

Modern Religious Trends

www.CreationismOnline.com

In the Light of the Messages of Ezekiel, the Forgotten Prophet

By LEWIS HARRISON CHRISTIAN

“Ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done, . . . saith the Lord God.” Eze. 14:23.

Review and Herald Publishing Association
Takoma Park, Washington, D. C.

Copyright, 1941, by the
Review and Herald Publishing Association
PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Contents

Foreword
Humanity Calling Religion
The Doctrine of God Today
Prophetic Messengers
The Seat of Authority in Religion
Modern Idols in Modern Churches
Opposition to Prophecy and the Second Advent
Pagan and Atheist Leaders in Present-Day Thought
Morality Uprooted
The Aftermath of Apostasy
The Destiny and Doom of Nations Foretold
Not a Creeds but a Message
The Jewish Problem Solved
Apocalyptic Thinking—Gog and Magog
Glorified Visions of Church and Missions

Foreword

As the large ocean currents, like the Humboldt Current or the Gulf Stream, regulate the climate of continents, so the trends of religious thought control the destinies of mankind. Culture always has a spiritual basis, since every civilization, ancient and modern, is the fruit of religion. For this reason, too, a civilization must begin to break when the morals of its religion fall into decay. That, in a word, is the root cause of the present world collapse.

To understand history and even current events aright, we must know the religious trends which are the fountains out of which these events flow. But current trends of thought can be understood truly only in the light of the Bible. The books of Daniel and the Revelation outline the rise and fall of nations, stressing their attitude toward the people of God. These two books, however, set forth the effects in greater detail than the causes of the things that happen. To get a clear view of the sources of events we must study such prophecies as those contained in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and especially Ezekiel. The last contains great light for our day. In this volume we shall study modern religious trends as interpreted by Ezekiel. It will be helpful to the reader to peruse again those parts of Ezekiel referred to in the chapter headings.

Humanity Calling Religion

“DEEP calleth unto deep” is the Bible wording. The present cry for religion is a cry of distress. Gone is the former scoffing contempt for things divine. A sinking world reaches up after God, and religion is just now coming into a new prestige—and new conflicts. Religion is no longer thought of as dark and dying superstitions, born of ignorance. It is seen as an indispensable component of the human soul—a living, vital factor. Thousands of thoughtful people today stress man’s present need of religion.

“Even Science Needs Religion as a Guide”

“Odd isn’t it for a cool, calculating scientist, a physicist who works with such impersonal things as atoms and X rays, to concern himself with religion and the improvement of man’s humanity to man? Dr. Arthur H. Compton doesn’t think so.

“ ‘In science there is strength,’ he said yesterday, ‘but we must look to religion and religious leaders if that strength is to be applied in the best way. . . . The more we learn through science, the greater becomes the need to elevate our ideals.’ ”—*Washington Post*, Oct. 12, 1940.

Again Doctor Compton, famous scientist and Nobel prize winner, in a very recent statement wrote:

“How plain it is that genius does not suffice, that science is not enough! Even our very freedom, which we have taken for granted as much as the air we breathe, has the fingers of death at its throat. . . . I speak of the virtues by which man lives and progresses, on which civilization is built, and by which alone it can endure. I speak of the spiritual elements of love and sacrifice, justice and honor, integrity, equality, and good will. They are qualities which must be strengthened if we would safeguard our liberty and our civilization.

“These qualities, in turn, are rooted deep in religion. To strengthen them we must strengthen our faith, for faith is the cornerstone of religion.”

Words like that help. We do not claim that all who call for religion are godly, or call for the right religion, or want it for themselves. A patient calls for a doctor, a dying man for a priest. One call may be dictated by pain, the other by fear. But however mixed are human motives, human needs remain the same.

When we speak of religion, we mean men’s attitude toward God, toward eternity, and toward one another. To us religion includes conscience and divine care. Religion is belief in personal immortality in the great hereafter. Religion is faith in the Bible as the inspired word of God and in the ten commandments as the one perfect, immutable standard of right and wrong. To us, above all, religion means personal faith and communion with Christ, the eternal Son of God, and an individual experience in His transforming and keeping grace. Religion comforts, inspires, and elevates. Religion builds happy homes and prosperous nations, content and peaceful. Religion alone creates true heroes and noble men. It is these and other fruits of religion which more and more have led many to realize that without religion human society cannot exist. But they also suggest the importance of a true standard or test to go by.

Mankind today is taking stock anew of religion. The idea of fifty years ago that religion is weak and obsolete is itself obsolete. Statesmen, generals, and other rulers or leaders have come to see that religious ideals and convictions are a mighty force which they can use.

Rethinking Religion

President Roosevelt expressed a popular idea when, in his Brotherhood Day broadcast, he said:

“No greater thing could come to our land today than a revival of the spirit of religion—a revival that would sweep through the homes of the nation and stir the hearts of men and women of all faiths to a reassertion of their belief in God and their dedication to His will for themselves and for their world. I doubt if there is any problem—social, political, or economic—that would not melt away before the fire of such a spiritual awakening.”

In 1935, one of the keenest thinkers of this modern age wrote:

“Colossal catastrophes, far greater than those experienced by the present generation in the upheaval of the World War and the ensuing revolutions, are about to overwhelm us. . . . In the event of another war, the normal process of decay, which might normally last for decades, would be concentrated into weeks and months. . . . In Europe, depths of religious feeling, conscientiousness, and spiritual ardor alternate with brutal acquisitiveness and tyranny.” “What prophets can the masses follow when only *false* prophets

address them? When one worships the state, . . . another humanity, another himself ?”— *“The Threat to European Civilization,” Ludwig Freund, pp. 2, 53, 159.*

Men everywhere have learned that religion is the most potent power to create or guide human conduct. But just as helpful as is true religion, just so harmful is the counterfeit. Indeed, the greatest scourge that has afflicted mankind through the ages is the bane of false religious systems. When we speak of religion, we mean the teachings and life of Jesus. That religion is more than a church or a creed. It is personal faith and piety. There may be dark days ahead for the humble converted believers, but through prayer and communion with God, they will triumph. The religious thought of our day is different from that of former times. New and strange conceptions of God, of eternity, and of morals have come to the front.

In many lands men have begun to restudy and re-evaluate religion. Some of this thinking is bitterly anti-Christian. Some of it professes great reverence for Christ, though it undermines the very foundation of His gospel. Some, on the other hand, is truly Christian in its objective and method. But this one thing is certain: there is today a new and growing faith and interest in what religion is and what religion can do for mankind. In such a day as this, we must not be of those who endeavor to follow the stream of religious thought with neither chart nor compass. They are confused, and they confuse others.

If we would truly know the direction, power, and quality of modern religious trends, we must have some standard by which to measure. That standard is the Holy Scriptures. In this volume we have chosen to study modern religious thinking in the light of one book, Ezekiel, with many an almost forgotten prophet.

The name Ezekiel means “strong is God” or “God makes strong.” To him was given the greatest vision of divine glory ever entrusted to man. Even Moses, who talked with God face to face, did not see the majestic rule of the Omnipotent One as did the prophet of the captivity. Ezekiel possessed a keen sense of individual moral duty and a flaming hatred of sin. His clear view of the presence and reign of God—like a searchlight from above—discovered and diagnosed things as they really were.

Ezekiel and His Time as a Type of Today

The entire Bible stands together as one perfect revelation. It contains no superfluous books and no useless repetitions. All is alike profitable, and all alike needed. There are some who place the gospel above the law, or the New Testament above the Old. But though people may have personal preferences, every book, chapter, and verse in the Scriptures has light for mankind. If the enemy of truth cannot discredit the entire Bible, he seeks to undermine faith or interest in certain parts of it. Among the books

against which there has been great prejudice or indifference is Ezekiel. The Jews decreed that no one under thirty years of age might read it. According to the Talmud, Ezekiel was “the one book which almost lost its place in the Jewish canon, owing to a suspicion of the Jewish doctors that it contradicted the law. Fortunately Hananiah, son of Hezekiah, after burning three hundred measures of oil in his midnight studies, was able satisfactorily to explain these seeming discrepancies.”—*Whedon’s Commentary on the Old Testament, Introduction to the Book of Ezekiel, Camden M. Cobern, D. D., p. 8.*

That many Jews were opposed to Ezekiel, since his book, as no other, sets forth their apostasies and unfaithfulness toward God, is easy to understand. It is just as plain why many today neglect the book, for in no other part of Holy Writ are the false principles now leading Christianity astray portrayed with such graphic language as in Ezekiel.

This book of prophecy, like the book of Revelation, comes right out of the heart anguish of a suffering captive. For that reason the book is especially helpful to God’s people in days of darkness. No other book in all the Bible, not even Job, comforts as does Ezekiel.

When Alaric, king of the Goths, conquered Rome and filled the Christian world with tears and blood, Jerome studied and preached with much care out of this book. In Reformation days, as Europe was deluged in war and blood, Calvin, the great Reformer, found comfort in the study of Ezekiel. In the time of trouble before us, Ezekiel will, we think, be of peculiar value to the remnant church.

This, no doubt, is the reason why the messenger of the Lord repeatedly urges us to study Ezekiel, in expressions like these:

“Read the ninth chapter of Ezekiel.” “Read Ezekiel 47.” “In the visions given to Isaiah, to Ezekiel, and to John we see how closely heaven is connected with the events taking place upon the earth.”

John Wesley testified, “There is much in the book which is very mysterious, especially in the beginning and latter end of it; but, though the visions are intricate, the sermons are plain, and the design of them is to show God’s people their transgressions.”

A host of other Bible students speak most highly of Ezekiel. Cornill, the German Bible expositor, says: “It is a masterpiece which can only be paralleled by the book of Job.” Because of Ezekiel’s far-reaching influence and mental grasp of vast problems, Kamrath styled him the Jewish Calvin. Kautzsch says: “He was a man of extraordinary success.” Another writes: “Power went out

from him. Without him Judaism would not have fulfilled her mission, and Christianity would not have been born.” Another writer says: “How great is he in his solitude, how heroic in his captivity, how sublime in his desolation! During more than twenty years this extraordinary man was the center of that fiery preaching which saved the conscience of Israel from a storm in which every other national conscience would have perished. Christianity owes more to Ezekiel than to any other prophet.”

Of Ezekiel Dr. Camden M. Cobern says: “He was indeed a powerful personality, who has left his mark on everything he touched. No one doubts that this colossal figure, this organizer and lawgiver of captive Israel, was the ‘spiritual director of the exile, the father of Judaism,’ . . . and the ‘preserver of the Jewish commonwealth.’ . . . Without his teaching Israel would have been buried in its Babylonian grave forever. . . . He furnished the impulse which culminated in the edict of Cyrus and the return of his people to the Holy Land ‘with songs of rejoicing on their lips.’ He lived in an evil hour, but his majestic personality mastered all adverse circumstances. As a priest he restored the past; as a prophet he created the future. He stands large and unique among the great men of his race. His was a vast mission: to save the Israelites from becoming Babylonians; to transform those faithless, hopeless, idol-worshipping exiles into an ardent, hopeful, believing church, and with serene audacity to prepare them for their second exodus.”—*Whedon’s Commentary on the Old Testament, Introduction to the Book of Ezekiel, p.15.*

The forceful language employed by Ezekiel makes plain the great spiritual power he possessed. Bishop Lowth, who published a series of lectures on Hebrew poetry, declares: “Ezekiel is inferior to Jeremiah in elegance, but is equal to Isaiah in sublimity, though in a different species of the sublime. He is bold, vehement, tragical, and deals very much in amplification. His sentiments are lofty, animated, poignant, and full of indignation. His images are fertile, magnificent, and sometimes rather bordering on indelicacy. His diction is grand, weighty, austere, rough, and sometimes uncultivated. He bounds in repetitions, not for the sake of beauty or grace, but from vehemence and indignation. Whatever his subject be, he keeps it always in his eye, without the least deviation, and is so much taken up with it that he has scarcely any regard to order or connection. In other things he may be perhaps exceeded by the other prophets, but in that species for which he was particularly turned, that is, force, impetuosity, weight, and grandeur, no writer ever equaled him.”—*Clarke’s Commentary, Introduction to the Book of Ezekiel, pp. 423, 424.*

We are told that “Schiller wished to learn Hebrew that he might read Ezekiel in the original; Victor Hugo places Ezekiel, with Homer, Aeschylus, Juvenal, and others in ‘the avenue of the immovable giants of the human mind.’ ” The ministers of God today should devote more time to Ezekiel, both in study and in preaching.

The style of Ezekiel was naturally influenced by his stay in Babylon. The illustrations or figures of speech used are often Babylonian, as were those of Daniel. No one, we think, could live for a generation in a foreign country without being affected by his environment. God’s servants in captivity were missionaries, not monks. But while the language of this book shows the marks of the age, the message is clear, strong, and divine. As a matter of interest, too, it should be stated that the critics of the Scriptures have found perhaps least of all in Ezekiel to change or destroy.

Ezekiel lived at the end of an era. His age was a time of wars and tumults, of apostasies and moral weakness, of new ideas, new gods. Israel, like modern Christianity, had forgotten God. His sanctuary was destroyed, His people were dispersed. Never in olden time was the true faith in greater danger than when the Jews were carried off to Babylon. The whole religious trend of that day was to depart from the living God. Daily the falling away increased, and there seemed to be none to protest. With the temple in ruins, the priests could not carry on the usual service. Israel in captivity was a type of the Christian churches today. In the political world there is a striking likeness between that age and ours. Two great powers, Egypt and Babylon, were contending for world supremacy—the first universal monarchy of history. In these bloody wars the small nations of earth perished.

The captivity of Israel marked a great change in the history of that people. “The exile marks a transformation from a national religion to a world religion.” The Babylonian kingdom carried some twenty nations into captivity, but only one of these returned or has been heard of since. The children of Moab, of Edom, and those of other countries have all disappeared. Babylon was the graveyard where twenty religions were buried, but only one religion came forth to a new life to continue its history. In the providence of God, Ezekiel was the greatest human force in accomplishing this miracle. He was, as one says, the bridge between the old Israel and the new. “We must honor and understand Ezekiel if we wish to understand the history of Israel.” This is not a matter of minor importance, for the history of Israel and the mission of Israel are the foundation of the Christian church and missions. To advent believers, both members and ministers, the book of Ezekiel is of supreme importance.

Ezekiel had one great purpose—to arouse and save Israel. He was in the highest sense a spiritual reformer. While many statements in the book alarm or even terrify, all through the book is found a note of tender compassion bringing comfort and hope to a discouraged people. Ezekiel was not only a preacher of stern judgments, but a publisher of good tidings. His life revealed a constant and entire subordination to the great work to which he had been called. He never spoke as an ordinary man, but always thought, acted, and felt as a prophet. This concentration of mind and life on one objective is strikingly portrayed in the account he gives of the death

of his wife, to whom he appears to have been most devoted. That is the only event in his personal history to which he refers, and even then he only said, “So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.” A man who can thus completely subordinate the strongest personal interests to the great work of his prophetic office may well command our admiration.

Although while Ezekiel himself said little about his life, tradition tells many things. When about seventy years of age he was killed by a Jewish prince whose idols and sins Ezekiel had sternly reproofed. His grave is still shown at Kepele near Babylon. He lived by the river Chebar, a large navigable canal some distance southeast of the old site of Babylon. Telabib was a city on that canal. The idea formerly held that this river was a branch of the Euphrates over two hundred miles north of Babylon, is an error. Ezekiel lived but a short distance from the capital of the kingdom, and news from Jerusalem could come to the prophet regularly in the course of a month or more. Ezekiel, as his book clearly states, was of priestly origin. He received his first vision when he was thirty years of age, and began his work, as did John the Baptist and the Saviour, when, according to the Jewish law, priests were ready to serve.

Ezekiel toiled all his life with the feeling that his message would be rejected, his work a failure. He seems to have experienced the same darkness and discouragement that will come to the remnant church at the close of probation. But he held on, faithful to the end. His one assurance was that he gave God’s warning, and that when it was all over, they would “know that a prophet hath been among them.” Eze. 33:33.

“Yet shrink not thou, whoe’er thou art, For God’s great purpose set apart, Before whose far-discerning eyes, The future as the present lies!
Beyond a narrow-bounded age
Stretches thy prophet heritage,
Through heaven’s vast spaces angel trod, And through the eternal years of God! Thy audience, worlds!—all time to be
The witness of the truth in thee!”

—Whittier.

The Doctrine of God Today

Read Ezekiel 1 and 10

THE measure of an age is the strength of its religious convictions. When these begin to weaken, decay sets in. There is now a deeper interest in religion—but not a deeper love for Jesus. The ideas of many on religion are unsound. Their attitude toward the personal God of the Bible varies from indifference to contempt and even hatred. There is in many places a boastful attack on the true God as outlined by Ezekiel. In his day, as never before since the building of the tower of Babel, all mankind had joined in a bold rebellion against Heaven. Even Israel said: “The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth.” Eze. 8:12.

In our time we witness the final climax in this haughty *war on God*. “The present-day drift away from religion is one of the outstanding spiritual trends of the latter days.” We see this in modern skeptical science and history. “Today we are living in an age in which all fundamental beliefs are challenged.” An undercurrent hard to explain seems to lead men and women toward material things. So-called learned men speak of God as an inscrutable force, and hold that modern science makes the old faith in a personal God impossible. Either they completely give up their faith in any God, or they declare that “science requires a new conception of God.” Few realize how utterly confused and meaningless are the ideas of some modern wise men concerning God. Says one: “God is ‘the principle of concretion.’” Another declares: “The primordial nature of God is limited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality.” “Wieman has most recently defined God as ‘that interaction between individuals, groups, and ages which generates and promotes the greatest possible mutuality of good.’” Could confusion be more confused? How true it is that today there is a terrible departing from the Lord.

In some lands this denial of God begins with the children in school. Thousands of boys and girls from six to fourteen years of age, and right out of the primary grades, parade the streets, carrying such inscriptions as: “Away with God from the schools,” “Down with the God superstition,” “Religion is an opiate.”

“Too many are treating religion today as though it were an incidental of life, rather than an essential; a luxury, rather than a necessity; a mere external form of life, rather than a vital principle in life. Men are not asking in our day, What kind of religion is needed, but, ‘Is religion needed?’ . . . The real denial of God in our day is not the denial of His existence, but of His reign. Over against this materialism and paganism, the followers of Christ are challenged to maintain that religion is essential to life, that it is not

‘the cake of life,’ but ‘the bread of life,’ and that no theory can be true to the facts man’s nature, which disregards religion as an internal, inalienable factor in his consciousness. ‘There is no living without it.’ The verdict of history is that religion is universal. The verdict of Scripture is that religion is essential, and the verdict of human experience is that religion is indispensable. Man may exist without religion, but he cannot live without it “—*John McDowell, D. D., in Record of Christian Work.*

But the modern war on God goes way beyond mere negative indifference to the Christian religion. During the last two decades efforts have been made in a number [22] of countries to return to the old gods of heathen days. Prominent writers have pronounced themselves as pagans believing in the old Nordic deities. This modern paganism has grown into a mighty movement. Scores of writers and university professors openly avow their adherence to this militant attack on the God of the Bible. Like pantheism in all ages, it is insidious, philosophical, and most deceptive. It leads the multitudes to a dangerous man worship, the deification of some outstanding leader, so common today.

Pantheism holds that God not only is *in* everything, but *is* everything—that the entire universe is one great god. It rejects wholly the thought that God is a personal being. Professor Ernst Bergmann, of Leipzig University, has published a “Catechism of Twenty-five Theses” on this new paganism. From this we quote as follows:

“Where Christianity stops, there our religion begins. Belief in a personal God, in revelation and salvation, is superstition, not religion.”

“The Christian feelings of sin, guilt, and repentance are not religious feeling at all. They are artificially engendered complexes in man.”

“Whoever forgives sin, sanctions sin. The forgiving of sins undermines religious ethics and destroys the morale of the people.”

Thus, like pantheism, this paganism not only derides the personality of God; it denies the individual existence of man. It deadens conscience and poisons all thought of moral responsibility.

A Mighty Vision of the Reign of God

At the very beginning of his prophetic mission Ezekiel was granted a vision of God such as no other mortal ever had had. He tried to describe this view of glory in chapters one and ten. At this point it will be helpful to [23] read them again, for to some readers of the Bible no other vision has seemed quite as baffling as the vision of the first chapter of Ezekiel. Of this preachers have preached and poets have dreamed. Many religious poems were written by our own beloved Whittier. By far the best is the one on Ezekiel; yet even he gave but a glimpse of the heavenly grandeur. Artists have tried to paint the symbols of Ezekiel, but here even the genius of Raphael failed. Theological minds have had the hardest time with this chapter. It is almost unbelievable what idle speculations they have advanced, even denying any reality to the vision. The truth is that no pen can trace, no tongue can make plain, the infinite order and harmony of what appears to be infinite confusion and contradiction.

But for the humble child of God this vision in Ezekiel is one of transcending beauty. It may not be possible to think through and fully reconstruct in our minds all parts of the chapter. The vision deals with the majesty of God, and the less we indulge in idle speculations on the personality, eternity, presence, or place of Jehovah, the better. Many have been led astray in these things by mistaking their own imaginations or philosophical convictions for truth. We are, however, to meditate on the power, attributes, and kindly care of the Lord. This first chapter in Ezekiel lifts the veil from the unseen and gives to believers sweet and quiet hours in touch with our Lord. It is unfortunate that fanciful theories have kept many from giving this vision a detailed study. Many parts in the vision are clear, and with these in hand we can dig deeper into the chapter.

Though the chapter is called “visions of God,” it is rather a view of His chariot throne, as an object lesson of the Lord’s power and rule. Mighty monarchs of earth have many thrones, and the throne is a symbol revealing the dominion, strength, and glory of the ruler. This [24] chariot throne of the Lord is a living being. As the four directions include all space, so the four cherubim are spoken of as one “living creature” and again as four “living creatures.” Each cherub has four faces and four wings and four hands. There is a hand under each wing, and the hand has “the form of a man’s hand.” Each one of these cherubim also had a great wheel. “When I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubim, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub.” Eze. 10:9.

The four wheels were alike in appearance, and within the four wheels themselves were many, many other wheels. In fact, they appeared “as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel.” This intricate whicework of a wheel within a wheel moved with great rapidity and apparently in all directions, but all was under the Lord’s direct guidance.

“When the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. . . . For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.” These wheels represent the perfect rule of God in the universe and in the nations of earth, in the church, and indeed in the

life of every individual. They reveal how God throughout His dominions, and especially in the affairs of men, guides and controls. Nothing is too large or too small for Him. God is never surprised, and God always knows the way out.

These wheels had rings which “were so high that they were dreadful.” Eze. 1:18. The term “rings” here does not mean the rim of the wheel, but the six bent strakes out of which a rim was put together. A beautiful thing about the “rings” was that they were “full of eyes round about.” Indeed, the cherubim seemed to be covered with eyes. “Their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about.” Eze. 10:12. Eyes represent wisdom, and [25] this abundance of eyes is a symbol of the perfect wisdom of Christ in creation and in all His dealings with created beings.

The colors and the blending of colors of these cherubim were the most lovely sight human eyes ever beheld. “The appearance of the wheels . . . was like unto the color of a beryl.” The beryl is a pale sea-green color, inclined sometimes to water blue and sometimes to yellow. Its crystals have very pretty stripes. The likeness of the throne above the firmament had the “appearance of a sapphire stone.” Eze. 1:26. The sapphire sparkles in a fascinating blue color, sometimes the dark blue of the ocean, sometimes the deep blue of the morning sky, and often with lovely golden pebble spots. The color of the entire vision was “as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire.” Eze. 1:4. Amber is a resplendent composition of silver and gold, but always with the appearance of beautiful molten metal. Even the feet of the cherubim “sparkled like . . . burnished brass.” Above the throne of glory was a delightful rainbow ever changing, yet ever the same—a symbol of the covenant-keeping God.

If we think of the vision as a whole, there is, first, the portentous cloud, radiant round about, and within glowing with the fervor and brightness of living, self-fed flames. Above the throne is a majestic glory, a personal being in the dim outline of a man. This likeness of a man is really the center of this mighty vision of the appearance of the glory of God. Below the throne is a vaulted firmament of massive blue. The word “firmament,” also found in Genesis 1:3, is in other languages called “a widely extended or stretched-out foundation fastening.”

Under and in the midst of this lightning splendor, the four living creatures appear. Their general form and appearance was that of a man, though conjoined with this were also the likenesses of a lion, an ox, and an eagle. [26] Each one seemed to be looking to its own quarter—face each way, so that wherever the living creatures moved, they did not need to turn. There was a face in every direction. Each was separate in respect to the others; yet by the two wings that were expanded for flying, they were in immediate juxtaposition above. They were all moved and animated by one living spirit, by whose mighty impulse they shot like meteors from place to place. In all their movements and appearance they reflected the bright, burning splendor of the fiery element in which they were seen to exist. “As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps; it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.” Eze. 1:13, 14.

What this means to the advent people we read in “Testimonies,” Volume V, page 754: “The bright light going among the living creatures with the swiftness of lightning represents the speed with which this work will finally go forward to completion.”

The prophet himself recounts the vision with great reserve. Twenty-four times in the chapter we find the words “likeness,” or “appearance.” The prophet did not wish to give the impression that he could fully describe the Eternal One. He felt compelled again and again to repeat that he had only seen the “appearance of the likeness” of God. It was the “likeness” of four living creatures and these had the “likeness of a man,” and yet they were “like the appearance of torches.” He saw the “likeness of a throne,” and upon the likeness of the throne was the “likeness as the appearance of a man,” and above

it the “likeness of the glory of the Lord.” The Jews had a very deep reverence for God. They never spoke the [27] name Elohim, the Hebrew term for God in the beginning of Genesis. But while the prophet speaks of the likeness and appearance of God’s glory, he does this in such a manner that we find him deeply impressed that God is a living personal Being dwelling in the sanctuary above and overruling all. And this inward assurance of the presence and help of God stayed with him and sustained him to the end.

When Ezekiel received this vision, his mind was oppressed with gloomy prospects. Things had never before looked as dark for Israel as they appeared at that time. The prophet himself was a captive in a strange land. On every hand were idolatry and wickedness and heathen practices. He saw the slavery, the oppression, the poverty, for which those heathen lands were known. Though he was a priest, there was no sanctuary, and he could have little part in any divine service. With him were a large number of other captives, many of whom suffered great distress. Jerusalem was largely destroyed, and another war, the last one, with Babylon seemed near. But above all these things were the apostasy and idolatry of his own people in Babylon. He saw them turning from the living God to the deities of Chaldea. Open, defiant opposition to Jehovah seemed to increase daily. The prophet was tempted to doubt, not the existence, but the overruling providence and the kind, loving care of his heavenly Father. For his sake as well as for his brethren’s, this first great vision of God was given.

As Ezekiel saw the mighty majesty and power of the Lord, his heart was greatly cheered. He looked at the rainbow above the throne, and he remembered anew the eternal covenant of God with man and with his own beloved people. He watched the cherubim filled with eyes and behind, and he not only realized that the all-seeing eye of God observed all that happened, but he thought of the marvelous wisdom revealed in those eyes. [28] He began to trust anew; for, after all, the affairs of nations and of each individual were known to God. Then he watched the wheels within the wheels of those marvelous living creatures; and their movements, intricate though they were, made plain how an overruling Providence controls the entire universe and directs even the most complicated affairs of man. Again when he saw the lightning speed of these rapidly moving creatures, he was led to understand that even though the ways of God seem slow to us, they come in God's own time and are never late. As the prophet viewed this glorious vision of brightness and light, he was led to know that over all and controlling all is the hand of eternal power and inexpressible love.

In that same chapter there are many lessons for mankind today. With many in our time the vision of God has grown dim, and despair is coming into their hearts. They need to meditate upon God as revealed in this beautiful vision of Ezekiel. There is not a sorrow in any heart that God does not know and that God does not permit; there is not a disappointment so deep or a failure so great but that God knows the way out and will help everyone who seeks Him. No matter how perplexed we are, the Lord is never perplexed. God, who always knows what is best, will reveal His will to us. He wants us to have the same assurance of His presence that was given to Ezekiel. He wants us to sense that we are never alone, that every human life in this world of darkness is really lived in the light of our Father in heaven. Many who today are disheartened because of their own sins and ready to give up, should take on new courage as they consider again the love and Power and presence of the Saviour. It is not His will that we should ever be alone. He wishes us to spend every hour of every day as in His own personal presence. [29]

But this divine view of God is not only of great value for His children as individuals, but of great value to the church. Churches today are breaking up because of the mighty power of the enemies of Christ. Not a few churches are discouraged and ready to surrender. They forget that God has a special care for His own. The angels of glory represented by these four living beings, or cherubim, that mighty host of heaven, have been commissioned to watch over the church of Christ. He Himself has given us the promise, speaking of the church, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The Adventist people will come into dark days. There may be periods ahead of us when it will seem as if this blessed

advent movement will break up, but we are never to despair. The wheels within a wheel are a symbol of the organized gospel work on the earth. The hand stretched out to guide and help makes plain the presence and guidance of the Lord. Many powers will be arrayed against the remnant people of the Lord, and they will be sorely persecuted and oppressed, but never will they need to lose heart.

