to prominence and glory during the reigns of David and Solomon, but that was for but a short period, and it ended

with civil war which divided the twelve tribes into two groups, known to history and Scripture as Israel (the northern kingdom of ten tribes) and Judah (the southern kingdom of two tribes).

The history of Israel is a record of constant apostasy, failure and defeat, ending in the scattering of Jews among all nations.

Certainly, this history does not reveal them as a great nation at any time. Even during the reign of David, the people rebelled against him, and drove him temporarily from the throne!

When will the promise to Abraham be vindicated?

The answer is, In the future.

Though God scattered Israel (see Deut. 28:64-67), He will yet completely regather the nation (Deut. 30:1-3; Jeremiah 31:10), and restore them to their ancient land (Ezek. 39:25-29). They will be educated in Divine truth, will mourn for their past blindness (Zechariah 12:9-10), will have their sins forgiven them (Micah 7:18-20), and will be established as the "first" of the nations (Micah 4:7-8).

All this will be done on the basis of the promise made to Abraham. The prophet declared:

"Thou wilt perform the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn from the days of old" (Micah 7:20).

"I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the nations, whither ye went" (Ezekiel 36:22).

The Jewish people are return-

ing to their ancient homeland today, and the nation of Israel has come into existence once again, BECAUSE OF THE PROMISE MADE TO ABRAHAM.

The Jewish people, and the nation of Israel, are yet to be disciplined and humbled, in order that they might be elevated in accordance with the purpose of God. God has declared:

"I 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..." (Ezek. 37:21-22).

In this statement there is promised (1)—the regathering of the people; (2)—the establishment of the nation; (3)—the restoration of the monarchy.

The King referred to is the Lord Jesus, described as "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

Under his firm and righteous rule, the nation of Israel will reach the greatness promised it through Abraham.

Consider the personal promise made to Abraham. Is he blessed today? Is his name great? Is he a blessing in the earth?

The answer is, No! Abraham is dead; his name is far from great in the opinion of mankind, most of whom know nothing of him.

How and when shall it be fulfilled?

By a resurrection from the

dead to life eternal at Christ's coming. The Lord, himself, declared this. He told those Jews who rejected his mercy of salvation 1900 years ago, that they would be raised from the dead to be rejected of their Messiah, and to witness Abraham and others enjoy a status that they could have shared. He declared:

"There shall be weeping when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, west, north and south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13: 28-29).

At that time, Abraham will be both blessed and a blessing, and men will consider it an honor to be associated with him.

And, again, we must look to the future for the fulfilment of the promise.

The Family Promise, has relation to those who embrace the promises of Abraham, and who walk in his steps. They will become his associates in the Kingdom that Jesus shall set up on earth, and shall inherit eternal life.

The International Promise, points to the time when Christ's righteous rule will be set up over all the earth, and mankind shall rejoice in it. Then "the Kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ" who "shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). The Law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, bringing all nations in a state of unity and

peace before God (Isaiah 2: 2-4).

The glorious administration of the Lord Jesus Christ will solve the problems that afflict humanity today. The poor will be helped; the needy will be assisted; the tyrant will be deposed from the seat of authority, and "all nations" shall serve the Lord and find him a blessing (Psalm 72:11, 17). There will no longer exist the need to maintain huge standing armies, mighty navies, and vast air-forces to protect the rights of individual nations, when one king reigns over a united world. The wealth of nations, previously expended on war, will be utilised for the benefits of humanity. The result will be the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham: "In thee shall all nations be blessed."

This, as Paul showed, constitutes the Gospel (Galatians 3:8), and will be fulfilled through Christ (v. 16), the seed of Abraham (Matthew 1:1).

"All This Land Will I Give Thee."

Genesis records a further development in the promises of God to Abraham. Abraham had prospered with Lot his nephew, to the extent that their combined herds became an embarrassment, causing strife between their respective herdsmen.

They decided to separate, and Abram unselfishly offered Lot first choice of the land. Lot saw the well-watered plain of Jordan, with the prosperous cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and was attracted by the prospects of

easy living and pleasant communal associations to leave Abram, and elect to go down to Sodom.

He went "down" in more ways than one, leaving to Abram the hardship, the glory, the virtue of the rugged hills of the Land of Promise, and the inheritance of Bethel—the House of God.

After Lot had separated with his herds, God made a further promise to Abram. He was told:

"Look northward, southward, eastward and westward; for ALL THE LAND THAT THOU SEEST to thee will I give it, and to thy seed FOR EVER... Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee" (Genesis 13:14-17).

We cannot over-emphasize the importance of this promise made to Abram. It forms the basis of the personal hope of every true believer. Notice that Abram and his seed are promised the land FOR EVER, and not merely for life. It is obvious that this promise has not been fulfilled, for otherwise Abram would be alive to receive it.

Either Abraham and his seed must be resurrected from the grave and given life eternal to enjoy this promised inheritance, or we can place no confidence in the promises of God.

What of those who teach that the promised reward is in heaven? They normally interpret the promise to Abram as involving only occupation of the land during his lifetime. But contrary to this, 1900 years after the death of Abraham, Stephen, the

first Christian martyr, clearly stated that Abraham had never received the land promised to him. Significantly, also, he based his beliefs upon the promises made to this great man of faith. He declared:

"He (God) removed him (Abraham) into this land (Palestine) wherein ye (Jews) 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..." (Acts 7:1-4).

How is Abraham to receive the land promised him? Previous studies have indicated the answer: through a resurrection from the dead to life eternal (Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:1-2; Acts 26:6-8). In the promise made to Abraham, therefore, we see an amplification of that made in Eden. The Edenic promise of redemption is now channeled through Abraham and his seed.

But can Gentiles become the seed of Abraham? Certainly, listen to the instruction of Paul:

"As many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ... and if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE" (Galatians 3:27-29).

The hope set before all true believers is an eternal inheritance upon earth through a resurrection from the dead, if they die before Christ's coming (see 1 Cor. 15:51-54).

The Confirmation Of The Promise.

In due course Abram's name was changed to Abraham, signi-

fyng, "The Father of Many Nations" (Genesis 17:1-8), pointing forward to the fulfilment of the promises made to him. In addition, he was told that he would have a son, through whom would come the promised Seed, the Redeemer of mankind (Genesis 17:15-16; 18:9-14; 21:1-2).

The rite of circumcision was given as the token of God's covenant (Genesis 17:9-14), pointing forward to the need for a true worshipper to deny the flesh to serve God (A believer is spiritually circumcised when he does that (Romans 2:28-29).

Genesis 22 records a great trial of faith to which God subjected Abraham. Sarah, his wife, had given birth to Isaac, concerning whom God had declared: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21:12). When Isaac was about 17, Abraham was told to offer him as a burnt offering (Genesis 22:1-2). This was a tremendous challenge to Abraham's faith, but he was equal to it. Paul, commenting upon the incident, declares that Abraham's faith was such, that he knew that even though he did offer him as directed, God would restore him again, in order to vindicate His promise (Hebrews 11:17-19).

Thus, although Abraham went with the full intention of fulfilling the command of God, he told his attendants: "I and the lad will go yonder and worship and (we — in the Hebrew the plural is preserved throughout the sentence) will come again

to you" (Gen. 22:5).

This proved to be the case. Just as the knife was poised in Abraham's hand to administer the fatal blow, God intervened. He commended Abraham for his faith, and directing him to a ram caught in a thicket by the horns, ordered that it be offered in the place of his son (v. 12-13). Thus, to use Paul's words, Isaac was, "in a figure raised from the dead" (Heb. 11:17) by the Lamb of God's providing (see John 1:29).

Accordingly, Abraham named the place: "Yahweh Yireh" which signifies: "He who will be manifested will provide." He saw the incident as typical of the provision of God in supplying a Redeemer who would make atonement for the sins of humanity, and thus become the token of "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

Abraham Saw The Two Advents Of Christ.

A careful consideration of Genesis 22 reveals that the two advents of the Lord Jesus are inferred. The angel of God spake to Abraham twice (v.15). On the first occasion, he directed Abraham's attention to the ram caught in the thicket, and instructed him to offer the animal instead of his son. This dramatised the work of Jesus at his first advent, when on Mount Calvary, he was offered as the Lamb of God for the sin of the world.

The second proclamation by the angel, however, predicted the coming glory of the Lord

Jesus, and the ultimate blessing of Abraham at the second coming of Christ. God reiterated the promises of Genesis 12:1-2, but now unconditionally, emphasizing the absolute certainty in their fulfilment. He declared:

"By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of 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, because thou hast obeyed My voice" (vv. 16-18).

No more solemn covenant than this is found within the pages of the Bible. God declared in confirming it: "By myself have I sworn . . ." And Paul comments regarding this: **"IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIE"** (Heb. 6:17-18).

Ignore a covenant of such solemn import as that, and it is obvious that a basic teaching of God's word is ignored.

The covenant confirms all that had been promised previously, and provides for:

1. The multiplication of the seed of Abraham as "the stars of heaven, and the sand upon the shore;"

2. The manifestation in power of a single son of Abraham (described as "his" in the phrase "his enemies" and not "their" enemies) who will subdue his enemies and bring blessings upon all subject peoples.

The multitudinous seed is referred to by Paul as all those baptised into Christ who are

faithful: "Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

The singular seed points to the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul again comments:

"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" (Gal. 3:16).

Abraham was promised that this one would "possess the gate of his enemies." In ancient times, cities were walled up, and the person possessing "the gate" controlled the city. Abraham was therefore told in figurative language that his seed, the Christ, would control all mankind. He is to "reign till all enemies are under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:25). Then will the prediction of Daniel 2:44 be fulfilled:

"The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed; the kingdom shall not be left to other people (for its rulers will be immortal—see Rev. 5:9-10), but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

This declares more clearly that which was promised Abraham. He was also told, that in his seed "all families of the earth shall be blessed." Once Christ has set up his power on earth, and compelled by force all nations to submit (Isaiah 60:12), he will extend the blessings of his administration to all nations. This was the vision of Isaiah. He declared that "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, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:2-4).

Thus, in Abraham and his seed, the Christ, shall “all families of the earth be blessed.” The “Lord shall be king over

all the earth” (Zechariah 14:9), and the fulness of the Gospel message will be seen in the Kingdom that Christ will have established in the earth.

This constituted the national hope of Israel, to which Paul made reference, when he declared: “For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain” (Acts 28:20).

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 10

1. *Where in the Bible is Abraham's biography recorded?*
2. *Give a brief outline of the promises that God made to this patriarch.*
3. *Have these promises already been fulfilled?*
4. *Which incident in Abraham's life shows us that he believed in resurrection from the dead?*
5. *What does God's most solemn covenant promise to Abraham?*
6. *Can God lie? (Give Bible proof, please.)*

SUMMARY

The life of Abraham is recorded in Genesis, Chps. 12 to 25. In studying it, his biography presents him progressively:

1. As an idolator under condemnation with the world;
2. As a believer of the Gospel preached by the angel of the Lord;
3. As justified from all past sins by faith in its promises; and
4. As justified by works unto eternal life.

The "articles" of Abraham's faith were these:

1. That God would multiply his descendants as the stars of heaven for multitude and make them a great and mighty nation;
2. That at that time his own name would be great;
3. That out of his posterity should ONE arise, in whom all nations would be blessed.
4. That he, together with this personage, should have actual possession of the land of Canaan for ever;
5. That they two, with all the faithful multitudinous seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:26-28) should possess the world;
6. That the seed, or Christ, would be an only begotten and beloved son (Isaac being the type); that he would fall a victim to his enemies; and in his death be accepted as an offering by being raised from the dead, after the example in the case of Isaac;
7. That after the resurrection, or at "a second time", Christ would possess the gate of his enemies in triumph, and obtain the land of Canaan, and the dominion of the world according to the promise; and
8. That at that time, he (Abraham) and his faithful multitudinous seed would be made perfect, receive the promises and "enter into the joy of their Lord" (Heb. 11:40).

In short, Abraham was promised a resurrection from the dead unto life eternal through the redemption of the Lord Jesus, whose "day" he beheld in faith. In the promise to Abraham, therefore, and in the national hope of Israel, there is seen an amplification of the covenant made by God in Eden: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent on the head." This was now to be channelled through Abraham and his seed, outside of whom there is "no hope" (Ephesians 2:12).

(11) Israel Called Out of Egypt

Following the death of Abraham, the covenants of promise were confirmed with Isaac his son (Gen. 26:3-4), and Jacob his grandson (Gen. 28:13-16).

These dwelt in Palestine (or Canaan as it was then called—Gen. 46:5-7), until famine drove Jacob and his sons to Egypt to obtain food (Gen. 42:1). In Egypt, the children of Israel received great kindness, and gradually grew into a numerous people. As Abraham had been told (Gen. 15:13-14), his descendants remained there for some hundreds of years.

The record of this is contained in Genesis 37 to 50. This section of the Bible is full of interesting detail, woven around the life of Joseph, the beloved son of Israel. In a wonderful manner, Joseph's experiences prefigured those of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was loved of his father, but hated by his brethren; he learned the depths of suffering and tragedy but also rose to the heights of happiness and glory. In all this, he typed the Lord Jesus himself, so that in his life the children of Israel had foreshadowed the life of their Messiah, the Redeemer of humanity.

This was all summed up in a remarkable prophecy (Genesis 49), in which the future of Israel was outlined, and the glory of the latter end of the nation was clearly predicted.

Moses The Deliverer.

Hated by his brethren, Joseph

was sold as a slave into Egypt, but through the providence of God, he was elevated from this humble state to become ruler in the land.

In that, he foreshadowed the Lord Jesus.

His skill and wisdom in administering the affairs of Egypt in times of both plenty and famine, saved the nation from disaster, and, as a result, he and his brethren, the children of Israel, were treated with great respect and kindness by Pharaoh (Gen. 45:17-20).

For a time, the Israelites prospered in the land of Egypt, and grew into a numerous people.

But there arose a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph (Exod. 1), and who viewed with greatest concern, the growing power of Israel in Egypt. He withdrew the privileges that had been granted the people, and reduced them to abject slavery and hardship.

In their misery, the Israelites cried unto God, and He sent Moses to deliver them (Exodus 3:3-12).

Egypt was afflicted with ten great and dreadful plagues, at the conclusion of which, Pharaoh agreed to let the people go. The last plague brought death to all the first-born in Egypt, but Israel escaped this affliction by obeying the commands of God.

How Israel Was Delivered From Death.

Israel was strictly warned that unless the people observed the commandments of God they would likewise suffer the death that was threatened against Egypt.

Each family was required to select a lamb without blemish; to slay the lamb in sacrifice; to sprinkle its blood on the side posts and lintels of the doors of their homes; to shelter in the house all night; to eat the Lamb with "loins girded, shoes on feet, and staff in hand," ready to depart at the call of God.

The circumstances are outlined in Exodus 12. The lamb was called the Passover Lamb, because through it the angel of death "passed over" the Israelites, and it pointed forward to the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ who is described as our Passover Lamb (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7).

The lamb had to be without blemish—and Jesus was without sin;

Its blood was splashed on the door posts and lintels, but not underfoot—and believers are warned not to "tread underfoot" the Son of God (Heb. 10:29);

It was eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs—speaking of sinlessness and the bitterness of trial.

It was eaten in haste in readiness to depart — and believers should likewise recognise the urgency of their need, and live in constant expectation of Christ's coming;

The people were warned to remain in the house all night—and we must shelter in the "house of

God," among His children;

It saved the people from death—and Christ's offering can do likewise.

The Passover Lamb in Egypt thus pointed forward to the work and offering of the Lord Jesus. Through it, the people escaped the death that afflicted the firstborn of Egypt. But they were not completely saved as yet. Under the leadership of Moses, they were taken out of Egypt, and separated from that land and people by passing through the waters of the Red Sea (Exod. 14:21-22).

As in the case of Noah, water saved the people of God. This deliverance is described by Paul as a baptism: "They were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:2). They saw Pharaoh's army (representative of the powers of darkness and sin) overwhelmed and destroyed; they found themselves delivered from the slavery in Egypt to worship God in truth.

It is all representative of baptism. Through baptism past sins are blotted out (Acts 2:38); a person rises to a newness of life (Romans 6:4); being delivered from servitude or slavery to sin (Romans 6:18).

All this was typified and dramatised in the deliverance of the people of Israel from Egypt.

The Mosaic Covenant.

But though delivered from Egypt, the people of Israel were not yet saved. The wilderness lay before them, separating them from the land of Promise. They

had left Egypt, but they had to learn to worship God.

Accordingly, Moses led them down to Sinai where a Divine law was delivered them, and the nation entered into covenant with God to obey that law (Exod. 19:5-8).

This law and covenant is based upon the Ten Commandments (see Exod. 34:28; Deut. 4:13-14), and made provision for the civil, religious and domestic life of the nation. But it warned that the penalty of sin is death, and as all broke the law, it impressed the reality of sin and the inevitability of death.

It could not give life, because of the nature of flesh.

It emphasised the need of a Redeemer, one who could take away sin in forgiveness. Therefore, it was a schoolmaster leading to Christ (Gal. 3:24). Discerning Israelites recognised that the Law revealed them to be sinners (Romans 7:7), and thus led them to look to that one whom God had promised to provide to take away the sins of humanity (Hebrews 9:26).

The effect of Christ's offering, therefore, is to deliver mankind from the curse of the law. In Christ it is done away, and replaced by the Law of liberty (not of licence) styled also "the law of Christ" (1 Cor. 9:20-21).

Therefore, all the experiences of Israel at that time, and the very enactments of the law and covenant to which they were related, emphasised the reality of sin and death, and the need

of one who can lead mankind away from its influence.

Thus the Passover Lamb and Baptism did not save Israel, even nationally, for the people had to yet reach the Promised Land. And so real was the very sin that the Law revealed, that the generation that was taken out of Egypt and so readily accepted the covenant of Moses, perished in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:5).

They believed God, they were baptised, but they did not remain obedient.

Moses: Mediator And Prophet.

In bringing Israel under the covenant that God made with them, Moses acted the part of mediator between God and the people (Gal. 3:19). He was also a prophet, and had no false illusions as to the future of the nation that he led (Deut. 9:6, 13; 31:16-18, 29).

In a remarkable chapter of Scripture (Deut. 28), he listed the calamities that would overtake Israel because of their disobedience, and then predicted that the people would be scattered among all nations.

He foretold that they would be subjected to invasion and siege:

"The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far... a nation of fierce countenance, and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high walls come down..."
(Deut. 28:49, 53).

This predicted siege came to pass some 1500 years later, when Vespasian and Titus, the military leaders of Rome, attacked Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

The war was disastrous for the Jewish nation. The state was overthrown, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the people were scattered into all parts as Moses predicted:

"The Lord shall scatter thee among all people...and among those nations shalt thou find no peace...the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes and sorrow of mind; thy life shall hang in doubt before thee" (vv. 64-66).

The history of Jewry since Christ shows how literally all this has been fulfilled. The Jewish people have been scattered among all nations, and have been subjected to fearful persecution during the course of their wandering. At the same time, the land they once inhabited fell into a condition of desolation, as Moses likewise predicted it would (Deut. 29:24-28).

