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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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WILL THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH PRECEDE OR FOLLOW THE GREAT
TRIBULATION?

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields.

(Fifth in a Series on What the Bible Teaches About the Second Coming of Christ)

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, May 1st, 1932.

(Stenographically Reported)

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

"And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."—Matthew 24:21, 22.

Prayer by Rev. W. Gordon Brown.

Our Father Who art in heaven, we pray for Thy blessing to-night upon the children of Thy love, Thine own dear children, that they may be true imitators of Thee. Grant to us, Lord, a very deep and blessed consciousness of Thine own presence.

We leave Thee altogether too much out of our minds, even when we handle Thy Word, we are so occupied with the pages that we are apt to forget the face of Christ. Enable us to know that Thou God seest us, and that in Thy sight is our strength, for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. Grant us O Lord, such perfect hearts.

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers."

We ask also for a renewed consciousness of our fellowship with Thee. Thou hast anointed our Christ with the oil of joy above His fellows. He has not called us only servants and slaves, but He has called us friends, for He has made us to know His will. Make us like Abraham of old, who through faith was called the friend of God. Give us real communion with Thyself and with Thy Son, for only then can we have that sweetest communion with one another in the bonds of faith and hope and love.

Then, O God, we pray too for those who have come to hear Thy word who are not, by faith in Christ, Thy children, that Thou wouldst give them a vision of the blessedness of the family of God; of the joy of having such a Father, and such a Saviour, and such a Comforter; of the glory of sins forgiven; and of a sure hope of life everlasting. Draw them to Thyself by Thy love, and chasten them by Thy fear, that they may have ears to hear, and hearts to understand, the message of the Lord, and through Thy gospel may believe and live.

Especially do we ask for the preacher of Thy Word in this place, and for all places where Christ is uplifted, and the word of God honoured. May reviving grace be on Thy

great church, the body of Christ built up, and thus the coming of the day of the Lord hastened. Hear us according to Thy grace, and answer according to Thy great wealth, since we ask it in the name of the Lord Jesus, Amen.

Whatever the "great tribulation" may be, whenever, in the plan and purpose of God, it may be permitted or may have been permitted, to afflict the souls of men, here it is described as a tribulation surpassing anything that had been before, or that ever shall be thereafter: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

The question before us this evening in our study of what the Bible teaches about the second coming of Christ is this: "Will the Rapture of the Church Precede or Follow the Great Tribulation?"

Very much more is involved in this question than the mere consideration whether the church shall escape or endure the great tribulation. That, of course, is not a small matter; and should we survive until the Lord shall come, it would be a matter that would have a very practical bearing upon ourselves. But there is very much more than that involved in the question of the pre- or post-tribulation rapture: it must affect the whole system of interpretation which makes this dispensation to end with the rapture of the church, and which teaches that after the church has been withdrawn, within a very brief space of time, seven years at the most, according to that school of

interpretation, countless millions of people, without the instrumentality of the church, will be saved. Everything in respect to that system hinges upon the question as to whether the church will be raptured, taken out of the world, before the great tribulation, or whether it will pass through it and share its persecution.

The entire theory is based upon the assumption that the church is to be taken away, and that after that, the greatest revival ever known in all the history of the world is to take place; that the multitude which no man can number, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, described in the seventh chapter of Revelation, are all to be saved during the tribulation period, without the ministry of the church—for the church will have been removed.

Furthermore: that I may impress you with the importance of this question, let me remark that by that principle of interpretation, in the view of many, the hinderer is the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit's ministry, the dispensation of the Spirit, will be terminated with the rapture of the church—and then, without the instrumentality of the church, and without the special ministry of the Holy Ghost, countless millions of people are to be saved. That is something to think about, is it not, if that be so?

In my discussion this evening I shall omit reference to a great many passages of Scripture which are usually cited in support of that theory: I propose this evening to confine myself to bringing to your attention those scriptures which plainly indicate the programme of the Lord in this respect. But I refer to it now lest anyone should say in his own mind, "Oh, yes; but he did not quote this scripture, or that." I shall quote them, but I shall reserve that until next Sunday evening.