Another trend of modern religious thought should be noted. Though there is a great drift away from God, and though the way seems dark, from another angle many encouraging signs appear. While multitudes are drifting, there is also in millions of human hearts today a deep longing after the Lord.

Says the English writer, Sir Philip Gibbs: "Yet, by a strange and tragic contradiction, there has been no time in modern history when the peoples of the old civilization have been so desperately eager for spiritual guidance. There is a great thirst for spiritual refreshment from among those in the dry desert of our present discontent. I find expression of that among many men and women not 'religious' in temperament nor of sentimental type, [30] but rather among cynics and ironists and realists. In conversation at the end of pessimism, they are apt to admit that 'nothing can save us all but some new prophet of God.' "—"More That Must Be Told," pp. 107, 108.

We speak of our day as the "machine age," and think of the multitudes as godless and all taken up with carnal, material things. Yet even in this time many express a deep longing after God and eternity. This is seen in our modern literature, irreligious as it often seems to be. Thus Harry Kemp, one of our American poets, writes:

"I cannot put His presence by, I meet Him everywhere;
I meet Him in the country town, the busy market square; The mansion and the tenement attest His presence there.

"Upon the funneled ships at sea He sets His shining feet; The distant ends of empire not in vain His name repeat— And, like the presence of a rose, He makes the whole world sweet.

"He comes to break the barriers down raised up by barren creeds;
About the globe, from Zone to zone, like Sunlight He proceeds;
He comes to give the world's starved heart the perfect love it
needs—

“The Christ, whose friends have played Him false, whom dogmas have belied,
Still speaking to the hearts of men—though shamed and crucified.”

In those strange verses, “Heart of God,” Vachel Lindsay says:

“O great heart of God,
Once vague and lost to me,
Why do I throb with your throb tonight,
Is this land, eternity?

* * * * *

[31]

“Wild, thundering heart of God,
Out of my doubt I come,
And my foolish feet with prophet’s feet, March with the prophet’s drum.”

In another poem on “God” by Gamaliel Bradford, we find these beautiful lines:

“Day and night, I wander widely through the wilderness of thought,
Catching dainty things of fancy most reluctant to be caught, . . . But my one unchanged obsession, wheresoe’er my feet have trod,
Is a keen, enormous, haunting, never-sated thirst for God.”

This search for God in the hearts of men and women today is the Lord’s preparation for the advent message. It is His Spirit everywhere at work in the hearts of men, leading them to accept present truth.

The Old Testament revelation, in its conception of God, emphasizes His relation to humanity, and especially to the people of Israel. We find no theoretical speculations concerning God’s existence and nature, but a very clear presentation of His moral claims, His promises, and His acts. The fear of God is based upon His hatred for everything that is morally unclean, and on the judgment come. The redeeming power and lawgiving majesty God forms the basis of the Old Testament revelation. In the New Testament God reveals Himself in the highest and fullest sense as our loving Father and as the Father Jesus Christ. All we know of God is what Jesus revealed. He brought us no idle speculations, but He taught us that we must accept God through Him, and He made plain the Father’s will and all the blessings connected it. In this Christian revelation concerning the Fatherhood of God, love is the fundamental element, as is [32] so forcefully expressed in the beautiful words, “God is love.” It is not love in the abstract, but love in deed and personal care. The New Testament, too, reveals His perfect purity and glorious majesty. He, the Almighty God, is to be worshiped in the spirit of loving service.

Down through the ages this simple revelation of God in Christ has often been beclouded by the finespun reasoning of man. Augustine taught a God idea largely derived from the Greek philosophers. The scholastic churchmen of the Dark Ages made God an arbitrary being, hard and revengeful. The mystics exalted God’s greatness and love, but taught the annihilation of law and outlaw obedience. The Papacy represented God as a strict autocrat and judge. Luther and other Reformers returned in part to the God of the Scriptures, and set forth His love with some clearness, though they still clung to the horrible doctrine of eternal torment. In America, Jonathan Edwards, in spite of other intolerant views, emphasized strongly the absolute sovereignty of God. He believed in God as a personal being, glorious and transcendent, the absolute Source and Ruler of this world and of the universe. As a motive for creation he gave not only the glory of God, but the happiness of His creatures. These ideas about God had a healthy molding influence on American religious thinking.

The advent message, like the message of Ezekiel, is to give the people “visions” of God. We are to teach, as stated so frequently in the Scriptures, that “the Lord reigns.” There is today a great interest in the idea of God. At the recent summer school for clergy in Cambridge, England, the only subject considered was the one word, “God.” Papers were written by many on such subjects as “The Study of God.” We need to meditate more and more on the beautiful love of God as revealed to us in nature. We should see our Father’s hand in the [33] beautiful things about us: the starry night, the gentle dew, the falling rain, the budding grass, the singing birds. All testify of God’s love and care for His own.

Believers today, like Ezekiel of old, need a clear view of divine things. The doctrine of God should be studied anew, and all should have a keen sense of the continual presence of the Lord. [34]

Prophetic Messengers

Read Ezekiel 2 and 3

THE trend to make holy things profane is one of the saddest religious tendencies of our time. We live in an irreverent age. With many people holy things have become common. Not only reverence for God, but respect for the house and worship of God, is nearly unknown. This lack of reverence for divine things, whether it be the word or truth or person of the Deity, has most dire results. Reverence for God gives dignity to man and a high regard for all our fellow men. True reverence creates humility. The haughty pride of rulers so common today and so constantly seen in the way in which man is exalted or worshiped, would disappear if proper reverence were regarded. This tendency to make holy things profane is seen in many ways. God's holy Sabbath is desecrated. Baptism, so sacredly regarded in Holy Writ, is made ordinary and common. The same applies to holy communion.

Modern Secularism

There is today an alarming spiritual declension. Modern comforts and secular pursuits somehow have caused many to become indifferent to religion. The comfort, convenience, and abundance of our day lead many to forget God or to feel less clearly their need of His help.

One evidence of the sad lack of living religion today is the new attitude of many toward prayer. Concerning this we quote from an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, for April, 1940:

[35]

“Most modern people hardly pray at all; and all too many of those who still do bother to address the Almighty are content to do it in what is little more than a patter of words long since become mechanical. Few there are nowadays who are sufficiently proficient in approaches to God to find enjoyable, or even possible, the higher reaches of ‘mental prayer.’ . . . Why has prayer become ‘the great lost art’?”

But the tendency to lose respect for that which is holy and to make life common and profane is seen most clearly in the modern contempt for God's work and workers. The sacred calling of the ministry is ridiculed. Few today have the old-time love and regard for the servants of the Lord. That God calls men and women and entrusts to them a definite message, is denied. The messenger is derided and the messages are spurned. But if God can no longer speak to this earth, mankind is lost. “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” But the modern disregard for holy office and ridicule of God's messages goes farther than to reject the inspiration of the Bible. It denies that the Lord has special messengers today to whom He reveals His will as He did to the prophets of old.

The divine call to prophetic service is extremely important. To a large degree, such a call of God decides the eternal destiny of the one called, as well as of those who hear the message “He that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.” Eze. 33:5. When a person is commissioned to be God's messenger with prophetic messages, very convincing proofs in signs and wonders of such a call are given. No other man in the Bible received more outstanding divine credentials than did Ezekiel. The call of Moses, or Paul, was unusual, but the call of Ezekiel was in some ways, even more so. Though he was referred to twice as one whom the people thought of as a prophet, the Lord did not directly designate him as such. Ezekiel was [36] given a greater work. He was, to be sure, a prophet, but in a larger sense he became a

watchman for those dark days of crisis. Ezekiel, indeed, is the only one in the Bible who in his call was specifically named a watchman. Of this strange call to the prophet, Whittier writes:

“In sudden whirlwind, cloud, and flame, The Spirit of the Highest came! Before mine eyes a vision passed, A glory terrible and vast;
With dreadful eyes of living things, And sounding sweep of angel wings, With circling light and sapphire throne, And flamelike form of One thereon, And voice of that dread likeness sent Down from the crystal firmament!

“The burden of a prophet's power
Fell on me in that fearful hour;
From off unutterable woes
The curtain of the future rose
I saw far down the coming time
The fiery chastisement of crime;
With noise of mingling hosts, and jar

Of falling towers and shouts of war,
I saw the nations rise and fall,
Like fire gleams on my tent's white wall."

Ezekiel received two distinct calls. In the first, recorded in chapters two and three, he was made "a watchman unto the house of Israel." In the second, recorded in chapter 33, many years later and after he had been prophesying to the nations, he was made a watchman for all mankind. The first call of God came to him after he had seen the Lord enthroned above the cherubim. "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the Spirit entered into me when He spake unto me. And He said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against Me: they and their fathers have transgressed [37] against Me, even unto this very day. Eze. 2:1-3. To teach Ezekiel the sacred duty to speak not his words, but God's, the Lord in vision showed him a most impressive object lesson. "When I looked, behold, a hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; and He spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe." Verses 9, 10. "Moreover He said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that roll. And He said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. And He said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with My words unto them." Eze. 3:1-4. With this solemn charge, Ezekiel entered upon his lifework to speak the messages of God, and not the words of man.

Unusual Visions and Experiences

Twice in the Scriptures, the book of Isaiah is called the "vision of Isaiah." In like manner the books of Obadiah and Nahum are called the visions of those two prophets. But in Ezekiel we find a term used by no other prophet. Three times he had what he calls "visions of God." The first of these is found in the opening chapters of the book, the second includes chapters eight to twelve, and the third vision of God takes in from chapter forty to the close of the book. In the other revelations of Ezekiel the Lord spoke to him as to all prophets in inspired messages, though not always in a trance or dream. "The word of the Lord came to me," said Ezekiel, thirty-two times, and once he emphasizes the majesty of his message by adding, "The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel." [38]

In Ezekiel other telling terms occur again and again. The prophet was so eager to make plain that the message was not his, but the Lord's, that he used the words, "Thus saith the Lord," 117 times. Jesus spoke of Himself as the "Son of man." And twice the angels called Daniel by the same name. But sixty-nine times Ezekiel is called the "son of man." Ezekiel was not merely a Jew, a son of Abraham. As Jesus the divine "Son of man" was the Saviour of the world, so Ezekiel was given a message not for one race alone, but for the entire human family.

Ezekiel has another very striking term found but seldom in the Scriptures: "They shall know that I am the Lord." This sentence, found, in essence, ninety-four times in his book, gave the purpose of all Ezekiel's revelations. His one supreme purpose and passion was to lead men and women back to God. His message is not only for the church in exile, but for the church in every generation. In a very striking sense, the prophecies of Ezekiel find their fulfillment in our own day. The experience of apostate Israel is a type of that of modern-world Christianity. Ezekiel's earnest and repeated calls to repentance set forth in clear terms the advent message of repentance and of living heart religion.

John the revelator, while in vision, was twice "carried . . . away in the Spirit:" the first time "into the wilderness" when he saw Babylon—"a woman . . . upon a scarlet-colored beast;" the second time to "a great and high mountain," where he beheld the city of God, "the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Rev. 17:3; 21:10. In like manner in each of the three "visions of God" Ezekiel was taken up in the spirit and transported to another place. Of the first time he says: "So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me. Then I came to them [39] of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days." Eze. 3:14, 15.

At another time Ezekiel was taken by the Spirit and carried to Jerusalem. "He put forth the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy." Eze. 8:3.

The third, and as far as we know, the last, time the Spirit of God seemed to take Ezekiel from place to place, is told of in the fortieth chapter. The day Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians, "in the selfsame day the hand of the Lord was upon me, and

brought me thither. In the visions of God brought He me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south.” Eze. 40:1, 2.

When Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was promised a son, the forerunner of the Messiah, Zacharias became dumb, and for many months did not speak a word. Of Ezekiel, too, we read that at times he was dumb. “I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover; for they are a rebellious house.” Eze. 3:26. Just how long lie was unable to speak is not revealed. Some claim that he was dumb for thirteen years, but we have not been able to verify that by the Bible. Once he sat with the people for seven days without speaking. At other times he was dumb for longer periods and able to speak only as the Lord enabled him to do so. After the death of his wife, it was revealed to the prophet that a man would come from Jerusalem with the information that the city was taken, and when that sad event was [40] proclaimed, the Lord would “cause thee to hear it with thine ears,” “and be no more dumb.” Eze. 24:26, 27. “And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten. Now the hand of the Lord was upon me in the evening, afore he that was escaped came; and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb.” Eze. 33:21, 22.

When we read that Ezekiel was dumb and see how strangely God used him so that he was even taken from place to place by the Spirit, our minds turn to the many times in which the messenger of the Lord for this remnant church, while living in one country, seemed in vision to be transported to another. We are also reminded of how God revealed what was going on behind closed doors in other lands regarding plans for the mission work and of the times when God’s messenger seemed to be taken from the earth up into the glory of heaven. “The Holy Ghost fell upon me, and I seemed to be rising higher and higher, far above the dark world.”—“*Early Writings*,” p. 14.

We shall summarize some comparisons between the call and work of Ezekiel and of the messenger of God in this generation:

In the first vision of each was a view of the glory of God. In Ezekiel’s first vision, “the heavens were opened,” and he “saw visions of God.” Above the cherubim was the throne of God, surrounded by a rainbow. In Ellen G. White’s first vision, she saw the great white cloud—a “living cloud,” upon which sat the “Son of man” over the cloud. “A rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels.”—*Id.*, p. 13.

Both were given a solemn commission to act as God’s [41] messenger. Ezekiel was commissioned to go to the children of Israel, and to speak to them the words of the Lord. (Eze. 2:1-6.) Mrs. White was bidden to relate to others that which the Lord had shown her. (“*Early Writings*,” p. 20.)

Both were told they would meet trials and opposition. Ezekiel was sent to a rebellious house, and they would not hearken unto him. (Eze. 3:7) Mrs. White was shown the trials through which she must pass, and was told that she should “meet with great opposition, and suffer anguish of spirit by going.”—*Id.*, p. 20.

At first both manifested a reluctance, almost to the point of disobedience. Ezekiel went in “bitterness” and in the heat of his spirit. (Eze. 3:15.) Mrs. White considered her poor health, her timid, retiring disposition, and for several days prayed far into the night that the burden might be removed from her. For a long time she “lay on her face,” seeking for release. (“*Life Sketches*,” p. 691; “*Early Writings*,” p. 20.) “After I had the vision, and God gave me light, He bade me deliver it to the band, but I shrank from it. I was young, and I thought they would not receive it from me. I disobeyed the Lord, and instead of remaining at home, where the meeting was to be that night, I got in a sleigh in the morning, and rode three or four miles.”—*Review and Herald*, March 14, 1935.

Ezekiel was warned that if as a watchman he should fail to blow the trumpet, and souls should be lost, their blood would be required at his hand. (Eze. 3:17-21.) Finding it a great cross to relate to the erring the messages of reproof given her for them, Mrs. White was tempted to soften the reproof. In vision she was shown a company with torn garments who came near to her and rubbed them upon hers. She then saw that her garments were stained with blood. She was told that this repre- [42] sented her situation if she neglected to give the messages faithfully. (“*Testimonies*,” Vol. I, pp. 73, 74.)

Both had an experience of being dumb. After his hesitation about undertaking his mission, following the above warning, Ezekiel was stricken dumb for a time. (Eze. 3:26, 27.) In a moment of doubt regarding her experience, Mrs. White resisted the power of the Spirit as it rested upon her. She was immediately stricken dumb and remained so for an entire day. (“*Early Writings*,” pp. 22, 23.)

During the time they were dumb, both were called to bear witness. While Ezekiel was dumb, he was called upon to represent the siege of Jerusalem in symbolic actions. (Eze. 4:4.) While Mrs. White was dumb, she wrote upon a slate. In the large Bible she looked up fifty texts that had been held up before her on a golden card. (“*Early Writings*,” p. 23.)

Both sometimes seemed to be present and participate in scenes far away. In vision, Ezekiel seemed to be in Jerusalem, where he saw various forms of idolatry being carried on in the temple precincts. He saw what men were doing, and recognized one, calling him by name. (Ezekiel 8.) Mrs. White, while in Salamanca, New York, in November, 1890, seemed to be present at a meeting in Battle

Creek, at which the future of the *American Sentinel* was being discussed. One was seen holding up a paper, and urging the elimination of a certain kind of article. Some months later, this was again brought to her mind and described in a morning service. To her own surprise, she then learned that such a meeting had been held during the previous night. The participants were present, those who were on the wrong side made confessions, and an unfortunate division was prevented. ("Life Sketches," pp. 309-318.)

Both were opposed by false prophets, and warned [43] these deluded people. Ezekiel was given a message against the "foolish prophets" that follow their own spirit, and had seen "vanity and lying divination." (Ezekiel 13) On a number of occasions Mrs White was challenged by men and women who bore false messages, based upon impressions which they claimed to be the voice of the Holy Spirit. Often they had dreams or visions opposed to the Lord's messenger or to the messages borne.

In our day even so-called Christians scoff at the idea of messages from God. They may in part accept the revelations of the Bible, but they bitterly oppose the gift of prophecy in the church now.

But even in this age of contempt for holy things, God's messages will be heard. There is a persistent effort at this time to separate not the world alone, but even the church, from God. The trend is strong to deny that the Lord now gives prophetic revelations direct to mankind. Some admit that spiritist mediums receive communications from the great "beyond," but they do not believe that God now reveals His will through the Spirit of prophecy. Yet never before has mankind needed such messages with light from heaven as much as we need them today. Surely if Israel of old had need of prophets, we in our day of confusion and peril need them even more. [44]

The Seat of Authority in Religion

Read Ezekiel 4, 5, 6, and 7

A DEFINITE, positive preaching of Christ and His truth is the need of this hour. Modern religious thinking and teaching have become vague and weak. Science boasts of being positive and exact. It deals in experimental knowledge. It measures and weighs and tests and demonstrates. We are told that science brings certainties, but religion, guesswork and legends. No comparison could be more invidious than this, or farther from the truth. We believe in science, and we have the highest regard for the noble men who devote their lives to that search for truth that benefits mankind.

However, we regret to state that modern thinking is drowning in an ocean of conflicting theories. There is no unity of thought, no center around which the soul of man gathers, no definite direction or purpose by some creative inspiration of God, *or high ideals*. Our mechanistic philosophy of man and the universe is all at sea. How true it is "that the mania for facts alone has made more and more difficult the problem of eliciting from these scattered bits of theory a unified outlook upon the whole." And never were priests or popes more dogmatic and intolerant of others who differed with them than some petty, two-by-four "scientists" in their narrow views.

The question of authority in faith and morals needs to be restudied and restated today. "One error that has greatly influenced modern thinking or search for truth is its faith in the absolute supremacy of science. This is [45] taken for granted by the great multitude." Says Dr. J. H. Morrison, an outstanding thinker of England, in his book, "Christian Faith and the Science of Today," page 73: "There is a widespread idea, deep rooted in the modern mind, that the science of today is the absolute and final truth."

The worship of science and the infallibility of its discoveries, have become almost an obsession with many. The greater scientists, however, do not endorse that idea. Thus Darwin said: "All our knowledge of this planet is something like an old hen's knowledge of a forty-acre field, in one corner of which she happens to be scratching."—"Christjan Faith and the Science of Today," J. H. Morrison, p. 74.

Again Jeans, the great astronomer in England, declares: "With the most powerful telescope we can see only a tiny fraction of space, so small that it may bear the same relation to the whole of space as the Isle of Wight does to the surface of the earth."—*Id.*, pp. 77, 78.

More and more of recent years we see men discarding the "theory that religious faith is impossible for the educated modern." The failure of atheism and the utter bankruptcy of Modernism and liberal theology proclaim in thundering tones that without faith in God and the Bible, morality fails and humanity itself cannot exist. Thus Miles H. Krumbine says: "We have disinfected religion from superstition, only to discover that man cannot live on disinfectants. Many have discovered also that a thin trickle of sociology is a poor substitute for God." Says another writer concerning our strange, unsettled time: "Amid all other trends and moods manifested, the interest in God, the wistful outreach for God, the quest for God, the experiment which becomes an experience, has gone steadily on."

In studying the religious life of today we must consider the standing of the Bible as an inspired book of divine authority. The old-time prestige of the Scriptures is largely gone. Atheism and secularism from without and Modernism and liberal theology from within the church, have greatly weakened the faith of the multitude in the word of God. The doctrine of inspiration is denied on every

hand. "Professor John A. W. Haas says: 'If, then, finally the authority of the message is gone, we are left without any authority, religion is adrift and optimism is a pure speculation. We are hastening through our modern liberalism into conditions of religious dissolution' "—a cultured paganism. Professor Walter Scott Athearn says: " 'In fifty years crime has increased four hundred per cent. Something must be done to underpin the virtues of our people.' "—"Modern Religious Liberalism," John Horsch, pp. 130, 131.

There is no centralized idea, no faith in God as the heart of modern thinking. It is this inspired source of thinking recorded in a living faith which imparts power and enthusiasm in the struggle for freedom and right. But the thinking of mankind today is split up into many sections or apartments. Thus Dr. Marvin M. Black writes:

"Seeing things together as parts of unified totality is necessary if we are to escape the confusion and discord of contemporary civilization. More than ever before there is need of synoptic vision—to see life whole, transcending the piecemeal character of merely partial views and attitudes. On all sides we are met by a babel of conflicting voices: Physics tells us of the world in terms of matter and motion; biology speaks of cells, gemmules, and the 'inner urge' that makes for life and behavior; psychology uses the language of 'drives,' 'capacities,' and 'conditioned reflexes;' this group of economists hails one doctrine as the salvation of society; another group sees in it society's [47] downfall; sociology, political science, anthropology, and other social sciences likewise speak a jargon peculiar to themselves—until one hardly knows which way to turn, and finds it difficult to make order out of the chaos of conflicting opinions."—"The Pendulum Swings Back," p. 7.

The seat of authority in religion cannot be of man. It is not in that combination of priests and politicians called the Papacy, or the Roman church. It is not in any church. It is not in science. In fact, many claiming to be scientists are only cheap scoffers. No man who ridicules religion is worthy of the name of scientist. No, the true and only seat of authority in matters of faith or moral teaching is God's Word, the Holy Scriptures. Only those who believe in the Bible as the divine word of God, have a unified thinking.

The greatest cause of the present weak, defeated state of the church is the uncertain, flabby preaching of our day. Christ spoke "as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Paul did not shun to declare all the counsel of God. Our time needs preachers with strong convictions and courage to make them known.

Such a man was Ezekiel in Babylon. Like the modern churches, the Jews in exile had become worldly. They did not sense the moral crisis into which they had come. They loved money, ease, and luxury. They ran after the idols of popular amusements. Ezekiel neither reared nor hesitated to protest and warn. Tenderly he set forth the love of God, calling them to repentance, and sternly he rebuked their apostasy. His message and manner of preaching show us the way.

In God's work every age has its man and every man has his message. In presenting messages for special times, not only does God choose men adapted to the work, but the men choose methods of presenting their messages that are fitted to the thinking of their day. Sometimes [48] when conditions are abnormal or strained, as they were with the exiles in Babylonian captivity, the methods chosen, as well as the message itself, are unusual. Ezekiel did things in ways that to us would seem strange and almost unbecoming, but the people were impressed, and many understood.

In his teaching Ezekiel used many parables and proverbs as well as striking object lessons. When he tried to make plain that Jerusalem was to be besieged and destroyed, he arrested the attention of all the captives by taking a large tile and portraying upon it a map of Jerusalem. Then he lay down in front of that tile for 430 days. During this time he himself suffered both hunger and thirst. At another time he took a sharp knife like a barber's razor and cut his own hair. For Ezekiel, as a priest, the hair was a sacred heritage. However, he not only cut it off, but he divided it into three parts, burning one part, scattering another to the winds, and cutting other all to pieces.

At still another time, Ezekiel dug a hole in the wall of his house and began to carry his clothing and furniture out into the street through the hole he had dug. As he did this, he would eat a snatch of food as in great hurry and fear. At other times the prophet used even stronger methods, and when the people watched and wondered, he gave a clear answer to all their questions. The servants of the Lord today, as the world is breaking up, may have to use strange methods to impress spiritual truths on the hearts of the people. Like Ezekiel of old, we have to deal with "a confederation of men in league with evil spirits." Only strong methods and burning words will arouse the people to a sense of their dangers. Too many religious leaders at this time seek a career, but shun the cross. As they neglect the flock, the flock scatters. We are not to judge methods or the strong messages of others. [49] Each one is to be true to his own individuality and follow the Lord's leading.

In the call of Ezekiel to watchmen and shepherds, one sacred truth is made especially prominent. It is the duty of God's servants to be faithful in giving a clear message. The people are to hear the "sound of the trumpet," that is, a definite call to repentance, and to prepare to meet the Lord. This certain sound of the trumpet has a peculiar meaning for the Adventist ministry. We have been definitely told that the words of Ezekiel are a warning to us. If we fail to give the old-time message in the power of God's Spirit, great loss will come to the church, and we ourselves will perish.

"Let us, the children of the night,
Put off the cloak that hides the scar! Let us be children of the light,
And tell the ages where we are!" —*Edwin Arlington Robinson*. [50]

Modern Idols in Modern Churches

Read Ezekiel 8 and 9

THE trend toward secularism is growing in strength. The old-time humanism may be in decline, but the change is a change of garment rather than of heart. Two errors, hand-painted and popular, are among the chief enemies of true Christianity in our age. One of these is a false tolerance. Genuine freedom is an untold boon. But the fact that all men have within proper limits the right to do or Worship as they choose, does not mean that everything is morally right.

A great indifference to doctrine and standards of right or wrong has come in. Many forget that while we are not to condemn one another as individuals, we are to take a firm stand against every sin and error. The tendency now is toward a wishy-washy milk-and-water religion and morality. We need men of strong convictions who hate sin, and warn against false ideas. Modern liberalism reveals an appalling unconcern with respect to doctrinal truths. "The flight from dogma" has led to a flight from morals. "The lack of a solid dogma of man is the immediate source of our social, ethical, and aesthetical muddle."—"Christianity, and the Modern Chaos," *William George Peck*, p. 26.

"Fr. V. A. Demant said in a recent interview: 'Modern civilization is in danger of complete collapse because it has been built up on foundations that have no real guidance from religion. . . . No secular civilization can be successful, even on the secular plane, without a spiritual end.' "—*Id.*, p. 112. [51]

This misguided tolerance which leads many to condone sin and smile at error is really a sign of religious decay. It is in effect a door through which every form of philosophical error and satanic delusion can freely enter the church. One manifestation of this indifference to vital truth is the ease with which churches of almost opposite creeds now unite. The most tragic and fateful fruitage of this modern false tolerance is the new attitude of millions of nominal Protestants toward Rome. The faith and protests of their fathers have been thrown to the wind as they admire and defend the policies of the Pope.

Another enemy of living faith is the tendency to mistake culture for holiness. Art, music, education, ritualistic worship, polished, ethical preaching, though in themselves beautiful, are not a substitute for piety and prayer. In the Roman church they are always used to shield error—and sometimes sin.

But some find it hard in our time of boasted liberty and culture to resist the allurements of secularism and to separate the true from the false. For this reason it is instructive to study the second great "vision of God" in Ezekiel.

In the first great vision he had seen the glory of God and had received his prophetic call. In this vision there was revealed to him the apostasy and religious degradation of the Jewish people in Jerusalem. There is no other statement like this anywhere in the Bible. It would seem that this second great "vision of God" came to Ezekiel while he was still engaged in the siege of Jerusalem, as described in chapter 4, as the elders of Judah sat before him. He had already become prominent because of his prophetic gifts, and these elders had come to inquire further about the things God had revealed to him.

In the vision Ezekiel said the Lord put forth the form [52] of a hand, and took him by a lock of his head; and lifted him up between the earth and the heaven and brought him "in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy." Eze. 8:3. As he was thus brought to the temple in Jerusalem, he beheld the glory of the God of Israel according to the vision that he saw in the plain. Standing in the very presence of God, he saw first "the image of jealousy" This idol was an obscene image of the goddess Astarte, a voluptuous representation of sex in the grossest immoral acts so common in the idol temples. This image of jealousy held up to ridicule and contempt the sacred but outraged feeling of a husband or wife when the other party is untrue.

From this astonishing introduction the prophet was brought nearer the temple itself. He saw the “great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far oft from my sanctuary.” The prophet was still outside the temple, and the doors were closed as though the powers of evil within would not reveal to his prophetic glance their corruptions inside the holy place. But God, wishing His servant to know what was going on, said, “Son of man, dig now in the wall.” There is a lesson here which we do well to consider. Some people are of the opinion that the sins of Christendom should not be revealed. They hold it to be wrong to investigate or speak of sins or errors in the so-called “temples of God.” The Lord, however, commands His servant to “dig in the wall,” in order that he may see and reveal to others how the truth of God has been perverted and how in the very worship of God, His name is blasphemed.