But Moses' prophetic vision enabled him to see beyond the scattering of Israel to its regathering again, and its ultimate glory. Abraham had been promised that the Jewish people would develop into "a great nation", and Moses revealed how this would be brought about. He declared:

"It shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee...that then the Lord will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee" (Deut. 30:1-3).

We are witnessing the beginnings of this today. The Jews are returning to their ancient

homeland after 1900 years of wandering, and have re-established their State once more. This is all as a basis for the future purpose of God when the Lord Jesus shall return to reign from Jerusalem as king (Isa. 24:23). It is a feature of God's purpose that is very clearly enunciated throughout the prophetic word. Over 100 years ago, long before the current return commenced, a Christadelphian writer on Bible prophecy declared:

"The pre-advantural colonisation of the Holy Land will speak in unmistakable and infallible terms to the believer. It will be surely a certain sign of the speedy appearing of the Son of Man in power and glory. No one need expect that appearing to be manifested until the Jewish Colony be lifted up 'as an ensign upon a hill'; for to snatch that ensign out of the hand of Gog (Russia) is the proximate cause of the Lord's appearance again." (From "The Herald of the Future Age" by J. Thomas, 1852.)

The Jewish colony made its appearance in the Holy Land some time back; the state of Israel has since come into existence, and these are sure signs that we are living at the time of Christ's second coming:

"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favor her, yea, the set time is come...When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in His glory" (Psalm 102:13, 16).

Moses: Type of Christ.

Both the Edenic and Abrahamic covenants promised that one would arise who would conquer sin and death, would lead the way to a resurrection unto

life eternal, and subduing the nations, would reign as monarch, bringing blessings to all mankind.

Moses looked forward to the coming of this one. Paul wrote that Moses: "Esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt because he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Hebrews 11:26).

Moses had been brought up in the luxury of Egypt as son of Pharaoh's daughter, and as such had tremendous opportunities of great advancement in the world. But the prospects of worldly glory faded in comparison with those of eternal glory on earth, such as God's promises reveal. In confident anticipation of this time yet to come, when he will inherit eternal life with Abraham, Moses preferred to endure temporary reproach with the "people of God" rather than jeopardise his future with Christ.

Moses was Deliverer, Law-giver, and Ruler in Israel, and as such typed Christ. He told the people:

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken."

God added these words:

"Whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he (the Christ) shall speak in My name, I will re-

quire it of him" (Deut. 18:15, 18, 19).

Christ, in fulfilment of this, "spake the words of God" unto the people (John 3:34), and when they refused to hearken unto him, God "required it of them." He will yet require it of all those who knowingly reject His word, for they will be raised to condemnation and the second death (John 12:48; Rev. 20:6).

From Moses' description of Christ, as a Prophet whom God would raise up from the midst of Israel, as one of the people, it is obvious that he did not subscribe to the current doctrine of the Trinity, or consider the Lord as a pre-existent angel. He recognised that he would be the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, and as such, though acknowledging Divine parentage as far as his Father is concerned, would be of a nature identical with all mankind.

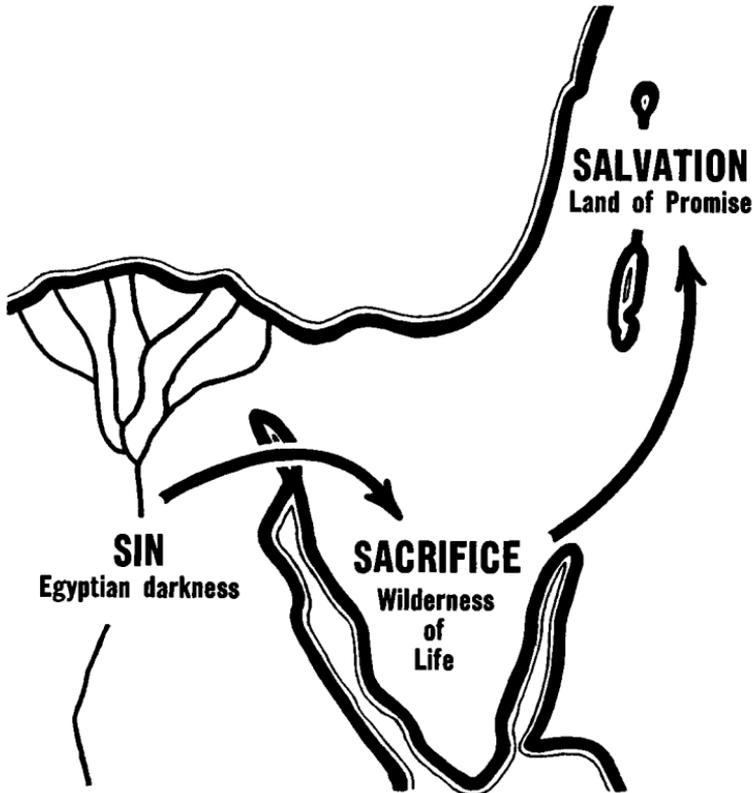
This is the consistent teaching of Scripture. Many years later, Peter taught:

"Jesus of Nazareth, a MAN APPROVED OF GOD among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you" (Acts 2:22).

God is consistently set forth as the God of Israel in both Old and New Testaments; and the theory of the Trinity finds no expression in Scripture.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 11

1. *In what land did the children of Israel settle in the time of a severe famine?*
2. *Which of the sons of Jacob, or Israel, was loved of his father and hated by his brethren, and yet preserved their lives in the time of famine?*
3. *Who did God raise up as deliverer when Israel was afflicted in Egypt?*
4. *By what means was Israel saved from death at a time when Egypt's firstborn were slain by the angel of God?*
5. *Who is likened unto a lamb "without spot and blemish", and how can we come under the protection of his saving power?*
6. *Why did the people that had been delivered from Egypt die in the wilderness?*
7. *What did Moses predict in regard to the future experience of the children of Israel?*
8. *Which words of Moses do clearly indicate that Christ was of the nature of Adam and not God Himself or a pre-existent angel?*



The deliverance of Israel from Egypt is a parable of the call of God from the darkness of ignorance through the sacrifice of Christ to the hope of salvation (1 Cor. 10:1-11; Acts 15:14).

(12) Israel Becomes The Kingdom of God on Earth

God Becomes Israel's King.

In this study we want to show that when God called Israel out of Egypt, He ultimately constituted the people as His nation. This means that references to the Kingdom of God have relation to a literal Kingdom on earth, as tangible as any other nation, with its King, country, people, laws, religion, and even its history.

Thus when the Bible speaks of the future setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth, it relates to the restoration of that which existed in the past, though in the future it will be world-wide, whereas in the past it was limited to Israel.

Under Moses, the children of Israel were taken out of Egypt, baptised by going through the Red Sea, and conducted down to Sinai, where God invited them to enter into covenant relationship with Him. He promised, that if they did so, He would establish them as His nation upon the earth:

"Ye shall be unto Me a peculiar treasure ABOVE ALL PEOPLE; for all the earth is Mine. Ye shall be unto Me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS AND AN HOLY NATION" (Exod. 19:5-6; Deut. 10:15; 14:2).

Israel thus became the Kingdom of God on earth!

Consider the following expressions used in relation to that nation:

"Israel was His dominion" (Psalm 114:2).

"The Lord your God your King"

(1 Samuel 12:12).

"Solomon sat upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord, over Israel" (1 Chronicles 28:5).

"Thine is the kingdom O Lord, and Thou art exalted as Head above all" (1 Chronicles 29:11).

"Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him" (v. 23).

"The Lord delighted in thee (Solomon) to set thee on His throne, to be king for the Lord thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever" (2 Chron. 9:8).

Christ Recognised The Earthly Kingdom Of God.

Israel's status as the Kingdom of God on earth, was recognised by the Lord Jesus, as is obvious from the expressions that he used. He told the unrighteous leaders of his day that their faithless attitude disqualified them to exercise authority over such a nation, and in consequence it would be taken away from them and given to his disciples (see Matthew 21:43; Luke 12:32; 22:29-30). On another occasion, he told the disciples:

"Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28).

It was undoubtedly in anticipation of that time, that the disciples enquired of Jesus Christ after his resurrection: "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

They realised that it was the purpose of God so to do, and

they looked forward with keen anticipation to the re-establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, when a disciplined, educated, rejuvenated Israel with Christ as its king, will reflect glory to its Maker, even Yahweh the God of Israel (Jeremiah 33:8-10).

The "Kingdom of God" is a Scriptural term, therefore, that denotes a divine, political kingdom, as real and tangible as any nation today. It once existed on the earth in the Kingdom of Israel. It was broken up and scattered among the nations because of the wickedness and rebellion of its leaders and people; but it will be restored again as the basis of God's purpose in all the earth.

The Kingdom of the future will be different from that of the past, however, for its authority will be vested in immortal Kings with Christ as chief. Thus the redeemed are promised:

"To him that overcometh, will I give power over the nations" (Rev. 2:26).

They are represented as singing:

"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall REIGN ON THE EARTH" (Rev. 5:9-10).

Moreover, the Kingdom of the future will not be limited to Israel who will nevertheless occupy the "first dominion" (Mic. 4:8), but will incorporate all nations (Rev. 11:15; Isaiah 2:2-4). Then Jerusalem will re-

assume its ancient status, and will again constitute the "throne of the Lord" on earth. The prophet Jeremiah declares:

"They shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all nations shall be gathered unto it; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jer. 3:17).

Israel Inherits The Land Of Promise.

The generation of Israelites that left Egypt proved faithless, and were not permitted to enter the Promised Land. For forty years they wandered in the wilderness under the leadership of Moses, until they all perished, and then, under Joshua, the succeeding generation passed over the river Jordan into the land where Abraham had wandered as a pilgrim.

Under the leadership of faithful Joshua, they were settled into their possessions, and during the period of his control and that of the elders associated with him, the nation was wisely and firmly guided (Joshua 24:31).

Before his death, Joshua gathered the people together, and reminding them of the benefits they had enjoyed under God, recalled the solemn covenant into which they had entered, and exhorted them to "cleave unto the Lord." He promised that Divine blessings would be theirs if they obeyed God, but warned them of the awful consequences of disobedience.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve," he declared. "But as for me and my house, we will

serve the Lord.”

Joshua's stirring speech is recorded in Joshua chapters 23, 24.

The nation was thus established under a theocratic form of government. God was king, and the priests were the officers of His realm. The symbol of God's presence was the Tabernacle where the people worshipped, concerning which He had declared to Moses: "There will I meet with thee (Exodus 25:22). Success or failure, as far as the nation was concerned, depended upon how firm the High Priest was in enforcing the divine law, and how co-operative the people proved in obeying it.

Such a form of administration demanded the manifestation of faith, and here Israel failed. Human nature being what it is (Gen. 8:21; Jer. 10:23; Rom. 7:18), the absence of a visible king caused the disbelieving to forget that the eye of God was on them, so that they pleased themselves. Thus, if the High Priest proved weak, the nation did also, and as both Moses and Joshua had warned the people, it suffered in consequence.

And generally the High Priests proved weak.

Therefore, for a period of about 450 years, from the death of Joshua until Samuel the prophet, Israel's history is a record of alternating obedience to, and rebellion against, the Divine authority; and of punishment in time of disobedience, or of assistance when they turned again to God.

Whenever this occurred, "the Lord raised up judges (temporary rulers) who delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them" (Judges 2:16-19). The general conditions during this period are summed up in the book of Judges thus:

"In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

These chaotic conditions emphasised the need of the coming of that one who as the Seed of the Woman would bruise the head of the serpent power of sin (Gen. 3:15), or as the Son promised Abraham, would rule over his enemies (Gen. 22:17), or as the leader promised through Moses, would compel the people to hearken (Deut. 18:18-19).

The righteous always looked forward to the time when this one thus promised would be manifested, and human nature will be thoroughly disciplined. Of him it is recorded that he will "reign in righteousness", "rule with a rod of iron", "magnify the law and make it honorable", "shall not fail nor be discouraged till he has set judgment in the earth and the isles shall wait for his law" (Ps. 72; Rev. 2:26-27; Isa. 42:4, 21).

Though Israel constituted the Kingdom of God in the past, it was the Kingdom in a very imperfect state. When it is re-established under Christ, it will reveal the glory to which it was originally designed (Jeremiah 13:11).

Where Israel Failed.

Israel failed mainly through the weakness of its priests. Established over the nation to act as shepherds to guide the people, they lamentably failed in their duty. Time and again God sent prophets to condemn the wicked practices of both priests and people (Jer. 5:31; Ezek. 34; Micah 3:11), and to warn them of the inevitable punishment that would follow their evil ways.

But, so great is the mercy of God, that these words of indictment were always blended with messages of hope to the righteous. God promised to send a righteous priest to Israel (Psalm 110:4), a true shepherd to feed the flock, "even my servant David" (or The Beloved — a

title of Christ — Matt. 3:17), who would guide the people in wisdom (Ezek. 34:23-26). This one, yet to be manifested to Israel, shall "turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11:26), and will "destroy the veil that is over all nations," and which prevents them comprehending the truth in Christ Jesus (Isaiah 25:7).

This was the prophetic message of all those whom God sent to Israel warning and pleading with them, and promising them hope if they would but turn to Him.

But, declared the prophet Jeremiah, "they would not hear" (Jer. 13:11). They turned a deaf ear unto God, and so the threatened punishment ultimately came upon them.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 12

1. *In what place did the children of Israel receive God's laws and commandments after their delivery from Egypt?*
2. *What did God declare Israel to be, once they had entered into covenant relationship with Him?*
3. *Was there at any time in past history a "Kingdom of God" on earth?*
4. *According to the Biblical record the sons of David are represented as "sitting on the throne of the Lord". Can you name one of the sons of whom this was said?*
5. *Quote a Bible passage where Christ's disciples indicated that they were waiting for the restoration of the Kingdom of God on earth, with Christ as king.*
6. *Who led the Israelites into the Promised Land after the wilderness wandering, and gave the tribes their portions in the land?*
7. *Which form of government did Israel have at this time, and for some time afterwards, and who had the duty to enforce the Divine laws?*
8. *Where in the Bible do we find reference made to a future high priest who shall not fail to enforce the law rightly and with power, thus effectively restoring peace and righteousness?*
9. *Will there at that time be a Divinely appointed centre of worship, and where?*

(13) *The Promise made to King David*

Israel Demands A Visible King.

Previous studies have briefly covered the early history recorded in the Bible. It includes:

Creation, the Flood, and the selection of Abraham and his posterity as the channel of the Divine purpose (Genesis).

The deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and the covenant God made with the nation through Moses (Exodus to Deuteronomy).

The occupation of the Land of Promise by Israel (Joshua).

The period of the rule of the Judges (Judges and Ruth).

This brings us to the two books of Samuel, in which is recorded how that a visible monarchy was established over Israel.

This was made necessary to correct the anarchy that developed during the period of the Judges. The Judges were heads of tribes set up in authority during times of emergency. They were neither hereditary governors, nor rulers chosen by the people. They were established in their positions by God, and therefore were His deputies.

Whilst they ruled, the people prospered, but in their absence, the nation declined and suffered, for authority was relaxed, and the people did as they pleased. The record states:

"There was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

This pin-points the cause of failure, for there should have been a King in Israel. Men should have recognised the royal status and authority of God, and submitted to His rule (cp. Jud-

ges 8:23). They failed to do so, however, and thus periods of anarchy were common.

The last Judge appointed over Israel, and the most successful of them all, was Samuel. He united the whole nation, and brought it under complete control. God's law was elevated, and under his wise administration, the nation prospered (1 Samuel 7:15-17). Men of discernment began to dread the time when his control would be relaxed, and when his death would bring an end to a regime that had proved so successful in every way.

They saw that his sons did not manifest the virtues of their father, and recognised the need of some form of permanent authority to maintain the unity of the nation, and guide it for its good.

The solution, they believed, was in an hereditary king, a visible monarch to symbolise authority and to exercise it as did Samuel.

They made request for this to Samuel, a request that deeply disappointed him. He could only view it as lack of confidence in the system he had established over the nation. He took the matter in prayer to God, and it was revealed to him that the fault was even more deep-seated and serious than he had realised. The demand for a King expressed dissatisfaction with God's rule.

"They have not rejected thee,

but they have rejected Me," God told Samuel (1 Samuel 8:1-9).

Nevertheless, because experience is the greatest teacher, God granted the people their request, after solemnly warning them of the oppressions that could result from such a king (1 Samuel 8:10-17). Representatives of the nation were gathered together, and Saul of Benjamin was anointed as first king of Israel.

Saul was accepted by popular acclaim of the people. He had all the external qualities to commend his appointment. He was well-built, of striking appearance, with a commanding aspect that earned the respect of those under him (1 Sam. 9:2; 10:23-24).

But he lacked the essential qualities for rulership in a theocracy: the virtues of faith and obedience. In a Kingdom where God was the real, if invisible, King, the absence of such qualities was fatal.

Saul commenced well, but his failure to carry out the will of God, proved that he was unsuited to the position, and he was deposed (1 Sam. 13: 13-14; 15:11. Though of Israel, he had revealed himself to be a man of the flesh, a seed of the serpent, a progeny of Cain. He revealed this by his deadly determination to destroy his God-appointed successor: David, the man after God's own heart. Saul's reason was swamped by anger and jealousy, and he became dominated by a murderous intent towards David, such as

Cain had shown towards Abel.

But for the protection that God afforded David, he would have been destroyed by Saul. It was the enmity of the two seeds manifested once again (Gen. 3:15).

David Selected By God To Replace Saul.

The aged Samuel was given the sad task of telling Saul that he had proved a failure, and that God was about to replace him with a better man (1 Sam. 15:28). He was then sent to anoint the shepherd boy David, as king over Israel (1 Sam. 16: 11-13; Psalm 78:70-72).

David's appointment was made secretly in order to protect him from the anger of Saul, and at first was not recognised by the people. His victory over the giant, Goliath, brought him into prominence before the people (1 Sam. 17, 18), and gradually it became known that he was the appointed successor to Saul.

This aroused the bitter antagonism of Saul who set out to destroy his rival. David was driven into exile, and was forced to live in constant jeopardy of his life throughout the remainder of Saul's life.

On the death of Saul, however, David was accepted by his own tribe of Judah, and, seven years later, was proclaimed king over all the twelve tribes (cp. 2 Sam. 2:11 with 5:3). His skill in war won for him victories in every direction, and soon his kingdom had extended into an empire, with the sur-

rounding nations made subject unto him.

In all this, David typed the Lord Jesus Christ.

As Israel eagerly acclaimed Saul and only reluctantly accepted David (who proved by far to be the better king), so men readily put their confidence in the arm of flesh rather than in God. They will acclaim an Alexander, an Augustus, a Napoleon, but not the Lord Jesus Christ, the greatest leader of all time.

As Saul, the man of flesh, sought to slay David, so the Jewish people, as men of flesh, did slay the Lord Jesus.