I have before me two periodicals: one is *The Moody Monthly*, published by the Moody Bible Institute. This is the issue of last August, and it is entitled "Prophetic Number". On pages five hundred and eight-three and five hundred and eighty-four, the Editor, Dr. Gray, deals with one of my sermons. He begins by saying,

"A southern correspondent wrote us some time ago about a sermon in THE GOSPEL WITNESS (Toronto) by the well-known Dr. T. T. Shields, Pastor of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church of that city. The theme of the sermon was, 'Are We on the Eve of the Great Tribulation?'"

The article is written in Dr. Gray's well-known style. I know him personally, and delight in the honour of his friendship. Dr. Gray is above all a gracious Christian gentleman with whom one may differ without causing any breach of friendship. I do not agree with Dr. Gray in respect to this matter; but although I do not agree with Dr. Gray on some of these eschatological matters, I know there is no more stalwart defender of the essentials of Evangelical faith, and I should count it a great honour to welcome Dr. Gray to this pulpit; I hope we may have that pleasure. I did indeed invite him, but on that occasion he was unable to come.

I have another magazine here, *The Evangelical Christian*, of May, published in Toronto. There are two articles, one by the Editor, and one by our dear friend, Dr. W. L. Pettingill. I have known Dr. Pettingill for some years, and when first I invited him to this pulpit I knew his views. He has not changed in that respect—neither have I.

No man is truer to the great verities of the faith than Dr. Pettingill, and no man is more welcome to this church or to this pulpit. Notwithstanding, on these matters I do not agree with Dr. Pettingill. But on the great body of truth it is necessary to believe in order to be saved, we are in happy agreement.

Next Sunday evening I shall especially deal with this subject as it is presented by these two representative men. I think I may safely assume that, taking the argument of Dr. Gray, and that of Dr. Pettingill, together, the very best that can possibly be said for the pre-tribulation rapture theory has been said. Next Sunday evening I shall deal with these two articles, and in that connection shall deal with the scriptures that are usually quoted in support of that theory. I mention them now so that no one may have in his or her own mind the idea that I am deliberately passing by certain scriptures upon which probably some of you have depended for the support of your views. We will deal with that next week. But first of all, before we hear what Dr. Gray or Dr. Pettingill, or anybody else, has to say, let us examine the Scripture.

I think I have one advantage over some of my brethren, and that is that my sermons are reported and printed, so that they can be examined. You may study them, look up the scriptures which are quoted, examine their context, and find out whether these things be true or not. If they are not true, if you cannot see in the light of Scripture that the positions I take are scriptural, do not accept them. I beg of you, do not accept anything because I say it. There is but one authority, and that is the authority of the Word of God itself; to that we must bow.

Observe two or three things then as preliminary considerations. One is, that *Old Testament passages relating to this subject must be interpreted in the light of the New Testament*. I am not of the number who disparage the Old Testament. I have told you hundreds of times, I think, that to me the Old Testament is just as truly the Word of God as the New Testament. The whole Bible was given by inspiration of God. Notwithstanding, the Old Testament is the Old Testament, and the New Testament is the New. It cannot be admitted, surely, that anything is contained in the Old Testament which is ignored or obscured in the New; or that any truth of the gospel is more plainly revealed in the Old Testament than in the New. Christ is the ultimate Revelation, the Word made flesh. He promised when He was here the completion of divine revelation when He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." He promised that He would guide us, not into all truth, but into all *the* truth, the special truth which Jesus Christ came to reveal.

That promise was fulfilled by the inspiration of the writers of the New Testament, as the Divine Remembrancer brought to their minds the things which Jesus had spoken. That is the explanation of the record of the sermon on the mount long after it was delivered; that is the explanation of the Acts of the Apostles, and the epistles, and at last of that sublime and mysterious book, the book of Revelation.

But we must go back into the Old Testament with Christ; we must read the Old Testament in the light of the New.