When Ezekiel “had digged in the wall,” he saw a door, and the Lord told him to “go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.” As the prophet entered [53] the temple, he had such a view as few men ever beheld. He saw images and idols of every kind portrayed upon the walls of the holy place. There were pictures of “every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel.” As Ezekiel gazed on this dreadful portrayal of idolatry in the temple, he noticed “seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.” Eze. 8:11. The term “seventy men” refers to the seventy elders spoken of in the early history of Israel and later known as the Sanhedrin. One of these men, Jaazaniah by name, was prominent in the history of Judah at that time. As these men were offering their incense and talking among themselves they said, “The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth.” Eze. 8:12. These last words of the apostate leaders are really the climax of rebellion against God.

After the prophet had observed this first vision of religious depravity, the Lord said to him, “Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.” The Lord then brought him to the gate of the Lord’s house, and there he beheld “women weeping for Tammuz.” This worship of Tammuz by weeping women was counted in God’s eyes an even greater abomination than all the idolatry seen as the seventy men offered incense to the other idols. Tammuz was the sun-god, and the weeping for Tammuz was one of the most corrupt forms of idolatry known in those days. It took place at Christmas time when, as they claimed, their god had died and they were weeping lest he would not return. The rites connected with this were licentious beyond description, and the women in the temple were guilty of the most depraved practices. After this awful view of the corruptions brought by these ungodly women into the temple itself, [54] the Lord said, “Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And He brought me into the inner court of the Lord’s house, and, behold at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the Sun toward the east.” Eze. 8:15, 16.

Who these twenty-five men are is not revealed. They not only turned their backs upon the temple of the Lord and worshiped toward the east, but they worshiped the sun. This wicked sun worship was the worst form of idolatry in ancient times. In fact, the whole system of idolatry from both Egypt and Babylon centered in sun worship. We still have many reminders of that sun worship, not only in our popular festivals of Christmas and Easter, but especially in the weekly observance of the ancient day of the Sun. If God viewed with horror the worship of the sun by twenty-five men in the temple as they turned their backs upon the sanctuary of the Lord, how does He regard the great honor paid today by the Christian church to these relics of that vile idolatry? Of this insidious and appalling apostasy the Lord said, “Hast thou seen this, O Son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke Me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in fury: Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in Mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.” Eze. 8:17, 18.

There may be those who will say that this vision of Ezekiel was only for the Jews in Jerusalem. However, the whole prophecy points to the latter days of which Jerusalem was a type. The messenger of the Lord says, [55] “The prophet, looking down the ages, had this time presented before his vision.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. V, p. 208. It is not an exaggeration to say that as the temple of old was filled with idols and the abominations of idolatry, so the churches of our day are filled with modern idols and idolatry.

On this, Ellen G. White states: “It is as easy to make an idol of false doctrines and theories as to fashion an idol of wood or stone. By misrepresenting the attributes of God, Satan leads men to conceive of Him in a false character. With many, a philosophical idol is enthroned in the place of Jehovah; while the living God, as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, and in the works of creation, is worshiped by but few. Thousands deify nature, while they deny the God of nature. Though in a different form, idolatry exists in the Christian world today as verily as it existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah. The god of many professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists,—the god of polished fashionable circles, of many colleges and universities, even of some theological institutions,—is little better than Baal, the sun-god of Phoenicia.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 583.

This sad truth concerning modern idolatry becomes very plain when we consider what is really being taught by religious leaders today. The idea that the apostasies so common in Israel of old are unknown today, is accepted only by those who are spiritually blind. There is overwhelming evidence to prove that the experience of apostate Israel when Jerusalem was destroyed was but a shadow of the corruptions and errors found in the churches today. We need now to dig through the wall and see how modern Christianity, especially the Orthodox and Roman Catholic section, has departed from the gospel. [56]

It is not only in Russia and other parts of the world that unbelief is rife. It is almost as common, and certainly as outspoken, in many so-called Christian churches, and even among prominent preachers.

Let us look at religious conditions in America. One author raises the question, Is American religion Christian? and then says: "It has been customary in the past for American Protestants to assume the reliability and integrity of their own witness to the Christian faith. . . . All alike assume the stability of the foundations of Protestantism. Where doubt is cast upon these foundations, it is never directed toward the American section, but is almost invariably directed toward the European section. . . . But the preoccupation of the leaders of the American churches with the crumbling foundations of European churches seems somewhat gratuitous when the foundations of their own churches are crumbling under their very feet for exactly the same reasons. . . . The degradation of the American Protestant church is as complete as the degradation of any other national Protestant church. The process of degradation has been more subtle and inconspicuous, but equally devastating in its consequences for faith."—"The Church Against the World," H. R. Niebuhr, pp. 100-102.

The late Bishop Randolph S. Foster wrote:

"Just now four out of five of our churches are doing nothing, almost absolutely nothing; and God's blessed cause is not made one whit stronger in numbers or influence by their living. The church of God is today courting the world. Its members are bringing it down to the level of the ungodly. The ball, the theater, nude and lewd art, social luxuries, with all their loose moralities, are making inroads into the sacred enclosure of the church.

"As a satisfaction for all this worldliness Christians [57] are making a great deal of Lent and Easter ornamentalions. It is the old trick of Satan. The Jewish church struck on that rock, the Romish church was wrecked on it, and the Protestant church is fast reaching the same doom. Our great dangers, as we see them, are assimilation to the world, neglect of the poor, substitution of the form for the fact of godliness, abandonment of discipline, a hireling ministry, an impure gospel, which summed up is a fashionable church. . . .

"Formerly every Methodist attended class and gave testimony of experimental religion. Now the class meeting is attended by very few. . . . Worldly socials, fairs, festivals, concerts, and such like have taken the place of the religious. . . meetings of earlier days. . . .

"The early Methodist ministers went forth to sacrifice and suffer for Christ They sought not places of ease and affluence, but of privation and suffering. They gloried not in their big salaries, fine parsonages, and refined congregations, but in the souls that had been won to Jesus. Oh, how changed! A hireling ministry will be a feeble, a timid, a truckling, a time-serving ministry without faith, endurance, and holy power. Methodism formerly dealt in the great central truth. Now the pulpits deal largely in generalities and in popular lectures. The glorious doctrine of entire sanctification is rarely heard and seldom witnessed in the pulpits."—Quoted in "Breakers! Methodism Adrift," L. W. Munhall, pp. 37-40.

The Reverend Doctor Buckley, editor of the *Christian Advocate*, declared:

"The trouble with too many preachers today is that they never teach the deity of Christ. . . .

"There are thousands of men in this city [Cleveland] who have never had the gospel presented to them in a manner which could reach them. They are to be saved in the manner in which the heathen are to be saved, by [58] the light that reached them. While I cannot agree with the Calvinists that none of the elect ever fall away, the older I grow, the more I think that very few fall away who were really converted.

"Some of our ministers even do not hesitate to state in their pulpits that in a few years Abraham will be generally regarded as a name and not as a person. For twenty years I have not heard a real sermon on such a topic as the new birth. I have heard only one sermon on sin properly *presented*."—*Id.*, pp. 40, 41.

The cause, however of the present apostasy in Protestantism is not only worldliness and sheltered sins. The lack of faith in God's word and the departure from true doctrine are really more alarming. Concerning this a very thoughtful writer on religion in America says:

"The intellectual drift within Protestantism has gone so far that it has become stale. A dark and impenetrable cloud seems to have settled upon the intellectuals. A frigid paralysis is evident. Intellectualism has no power to save itself. It has gone to seed. It has lost its Master, its sense of mission. . . . Its alliance with modern philosophy and psychology has been detrimental."—"Christianity in America," E. G. Homrighausen, pp. 46, 47.

In the foregoing quotations we have referred only to the churches in America. As we have visited other parts of the world in which there are large bodies of Christians, such as Europe, Ethiopia, South America, Mexico, etc., we have seen in those countries an even greater lack of piety, as well as greater errors. It is really almost unbelievable the state of spiritual declension to which such churches as the Coptic Christians in Ethiopia or the Orthodox Church in Russia have come. However, the condition of religion and the lack of the Spirit of Christ in the Roman Catholic Church is even more appalling. Those who know only the United States have but little [59] conception of what Catholicism really is in such parts of the world as South America, Spain, or Mexico.

In America the churches, though worldly, are free from state domination and in part, at least, out of politics. In practically every other country, especially in Europe, the church and state are united in such a way that either the state is controlled by the church or the church is under the domination of the state. It is really difficult to know which of these two conditions is worse. Sometimes they both seem to obtain at once. This unholy alliance of state and church has brought in such worldliness and weakness that these churches have almost completely departed from the Lord.

Black Magic in Modern Churches

In our time there is no greater deception than modern spiritism, or the black magic. Spiritism and other forms of occultism have been known from time immemorial, but they have had a great revival in recent years, especially since the World War. During a visit to Germany in the summer of 1939 I noticed how that country is swept by such illusions as were taught by the former General Ludendorff and his wife, Germany's greatest medium. However, the alarming thing about spiritism today is the way in which it is now welcomed into Christian churches.

"In England, professing Christian ministers are showing an ominous interest in spiritism. The *Advent Witness* (London, April, 1937) publishes this note: 'Christianity can be saved by Spiritualism with the cooperation of the churches.' This assertion was made at a gathering of clergymen and ministers in Leeds, arranged by the Confraternity of Spiritualists, Clergy, and Ministers to discuss closer relations between Christianity and psychic research. The Reverend G. M. Elliott, who gave up a living at Cricklewood to devote his time to the [60] work of the Confraternity, told how he and a well-known dean approached the Archbishop of York and urged that the Church of England should carry out a thorough investigation of Spiritualism. 'To my amazement and intense delight,' went on Mr. Elliott, 'the archbishop agreed and told us a commission must be appointed. That commission has been appointed, and the dean who was with me is its chairman.'"—"*Prophecy's Light on Today*," Charles S. Trumbull, pp. 131, 132.

The teaching and the ultimate of spiritism is clearly stated by a prominent spiritist writer in England:

"Each individual is his own savior, and he cannot look to someone else to bear his sins, and suffer for his mistakes. . . . The future life has only been definitely revealed to mankind within the past hundred years. The vast majority still know no more about the future than did primitive man. . . . Up till within the last hundred years we knew nothing of our destiny, and so religion has stood still. . . . Instead of Christianity being a divine revelation, it is in reality what the church fathers at their various councils decided it was to be. . . . Next to St. Paul, Constantine did more to establish Christianity than any other man. . . . Baptism, another pagan ceremony, will gradually be abandoned. . . . Marriage needs no priest to perform the ceremony. . . . Therefore I see just as the Unitarian Church has leavened the preaching of most of the nonconformist churches, the Spiritualist church leavening in time every religious organization throughout the world. . . . We are today, however, living in changing times, and now that mediums are safe from destruction, it is only a question of time until Spiritualism takes the place of Christianity, and mediums take the place of parsons and priests. . . . The Pantheon at Rome, once a pagan temple, is now a Christian church. So St. Paul's and Westminster Cathedrals, now Christian churches, [61] will become Spiritualist churches."—"The Unfolding Universe," J. Arthur Findlay, pp. 341-399. "First of all I foresee the Unitarians uniting with the Spiritualist church; then the Congregationalists, to be followed by the Baptists, Evangelical Anglicans, the Methodists, and the Church of Scotland. The High Anglican Church will probably be the last to succumb so far as Protestantism is concerned, but ultimately it and the Roman Catholic Church will discard all their superstitions, and absorb and teach what Spiritualism stands for, and that only. Then and then only will there be one church."—*Id.*, p. 383.

Growing Interest in the Occult

Nor is it only in Europe or other overseas countries that spiritism has come into the higher ranks. There have been rumors "that official Washington was patronizing palm readers, astrologers, mediums, and other exponents of the occult." Because of such rumors, a prominent magazine recently made an investigation of spiritism in high places. Finding these rumors to be true, the writer adds: "At least four

Washington mediums of today are nationally known for weirdly true predictions.”

A startling development in the power and influence of spiritism is the tendency of scientists and universities to favor, investigate, and accept spirit communication as true science. A number of leading colleges and other schools are today devoting not a little time and study to psychic research. Thus Henry Siebert left an endowment some years ago to the University of Pennsylvania for the study of psychic phenomena. Stanford University, too, has a large endowment for the same purpose. Experiments along this line are also being made in Harvard and Duke Universities, as well as in other prominent schools. We read:

“The traditional attitude of science has been one of [62] antagonism to the claims of psychic research, but a large number of scientists who have looked into the evidence, have found the facts unassailable. Those who scoff most at psychic research appear to be ignorant of its vast extent. The proceedings and journals of the societies for psychic research alone comprise more than a hundred volumes of material, to say nothing of the hundreds of other books published on the subject.” “It has even been predicted that the findings of psychic researchers may do for the present age what the researches of Faraday, Newton, Darwin, and Huxley did for the nineteenth century.”—*The Pendulum Swings Back*,” Marvin M. Black, pp. 83, 82.

But when we “dig in the wall” and view the horrible things tolerated in the churches now, we remember the words of God to Ezekiel, “Thou shalt see greater abominations than these.”

Corrosive Thinking

But it is not merely the confusion of thought today that destroys. Certain forms of corrosive thinking are doing untold harm. Some of these schools of thought are positively immoral. There is, for instance, the so-called “behaviorism” which teaches that everything is right, and which leads men to follow their own instincts, no matter how depraved they are. But one of the worst of these destructive kinds of thinking is Freudism, often called psychoanalysis. We shall not tell much about the base theories taught by this vile atheist. One writer says:

“Sigmund Freud turns psychology upside down. He studies not what the mind knows about itself, but what it does not know, or, at least, does not know that it knows. He is concerned not with states of the conscious self, but with the unconscious. For him the normal is not the [63] key to the abnormal; rather the abnormal is the key to the normal. The immediate subject matter of his science of psychoanalysis is not human nature, but the uglier side of human nature.”—*False Prophets*,” James M. Gillis, p. 45.

An outstanding exponent of Freud’s philosophy tells

“The unconscious mind is the reservoir which receives all the accumulations and experiences and impressions of the personality. . . . It is that region of the mind where are deposited and have been since birth every sight and sound that we have perceived, and every feeling that we have had, in fact, everything that has happened to us, however trivial.”—*Psychoanalysis, the Key to Human Behavior*,” William J. Fielding.

Some psychoanalysts, however, maintain that the unconscious remembers everything, not only in our lives, but in the lives of our ancestors back to Adam, and even, as they claim, away back to the apes and other animals from which they think we descended. The thinking, however, that seems especially prominent in the “unconscious” mind is the sex urge. Somehow, this thinking has been made prominent above everything else by Freud and his followers. A writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* states:

“ ‘The forms this obsession has taken in literature constitute nearly all the new fiction, poetry, and drama that has been written in the last five years. . . . This imaginative literature of twisted subconsciousness has engaged a large majority of the finer minds among the young writers.’ ”

Thus Freud and his followers are to a very large extent responsible for the corrupt sex mentality of our day.

THE first Adventist to be killed for the faith in Russia after the First World War, died because she “Freud himself regards religion as an ‘illusion.’ He has declared that psychoanalysis ‘has no advice to offer as to what one shall or shall not do, as for instance, [64] whether or not one should believe in a divine being.’ ”

“Of far-reaching moral influence has been the effect of Freud on the idea of sin. Freud says that the most bitter blow to human vanity is ‘the discovery by the psychoanalysts that the ego is not master in his own house.’ Similar expressions of determinism have led to the substitution, by many, of environmental conditions and influences for moral choices as the source of evil. The result has been the weakening of the sense of moral responsibility and the feeling of guilt. This has filtered down into the thinking of many who have never been directly influenced by the new psychology.”

The Recompense of the Lord

We are living in the midst of an almost complete world downfall. Present-day civilization is creaking and breaking. But the greatest cause of the collapse of the nations is the moral fall of the churches. Indeed, a large share of the thinking of our times is not only, unfortunately, vague and vacillating, but is positively corrupt and corrupting. Instead of the old fixed standards of right and wrong, the moral conceptions of multitudes today are vague and unsettled. While much of this thinking claims to be scientific and even cultured, and while often, in supercilious words, it ridicules the Bible ideas of sin as mere superstition, it is really itself vulgar and crude, no matter in how beautiful language its depraved teachings are attired.

The final outcome of these things is described in the last part of Ezekiel's second great "vision of God," that is, in chapters 9 and 10.

After he had seen the dreadful apostasy as witnessed in the temple of Jerusalem, he heard a loud voice saying, "Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. [65] And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar." Eze. 9:1, 2. Five of the six men spoken of in the above text are angels of destruction. The sixth, the one clothed in linen, places a mark upon those who belong to God. In Revelation, chapters 7 and 16, we have a prophecy very similar to this one in Ezekiel. An angel with the seal of the living God does his work. The "seal" in Revelation is the same as the "mark" in Ezekiel—God's holy Sabbath. The number of those sealed is 144,000. These are the true children of God; "men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." Eze. 9:4. These people are not disgruntled critics or smiters of the brethren. In the holiness of life they abhor evil; instead of taking part in worldly amusements or other sins in the church, they cry to God to keep them and others pure. When this number has been sealed, the angels are told to loose the winds that will destroy the earth.

Chapter 10 in Ezekiel closes this astounding vision. It is in part a restating of the first "visions of God" in chapter one. But chapter 10 deals with the glory as it will be revealed at the end of time, when God will be seen as a "consuming fire" to sin and sinners. [66]

Opposition to Prophecy and the Second Advent

Read Ezekiel 11 and 12

bravely confessed that the coming of Christ was near. In several lands overseas now it is against the law to preach the full gospel. No doctrine seems more bitterly hated than that of the return of Jesus. Rulers declare that their new governments will "last a thousand years." To speak of the end of the world and the setting up of a kingdom of God appears to them as a dangerous form of "counterrevolution."

In our country, too, where so much is now being said by leading clergymen and large religious groups about "world reconstruction," the doctrine of the second advent is shunned and even despised. The idea of community churches is gaining—people belonging to the same church, not because they have the same love and faith, but because they live in the same neighborhood. That the church is to cleanse politics, regenerate the state, and save society, is an exceedingly popular error. The so-called "social gospel" has come to the front.

We are told that Christ "lived in a day of revolt; 'Galilee was the hotbed of Jewish rebellion against the ruling classes.' . . . 'The lords of privilege feared His gospel, for it was to their minds full of social dynamite.' . . . 'Christianity to the Roman mind was the equivalent of modern Marxism.' "—*Quoted in "Trends of Christian Thinking," Charles S. Macfarland, pp. 74, 75. [67]*

We earnestly protest this idea that the great objective of Jesus was "neighborhood betterment" and "social reform."

Christ never taught that the kingdom of God would come through a new order of "world reconstruction" in "social justice." Those who hope for "community salvation" naturally do not accept the old-time Bible doctrine of Christ's coming in glory in the clouds of heaven. Jesus, however, taught individual salvation through the new birth and a coming resurrection and reward at the end of this world. Today that blessed advent hope is held in great contempt.

Ridiculing the Coming of Christ

Said one preacher recently: "As to the second coming of Christ, nobody knows anything about it; it is impossible to tell just what the writers of the New Testament themselves believe; it looks as if Paul himself changed his mind about it; equally good men hold utterly varying views about it; it does not seem to have any effect upon character one way or another, as half the saints believe in it and half do not; and what difference does it make anyhow?"—"Prophecy's Light on Today," Charles G. Trumbull, p. 15.

The above quotation, though directly contrary to the word of God, is typical of the attitude of many professed Christians toward the second advent. They not only belittle the hope of our Lord's return; they see no need of it. In their minds Christ is to save this world through a new order of social changes.

Not long ago a prominent minister wrote in one of the most widely read monthlies of this country: "In these days, among ourselves, certain writers and speakers hotly affirm as fundamentals what no reasonable man can believe—the absence of error from the books of the Old and [68] New Testaments, the necessity of expiation in order to be forgiven, the dependence of the future life for man upon reunion with the body vacated at death, and the return of Jesus of Nazareth in the flesh, no longer as Saviour but as Judge. One may sympathize deeply with the zeal of these persons, even praise their passionate desire to vindicate what they believe to be true, and yet hold that the ideas cited are not only wanting in character of fundamentals, but that *they are simple foolishness.*"—*Id.*, p. 20.

When preachers of the gospel can stamp as "simple foolishness" the zeal and hope of God's children for the appearance of Christ, they have departed far from the spirit and teaching of our Lord. But let us quote from another: "The Gospel of John proves that Jesus would never come back. Washington does not come back. Lincoln and Newton do not come back. . . . *This is no time to be looking for the second coming of Christ* nor for the destruction of the world. It is time to write a new chapter and to write it in the spirit of Christ, who isn't coming back because He never went away."—

Id., pp. 157, 158.

People will not believe in the second coming of Christ because they do not believe in Christ as God. The two concepts belong together. If Christ is God, the second advent becomes a certainty. If Christ is not God, the second advent naturally will never occur. In the apostolic age the test of faith in Christ was faith in the first advent—that Christ had come. In these latter days the test of faith in Christ is faith in the second advent—that Christ will come again in a personal, visible appearance. For Christians today to deny the second advent is as much a denial of Christ as was the rejection of Christ by the Jews at His first advent.

With this opposition or indifference to the soon coming [69] of Christ is found a strong prejudice against symbolic prophecy. Yet Christ founded His message on the prophecies, as did Paul and all the apostles. The impelling power of symbolic prophecies has been seen in all periods and messages of gospel reform.

In the work of Ezekiel these prophecies were paramount. He was the first Bible writer to designate animals or birds as symbols of kingdoms. He was also the first to use a day for a year in symbolic time. In chapter 19 Judah is represented by a lioness, and the king of Judah is "a young lion." The mighty kingdom of Egypt is "a great eagle with great wings, long wings full of feathers, which had divers colors;" Babylon, the great universal empire, as "another great eagle with great wings and many feathers." Eze. 17:1-8. These figures of speech were very common in Babylon, as they are with us, and were understood by all.

These symbolic prophecies given by Ezekiel and others become much more instructive because of their symbolic times. In these prophecies one day always stands for the year. This year-day principle was stated by Ezekiel before Daniel gave his symbolic prophecies. There are several time prophecies in Ezekiel, but the clearest one is found in chapter 4. The prophet was told to besiege Jerusalem while lying on his side, first for a period of three hundred and ninety days for the ten tribes of Israel, and then for a period of forty days for Judah. The Jews naturally would carefully notice these two periods of symbolic time, and even today we can easily trace them.

The first attack on the ten tribes after they became an independent kingdom began 958 B. C. (1 Kings 15:20.) Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, sent an army against the cities of Israel. He smote and destroyed many cities, especially to the northeast, in the territory occupied by the tribes of Dan and Naphtali. From that time on Israel [70] was continually attacked by enemies. There were almost innumerable wars against Israel by the Assyrians and Babylonians and Egyptians. When the city of Jerusalem had fallen, thousands of Israelites fled to Egypt, where they were finally conquered and completely subdued by Nebuchadnezzar at 568 B. C. Over a period of 390 years, from 958 B. C. until 568 B. C., the nations waged war against Israel, especially the ten tribes. But for many years Judah was spared. The king of Egypt once invaded Jerusalem, but quickly retired. Sennacherib, an Assyrian king, threatened to lay siege to Jerusalem, but was not permitted to do so. In a very signal manner God's protection was given to Judah, and Jerusalem escaped. But about the year 608, Judah, too, began to be attacked. The king, Josiah, a godly man, was employed in war with Pharaoh-nechoh of Egypt. Josiah was slain, and Jerusalem was taken. A little later Nebuchadnezzar, who had conquered the Egyptian king, attacked Jerusalem. Several times the city was taken and sacked. These attacks on Jerusalem and the Jews began in 608 B. C., and ended with the destruction of the Jews in Egypt 568 B. C., a period of forty years. Thus the people themselves, before Daniel ever applied the year-day principle, knew that a day did stand for a year.

The message of Ezekiel to Israel was made impressive by many symbols and signs. The time element, however, in the prophecy made it more emphatic. Israel Was not only told what would happen, but was told *when* it would come. The time prophecy was made so plain that they themselves could see and did see the fulfillment of it. Yet in spite of this definite and direct nature of the message, it was rejected by the people, who said, “The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth.” Eze. 12:22. In reply to this the Lord said: “There shall none of My words be prolonged any more.” Eze. 12:28.

How liter- [71] ally this prophecy, with respect to both events and time, came to pass, is plain history now.

This experience of Israel in rejecting a definite time message so signally explained was their undoing. Jerusalem was destroyed and the people were dispersed at the very time indicated. This experience of Israel is an outstanding lesson for all in the latter days. The Christian world today is rejecting the great advent message. Though the signs of the coming of the Lord have nearly all been seen, and though the prophetic timetables of Daniel and Revelation are well known, multitudes who profess to believe in the Lord have turned their backs upon the advent message. They declare as did the evil servant of old, “My Lord delayeth His coming.” Matt. 24:48. [72]

Pagan and Atheist Leaders in Present-Day Thought

Read Ezekiel 13

WHO are the human creators of modern thought? Strictly speaking, there are none. The primary source of thought is not in man. Even what we call creative thinking is rare. But there are those who mold, guide, and to a certain degree control, the thinking of an age; and it is a thing of fate who, or rather what, these directors of mind and mentality are, and how they think. Almost the darkest tragedy of the last hundred years or more is that the thinking of those decades has been tremendously influenced by unworthy leaders. These men have been skillful—polished and popular writers. Their choice and pleasing use of beautiful language has blinded the eyes of many. Take the two famous Jewish literary critics, the Brandes brothers, of Northern Europe. What insight, what knowledge, what art, what superb command of words they possessed! Yet these master writers with their sarcasm and haughty contempt for holy things filled millions of hearts with deadly unbelief. Or take Thomas Mann—now a refugee in our land—whose diction is music, how he is praised and adored by readers who never stop to consider that he perverts truth and prostitutes purity in his sex-flavored stories of Jacob and his sons. Today these men who might have lighted up and led this age have brought mankind to the brink of moral ruin. These blind leaders of the blind have seduced the multitudes by their pleasing words. Remember our own Mark Twain—a great author, but [73] an avowed, aggressive atheist. These literary men, large as their influence may be, are not as unwholesome leaders of modern thought as some teachers of pseudo science who write in magazines on a false geology, denying creation and other Bible truths. But of all the “false prophets” of our day the most dangerous are those who, scorning true freedom, are inventing new intolerant and totalitarian philosophies of government and of human rights. In the days of Ezekiel there were many of these sinister teachers called prophets who misled the people. They molded public opinion in a way that was disastrous, and we have come to call them false prophets.

The term “false prophets,” however, is not found in the Old Testament. It was first used by Christ in the sermon on the mount. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” Matt. 7:15, 16. There are those who think of the teachings of Jesus as so meek and kind that they do not reprove evil, but the Saviour was very stern in His opposition to false teachers. Seven times in one chapter He pronounced a woe on the blind leaders of that day. (See Matthew 23.) In times of special crisis these deceivers are unusually numerous. Indeed, it is largely their teaching which brings on the crisis.

In the days of Jeremiah, just before the Babylonian captivity and the work of Ezekiel, there were a large number of false prophets. Again and again they met Jeremiah in open conflict as he warned the people against them. (See Jeremiah 23.) They not only undermined faith in his message, but they tried to have him imprisoned and put to death. In Babylon as well there were many of these false prophets. They gloried in that fact, and said, “The Lord hath raised us up prophets in Baby- [74] Ion.” Jer. 29:15. Two of these, Ahab, the son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah, the son of Maaseiah, are mentioned by name. They were very prominent in their work, but very wicked in their lives. These two men were burned by Nebuchadnezzar, and it became a proverb among the Jews in Babylon, “The Lord make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.” Jer. 29:22.

Prophets of Paganism

The Scriptures do not leave us in the dark concerning what these false prophets were and taught. “The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God: Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The Lord saith: and the Lord hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word. Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The Lord saith it; albeit I have not spoken? Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord God. And Mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of My people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God.” Eze. 13:1-9.

Anyone who reads the foregoing passage will understand the motive and teachings of these prophets. They were the teachers of the age. They did not necessarily [75] have open visions or revelations, but they taught doctrines that led away from God. Ezekiel declared of them that “they prophesy out of their own hearts though they have seen nothing.” They claimed that their words were a message from heaven, and asked everyone to believe in their teachings as a divine revelation. Yet the visions they had were vain visions, and what they spoke was only “lying divinations.” Ezekiel calls them “foolish prophets that follow their own spirit.” Many of them were dishonest, and followed deceitful methods. “O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts.” Eze. 13:4. Concerning their fate, he declared, “They shall not be in the assembly of My people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel.” Eze. 13:9.

One great mistake of these false prophets was the negative nature of their messages. They did not build up “a hedge for the house of Israel.” In their words was no protection or shelter against the coming storm. They did not strengthen the faith of God’s people or deepen their spiritual experience.

In this same chapter 13 we read also of certain groups of women who pretended to be earnestly working for the welfare of the people, though their whole influence was to strengthen idolatry and destroy honest souls. “Woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of My people, and will ye save the souls alive that come unto you? And will ye pollute Me among My people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to My people that hear your lies? Wherefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against your pillows, wherewith ye there hunt the souls to make them fly, and I will [76] tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, even the souls that ye hunt to make them fly.” Eze. 13:18-20.