As David was not at first accepted as king by Israel, so the natural seed of Israel continues to reject Christ to this present moment of time.

As David was first accepted by his own followers in exile, then by his own tribe when he came to power, afterwards by the rest of Israel, and finally by surrounding nations, so Christ is today accepted by his followers, will be first acknowledged as king by the Jews in the land at his return (Zech. 12:7), will be afterwards accepted by the rest of Israel who will then be restored to the land (Ezekiel 39:25-27; 37:22), and will finally extend his power over all nations (Zechariah 14:9; Isaiah 60:12).

By such incidents has God dramatised his future purpose to be worked out by the Lord Jesus at his coming.

David sinned, as all men sin,

but despite his failings, he was pre-eminently a man of faith, always seeking to obey God's will. His great ambition was to attain unto the future Kingdom of God when the promised Redeemer and Messiah of Israel shall rule over a regenerated world at peace. He declared:

"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His Temple" (Psalm 27:4).

"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (v. 13).

Many of the Psalms which he composed breathe forth his ardent hopes for the future. In common with Abraham and other worthies of faith, he looked forward to a resurrection from the dead unto life eternal. Here is a typical expression, revealing his hope to that end:

"Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side" (Psalm 71:20-21).

David was Israel's greatest king. Despite his weaknesses, he was a man of superb faith and courage who inspired men both then and since. He constantly sought God's help: as a youth when he was called upon to protect his flock from ravaging lions and bears; as a young man when he battled with Goliath in single-handed combat; as an exile when he fled from Saul in jeopardy of his life; as king when

he sought Divine wisdom and guidance to rule the people.

His strength and his weakness are both faithfully recorded in the Bible. In a merely human document, the sins of Israel's most illustrious king would be carefully edited down in the national records, but the Bible being what it claims to be—the Inspired Word of God—depicts the character of David with ruthless frankness. We can thereby learn from his mistakes as well as by his example of faith, courage and love of God.

God's Promise To David.

After David had been established in power, and all his enemies had been subdued under him, he desired to express his gratitude to God by building a permanent Temple at which Israelites might assemble for worship.

The existing place of worship was the Tabernacle. It was but a temporary building, described as "a tent," and therefore was a contrast to the palace which David had built for himself.

The king felt that it was incongruous that he should dwell in such splendour, whereas the symbol of God's "dwelling place in Israel," should be so humble.

But God refused the request of David, on the grounds that he had been a man of war, and had shed much blood in battle (1 Chron. 28:3). The building of the Temple was reserved for a man of peace, who would

foreshadow the ultimate peace of Messiah's reign. This was fulfilled when Solomon, the son of David, built the first Temple in Jerusalem.

David's request is recorded in 2 Samuel 7. Though God rejected it, He did appreciate the motives that moved him to make it; and in response thereto made promises to David of far-reaching significance. The king was told:

"I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and MOVE NO MORE; neither shall the children of wickedness AFFLICT THEM ANY MORE" (v. 10).

"The Lord will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom" (v. 12).

"He shall build an house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom FOR EVER" (v. 13).

"I will be his Father, and he shall be My son" (v. 14).

"Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever BEFORE THEE: thy throne shall be established FOR EVER" (v. 16).

The promise to David thus incorporates:

(1)—The re-establishment of Israel in the Land of Promise, never again to be removed nor afflicted (v. 10).

(2)—The setting up of a King upon the throne of David FOR-EVER, who will be both Son of God and son of David (vv. 12-14).

(3)—The building of a House or Temple for God by this king (v. 13).

(4)—The manifestation of a faithful "house" or posterity in the line of David (vv. 11-12).

(5)—The death of David (v. 12) after which the seed would come, and his resurrection to life eternal so that he might see these things established forever "before him" (v. 16).

This promise follows in natural sequence the other two great covenants of promise made in Eden and to Abraham.

The first promised LIFE.

The second promised an earthly INHERITANCE.

The third promised AUTHORITY.

The son promised to David was the Lord Jesus Christ. This is established beyond all doubt by the words that Gabriel uttered to Mary before the birth of her son. She was told:

"Thou shalt conceive, 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 God 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" (Luke 1:31-33).

The fulfilment of these words demands the return of the Lord Jesus to this earth, to raise David and all like him, from the dead to life eternal; to restore Israel in its fulness; and to reign from Jerusalem as King.

David recognised that God had spoken "of Thy servant's house for a great while to come" (2 Sam. 7:19); he viewed the solemn promise of God as an "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure" (2 Sam. 23:5).

The fulfilment of the promise to David became the great theme of the prophets, and is

referred to in many passages of the Bible in relation to the future purpose of God. The following is a typical example:

"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: and this is his name whereby he shall be called: The Lord our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:5-6. See also Jer. 33:15-17; Isa. 9:7; Amos 9:11).

The same covenant of promise is set forth in the New Testament as epitomising the mission of Jesus (Luke 1:31-33; 68-70; Mark 11:10; Acts 2:30). It was taught by the Apostles as a foundation doctrine of the Gospel (Acts 2:29-31). James declared:

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, Who doeth all these things" (Acts 15:14-17).

Notice the principles involved in this declaration of the Gospel.

First, as to personal responsibility:

Visitation—God visited the Gentiles by arranging for the Apostles to preach the Word.

Invitation—The design was to take, or call to Him a people.

Separation—Those responding

were to be taken "out of" the Gentiles.

Dedication—The purpose of their call was to constitute them a people for "His name" or character and purpose.

Second, as to His purpose:

The present call—To bring a people unto Himself.

The return of Christ—"I will return..."

The restoration of Israel — "will build again the tabernacle of David..."

The world-wide extension of Christ's rule—That "the residue (rest) of men might seek after the Lord."

David To Witness The Fulfilment.

There are two significant features in the declaration made to David that are of profound importance.

First, he was told that he would die before the covenant was fulfilled: "Thy days shall be fulfilled..." (2 Sam. 7:12). Second, he was told he would see the ultimate fulfilment: "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever BEFORE THEE"—or in your sight.

How are those two apparently contradictory statements to be reconciled? Certainly not by teaching that David ascended into heaven, because Peter was specific that "DAVID IS NOT ASCENDED INTO THE HEAVENS" (Acts 2:29, 34), and as we have seen, the theory of an immortal soul is false.

No, David's confidence was in a resurrection from the dead,

as we have already shown. He declared: "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave" (Ps. 49:15).

Like the Edenic and the Abrahamic covenants, the one made to David, is not limited to him, but is open to all who accept Christ in the way appointed. In fact, God invites us to associate with that covenant. He declares:

"Incline your ear, and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David" (Isaiah 55:3).

This everlasting covenant is open to all who accept Christ through knowledge and baptism (Ephesians 2:11-13). Those who embrace it can anticipate a time of glory upon the earth when they shall be clothed upon with immortality, and shall enjoy the authority that was promised David. They will be able to sing the song of the Redeemed:

"Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10).

The Developing Purpose Of God.

Now notice the gradual development of God's purpose through the three great covenants of promise.

● **The Edenic Covenant** — Promised man redemption from sin and death, and set before him that which he had lost, namely the hope of life eternal through the coming of One who would

KEY TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE SCRIPTURES

triumph over sin and death and channelled the work of redemption through Abraham and his seed (Gal. 3:28). It showed that for mortal man.

● **The Abrahamic Covenant** — the Redeemer would be a son

THE PROMISE TO DAVID ANALYSED

(See 2 Sam. 7:10-25.)

SCRIPTURE	EXPLANATION	FULFILMENT
"When thy days be fulfilled" (v. 12).	After the death of David.	A long while after, see Luke 1:32-33.
"I will set up thy seed . . ."	God will provide a righteous descendant from David.	Jesus was the son of David (Matthew 1:1).
"I will be his Father, he shall be my son" (v. 14).	The birth of this Son would be by Divine intervention.	Jesus is Son of God as well as Son of David (Luke 1:35; Heb. 1:5).
"If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men" (v. 14).	This has been rendered better (see Adam Clarke): "In suffering for iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes due to the children of Adam."	Though Christ did not sin, He inherited the effects of sin by coming in the mortal nature of all mankind. In this sense, He was chastened with the stripes due to the children of Adam, who first brought sin into the world (see Gen. 3:17-19; Isa. 53:3-12; Heb. 2:14; 4:15; 5:8).
"He will build an house for my name."	David wished to build a temple, but was not permitted to do so; the promised son would accomplish this.	Christ will complete a Spiritual Temple of living stones, made up of the resurrected and glorified faithful (1 Pet. 2:5-9), and will, at his second advent, cause to be erected in Jerusalem, a house of prayer to which men will turn, and which will become a spiritual rallying point for all nations (Zech. 6:12; Isaiah 56:7; Isaiah 2:2-4).
"I will establish the throne of his Kingdom forever."	The present state of David's kingdom shows that this has not yet been fulfilled.	Both Old (Dan, 2:44; Zech. 14:9; Ps. 22:28) and New Testaments (1 Cor. 15:23-28; Mat. 25:31-33; Rev. 11:15) speak of the coming Kingdom of God upon the earth.
"It shall be established forever before thee" (v. 16).	Established in the sight of David for ever.	By the resurrection of David from the grave, and the bestowal of immortality (Titus 1:2-3) at the return of Christ (2 Tim. 4:1, 8).
"I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more (v. 10 cf. also 1 Chronicles 17:9).	This statement anticipated the scattering of Israel and their ultimate regathering to the land again. The beginnings of this today, show that the time is at hand for the vindication of the Davidic promise.	Israel will be established as the head of the mortal nations, over which will be established Christ and his immortal associates (Isa. 32:1; Jer. 30:3, 24; Ezek. 37:21-22; Amos 9:11-15 etc.).

of Abraham; that he would (after the type of Isaac) be also a Son of God; that he would be put to death, would be raised therefrom, and would open the way for a resurrection to life eternal to the true seed of Abraham, and bring blessings to all mankind through his rule. It promised to Abraham and his seed an earthly inheritance for ever; a place where the life promised in Eden could be lived,

and granted Abraham for an eternal inheritance that which he gave up when he left Ur to obey God.

● **The Davidic Covenant**—Offered everlasting earthly authority to David and his seed over the inheritance granted by the promise to Abraham. By this means the seed of Abraham will reign upon the earth, bringing the blessings of a divine administration to all peoples.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 13

1. *Whom did Israel fail to recognise as their king when they demanded Saul to be king over them?*
2. *Who was the last judge over Israel when they demanded a visible king?*
3. *Who was anointed as successor of Saul, and became the greatest king of Israel.*
4. *Give Scriptural proof that king David believed in the future resurrection of the dead.*
5. *Give 5 significant facets of the promise God made to king David according to 2 Samuel, Chapter 7.*
6. *Where do we read in the Bible that Jesus Christ is the "son" promised to king David, and the ruler who shall sit upon the throne of David "forever"?*
7. *For what purpose is God calling out a people from among the nations?*
8. *What are the "sure mercies of David", mentioned by Isaiah (Ch. 55:3)?*

**SUMMARY OF BIBLE TEACHING ILLUSTRATING THE
COVENANT MADE TO DAVID**

The Lord Jesus will return to the earth visibly and personally:

"This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11. See also Acts 3:19-20; Rev. 1:7).

The resurrection will take place, and the faithful will be granted eternal life. They will be associated with the Lord Jesus to reign with him over the mortal populations of the globe.

"Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life . . ." (Daniel 12:2). "To him that overcometh will I give power over the nations" (Rev. 2:26. See also Isaiah 26:19; 1 Cor. 15:21-23, 53-54; Rev. 11:18).

The complete restoration of Israel will take place, and the nation (mortal subjects under immortal rulers) will form the first dominion in the world-wide empire of Christ.

"I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all" (Ezek. 37:21-22. See also Micah 4:8; Romans 11:26-27).

All nations will be disciplined, educated in divine principles, and brought under Christ's control.

"All nations shall call him blessed" (Ps. 72:17. See also 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Micah 4:1-4; Isa. 61:11; Rev. 11:15; Isa. 60:12).

Jerusalem will become the throne-city of the Lord.

"Jerusalem, the city of the great king" (Matt. 5:35. See also Jeremiah 3:17; Isaiah 2:2-4; 32:1).

A glorious Temple (a centre of universal worship) will be erected in Jerusalem to which mankind will make periodical pilgrimage.

"It shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship" (Zech. 14:16. See also Zech. 6:13; Haggai 2:9; Isa. 56:7; Mark 11:17; Isa. 60:10-11).

Christ's millennial reign will embrace all nations.

"The Lord shall be king over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9. See also Psalm 72; Dan. 2:44; 7:27).

(14) The Kingdom Overturned: "Until He Come . . ."

Civil Dissension Rends Israel into Two.

David's reign over a united Israel was followed by that of Solomon his son (1 Chron. 29:23). Under his wise administration, the nation reached a pinnacle of power and prestige which will only be exceeded when Christ "the greater than Solomon" (Matt. 12:42) restores again "the Kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1:6; Matt. 19:28) and reigns as king.

The record declares:

"Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father, and prospered, and all Israel obeyed him" (1 Chron. 29:23).

He built up the commercial and political prosperity of the nation. Many of the cities were rebuilt, impressive palaces were erected for himself and his multitudinous wives, and a magnificent Temple was set up in Jerusalem dedicated to the worship of Yahweh.

The seeds of decay, however, were evident even in this glory. Although Israel had become a wealthy and powerful nation so that "silver and gold became as plentiful as stones, and cedar trees as sycomore trees for abundance" (2 Chron. 1:15), these riches had been wrung from the people by such oppressive measures of taxation as to cause them to remember the warning counsel of Samuel (1 Sam. 8: 10-11). Moreover, with his in-

creasing prosperity, Solomon's heart was lifted up in pride, so that he forgot the responsibilities that he owed unto God.

In the face of this spiritual decline, God proclaimed that He would rend the greater part of the Kingdom from the control of Solomon's sons (1 Kings 11:26-34), and give it unto others.

The close of Solomon's reign found mounting difficulties on every side, and increasing resentment on the part of the people. A deputation was sent to his successor, Rehoboam, — demanding some relief from the oppressive taxation. Rehoboam, however, influenced by the headstrong advice of the more inexperienced and irresponsible counsellors, refused this reasonable request, with the result that the nation was almost plunged into civil war. This was only prevented by the warning of God, and with growing tension, ten of the tribes seceded and formed a separate kingdom under Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:9-17).

Thus arose the distinction between Israel (ten tribes) and Judah (two tribes), referred to so frequently in Scripture (e.g. Ezekiel 37:21-22).

The Northern Kingdom Taken Into Captivity.

The spiritual condition of the divided nation continued to deteriorate. In mercy, God sent

prophets to warn the people of the punishment that would inevitably fall upon them if they continued in the way they were proceeding, but the admonition fell on deaf ears. It is recorded:

"The people despised His words, and misused His prophets until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy" (2 Chron. 36:16).

The ten tribes proved to be the more wicked of the two kingdoms, and were the first to be punished. Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, marched against Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, about 700 B.C., and after a siege, the city fell (2 Kings 17:5; 18:10). In accordance with Assyrian policy, the people were taken into captivity and transplanted into different foreign parts.

Where Are The Lost Ten Tribes?

The theory is sometimes advanced, that these tribes migrated west through Europe until they reached England where they settled, and the claim is made, that Britain, America etc. are the "lost ten tribes of Israel."

There is absolutely no true Scriptural support for this theory, and usually the very context of the references advanced to prove it, is sufficient to overthrow it.

The ten tribes were never "lost" in the sense advanced by this theory; they were "lost" spiritually (see Jer. 50:6). It is true that Jesus declared: "I

am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24; 10:16). But Jesus limited his preaching to Palestine, and this comment was made to a Gentile who pleaded his help. Therefore, the very action of the Lord illustrated that these "lost sheep of the house of Israel" were to be found in Jewry in the days of his preaching.

The Apostles used the term in the same manner. When Peter preached at Pentecost, he declared:

"Let ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

He addressed them as "men of Israel," and "elders of Israel" (Acts 3:12; 4:8), thus identifying Jews and Israelites as one and the same.

In like manner, when James wrote his epistle, he wrote it to the "twelve tribes scattered abroad" (James 1:1), showing that at that stage, the political identity of all the tribes of Israel had been retained.

The political status of the ten tribes, after being taken into captivity is described in the prophecy of Hosea:

"The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, without a prince, and without a sacrifice . . . afterward shall they return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days"

(Hosea 3:4-5).*

Such a description as this cannot apply to the British which have had a long succession of kings and a political entity, but it can and does apply to the people of Israel (the Jews), which have been scattered among all nations, but are now returning to their land in fulfilment of the prophecy. God has a wonderful future for the Jewish people, after they have been humbled by reverses.

Fall Of The Southern Kingdom.

The southern kingdom did not heed the warning manifest in the punishment poured out upon the northern kingdom. Jeremiah sadly noted:

"For all this Judah hath not turned unto Me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord" (Jer. 3:10).

It was a time of spiritual chicanery and hypocrisy. Though the Temple services apparently flourished, the heart of the nation had turned completely away from God. During the period of the last king to sit on David's throne (Zedekiah) conditions sharply deteriorated, and the counsel of God's prophets and faithful priests were completely disregarded. The time came when God would bear it no more. A message was sent unto guilty Zedekiah as the responsible figure-head of the nation:

"Thou profane, wicked prince of Israel whose day is come when iniquity shall have an end. Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; this shall not be the same . . . I will overturn it (the throne of David) and it shall be no more UNTIL HE COME WHOSE RIGHT IT IS: AND I WILL GIVE IT HIM" (Ezekiel 21:26-27).

This was a direct reference to the King promised David, the One who would establish his throne and kingdom for ever (2 Sam. 7:13). The declaration, therefore, stated that the throne of David would be completely overthrown, and never restored, until the Messiah comes to build it up once more.

This was the hope of the early communities of believers. Therefore, James quoted the words of the prophets applying them to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ at his second coming:

"After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up" (Acts 15:16).

Because of God's purpose with Israel, the nation has never been destroyed, nor ever will be, though David's throne has been temporarily "in ruins."

Judah was overthrown by Babylon in B.C. 606. Under Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon had recently developed into a world power, and Judah was swallowed up with other nations in his

*In this reference, "David the King" relates to Christ. David means "the beloved" and is frequently used in the prophets for Christ, of whom King David was a type. They shall serve "the Beloved their King" when they submit to Christ. The title is used in Matthew 3:17 which in the Greek reads: "My son, the beloved . . ."

march of conquest.

Nebuchadnezzar's policy in regard to conquered peoples was similar to that of the Assyrians before him. He took them into captivity, and dispersed them among his dominions, in order to prevent them rising against him. The Jews were treated in that way, and among those taken into captivity at that time was Daniel the prophet (see Dan. 1).

His prophecy makes exciting reading, particularly upon the background of his experiences, and in view of the fact that God's Kingdom on earth had then been broken up. Consider such declarations as the following:

"The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people (i.e. its ruler shall be immortal), but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Ch. 2:44).

"The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN (notice — not in 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).