Then furthermore: *a doctrine cannot fairly be built on symbolic or highly figurative scriptures.* They may serve to illustrate and to amplify that which is elsewhere clearly and unmistakably revealed; but it is not a sound principle of exegesis, of interpretation, to take a somewhat involved and obscure figurative scripture, in respect to which there may be a thousand different interpretations—to take that and build a doctrine upon a particular interpretation of that symbol, and then endeavour to make the plain statements of Scripture accord with a particular interpretation of the symbol or parable.

The opposite principle is much safer, to take the plain, unmistakable, indisputable, teaching of the Word of God, and to let that be the ground of our doctrinal belief; then these symbolic scriptures, in the light of the plain teaching of Scripture, may illustrate, and in some particulars, amplify our understanding of the more condensed form of statement. But the reverse is extremely dangerous. Let me give you an example:

Our Lord, speaking in the sixteenth chapter of John, said: "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." In the early part of the chapter the disciples were enquiring, "What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that He saith, A little while? we cannot tell what He saith." Then He continues, "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs (or parables): but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb (or parable). Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God." They felt the greater authority of the plain speech over the parable, and in turn the parable derived its authority from the plain speech.

Surely on matters of such tremendous importance, the Bible has not left us to use our imagination: somewhere it must have spoken plainly and unmistakably so that there can be no doubt whatever as to what the Holy Ghost intends us to understand.

Once again: *a doctrine must not be built on inference and assumption.* It is legitimate to assume and infer that which is in harmony with what is elsewhere plainly, explicitly, and unmistakably, taught. In spite of all the mockers, the citation of chapter and verse in support of our position is still a very satisfactory method of dealing with any religious matter in dispute. It is of no avail for the lawyer to stand in the court and say to the bench, "The effect of the law is so-and-so." The judge will say, "Cite your authority." And you have seen the lawyer take his book and name chapter and verse, and pass it to the judge, for him to make a note of it; for the judge is there to interpret the law—the law as written. The man who

pleads his case is not content with mere assumption and inference: he quotes the law.

That is how we ought to meet cases of this sort. Any teaching which rests for its authority on mere assumption may legitimately be questioned. Personally, I am always suspicious of any interpretation of Scripture which requires great ingenuity to discover it. When anybody tells me that he has a special wire to heaven, that he has inside information, that at last to him has been committed the understanding of a particular scripture that has been hidden from everybody else, I say, "Good morning, sir; I am too busy to talk with you." The Bible was given, not for one or two. I believe that, in respect to all these great matters which are important, we should know; that there is no excuse for our not knowing, if we carefully abide by the unmistakable teaching of the Word of God.

I have heard some of my friends—I will not name them—but I have heard some of my friends with whom I have had, and still have, fellowship, discussing Charles Darwin, and telling how often Mr. Darwin uses the phrase, "We may well suppose"! "We may well suppose"! "We may well suppose"! I have heard my fellow-evangelicals pour ridicule upon that phrase. But it is just as much out of place in the interpretation of the inspired Word of God as in the interpretation of nature. There is no necessity of our "Well supposing." When a man reads a scripture to me which, on the face of it, seems to have no relation to the subject, I say, "How did you arrive at it?" When he says, "Is it not inferred? Is it not implied?" I am constrained to enquire, "Are you shut up for the support of your theory to vague implications? Cannot you give me chapter and verse? Cannot you tell me where in the Bible it says that the church is to be raptured before the great tribulation shall take place, and that millions of people are to be saved after the church shall have been taken away to glory? If that is the divine programme I am positive we need not depend on inference and assumption to support it. When a position can be supported only by inference and assumption, it shows itself to be as hard pressed for scriptural warrant as is infant baptism when it is inferred there may have been children in households baptized; and that there is some analogy between baptism and circumcision.

I.

Let us enquire WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH? You are all familiar with the great rapture passage in the fourth chapter of first Thessalonians: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Follow me closely. I do not say that the rapture of the church may not legitimately be inferred from other passages; I do not say that there are no other scriptures in which the rapture of the church may be implied; but that is the only specific, unmistakable, plain statement of Scripture with respect to the rapture of the church.