The influence and organization and planning of these women pretended to be good, but tended, really, to strengthen idolatry and apostasy. When we consider the story of these women, we find a striking similarity between certain women’s movements of our day and the work of these women of old. The evil forces in that period were in many cases similar to many sinister factors in our own time. It was an age of excitement and mental upheavals. New ideas and new gods abound today because of the large number of false teachers or prophets. We wish to mention some of these false prophets or trends of our times in detail.

If we should characterize our present age in two words, we would use the term “confused thinking.” Present-day thinking is a difficult subject to discuss; yet it is the root cause of our troubles.

The present world unrest, concerning which we hear so much, is really the outgrowth of this changeable mentality that has lost its anchor. We are in a time of uprooted mentalities.

One of the greatest causes of this present spiritual declension is a return to a pagan way of life. Modern American paganism does not pretend to worship the heathen gods of old. It ridicules the vain superstition of the past as crude barbarism. It is artistic, aesthetic, philosophical, and refined. The art and poetry of pagan Greece were the finest ever produced by man. Modern paganism is also highly cultured. It loves music; it glories in and adores beautiful architecture.

“In a word, we are concerned with polite pagans, civilized pagans, in some cases of very nice culture, of [77] high intelligence, and of great education. Our pagans are after the manner of Antony and Cleopatra, of Caesar and Seneca, of Horace and Petronius, of Lucullus and Maecenas, of Poggio and Boccaccio, rather than of Attila, or Genghis Khan, or the Sultan of Sulu, or Sitting Bull. In a word, our modern paganism is another Renaissance, a recrudescence of the paganism of the golden age of Augustus and Tiberius Caesar; and especially of the later Roman Empire, when civilization rose so high that it toppled over; when culture became so ripe that it turned rotten; a paganism that was concomitant with the highest civilization and the basest corruption that the world has ever seen.”— *“False Prophets,” James M. Gillis, p. 174.*

There are some characteristics by which paganism and Christianity may always be known:

Paganism teaches that (a) everything is God (pantheism); (b) there are many gods; (c) creation came through long periods of evolution; (d) salvation is by works, (e) morality is founded on reason; and (f) philosophy is the source of wisdom. Wherever we find one or more of these ideas, we have paganism.

Christianity, on the other hand, teaches that (a) there is only one true God; (b) Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God; (c) salvation is by grace alone, through faith; (d) creation is by God's word and will; and (e) morality is founded on revelation alone. These are fundamentals of true Christianity, and those who hold them are Christians.

For most people, the paganism of today is a life of pleasure, usually of exciting, even sensual, gratification. It was Horace, the Roman poet, who coined the motto, "Seize pleasure while it flies; it is a gift divine"—meaning by pleasure such things "as cannot be called by their right names in a Christian assembly." But aside from [78] this popular paganism of the masses there is also a paganism of education and thought that thrives at the expense of religion.

Paganism is really a worship of man, and in our day it has become a worship of reason, intellect, and nature. How vain this is, has been well stated as follows: "If there be no God but Nature, then I admit that the existence of civilization is indeed precarious, and its continuance doubtful. For Nature, if she be a deity, is a capricious deity. Nature is kind and cruel, beautiful and terrible. Nature is sunsets and waterfalls, snow-capped mountain peaks, smiling valleys, lakes like jewels, and rivers like streams of silver. But Nature is more than that. Nature is cyclones, and tornadoes, and floods, and drouths, and blizzards. Nature is a paradise and a jungle. Nature is an alma mater and a savage beast. 'Nature is one with rapine.' 'Nature is red in tooth and claw.' Nature is the lion lying in wait for the hapless gazelle; Nature is the wolf, tearing the lamb to ribbons."—*Id.*, p. 188. The pagan way of life, with reason or nature as our guide, can only end in hopeless disaster.

Prophets of Progress

We believe in true progress. God desires all to grow in wisdom and every good thing. Science had imparted to this generation such a steadily increasing wealth of useful knowledge that there grew up some sixty years ago a conviction that we were in the midst of a continual upward progress. It was claimed that the world was getting better, and that mankind was sure to advance on this, well-paved road.

"In nothing did the Victorian Era believe more than in the inevitability of progress, and if one confined his attention to that section of history in which the Victorian lived, it was amply warranted.

We need do no more than [79] recall the facts which we have already noted: the steady rise in the standard of life, the increase of material wealth, the enormous multiplication of instruments of pleasure and satisfaction. All these were, patent to the eye of the most superficial critic.

"Moreover, the Victorian believed that an easy way to world-wide community lay open. The economic expansion of Western civilization bound every nation to each other in reciprocal self-interest. Nations would keep the peace because it was the plainest part of common sense and wisdom to do so. War was not so much a crime as a folly—a sin against enlightened self-regard. Economic internationalism would bring political internationalism, and could not help doing so. World peace was only another name for world trade, taken a little lower downstream. . . .

"Yet the optimistic mood of the nineteenth century created by its vast triumphs in the world of invention and scientific discovery fastened on the brighter aspects of the evolutionary process as being characteristic of it, and so the idea of biological evolution was transformed into the idea of automatic progress."—"Rebel Religion," pp. 25, 27.

But today to quote the same author:

"Our world is in pieces; it has dissolved once more into something like chaos. . . . Where once was a plain road, well trodden and apparently an enduring highway, at the end of which was the kingdom of God—a world of righteousness, peace, and plenty—there is now an ill-defined track through a jungle, leading one hardly knows whence or whither."—*Id.*, pp. 15, 16.

Let us give an illustration of how mistaken these ideas of progress can be. In a book printed in 1916 the author states:

"Commerce killed famine. By her railroads and steam- [80] ships she killed it. It lies like a dead snake by the side of the road along which humanity has marched up to the present day. Science killed pestilence. The black plague, the bubonic plague, cholera, smallpox, yellow fever—all have received their deathblow. Science did the work. These foes of mankind lie bleeding and half dead by the side of the road along which the world presses on to a higher day."—"What the War Is Teaching," Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, p. 199.

Since the above was written, the world has seen the most destructive famine and plague of all history. Instead of lying like a dead snake by the roadside, these scourges of mankind are yet very much alive.

Prophets of Race and Hate

In recent years new conceptions of race have come to the front. Men of science have advocated in strong terms the superiority of certain races.

The following thoughtful statement by Ramsay Muir, the well-known statesman, in the *British Weekly* of April 19, 1934, is worthy of more than ordinary reading:

“One of the most remarkable features of our mad world today is that, almost unanimously, its peoples are turning their backs upon the ideals which have inspired the progress of civilization during the last four centuries, and especially during the nineteenth, when this progress was most rapid.

“The world, which was to be made ‘safe for democracy,’ has gone awhoring after dictatorship. Free enterprise, which created the potential abundance that the world now offers, is regarded as an evil thing. Free thinking, speaking, and writing are forcibly repressed in many countries. The reign of violence is replacing the reign of reason. Humanity seems to be slipping back from civilization into barbarism; for the essence of [81] civilization is the conquest of violence by reason. . . .

“There are many who think that we are now in the twilight of Western civilization, and that, unless it changes its course, its final collapse, either through the bestial madness of war or through the breakdown of the complex economic organization upon which we all depend for our existence, may not be far distant.”

Another writer says: “The religious forces of the world are faced with the most serious situation they have known for generations past.” It is true that “tyranny is a creeping paralysis, and hence resistance to tyrants is not only obedience to God, but a dictate of self-preservation against the subtle infection of absolutism and arrogant autocracy.”

Prophets of Foolish Fads

As an instance of the foolish fads which lead men astray we would mention astrology—one of the cheapest deceptions of this time. Like Christian Science, it is neither religion nor science; yet it is astounding how astrology has come to the front in recent years. Some of the leading master minds of today are apparently directed by this great delusion.

“Astrology is having a great revival. It is coming to the front again with other satanic movements, and will probably have increasing influence over all classes of men, the most intellectual as well as the ignorant, until the Lord comes. Leading newspapers and magazines have their regular departments in which astrologers give advice; national leaders in various countries are said to take no important step today without first consulting an astrologer. . . .

“The *Advent Witness* comments on a book published in 1927 by a well-known astrologer who called himself Cheiro, which contained the prediction: ‘Viewing the [82] future I see great and menacing times overshadowing England, while over the palace of King George and the royal family the immediate present and the coming years are full of ominous signs that have no parallel in recent times.’ There followed a penetrating study of the (then) Prince of Wales, with this statement: ‘It is well within the range of possibility . . . that he will fall a victim of a devastating love affair. If he does, I predict that the prince will give up everything, even the chance of being crowned, rather than lose the object of his affection.’ ”—“*Prophecy’s Light on Today*,” Charles G. Trumbull, pp. 132, 183.

“ ‘Despite the fact that astrology has been ridiculed by intelligent people and even banned by law in many countries for 4,800 years, it remains today the most elaborately organized of all superstitions. In the United States, astrologers still are licensed to forecast future events.’ ”—*Id.*, p. 138.

We constantly read in the papers, magazines, and almanacs about the astonishing prophecies of astrology. When men turn away from the Bible and trust in their own wisdom, there is no superstition so dark or dense but some will follow it.

Prophets of Other Gods

In speaking of these various false teachings and teachers, we would like to mention four men whose teachings have been especially outstanding in leading mankind astray. One of these is G. B. Shaw of England. His philosophy is the pessimism of despair. All that is, is wrong and must be destroyed. He boasts, “I shatter creeds and demolish idols.” He tells us that our prosperity is organized robbery, our morality impudent hypocrisy, and our honor is false in all its parts. Shaw has a strange, though, as usual, not an

original, idea of God. [83] His idea is that God, or the Life Force, is as yet unconscious of His own existence, but that He is trying to become aware of Himself. The idea is not original. It is found in many atheistic philosophies. Some say that Shaw is brilliant and clever. We think he is cheap. Really what makes him popular is that he ridicules what godly people reverence.

The human race has always considered religion as a blessing, but Shaw states that religion is a curse. It has been admitted everywhere that while poverty is a misfortune, it may not be a sin. Shaw declares that it is a crime. How many times have we not thought of the love a child has for its mother as beautiful! Shaw says that such a love is “horrible.” We consider marriage as a safeguard of morality. Shaw states that “marriage is the most licentious of institutions.” Love for country, we think, is an honor. Shaw calls it a disgrace.

Another false teacher whose work, perhaps more than anyone else’s, has brought on the present world break-down is the philosopher Nietzsche. The Nietzschean view of morality “is specifically illustrated by his famous division of morality into two kinds, ‘Slave Morality’ and ‘Master Morality’

(‘*Sklavenmoral*’ and ‘*Herrenmoral*’).” The “slave,” that is, the ordinary man, must abide by rules and laws and commandments, which are the embodiment of the principles of “good” and “right.” But the “master,” the man of genius, the dictator, is beyond good and evil. He is not subject to any established rule of moral values. He makes his own values. Whatever he does is right, not because he is too high-minded to do wrong, but because wrong is right if he does it.

Nietzsche teaches that certain supermen are worth all the rest of the world. Indeed, he says that they are the world, the only world that deserves to be reckoned with. The weak and the unworthy should learn self- [84] sacrifice, and leave the practice of self-assertion, to the superman.

“ ‘The weak and the unsuccessful shall perish,’ he cries, ‘and we will even help them to perish. . . . This is our love of mankind.’ ”

To the superman—and the superstate—a treaty is a scrap of paper; a contract is binding only on the weaker party; and even the ten commandments have no binding force.

Few men today have written more books than H. G. Wells—and his books are widely read. His defense of freedom and his attacks on papal superstitions and errors have been valuable, but his views of true Christianity are a gross distortion of truth. Mr. Wells claims to be for religion. He says: “Religion is the first thing and the last thing, and until a man has found God and been found by God he begins at no beginning and he works to no end.” To him, miracles are “foolish stories,” while the ‘doctrine of the divinity of Christ and other Bible truths are “preposterous refinements of impossible dogmas” and “disastrous ebullitions of the human mind.” In the mind of Wells, “the Gospels contain the teachings of Jesus on the one hand, and the glosses and interpretations of the disciples on the other.” Wells, however, thinks “that it is a matter of no importance whether Christ ever lived or not.”

Wells contends that every man must “discover” his own God—he has discovered his. It is not the God of the Bible—not Jehovah or Christ. But in spite of his many errors and fables, multitudes have made shipwreck of their faith because they loved the eloquent vagaries of Wells.

Anatole France, who died in 1924, exerted a tremendous influence on the thought of today. He was called “the most interesting intelligence working in the field of [85] letters.” A New York magazine declared: “It is a rare thing in any age for a man to be accepted as the world’s greatest living man of letters.” Of his thirty-seven books his English publishers said: “These thirty-seven volumes will be radiating light in our foggy atmosphere, when the last scrap of iron in our fleet of dreadnoughts has long rusted away.” An American writer prophesied: “Anatole France leaves the world a narrow shelf of novels that will die only when men are no longer interested in love and life and laughter.”

Who was this man who received all these tributes of praise and glory? Anatole France was a gifted and pleasing writer. He bitterly attacked the Roman church, and that made him popular in France, which has suffered so fearfully from papal cruelty. But at the same time he cast contempt on all things sacred. The angels, heaven, the Lord Jesus, all are ridiculed in his biting irony, while lust and sensual things are glorified.

But these and other avowed infidels are not the only ones who have undermined faith in God. Many religious teachers mislead people concerning the deity of Christ. They have given up their faith in a personal God and in Christ as the only-begotten Son of God. In the bulletin of a divinity school sent out in 1931, we find the following: “The limited idea of God in many of the psalms is a hindrance to their use in modern worship.” The late president of a well-known theological seminary stated, “Divine and human are recognized as truly one. Christ, therefore, if human, must be divine, as all men are. Christ is essentially no more divine than we are or than nature is.” Another preacher in Oregon wrote, “Men are what they are because of a fatal disbelief in their own divinity.” Still another says, “Do you ask me whether God is simply the spirit of humanity? I reply that is essentially and simply just that.” Writes a

[86] professor of one of our State universities, “Man is my best expression of deity, and so I bow reverently at this shrine.” Can worship of man, with the resultant unbelief and mockery of God and things divine, go farther?

The Wall With Untempered Mortar

While the false prophets in the days of Ezekiel, like those of today, lived on a negative message, they did also attempt something positive. They proudly professed to build up a wall, and the wall looked solid and beautiful, but the mortar was untempered. They initiated a certain movement that they claimed would be for the protection of the people. They had “visions of peace” when there was no peace. They built up this wall with untempered mortar, and Ezekiel declared that in overflowing showers and hailstones to come, the wall would break, and the builders would perish. This wall of untempered mortar was really a message of peace built on a false unity, not by the word of God. Untempered mortar is the plans and commandments of men.

Results of Irreligion

What will be the fruits of this seed sowing of irreligion and unbelief? How does it even now affect individual morality as well as the state of society in general? To ask these questions is to answer them. One representative of the modern “literature of doubt” admits “that the whole moral organization of life is shattered when the faith around which it is built is destroyed.” Another “is convinced that the modern scientific world view not only destroys God, but also destroys the basis of any kind of moral idealism.”—*“The Problem of God,”* p. 27.

The truth of that statement is seen on every hand. God’s children build on His word. We must warn our [87] youth to avoid all literature of unbelief. Said Christ: “Beware of false prophets.”

Science, legislation, social betterment, education, and other good things are powerless to save mankind. Only individual faith in Christ can overcome the world. It is for this personal heart religion that all must seek at this time. [88]

Morality Uprooted

Read Ezekiel 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19

THE trend to lower all fixed moral standards is very marked at this time. But these efforts go much farther than to lower the standards. The very foundations of moral living are held in contempt or denied by many, while with others all ideas of right or wrong seem to be indefinite or unsettled. The tendency of the human heart is to excuse or minimize sin. Some blame their mistakes upon circumstances, upon their early training, or upon others. Many today, as in the days of old, would make their parents responsible for their failures.

Mankind today has an entirely different conception of sin from that which our forefathers held. The old idea of the sinfulness of sin is gone. Indeed, many deny that there is such a thing as evil. Says one writer: “The word ‘sin’ is losing its scarlet color. Even church congregations no longer see red when the pulpits denounce it.” “The average man can hardly understand the personal focus of the psalmist’s soul-racking confession, ‘Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.’ ” “It is safe to assume that Sunday morning discourses on America’s lawlessness or the gambling spirit or the jazz age do not send many sinners home in agony of conscience. It is an equally safe assumption that few if any souls are stirred to searching repentance by the congregational repetitions of the line in the Lord’s prayer, ‘Forgive us our trespasses.’ Yet this is about the nearest to a confession of sins that the [89] average Protestant churchman comes today.”—*“Morals of Tomorrow,”* Ralph W. Sockman, pp. 29, 30.

No trend in modern religious thinking is quite as alarming as the tendency to break down the old-time Bible standards of right and wrong. Among the young people these vicious ideas are as deadly poison. There can be no true standards of moral conduct where there is no faith in a living Creator, and therefore we would appeal to all parents and teachers that they do their utmost to establish in our young people a firm faith in a personal God. In doing this we have the hearty support of our best writers and thinkers.

It is appalling how some now defend wrong practices. As men lose the sense of sin, the marriage relation is discarded, purity of life is ridiculed, and obedience to the law of God is spoken of as bondage. Says Sir Oliver Lodge: “As a matter of fact, the higher man of today is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment; his mission, if he is good for anything, is to be up and doing. . . . There is a tendency already noticed to weaken down the idea and sense of sin, to belittle it, to get rid of the elements of fear in connection with it, to assert liberty, and throw down the restraints by which moral conduct has hitherto been guarded. This tendency finds plenty of soil to work on in the secularism, and moral and religious indifferentism of the time.”—*“Sin as a Problem,”* pp. 12, 14, 15.

Moral Responsibility

In a study of moral responsibility Ezekiel's message is a great help. He dealt with nearly all phases of that question. Among Bible writers Ezekiel is often called the individualist, and he is very strong on personal guilt and grace. Indeed, no other writer in the Bible stresses individual moral responsibility as does Ezekiel. This [90] is set forth pre-eminently in chapter 18, but there are a series of chapters, beginning with the fourteenth, which by many striking sayings or object lessons explain and emphasize both collective and personal accountability. The Jews in exile were prone to blame others for their

troubles. They said, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Eze. 18:2. But the answer was: "Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Verse 4. And when the people asked again, "Why? Doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?" the reply came once more, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." "When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all My statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live." Verses 20, 19. We need to ponder the words of God, "Behold, all souls are Mine;" that is, man belongs to God before he belongs to any nation or group, or to himself; and that being so, his first and highest responsibility is to God.

Today we hear much about collective responsibility and group morality, but really this morality of the mass or of the nation exists only in a secondary sense. Moral accountability is individual, not collective. Some emphasize "social conscience" or "community neglect." When clearly understood, these terms may be right, but usually they are misleading. We do not deny that nations, churches, or business firms have responsibility as groups, but real moral responsibility is always individual.

If we would understand aright the doctrine of moral responsibility and personal guilt, certain points must be clear in our thinking.

[91]

1.If a person is to be held responsible for his choice of right or wrong, he must have a free will or choice. Actions performed by the insane or by beings without free action of the will would not involve guilt. No individual is or can be so situated that it is impossible for him to be true to his own conception of right, nor can he be so situated that he does not have the privilege of choosing.

2.To have moral responsibility, the individual not only must have the right of choice, but must know what is right or wrong, or at least have had an opportunity to know. In civil matters ignorance of the law may not excuse crime, but with God it is different. He does not impute sin when the person committing the sin has no knowledge of the wrong or has had no chance to become informed. But this great truth does not justify evil in any man, since all human beings have a certain inborn knowledge of right and wrong. They have the law written in part, at least, in their hearts, and know when they sin. Even the heathen in the darkest lands of earth have a conscience and some conception of right and wrong.

3.There is yet a third factor in this question of moral responsibility. Not only must a person know what is right and wrong, and have the choice to decide what is right and wrong, but he must have the power to do what he knows and decides is right. This power was lost by Adam when he sinned, but it has been restored through Christ in the plan of salvation. We hear many saying that they cannot help doing what they do. They try to abstain from evil, but they have no power to overcome. That is no doubt true, and yet the reason why they fail to possess that power is wholly their own fault. In the gospel there has been provided such a fullness of divine grace for every individual that anyone accepting it may through Christ have power to obey. [92]

The Sovereignty of Moral Law

When we study moral responsibility, we must give careful attention to the question of moral law. In our age, lawlessness abounds. Many deny that there is any supreme God-given law. Some claim that the law of the state is supreme. This modern worship of the totalitarian state is growing in many lands, but it is pernicious error. Some speak of a natural morality. They base their religion on experience. But while we are to have a religious experience, there is no natural morality, and experience is not the root but the fruitage of religion.

The teachers of that dreadful error called behaviorism are right when they say, "A human morality has no such sanction as a divine. The sanction of a divine morality is the certainty of the believer that it originated with God. But if he has once come to think that the rule of conduct has a purely human, local, and temporal origin, its sanction is gone. When he regards moral codes as man made, the legalist can be convinced of unconventionality, but not of sin."—*Preface to Morals*, Walter Lippman, p. 49.

One potent cause of the present lawlessness is that men and women deny the sovereignty of divine law. Lack of faith in the ten commandments as a perfect moral standard is very widespread today. Indeed, as one writer says, a serious "obstacle in securing

modern conviction of sin is the seeming uncertainty of the divine law which the sinner is accused of violating.” Mankind has lost its moral anchor, and many are adrift on the uncertainty of man-made decrees and national legislation. We have found in those lands where atheism is in control, a great contempt for the ten commandments. We have observed the same in other lands that exalt the state and make the decrees of some government or leading individual their criterion for human conduct. Human reason, church creeds, or civil enactments have never been and can never [93] be the guide in questions of conscience, that is, of right or wrong.

There never was morality without religion, and there never can be true moral standards without divine commands. No one but God can proclaim moral laws. What the Lord commands is morally right; what He forbids is morally wrong. There is only one standard of right and wrong. This standard is the same for all time and is for the entire universe. That standard of right and wrong is the ten commandments, God’s perfect law. In our day the perfection and the immutability of the moral law need to be stressed. Many influences have been at work to undermine faith in and responsibility for obedience to the ten commandments. A modern secularism teaches a pagan morality, one that outwardly appears respectable, cultured, and aesthetic. But in its motive and force, it is as the “whited sepulchers” condemned by the Saviour when He pronounced His woes upon the Pharisees. The great spiritist movement is an enemy of moral law, also. It declares that everything which exists is good, and denies that there is any sin. Christian Science and other modern forms of existing philosophy bring in the same teaching that sin does not exist or is only the fancy of weakened thinking.

One of the greatest and most insidious enemies of moral right is the so-called scientific doctrine of evolution. If man has evolved by means of some immutable causes beyond his control, as is taught by some of these leaders of a false science, he is the result of circumstances, and not a free moral agent. In the very nature of the case, such beings in their various stages of development could not have the same standard of right and wrong, and they would not be responsible for what they did.

Atheism has always denied the existence of moral law. It teaches a certain form of natural morality. It is true [94] that some atheists in a way believe in the existence of God, but they deny His reign. They do not admit that there is any personal God who guides His children by moral law. The Papacy professes a great admiration for law. Many papists have earnestly taught certain forms of righteousness, including some of the commands of God, and yet history demonstrates that papism leads to atheism. But even where it does not, the Catholic tradition is held equal with the Bible, and the Papacy claims the power to change divine precepts as it did in the case of the Sabbath commandment.

While all these various forces deny or seek to undermine faith in the moral law, there is one doctrine (and we regret that it is very frequently taught by Protestants) which more than any other has undermined faith in the perpetuity of the ten commandments. This is the error that the law of God is abolished. Satan is the great enemy of God’s law, and the most insidious attack he has ever made on the law is this effort to substitute grace for law, as if the gospel did away with the law. The truth is that Jesus exalted the law. He glorified it in His life and established it forever by His death. Conversion does not release people from their obligation to the law. It transforms their hearts and causes them to love the law of God.

These teachings which weaken the authority of God’s commandments and lessen the responsibility of people for them, have brought in a state of mind which is most unfortunate. Our forefathers feared to offend God. They looked forward to a day of judgment. They believed that sin was sin, and they had a keen sense and a quick conscience concerning the divine claims of God’s law. Men today have largely lost that keen perception of the holiness and presence of God. One of the greatest perils to the religious life of our time is this spiritual indifference. Sin is excused. Sin is even glorified in many circles. Men [95] boast of their ability and their power to do evil. They scoff at the idea of an eternal judgment, for they deny that God will hold them responsible for what they are doing. Yet the truth is that we are accountable to God not only for our thoughts, deeds, and words, but for our influence over others. While every person is responsible for his own sins, we would stress the fact that every sin committed has an influence on others for which the sinner is also responsible.

The real source of our spiritual life is the heart. God takes into account our motives as well as our deeds in measuring our guilt. All these points and many others concerning moral responsibility are clearly set forth in the book of Ezekiel.

The Law of Heredity

Today, as in the times of Ezekiel, many emphasize heredity as though it were responsible for our moral actions. The Bible does not deny the influence of heredity or of early training and environment. This principle is so important that it is clearly embodied in the second commandment. “I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.” God’s great answer to those who excuse themselves for moral failures because of the mistakes of their parents is, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Eze. 18:4. That statement, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” sets forth with telling effect the personal, individual responsibility of every human being for his own actions.

“Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not My way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall [96] he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not My ways equal? are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.” Eze. 18:25-30.

Though the influence of heredity is great, and though it is to be regretted that many children do inherit wrong moral tendencies and weaknesses, the Scriptures make plain that in spiritual victory and true moral living, our character is not dependent upon what our parents were. While the Lord does visit “the iniquities of the fathers upon the children,” He declares that He does it to “them that hate Me.” He further states that He shows mercy unto thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments. Indeed, the power of God’s grace through the gospel is so abundant that the very weaknesses we inherit may become so strengthened that they are the strongest timbers in our character building.

Individual Salvation

The greatest question for every individual is his eternal destiny. On this important matter Ezekiel gives great light. He makes plain that no one can compel us to be saved, and no one can compel us to be lost. The personal responsibility of each individual for his own salvation is set forth in Ezekiel 14. The prophet made plain that any lack of personal victory in our own lives is our own fault. The Jews were likely to think of [97] themselves as a nation chosen of God, and to consider guilt, or wickedness a matter of national concern. They thought that since they were the people of God on earth, they were also to be the Lord’s elect in the world to come.

Against this the prophet earnestly protested. He stated that eternal salvation is an individual question, and that no one man can save another. In the day of God’s judgment “though these three men,

Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God.” Eze. 14:14. No matter how godly parents are, they cannot help their loved ones to stand in the judgment. “Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.” Verse 16. This does not mean that the influence of parents may not help or harm their children. But if we are lost, this cannot be blamed on our parents. Each man decides his own eternal fate. No one can keep us away from God or separate us from His love. We can help one another, but we cannot rescue one another from the snares of the evil one. The prophet, in chapter 15, emphasizes this further with the parable of the vine. The wood was not suited for furniture or tools, but the vine bore precious vintage, which other trees did not do. So each individual has his own gifts and is responsible to God only for that which God has entrusted to him, and not for things entrusted to others.

National and International Morality

The question of the moral responsibility of a nation or a government is set forth by a very striking example in chapter 17 of Ezekiel. There had been war between Israel and Babylon. In this war Israel had been defeated. Zedekiah, the king, made a covenant with Nebuchad- [98] nezzar, who then appointed him to be ruler of Israel. The king made a treaty with the king of Babylon and signed this covenant with a sacred oath. Later Zedekiah began negotiations with Egypt. He broke his oath and treaty with Babylon, and entered into a new covenant with Egypt to join with that country in war against Babylon. For thus breaking an honest treaty, the Lord sternly rebuked him, saying, “Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things?” “Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not escape. Therefore thus saith the Lord God; As I live, surely Mine oath that he hath despised, and My covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head. And I will spread My net upon him, and he shall be taken in My snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against Me.” Eze. 17:18-20.

International treaties are to be kept. Diplomacy, statesmanship, or seeming national need can never justify falsehood.

In our day this lesson needs to be remembered. While moral responsibility is individual, these individuals form groups, and create national, international, and other group obligations. International obligations are not something to be broken at will. Some nations wage war without declaring hostilities, or they break treaties and solemn covenants. They repudiate honest debts and justify themselves in refusing to pay, but dishonesty, falsehood, and oppression are not right simply because they are practiced in high places. The law of the Lord applies in all the affairs of life. If the law of nations fails, the nations themselves will fall. Statesmen or masters of

wealth are all subject to the same ten commandments, that divine law which knows no favorites and grants no [99] immunities. God will never decree that might is right. Governments that oppress the poor or deprive their subjects of civil and religious liberty stand condemned at the bar of heaven. Today a false patriotism in some places justifies the state in robbing the individual citizen. Others are tempted to hide their sins behind their club membership, or by saying that business is business, as if the law of God did not apply in business transactions. Ezekiel teaches that the moral law holds to all human relationships. Of the breakdown of morals today, a popular modern writer says:

“I put the moral standard first. Twenty years of observing the wars, popular uprisings, miseries, and savageries of the twentieth century have convinced me that what is happening to us is essentially a moral collapse. . . .