Daniel gave an outline history of events from his day until the setting up again of the Kingdom of God (Dan. 2:28-44). He predicted the crucifixion of Christ (Dan. 9:26), and his ultimate glory (Dan. 8:25; 7:27), and showed that the faithful would be raised from the dead to inherit everlasting life (Dan.

12:2), and an inheritance upon earth forever (Dan. 12:13; Dan. 7:27).

His prophecies have had remarkable fulfilment to the present time, so that every confidence can be placed in the vindication of everything predicted.

Restoration Of Judah.

Jeremiah predicted that the Babylonian captivity would last for seventy years, after which the people would return (Jer. 25:12; 29:10-12). In fulfilment of this prediction, Babylon was overthrown by Persia about seventy years after Nebuchadnezzar, and in B.C. 536, a decree was issued by Cyrus the Persian, permitting Jews to return to their land (Ezra 1).

A small regathering of Jews was organised under Zerubbabel and Joshua, and ultimately a Jewish State came again into existence as recorded in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Contemporary prophets, however, revealed that this was not the promised restoration, for that still awaits the future (see Haggai 2:7-9; Zechariah 1:14-17; 2:4-5; 6:12-13; 8:3-8, 20-23; 12:7-14; 14:9).

The Shadow Of Rome.

Some 450 years after Cyrus, a new menace to Israel's independence arose in the West. The Roman legions were on the march, extending the boundaries of the empire in all directions. The shadow of Roman rule stretched menacingly towards the east, and soon the tramp

of its legions was heard.

Daniel had predicted that the nation of Judah would be swallowed up by Rome, and so it proved to be. Under the Herods, Judah lost its independence. It became but a province of the Roman Empire, with a resident governor to see that the orders of the Em-

peror were carried out.

Thus, at the birth of Christ, Herod the Idumean (Edomite) reigned in Jerusalem under the authority of the Roman power. Judah had lost its independence and was under the heel of the oppressor, or, as called in the prophecy of Daniel, "the desolator" (Dan. 9:27 marg.)

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 14

1. *Who was the first successor of David that "sat on the throne of the Lord as king"?*
2. *Did the kingdom of God exist in the past, and where?*
3. *In which way were the 12 tribes of Israel broken up after Solomon's reign?*
4. *Why did God permit the people of Israel to be taken into captivity by other nations?*
5. *Until what time is David's throne to be overthrown, according to God's decree?*
6. *Which powerful nation dominated Palestine politically prior to and in the days of Christ?*
7. *Where in the Bible do we read that God will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down?*

A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY

INCIDENT	WHERE RECORDED
The Call of Abraham .	Gen. 12:1-4
Promises to Abraham.	Gen. 12:1-4, 13:14-17, 22:15-19
Promises confirmed in Isaac .	Gen. 26:3-4
Promises confirmed in Jacob .	Gen. 28:13-15
Jacob and his children in Egypt.	Gen. Chp. 46
Israel slaves in Egypt.	Exodus Chp. 1
Moses — his preparation and call.	Exodus Chps. 2-4
Contest between Moses and Pharaoh.	Exodus Chps. 5-12
Israel flees from Egypt.	Exodus 12:41, 13:18
Israel constituted the Kingdom of God .	Exodus 19:5-6
Wandering in the Wilderness .	Numbers Chps. 10-26
Joshua chosen as successor to Moses.	Nb. 27:18-23, Josh. 1:1-9
Death and Burial of Moses .	Deuteronomy 34:5-7
Joshua leads Israel against Canaan.	Joshua Chps. 1-4
Subjugation of Canaan.	Joshua Chps. 6-12
Death of Joshua.	Joshua 24:29
Israel under Judges .	Book of Judges
Birth of Samuel .	1 Sam. 1:20
Samuel as Prophet and Judge.	1 Sam. 7:15-17
Israel demands a visible King.	1 Sam. Chp. 8
Saul elected King — the people's choice.	1 Sam. Chps. 9-10
Saul's failure.	1 Sam. Chp. 13
David anointed King.	1 Sam. 16:13
Death of Saul.	1 Sam. Chp. 31
David, King over Judah.	2 Sam 2:4
David, King over united Kingdom.	2 Sam. 5:3
God's Covenant with David.	2 Sam. 7:5-16
Death of David.	1 Kings 2:10-11
Revolt of Ten Tribes under Jeroboam .	1 Kgs. 12:16-20
Judah and Israel as independent Kingdoms.	1 Kgs. Chp. 13, 2 Chron. Chp. 10
THE PROPHETS begin to record their prophecies!	
Deportation of Ten Tribes (Israel) to Assyria by Shalmanezzer approx. B.C. 700.	2 Kgs. 17:5-6
Judah continues under Hezekiah Manasseh , Josiah etc.	2 Kgs. Chps. 18-24
THE PROPHETS continue their warnings!	
Nebuchadnezzar overthrows Judah, B.C. 606	2 Kgs. Chp. 25
Cyrus conquers Babylon and decrees, that Jews can return home. B.C. 536.	2 Chron. 36:22
Ezra and Nehemiah sponsor further Jewish return.	Ezra 7:7, Neh. 2:1
Victories of Maccabees consolidate Jewish State, B.C., 180.	The four Gospels
Rome extends her power eastward and eventually controls Palestine, B.C. 65.	
The Apostles establish the early ecclesias.	The Acts of Apostles
Jewish Revolt against Rome and Destruction of Jerusalem, A.D., 70.	Matthew 24:2-28

(15) The Ministry of the Lord and the Call to the Gentiles

Conditions In Palestine At Christ's Birth.

The Lord Jesus was born when Rome dominated Palestine politically, a foreign governor exercised control over Jerusalem, and a cold formalism robbed the worship of God of its power.

It was also a time when many Jews were looking for the coming of the promised Messiah (Mark 7:1; Luke 2:25-26, 36-38; John 1:45-47.) But they were looking for a powerful leader, and mighty warrior, who would overthrow their enemies, and bring to reality the visions of glory concerning which they read in their prophets.

Actually, the Old Testament prophets "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. 1:11), but the Jews ignored the first, and concentrated on the second, so that when the Lord did appear as predicted, they rejected him.

They were not incorrect in looking for glory, but only in the time-setting at which it would be brought about.

The prophets had clearly predicted that Christ would come as the Lamb of God to be offered for the sins of men in fulfillment of the Edenic covenant (Isaiah 53). They had prophesied that he would die as a sacrifice (Daniel 9:26), that his executioners would "pierce his

hands and his feet" (Ps. 22:16), and that this would be at the instigation of the Jews themselves (Zech. 12:10; 13:6-7).

But they also predicted his resurrection and second advent (see Acts 2:29-36), and they proclaimed the glory and greatness that will accrue to Israel when its Messiah-king shall reign upon the throne of David (Jer. 3:17; Isaiah 2:2-4; Amos 9:11-12; Psalm 2).

The Lord Jesus was the personification of all these promises and prophecies. He was the Word which had been proclaimed from the beginning (John 1:1) "made flesh" (v. 14). He was the Seed of the Woman destined to bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15), the Son of Abraham who will bring blessings to all nations (Gen. 22); the Prophet like unto Moses (Deut. 18), whose words the people will ultimately be compelled to accept (Acts 3:22-26); the King promised David who was to be both Son of David and Son of God (2 Sam. 7).

In Jesus Christ there was seen the Law and the Prophets walking in the midst of the people, and proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

The Jews Are Disappointed In Their Messiah.

But Jesus, who proclaimed that the time was not then ripe for his manifestation as the pro-

mised mighty leader, and taught that the cross must come before the crown (see Matt. 16:24-27), was a complete disappointment to the Jewish people.

They desired a powerful military leader capable of breaking the shackles of Rome, not a carpenter preaching that "the meek shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5); they looked for one who would destroy their enemies, not one who taught the doctrine of non-resistance to evil (Matt. 5:11-12, 25, 39); they were impatient for immediate power and glory, and were not prepared to set about conquering their own inclination whilst they waited for the Kingdom so long in the future.

Even his disciples failed to understand both him and his mission. The shame of his crucifixion finally convinced them that they had made a mistake in following him. "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel," they declared (Luke 24: 21).

The Crucifixion of Jesus.

"Wicked hands" finally nailed Jesus to the stake, but it was nevertheless by "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). He died, as a sacrifice for sin. On the cross he dramatised what is necessary to render perfect obedience unto God.

His flesh was crucified, so that he died. But figuratively he had crucified his flesh day after day, as he put to death its desires and refused to submit to

them (Luke 22:42). He taught that sin came from within (Mark 7:21-23), and is therefore used as a metonym for the flesh, so that it is said, "He died unto sin once" (Rom. 6: 10). In that crucified body, the desires of the flesh were rendered inactive, teaching his followers what they must do figuratively: "For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections (passions-Revised Version) and lusts" (Gal. 5:24).

His blood was poured out, as a symbol of a dedicated life. The Law taught that "the life of the flesh was in the blood" (Lev. 17:11), and in sacrifice this had to be smeared upon the altar, as a token that the person's life would be dedicated to doing God's will.

In the ordinance of the Last Supper, Christ set forth the significance of his sacrifice (Luke 22:19-20). The unleavened bread represented his body that had never sinned; the wine represented his blood (or life) that had been given in complete dedication to God. Now both were to be offered in sacrifice for the redemption of the family of God.

The one (the bread) was the token of a negative offering, the denial of flesh; the other (the wine) was the token of a positive offering, the manifestation in life of the principles of God.

Those who come unto God through baptism into Jesus Christ, are baptised "into his death" (Rom. 6:3), in that it is

a public declaration that they will seek to follow Jesus in the sacrifice he offered.

They do not do so perfectly, but in Christ, there is "forgiveness of sins" and upon the mercy of God they can lean in confidence (1 John 1:9).

The charges laid against Jesus by which his accusers procured his death were two: a charge of blasphemy, and a charge of political insurrection.

The charge laid against him by the Jews was that of blasphemy, because he claimed to be the Son of God (Luke 22:70-71). For this they condemned him to death. But Pilate, the Roman governor, ordered him to be crucified, not on account of blasphemy but because he claimed to be the king of the Jews (John 18:37; 19:14-19). This was the accusation placed over his cross: Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.

The Lord Jesus Christ will yet return to the earth to vindicate the truth of his claim.

The Return Of Christ.

The Jews crucified Christ saying: "His blood be upon us and upon our children." In A.D. 70 those words had terrible fulfilment. The Jews had revolted against the Romans, and the legions marched against them, inflicting great cruelty upon the people. Jerusalem was besieged and conditions within the city reduced to a terrible state. Internecine strife and bloodshed had broken out within the walls, whilst the enemy without inflicted terrible losses

and awaited the inevitable end of the most terrible siege in history. Over a million Jews had been destroyed, and the remnant were scattered throughout the world. Jesus had predicted this. He had declared:

"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" (Luke 21:24).

It is of the greatest significance that in recent years, Jerusalem has been cleared of foreign domination, and after 2000 years of such, that Jews today occupy it. Though this is not the restoration spoken of in the prophets, it is a token pointing to that time.

Three days after Jesus was crucified, he was raised from the dead, and forty days later, he ascended to the Father in heaven (Acts 1:3; Mark 16:19). Those days were spent in instructing his Apostles in divine truth. Among other things, he explained that God would restore the Kingdom to Israel at the time appointed, whilst meanwhile the Gospel must be preached that a people might be taken out of the Gentiles for God (Acts 1:3, 6-8; 15:14).

Then came the time that he must leave them. As they conversed together on the Mount of Olives, he was taken up from them into heaven. As they stood watching him ascend, two angels stood by them, and declared:

"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).

The Establishment Of Ecclesias.

With a thrilling message of hope to take to the people, the Apostles commenced the work of preaching. They proclaimed the message of a risen Christ who would return again to the earth and set up thereon his universal reign. They called upon men and women to believe this message and to be baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus they fulfilled the mission he had delivered unto them to do:

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel; he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16).

Gradually communities of believers were established throughout the world. They were organised into Ecclesias, a word that has been rendered "church" in the Bible, but which signifies when properly translated from the Greek, "called out ones." These answer to the description of Acts 15:14: "God did visit the Gentiles, to take OUT OF THEM, a people for His name."

The Ecclesias were exhorted to live so as to have Christ as their example (1 Pet. 2:21-25), to live in anticipation of his return (2 Thess. 3:5), when they would reign with him (2 Tim. 2:12). They were taught that they were spiritual Israelites (Gal. 6:16), having embraced the national hope of Israel by baptism into Christ

(Eph. 2:11-13), and constituting the heirs of the promises made from the beginning (Gal. 3:26-28).

They were taught that outside of this "one faith" (Eph. 4:5) there was "no hope" (Eph. 2:12), and that natural Jews had forfeited their claim to the title of "Israelites indeed" by their rejection of Christ Jesus (Rom. 11:7).

The Coming Of An Apostasy.

But the Apostles also warned, that as Israel had drifted from God, so also could these Gentile believers. In fact, they predicted an apostasy from the one faith. Paul warned:

"I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).

"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 Timothy 4:3-4).

These warning words have had sad fulfillment. In course of time truth became submerged by a flood of error. The Ecclesias lost their distinctive character, and though the churches that arose claimed to be Christian, they were found denying the doctrines of Christ. Christendom today is astray from the Bible. Such ideas as the immortality of the soul, the trinity, heaven going as a reward, an immortal devil, and other

theories, are completely erroneous. A personal responsibility rests upon every individual to seek out the truth for himself if he would be saved (Rom. 1: 16; 1 Cor. 15:1-2).

The Truth Today.

But God has never left Himself without a witness in the earth. And down the centuries little communities have arisen holding aloft the torch of Truth, proclaiming their hope in the return of Christ and the setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth. And as again and again, these communities have drifted into error, so fresh ones have arisen to proclaim the old truths. We claim that today the torch of Truth is held by the Christadelphians — a word signifying "Brethren of Christ" (see Hebrews 2:10-11). This community, like all the other communities down the centuries, proclaims its belief in the return of Christ to set up his Kingdom on earth, with this

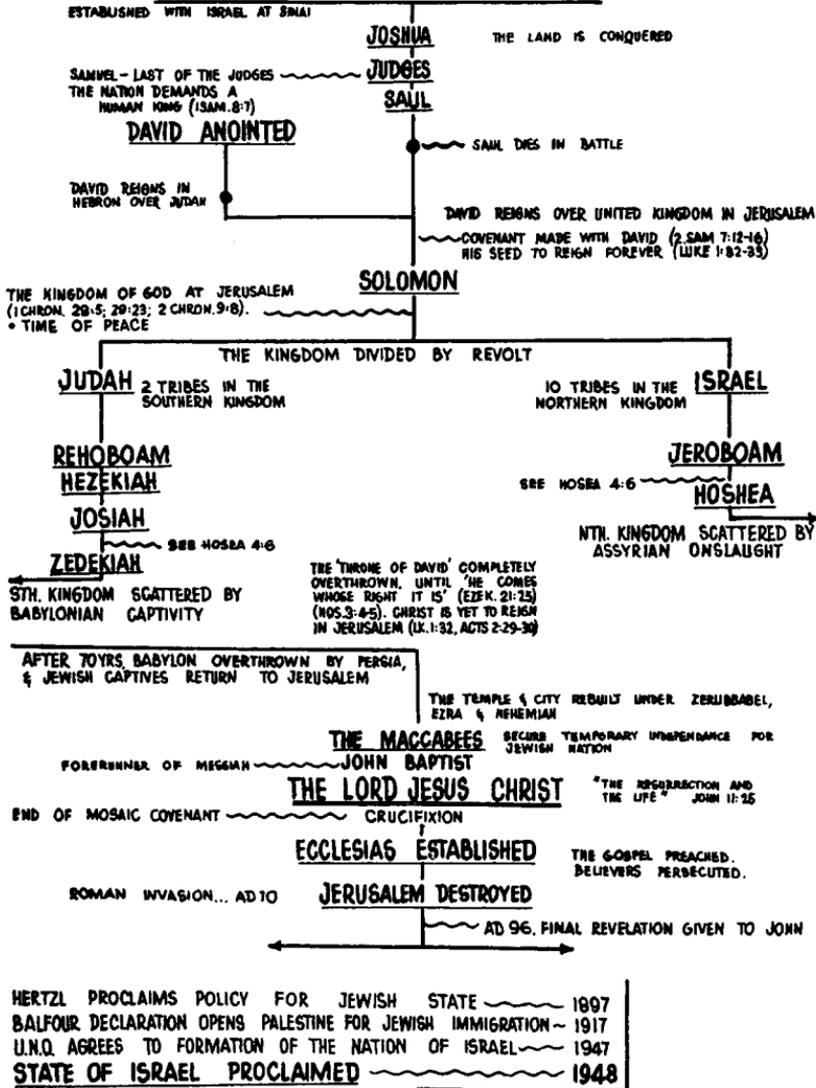
difference; the signs of the times show there is a greater urgency in the message today, for they reveal that the world is on the very eve of the most dramatic event in all history — the personal visible return of the Lord Jesus in glory.

The Apostle John was the last of the Apostles to die. Before his death the Lord appeared to him and gave him the book of Revelation — the last book in the Bible. In its closing chapter we hear for the last time, until it will be heard again in the future, the Voice of Christ: "Behold, I come quickly (or suddenly, as the word in the original implies): and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." And to these words, the Apostle added his own, which all true followers of the Lord will endorse: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (Rev. 22:12-20, 21).

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 15

1. *What did the Jews expect of their Messiah at his coming?*
2. *Why did they reject him?*
3. *Why was it necessary for Christ to die?*
4. *Where do we read that this same Jesus shall come again in like manner as the disciples saw him ascend?*
5. *Where is it recorded that the Truth would be perverted?*

GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH



1967 ♦ JERUSALEM FREED! (LUKE 21:24)

CHRIST RETURNS - TO ESTABLISH GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH

Outline of Bible History (continued from P. 28).

Section 4

MISUNDERSTOOD DOCTRINES

In every age, God's truth has been assailed by error. It was so in the days of the Apostles, it is so today. In Apostolic times some taught that justification was by the works of the Law (Acts 15:5), others claimed that the resurrection was past (2 Tim. 2:17-18), others again, that Jesus Christ had not come in the flesh (1 John 4:3), and so forth. The Apostles vigorously challenged the errors, and warned that their false doctrine was destructive of faith. Paul pronounced a curse upon those teaching these errors (Gal. 1:8), and urged upon believers the need to take heed to their conduct, "and to their doctrine," for by so doing they would save themselves, and those who heard them (1 Timothy 4:16). The Lord Jesus taught that acceptable worship is only that offered "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23). Therefore, there is a need to seek out truth, and to carefully sift out error. Unfortunately, many doctrines taught by Christendom today are erroneous. Some of these, like the doctrine of the mortality of man, we have already dealt with in the course of our studies. Others, we propose to consider in this section, though we will not be able to treat with all. The reader owes it to himself and to God to carefully discriminate between truth and error, even in relation to teaching which he has been taught to revere. God's word must be magnified above all else (Ps. 138:2). "Let God be true" even if every man be "made a liar" (Romans 3:4).