Parallel with that is the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians: "Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all

sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The resurrection of the believer, of the righteous dead, is to take place at the trump of God, which is here identified with the coming of Christ, when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven. When will the resurrection take place? "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." So that the resurrection of those who sleep in Jesus synchronizes with the coming of the Lord from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God.

Keep that in mind: the righteous dead, or such as sleep in Christ, shall arise at that time. The Scofield Bible admits that all the righteous dead are to rise when Jesus Christ comes: "Not church saints only, but all bodies of the saved, of whatever dispensation, are included in the first resurrection, as here described." I want you very particularly to observe and remember this. My good friend, Dr. Pettingill—I will anticipate next Sunday so far—says in respect to the resurrection taking place at the coming of Christ, "Together with all who have fallen asleep in Christ, including all the saved of all the ages." Thus far, in this matter, we are agreed, that when the Lord shall descend with a shout, all the righteous dead of all ages shall rise; and the living shall be changed.

Thessalonians does not say that the righteous living shall be changed. How can we know they shall be, when it does not say so? Observe this principle of interpretation. Corinthians says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." In Philipians the Holy Ghost by Paul says, "Our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body (the body of our humiliation) that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Thus we have two passages which plainly state that at the coming of Christ the living who are in Christ shall be changed; and, therefore, though Thessalonians does not say so in so many words, legitimately "we may well suppose", on the basis of the other two explicit statements, that that is implied here; we may legitimately infer that Paul, in that passage, took it for granted. I cite this case as an illustration of the legitimate use of inference or assumption.

Then *all* the living who have been changed, and the righteous dead who have been raised, shall be caught up together "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." I repeat it for the sake of the connection: I hold that that resurrection, that coming of the Lord, that sound of the trumpet, the voice of the archangel, the shout from heaven—indicate a public, open, visible, audible, coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So much, then, for the plain statement of Scripture respecting the rapture of the church. Blessed be God, it is true. For years I have used that passage at the graveside when we have laid away the body of someone who has fallen asleep in Christ: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep"—I delight to think of the opening of the grave at the coming

of our Lord in glory. Then the closing words—"Wherefore (because that is in prospect) comfort one another with these words." Blessed be God, we shall sometime be re-united with those whom we have loved long since but lost a while.

II.

Observe now THE PLAIN STATEMENTS OF SCRIPTURE ABOUT THE TRIBULATION. I want to identify these two things, and then relate them to each other. Tribulation is the common lot of all believers—especially members of Jarvis Street Baptist Church! There is nothing unusual about that. Paul said, "We glory in tribulation." John described himself in the Revelation as a "companion in tribulation", when writing to the seven churches. He knew that they all had tribulation. Then it is written that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God". That is common to us all. But that is not *the* tribulation of which we are speaking to-night. There is no doubt about it, we all have our hard times, for this vile world is not a friend to grace to help us on to God. Therefore believers have their difficulties.

But the Bible speaks of a time of unprecedented, unexampled, tribulation. I do not, for the moment, say what that tribulation is; nor do I say whether it is past or still in the future. I confess that some of my friends know more about it than I have been able to discover. But whatever is meant by the "great tribulation", it is here referred to in the verses I have announced as a text—and surely there can be no mistake about the identification of that period—as being "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time"—and, looking into the future—"no, nor ever shall be." Therefore there is a tribulation commonly called the "great tribulation", which has no parallel in the past, and to which there shall be nothing comparable in the ages that are to follow it.

Mr. Brown read to you from Mark's gospel, of "affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be". It is to the same effect. In Daniel, chapter twelve, the same thing is referred to,—and you notice I have gone to the New Testament first. I think that is a sound practice, for then we may go back into the Old Testament, with the light of the New. We find that that which Christ, as a Prophet as well as Priest and King, predicted, has been predicted in the Old Testament: "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Daniel refers to a time of unexampled tribulation.