“In eighteenth-century America, the leadership of this country was in the hands of preachers, scholars, and soldiers.

“Whatever their limitations, they had a strict moral sense of individual and social responsibility. . . .

They led austere lives, set standards of culture and behavior, and established the mores of American life. . . .

“The intellectual leaders of the American eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had a conception of sin. They read the Bible, believed in the ten commandments, taught their progeny that hell-fire awaited those who should lie, steal, break up families, and murder.

“The moral basis was the very basis for the New World. Human rights were an endowment of the Creator; God was our King and the author of liberty; freedom of conscience was based on the idea that man had a conscience and that it was exceedingly precious.”

There is need now of a definite return to the gospel of Christ. [100]

Every question of sin or guilt can be truly understood only when viewed in the light of the cross. That the eternal Son of God, the Creator of the universe, would give His life to save mankind from sin, shows the enormity of human guilt. We may condone evil, but the Lord hates it with the infinite majesty of His holy nature. The death of Christ reveals His high regard for all moral laws. Calvary also places an eternal emphasis on our individual moral duty. We cannot shift those obligations to others. We are to give an account only to our Creator.

God did not fashion man
For imitative art,
But all in His great plan
Must do their special part.
You only choose life's road,
The path that takes you through;
You only know the load
That Jesus gave to you.

None should his fellows rule,
Their life and work decide; Be not thy neighbor's tool,
Have Christ alone as guide. Your conscience, yours alone,
Supreme for you must be;
Make this great truth your own—
The soul of man is free.

[101]

The Aftermath of Apostasy

Read Ezekiel 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24

STRANGE and revolutionary ideas concerning both the church and the state abound. They were born in Europe, but are now beginning to thrive in America. Suicidal conceptions of religious liberty, which change freedom into bondage, and startling philosophies of the rights and objectives of civil rulers, which turn governments into tyrannies, are taught on every hand. For decades we had seen the state recede more and more from a meddling control of life and the individual coming to the front. Today the trend is strong in the other direction. We are facing a new world order in which the individual almost disappears and the state becomes all. The well-known axiom of the totalitarian states, “Nothing against the state; nothing outside the state; everything for the state,” makes this

plain. We are told (though we don't believe it) that faith in God and in the democratic way of life and popular government by and for the people cannot solve the problems of society in this age.

Back in 1936 the magazine *English Review* stated editorially:

"Today the future of popular government is said by its friends and its enemies to be in doubt. It has lost ground in so many countries recently that once more we are told that there is no escape from the circular movement of tyranny, oligarchy, democracy, and back to tyranny again. Democracy makes, it is argued, too great a demand upon the intelligence, the energy, and the [102] honesty of average mortals. The people, it is said, do not see where their true interest lies."

How often since that year have we heard such pernicious assertions! This false trend in modern thinking toward bureaucratic or totalitarian rule and mass control is everywhere in evidence. But it is not alone in the civil affairs of mankind that we see a centralization of power by which small nations, having been crushed, disappear, and only a few large nations remain—and these under the rule of one man. This same tendency appears in the religious world. The old doctrine of a church separate from the state is disappearing, and new definitions of the church and its functions are pressing to the front. These new ideas are really the old papal teaching of one strong central church in control of human society. Such a church union or federation would eliminate the small Christian bodies and give the religious control to one man or a small group—a World Council of Churches. In past centuries large, rich churches, grasping for power to protect themselves, have united and become not only dominating, but persecuting, rulers. This means an alliance with the world, and is the aftermath and climax of religious apostasy. In view of these tendencies toward a dictating totalitarian church, it is urgent that we study again the relation of church and state.

Here we must remember the differences between the Jewish church of the Old Testament and the Christian church of the New. Israel, the church of the old covenant, was racial, national, and theocratic. In this church all Israelites were members by virtue of birth, with circumcision as a sign. The church, the state, the world, religion, politics, business—all activities of life—were merged in one. This church-state was to stand separate and never make entangling alliances with other nations. [103] True Christianity, the church of the new covenant, on the other hand, is neither racial, national, nor theocratic. It is a spiritual brotherhood of those who believe in Christ and are converted. No one is a member of the Christian church by virtue of birth, blood, citizenship, or other external things. It is God's plan that the Christian church must not unite with the world or any phase of the world, such as the state, politics, worldly education, worldly pleasures, secret societies, or other forces in the world.

Whenever a church unites with the state, it has broken its covenant relation with Christ, and is apostate. The Scriptures represent such a church under the symbol of a fallen woman. Today the so-called Christian churches in many countries are definitely joined to the state, sometimes controlling the state, but oftentimes in bondage to the state. In other countries, like America, where church and state are separate, many churches have grown worldly, and while they have no direct state support, they are under the influence of wealth, politics, or other forms of selfish power.

We must consider the principles stated above as they apply to our present day. In our time the churches are in distress. Many fear the downfall, not only of state religion, but of all organized churches and of Christianity itself. On this question of an alliance of the churches and the world there is precious light in Ezekiel.

Causes of Apostasy

Chapters 16 and 23 in Ezekiel are so unusual that they startle. Indeed, to some they seem uncouth and offensive. Ezekiel's statements seem almost in answer to the prediction of Moses in Deuteronomy 28. The translators of the Bible inform us that though the text is carefully given, these chapters in the original are even more outspoken than in the King James Version. It was not that Ezekiel [104] desired to be so offensive. He was chaste in his thinking, but as he dealt with wicked apostasies in the church of God, he spoke plainly of the great popular historical wrongs that have wrecked churches and destroyed the fruitage of civilization. These chapters contain the strongest condemnation ever uttered by human lips of every union of the people of God with the world.

Through the centuries, there have been noble servants of God who have protested against the immoral unity of church and state. Many sealed their testimony with their own blood. These witnesses for the truth who have exposed the apostasy of state churches have found in these chapters in Ezekiel a great arsenal from which they have taken weapons to use in their warfare. We are now seeing the breakup of a world. The very foundation pillars of society are crumbling. In this crisis of civilization one great cause of our trouble is the weakness of so-called Christianity, and the chief cause of this weakness is that the church has joined the world. As Jesus on Mount Olivet wept over the coming fate of Jerusalem, so do God's children today sorrow over the future doom of organized world Christianity.

It is well to read these two chapters through again. They are the climax of a series of chapters. Chapter 23 is the divine interpretation of chapters 20, 21, 22. The Jews themselves gave occasion to what the prophet wrote. In chapter 14, as in chapter 20, "certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord." The elders' questions are not revealed, but it is stated that they had "stumbling blocks of iniquity in their hearts" and did not sincerely desire the light. It is possible that the people had been greatly stirred by the message of the prophet, and that these elders were almost compelled to seek further information. At any rate the answers to their questions were to reveal the great apostasy of the people. "Son of man, [105] speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: Are ye come to enquire of Me? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you. Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge them? cause them to know the abominations of their fathers." Eze. 20:3, 4.

The outline of these two chapters may be briefly stated. In chapter 16 the Lord speaks of the spiritual origin of apostate Israel, "Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite." He describes in great detail the poverty and distress of Israel in the early days and tells how the Lord found this little people, oppressed and wasted in Egyptian slavery, and how He chose them to be His own precious heritage. "Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God." Eze. 16:9-14.

In this same chapter the Lord goes on to describe how Israel was untrue to Him. He says, "I . . . entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest Mine," but the people of the Lord turned from God, represented as the husband of the church, and gave themselves up to every sin. God had separated them from all other [106] nations and commanded them to remain distinct, but they sought and made an unholy alliance, first with Egypt and later with Assyria and other nations. Both Judah and Samaria went so far in the apostasy that they were more wicked than surrounding nations, even worse than Sodom. "As I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." Eze. 16:48, 49. As a consequence of these apostasies the Lord said, "I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy." Eze. 16:38. Indeed, so far had Israel departed from God that the Lord declared that it was as impossible for the church of the old covenant to continue as it would be impossible for Sodom to return and build the "former estate." Eze. 16:55.

In chapter 23 we have this same prophecy of Israel under the figure of two women. "The names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were Mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah." Eze. 23:4. Aholah, the name for Samaria, means "his tent," but Aholibah means "my tabernacle in her." That is, Samaria claimed to belong to the Lord, but in the case of Judah, the Lord Himself dwelt in their midst, in the sanctuary in Jerusalem. This chapter is largely a repetition of the sins described in chapter 16. The Lord had clothed them with the beauty of truth and had entrusted great spiritual light and riches to them. As His peculiar people they enjoyed advantages over all other nations. He had given them the best on earth, "the glory of all lands." Eze. 20:6. He had placed them where they would [107] belong neither to Egypt nor to Babylon, the great world powers. He had made them to be a nation of priests to teach His word to all mankind. It was the Lord's plan that they should live apart from the nations of earth, having been strictly charged not to enter into covenant relation with idolatrous powers. But they sought one alliance after another, trusting more in the riches and military might of other nations than in the promises of God. It was this great sin of worldly alliance with the nations of earth that separated the people from God.

But the Lord did not set forth the apostasy of Israel only in parable, as in the two chapters mentioned above. In chapters 20, 21, and 22 He describes in detail the nature of this falling away of His people. In chapter 20 we have a historical review of the apostasy of Israel from the time of Egypt to the days of Ezekiel. "Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. But they rebelled against Me, and would not hearken unto Me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt." Eze. 20:7, 8. This is the clearest statement in the Bible concerning the idolatry of Israel before they left Egypt.

The apostasy of Israel in the wilderness is set forth even more fully. "The house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness: they walked not in My statutes, and they despised My judgments." Eze. 20:13. Later the prophet makes plain how completely Israel had failed to honor God after they came into the Promised Land. Again and again the Lord sent to them His prophets and called them to repentance. But they refused. Still in spite of their iniquities He permitted them to go on. "Nevertheless I withdrew Mine hand, and

wrought for My name's sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight [108] of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth." Eze. 20:22.

In chapter 21 we have a further statement of the sins of the Jews in their own land. These apostasies finally became so great that the limit of God's mercy was passed, and Babylon was chosen to punish Judah and other near-by nations. The king of Babylon was directed to attack Jerusalem and Judah. Because of the apostasy of Israel, Zedekiah, who then reigned, was to be the last earthly king. "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God: Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." Eze. 21:25-27. After the Babylonian there were still to be three changes of rulership over Judah. There would be an overturning from the Babylonian to the Persian and from the Persian to the Greeks and from the Greeks to the Romans. The third, that is, the Romans, were to reign over Israel until the days of Christ, and finally the crown would come to Him whose right it is.

In chapter 22 the deeper causes of these apostasies are named. The princes had shed innocent blood. (Eze. 22:1-6.) The people had oppressed the stranger and the poor. They had despised holy things and profaned the Sabbath. When the Lord finally tried through tribulation to purify them, Israel appeared as dross and worthless metal. (Verses 18-22.) The prophet goes on to describe how the leaders had led the people astray. There was a conspiracy of her prophets. They saw vanity, and built up a false wall of peace. Her princes were like ravening wolves who destroyed the poor. Her priests violated the law and hid their eyes from the Sabbath. When God [109] sought for a man to build up a hedge for their protection, He found none to do this work.

"There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated My law, and have profaned Mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out Mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God." Eze. 22:25-31.

These words certainly contain a message to the guides of Christianity in this generation. Now as then it is not so much the members as the religious leaders who cause the churches to forsake God and join the world.

Consequences of Apostasy

This statement concerning the apostasy of Israel of old is written for our learning. Israel in the old covenant is a type of the church of the new covenant. Just as the [110] Jews of old broke their covenant to belong to God alone and be separated from the nations and from sin, so there came in the Christian church a great falling away. This departure began even in the days of Paul, but it increased in numbers and power until the church, as a church, in the days of Constantine, separated herself from her Master and united fully with the world in a state religion.

In the history of Christianity there have been three great apostasies. The first was in the early centuries that gave rise to the Roman church. The second was the apostasy of Protestantism after the days of the Reformation, so that instead of there being one Catholic state church in Europe, there came to be many so-called Protestant state churches. In practically every country popular Christianity aligned

itself with the state. There was, however, this difference. In the Medieval Ages, the state was largely under the control of the church, but in the post-Reformation centuries, the state was in control of the church, as it is today in Europe to a very large extent. The third falling away in Christianity is seen today in the Protestant churches of North America. Many of these in the early years were poor in worldly things, but mighty in spiritual truth and power, and they all stood free and had no alliance with the state. But today we see worldly churches rich in money, strong in politics, but weak in spiritual vision and power, and in danger of utter collapse.

Shipwrecked Churches

Many religious denominations that thirty years ago were popular and prosperous, today find themselves in threatening perplexities. Some are in such distress that they almost despair. Their future appears as one fatal series of disasters. In Russia the old Orthodox Church is well-nigh broken. Once it was wealthy and mighty. After the First World War the state churches in other [111] lands were separated from government support, and their ministers were left in poverty. Some of them actually became beggars, homeless, and without food. Even the Roman church, mighty as it is growing to be in a few lands, is fighting for its very life in others.

In fact, there has grown up a pessimism within the churches themselves which may easily spell defeat. It is common today to find articles in church journals, and books, setting forth the sad fact that one church after another is facing a crisis so serious that it may mean its dissolution. Thus Dr. Adolf Keller, so well known in Protestant church federation circles in Europe, writes:

“An old church is dying. The end of a church is a historic Christian experience. Where is the indigenous Christian church of Northern Africa—the church of Augustine and Cyprian? Gone! Where is the ancient church of Asia Minor—the church of Ephesus and Smyrna and Iconium? It has come to an end. Where is the formerly great Nestorian church in China? It died.

“But at the conferences of Oxford and Edinburgh these dead churches of the past were not present in our minds as mere historic recollections. We seemed to have in our nostrils the reek of decay emanating from so much that has died in the Christian church not only in times past, but in the present.”—*Five Minutes to Twelve*, p. 96.

“A survey of organized Christianity made at Oxford and Edinburgh could easily show us that churches today are not only wiped out by force, but are dying from many diseases. This is a sad sight of spiritual death, a ghastly field strewn with the bones of human ambition, egotism, nationalism, individualism, human idealism, and secularism, which in the very midst of present-day Christianity tries to create ‘churches,’ but acquires only numerous sociological groups, schisms, and sects, because the Holy [112] Spirit has been the sole ‘church builder’ since Pentecost.”—*Id.*, p. 99.

“It is five minutes to twelve even in the religious situation of the present world. And the future battle will not be one between the Protestant denominations or between Protestantism and Catholicism, but between Christendom and paganism, between Christ and antichrist. And Europe will be the battlefield.”—*Id.*, p. 118.

A Weak Spirituality

The causes of the present crisis in many large churches are not hard to find. The first is the loss of their early love and zeal. In a recent conference sermon, Bishop McDowell of the Methodist Church declared:

“John Wesley once said in substance ‘that the movement called Methodism would last in power for a century or a century and a half on its original motive or impulse from God. Unless it then received a new vision from God, undertook a new and greater adventure with God, and felt its life filled with new power from God, it would cease to be a primary and resistless force for redemption, and become a conventional body, as others had done, doing many useful and necessary things, but no longer having the sound as of a rushing mighty wind or seeing cloven tongues like fire sitting upon the heads of its servants.’ ”

Those words sound prophetic now—and how sad is their fulfillment! But let us quote another:

“The Christianity of our popular church life in America is neither Fundamentalist nor Liberal. It is largely nebulous concoction. It lacks definiteness and depth.”—*Christianity in America*, p. 21.

“The churches have lost their vigorous vigilant and uncompromising obedience to the God and Father of Jesus Christ, and Him alone! To lose this is fatal.”—*Id.*, p. 11.

Many godly men in the various churches recognize the [113] spiritual changes for the worse that have come. A statement concerning this in a prominent Baptist paper tells the sad story:

“The denomination is engaged in a struggle to save its life. A century ago the denomination had smaller numbers, less money, less equipment, less efficiency, and less of many other things considered so essential to a successful program. But it was not fighting for its life. Rather, it was a great source of life from which rivers of living waters flowed to a needy world.

“A century or more ago, Baptists faced challenges on two fronts. They faced a lawless, irreligious West. Thousands of people had left the ties of home and church, and were journeying to the hard, raw West to pit their strength against a ruthless nature and a godless society. Beneath the glamour and romance was a hardness and irreligiousness of spirit that portended anything but good for the infant West, and for the boys and girls growing up in it. Could the denomination meet this challenge? It did. It poured out streams of prayer and money and men into the same West to take God to the people who had gone for gold.

A Present-day Contrast With the Past

“Today, how different! We are sure of neither the need nor the message. Science has brought into common usage the critical attitude. We Christians have begun to sit down and think about ourselves and our institutions. We have become greatly self-conscious. We have begun to wonder if the world is really lost. We have begun to wonder if we really do have a message of supernatural origin. We have begun to wonder if Christ was really virgin born, crucified for sin, resurrected, ascended, coming again, the perfect revelation of God to man and the only way of finding God. We have begun to wonder if [114] Christianity is not, after all, only another religion, and if we have any right to try to turn others away from their religions to ours. And as we have begun to wonder and to ponder these questions, the stream of money has been drying up. We have seen the great river of gold surging through our boards to the fields first lose its depth, then its breadth, and finally dwindle to a mere trickle of what it was. We have been made so self-conscious, so uncertain as to our mission and message, we have been so on the defensive, that we have been trying to save ourselves. But we have found that far from saving ourselves, we have been losing ourselves.”—*George F. Ladd, in the Watchman-Examiner, Nov. 26, 1936.*

Many others admit with deep grief of heart that politics, worldly standards, oppression of the poor, unholy practices of many kinds, ignored or even protected by ecclesiastic authorities, have caused the uncertainty and weakness in present-day churches. Says one: “The ministers of the popular churches will not allow the truth to be presented to the people from their pulpits. The enemy leads them to resist the truth with bitterness and malice. . . . Christ’s experience with the Jewish rulers is repeated.”—*“Testimonies,” Vol. VIII, p. 197.*

The Crisis in Religion

But it is not alone state churches in Europe which face downfall. There is in many sections of the earth a determined attack on all kinds of organized religion. On every hand we hear that the “church is a failure”—an expensive failure at that, and one utterly unworthy of support. We see determined mass movements away from the church. However, the worst attacks on the church do not come from

without. The most aggressive enemies of the Bible are within the gates. The deadliest dangers are not questions of organization or economies, but of spiritual life [115] It is a departure from the faith that undermines the power of the church.

How completely some in the Protestant ministry have departed from the gospel is made plain by the following paragraph from the farewell sermon of a minister in Portland, Oregon, who resigned his pastorate to accept a professorship in a theological seminary. He said:

“I have not pleaded with you to believe in God. I have not asked you to bring your sins to be forgiven, primarily. I have not asked you to believe in the realities of the spiritual world. I have asked you to believe in yourselves, in the dignity of men, in the greatness of the human soul. . . . Men are what they are because of a fatal disbelief in their own divinity.”—*“Modern Religious Liberalism,” John Horsch, p. 11.*

This man was called to teach in a seminary for coming preachers. We remember the quotation, “Spurgeon in his day warned that ‘certain preachers’ were making infidels.” Today certain infidels are training preachers.

The Fall of Christianity

“The Fall of Christianity” is the title of a book written a few years ago by Dr. G. J. Heering. It deals with the relation of modern churches to militarism. Doctor Heering is a prominent theological writer in Holland, and his words are worthy of careful thought. He says:

“It has been no mere whim of mine to write this book, but a necessity from which there was no escape, for I could no longer endure the tacit alliance between Christianity and militarism. . . . I have not shrunk from the pregnant symbolism of my title: ‘The Fall of Christianity.’ It was a fateful change of spirit which took place under Constantine the Great and afterwards, through the alliance, all too close, of church and state, the consciousness of the opposition of Christianity and war—a con- [116] sciousness which arose in the early centuries as a result of the gospel—was lost, and with it a Christian conviction of the greatest value. . . . A fateful change of spirit. For the worst of it is not that at a certain point men sinned against the Christian standard; the worst of it is that from that point on the standard was no longer seen, and what was evil was tacitly called good. However many historical and psychological reasons may be advanced to explain this change, the fact remains: primarily it was a fall.”—*Page 9.*

There could be no more conclusive proof of the spiritual declension and moral fall of present-day Christendom than the way in which they unite with the world in international conflicts. Could the churches go farther in denying Christ, the Prince of Peace, than

they do when they advocate war? How different is such Christianity from the teaching of Jesus! Doctor Heering was certainly right in saying, “No severer sentence can be passed on the military Christianity of our day than that which is passed by the Christianity of Christ.”—*Id.*, p. 10.

It is, indeed, true, as he said, that “no greater difference and contradiction is conceivable than that between Christianity and modern war.”—*Ibid.*

But we should also look at other religious trends in this view of modern apostasies.

A New Call to the Church

The religious faith and life of millions were deeply influenced by the great conflict of 1914-18. In several churches that war produced great upheaval, the effect of which is still seen. Some countries, like Russia, separated the church from state support, and the church nearly perished. In certain parts, even outside of Russia, whole countries turned to atheism, saying they didn't think a good God could have permitted such misery.

[117]

Within some churches a new spiritual life began. It was felt that the war was a call of God to repentance. Not a few believed that the war was a sign of a soon-coming Saviour. In America about 1919 and 1920 a series of prophetic conferences were held, attended by many pastors and laymen. Just after the capture of Jerusalem by the Allies in 1917, ten clergymen met in London and sent out a statement from which we quote the following:

“First.—That the present crisis points toward the close of the times of the Gentiles.

“Second.—That the revelation of the Lord may be expected at any moment, when He will be manifested as evidently as to His disciples on the evening of His resurrection.

“Third.—That the completed church will be translated, to be ‘forever with the Lord.’ ”

This statement sent to preachers all over the world shows that many were expecting the return of Jesus. It was signed by “A. C. Dixon and F. B. Meyer, Baptists; George Campbell Morgan and Alfred Byrd, Congregationalists; William Fuller Gouch, Presbyterian; H. Webb Peplow, J. Stuart Holden, Episcopalians; Dinsdale T. Young, Methodist. These well-known men were among the world's greatest preachers. That these eminent men, of different churches, should issue such a statement was of itself exceedingly significant.

Before long, however, a change, but not for the better, was seen. The churches fell back to their former lukewarm indifference. Revival meetings slackened. Such unchristian fads as the “Moral Rearmament” theories of the Oxford groups flourished. In several lands it was welcomed by hundreds of state church preachers. Few saw its weakness as a modern form of righteousness by works—like the Pharisees in the days of Jesus. One [118] of the darkest omens of the present drift is the lack of evangelism in modern days. Gone seems the old spirit of soul-winning and revival meetings. Such giants of evangelism as Finney, Moody, and others, belong to a past age. Ritualism and social-betterment movements occupy first place, while foreign missions have become almost a back number.

The Church at the Crossroads

The early twenties of this century were critical days for Christianity. Though a few godly leaders—like voices in the wilderness—called for repentance and a genuine spiritual rebirth, the great majority of ministers and members turned to carnal plans and policies. They trusted in numbers and organizations. With 650,000,000 Christians on earth, what power would they not have if united in a world church federation? Like Jesus on the mount of temptation, “an exceeding high mountain,” they were shown, but not by the Lord, “all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.” Matt. 4:8. And they began to yield. Statements like the following became common both in press and in pulpit:

“ ‘The church of today faces a life-and-death struggle in which either a totalitarian Christianity or a totalitarian government is the issue.’ To achieve this ‘Christian goal,’ . . . ‘all minor differences separating the sects must be forgotten.’ ”—*Dr. Emil Brunner, famous German theologian, quoted in the Religious Digest, May, 1939.*

“The pressure of hostile forces upon both Catholics and Protestant churches is bringing them together in defense of a single concept of Christian fellowship, in protection of institutions sacred to all disciples of the crucified Carpenter of Galilee, regardless of traditional sectarian differences.”—*Washington Star, Nov. 27, 1938.*

“The ‘united front’ of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews [119] against dangers which threaten all faiths has been made the outstanding news of 1938.”—*Religious News Service, Jan. 16, 1939.*

Significant Church Conference

Since the war of 1914-18 a series of large international and interchurch conferences have become famous. They remind us strongly of the church councils in the fourth and fifth centuries, which led to the Papacy—the same liturgy and worship, the same pious phrases, the same profession of holy zeal for Christ and His church, the same world objectives, the same lust for power, the same remedy for the same perplexities.

During the war itself Archbishop Soederblom of Sweden, one of the foremost churchmen of those years and almost the father of the church-unity movement, wrote a telling appeal, beginning as follows:

“ ‘The war is causing untold distress. Christ’s body, the church, suffers and mourns. Mankind in its need cries out, “O Lord, how long?” ’ ” “We may regard a message prepared by him as one of the most definite moves which ultimately led to the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work.”—”*Steps Toward the World Council*,” *Charles S. Macfarland*, p. 40.

At the close of the war a number of smaller conferences were held, one of them at The Hague, October, 1919. Here “Archbishop Soederblom outlined the purposes thus: to gain a common ideal of international brotherhood, social renewal, a common voice for conscience, by ‘an ecumenical council representing Christendom in a spiritual way.’ According to the minutes of that meeting, Doctor Soederblom presented ‘a detailed proposal for an international Christian conference and “an Ecumenical Church Council.” ’ In fact, the archbishop’s plan was deemed slightly hierarchical, involving a council which to some looked almost papal.”—*Id.*, pp. 50, 51. [120]

At the same conference the Swiss delegation stated:

“ ‘We, the delegates of the Swiss Council, take the opportunity, when Protestants of many countries are assembled, to give expression to the urgent necessity of uniting all Protestants.’ ”—*Id.*, p. 51.

As we traveled from land to land in Europe after the First World War, we observed the papal church trying to comfort and help the many who were in mourning and misery. In their way, they began to emphasize spiritual things more than before. We remember one section in which the Catholics started a new journal, the purpose of which was declared to be to give guidance and solace to the pious. But while Rome thus deepened her hold on the souls of men, other churches sought salvation through worldly unity and prestige. They declared that the war “created a new necessity for the church.”

“This necessity found expression in the World Conference on Life and Work at Stockholm, Sweden, in 1925, and the World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1927. These were wider than Protestantism, including also the Old Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

“Ten years have passed since the last of these historic gatherings—years which have brought momentous changes in governments, economic life, moral standards, and spiritual outlook. It seemed to many Christian leaders all over the world that the influences set in motion at Stockholm and Lausanne should be carried forward into the new situation; and that the Christian churches should again assemble to confer regarding their responsibilities. This feeling gave birth to the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences of 1937, the former continuing the work of Stockholm in seeking a Christian answer to pressing world problems, the latter that of Lausanne in striving for a deeper fellowship of understanding in the realm of [121] faith and order.”—”*Oxford and Edinburgh, 1937*,” p. 11.

“The Oxford conference first met in the Sheldonian Theater, an auditorium full of university traditions; but soon was transferred to the Town Hall, one of the newer buildings of the city. There the eight hundred delegates and associate delegates assembled, two and often three times a day, to hear addresses and reports and to discuss the pressing questions which the conference faced. The Edinburgh conference met in the assembly hall of the Church of Scotland. This is located on the ‘Royal Mile’ which begins at the Castle high upon its rock, and ends at Holyrood Palace, the home of kings and queens for many generations. Each conference did a large part of its work in commissions whose duty was to discuss the issues in hand and formulate statements for presentation to the full sessions.

“The world character of the conferences was evident to anyone who walked the streets of Oxford near the Town Hall or watched the delegates entering the assembly hall in Edinburgh. The eye was caught by an almost bewildering array of countenances and ecclesiastical garments, while the ear heard the sound of many tongues. Delegates came from forty-five countries and represented 123 communions. All of the eight great families of Christian believers had representatives present.”—*Id.*, pp. 11, 12.

But the Pope Held Back

As stated above these church councils, especially those of Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937, represented all the larger churches of modern Christendom—except Rome. And thereby hangs a tale. It was not that Rome wasn’t wanted or welcome. She was more. She was greatly desired. From the beginning “there was even the hope that . . . there would be a joint conference of Protestants, Roman

Catholics, and Eastern churchmen. When [122] the Federal Council issued the call in 1920, its committee expressed ‘the preference that the ultimate conference should be inclusive of *all* Christian bodies.’ Again, at Geneva, in 1920, the resolution adopted was proposed by a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, who, with definite intent, phrased it to include both the Eastern and Roman churches. The invitation was to ‘all Christian communions.’ As we shall see later, this action was repeated again and again. . . . Archbishop Soederblom made many and constant approaches to the Vatican. . . . It may suffice to say here that all the negative attitudes have been on the part of the Church of Rome. One could almost write a volume describing the visits of non-Catholic delegates to the Vatican and the Succession of invitations to the conference for ‘re-union.’ ”—“*Steps Toward the World Council*,” Charles S. Macfarland, pp. 73, 74.