(16) God is One not Three

The Trinity Not Taught In The Bible.

The importance of this subject was stressed by the Lord Jesus when he prayed: "This is life eternal to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3). He thus stated that a true knowledge of God is essential to salvation (see also Hebrews 11:6).

We claim that Christendom is astray on this matter. Most systems of religion propound belief in what is termed the Trinity. They accept the principle of a "one God," but a God who is, at the same time, a "triune Being" made up of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But, though this doctrine is commonly taught, the word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible. Not until the 4th century after Christ, at a time of great apostasy from the Apostolic faith, was the doctrine of the Trinity introduced, and superimposed upon the original faith. This is acknowledged by many theologians. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* declares:

"The propositions constitutive of the dogma of the Trinity were not drawn directly from the New Testament, and could not be expressed in New Testament terms. They were the products of reason speculating on a revelation to faith . . . They were only formed through centuries of effort, only elaborated by the aid of the conceptions and formulated in the terms of Greek and Roman metaphysics" (i.e., borrowed from pagan mythology — Editor).

In contradistinction to this, however, the declaration of God through Moses was: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord," (Deut. 6:4). To that belief the Jews have ever kept. The monotheism of the Hebrews was a distinguishing feature in a polytheistic world.

This same teaching was proclaimed by the prophets (Isa. 45:5; 46:9), the Lord Jesus Christ (John 17: 3; Mark 12: 29), and the Apostles (Acts 7: 32). The early ecclesias were founded upon the doctrine of the unity of God and Jesus as the Son of God, not God the Son. Thus:

"To us there is but ONE GOD, the Father, of whom are all things . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ . . . howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge" (1 Cor. 8: 6-7).

"There is ONE GOD, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

"One Lord (Jesus Christ) . . . and ONE GOD and Father of all" (Eph. 4:5-6).

"Jesus of Nazareth, A MAN approved of God among you by miracles and wonders which GOD DID BY HIM" (Acts 2:22).

"GOD IS ONE" (Gal. 3: 20).

"Him (Jesus) hath God EXALTED with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour (Acts 5:31).

All these references exhibit God as the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ as His only begotten Son. They are opposed to the dogma of the Trinity, and the theory of a supposed pre-existent Christ.

We do not go to the ex-

treme of the Unitarians, and teach that Jesus was no more than mere man however. There was a divinity in Jesus that we must not overlook.

He was the manifestation of God. In character, word and deed there was seen in him the impress and influence of the Father, so that he could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," and "I and the Father are one." Trinitarians feel that this language supports their theory, but they overlook the fact that what Jesus claimed for himself, he also prayed for his disciples: "*That they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us*" (John 17:21). Not God as a Trinity, but God in multiplicity, is the doctrine of the Bible. When the fullness of His purpose is revealed in the earth, He will be found manifested in a multitude of redeemed ones, of whom the Lord Jesus is chief (see Hebrews 2:10-11).

That Jesus is not the equal of his Father is shown by his prayers and teaching. Jesus prayed, "Not my will but Thine be done" (Mat. 26:39). He taught: "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me" (John 7:16). If Jesus were God would he pray or teach like that? If he were God he would claim the will and doctrine of the Father as his own. On the contrary, he declared: "I can of mine own self do nothing" (John 5:30) and "My Father

is greater than I" (John 14:28).

Jesus the Man.

The Bible reveals Jesus to us not as God the Son, the second person of a Trinity, but as "the MAN Christ Jesus" (Acts 2:22; 1 Tim. 2:5; Rom. 5:15), as the "prophet like unto Moses" (Deut. 18:15; Acts. 3:22), who was made of a woman (Gal. 4:4), "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," "in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15), who "learned obedience by the things that he suffered" (Heb. 5:8), who "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared" (Heb. 5:7). These are not terms relating to God!

The Bible reveals Jesus as a man limited in knowledge (Mark. 13:32), even after his glorification (Acts 1:7), even when in heaven (Rev. 1:1). It shows us a man who was at times found weary (John 4:6), weeping (John 1:35), praying for strength. We see one possessing a nature common to all mankind (Heb. 2:14), a nature subject to death (Rom. 5:12), and in need of redemption (Heb. 9:12; 13:20). We see him "striving against sin" (Heb. 12:4), triumphing over the flesh. We learn that "God was in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:19), "strengthening him" (Luke 22:43; Ps. 80:17; Isa. 11:1-3), "reconciling the

world unto Himself." From this we understand that he was the expression of the Father's love to those who trust Him, so that he became for them the Author of eternal salvation.

The doctrine of the Trinity declares that the Son was co-equal with the Father, but surely this is contradicted by the lonely cry that came from his lips during the agony of Calvary: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34).

The doctrine is shown to be completely wrong by the teaching of Paul who declared that at the epoch of Christ's greatest triumph in the future, when every enemy shall have been subdued before him, "then shall the Son himself be subject unto Him (God) that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

How could this possibly be true if Jesus is co-equal with God. The doctrine of the Trinity is false; God is one, not three; and Jesus Christ is His only begotten son.

Concerning The Title: God.

But some may draw attention to the fact that the title of God is sometimes applied to Jesus Christ. For example, when Thomas saw the risen Christ, he exclaimed: "My Lord and my God!"

Does the use of such titles in relation to Jesus prove that he is the second person of a Trinity.

We answer, No, on the

grounds that if it did, it would present a contradiction to many passages which show that he is not co-equal with the Father. In addition the same titles are used for angels and men who stood in a special relationship to the Creator.

This may sound confusing at first sight, but it is not really so. Consider. An agent goes forth in the name of the one who employs him; the representative of a firm merges his individuality in the name of the company he represents. On the same basis, angels and men used God's name when they went forth as His accredited agents.

The Lord himself reminded the Jews of this when they accused him of using the name of God blasphemously. He replied:

"Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, Ye are gods?' If He (God) called them 'gods' unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken (i.e. — you cannot refute this fact), why say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, 'Thou blasphemest,' because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:34-35).

The Lord was quoting from Psalm 82, where the divinely appointed priests and elders of Israel are given the title of "Gods" because they acted and spake in the name of God. The fact that they used the title and applied it to themselves, did not make them part of the God-head, anymore than it did Jesus when it was applied to him. That is the point of his reasoning with the Jews. He made it perfectly clear that he was

not claiming equality with the Father.

Those "to whom the word of God came," such as the priests in Israel, derived their authority from God, judged on His behalf, and were His accredited representatives among the people. They were "Gods" by deputy (2 Chron. 19:6). To stand before the priests was to stand "before the Lord" (Deut. 19:17), so that Paul taught: "Though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, to us there is but one God, the Father . . . and one Lord, Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 8:6). The "gods" in heaven and on earth besides the Father are His angels and rulers, who, in consequence assumed the title. In Exodus 7:1; 4:16, Moses is called "God," and in Joshua 22:22, the Father is described as a "God of gods and Lord of lords."

Any humble believer can attain unto that high and lofty title in a more complete sense than did the mortal rulers of Israel in ages past who though called Gods, nevertheless "died like men" (Ps. 82:6-7). Believers are described as "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17), rejoicing in hope "of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2). Peter taught that they can become "partakers of divine nature," (2 Pet. 1:4), and Christ promised that he would "write" upon those who overcome "the name of my God" (Rev. 3:12). If mortal man can attain unto the

glory, nature and name of God, surely the Lord Jesus can claim the privilege of the title "God" without teaching that he is part of the Trinity.

The angels also spake and acted in the name of God, without claiming co-equality with Him. There was one placed over the affairs of Israel, concerning whom, God told Moses:

"Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in him" (Exod. 23:20-21).

That angel spake and acted as God, but it would be folly to claim that he was part of the Trinity. In the Age to come, the faithful will be "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36), and will go forth in the name of God.

The Holy Spirit.

This is frequently translated *Holy Ghost* in the Bible, but should always be rendered Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the energy or power of God by which all creation came into being and is sustained. Whilst God dwells personally and corporeally in the heavens, His spirit is diffused throughout the universe (Ps. 139:7-12), and is the substratum of all creation (Acts 17:25).

When God's Holy Spirit was poured out upon men so that they could use it, it enabled them to perform miracles, or to speak with Divine wisdom. Micah declared: "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord" (Ch. 3:8), and so he proclaim-

ed his prophecies of the future. Of Peter it is written that he was "filled with the Holy Ghost" (Spirit) and thus spake boldly unto the people (Acts 4: 8). It is surely obvious that he was not filled with the third person of a Trinity! Cornelius was told that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost" (Spirit — Acts 10:38). Surely the first Person of the Trinity did not anoint the second Person with the third Person !!

No! The Holy Spirit relates to God's power, which was then (but not now) poured out upon men, enabling them to speak foreign languages without having learned them, or to perform miracles.

The prophets were moved by the Spirit to record their teaching (Nehemiah 9:30; 2 et. 1: 21), and by the same means God spake to men through His Son (Heb. 1:1). In consequence of this the revelation of God's truth can be described as the spirit-word (see John 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1 John 5:7). It is this spirit only that is available to men today, but that is also capable of performing miracles, for it can cause the hard hearts of men to become softened and pliable to the Divine will, and to reflect this in a changed way of life (see Gal. 5:22-25).

On one occasion, when Paul visited Ephesus, he came upon certain disciples, and enquired as to whether they had yet "received the Holy Spirit." The disciples replied that they had not,

and commented: "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" (i.e. Spirit). Obviously they had never heard of the modern doctrine of the Trinity. The incident is recorded in Acts 19: 2-3.

Did Jesus Pre-exist?

There are verses that seem to give support to the theory that Jesus existed in heaven before he was born. For example, on one occasion he declared: "I came down from heaven" (John 6:51). What did he mean by such a statement? The context shows that he meant that he had been born from above, for a few verses later, he is reported as saying: "It is the spirit that quickeneth . . ." (v. 63).

Jesus was born by the interposition of the Holy Spirit on the virgin Mary. She was told:

"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" (Luke 1:35).

In that sense Jesus came down from heaven, for God was his Father.

Though Jesus was in the mind and purpose of God from the very beginning, he had no corporeal existence prior to his birth of the virgin Mary, 1900 years ago. Previous to that event, God spake of the coming Lord in the future tense: "I will be his Father, and he shall be My Son" (2 Sam. 7:14).

"I will make him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Psalm 89:27); "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor," etc. (Isa. 9:6). If Jesus were already in existence when those words were uttered, God should have said: "He is my son, I am his Father," "He My firstborn," "His name is Wonderful" etc.

The future tense used in relation to the Son shows quite clearly that he was not in existence when the words were uttered, except in the mind and plan of God.

Jesus Christ was the Seed of the Woman promised in Eden; the Son promised Abraham; the Prophet promised Moses; the King promised David; the Messiah promised Israel; the Chief among the sons of God, and the Captain of their salvation promised believers (Heb. 2:10). Of him it is written:

"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the status of sonship" (Gal. 4:4-5).

This is clear, easily-understood language; but to teach that he

had some prior existence only confuses these words, and is contrary to Scripture. Moreover, where is there any power of example for mortal man in Jesus if he were a pre-existent angel, or the second person of a Trinity? God's purpose was to manifest His righteousness in a man of our nature, whose perfect character would ensure a resurrection to life eternal (Acts 2:24)) and by that means to point the way whereby we can conquer both sin and death. Paul declared:

"Forasmuch then as the children (i.e. sons of God — believers unto salvation) 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, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14).

If Jesus were an angel, or the second person of a Trinity, he would not be a partaker of flesh and blood, he could not have died (cp. Luke 20:36), he would not be a representative man, and therefore he would not qualify as a sacrifice for sin unto salvation.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 16

1. Please give Bible references in the Old—and New Testament which prove that God is ONE.
2. Is Jesus Christ the only person that can be "one" with the Father, as he declared to be according to John 10:30?
3. Where do we read that Christ learnt obedience by the things that he suffered?
4. Where does Jesus declare that those, unto whom the word of God came, were called "gods"?
5. Where in the Old Testament is Moses called "a god"?
6. Describe an incident where God placed His Name and Authority in an angel.

BIBLE TEACHING CONCERNING THE GODHEAD

***GOD AS CREATOR:** "Thou, even thou art Lord alone. Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein; the seas, and all that is therein. Thou preservest them all and the host of heaven (the angels) worshippeth thee" (Neh. 9:6). See also Isa. 40:13-27; Ps. 124:8; 146:6; 148:5; Acts 17:24.

***HIS CREATIVE POWER:** "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens" (Job 26:13; Jer. 10:12-13).

***INVISIBLE TO MORTAL MAN:** "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God be honor and glory for ever" (1 Tim. 1:17; 1 Tim. 6:15).

***HIS UNITY:** "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord." Notice it is not "We, even we are the Lord" (Isa. 43:10-11; Isa. 44:6-8; 45:5; 46:9-10; Deut. 6:4).

***HIS ABSOLUTE POWER AND GLORY:** "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the Kingdom O Lord, and thou art exalted as head over all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all" (1 Chron. 29:11-12; Ps. 145:3; Isa. 26:4; 40:26; Ps. 92:5; 104:24; 147:4-5; Isa. 28:29).

***ALL THINGS VISIBLE TO HIM:** "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to shew Himself strong unto them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chron. 16:9; Job 28:24; Ps. 33:13-14; 44:21; 32:19; Amos 9:2-3; Acts 17:27-28).

***HIS DWELLING PLACE:** "O thou that dwellest in the heavens" (Ps. 123:1; 1 Kings 8:30, 39, 43, 49; Matth. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 Tim. 6:15-16).

***EVERYWHERE PRESENT BY HIS SPIRIT:** "If I make my bed in hell (the grave) behold thou art there" (Ps. 139:7-11; Prov. 15:3; Jer. 23:24).

(17) *The Devil and Satan*

Not A Fallen Angel.

The current teaching that the Devil is a fallen angel, with mysterious powers over the minds of men and women, is quite foreign to the Bible teaching on this theme.

We learn from the Bible that Jesus Christ was manifested that "he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). Again, that Jesus partook of human nature that "through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. 2:14).

In these two statements, the devil is defined as:

- (1)—**That which Christ came to destroy;**
- (2)—**That which has the power of death.**

From other parts of the Word, we learn:

- (1)—**That Christ came to destroy sin.**

"He put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26). "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3). "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24). "He was manifested to take away our sins" (1 John 3:5).

- (2)—**That sin was the original cause of death.**

"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). "By one man (not the devil) sin entered the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5:12). "The sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. 15:56).

These two lines of reasoning converge to show that the terms "sin" and "devil" are used synonymously. In order to destroy the devil, Jesus came in that

nature where it is found, for we shall show that the act of sin comes from the flesh. He partook of flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy the devil. So declared Paul in Hebrews 2:14.

But if the devil were an angel, how would the death of Jesus destroy him? Yet Paul is specific that the devil was destroyed through death!

Human Nature Is The Devil.

If we can show that human nature is the devil, it follows that when Jesus died, seeing that he came "in the flesh" (1 John 4:2), the devil was put to death as far as he was concerned. Jesus possessed our nature, but he never succumbed to it, for he never sinned. He triumphed over it during his lifetime, by figuratively putting it to death, and when he died on the cross, its power was brought to an end.

After he had been raised from the dead, he was given "divine nature" or immortality, in which the devil, or the lusts of the flesh, find no place.

But the devil still lives in us so long as the lusts of the flesh hold sway, and so powerfully, unfortunately, that we give way to sin. What can be done? We can seek the strength of God to overcome (Phil. 4:13), and His mercy to forgive where we fail. And in Christ, if we confess our sins, such mercy will be freely extended (1 John 1:7).

We have shown that the devil and sin are synonymous terms, and we now propose to quote Scripture to show that the term "sin" is used for human nature, the source of all transgression. Consider the following passages:

"Sin dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:17).

"The Christ died unto sin once" (Rom. 6:10).

"Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin but alive unto God" (Rom. 6:11).

"God made him (Jesus) to be sin for us who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21).

In all these places "sin" is related to human nature, or the lusts of the flesh. Normally "sin" is transgression of law, but it is clearly seen that such a definition cannot apply to the references above.

Sin (transgression of law) springs from fleshly lusts or desires, styled in Romans 8:3 as "sinful flesh" (see Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21-23). Our nature is such that we do not need the prompting of a supernatural devil to cause us to sin, because it springs naturally from the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). The *thought* of sin is generated by the "desires of the flesh," before the *act* of sin is committed (Ps. 10:4; 94:11), so that Isaiah exhorted the unrighteous to "forsake his thoughts" (Isa. 55:7). James summed up the matter thus:

"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" (James 1:14-15).

This process is illustrated by the confession of Achan:

"I SAW two hundred shekels of silver, I COVETED them, and TOOK them... I SINNED" (Joshua 7:20-21).

Saw, coveted, took! That defines sin, without the need of a supernatural devil to tempt!

Paul likewise, in treating with the subject of sin (Romans Ch. 7) speaks of it as an element of human nature, which he found to be at enmity with the principles of God. There is no hint in his words of a supernatural devil being responsible for sin.

"The evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin (human nature, alias the devil) that dwelleth in me" (Vv. 19-20).

He confessed to a "law in his members" warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the "law of sin in his members" (Romans 7:23).

The "law of sin and death," the desires of the flesh that lead us to disobey God, is the Apostle's term for human nature, the devil of the Bible (Rom. 8:2).

Significance Of The Word: Devil.

The word "devil" has been used as a translation for two entirely different Greek words: *diamonion* and *diabolos*. The first word should be translated "demons." It was applied to those diseases (mainly mental disorders) which Jesus miraculously "cast out" of afflicted

persons. An example occurs in John 7:19-20. Jesus asked the Jews: "Why go ye about to kill me?" They answered: "Thou hast a devil (*diamonion*), who goeth about to kill thee?" The Jews' reply, "Thou hast a devil!" is equivalent to the modern expression: "You are mad!"

In speaking of "demons" in that way, the New Testament was merely using the vernacular of the times by which mental disorders were described. The Grecian theory was that demons were the cause of madness, epileptic disorders, and obstructions of the senses. To be "possessed of a demon" was the way in which these illnesses were then described; and to "cast out a demon" was to say that the person was cured.

The word *diabolos* is compounded of *dia*, a preposition signifying *across* or *over*, and *ballo*, meaning to *throw* or *cast*. It defines that which crosses, or falls over, and is therefore a fit word by which to designate inordinate desires of the flesh, which cause mortal man to cross over the line of righteousness established by God, and so to sin.

The word also signifies to "traduce," "slander," "libel," "falsely accuse." Thus Judas is described as a devil (*diabolos*) because he betrayed and slandered Jesus to the authorities (John 6:70). In 2 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 2:3 the word had been correctly rendered "false accusers" (Gr. *diabolos*), for it should never be translated

"devil."

A consideration of the places where the word is used, will reveal that it cannot apply to a fallen angel. In Revelation 2:10, the faithful are warned that "the devil shall cast some of you into prison." Did the fallen angel do that? Of course not! The reference is to the civil authorities of the times, who were "falsely accusing" the Christians. In this case, sin was politically manifested. How much better would this reference read if *diabolos* was therein translated as it is in Timothy and Titus: "False accusers shall cast some of you into prison."

Again, in Ephesians 6:11, Paul refers to the "wiles of the devil" (i.e. the false accusers). He was referring to the unscrupulous means that pagan authorities were using to obtain a conviction against Christians when they were hailed before the courts. These same "devils" were always on the watch, ready to condemn any inconsistency on the part of the Christians. The Apostle therefore warned certain ones against being lifted up with pride, and so "falling into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:6-7).

Would the devil taught by Christendom condemn anybody lifted up by pride? By no means! He would look favourably upon such as a most promising subject!

Another reference, frequently quoted to prove the existence of a supernatural devil is 1 Peter 5:8: "Your adversary, the

devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

But let us look at the statement a little more closely. The word "adversary" is *antidikos* in Greek, and signifies "an opponent at law!" So, once again, we are in the atmosphere of a court case! And who is opposed to us? Why, the devil! Again let us use the translation of 2 Timothy 3:3, and the "opponent at law" is a "false accuser," and against such Peter warned Christians to be on their guard.

But why describe him as a "roaring lion?" Because, as the use of a similar expression in 2 Timothy 4:17 shows, this was a figure of speech by which the fierce and unscrupulous antagonists of Christianity were described. They were men of the flesh, and they personified sin in political manifestation.

The flesh, with its lusts, is a false accuser and a calumniator, because if its desires are gratified, mankind will never attain unto the Kingdom. It slanders God, because it reasons that He does not really want men to do the things He has asked them to do. It is a deceiver, because it claims that true happiness is found only in gratifying its desires. The whole world lieth in wickedness (1 John 5:19), and there are but few who are prepared to "resist the devil," and so gain a victory over flesh. Most are "children of the devil," in that they obey its lusts without consideration of God's way, thus revealing that

they are "of their father the devil" or sins flesh.

There is not a reference to the words "devil" or "satan" in the Bible that cannot be interpreted in accordance with the principles outlined above.

The Word "Satan."

The Hebrew word "satan," means "adversary." In contrast to the word *diabolos* which denotes an evil adversary, *satan* can refer to either a good or an evil adversary!

In Numbers 22:22 it is used in the former way. The verse reads: "The angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary (Heb. *satan*) against him." Here the word *satan* had been correctly translated "adversary," though the same Hebrew word in many other places has been transliterated "satan."

In v. 32, the word *satan* had been rendered "withstand." The account has to do with the withstanding of the wicked prophet Balaam by an angel of God, so that in this, we have an example of a good *satan* opposing a wicked man.

Another example of a good *satan*, or adversary, is contained in 1 Chronicles 21:1. It records: "Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel." The parallel account in 2 Samuel 24:1 reveals that the "satan" (adversary) in question was God, Who was opposed to Israel at the time because of the wickedness of the people. The record in Samuel reads: "The anger of the Lord was

kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah."

A careful consideration of the use of this word throughout Scripture reveals that it should not be interpreted to signify a fallen angel.

For example, in 1 Timothy 1:20, Paul wrote that he had delivered certain heretics "unto Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme."

Would the Satan of orthodoxy teach them "not to blaspheme?" Not if the current doctrine is true. On the contrary, he would teach them to blaspheme. The satan in this instance was the pagan world to which Paul had excommunicated the heretics, in order that they might be disciplined, and eventually brought back to an acknowledgement of the truth (see Titus 3:10; 2 Thess. 3:6, 15).

In 1 Timothy 5:15, Paul wrote of certain women being "turned aside unto Satan." They had not sought out the invisible tempter of orthodoxy, but had been drawn aside by the allurements of the world, the great adversary of the Truth (1 John 2:15-16).

The Bible refers to a "synagogue of satan" (Rev. 2:9), or a religious congregation in opposition to the true one. It describes Satan's seat as being in the Asian city of Pergamos (Rev. 2:13), because that city became the temporary headquarters of those heretics which

troubled the early Ecclesias (cp. v. 14).

It refers to satan as being "bound" during Christ's millennial reign (Rev. 20:2), which is a reference to flesh being restrained under the disciplinary laws of Christ. It describes Peter as satan, when he set himself in opposition to Christ (Matt. 16:23).

The word Satan, therefore, signifies "adversary." Whilst it can relate to a good adversary opposing wickedness, most often it is an evil adversary that is in view. The greatest and most evil adversary to righteousness that mankind possesses are the lusts of the flesh. The desires are so powerful, that to gratify them men turn their backs upon God. Jesus taught that "from within, out of the heart of man" proceed all forms of sin (Mark 7:21-23), and that is the satan we need to dread most.

Satan In Job And Revelation.

Satan figures largely in the book of Job, and many base their concept of a fallen-angel-devil upon the expressions of this book.

It is alleged, for example, that the scene of Ch. 1:6-7 which depicts Satan appearing before the Lord in company with the sons of God, relates to God's dwelling place in heaven, and at first sight it seems to read that way.

But obviously, if God is so holy that He "cannot look upon sin," He would not tolerate such a creature in close prox-

imity to Him.

And a true interpretation of the verses does not require such an inconsistent picture.

We learn from Deuteronomy 19:17 that when a person appeared before a priest (God's representative on earth) he appeared before the Lord, because God was with the priest in the judgment (2 Chron. 19:6).

Why not apply the same principle of interpretation to Job Ch. 1:6 — a principle that is consistent with other parts of Scripture? When that is done, the whole transaction is understood as taking place on earth, before God's priest.

But what of the term: "Sons of God"? Does not that indicate the angels of heaven?

By no means. The same phrase is used of mortal believers (see Deut. 14:1; Hos. 1:10; Isa. 43:6-7). John, writing to mortal believers, declared: "Now are we the sons of God" (1 John 3:2). Thus the term relates to mortals, not angelic beings.

Satan (many Bibles supply the alternative — "adversary" in the margin) was also a son of God, or a believer, but one who was motivated by jealousy and envy against Job, and who was therefore his adversary. He sought to blacken Job's reputation in the sight of God by imputing unworthy motives to his blameless life, and by accusing him of hypocrisy.

It is by no means uncommon to have such people among the believers, and claiming to be

sons of God in the sense of 1 John 3:1. Even among the disciples of the Lord, there was Satan in the person of Judas (John 6:70) as well as Peter (Matt. 16:23, Mark 8:33). Every Christian community has its Satan, its Judas in its midst, so that Job's experience was by no means unique.

It is sometimes claimed, however, that the Satan of Job exercised the powers of life and death over the patriarch. The book does not say so. It claims that all the trials that Job experienced came from God (Job 2:3; 19:21; 42:11). He was tested that his enemies might be confounded, and that a principle of faith in adversity might be exhibited as an example for all times (James 5:11).

Another reference frequently advanced to prove the existence of Satan in heaven as a fallen angel is Revelation 12:7: "There was war in heaven . . ." This seems conclusive, but is far from being so when the context is examined. For example, vv.1-2 depicts a woman giving birth to a son "in heaven." It is the same "heaven," but is it God's dwelling place?

Such an idea is unthinkable. There is neither marriage nor giving in marriage there (Luke 20:36). It is obvious that we are in the presence of symbolic language (see Rev. 1:1), and the "heaven" in question relates to the political "heavens" which are set up on earth!

In fact, all this chapter is couched in symbolic language,

and should be interpreted in that light. It is completely wrong to base a Bible doctrine on the literal interpretation of such expressions.

The same chapter speaks of a "great red dragon" (also in heaven) "having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads" which catches a third of the stars in his tail and casts them into the earth.

Obviously this is not literal language; nor is it the language

of fantasy. It is the language of symbol, the clues for the understanding of which, are carefully given (see Rev. 17:9-10). And these reveal that the symbols have relation to political events on earth, not in heaven, in which God's purpose is worked out.

The doctrinal evidence of the Bible shows, without doubt, that the devil revealed therein relates to sin in its various forms which Christ came to destroy.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 17

1. *What, according to the Bible, was the original cause of death?*
2. *Explain in scriptural terms the process of sinning and its results.*
3. *What does the word "devil", used in our English Bible version, really mean, when properly translated from the Greek?*
4. *How should the Hebrew word "satan" be translated into English?*
5. *Did Job think that the evil brought upon him was caused by a super-natural Satan?*
6. *Where, in the Book of Job, do we have proof that the trials were divinely controlled?*

(18) The Purpose of Christ's Second Coming

Misconceptions of His Coming.

It is unfortunately true, that though frequent reference is made to the second coming of Christ in the Bible, it is misunderstood even by some who believe and teach it.

On the other hand there is much scepticism shown in regard to it, fulfilling the prophecy of 2 Peter 3:3-4:

"Know this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming . . ."

Obviously, if the souls of the faithful ascend to heaven at death, there is little need for Christ to return to the earth, but we have seen, in earlier studies, that the current teaching of the immortality of the soul, and heaven going at death is completely false.

Some who proclaim the second coming of Christ teach that he will never be seen because he possesses an invisible body. Others again affirm that he will not actually return to the earth, but will come half-way, and will withdraw from the earth those accounted worthy to rule, and that ultimately the heaven and earth will be destroyed!

They do not reveal why God should thus destroy his own creation, and particularly the heavens, nor where everybody will dwell whilst both heavens and earth are destroyed. Again, as we have suggested earlier, this doctrine is based upon a wrong

interpretation of figurative expressions of Scripture.

We propose, in this study, to set out a summary of Bible teaching relating to Christ's return, and his work on earth.

1. Christ will return personally and visibly to the earth.

"We shall see him" (1 John 3:2).

"Every eye shall see him" (Rev. 1:7). "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). "He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20-21).

The literal and visible return of the Lord to earth is distinctly implied by the prophecy of Zechariah 12:10. Referring to the ultimate conversion of the Jews, the prophet declared: "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10), and they shall "say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands?" (Zech. 13:6).

The wounds referred to are those that convinced Thomas that his Lord had risen from the dead (John 20:24-29), and they will also convince the Jewish people at his return.

The disciples "handled" the risen Christ (1 John 1:1), they saw a body of flesh and bones (Luke 24:39 — though not of blood for it was energised by God's spirit — 1 Cor. 15:45, 50), they saw him ascend bodily into heaven (Acts 1:9), and they were told he would return in like manner (v. 11).

2. Christ will return to raise the responsible dead and reward the worthy with eternal life.

The responsible are those who know the will of God, whether they obey it or not, and such will be raised to judgment (John 12:48). Both just and unjust will be brought before the Judgment seat of Christ (Acts 24:15), The faithful will receive life eternal (Daniel 12: 2-3; 1 Cor. 15:49-53; Rom. 2: 7,16; Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5: 10-11), whilst the unworthy will be consigned to the "second death" (Rev. 2:11). Thus the alternative is to receive eternal life, or to perish for ever (John 3:15).

From 1 Peter 4:17 we conclude that the judgment of the household of faith will precede that which Christ will then proceed to pour out upon the world of the ungodly (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

3. He will manifest his power at Armageddon.

Having judged the household of faith, Christ will move against the world at large in company with some of the glorified redeemed (Psalm 149:4-9; Zechariah 14:1-5). The nations will be gathered together against

Jerusalem for war (Zechariah 14:1-2), but they shall be scattered before the glory of Christ, and turning their weapons one upon another, will wreak mutual destruction (Ezekiel 38:21-23).

4. Christ will set up his power in Jerusalem.

Christ will enter Jerusalem as King, to make it the metropolis of his earthly rule (Joel 3: 16; Isaiah 24:23; Jer. 3:17; Matt. 5:35). He will bring the Jewish people in the land under his control (Zech. 12:7); and will then restore all those still remaining in the countries of their dispersion (Ezek. 39:25-29; ch. 37). They will accept him as king, and embracing his means of salvation, will be incorporated as the first dominion in the empire Christ will set up (Ezek. 37:21-23; 36:24-38; Jer. 31:31-34; Micah 4:6-7; 7: 18-20). Israel will then be reorganised into its twelve tribes once again (Ezekiel 45).

Paul taught:

"I would not that ye should be ignorant of this mystery . . . that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all (i.e. all the tribes) of Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes" (Rom. 11:25-28).

Paul's statement that the Israel referred to are "enemies" of the gospel but "beloved for

the fathers' sakes" reveals that the practise of identifying the Israel to be restored as spiritual Israel, the followers of Christ, (as do such sects as the Jehovah's Witnesses) is completely fallacious.

5. Christ will extend his power from Jerusalem throughout the earth.

Having established his power in Jerusalem, Christ will issue a proclamation to all nations calling upon them to submit to his rule (Psalm 2:10-12; Isaiah 14:32; Rev. 14:7). Those nations that accept the summons will be incorporated in his growing empire (Isaiah 60:9); those nations that reject him will be compelled by conquest to submit (Isa. 60:12; Zech. 10: 3-6; 9:13).

Thus, gradually, in ever widening circles the kingdom of God will spread throughout the earth. Its symbol, in the prophecy of Daniel, is that of a stone that grows into a mountain, and fills the whole earth (Daniel 2). Interpreting this, the prophet declared:

"The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).

During this same period, Christ will supervise the building of a Temple in Jerusalem, to act as a House of Prayer for all nations. This will become the rallying point that will unite all people under God and His Son (Zech. 6:12-13; Isaiah 56:

7; Mark 11:17; Zephaniah 3: 8-9). Periodical pilgrimage will be made to Jerusalem by peoples of all nations, for the purpose of Divine worship (Zechariah 8: 22-23; 14:16).

6. Christ's millennial reign will last for one thousand years.

Whilst there will be "no end" to the kingdom Christ will set up on earth (Luke 1:32-33), there will be changes of administration. The world will enjoy one thousand years of peace (Revelation 20:4), during which time, the righteous regime of Christ will bring material and spiritual blessings to all people.

Men will be united in worship and in peace (Isa. 2:2-4). Conditions in the earth will be drastically changed to provide for conditions in which mankind will be a mutual blessing instead of a mutual curse.

The rulers, during that period, will be immortal (Rev. 5:9-10; 2:26), though the ruled will be mortal (Isa. 65:17-22). The latter, however, will be able to work out their salvation unto eternal life, which will be granted them at the end of the thousand years reign of Christ.

7. A Second resurrection at the end of the Millenium.

During the Millenium, sin (personified as satan) will be greatly restrained (Rev. 20:2-3), and the life span greatly extended (Isa. 65:20). Sin will be restrained, both by the open revelation of God to guide the people, as well as by the enforcing of divine law by rulers

who will have the ability to read the hearts of the people, and prevent disobedience before it occurs (see Isaiah 30:21). At the close of the millenium, however, this disciplinary action will be relaxed, enabling all to give expression to their personal desires, and demonstrate their continuing loyalty to God and to Christ, or otherwise.

Some will remain faithful, but human nature being what it is, others will oppose the rule of Christ (Rev. 20:9; Isa. 26:10). Judgment unto death will be poured out upon the latter (Rev. 20:9), leaving the faithful alone living. This will be followed by a general resurrection of all others who have died during the millenium, and they likewise will be judged (Rev. 20:12). Eternal life will be given the faithful, whilst the unfaithful will be consigned to the second death.

The completion of the judgment, therefore, will see death itself eliminated from the earth, which will, in consequence, reflect completely to the glory of its Creator (Num. 14:21).

At that time, a perfected world will be delivered unto God by Jesus Christ, that He

might be "all in all."

Thus the story of the Bible which commences with the statement: "In the beginning, God . . ." is completed with the declaration: "God shall be all in all . . ." The long era of sin and death will have been brought to a close with a glorified creation upon a globe that will reflect praise to its Creator.

Three epochs of resurrection are set forth by Paul which reveal the developing stages (1 Corinthians 15:19-28):

1. **Christ the first fruits — 1900 years ago;**
2. **They that are Christ's at his coming;**
3. **Then the End, when he shall deliver up the Kingdom to God.**

Paul summarises the future work of Christ in the following terms:

"He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him (i.e. unto God), that God may be all in all."

The above epitome should correct some false ideas that are current concerning the future work of Christ upon the earth.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 18

1. *Prove with New Testament references that Christ shall return visibly to the earth.*
2. *Which prophet foretold that the Jews shall "look upon him, whom they have pierced"?*
3. *Did Christ, after his resurrection have a body of "flesh and blood" or is it described as being "flesh and bone"?*
4. *What will be Christ's first mission on earth at his second advent?*
5. *Which three epochs of resurrection does Paul set forth in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 15.*
6. *What is the ultimate purpose of God with this earth and mankind upon it?*

CURRENT BELIEFS:

- ★ Man is conscious in death and spends eternity either in heaven or tormented in hell. (False—See Eccles. 3:16-21, 9:5, Ezek. 18:4, Ps. 6:5, 146:3-4).
- ★ The Devil is a powerful superhuman being bringing weak mortal man into captivity to sin. (False—See Heb. 2:14 with 1 Cor. 15:56).
- ★ Sincerity is a substitute for knowledge of God's purpose and obedience of his Will. (False—See Rom. 10:2, Eph. 4:18).

FALSE!

- ★ The Earth will be destroyed. (False—See Eccles. 1:4).
- ★ Jesus Christ will not reign on earth. (False—See Isa. 24:23, Jer. 3:17).
- ★ The Kingdom of God will not be established on earth. (False—See Dan. 2:44, Zech. 14:9, Psalm 72).
- ★ Belief and baptism are not essential to salvation. (False—See Mark 16:16, Gal. 3:26-29).

BIBLE TEACHING:

- ★ Jesus Christ will return visibly and personally to the earth. (True—See Acts 1:11, 3:20-21; Rev. 1:7).
- ★ He will raise from the dead and reward his followers with eternal life. (True—See Acts 23:6; 1 Cor. 15:21-23, 51-57; 2 Tim. 4:1-8).
- ★ He will set up His power on earth and reign over mankind from Jerusalem. (True—See Jer. 3:17, Isa. 2:2-4, Rev. 11:15, Luke 1:32-33).

TRUE!

- ★ He will bring the blessing of peace and goodwill to all mankind. (True—See Luke 2:14, 1 Cor. 15:25, Hag. 2:7-9, Ps. 72:17).
- ★ He invites you to a participation in His Kingdom. (True—See Matt. 19:27-30, Rev. 5:9-10, Heb. 9:28; Acts 2:38-40).
- ★ A knowledge of these truths is essential to salvation. (True—See Rom. 1:16, John 17:3, John 4:23, 1 Cor. 15:2; Contrast Eph. 4:18, 2 Tim. 2:15-18).

Section 5

NOTES ON PROPHECY

Bible prophecy is a subject of tremendous interest and vital significance. More space in the Scriptures is given over to it than to any other theme. The Gospel, itself, is prophetic, for it speaks of a time when the blessings of Christ's administration will be manifested in all the earth. But prophecy also includes the revelation of God's purpose in the rise and fall of nations, as well as the latter-day signs that indicate the near return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The re-establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth will be preceded by a latter-day national crisis which will bring all nations to Jerusalem to battle. Present day developments in Israel, Russia, and all nations can be aligned with Bible prophecy, and indicate that the world lives in the very shadow of Christ's second coming. We have only space to touch briefly upon a few items of Bible prophecy, but recommend its close study to the Reader, as one that is most rewarding. It will enable him to see the future more clearly, and so develop a conviction of reality in regard to the purpose of God that can act as an incentive in the determination to gain the reward laid up for those who "love the appearing" of the Lord Jesus (2 Tim. 4:8). The subject of prophecy is particularly commended by God, Who introduces Himself as its Author: "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isa. 46: 9-10).