The Papacy was not only asked and urged to join in these gatherings, but in the conferences themselves the Catholic Church was praised again and again in most flattering words. At the Stockholm conference, 1925, one delegate—a Protestant—even went so far as to propose that that Council of Anglicans, Orthodox, and Protestants should agree to recognize the Pope as the head of all Christendom.

The Catholics did send, not delegates, but observers, to Oxford and Edinburgh. Of this we read, “Attempts were made to secure the co-operation of the Roman Catholic Church for both Oxford and Edinburgh. Although in the view of the leaders of that communion it was not possible for them to take part directly in either conference, the state of the church throughout the world and the growth of a more Christlike attitude toward their ‘separated brethren’ did lead them to co-operate in certain invisible ways with the Oxford conference studies [123] and to address a significant message, couched in terms of warm friendliness, to the Edinburgh conference.”—“*World Chaos or World Christianity*,” Henry Smith Leiper, p. 9.

The Archbishop of York said, “We deeply lament the absence from this collaboration of the great church of Rome—the church which more than any other has known how to speak to the nations so that the nations heard.” —*Id.*, p. 101.

Two prominent Catholics sent greetings to the conference.

“The first was from the head of the Benedictine—Roman Catholic—priory of Amay-sur-Meuse in Belgium, who addressed to Canon Hodgson, the conference secretary, and through him to the conference itself, a warm, friendly letter of good will expressing his regret that his own communion was not officially represented and his heartfelt prayer that God would make plain to all the way to ultimate unity in one visible and universal church. ‘Though we are absent from Edinburgh,’ he concluded, ‘we are with you in heart.’ In somewhat similar vein Dr. A. J. McDonald, Roman Catholic archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, wrote to the conference, adding that he hoped to meet personally with the delegates of the non-Roman churches.

“To both these letters the conference authorized its chairman, Doctor Temple, to reply. Part of the reply, which was approved by the delegates, declares: ‘It has been a great sorrow to us that we have not had the fellowship and assistance of our Roman Catholic brethren in our enterprise and labors. We are both moved and encouraged by the knowledge that your prayers are joined with ours that we may be guided by the Holy Spirit as we seek to learn from God His will for ourselves and for His whole church.’ ” —*Id.*, p. 121.

[124]

Indeed, one great objective of Roman policies is a united, universal church—she to be that church. When the rest will accept her terms, she will join. We have it on the most trustworthy but confidential authority that the present Pope has stated that when the time is ripe, Rome is ready to unite with the other churches in a world council and federation. This we can well understand, for such a world-wide religious combination would really be an image of medieval Roman Catholicism.

Church Reconstructing World

The one supreme goal of these so-called ecumenical conferences and activities is not to save sinners, but to save society. These religious leaders have placed the salvaging of civilization above personal salvation. Indeed, individual conversion, sanctification, and eternal redemption are submerged in all these plans and efforts to preserve communities and nations. This is evident when we study the preparations made for the conferences as well as the program and discussions of the conferences themselves. Thus we read:

“The five main themes for the conference were designated as follows:

“1 The Church and the Community—in particular, the relation of the church to the common life of man as shaped by national tradition, expressing itself in characteristic folkways and determined by current standards.

“2 The Church and the State—including consideration of the Christian view of the state, the claims of the contemporary state, and the Christian conception of freedom of conscience.

“3 The Church, Society, and the State in Relation to the Economic Order—including the various new proposals for the regulation of man’s economic life.

“4 The ‘Church, Society, and the State in Relation to [125] Education—dealing with the acute and pressing difficulties which have arisen as governments have increased their claims over the whole of the citizen’s outlook and training.

“5 The Universal Church and the World of Nations—including a consideration of nationalism, international relations, the church as supernational society, Christianity and war.”—*Federal Council Bulletin*, October, 1936.

Again, in the *Federal Council Bulletin* for September, 1937, we find:

“Whatever else the Oxford Conference on Life and Work did, it certainly kindled a new vision of the possibilities of the church as a world-wide unity of Christians of every nation and race. This new outlook was described as ‘ecumenical’—an adjective which was on everyone’s lips at Oxford. . . . The churches as we see them today, one has to confess, are but feeble reflections of the one universal church of Christ. . . . Broken into denominational fragments and crippled by nationalism, the churches fail to function as one body of Christ throughout the world. . . . The Oxford conference made it clear that the first great task of the church as it confronts a disintegrating civilization is to be the Christian world community. . . . If Christians more and more truly become a world community, no one can set limits to their possible influence for unity in the political and social realm. . . . What if Christians generally, in different countries, gained the unshakable conviction that they owe a loyalty to the universal church of God which is higher than their loyalty to any nationalist state? Then perhaps governments might come to realize that they can no longer demand of Christians in the name of patriotism the kind of action which nullifies their fellowship with one another in Christ. . . .

“If the Christian church is a world community, it [126] manifestly requires a structure which will enable it to function as the one body of Christ throughout the world. Such a structure we do not yet possess. We do not need a highly centralized or authoritative organization such as the Roman Catholic, but we require some instrument through which the Christian bodies in different lands can be more than separate and unrelated national units. We need a central agency through which the churches of the various nations can be in continuous fellowship and can act together across national lines.”

Can anything prove more clearly than the above quotations the worldly objectives and the secular spirit of this entire ecumenical, movement? Its supreme result would be world dominion. Christ never outlined such a program for His servants. Nowhere in the Gospels did Jesus entrust a social or political task to His church. The Roman church had these views of her task in the Dark Ages, but they are absolutely foreign to the spirit and mission of the true church of Christ.

However, these ideas of social, national, or racial preservations are more popular now than many suppose. Recently an author of some standing wrote a book entitled, “Can Christianity Save Civilization?” The name is appealing, and the book became a best seller in the religious world. The book fails to answer the question. However, the author says: “ ‘Can Christianity Save Civilization?’ That is a question which becomes daily more urgent, as it becomes increasingly clear with each day’s news that modern Western civilization—so secure and so dominant at the close of the last century—no longer rests upon stable foundations.”—Page 2. But the author confesses, “If our bewildered civilization should in sheer despair turn to our existing churches for salvation, it would be only another case of the blind leading the blind—both would fall into some ditch deeper even than the [127] muddy Slough of Despond in which they are now floundering.”—Page 7.

But in spite of the confused apostasy and weakness of the modern churches, religious leaders still cling to the vain hope that these ecclesiastical powers can save society, regenerate the state, and preserve mankind. The supreme result of Oxford and Edinburgh was to found the World Council of Churches. As one writer declares:

“The conferences reached a high point of vision in the action looking toward a World Council of Churches. Both gatherings approved in principle the plan for such an organization; and a Committee of Fourteen was appointed to bring it into being. This council will be representative of the Christian churches of the world, and will carry on the present work of the Universal Christian Council and the World Conference on Faith and Order in addition to other responsibilities which will be entrusted to it. At a meeting in Holland in May, 1938, the detailed plan will be formulated; and after approval by the Continuation Committee of Faith and Order, the churches will be invited to constitute the council. Such a forward step in Christian co-operation should have the enthusiastic support of individuals and churches everywhere. It means that a new and visible organ of unity will have come into being just when it is most urgently needed in a disintegrating world.

“The total effect of the conferences will be to stimulate immeasurably the whole ecumenical movement. In a new way the church is finding itself. Its universal character is growing in the consciousness of clergy and laity the world over; and the conferences have given strong impetus to this development. It remains for this new understanding to be embodied, not only in the World Council, but also in a larger Christian co-operation among individuals, congregations, and communions, and in a [128] philosophy of the church which will undergird such Co. operation.”—*Oxford and Edinburgh, 1937*,” p. 15.

This movement to unite all the churches of Christendom for the purpose of self-defense and aggressive action against the enemies of the church is indeed popular. It is strongly supported by the large women’s societies in the churches, as the following shows:

“We the delegates to the triennial meeting of the Woman’s Auxiliary in Cincinnati, October, 1937, are convinced that the evils and confusion of the world can only be combated effectively by a united church.”—*“Toward Unity,” published by the Woman’s Auxiliary to the National Council, 1938, p. 4.*

“Before the world conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937, a Committee of Thirty-five had been appointed jointly to consider future relationships. This committee recommended the formation of a world council of churches which should from the start embrace both movements. The great enthusiasm with which this proposal was received at both world conferences led to the appointment of the Committee of Fourteen, seven members from each body. This committee met in London after the world conferences and decided to call a consultative meeting of delegates from the churches in Utrecht, Holland, in the spring of 1938.”—*“Interim Arrangements,” Adopted by the Provisional Conference at Utrecht, Holland, May 9-13, 1938, p. 2.*

This committee met in Utrecht, Holland, May 9-13, 1938, and adopted a “Constitution for the Proposed World Council of Churches.” This constitution gave some of the objectives of the council as follows:

“To facilitate common action by the churches.”

“To call world conferences on specific subjects as occasion may require, such conferences being empowered to publish their own findings.”—*Pages 3, 4.*

[129]

The plan is that the World Council shall discharge its duties through an Assembly which is to meet every five years, and a Central Committee which, under normal conditions, meets once a year. The Assembly consists of not more than 450 members, and at the beginning this membership was divided as follows:

“85 representing the Orthodox Churches throughout the world, . . .

“110 representing the churches of the continent of Europe, . . .

“60 representing the churches of Great Britain and Eire, . . .

“90 representing the churches of the United States of America and of Canada, . . .

“50 representing the churches of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific islands, . . .

“25 representing the churches of South Africa, Australasia, and areas not otherwise represented.”—*Id., p. 6.*

All these delegates of the churches are appointed by them as they may decide. The Central Committee with its membership of ninety was made up in the following way:

“17 of whom at least three shall be lay persons, representing the Orthodox Churches throughout the world, . . .

“22 of whom at least five shall be lay persons, representing the churches of the continent of Europe, . . .

“12 of whom at least four shall be lay persons, representing the churches of Great Britain and Eire, . . .

“18 of whom at least five shall be lay members, representing churches of the United States of America and of Canada, . . .

“10 of whom at least two shall be lay persons, representing churches of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands, . . .

“5 of whom at least two shall be lay persons, representing the churches of South Africa, Australasia, and areas not otherwise represented, . . . [130]

“And, not more than six members representing minority churches, which in the judgment of the Central Committee are not granted adequate representation by the above provisions.”—*Id., pp. 7, 8.*

All these members except the last six are appointed by their respective churches. In a 1941 report we are told that “the World Council of Churches” is “the most significant religious movement of the century.” In one of the many appeals for funds to support this project we read:

“Since its inception less than three years ago” it has experienced such a “phenomenal growth” that “already seventy great church bodies, representing all the non-Roman communions, have voted to accept membership.”

A Protestant Papacy

We, too, believe that this trend toward outward, organized unity will prove to be the most momentous church event of our age. It will lead modern churches back to Rome. It will create a stronger and more intolerant priest power than was even the Papacy in the thirteenth century. It will persecute anew the true followers of Jesus. Instead of saving mankind, it will, by uniting with the world, ruin both church and state.

This is the real aftermath of the apostasy—that the churches unite to get protection and power is not

the aftermath, but that they use that power to persecute the true followers of the lowly Jesus, that is the climax and final aftermath of the present world union of churches. All history bears witness to the fact that every large church or church federation that grasped power so that it could persecute, did persecute—and claimed to do God service while it destroyed His saints. Persecution is the [131] sure result of two factors—worldly church with civil power and spiritual revival. Wherever we find those two there is conflict—and the conflict makes oppression. Of this we read:

“There has been for years, in churches of the Protestant faith, a strong and growing sentiment in favor of a union based upon common points of doctrine. To secure such a union, the discussion of subjects upon which all were not agreed—however important they might be from a Bible standpoint— must necessarily be waived. . . .

“When this shall be gained, then, in the effort to secure complete uniformity, it will be only a step to the resort to force.” “Apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image to the beast.” “The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of Spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience.”—*“The Great Controversy,”* pp. 444, 445, 588.

The leaders of this movement, this climax of apostasy, do not now believe that. They are perplexed and, we believe, well-meaning, men. We judge no one. But from both the Bible and history we know the end of the road on which they travel.

The Work and Influence of the Church

When considering this subject, some will say: But is not the church to be a power for good in the world, and does not our age, above all times, need her help? Did not Christ call His followers to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth? Most assuredly. But did not Jesus also teach that while His children are in the world they “are not of the world”? Indeed, He added that “they [132] are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” John 17:16. One compelling reason why the Scriptures forbid any union of the church with the world is that when the church seeks favor and friendship in secular tasks, she separates herself from Christ and loses her spiritual endowment. She is to influence the world for good, but not through politics or mass reform, “for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.”

God’s Message for This Age

As stated before, the world now is all athrob with frenzied, conflicting ideas. Old errors with respect to the supremacy of the state and other controversies have been revived, and new, unheard-of issues and claims are being advanced. The human race is in great darkness. Mankind is being led astray today by false doctrines, false philosophies, false sciences, and false interpretations of history. But in our time as in former ages the Lord has not left Himself without a witness. In the midst of religious apostasies and as a protest against this falling away, the Lord sends forth His servants with a definite message of warning. The only remedy for modern ills of mankind is the gospel of Jesus. Christ alone can show us the way and give courage and power to choose the way.

In these days of apostasy the compelling need of Christianity is not a worldly, semipolitical league of churches, but true repentance, a return to God’s law and Sabbath, to living faith, to holiness of life, and a new Pentecost. How earnestly Adventists need to seek God for this new and Spirit-filled experience! As Jesus wept over Jerusalem, so are we in love and true humility of soul to sorrow over the apostasy of our day. Never, not even when persecuted, as many of our believers now are, should we harbor a spirit of ill will or criticism. We are [133] not called to condemn, but to love and save. For God’s children days of trial are days of triumph. Really the future is bright with the promise of divine deliverance.

“Faith of our fathers! living still

In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword: O how our hearts beat high with joy Whene’er we hear that glorious word.

“Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,

Were still in heart and conscience free: How sweet would be their children’s fate,
If they, like them, could die for thee!

“Faith of our fathers! we will love

Both friend and foe in all our strife; And preach thee, too, as love knows how,
By kindly words and virtuous life.

“Faith of our fathers! holy faith! We will be true to thee till death!”—*Faber.* [134]

The Destiny and Doom of Nations Foretold

Read Ezekiel 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32

WHILE there is now a strong trend in religious circles to have the churches come closer to the state, there is at the same time, strange as it may seem, a growing tendency to deny “that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.” Dan. 4:17. The thinking of today has been led astray by false interpretations of history. There is the *military* interpretation, which idolizes generals and battles. This brings on rearmament, and war. Then there is the *economic* interpretation of history, that materialistic philosophy called “communism.” What havoc has it not wrought among the nations! Another is the *racial* interpretation, making everything depend on blood, soil, and race. Closely akin to that is *destructive nationalism*. There are others, but these alone have murdered peace, nourished hatred, and banished liberty.

But in both its moral and its military results, the *godless* interpretation of history is the most pernicious of all. In our haste to escape from the old bondage of the “divine right of kings” we have fallen into the error that there is no divine control or guidance operating in the nations of earth. Both the Bible and history make plain beyond all doubt the moral rule of God in the affairs of men. Many deny and still more forget that the fate of nations is decided not by money or military prowess, but by the principles of right and wrong. We hear much about battles and alliances, or about future trade and [135] economic reconstruction, but we are seldom told that the Lord is still in charge of this old earth. This is clearly stated by another, as follows:

“We need to study the working out of God’s purpose in the history of nations.”—“*Education*,” p. 184. “The power exercised by every ruler on the earth is Heaven-imparted; and upon his use of the power thus bestowed, his success depends. To each the word of the divine Watcher is, ‘I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me.’ ”—*Id.*, p. 174.

“In the annals of human history the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as dependent on the will and prowess of man. The shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. The Bible reveals the true philosophy of history.”—*Id.*, p. 173.

God is not indifferent toward any nation. He watches the rulers of earth. A careful record is kept in heaven of the oppression of the poor, of cruel wars, or of other acts of violence by the various nations. There is a point beyond which their wickedness may not extend. “The nations of this age have been the recipients of unprecedented mercies. The choicest of Heaven’s blessings have been given them, but increased pride, covetousness, idolatry, contempt of God, and base ingratitude, are written against them. They are fast closing up their account with God.”—“*Testimonies*,” Vol. V. pp. 208, 209.

In the days of Abraham, God said that Israel would return in the fourth generation from Egyptian slavery. The iniquity of the Ammonites was not yet full. God bore long with those people, giving them every opportunity to return to Him. In like manner, the people of Edom or Moab or Tyre were spared for ages in order that they might turn from their sins and accept the true God as revealed in the temple and worship at Jerusalem. We in our own beloved country need to keep this in mind. Every believer is a loyal citizen of his own nation and loves his native land. But this love must not make him blind to existing evils. A false patriotism must never hinder us in giving God’s warning. America has had great light. Says one American writer, “The greatest and most favored nation upon the earth is the United States. A gracious Providence has shielded this country, and poured upon her the choicest of Heaven’s blessings. Here the persecuted and oppressed have found refuge. Here the Christian faith in its purity has been taught. This people have been the recipients of great light and unrivaled mercies. But these gifts have been repaid by ingratitude and forgetfulness of God. The Infinite One keeps a reckoning with the nations, and their guilt is proportioned to the light rejected. A fearful record now stands in the register of heaven against our land; but the crime which shall fill up the measure of her iniquity is that of making void the law of God.” “*The Great Controversy*,” p. 398, old edition. [136]

History and Prophecy

There is with some a tendency to discredit Bible prophecy while they exalt history. History is indeed a most valuable branch of human knowledge. The present may learn many useful lessons from the past; yet historians know only in part, and their conclusions are often one-sided. Divine prophecy and true history will always agree. What God tells before things happen is more reliable than what men record after the events are past. So many unseen motives and influences, as well as out- [137] ward forces with their play and counterplay, enter into human actions and world events that no historian can understand all or tell all. We can measure or weigh

a ball or any object in exact terms, but no man can give a perfect and complete account of any human act, let alone a national occurrence. The fact is that it takes the same divine inspiration to write true history as it does to write prophecy. Indeed, no one correctly interprets the meaning of history unless he studies it in the light of Bible prophecy. We can understand the trends and consequences of current events only when we throw the searchlight of inspiration upon them.

Some make the mistake of thinking that Old Testament prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel concerned themselves merely with the Jews. But it was God's purpose that the light of truth should go to all nations. The many prophetic visions concerning these nations were a divine call to return to the true God. Messages for various nations, as recorded in the prophetic books of the Bible, were sent to these people. The prophets themselves became well known, and as in the case of Jeremiah, they were highly regarded by the mighty rulers of those days. More study should be given to the messages sent by the Lord's servants to these nations, and to the reasons these warnings were given. This, above all, applies to Ezekiel. His book, like that of Daniel, has clear light for today. God will deal with tyrants today as He did with oppressors of old. The same destruction that came upon the heathen nations who hated Israel of old will be seen again.

The End of Small Nations

The age to which Ezekiel belonged being one in which God's judgments upon the nations were clearly seen, his predictions concerning the nations have special light for us. The century-long struggle for world dominion between Assyria and Egypt was coming to a close. The new Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar had grown mighty; and this kingdom, destroying, as some do today, the small nations, had brought the whole earth under the crushing reign of Babylon as the first universal monarchy. In turn, only a few decades later, Babylon met her final downfall, and was succeeded by Persia. When Babylon conquered Egypt, several other nations more or less in league with that country also fell. This great change from the independence of many nations to the domination of one universal power is foretold by Ezekiel. In these prophecies against the nations, Ezekiel makes prominent seven different peoples of Bible story. They were Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Sidon, the Philistines, and Egypt-Ethiopia. Against Babylon itself, in spite of all her cruelty and wickedness, Ezekiel never uttered one word of condemnation. Indeed, Nebuchadnezzar was designated as a servant of God. It was stated very plainly that in God's providence, this mighty monarch was used to destroy the enemies of Israel. (Eze. 29:18-20.)

In Ezekiel two important truths as regards human affairs are strongly emphasized—(1) The Lord is dealing with the nations of the earth on a moral basis ; (2) God has given special prophecies concerning the rise and fall of nations and the reason why they perished. The nations concerning which Ezekiel prophesied lived near Israel. Everything they did influenced Israel for good or evil. The small nations perished because of their idolatry and hatred of God's people. However, that is not the end of the story. The large military power, Babylon, who conquered the others was in a few years herself destroyed.

It will pay the reader to study the prophecies given in Ezekiel, chapters 25 to 32, concerning the small nations situated close to the land of Israel. They all perished [139] because of their hatred of the people of God and their attacks upon the nation of Israel. The prophecies against Tyre, however, are much more important. They cover chapters 26, 27, and 28. The description of the precious goods and wares bought and sold at Tyre is a classic. (Read Eze. 27:3-14.) This picture is a prototype of the luxury of modern civilization as outlined in Revelation 18. Those who have studied the history of these nations will understand how literally all these predictions of Ezekiel were fulfilled. When we visited Tyre and Sidon some years ago and saw how desolate those little coast villages were, we could but think of the words about Tyre: "For thus saith the Lord God: When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee; when I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living; I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God." Eze.26:19-21.

These prophecies concerning Tyre, however, have a larger meaning, especially for God's people now, and should be studied with that in mind. Above all, that is true of the prediction about the "prince of Tyre" in chapter 28.

"Satan and his agencies are laying out special lines of labor for men who can be controlled by his power. Deceptions of every degree and kind are arising. . . . With the same subtle power with which he plotted for the rebellion of holy beings in heaven before the fall, Satan is working today to operate through human beings for the fulfillment of his purposes of evil. [140]

"I ask our people to study the twenty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel. The representation here made, while it refers primarily to Lucifer, the fallen angel, has a yet broader significance. Not one being, but a general movement, is described, and one that we shall witness. A faithful study of this chapter should lead those who are seeking for truth to walk in all the light that God has given to His people, lest they be deceived by the deceptions of these last days."—*Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 17, p. 30.*

The same author says further:

“As we near the close of time, there will be a greater and still greater external parade of heathen power; heathen deities will manifest their signal power, and will exhibit themselves before the cities of the world; and this delineation has already begun to be fulfilled. . . . All need wisdom carefully to search out the mystery of iniquity that figures so largely in the winding up of this earth’s history.”— *MS. 193, 1903*.

Just what this means and how far this idolatry will go remains to be seen.

There are indeed many forms of idolatry today:

“Addressing the students of the University of Southern California, Professor A. V. Hill, of London, recently said, ‘One of the most damaging things to modern life has been the creed of material science that progress is inevitable and ever upward. It is one of our false gods.’ ”—“*Christ in War Time*,” *John Bunting*, p. 48.

Aside from Israel, no people is mentioned so frequently and fully in Ezekiel as Egypt. Four chapters, 29, 30, 31, and 32, set forth the history, influence, and especially the final fate of that great

Coming Persecutions

country. These chapters were a warning both to Pharaoh and to his country. “Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt: and say, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am [141] against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers” Eze. 29:2, 3 (Read the whole chapter.)

This prophecy concerning Egypt was literally fulfilled. Egypt had been one of the great nations of antiquity. Through many centuries it had had the closest connection of all with the people of God. The children of Israel themselves lived in the country for many years, and even after they were delivered, they still continued to be greatly influenced by Egypt. When Babylon made war against Judah, the kings in Jerusalem tried to ally themselves with Egypt and thus escape from the power of Babylon, but Egypt itself was destroyed by the Babylonians, and the country was in bondage to Babylon.

Worship of Country or Ruler

But the outstanding transgression of these two nations was the pride of their rulers, who set themselves up as God. The prince of Tyre said, “I am . . . God.” Eze. 28:1, 2. He set his heart as the heart of God. Indeed, so great was the pride and a worship of the prince of Tyre that he became the type of Satan, and the destruction of that city was set forth in terms that apply largely to the fall of Lucifer from heaven. The king of Egypt, too, declared, “My river is mine own, and I have made it.” Eze. 29:3. This self-glory of the rulers of Egypt and Tyre is a type of the modern idea of race pride, supermen, and hero worship, and the doom of Egypt and Tyre is a type of what we shall see again in our time.

In our time, one man after another comes to the front and builds his government and justifies all his actions on the assumption that he is a supreme being and that his guidance and wisdom are infallible. It is claimed that his every word is law. Those who oppose are visited with [142] the hardest punishment, A new cruelty and violence unsurpassed by anything known in the annals of man is now common in some parts of the earth. Anyone who dares to stand in defense of freedom or justice, and who in so doing sets himself up against these rulers of pride, is doomed. He loses his citizenship and is thrown into indescribable camps of misery and suffering. If he escapes into another land to live as a stranger and never to return, revenge is taken upon his wife, children, or even more distant relatives.

How displeasing to God this modern man worship is, is seen in the pride of Herod and its result.

“Upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.” Acts 12:21-23.

A Prophecy of the Near East

There is in these prophecies of Ezekiel concerning the nations of his day, one prediction which seems to have its direct fulfillment in our own time. We refer to the prophecy about Egypt and Ethiopia in Ezekiel 30:1-10. It is stated in this prophecy that it will be fulfilled when “the day of Lord is near” and that this day is “a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.” Eze. 30:3.

If we apply part of the first ten verses of chapter 30 to Egypt and Ethiopia of our own day and the near future, they become, indeed, a very instructive prophecy. We are told that “the men of the land that is in league, shall fall.” Eze. 30:5. It is further stated of Egypt that all her helpers shall be destroyed. “They also that uphold [143] Egypt shall fall.” Verse 6. Today these lands are in league with other countries, and it would appear from this that these nations will perish together. In studying these prophecies concerning Egypt and Ethiopia in our time, we should, however, beware of guessing concerning the future.

As already stated, the seven nations against which Ezekiel prophesied fell because of their hatred of Jerusalem and the persecution of the people of God. Today we have come into an epoch of bitter and bloody religious oppression. Of our own fellow believers in the remnant church, more than two thousand true, godly members have been in prison, or have been fined, flogged, starved, and banished. Many, many humble Christians have suffered much for their faith. In some parts of Eastern Europe and Asia, Christians have been treated more heartlessly in the last twenty years than at any time since the days of the medieval Saracens, or the Mongols of five centuries ago. This terrible change from the humane feelings and liberty of former years, to the harsh intolerance of today, bodes ill for the future.

The Future World Revolution

Another evil in the nations of earth which Ezekiel strongly emphasizes is the oppression of the poor by the governments of earth. Not only have the rich and mighty grown stronger in their power, but the masses are today destroyed and oppressed as never before in history. Great nations have shut all the borders so that no citizen under pain of death is permitted to leave. If anyone tries to cross the line into another country, he is shot without trial. In certain countries slavery has been reintroduced. It is called by new, finer-sounding names; yet it is really [144] the old-time slavery. Millions in camps or foreign prisons or field or factory are crying to God for relief. Men and women dare not come out in the open against their oppressors; yet their despair will someday break out in upheavals and revolution. The mighty of earth need to remember the truth set forth in the following lines:

“In the dream of your downy couches, through the shades of your pampered sleep,

Give ear, you can hear it coming, the tide that is steady and deep—

Give ear, for the sound is growing, from the desert and dungeon and den;

The tramp of the marching millions, the march of the hungry men.”

The book of Ezekiel and other prophecies reveal more than the history and downfall of nations in past centuries. They make plain the destiny and doom of present-day races and people.

Even though the nations may reject the prophetic warnings of the Lord, the honest in heart will heed His word and be saved. Not world reconstruction, but world destruction, awaits mankind. However, pessimism is poison, and for the true believers, even in these dark days, “the future is as bright as the promises of God.” [145]

Not a Creed, but a Message

Read Ezekiel 33 and 34

ON every hand today we find religious leaders emphasizing the need of revival. Thus one writer says: “There is a conviction growing among the most intelligent and most deeply reflective of our people that the deliverance so sorely needed must come by means of some great spiritual awakening and refreshment of mankind.”—*Christianity and the Modern Chaos*, William George Peck, pp. 109, 110. But the true basis for a spiritual revival is a definite message founded on well-established facts of faith. There is need, to be sure, of vision and zeal. Every religious movement is measured by the power of its leaders. Spiritual revival and reform can come only through converted, godly, Spirit-filled men.

As soon as the spiritual life and vision of church leaders decline, the members begin to backslide, faith grows weak, and mission zeal dies out. Only as the ministers of the Lord have a keen sense of their sacred call and work will they do service acceptable to God.

But there is also a dire need of ministers who are sound in the faith. As every doctrinal sermon must have a spiritual appeal, so every spiritual appeal must build on Bible truths. But in our time the trend to excitement as well as the mere mechanical activities in religion is one of the great perils of Christianity. The churches today do not fail because they are idle, for never before was there in religious circles such a bustle of activities—ladies’ aids, men’s clubs, youth movements, et cetera. Nor [146] do they lose out for lack of order, plans, or objectives. Nearly all churches are staggering under the load of overorganization.

Said a bishop recently:

“There are few churches not overburdened, and literally weighted down with the mechanics of organization. It is the exception where a pastor is not compelled to make the spiritual phase of his ministry subservient to organization”—*Decisive Days*, Adna Wright Leonard, p. 142.