(19) The Modern Revival of Israel

Are The Jewish People Referred to?

The preservation of the Jewish people in spite of centuries of terrible persecution is a miracle (Jer. 30:11), at the same time the revival of the nation of Israel in modern times is in fulfilment of Bible prophecy, and constitutes a sign of Christ's second coming.

Throughout the Bible, God has proclaimed His purpose to restore them to their land. In the covenant made with David, He declared:

"I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more as beforetime" (2 Sam.7:10).

This predicts the return of the people of Israel to their land, the restoration of their State, and the establishment of a condition of things that will relieve them of all anxiety or affliction.

But many religious teachers refuse to accept that this promise relates to Israel after the flesh, and claim that it refers to what is termed spiritual Israel. It is necessary, therefore, to establish the fact that such promises and prophecies do relate to the Jewish people.

We advance three proofs, and commence first with the words of David, to whom the promise was made.

He believed that it related to that nation that God saved from

Egypt: that is, Israel after the flesh.

The proof?

The very words that he uttered on being given the promise. He declared:

"What one nation in the earth is like Thy people, even like Israel, which Thou redeemedst from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For Thou hast confirmed to Thyself Thy people Israel to be a people unto Thee for ever" (Vv. 23-24).

There is no doubt that the nation referred to by David is that redeemed from Egypt: Israel after the flesh.

Our second proof is taken from the words of Ezekiel. He declared:

"Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went . . . For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land" (Ezek. 36:22-24).

Thus, we learn that the nation to be restored to their land, is not at first spiritually alive to their responsibilities towards God, but one that has "profaned" God's holy name. Obviously, the reference is not to the spiritual "Israel of God," but the Jewish people.

Our third proof is found in the New Testament. Paul, in describing the Israel to be saved, states that they are "enemies of the Gospel" but beloved for "the fathers' sakes"

(Rom. 11:26-28), which surely cannot apply to people endorsing God's truth.

He furthermore declares of the Israel to be saved, that they would be noted for their ignorance of the Divine purpose, and their ungodliness (vv.25-26).

The Israel to be restored, therefore, comprise that people whom God delivered from Egypt, who have profaned His holy name, who dwell in unbelief, who are enemies of the gospel, but who are the subjects of Divine mercy and restoration because of the faith of their fathers; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and because of the promise that God made to them.

Predictions Concerning the Restoration.

God clearly predicted that the Jewish people would never be destroyed as a nation (Jer. 30:11); He declared that His purpose with them is immutable, and cannot be prevented by man:

"Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar . . . if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever" (Jer. 31:35-36).

There have been many who have attempted to destroy the Jewish people, but all have failed. Babylon tried it; but Babylon fell. The Romans scattered them, but where is the Roman empire today? Hitler murdered

6,000,000 of them and proclaimed his purpose to destroy them all, but it was Hitler who finally perished.

On the other hand, God has proclaimed his intention before all mankind:

"Hear ye the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock" (Jer. 31:10).

"Thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-place . . . in the latter days ye shall consider it" (Jer. 30:18-24).

"I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel" (Micah 2:12).

In recent years, the world has witnessed a partial fulfilment of these prophecies. Thousands of Jews have returned, the lands have been tilled, the cities rebuilt, and the Jewish State has come into existence. And though complete fulfilment of these prophecies awaits the future, what has been accomplished is in accordance with the predictions of the Bible (see Jer. 30:17-18, 24; Jer. 32:37; Jer. 3:17; Hos. 2:23; Isaiah 37:31).

Indicative Of Christ's Coming.

Bible prophecy does not merely predict that the Jews shall return, but also states when it shall happen, namely, "in the latter days" (Jer. 30:24; Ezek. 38:8), or the days just prior to the setting up again of the Kingdom of God on earth. Consider these three significant statements of Bible prophecy:

"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion (i.e. Jerusalem); for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come" (Ps. 102: 13).

From the expression "the set time to favor her," we learn that the revival of Israel is not a matter of chance or caprice, but is of God, and is in process of completion at the time He determined. The Bible declares:

"When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory" (v. 16).

This statement shows that the revival of Israel is a great sign of Christ's imminent return to the earth. The same chapter states:

"This shall be written for the generation to come . . . who shall praise the Lord" (v. 18).

These words state that the prediction that "the Lord will build up Zion" was recorded for a future generation, one that would see the latter-day revival of Israel; in short, the present one.

We have, in earlier studies, shown how that Jesus, the king of the Jews, will set up his throne in Jerusalem, and assume his rightful prerogative over this people who have ignored his claims for so long.

Five Significant Developments.

Five remarkable events have happened to the Jewish people in recent years that have had the effect of focusing world attention upon the nation of Israel, now again in existence:

- (1) **Some six millions perished in the Nazi concentration camps in Germany under Hitler.**
- (2) **Jews flocked back to their ancient homeland so that today nearly 3,000,000 have re-**

turned.

- (3) **The modern state of Israel came into existence.**
- (4) **The ancient language of Hebrew was revived to become a living language once again.**
- (5) **Jerusalem was occupied by the Jews, so that they have obtained control over it again after 2000 years.**

These incidents have all been the subject of Bible prophecy.

- (1) **Hitler was a latter day "hunter" driving them back to their land (see Jeremiah 16:14-16; Deut. 28:65-67).**
- (2) **God prophesied that the Jews would increase in the land (Jeremiah 3:16-17).**
- (3) **Ezekiel predicted the latter-day establishment of the state of Israel (Ezek. 37:22; 38:16).**
- (4) **Zephaniah prophesied that Hebrew would again come into use (Zeph. 3:9).**
- (5) **Zechariah declared that the Jewish people (Judah) would possess Jerusalem at the time of the end (Zech. 12:2).**

The present-day restoration of the children of Israel is a modern miracle confirming Bible prophecy. It is something that Bible students have long waited to see happen. As long ago as 1848, the Christadelphian writer, John Thomas, on the basis of his understanding of Bible prophecy, wrote:

"There is, then, a partial and primary restoration of Jews before the manifestation of Christ, which is to serve as the nucleus, or basis of future operations in the restoration of the rest of the tribes after he has appeared in the kingdom. The pre-advantual colonisation of Palestine will be on purely political principles; and the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus, and of the truth as it is in him. They will emigrate thither as agricul-

tourists and traders, in the hope of ultimately establishing their commonwealth . . . under the efficient protection of the British power . . ." (Elpis Israel — An Exposition Of The Kingdom of God).

Statements like this show that we follow no fantasy when heeding Bible prophecy, and that it does clearly set forth the future intentions of God.

The Ultimate Purpose of God With Israel.

Why does God treat thus with Israel? Not because the Jews are any better than Gentiles, but because "of His holy name" (Ezekiel 36:22), and because of His regard for the fathers of the Jewish race (Romans 11:28).

God promised Abraham that He would make of him "a great nation" (Genesis 12:2), and because of that promise He has preserved, and will completely restore the people of Israel to their land.

It is freely conceded that they are no more worthy of this treatment than are Gentiles. They crucified the Lord Jesus, and continue to turn their backs upon God's way of salvation, so much so that men claim that God would be justified in rejecting them.

Why does not God do so?

Because of a principle involved and set forth by Paul who declared: "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (or subject to

change, as the word signifies — Rom. 11:29).

The preservation and restoration of the Jewish nation is a token of divine mercy; it teaches us that we can place complete reliance upon all that God has promised. Though we may fail Him, He will not fail us.

Nevertheless, there are many problems yet facing the Jewish State and people, some of which we will outline in our next study. They will be humbled, reduced in power and status, and so humiliated by reverses that they will be forced to plead with God for help.

And help will come—in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will assume his rightful position as King, and will compel their obedience. Under his administration, the land will blossom as the rose (Isa. 35:1), Israel will become the head instead of the tail of the nations (Isa. 60:3), and a disciplined and rejuvenated people will be so changed as to reflect to the glory of their God (Jer. 33:11, 16).

Israel failed in the past because of "lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6); the current troubles of the Gentile world arise from a like cause (Eph. 5:6). Let us heed the warning of this, and seek that knowledge, and way of life, that will ensure for us a place in the Kingdom of God shortly to be set up (Rom. 1:16).

BLACK SEA

ISTANBUL (CONSTANTINOPLE)

RUSSIA

TURKEY

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

BRITAIN WILL FORTIFY JERUSALEM, BUT WILL RETREAT TO EDOM AND MOAB (MODERN TRANS-JORDAN)

ISRAEL

SUEZ CANAL

EGYPT

Mt SINAI

Mt SINAI

JERUSALEM

TRANS JORDAN (EDOM & MOAB)

IRAQ

SAUDI ARABIA

AT Mt SINAI WILL BE ESTABLISHED THE JUDGEMENT SEAT.

TIDINGS OUT OF THE EAST AND NORTH SHALL TROUBLE HIM

2ND PHASE, RUSSIA TAKES EGYPT

3RD PHASE RUSSIA ADVANCES ON JERUSALEM

4TH PHASE CHRIST & SAINTS

ARMAGEDDON



(20) *Impending World Crisis and Divine Intervention*

A Preview Of World History.

Daniel 2, and particularly vv. 26-45, provides a simple, basic prophecy outlining world history from the time of the prophet until the setting up of the Kingdom of God.

It records how that King Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream, a vision of a man composed of different metals. It had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, feet part of iron and part of clay.

It stood over the king in threatening aspect, causing him much fear and consternation. But, as he watched, he saw a stone, cut out of a mountain without hands, smite the image on the feet. The top-heavy image fell, breaking to pieces as it did so. And then the stone began to grow and ground to powder the metals of the image which were subsequently blown away by the wind.

The stone continued to grow until it became a mountain and filled the whole earth.

The king was puzzled as to the meaning of the vision, but Daniel the prophet enlightened him.

The head of gold represented Babylon over which the king ruled (v.38). But, inasmuch as the image had breast and arms of silver, the vision indicated that the power of Babylon would give way to another world

dominion: the Medo-Persian rule (v.39). This was followed by the brassen power of Greece, and then by the iron might of Rome.

There were two legs of iron, and history records how that Rome ultimately became divided into two parts: East and West.

In the feet and toes, however, the previous unity of the image was broken into many parts, some of which were strong as iron, others were brittle like clay. The toes represented the divided state of Europe, that developed out of the Roman Empire, and remains in that state today. There were ten toes, and in remarkable agreement, the Roman Empire was ultimately divided among ten different nations.

History followed in exact sequence the requirements of this vision. There were four world powers: Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, after which Europe was divided. Men, like Frederick the Great, Napoleon and even Hitler, have endeavored to set up a fifth world power, but they have not succeeded. Meanwhile, divided Europe remains as described by Daniel: "partly strong and partly weak . . . shall not cleave together" (vv.42-43).

The truth of those words is revealed by the utter failure of the League of Nations (prior to World War II) and the United

Nations to weld the nations as one. God's word has proved true in spite of all the efforts of men to establish conditions of amity and peace.

There remains a phase of the vision yet to be fulfilled, however. The image was standing united in all its might, when the king saw it shattered by the stone. This suggests that a confederacy of powers uniting into one great alliance those that today exist on the territories of the ancient nations represented by the metals, must come into existence in "the latter days" (vv. 28, 45).

We shall show that the power destined to accomplish this is Russia. It will weld all the nations together in confederacy, and will seek to dominate the world. However, at the eve of success, it will in turn be destroyed by the "stone" power. This will be the Kingdom of God in the hands of Christ and his resurrected and immortalised followers. Daniel interpreted this part of the vision in the following words:

"In the days of these kings (divided Europe) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands (i.e. without human instrumentality), and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (Dan.

2:44-45).

Russia In Prophecy.

The great crisis and conflict which will witness nations confederated together, only to be broken by Christ and his immortalised followers, is the subject of many portions of Scripture. In Revelation 16:16 it is described as Armageddon: a symbolic word which in its Hebrew derivation signifies: *A heap of sheaves in a valley for judgment.* The focal point of this warlike gathering, is said to be Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1-2), and to that spot, in the valley of Jehoshaphat or the *Judgment Of Yahweh*, adjacent to Jerusalem, the nations are described as being gathered as sheaves in the threshing floor (see Joel 3:2, 12-13, 14-mg).

All these prophecies point to the future. Revelation 16:15 speaks of the return of Jesus Christ; Zechariah 14:9 refers to the time when he will rule over the earth; Joel 3:1 states that the prophecy will be fulfilled when God shall "bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem."

Ezekiel 38 provides further details of that time, and enables us to identify the influence of Russia in the work of gathering the nations.

The chapter predicts an invasion of the "land of Israel" in the latter days (v. 16), by a confederated army of nations, whose chief comes from the "uttermost parts of the north" (v.15).

In v.2 this chief is described

as "Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal."

The places referred to are the ancient titles of modern nations such as were familiar to the prophet. For example, Josephus, the Jewish historian of Christ's day, showed that Magog related to the ancient Scythians. Concerning them, Herodotus, the Greek historian wrote:

"They spread from the River Tanais, or Don, westward along the banks of the Ister or Danube."

The Magogites occupied the territory of Central Europe which therefore forms the modern "land of Magog."

Meshech is the ancient form of Muscovy, from whence came the word Moscow.

Tubal relates to the Tiberenes, who gave their name to Tobolski, the metropolis of Siberia.

All these titles point directly to Soviet Russia, whose power today extends to Central Europe, or to the "land of Magog."

Other nations associated with Gog are as follows.

"Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya . . . Gomer and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters . . . and many people with thee" (v.5).

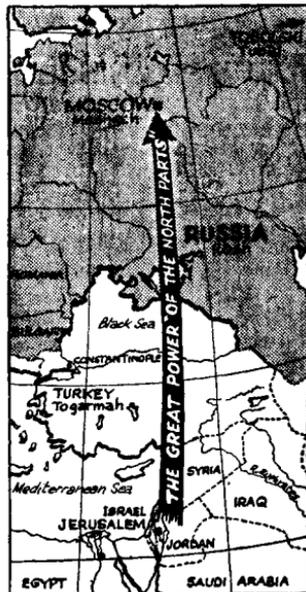
Persia, Ethiopia and Libya are well known to the modern world, and are nations being wooed by Russia today. But the other nations are not so easily identified, and it is necessary to search the ancient records to discover their modern counter-

part.

Gomer was the Jewish name for the Gauls, and they migrated west to occupy the territory of France, Holland, etc. Togarmah "of the north quarters" has been identified with Turkey, north of Israel.

The prophecy of Ezekiel, therefore, predicts an Eurasian confederacy of nations, headed by Russia, that will invade the Middle East in an attempt at world domination. This attack will ignite the spark that will flame into World War III, and involve the nations in "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation" (Daniel 12:1).

A further point of identification is given in v.15, where Gog is said to descend from "out of the uttermost parts of the



north" (Revised Version translation) against the "mountains of Israel." A glance at the map will show that this can only relate to Russia. Moscow is in longitudinal line from Jerusalem, whilst Russia dominates all the territory in "the uttermost parts north" of Israel.

In this amazing prophecy, God has revealed the future intentions and destiny of Russia, and outlined the fearful crisis that will involve all nations and people without exception.

By taking heed to the warning of the Bible, you can take steps that will enable you and your family to escape the holocaust that will involve those who are contemptuous of God's purpose (see 2 Thess. 1:8-9).

Russia Is Directly Named In The Bible.

Gog is represented as chief of a mighty host incorporating most of Europe and Asia. Three times he is described as "chief prince of Meshech (Moscow) and Tubal (Tobolski)" (Ezek. 38:2,3; 39:1).

What does the title signify?

The word "Gog" in Hebrew signifies "roof" according to *The English and Hebrew Bible Students' Concordance*, and therefore defines the "one at the top." The Hebrew word rendered "prince" signifies "one lifted up," i.e. a dictator, and not

necessarily a prince of royal birth. The word "chief" is "Rosh," and Hebraists state it is a proper noun, and should be rendered as such. The Revised Version (as with other translations) render it as such, and define Gog as "Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal."

This title is most significant because Rosh was the ancient name of Russia. The historian Gibbon wrote: "Among the Greeks, Russia was known as Ros." Bochart declared that in this word Rosh, we have "the most ancient form in Hebrew for Russia." He is supported by modern commentators, such as Scofield.

Stanley, the Church of England clergyman, wrote:

"The name Russ, Hebrew Roas, Greek Ros, unfortunately translated in the English version, 'the chief,' first appears in Ezekiel 38: 2 and 39:1. It is the only name of a modern nation that appears in the Old Testament."*

Here, then, is an ancient prophecy declaring that a dictator of Russia will lead a confederacy of nations down into the Middle East, at a time when Israel has been gathered back into the land. The same prophecy declares:—

"Thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword (and a people) gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel which have been always waste; but is brought forth

* This was correct when Stanley wrote, towards the end of the last century, but it is not correct today, for another modern nation has come into existence, mentioned in this very chapter of Ezekiel; namely, Israel (see v. 16).

out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely (Hebrew — confidently) all of them . . . to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places now inhabited, upon the people that are gathered out of the nations . . . against My people of Israel . . . it shall be in the latter days" (Ezek. 38:8, 12, 16).

How true these words are to the present time. Israel is in the state therein described; Russia is manifesting growing interest in the future of the Middle East, and has already threatened to move her troops down there.

The Bait That Will Draw Russia Into The Middle East.

But God has set His face against this power from the north:

"Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against thee O Gog . . . and I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth and all thine army . . ."

"I will do it," says God. He will draw Russia and her satellite armies into the Middle East. He likens Himself to a fisherman with baited hook, drawing His catch to the point where He wants to take it.

That is a feature of current events that should not be overlooked. Rulers and statesmen imagine that they are the arbiters of destiny, and that the peace and goodwill of the world depends upon their wisdom and guidance.

Nothing is further from the Truth.

It is God who "rules in the kingdom of men" (Daniel 4:17). He uses the ambitions

and schemes of men and nations to further His plans. He used Hitler to drive the Jews back to Palestine (Jer. 17:15-16); He is using the ambitions of Russia to "gather all nations" to the Middle East for judgment (Zeph. 3:8).

And what desirable bait is found on that hook! The Middle East provides the richest strategic and economic prizes the world has to offer. It is the bridgehead of three main continents, linking Africa, Asia and Europe as one. It contains the richest oil deposits in the world. It is the obvious strategic spring-board for world domination.

Take but one of the prizes mentioned above: oil. God, Who created the world, not only arranged the land masses so as to cause "His land" (Ezek. 38:16) to be strategically most desirable, but also hid beneath its soil that most important of all commodities today — the black gold of oil.