With this love for the sensational and busy endeavor with some, has come a strong tendency away from doctrine. Luther, when asked, “What is true Christianity?” replied: “Genuine Christianity is the faith of Christ and the life of Christ.” By “faith” he meant “the

doctrines of Jesus;" by "life," not only doing good deeds, but heart communion with God. While some now mistake dead creeds voted by a church centuries ago for a living message based on individual conviction, many more make outward mission work and gifts a substitute for the personal Christ within. With this tendency toward the external forms in religion has come a new fondness for ceremonies and ritualistic worship.

There is today in nearly all Christian churches an alarming trend away from specific doctrines. Ethical sermons, social and even political sermons, or sermons on current events are common, but sermons on the great fundamentals of gospel truth are seldom heard. We do not advocate speculative, theorizing sermons on old fossilized creeds or theological sophistries, but true doctrinal preaching that elevates Christ and leads to repentance and faith, is urgently needed. We should study again the solemn charge given to Ezekiel, as well as his earnest instruction to watchmen and shepherds in the church. We must return to the logical and fearless presentation [147] Bible teaching and the burning spiritual appeals of former days. Both of these cardinal features are clearly seen in the basic truths of Ezekiel's message.

Every divine proclamation has a solid foundation. In fact, a man or a church with a definite message from God to mankind always builds such a message upon certain strong foundation pillars.

And temptations sweep upon it, like a storm on ocean's breast,
"When the flesh is worn and weary, and the spirit is depressed,

This applies in a special sense to prophetic messages, that is, messages given through the Spirit of prophecy. Here the law and the testimonies belong together. God does not give the gift of prophecy nor the gift of healing to those who oppose His divine commandments. Three basic truths are prominent in Ezekiel—the covenants, the Sabbath, and the sanctuary. And in teaching these truths, both faith and obedience are strongly stressed. They are indeed the foundation on which his entire message and appeal are built.

The Call to Repentance

However, not doctrine alone, nor even his fiery denunciation of sin, but the earnest, tender, spiritual appeals, were the compelling power of Ezekiel's message. Of his lifework one writer says: "The great spiritual leader of Israel in the days of the Babylonian exile is worthy to stand with the most exalted prophets and teachers of mankind. It was he, more than any other man among the prisoners, who reshaped the religious beliefs of his people and gave to them a creed which lifted them above their miseries and humiliation. No leader of a nation, with the single exception of Moses, ever faced a more difficult task. He found the prevailing doctrines of religion discredited, nationality destroyed, the God of his people in disgrace and shame before the gods of Babylon, the people dispirited and 'without hope. He reinterpreted the being of God and set Him far above the gods of the conquerors. . . . His place in the religious history of [148] humanity is the more appreciated when we remember that without him there could have been no re-established Israel."—"The Saviors of Mankind," William R. Van Buskirk, p. 245.

The grandeur of Ezekiel's work stands out with a brighter glory when we remember the state of God's people in those dark days. "The Israelites were in captivity, their temple had been destroyed, their temple service suspended. Their religion had centered in the ceremonies of the sacrificial system. They had made the outward forms all important, while they had lost the spirit of true worship. Their services were corrupted with the traditions and practices of heathenism."

To these people Ezekiel made the touching appeal to repent: "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Eze. 33:11. And when they, discouraged, declared: "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts," the reply was: "O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel," and "ye shall live . . . in your own land." Eze. 37:11-14.

With Ezekiel religion did not consist of mere form or legal requirement. He taught obedience, but it was always the joyful obedience of faith. It was a religion of experience in a new heart. "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh." Eze. 11:19. Ezekiel had a message of courage and comfort. To him the presence and help of God were a sweet reality. Not by elaborate arguments or finespun theories did Ezekiel try to arouse and save his people. He brought his people a convincing doctrinal message with a moving spiritual appeal—the comfort of a living trust in God.

[149]

"When Thou Passest Through the Waters" Isaiah 43:2

Is there any heart discouraged as it journeys on its way?
Does there seem to be more darkness than there is of Sunny day?
Oh, it's hard to learn the lesson, as we pass beneath the rod,

That the sunshine and the shadow serve alike the will of God;
But there comes a world of promise like the promise in the bow—
That however deep the waters, they shall never overflow.

As a secret haven opens for the tempest driven bird, So the Lord provides a shelter in the promise of His word; For the standard of the Spirit shall be raised against the foe, And however deep the waters, they shall never overflow.

“When a sorrow comes upon you that no other soul can share, And the burden Seems too heavy for the human heart to bear, There is one whose grace can comfort if you’ll give Him an abode;
There’s a Burden Bearer ready if you’ll trust Him with your load;
For the precious promise reaches to the depths of human woe, That however deep the waters, they shall never overflow.

“When the sands of life are ebbing and you know that death is near;
When you’re passing through the valley, and the way seems dark and drear;
If you reach your hand to Jesus, in His bosom you will hide, And ‘twill only be a moment till you reach the other side; It is then the fullest meaning of the promise you shall know. ‘When thou passest through the waters, they shall never over-flow.’ ” [1 5 0]

The Jewish Problem Solved

Read Ezekiel 35, 36, and 37

IT is a bad omen today that the Jewish problem is urgent. History shows that in times of peace and in lands of plenty, the Jews are forgotten, and prosper, while in decades of war, famine, or turmoil they appear again on the program. Today many religious people take a new interest in the Jews. A strong trend of Christian thinking considers their present plight a fulfillment of prophecy and the chief sign of the return of Jesus. They believe the Jews will return to Palestine and be the beginning of Christ’s kingdom on earth. A popular writer of devotional books goes so far as to say that soon the Jews “will be renationalized in Palestine, the temple built, and the Hebrew code of sacrifices be offered.” He even declares that there is to be “a seven-year period of renationalization”—whatever that may mean. We need to beware of fanciful interpretations of prophecy, lest we succumb to wishful thinking and go astray.

The people of history who endure have had four great roots—religion, race, country, and government. Of these, the first two are by far the strongest. The Jews are Orientals by race—the only Orientals of any consequence in America or Europe, including the Balkans. When they rejected Christ at His first advent, the Jews lost both country and government, but they continued because they held fast their race and religion. In both state and church today there is much speculation on the future fate and homeland of the Jews.
[1 5 0]

Israel Redeemed and the Inheritance Restored

In no other prophecy of the Bible is the return of Israel mentioned so frequently as in Ezekiel. Again and again he brought the people a message of courage based on the hope of a glorious deliverance. They lived then in captivity, surrounded by bitter enemies, and were in great danger of losing their faith in a coming return to their homeland. But the prophecies of Ezekiel concerning the redemption of Israel are frequently misunderstood—not that they are dark, but some teachers misunderstand the doctrine of the true Israel and their inheritance.

While the land of Israel refers to Palestine in Ezekiel, it usually has a deeper meaning. Abraham had, indeed, the assurance that the land of Canaan would be the home of Israel or the Jews after the flesh. But the “everlasting covenant” with Abraham promised that he was to be “heir of the world,” a promise not yet fulfilled. The real Land of Promise is the new earth. The return of the people of God from Babylonian captivity was only a type of the great ingathering of all the redeemed at the second coming of Christ, which ingathering is God’s solution of the Jewish problem.

However, it is not so much the inheritance that is misunderstood as the Bible teaching concerning Israel. Many think of Israel only as the Jews according to race. But these Jews, of whom there are now more than 16,000,000, are not the Israel of God. Both the Old and New Testaments teach that only the true children of the Lord are really Jews. Not the seed according to the flesh, but the seed according to the promise, are Israelites.

“He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Rom. 2:28, 29. [152]

This spiritual conception of Jews and their relation to their homeland is emphasized very strongly in the book of Ezekiel.

“Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. . . . And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh.” Eze. 11 :17-19.

Only those who are truly converted count as Jews before God. This gives the Jewish problem an entirely new meaning. But the modern idea of Israel as a nation of unconverted people of Jewish blood has led to strange errors. One of these is the so-called “British Israel idea.” This teaching has been popular in England, and is still misleading many persons and policies of the British Empire. That error, in a word, is that the “ten tribes of Israel were lost.” Twelve tribes were led into captivity, and of these, ten are supposed to have wandered away and disappeared. How, why, where, or when, no one knows. The belief is that the English are these ten lost tribes. But the truth is that no ten tribes were lost. All the twelve tribes of Israel were brought into captivity, and some of all the twelve returned. Therefore, when the temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem and dedicated, twelve goats were offered on the altar, one goat for each tribe as “a sin offering for all Israel.” Ezra 6:17.

Four of these tribes—Judah, Levi, Asher, and Benjamin—are named in the New Testament. Paul states expressly that twelve tribes were waiting for the coming Messiah. (Acts 26:7.) The prophecy of Ezekiel gives the names of all twelve tribes, and states that, after the return from Babylon, the old division of two kingdoms would cease. “Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one [153] stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.” Eze. 37:16, 17.

The Future of the Jews

The present anti-Semitic feeling, now growing stronger in many lands, is almost world wide. The bloody oppression suffered by the Jews in certain parts of the earth has aroused much sympathy and indignation. The Zionist movement, in spite of internal strife and party bickerings, has made the Jews an international issue. One purpose of Zionism is to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. The British Balfour Declaration agreed to restore the Holy Land to the Jews as their national home. These things have given rise to endless fads and fancies about the Jews and their future. Some Bible students teach that the Jews are to return to Jerusalem and set up a kingdom of their own. They even go so far as to teach that when Israel shall be re-established in Palestine, Christ will appear and begin His millennial reign. They call the Jews the great sign of the end. One author declares: “The Scriptures clearly predict what we see beginning to take place in the return of the Jews to the Promised Land.”

Another says: “It is a study of fascinating interest, and confirms one’s faith in the supernatural inspiration of the word of God, to see how all this rebuilding and reconstruction of the land is taking place today before our eyes, exactly as foretold by the Old Testament prophets thousands of years ago. For several years the Jews have been returning to their homeland at the rate of tens of thousands annually from many lands.” [154]

Doctor Trumbull, from whose book, “Prophecy’s Light on Today,” we have quoted, writes, page 170:

“But the question has been raised whether the remarkable rehabilitation of Palestine in its colonization, building achievements, and agricultural development, and the return of the Jews in the movement known as Zionism, is really a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. The Jews are returning to their land today in unbelief; the vast majority of them have not recognized the Lord Jesus as Israel’s divinely promised Messiah. Is this independent of prophecy, or is it related to God’s prophetic word?”

In our visit to the new Jewish colonies in Palestine, we did not find the prosperity some speak of. The Jews there were in great fear and danger—and in hatred of Christ. Men who have lived there many years, right up to the present time, tell us the same thing. Nor can we find a single Bible prediction that the Jews are to be re-established in their former earthly homeland.

It will be a surprise to some, yet it is true, that the Bible contains no evidence at all either in prophecy or in promise that the Jews, in this or any future age, are to return to Palestine and rebuild Jerusalem. Indeed, the teaching of the Scriptures is the exact opposite. Jesus declared that Jerusalem was to be occupied by the Gentiles until the end of the gospel dispensation, which is the end of the world. (Luke 21:24.) He further stated that the temple was to continue desolate and never be rebuilt. (Matt. 23:38.) In the Old Testament there is no definite statement or even any indirect indication that the Jews are to gather and become an earthly kingdom near the end of time in the Holy Land. The Bible is silent on any such solution of the Jewish problem.

God has His own purpose in permitting the dreadful sufferings that have come to the Jews of late years. That people had grown haughty in their pride and wealth. [155] Hundreds of them, as we ourselves have seen in Russia, Poland, and Northern Europe—were steeped in atheism and immorality. To a large extent they brought their sufferings upon themselves. We are not against the Jews, but we must be true to the facts, and the facts are as stated. God has, however, permitted these things to come to lead the honest in heart to

a living faith in Christ. Though the Jews rejected Christ, they are not now rejected because of that sin. God loves them as He loves all mankind.

But while the Jews as a race lost their land forever by rejecting the Messiah for whom they professed to be waiting, the true kingdom of God will someday be restored to the true Israel. This restoration of Israel is set forth by Ezekiel in the vision of the dry bones of chapter 37. The prophet saw in vision a great valley representing the whole earth. As the soil of the earth today is mixed with the bodies of God's children who have died through the ages, so this valley was full of dry bones. "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And He said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, Thou knowest. Again He said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came [156] together bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said He unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four Winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." Eze. 37:1-10.

Some think of this chapter only as an allegory, a figurative representation of a national and political renewal of the Jewish race. We cannot accept this view. The truth is that Ezekiel teaches that the Israel that was to be restored is the Israel of the resurrection. "Then He said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of Your graves." Eze. 37:11-13. The only Jews whom God will return to their homeland are the Jews who come up from their graves in the resurrection or are translated at the second coming of Christ.

That is God's explanation of this remarkable vision. He makes plain that there will be a real and bodily resurrection, though some scoff at the idea. In the minds of many the doctrine of the hereafter is very vague today. Not only is the trend of modern thought concerning God unreal, but the subject of the future life has been so shrouded in mystery and speculation, that to many the future life means but little. Spiritists make the life here- [157] after a sort of spirit existence so unreal as to be nothing. Philosophers base their thinking largely on metaphysical assumptions. The Bible teaching, on the other hand, is definite and concrete that the life beyond the tomb is not a dream existence. God created a race of living, acting, thinking human beings. Adam and Eve were not spirits. They had bodies as we have. They could eat and sleep; they had homes, and enjoyed a real life in a real world. But such a future bodily life depends upon a resurrection, not upon an immortal soul. Without the resurrection, there is no life beyond. It is this great truth that is set forth in Ezekiel 37. Those who are raised to life in the resurrection will be real human beings. They will be immortal, and will never die again, but they will have bodies and live in homes and communities much as the sons of Adam would have enjoyed if sin had not entered. They will remember the things of this earth, and they will know one another. And, above all, they will know Jesus, who saved them from sin and death.

Ezekiel deals only with the resurrection of the redeemed. The Scriptures teach that there are two resurrections—the resurrection of life and the resurrection of condemnation. And they "shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:29. Not only are there two resurrections as to time—the first resurrection being a thousand years before the second—but there is a great difference with respect to those who are raised. In the first resurrection, there will be no bodily weakness or corruption. In the second resurrection all will have the bodily infirmities of earth. But the greatest difference is in the character of those raised. The righteous come forth to holiness and immortality—the ungodly to sin and eternal death.

"As the wicked went into their graves, so they come [158] forth, with the same enmity to Christ, and the same spirit of rebellion. They are to have no new probation, in which to remedy the defects of their past lives. Nothing would be gained by this. A lifetime of transgression has not softened their hearts. A second probation, were it given them, would be occupied as was the first, in evading the requirements of God and exciting rebellion against Him."—*"The Great Controversy,"* p. 662.

Adam was created and had eternal life on condition of obedience. If he had not sinned, he would later have become glorified and immortal. The righteous, when raised, are not as Adam was when he was created; they are the same as he would have become if he had been true to God and had not sinned. They will come up glorified, and will never again see death.

When the true Israel are called forth from their graves, they enter upon their inheritance. God makes with them an eternal covenant of peace, and Christ is to be their King forever. “David My servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children forever: and My servant David shall be their prince forever.” This is the only return of the Jews that is yet to come. Those who return are those who are raised in the first resurrection at the second advent, and the Land of Promise is not Palestine, but the new earth.

Of this inheritance—the true homeland of the true Jews—Ezekiel has given us a fascinating picture in Ezekiel 34:28-28; 36:34, 35, 38. It is indeed an erroneous understanding of prophecy to apply these chapters of Ezekiel to Palestine and a future kingdom of atheistic and worldly Jews. The great coming event is the second advent in glory and the gathering of the Israel of the redeemed. [159]

We are to study the Bible signs of Christ’s return, not such fanciful signs as the pyramids or a Jewish kingdom in Palestine. The second advent is not moral bankruptcy, but the supreme vindication and triumph of right. The day of our Lord’s appearing will be the grandest day of all high days of the ages. The second advent will bring an end to sorrow, sickness, suffering, and even death.

But the coming of Christ is not merely the end of certain evil things; it is the beginning of greater good things. The life to come is one of high-minded and noble achievement. Not only will the new earth be without foolish people, it will be full of wise people. They are neither young nor old, for they have the strength of youth and the experience of age. And every one will be a pioneer in some pursuit, and have an individual life of his own—“a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” Rev. 2:17. The inhabitants of the new earth have begun their life on this earth. They will all remember their stay here, and will know one another.

The life to come is not a dreamy existence of shades and shadows. It is a concrete reality. The new earth will be as real as was this earth before sin entered. It will be beautiful beyond words, with mountains, valleys, rivers, trees, flowers, and birds. The hope of the second advent is not an idle fable. The certainty of Christ’s return is as sure as the fact that He was once here. We are to wait for His coming and “love His appearing.” This blessed advent hope is our light in the present darkness, and we should let it light up our own hearts. Leaving the fads and fancies of modern religious thinking, we are to follow the word of God. [160]

Apocalyptic Thinking-Gog and Magog

Read Ezekiel 38 and 39

IN our day a good share of religious thought is apocalyptic. There is really an ever-growing trend in that direction. We noticed it in Russia, Germany, and other lands just before the outbreak of World War II. Apocalyptic thinking is an effort to interpret and apply prophetic revelations. It aims to understand the purposes of God in world disasters in such a way as to comfort the believers. It looks forward with hope to the second advent and the end of the world.

Religious thinking today is much concerned with “the future of mankind.” The apostate churches, having a program of political and social reconstruction in a brotherhood of man which they call the kingdom of God on earth, naturally oppose the idea of world downfall and the return of Jesus in glory. However, among true believers a growing number are turning their thoughts to the second advent and the end of human history. Their former prejudice against the idea of a coming world catastrophe is weakening. This generation is seeing so many terrible visitations of death and destruction that a climax seems probable.

But strong is the trend to extreme or fanciful thinking concerning the end and the world to come. Radio, press, and pulpit send forth a flood of fantastic ideas on this subject. Thus we read that the end of the world will be caused by a comet’s striking this earth. It is also taught by certain expositors of prophecy that, before the end, [161] Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus, will be raised from the dead and will appear on earth as a superman to war on Christ and humanity. Some even go so far as to assert that one of the present world dictators is Judas himself now resurrected from the grave. This foolish thinking does much harm. It is almost past belief that well-known religious leaders can indulge in such idle speculations which lack any Bible basis. As proof of their odd dreams, they do quote certain Old Testament prophecies, but torn and twisted out of their true connection. Above all, they build on the predictions concerning Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38 and 39.

In 1915 a college Bible teacher assured us that the prince of Gog was the czar of Russia, and that according to Ezekiel 38, the czar would invade Asia Minor and Palestine during the fifth plague. The czar, however, is dead. He never entered the Holy Land. Others have written long treatises to prove that Gog and Magog was Russia or England or Japan, or even Germany. Some claim that the prophecy was fulfilled years ago, and others that its fulfillment by these various nations is now right at hand. Many are the ideas that

have been propounded about these prophecies. Some of these applications may be true, some of them are very farfetched. On these questions it is best to hold to what we really know.

We believe the etymology, or origin, as well as the meaning of the terms Gog, Magog, and Rosh in these chapters is so indefinite that they cannot safely be applied to any modern nation. Says one competent Bible authority:

“Gog is regarded as already existing; but the name cannot be regarded as applied to the Chaldaeans (as Ewald suggested), since the whole description is of a savage horde, and the Chaldaeans themselves are nowhere [162] thus attacked. The origin of the term Gog is uncertain; it is, however, mentioned in the Tel-el-Amarna letters as the unknown land in the north; Haupt suggests that it is an appellative like *Great Mogul* or *Grand Turk*.

“Rosh: a word which in Hebrew means ‘head;’ hence, R. V. marg., ‘chief prince of Meshech.’ If it is a proper name, the region is unknown. Dubious identifications have been suggested with ‘Tiras’ of Gen. x. 2, and with a medieval name for the ancestors of the Russians.”—*“The New-Century Bible—The Book of Ezekiel,” pp. 275-277, English edition.*

It is quite generally agreed among the best Bible students that: “Attempts to identify Gog and his armies with particular nations, as e. g. with the Chaldeans (Ewald), the Scythians (Knobel, Hitzig), the Greeks under Antiochus Epiphanes (Grotius), and even the Turks (Luther), have not been and are not likely to be successful.”—*The Pulpit Commentary, Ezekiel, Vol. II, p. 283.*

The truth is that these chapters describe a struggle far greater than any war between two nations or groups of nations. The people or multitudes involved come from the four quarters of the globe. There is Persia from the east; Ethiopia or Cush from the south, Libya or Phut from the west, and Gomer from the north. It is really the final battle of the controversy between Christ and His saints on the one hand and Satan with his hosts of evil men and angels on the other. And the conflict is about the inheritance and home of the redeemed—the true land of the true Israel. The Lord Himself declares: “I am against thee, O Gog.” This conflict between the Lord and Gog is well stated in the following:

“Just because Gog was against Israel, Jehovah was against Gog. Gog’s invasion of Israel’s land would be a declaration of war against Israel’s God, so that the [163] conflict would rather be between Jehovah and Gog than between Israel and Gog. Hence through this prophecy Jehovah is represented as the principal actor on the side of Israel, who seeks her defense not in walls and bulwarks or in earthly alliances and military combinations, as in the days of the monarchy before the exile, but in the presence of Jehovah in her midst.”—*Id., p. 285.*

Many writers on these chapters have been impressed with the world-wide magnitude and final, eternal outcome the struggle described. Thus we read:

“The vast and mysterious forces of the world’s barbarism must be destroyed before Israel’s peace is unshakable. Ezekiel therefore describes an irruption of the hordes who range themselves under ‘Gog;’ these sweep upon Jehovah’s land; they meet their destruction there at His hand, and all that Israel has to do is to bury the multitudes of the slain. The ‘Scythians’ had invaded Western Asia in the time of Josiah (Herod. i. 73, 103-106: cf. Jer. i. 15), and the memory of these barbarians, as terrifying and destructive as the armies of Attila, ‘the scourge of God,’ would be still fresh in Ezekiel’s mind. A second and still more terrible invasion he regarded as already predicted. The event, however, will be the final calamity, and the final revelation of Jehovah’s supremacy to the world.”—*“The New-Century Bible—The Book of Ezekiel,” pp. 275-277, English edition.*

It is distinctly stated in Revelation 20:9 that all the wicked who come up in the second resurrection at the close of the thousand years are Gog and Magog. This divine exposition of the prophecy is definite and direct. In other words, these two chapters, even though they may apply in part to the past or the immediate future, will find their complete fulfilment at the end of the millennium.

Concerning these events at the close of the millen- [164] nium, there is in religious circles today much idle speculation, and many fads. The events of the “little season,” in which Satan works after the 1,000 years, are clearly presented in quite complete detail by Ezekiel in chapters 38 and 39. One Bible commentator calls this the most difficult problem in the Bible to understand. If we should judge from the many visionary interpretations of it, we would agree. But if we place our preconceived ideas aside and study the prophecy as it reads in the light of other Bible texts, it is not difficult.

Events During the Millennium

This will be yet easier to understand if we remember certain cardinal facts concerning the millennial reign. The Scriptures call this climax “the great and terrible day of the Lord.” In point of time this day extends over a thousand years, beginning with the end of the gospel age—the close of probation and the coming of Christ—and ending with the second death after the millennium. This day marks the consummation and fruitage of the age-long controversy between good and evil. The events at the beginning of this millennial era—such as Christ’s glorious appearing, the first resurrection, the

gathering of the redeemed, the binding of Satan, the desolation of the earth—all are well known. They are often described in the Bible. Ezekiel 7 gives the clearest and most detailed account of world destruction at the beginning of the millennium, and chapters 38 and 39 describe events of the final battle after the 1,000 years.

At that time, the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven and settles on that part of the earth first promised to Abraham. Christ and His saints enter and possess the city as their home. Then all the countless multitude of sinners are raised from the dead. Immediately after this second resurrection, Satan and his angels plan an [165] attack on the Holy City, which he represents as being without adequate defense. In this war against the camp of the saints, Satan and his host of evil angels and human beings will perish.

The Paradise in Heaven

In the Scriptures we read of the Garden of Eden as the original home of man. This garden was not, however, as some seem to imagine, a small place, say a mile or two square. The city now called Jerusalem in Palestine, that is the city within the wall, has less than 300 acres of land, and we can walk around it on the outside of the wall in an hour. The Garden of Eden, on the other hand, was a vast country out of which issued four large rivers, two of them well known in history. One of these rivers was called Hiddekel, or Tigris, and the other Euphrates. (Gen. 2:8, 10-14.) Flaming chariots guarded the way to this part of the earth, which was never cursed by sin as was the rest of creation. This Paradise of God is now in heaven, for the tree of life is there in the midst of the garden. In other words, the Garden of Eden, a fairly large part of the earth, was transferred to heaven at the time, no doubt, of the flood.

Several prophecies in the Scriptures that are applied by some to the new earth really describe the Garden of Eden in heaven during the thousand years. A good illustration of this is Isaiah 11:6-9. Some speak of this chapter as though it told of eternal conditions in the new earth, but the verses themselves state that this is spoken of as “My holy mountain,” a term applied to Jerusalem and its suburbs. In these same verses we read of a sucking and a weaned child. Now, the Scriptures clearly teach that there will be no children born in the new earth after the millennial reign, nor, indeed, after this present world of sin ends. If there were to be “a sucking child” or other [166] little children in the new earth after the thousand years, they would have to be born there or else they would have remained as little infants for more than a thousand years. The truth, however, is that Isaiah 11 gives a picture of the condition of God’s children during the thousand years in the Garden of Eden in heaven.

Another important fact is that the New Jerusalem which comes down from heaven to this earth, is a large city, 375 miles square. This city comes to a place made ready for it on the earth at the close of the thousand years, but before the second resurrection. Ezekiel speaks of this city of God on the old earth as “the land that is brought back from the sword, . . . the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste,” but where now God’s “people of Israel dwelleth safely.” Eze. 38:8, 14.

Right after the city is settled here, with Jesus and all His saints, the wicked are raised as an innumerable multitude scattered over the earth. During the thousand years Satan has been a prisoner in this earth, desolate and waste, called in the Bible the bottomless pit. But now he is loosed from this prison of inactivity by the resurrection of the wicked. Immediately he begins his old task of deceiving mankind. He stirs them up to attack the city of God.

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.” Rev. 20:7-9.

Ezekiel presents this battle in these words:

“Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt [167] be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Thus saith the Lord God: It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwallled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. . . .

“And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: and thou shalt come up against My people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against My land, that the heathen may know Me, and when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. Thus saith the Lord God: Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by My servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them? And it shall come to pass at that time when Gog shall come

against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that My fury shall come up in My face.” Eze. 38:9-18. Satan describes the city as “having neither, bars nor gates,” that is, without adequate defense. And the motive of all is “to take a spoil.”

Satan, called by Ezekiel the prince of Gog and Magog, “looks over the vast army and tells them that the company in the city is small and feeble, and that they can go up and take that city, and cast out its inhabitants, and possess its riches and glory themselves. . . . They construct weapons of war; . . . all kinds of implements of war.”—“*Spiritual Gifts*,” Vol. I, p. 216. [168]

Concerning this war by Satan and all the wicked, we read as follows:

“Now Satan prepares for a last mighty struggle for the supremacy. While deprived of his power, and cut off from his work of deception, the prince of evil was miserable and dejected; but as the wicked dead are raised, and he sees the vast multitudes upon his side, his hopes revive, and he determines not to yield the great controversy. He will marshal all the armies of the lost under his banner, and through them endeavor to execute his plans. The wicked are Satan’s captives. In rejecting Christ they have accepted the rule of the rebel leader. They are ready to receive his suggestions and to do his bidding. Yet, true to his early cunning, he does not acknowledge himself to be Satan. He claims to be the prince who is the rightful owner of the world, and whose inheritance has been unlawfully wrested from him. He represents himself to his deluded subjects as a redeemer, assuring them that his power has brought them forth from their graves, and that he is about to rescue them from the most cruel tyranny. The presence of Christ having been removed, Satan works wonders to support his claims. He makes the weak strong, and inspires all with his own spirit and energy. He proposes to lead them against the camp of the saints, and to take possession of the city of God. With fiendish exultation he points to the unnumbered millions who have been raised from the dead, and declares that as their leader he is well able to overthrow the city, and regain his throne and his kingdom.

“In that vast throng are multitudes of the long-lived race that existed before the flood; men of lofty stature and giant intellect, who, yielding to the control of fallen angels, devoted all their skill and knowledge to the exaltation of themselves; men whose wonderful works of [169] art led the world to idolize their genius, but whose cruelty and evil inventions, defiling the earth and defacing the image of God, caused Him to blot them from the face of His creation. There are kings and generals who conquered nations, valiant men who never lost a battle, proud, ambitious warriors whose approach made kingdoms tremble. In death these experienced no change. As they come up from the grave, they resume the current of their thoughts just where it ceased. They are actuated by the same desire to conquer that ruled them when they fell.