Russia has ample oil of her own, but if she controlled the existing Middle East oil-wells, she could cripple the economy and military potential of the West that depends upon them.

Three-fourths of the world's proven oil reserves are located in the Middle East. Whereas wells elsewhere may produce 10, 20 or 30 barrels of oil a day, some wells in the Middle East produce 6,000 barrels in a day!

There is also a vast supply of chemicals in the Dead Sea from which billions of tons of fertilizer can be made. Further-

more, its waters contain a great variety of chemicals needed in modern industry. From the standpoint of sheer wealth, the Dead Sea is the richest spot in all the world!

During the Suez crisis of 1956, as well as the six day's war of June, 1967, it was obvious that Russia had designs on the Middle East, and this has been made even more apparent since then. Strategists know that the nation that dominates in that area is in a position to rule the world.

Christ Will Challenge Russian Might.

The Russian invasion of the Middle East will not be merely a conflict between nations not merely a contest of power between the East and West, Communism and Capitalism; but between the Russian Colossus and Christ; between the greatest accumulation of human power ever wielded by man, and Divine power in the hands of the Son of God. It will commence with war between east and west,* but it will end with the intervention of the Lord Jesus who will become the Victor of Armageddon.

The prophecy of Ezekiel 38 issues a decree to the Russian Gog:

"Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them" (v.7).

This is an ironical statement. The prophet represents God as calling upon the Russian Gog, with all its godless Communism, to mass its mighty accumulation of power — its modern, nuclear weapons of war, its guided missiles, its space rockets, its massed legions of soldiers — for a tremendous contest of power, in which He will vindicate His authority, and show the folly of Jew and Gentile who put their confidence in the arm of flesh.

And Russia's power is mighty from a human standpoint. She has the largest army, the greatest number of submarines, the most numerous air-force, and the second largest navy in the world. Since World War II, over 1000 million people have been drawn into the Communist orbit. The influence of the Soviet today extends deep into European territory; it has close ideological links with China and south Asia; it is actively intriguing in Africa; it wages a constant war of nerves on Turkey and Japan; it steadily increases its influence in the Middle East; it manifests open hostility towards Israel.

* Ezekiel predicts that the Soviet will experience opposition by Powers that can be identified as the English speaking world in conjunction with certain Arab nations (Ezek. 38:13), which will likewise bring their armies to Jerusalem for battle, but they will be no match for the Russian forces. Israel and her allies will be completely humiliated. The present confidence of the Jews will be destroyed by the disaster of a Russian invasion (see Ezek. 38:11 mg.; Zech. 13:8; Jer. 30:7).

Moreover, Russia is a "guard" unto the nations, as Ezekiel indicated she should be. The word, in Hebrew, suggests one who hedges in those over whom one has gained control. It is a most significant definition for Russia with its "iron curtain" barrier, and its Berlin wall!

When the time is ripe, Russia will emerge from its Iron Curtain, and having confederated other European nations under its control, will invade the Middle East. The world will be convulsed in the greatest crisis of all history. It will erupt into a death-struggle between East and West with the Middle East as the focal point. By land, sea and air, Russia will drive south and occupy Egypt (Dan. 11:40-45), for the moment by-passing Jerusalem. Troublous tidings (possibly telling of allied concentration of troops at Jerusalem) will cause the Russian Gog to move north from Egypt to Jerusalem, where he will engage other armies drawn there for war (Dan. 11:44. Zech. 14:2).

Jerusalem will fall to the Russian onslaught, and the Jews, with their Anglo-American allies, will be decisively defeated. Russia's triumph will seem complete! The world will appear to

be on the eve of becoming completely communised, when, suddenly, a new power will be manifested in the political arena. Jesus Christ will intervene in the affairs of the nations, to overthrow the warring armies, and set up his power on earth.

Christ Humbles The Nations.

The Bible indicates that before Russia lays siege to Jerusalem, an event of even greater importance will take place. This will be the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth. He comes to first judge his followers, and then judge the world (1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thess. 2:1; 2 Tim. 4:1,8). Those responsible for judgment (believers), will be brought before him, that he might reward them according as their work has been (Rev. 22:12; 1 Cor. 15:20-23). The righteous will be granted life eternal (Rom. 2:7; Matt. 19:29), but the rebellious will be banished from his presence, to ultimately experience a second death (Rev. 2:11; Gal. 6:8).

Having thus judged his own, he will proceed to judge the world (2 Thess. 1:7-8). He will move against the nations then convulsed in war, and in company with his glorified followers

Christ's conquest of the nations will be in two stages: first, the overthrow of Gentile political power in the destruction of the confederated forces of Europe and Asia under Russia in the land of Israel (Ezek. 38); and second, by the successful invasion by Christ's forces into the European area by which ecclesiastical tyranny will be overthrown (Rev. 17:5, 14).

(Psalm 149:9) he will manifest himself at embattled Jerusalem in great power (Zech. 14:5). Using Divine power he will overthrow them. The very elements will be used to that end. A storm of unprecedented fury will break over the Holy Land; heaven's artillery will thunder forth; lightning and hail of tremendous force will scatter the enemy; a terrible earthquake will shake the ground.

In the face of these manifestations of Divine power, the heterogeneous forces of the Russian invader will be seized with fear. In superstitious panic, they will turn their weapons on one another, seeking to escape from the awful presence of Christ. Mutual slaughter will result. The prophet declares:

"Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel . . . and I will call for a sword against him (Gog) throughout all My mountains, saith the Lord God; every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify Myself and sanctify Myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. 38:18-23).

Gog's defeat will be complete and final.

What will it accomplish?

The prophet declares: "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). The terrible disaster, the over-

whelming victory will result in the humbling of the nations, and the elevation of the Lord Jesus. The initial success of Russia will humble the West and Israel; the final defeat of Gog will lay the pomp and power of man in the dust. Thus God shall be magnified in the eyes of all mankind in the person of His son.

Christ will then call upon all nations to submit to his rule. Those who refuse will be overthrown; those who submit will be incorporated in the world-wide Kingdom he will set up on earth. The prophet declares: "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish" (Isa. 60:12). On the other hand, nations will ascend up to Jerusalem to worship (Zech. 14:16), and from that city will emanate the law of the Lord unto all nations (Isaiah 2:2-4). The result will be:

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

International peace and goodwill among nations will then be established throughout the earth. The Lord's prayer will be fulfilled: "Thy kingdom come, that Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." The song of the angels at the birth of Christ will be realised in the earth: "Glory to God in the highest, and upon earth peace and goodwill towards men."

Men at last will see the folly of placing any confidence in the arm of flesh. They will recognize that Almighty Power is vested in the Creator alone, and will be forced to acknowledge the authority of God manifested through His son.

Israel, humbled by disaster, will then be completely restored. The Jewish people shall "look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn" because of their past blindness (Zech. 12:10). The "Deliverer shall come out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob," (Rom. 11:26). The nation will at last submit to its King, and will be restored to its land and position of favor before God, as in the days of old (Amos. 9:11).

Jerusalem, the city where Christ was humiliated 1900 years ago, will become the metropolis of his reign. It shall be called "the throne of the Lord," (Jer. 3:17), and it will become the centre of his glory, and the scene of his triumph. Thus will "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

What This Means To You!

Thus out of the storm-clouds of trouble and war, a bright future will unfold for the earth. Russia's bid for world domination will fail, for it is the purpose of God to set up a kingdom "which shall never be destroyed," and which shall "break in pieces" those nations that oppose it, finally incorporating all

peoples under its rule (Dan. 2:44; 7:27).

The call of the Gospel, is a call to you to associate with Christ now, in the hope of attaining unto life eternal then, and forming part of that aristocracy that will be associated with the Lord in the day of his triumph (see Revelation 5:9-10; 2:26-27). "They shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years" is the summary of their position in that age (Rev. 20:4).

During Christ's millennial reign, his subjects (the people of all nations — both Jew and Gentile) will remain mortal (Isa. 65:20), though his glorified followers will have been made immortal. At the end of this thousand years' reign, those mortals who have lived during the millenium, and who warrant it, will also be given immortality through a second resurrection (Rev. 20:12-15). The result will find death eliminated from the earth, to the glory of God, that He might be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:2).

In view of the threat of world conflict, therefore, we can confidently proclaim that Christ is coming! There is no doubt about the Bible teaching on this theme. The purpose of God demands it; the signs of the times indicate it; the needs of humanity require it. The question remains: Will we witness it? The answer depends upon our individual attitude to the Bible. The way to life eternal, in the Kingdom that God will

set up on earth, is revealed therein. Christ invites us to walk that way. He has declared: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." But how do we come unto him? He instructed his disciples: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel, he that BELIEVETH and is BAPTISED shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

Those are the steps required. Are you prepared to take them? Or would you prefer to remain

in a world that is hastening towards Armageddon and the greatest holocaust in all history. Remember, the times are significant and the need is urgent. We earnestly suggest that you seek into these matters. It costs you nothing to do so; and yet eternal life is bound up in them. Surely you owe it to God, your family and yourself to seek a way that is spiritually rewarding and will lead finally to life and glory in the age to come.

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 19

1. *Has God finally cast off His people Israel?*
2. *Give references, which predict the return of the Jews to the land of Palestine.*
3. *WHY does God save and restore the Jews? Is it for any righteousness on their part?*
4. *Where is it recorded, that the Jews failed, because of "lack of knowledge"?*
5. *What is offered to us, when we have knowledge of God's purpose?*
6. *Where, in the Psalms, do we read that the restoration of Israel is not a matter of chance, but rather takes place at a "set time"?*
7. *Where in the Scriptures do we read that the restoration of Israel and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory are closely connected in time?*

QUESTIONS TO STUDY No. 20

1. *Which prophet had the privilege of interpreting the meaning of king Nebuchadnezzar's vision?*
2. *Which four world powers were represented by the different metals of the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision.*
3. *Which significant future development in world events was indicated by the stone smiting the image and growing until it filled the whole earth?*
4. *Which nation is represented in Ezekiel's prophecy as coming against the mountains of Israel in the "latter days" to take a spoil?*
5. *Which nation dominates all the territory in the "uttermost parts north" of Israel?*
6. *Who "rules in the kingdom of men"?*
7. *In which place will God gather all nations for judgment?*
8. *To which place shall all nations go to worship God and to learn of His ways at a time when they shall not "learn war any more"?*

A Summary of the "One Faith" taught by the Apostles

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, ONE FAITH, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).



THE BIBLE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS are both God's revelation to man, and are both equally authoritative. They are wholly inspired and infallible. The New Testament supplements the Old, its teaching being based exclusively upon it (Luke 24:27; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21).

THE GODHEAD

GOD is one, not three. He has revealed Himself as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and of all who are related to Him in faith (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29-32; 1 Cor. 8:5-6; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2:5).

THE SPIRIT is the power of God by which He created all things, and by which they subsist (Gen. 1:1-2; Psalm 104:30; Acts 17:25-28). It is also used to describe the power of Divine truth upon the mind of a believer, for the revelation of such came by inspiration of the Holy Spirit upon those selected to reveal it (Heb. 1:1; John 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1 John 5:6). Thus believers are exhorted "to be led of the Spirit" or the power and influence of the truth believed (Gal. 5:16-18).

THE HOLY SPIRIT though sometimes personified (as are many inanimate things such as wealth, wisdom, sin, etc.) is not a person, but the "one spirit" of God used for special purposes, such as the performance of "miracles, signs and wonders" (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; 2:22; 10:38).

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT were bestowed on believers for a testimony to the Truth, by the laying on of the hands, of the Apostles (Acts 8:18). With the death of the Apostles, the power of transmitting these gifts no longer remained, and the gifts ceased (1 Cor. 13:8).

JESUS CHRIST

JESUS CHRIST is not God the Son, but is the Son of God, begotten of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 2:18-25; Luke 1:31-35; Gal. 4:4). He was a man of our race, identical in nature with all mankind (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 2:14-17).

HE IS THE CENTRAL FIGURE IN GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION, being the Son promised in Eden (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4), to Abraham, David and others, through whom the promises are to be realised, and the inhabitants of the earth blessed (cp.

Gen. 22:17-18 with Gal. 3:8, 16; Psalm 89:34-37 with Acts 13:22-23. See also Gal. 3:14, 19, 26-28; Acts 4:12; Rom. 15:8).

JESUS CHRIST IS TO RETURN personally and visibly to the earth, at the end of Gentile times (Acts 1:11; 3:20-21; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 1:7). He will set up the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:25; Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14; Rev. 11:15).

JESUS CHRIST WILL BE KING OF KINGS for he will have as his associate kings and priests, those who have been faithful in all preceding ages, and who will be clothed upon with immortality (Rev. 19:16; 5:9; 1 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 20:4; Psalm 149:5-9).

THE NATURE OF MAN

MAN IS A CREATURE OF THE DUST, energised by the breath of life (Gen. 2:7; 3:19; 7:21-22; 18:27; Ps. 103:14). Apart from the resurrection he is without hope (1 Cor. 15:17-18; Eph. 2:12).

THE SOUL, in its primary meaning stands for the creature. It is rendered variously "life," "living," "man," "persons," "self," "body," and "beast." It can eat, live, die, corrupt and perish, and it can be slain, strangled and destroyed. (Gen. 2:7; Josh. 10:28; Job. 7:15; Psalm 56:13; 78:50; 89:48; 116:8; Isaiah 29:8; 53:12; Ezek. 18:4, 20; Acts 3:23).

IN THE DEATH STATE man is entirely unconscious and (apart from a resurrection) must inevitably perish (Eccles. 3:16-21; 9:5, 19; Isaiah 38:18; Psalm 6:5; 49:12, 14, 19-20; 146:3-4; 1 Cor. 15:13-18).

"HELL" IS THE PLACE OF DEATH and the word is the equivalent of the Hebrew word "Sheol," and the Greek word "Hades." Both words signify "a hidden place," and are mostly rendered "grave" or "pit." The Revised Version Bible and marginal references show "grave" and "hell" as the translation of "sheol" and "hades." Both words should be consistently rendered as "grave." (Compare Psalm 9:17 with 31:17; Psalm 30:3; Acts 2:27, 30-32).

"GEHENNA" is the name of a place outside Jerusalem where a fire was kept burning to consume the offal from the city. The term symbolises the everlasting destruction (i.e. perishing in death) of the wicked (Mark 9:47-48).

THE CAUSE OF SIN

"DEVIL" comes from the Greek word "Diabolos," signifying "false accuser" or "slanderer." It is translated "slanderer" in 1 Tim. 3:11, and "false accusers" in 2 Tim. 3:3, Titus 2:3. Its general meaning is sin or lawlessness, whether manifested individually or politically. It is also applied to the unlawful lusts and tendencies of human nature which invariably lead to sin. It is not a supernatural being (Compare 1 John 3:8 with James 4:1. Also Heb. 2:14 with 1 Cor. 15:56. See Rom. 5:12, 21; 6:23).

"SATAN" is a Hebrew word signifying "adversary," "enemy," or "accuser." It is sometimes applied to a good adversary (Compare 1 Chron. 21:1 with 2 Sam. 24:1). It is used of an angel

(Num. 22:22, 32, where the word is rendered "adversary" and "withstand"). The Apostle Peter was a "satan" on a certain occasion when he opposed his Master (Matt. 16:23). Kings and powers have been adversaries, or "satans" (See 1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Kings 11:14, 23, 25, where the word "adversary" is "satan" in Hebrew. 1 Tim. 1:20).

THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION

A **LAW** was given to the first man (Adam) whom God had created "very good," and continuance of life was dependant upon obedience to it (Gen. 2:17; 3:1-3).

DEATH became the inheritance of mankind due to the transgression of God's law by Adam and Eve, so that man is now inherently mortal (Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 5:12, 18; 1 Cor. 15:21-22; Psalm 89:48; Job 4:17; Eccles. 3:19-20; 9:5-6; Job 3:15-19; Isa. 38:18-19; Ps. 6:5; Acts 13:36; 2:29).

RECONCILIATION AND REDEMPTION were ordained by God in His mercy, to be manifested through a promised Son who would bruise the "serpent" (figurative of sin and death) in the head. Christ was therefore manifested to effect the abolition of sin and death (Gen. 3:14-16; Rom. 7:24; Heb. 2:14; Rom. 8:1-4; 1 Pet. 1:19-20; 1 John 3:5).

ABRAHAM AND DAVID were promised that this Seed would be among their descendants, and were given "great and precious promises" which constitute the plan of God for the redemption of man. It is necessary to become related to them, otherwise we are without hope (2 Pet. 1:4; Gen. 12:3; 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Rom. 4:13; Eph. 2:11-13; 4:18 Heb. 11:10-13, 39-40).

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

BELIEF is a first essential to salvation, for to become related to the promises of God we must understand them, and their relation to the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; Acts 8:12).

BAPTISM must follow a knowledge of God's will and purpose. It is burial or immersion in water after believing the Gospel, and is necessary for the remission of sins, and relationship to Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 8:12, 36, 37; 10:6, 47; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12).

OBEDIENCE to the commandments of our Lord must follow baptism (Luke 19:13; John 14:15, 23; Rom. 2:6-7; Phil. 2:12; 2 Pet. 1:3-11).

THE RESURRECTION of those who are responsible to God (and a knowledge of His will brings responsibility — John 12:48) will take place at the return of Christ (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15. Contrast Ps. 49:19-20; Isa. 26:14; Jer. 51:39, 57 — which teach that many will not rise from the grave). Those found approved will experience a change from mortality to immortality (John 6:39; 1 Cor. 15:50-53; Phil. 3:21; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:8; Matt. 5:5; 25:31-34).

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE GOSPEL consists of the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (Luke 9:2, 6; Acts 8:12; 19:8), and was preached to Abraham in the promises given him (Gal. 3:8).

THE KINGDOM OF GOD will be a Kingdom established on earth. It will overthrow all existing kingdoms, supersede them, and last forever (Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14, 27; Rev. 11:15; Psalm 72; Micah 4; Isaiah 11).

THE RESTORATION OF THE THRONE OF DAVID is an element of this kingdom, and involves the complete restoration of Israel in the Land of Promise. Jerusalem will be the capital city of the world, and from it the laws will issue to govern all mankind (Isa. 2:2-4; 11:12; 24:23; 51:3; Jer. 3:17; 31:10; Ezek. 37:21-22; 39:25-29; Joel 3:17; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-8; Matt. 5:35; Luke 1:32-33).

THE MILLENIUM relates to the thousand years reign of peace that will follow the return of the Lord Jesus and the setting up of his kingdom (Rev. 20:6). The mission of Christ will be to subdue all enemies, the last being death. At the conclusion of the 1000 years reign, there will be a further resurrection of those who have died during that period, and those worthy will be given eternal life, whilst those unworthy will be consigned to "the second death." Death itself will thus be eliminated, and the Kingdom will then be delivered to the Father Who Will then become "all and in all" (Isa. 25:6-8; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 20:7, 11-14).

Thus the plan of God that commences with the statement, "In the beginning, God . . ." (Gen. 1:1), ends with the final picture of glory: "God all and in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