“Satan consults with his angels, and then with these kings and conquerors and mighty men. They look upon the strength and numbers on their side, and declare that the army within the city is small in comparison with theirs, and that it can be overcome. They lay their plans to take possession of the riches and glory of the New Jerusalem. All immediately begin to prepare for battle. Skillful artisans construct implements of war. Military leaders, famed for their success, marshal the throngs of warlike men into companies and divisions.

“At last the order to advance is given, and the countless host moves on,—an army such as was never summoned by earthly conquerors, such as the combined forces of all ages since war began on earth could never equal. Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle. Kings and warriors are in his train, and the multitudes follow in vast companies, each under its appointed leader. With military precision, the serried ranks advance over the earth’s broken and uneven surface to the city of God. By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city, and make ready for the onset.”—“*The Great Controversy*,” pp. 663, 664.

It is this last battle of the ages, the attack of Satan [170] and his host on the saints and the city of God, that is described in such graphic words by Ezekiel in chapters 38 and 39. The terms and illustrations used are such as the Jews in exile would understand. Certain names like “Hamongog,” or weapons of war or periods of time like “seven years” or “seven months” (see Eze. 39:9-15), whether literal or figurative, will be fully understood when fulfilled and seen.

As this last attack by the wicked is about to be launched, fire comes down from God out of heaven, and devours them. (Rev. 20:9.)

“When the flood of waters was at its height upon the earth, it had the appearance of a boundless lake of water. When God finally purifies the earth, it will appear like a boundless lake of fire. As God preserved the ark amid the commotions of the flood, because it contained eight righteous persons, He will preserve the New Jerusalem, containing the faithful of all ages, from righteous Abel down to the last saint which lived. Although the whole earth, with the exception of that portion where the city rests, will be wrapped in a sea of liquid fire, yet the city is preserved as was the ark, by a miracle of almighty power.”—“*Spiritual Gifts*,” Vol. III, pp. 87, 88.

Some have hesitated to apply Ezekiel 38 and 39 to the final controversy between Christ and Satan on this earth at the close of the millennium, because we read of animal life—fishes, birds, wild beasts—on the earth. (Eze. 38 :20.)

The Bible teaches distinctly that the earth will be desolate during the thousand years.

“I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.” Jer. 4:23-25. [171]

In speaking of the millennium, however, some may have gone too far in picturing the desolation of the earth. It has been claimed that after the second advent there is no atmosphere surrounding the earth. That, however, can hardly be true because the wicked will live on this earth “a little season,” an unknown period of time, after the second resurrection. It has also been stated that in the millennial age there will be no life on this earth. In support of that, the above verses in Jeremiah have been quoted. The Spirit of prophecy, however, in referring to the original state of the earth when it was without form and void, says that “the earth . . . will be brought back, partially, at least, to this condition.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 658, 659.

We would not be dogmatic in asserting that or defending this or other details about the state of the earth during the thousand years. Many details are not important and have not been revealed. We only know in part, but we are inclined to believe that the Bible teaches that animals and birds will continue on the earth through the millennium. If we understand it in this way, we find it easier to comprehend how the wicked can live here after the thousand years and prepare for their attack on the camp of the saints. This idea that there will be animal and bird life on the earth during the thousand years is not a new one in our literature.

Some years ago our church printed a tract entitled “The Great Day of the Lord.” From this we quote as follows:

“It seems evident, however, that there will be animal life on the earth during this period, but not human life. The most graphic picture of the earth in this frightful loneliness is found in the double prophecy of Isaiah, referring to Idumea and to the earth as the antitype of Idumea.” [172]

“This leaves the earth desolate of all human life. The righteous are in the courts on high, engaged in judgment work, the wicked are dead, and each class remains in its respective place and condition during the thousand years. During this time birds and beasts multiply, and furnish food for the wicked when they are raised at the end of the thousand years. Satan, confined to this earth, muses over the ruin he has wrought. This is the boasted millennium of the earth in the light of Bible facts.”

“What a scene! The earth is waste, empty, and desolate. The palaces of emperors, the courts of kings, the halls of legislation, know no sound of life save the scream of the wild fowl or the fierce growl of some beast of prey, which has sought these ruins as a shelter from the fierce blasts of fiery heat which sweep over the sin-ruined earth.”—*Pages 29, 37, 30*. The author of this tract refers to Isaiah 34:8-15 and other texts as proof.

In studying these two chapters of Ezekiel’s prophecy, certain principles of prophetic exposition should be kept in mind. Though we are to study unfulfilled prophecy, prophecies not yet fulfilled cannot be fully understood or explained in every detail. There are prophecies in the Bible that will not be fulfilled in this world, and they will not be entirely understood until the redeemed are gathered home. Old Testament prophecy, the fulfillment of which came at the time of the first advent or after, is explained or applied in the New Testament.

As there is no event in past history that is a fulfillment of Ezekiel 38 and 39, these chapters must belong to the future. Since the New Testament definitely locates Gog and Magog after the thousand years, we hold that the entire prophecy refers to the resurrected wicked of that time, and the “chief prince” is Satan.

With these principles as a key to unlock these chapters, we can understand and enjoy them. And we must [173] not fail to study the verses which set forth the triumph of Christ at the end of the controversy.

“I will set My glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see My judgment that I have executed, and My hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward. . . . Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for My holy name; after that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against Me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid.” Eze. 39:21-26.

In the days of Christ on earth the Jews failed to comprehend His mission because they misunderstood or misapplied the prophecies. At this time so near the second advent, we see the same thing. Fads, fancies, false speculative ideas concerning the return of Jesus, the millennium, and the kingdom flourish, and many even among believers are confused. Radical views in regard to world conditions and outstanding leaders are presented. There is need today of clear, explicit prophetic expositions. The meaning of present-day events and the prophecies themselves are better understood by the remnant church than they were fifty years ago. But there is yet clearer and fuller light on the prophecies for the church of Christ. Much of what is called apocalyptic thinking is vague and visionary, but God’s message is definite, clear, and free from all guesswork. [174]

Glorified Visions of Church and Missions

Read Ezekiel 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, and 48

IN the religious trends today there are many and strong crosscurrents. One of these is the drift away from personal soul-winning evangelism, which stresses individual repentance and the new birth to prepare for a coming reward in heaven. This tendency is especially apparent in modern foreign missions. Missionaries in former years went out to save the heathen by faith in Christ. Their object was the conversion of sinners through the preaching of the simple gospel of Jesus. Today we witness a disquieting change. Some now claim that people are neither “lost” nor “heathen.” Even their African jujus, or pagan idols and charms, are studied rather as a variant of the common religious instincts of mankind. Among those who are rethinking missions at this time certain leaders belittle the lasting value of conversion or gospel preaching in mission work. They emphasize education, village hygiene, tribal pride, home training, etc., as the bigger goals of missions. A few even lower moral standards for the new converts. This tendency to make the good by-products of the gospel more important than the gospel itself would, if followed, destroy the gospel. And it is indeed weakening and almost destroying overseas missions. This again reacts on the churches supporting the missions, for no church at home ever prospered without missions abroad. Indeed, the trend away from personal salvation and experimental religion is even stronger with us than it is overseas. [175] This trend makes the church a human organization with social objectives for this life rather than a divine institution for holiness and heaven.

But there is now another world-wide trend in the opposite direction. This is eschatological rather than mundane, though its outlook and influence for practical mission Christianity and soul-winning evangelism are intensely useful. We speak of the advent message and movement, which exalts the church as God’s only agency to save man. It glorifies missions in every land and for all races. It preaches Christ and conversion as the only hope for sinners. The keynote of the advent message is justification by faith alone, and genuine sanctification in “the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” As Ezekiel strove to arouse the Jews in exile and rally them for God and a return to their earthly homeland, so the advent church seeks to gather the faithful into one body of believers in all the earth— saved by grace, ready for the coming of Christ.

The glory and climax of Ezekiel’s message and life-work is found in chapters 40-48. These, his third “vision of God,” set forth the power and fruitage of the gospel as well as the final, eternal reward. They contain a definite appeal to the church of God today.

In reading these visions we must remember that “Ezekiel lives in a world of thoughts that ‘break through language and escape.’ The precise and scrupulous priest, who will not have his altar base an inch either more or less than a perfect square, sees his country as the center and subject of a drama of punishment, recovery, and repentance, before whose awful and divine glory the mind reels in dismay. ‘He loved the symbol, not for itself alone, but for the majesty which it contained, the hidden light which it guarded.’ ”—“*The New-Century Bible, Book of Ezekiel*,” p. 11. At the very outset, it [176] should be stated that these chapters belong together in one connected presentation. To take the first six chapters concerning the temple and give them a literal interpretation, and then take the last three chapters concerning the life-giving stream and other truths and apply them figuratively, is neither logical nor true. If the first part of the vision—that is, of the temple—is to be understood literally as a building in Palestine, the latter part concerning the river which comes out of this temple must also be understood as real water in the earth. It is one entire vision, whether literal or in parables.

These last nine chapters of Ezekiel have perplexed many Bible students. Jewish rabbis call them “inexplicable secrets.” They forbade their disciples to read them, adding that when “Elias will come, he will explain all things.”

Many writers on Bible topics, taking the same view of these chapters, have left them alone. There are mysteries in the Bible beyond our comprehension, yet if we refrain from empty speculations, they may be studied with great profit. Really, the deep things of the Scriptures, which skeptics urge as an argument against the Bible, constitute a strong evidence of its divine inspiration. Concerning this we are told that if the Bible “contained no account of God but that which we could easily comprehend, if His greatness and majesty could be grasped by finite minds, the Bible would not bear the unmistakable credentials of divine authority. The very grandeur and majesty of the themes presented should inspire faith in it as the word of God.” “The portions of Holy Writ presenting these great themes are not to be passed by as of no use to man.” “*Testimonies*,” Vol. V, pp. 700, 699. In this age we shrink from careful thinking. We love books that are superficial and easily understood. Yet it is a fact that it often does us more good [177] to read a book we do not fully understand than to read one the meaning of which lies open on the surface. As our soul reaches out after higher truths, we grow. Knowing this great truth of how the mind only can expand, the Lord has given us scriptures hard to be understood.

Several erroneous ideas concerning these last nine chapters in Ezekiel have been taught. One view makes the chapter a literal prophecy. Ezekiel, we are told, described what he had seen in Jerusalem and what was again to be seen there after the captivity. This is

the Jewish explanation. The claim is that the instruction given by Ezekiel was literally followed by Zerubbabel, Haggai, and others who rebuilt the temple, and also, that Herod later followed Ezekiel's instruction in his temple. But this is not true to facts. None of those who rebuilt the temple ever referred to the pattern given by Ezekiel. In fact, the temple they built was not at all like the plans presented by Ezekiel. The books of Kings and Chronicles gave a much better description of the temple than is found in Ezekiel, and the Jews had access to those documents.

A second view, and a pernicious one, claims that these chapters are prophecies yet to be fulfilled on this earth during the millennium. That this idea is wrong is so easily proved that one fact alone makes its falsity plain. These chapters in Ezekiel speak of offerings and an earthly sanctuary and priestly service. But the sanctuary service included offerings which typified the coming of the Messiah, and they ended with the death of Jesus. Whatever else we may think of the chapters, they cannot be literally fulfilled in a real earthly temple and animals slain in sacrifice by priests, after the beginning of the Christian Era. When Christ was offered as Sin Bearer of mankind, all animal offerings and other [178] such types ended. The earthly sanctuary services and priesthood belonged with the old covenant and ended when the old covenant ceased at the death of Christ.

A third explanation of these chapters is that they are a literal, but conditional, prophecy. The thought is that Ezekiel prophesied that such a city and temple would be built, and Israel would occupy the land divided as outlined, provided they would separate themselves wholly from all their idols. In that way the Lord appealed to the people to dedicate themselves completely to God. We believe there is a measure of truth in this view. God has often given promises concerning the great things He would do for His people on certain well-defined conditions. But we cannot think of these chapters as a conditional prediction only. They are much *more*. They contain a positive, unconditional message for every age. Anyway, the truth is that the conditions, as far as the Jews are concerned, were never met. Instead of departing from evil, the people went deeper and deeper into apostasy. They finally rejected and crucified their promised Messiah. Thus, if these chapters were only conditional prophecies, they never were fulfilled and are of little value.

In these last chapters of Ezekiel the Lord had His own purpose to instruct the church through the ages. These visions of God are a graphic representation of great spiritual truths rather than a literal prediction of things to be seen on this earth before or after the first advent of Jesus. They set forth the present mission and future reward of the redeemed. Their fulfillment, as far as they can be literally fulfilled, will come in the city and river of life in the earth made new. This applies expressly to the division of the land among the twelve tribes of Israel. The Jews were captives, or at least exiles, in Babylon. Their temple had been [179] destroyed, and its services had ceased. They hoped that both might again be restored in Jerusalem. He tried to instruct the people in the sanctuary services. About 80 of Ezekiel's characteristic expressions sound like verbal quotations from the book of Leviticus. And yet Ezekiel tried still more to teach Israel their great spiritual mission for mankind—the stream of life-giving water flowing from out the temple—and he felt called to stress the eternal reward in the world to come.

In our study and presentation of these chapters, we are not so much to seek support for certain doctrines. The statements made concerning the sanctuary in Ezekiel were not given to explain the doctrine of the sanctuary of the old covenant. We have these teachings about the sanctuary in the books of Moses. We are, rather, to discover the great spiritual truths they teach. The great central lesson of this vision is not a temple or priesthood as outward Jewish cults. The church in all ages is the true temple of the Lord from which flow streams of grace to all the earth. Here is a spiritual representation of the church of God with the great lesson of the life-giving stream that flowed out from this temple to all mankind both before and after the death of Christ on the cross.

In speaking of the church and its mission from his day to the end of time, Ezekiel used Jewish pictures and terms which his brethren in exile would understand. The same holds true in his account of God's everlasting kingdom. These chapters had a message for that day, as did the words of Jesus when He said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John 2:19.

These visions of God given to Ezekiel contained precious instruction for Israel in old-covenant times, after they had returned from Babylon, as well as for us now.

In the apostasy of Israel, which led to the destruction of the city and temple, the Levites, unfortunately did not [180] stand true to God. We read that the Levites are "gone away far from Me, when Israel went astray." But the same chapter receives the Levites back to their former work. Though they had "ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity," "yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them." Eze. 44:12, 11. In these words Ezekiel by divine direction restored the Levites to their office and work.

In contrast to the Levites, the priests, the Sons of Zadok, had "kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near to Me to minister unto Me, and they shall stand before Me. . . . They shall enter into My sanctuary, and they shall come near to My table, to minister unto Me, and they shall keep My charge." Eze. 44:15, 16. There had, however, been no sanctuary service for years, and even the priests needed a new cleansing and dedication for the new temple. They

were not to drink wine when they entered into the inner court. They were not to take for their wives a widow or one that was put away, but they were to choose maidens of the house of Israel, or a widow that had been married to a priest before. Aside from the offerings they presented, their work is spoken of as teachers and judges. "They shall teach My people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to My judgments: and they shall keep My laws and My statutes in all Mine assemblies; and they shall hallow My Sabbaths." Eze. 44:23, 24.

These chapters further set forth the duties and rights [181] of the civil ruler or prince. After the captivity Israel was never again to have an earthly king. "Thus saith the Lord God: Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." Eze. 21:26, 27. "Thus saith the Lord God: Let it suffice you, O princes of

Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from My people, saith the Lord God. Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath." Eze. 45:9, 10. Though the prince is not spoken of as a king and was not crowned as such, the house of David continued as a royal lineage. The sons of the princes were to have their possessions by inheritance.

For the people themselves these chapters contain vital principles. It was made plain that the blessings promised to either princes or priests or people were given them on the distinct condition that they have an entirely new experience with the Lord. Concerning the temple, they were told to "measure the pattern," but it is very evident that the pattern they were to measure was not so much the size of the building as the spiritual experience of those who worship. "Thou son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, show them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them." Eze. 43:10, 11. [182]

However, the chief thing in these instructive chapters, both for the old and for the new covenant Israel, was the spiritual lesson they impart. This beautiful lesson, the key to the entire vision, is found in the parable of the life-giving stream which flowed out of the temple. The story of this stream is so outstanding and so unusual that we request all to read afresh Ezekiel 47:1-12.

The meaning of this parable is plain. It is not literal water from a literal temple, but streams of water represent spiritual blessings. The Saviour Himself used this simile to represent the blessings that God's people both receive and give. (John 7:37-89.) In the Spirit of prophecy this stream is very clearly applied as a symbol of the advent movement. "Our work has been presented to me as, in its beginning, a small, very small rivulet. To the prophet Ezekiel was given the representation of waters issuing 'from under the threshold of the house eastward,' 'at the south side of the altar.' . . . So our work was presented to me as extending to the east and to the west, to the islands of the sea, and to all parts of the world."—"Testimonies," Vol. VII, pp. 171, 172.

Therefore, we believe that the entire vision is a beautiful object lesson of the many, many benefits and blessings flowing from the church of Christ clear to the end of time. "Wonderful is the work which the Lord designs to accomplish through His church, that His name may be glorified. A picture of this work is given in Ezekiel's vision of the river of healing."—"Acts of the Apostles," p. 13. One of the best illustrations of this is our foreign missions enterprise. Like a stream of living water, it began small, but has grown deeper and wider, carrying blessings wherever it has gone. As these waters reached to the ankles, then to the knees, and then to the loins, and finally became a river which could not be passed over, so has the advent mission work grown both at home and [183] abroad. There waters "issued out of the sanctuary," the church, "and everything shall live whithersoever the river cometh." Thus does Christ bless humanity through His church in all ages. For both temple and city represent the church.

These divine blessings come only through the personal influence of the Holy Spirit on human hearts. But in the tides and trends of modern religious life, the gifts of the Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, are often either ignored, slighted, or rejected. Spirit-filled preaching or humble piety is sneered at as fanaticism. Yet the great need exceeding all other needs of both ministers and members is a daily experience in that grace and guidance which come through the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Neither education, organization, zealous mission activity, nor anything else can ever be a substitute for the Holy Spirit. In every heart there should be a constant longing and prayer for this holy endowment.

The Glory of the True Church

The trees on the streams of life bear a new kind of fruit (from different branches) each month, and their leaves are for medicine, "the healing of the nations." The city in both books "lieth foursquare" and "the holy oblation foursquare." In Ezekiel the name of the city is

Jehovah Shammah, “The Lord is there;” in Revelation, “The tabernacle of God is with men.” But the supreme purpose and lesson of Ezekiel’s vision was to reveal for both time and eternity the glory of God in His church.

The glory of the church eternally and in all the universe is Christ and Christ alone. The glory of the church is its great message of truth and its mission to make known this message to the whole family of God—both in [184] heaven and earth. The glory of the church is its spiritual endowments of grace and power to redeem the lost. To save a sinner is greater than to create a world. There is now a strong trend away from personal salvation—the only salvation ever ordained by Christ as the work of His church. Ezekiel and those who received his message met God’s expectations in those dark days and saved a remnant church to escape out of Babylon. True, many rejected his message—some even took his life. After Jerusalem had fallen, some of these tried new revolutions in Judea, while others rebelled and fled into Egypt. But all perished, as the prophet had said. The message, the methods, the sorrows, the heroism, and the triumph of Ezekiel contains precious object lessons for the servants and people of the Lord now. But greatest of all are his “visions of God.” Those who accept them can never be misled by the insidious trends in modern religious thought. Their hearts are full of courage. Though the forces of evil are mighty, and though much in the past and present seems dark, they rejoice in the victory of Christ, assured that He still lives and reigns. At times things may appear confused as a “wheel in the middle of a wheel;” yet with the Lord all is well, for “the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.” Eze. 1:20. [185]

Bibliography

- Aubrey, Edwin Ewart, “Present Theological Tendencies,” Harper & Brothers, New York, 1936.
Beales, A. C. F., “History of Peace,” G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., London, 1931.
Bell, G. K. A., Editor, “The Stockholm Conference” (Official Report), Oxford University Press, London, 1926.
Bennett, John C., “Christian Realism,” Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, 1941.
Bergman, Ernest, “Catechism of Twenty-Five Theses,” of Leipzig University.
Black, Dr. Marvin M., “The Pendulum Swings Back,” Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1938.
Bordyaev, Nicolas, “The End of Our Time,” Sheed and Ward, London, 1933.
Bratt, K. A., “That Next War?” George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, 1930.
Bunting, John S., “Christ in War Time,” Fleming H. Revell Co., New York, 1940.
Churchill, Winston, “World Crisis, the Aftermath,” Butterworth Press, London, 1929.
Cole, G. D. H., “The Intelligent Man’s Review of Europe Today,” Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1933.
Congar, M. J., “Divided Christendom,” Geoffrey Bles, Ltd., London, 1939.
D’Abernon, Edgar Vincent, “The Ambassador of Peace” (Diary), Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1930.
Dark, Sidney, and Essex, R. S., “The War Against God,” Abingdon Press, New York, 1938.
Dickinson, G. Lowes, “International Anarchy,” George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, 1937.
Douglas, J. A., “The Relations of the Anglican Church With the Eastern Orthodox.”
Douglass, H. Paul, “A Decade of Representative Progress in Church Unity,” 1927-36, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1937.
Drucker, Peter F., “The End of Economic Man,” John Day Co., Inc., New York, 1939.
Eddy, Sherwood, “The Challenge of Russia,” Herbert Jenkins, Ltd., London, 1982.
Ermhardt, William Chauncey, “Religion in Soviet Russia.”
Fedotov, G. P., “The Russian Church Since the Revolution,” The Macmillan Co., New York, 1928.
Fenn, Eric, “That They Go Forward,” Student Christian Movement Press, London, 1938.
Findlay, J. Arthur, “The Unfolding Universe,” Bruce Humphries, Inc., Boston, 1938.
Fortescue, Adrian, “The Uniate Eastern Churches.”
Freud, Sigmund, “A General Introduction to Psycho-Analysis,” Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., Garden City, New York, 1920.
Freund, Ludwig, “The Threat to European Culture,” Sheed and Ward, Inc., London, 1935.
Frey, Dr. Arthur, “Cross and Swastika,” The Macmillan Co., New York, 1938.
Gasset, Jose Ortego, “Invertebrate Spain,” W. W. Norton Co., New York, 1937.
Gasset, Jose Ortego, “The Revolt of the Masses,” W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1932.
Geismar, Edward, “Lectures on the Religious Thought of Soren Kierkegaard,” Augsburg Publishing House, 1937.
Geismar, Edward, “Religiöse Brydninger,” Copenhagen.
Gibbs, Sir Philip, “More That Must Be Told,” Harper & Brothers, New York, 1921.
Gibbs, Sir Philip, “Ten Years After,” Hutchinson, London. c.1925.
Gillis, James M., “False Prophets,” The Macmillan Co., New York, 1934.
Gooch, G. P., D. Litt., F. B. A., “Recent Revelations of European Diplomacy,” Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1940.
Goudge, H. L., “Church of England and Reunion,” Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1938.
Greenhill, William, M. A., “An Exposition of the Prophet Ezekiel,” Edinburgh, 1650; James Nichol, 1864.
Haner, Wilhelm, Heim, Karl, and Adam, Karl, “Germany’s New Religion,” Abingdon Press, New York, 1937.
Hayes, J. H. Carlton, “Political and Cultural History of Modern Europe,” The Macmillan Co., New York, 1936.

Henderson, E., "The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel," Warren B. Draper, 1870.

Hengstenberg, E. W., "The Prophecies of the Prophet Ezekiel Elucidated," T. & T. Clark, 38 George St., Edinburgh, 1869.

Hindus, Maurice, "Humanity Uprooted," Jonathan Cape, New York, 1930.

Homrighausen, E. G., "Christianity in America," Abingdon Press, New York, c. 1936.

Horsch, John, "Modern Religious Liberalism," Bible Institute Colportage Association, Chicago, 1938.

Horton, Walter Marshall, "Can Christianity Save Civilization?" Harper & Brothers, New York, 1940.

Hough, Lynn Harold, "Whither Christianity," Harper & Brothers, New York, 1929.

Huizinga, J., "In the Shadow of Tomorrow," William Heinemann, Ltd., London, 1936.

Ingram, Kenneth, "Modern Thought on Trial," Philip Allan & Co., Ltd., London, 1935.

Jefferson, Dr. Charles E., "What the War Is Teaching," 1916.

Jones, E. Stanley, "The Choice Before Us," Abingdon Press, New York, 1937.

Keller, Dr. Adolph, "Church and State on the European Continent," Thomas Allan, Toronto, 1937.

Keller, Dr. Adolph, "Five Minutes to Twelve," Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1938.

Keller, Dr. Adolph, "Religion and the European Mind," Lutterworth Press, London, 1934.

Keyserling, graf von, H. A., "Europe," Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1928.

Kierkegaard, Soren, "Enten-Eller" (Either Or).

Kierkegaard, Soren, "Ojeblikket."

Kierkegaard, Soren, "Philosophical Fragments," Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1936.

Kierkegaard, Soren, "The Present Age."

Langsam, Walter Consuelo, "The World Since 1914," The Macmillan Co., New York, 1936.

Leiper, Henry Smith, "World Chaos or World Christianity," Willett, Clark & Co., Chicago, 1937.

Link, Henry C., "The Return to Religion," The Macmillan Co., New York, 1936.

Lloyd, Roger B., "The Religious Crisis," John A. Dickson Publishing Co., Chicago, 1936.

MacFarland, Charles S., "Steps Toward the World Council," Fleming H. Revell Co., New York, 1938.

MacFarland, Charles S., "Trends of Christian Thinking," Fleming H. Revell Co., New York, 1937.

Mackintosh, H. R., "The Christian Apprehension of God" (The Torch Library), Student Movement Press, London, 1934.

Martindale, C. C., "Does God Matter to Me?" Sheed and Ward, New York, 1937.

McEachran, F., "The Destiny of Europe," Faber & Faber, Ltd., London.

Miller, Edward, "Irvingism Vols. I, II, C. Keagan Paul & Co., London, 1878.

Morrison, J. H., "The Christian Faith and Science of Today," Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tennessee 1937.

Muniford, Lewis, "Faith f&r Living," Harcourt Brace & Co., New York, 1940.

Munhall, L. W., "Breakers! Methodism Adrift," Charles C. Cook, New York, c. 1913.

Nicolai, Bishop, of Yugoslavia, "Spiritual Rebirth of Europe," Pub. in America by Episcopal Publishing House.

Niebuhr, H. B., Pauck, Wilhelm and Miller, Francis P., "The Church Against the World," Willett, Clark & Co., Chicago, 1935.

Nitti, Francesco S., "The Decadence of Europe," T. Fisher Unwin, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1923.

Nitti, Francesco S., "Fenceless Europe," Cassell & Co., London, 1922.

Oldham, J. H., Editor, "Oxford Conference" (Official Report) Willett Clark & Co., Chicago, 1937.

Peck, William George, "Christianity and the Modern Chaos," Morehouse-Gorham Co., Milwaukee 1934.

Plowright, B. C., "Rebel Religion," Round Table Press, Inc., New York, 1937.

Poliakoff, V., "Europe in the Fourth Dimension," D. Appleton-Century Co., New York, 1939.

Premoli, Orazio M., "Contemporary Church History," Benziger Brothers, New York, 1932.

Rosenberg, Alfred, "An Die Dunkelmänner unserer Zeit."

Rushbrooke, Dr. J. H., "The Baptist Movement in the Continent of Europe."

Schoulguine, Vassili, "La Resurrection de la Russie," Payot, Paris, 1927.

Schroder, Wilhelm Julius, "The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel," Scribner-Armstrong Co., New York, 1876.

Seldes, George, "The Vatican: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," Harper & Brothers, New York, 1934.

Sencourt, Robert, "The Genius of the Vatican," Jonathan Cape, Ltd., London, 1935.

Sockman, Ralph W., "Morals of Tomorrow," Harper & Brothers, New York, 1939.

Söderblom, Nathan (Archbishop), "Kristenhetens Möte I."

Trumbull, Charles G., "Prophecy's Light on Today," Fleming H. Revell, New York, 1937.

Van Buskirk, William R., "Saviors of Mankind," The Macmillan Co., New York, 1929.

Van Paassen, Pierre, "Days of Our Years," The Dial Press, New York, 1940.

Walker, Leslie J., "The Problem of Reunion," Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1920.

Watts, N., "Britain Without God," Religious Tract Society, London, 1932.

Weigle, Dr. Luther A., "The New Paganism and the Coming Revival."

Federal Council Bulletin, June, 1936, and September, 1937.

"God," Papers from the Cambridge School of Catholic Studies, 1930.

Survey on the Affairs of the Orthodox Church, 1934.

Second Survey on the Affairs of the Orthodox Church, 1937.

Survey on the Affairs of the Continental Churches, 1934.

Second Survey on the Affairs of the Continental Churches, 1935.

Third Survey on the Affairs of the Continental Churches, 1936.

Fourth Survey on the Affairs of the Continental Churches, 1937.

Fifth Survey on the Affairs of the Continental Churches, 1939. (Issued for the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations by the Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, 2, Little Smith Street, S.W. 1, London.)