There is a passage also which I observe Dr. Pettingill quotes, and I will refer to it in this connection, though I am not quite so sure about its application. It may refer to the same period, but it is not so conclusive, in my view, as others: "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." (Jer. 30:7) But for the sake of argument, and to avoid even the semblance of unfairness, let us grant that in Jeremiah also we have a reference to the "great tribulation". We shall refer to other passages next Sunday, but these are sufficiently clear for us to see by the plain teaching of Scripture, (personally, I should omit the passage in Jeremiah from that category) that there is to be, or has been, in the course of human

history, a period of tribulation exceeding everything before and everything following.

The next principle is to observe that *the tribulation*, I suppose most schools would agree, *coincides with the reign of antichrist*. I should not like to say there is unanimity of opinion, but it is generally agreed, that the "great tribulation", whatever it is, synchronizes with the rule of the lawless one who is yet to be fully revealed.

For that we must begin again, not with Daniel in the Old Testament, nor with the symbolism of Revelation in the New, but first of all with the plain, unmistakable, statements of Scripture. Here it is: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked (lawless one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

That certainly points, by the plain teaching of Scripture, to a time of great tribulation, of great distress.

There are at least two outstanding characteristics of the lawless one. One is that he is a distinctly religious personage, "So that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God"—God's vicegerent. I hope you have given no credence to the talk of Mussolini's being the antichrist. Mussolini is not a religious figure: he is irreligious, if anything. But antichrist will come in a religious form; he will be a religious person, possibly the head of a religious system. He will sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God, claiming to be God's representative on earth, God's vicegerent. There is somebody already who claims to be that.

Furthermore, notwithstanding his religious profession, he is a man, a personage, or system,—whatever he or it is, that is subject to satanic inspiration, "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness."

That is generally identified with the "great tribulation", when antichrist is in the ascendancy, and when such tribulation is as never at any other time known to the world is abroad.

Let us glance now at *the book of Revelation*. Let us for our present purpose accept your interpretation of that book, if indeed you accept that school of interpretation with which I am dealing this evening. I have in my hand the Scofield Bible. Read the book of Revelation, and see the notes that are appended. For the sake of argument, let us take that interpretation with the description of the terrible affairs which will take place in the earth during the time of the ascendancy of the beast and the false prophet—what then? That is the "great tribulation". What has that to do with the rapture? We affirm that we have conclusively proved by the explicit word of Scripture that

a secret rapture is not taught; that the rapture of the church will be public and open, and that it is inseparably connected with the resurrection of the righteous dead, and with the coming of Christ—a public, open event*.

I affirm that neither in Thessalonians, nor anywhere else in Scripture, is there any possibility of finding, implicitly or explicitly, any reference to the rapture of the church except in association with the coming of Christ. Nobody claims that there is: we are all agreed on that. If that be so, look at the chapter from which the text is taken: "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

He will come after the tribulation, not before; therefore *it is impossible to establish the pre-tribulation rapture theory unless you make the rapture secret, and to make it secret you must do violence to every plain statement of Scripture relating to the Second Advent*. Christ will come after the tribulation, not before.

Furthermore, the text plainly tells us that *God's people will not be raptured before the tribulation*. How can we know? "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." I know what you will say: "The elect are the Jews. They are the people who will be saved during the tribulation, not the church; the church will have been removed from the earth. The tribulation will be shortened for the Jews and for such Gentile na-

*The note in the Scofield Bible on Revelation 7 is as follows:

"The great tribulation is the period of unexampled trouble predicted in the passages cited under that head from Psa. 2:5 to Rev. 7:14 and described in Rev. 11:18. Involving in a measure the whole earth (Rev. 3:10), it is yet distinctively "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7), and its vortex Jerusalem and the Holy Land. It involves the people of God who will have returned to Palestine in unbelief. Its duration is three and a half years, or the last half of the seventieth week of Daniel (Dan. 9:24-27, note Rev. 11:2, 3). The elements of the tribulation are: (1) The cruel reign of the "beast out of the sea" (Rev. 13:1), who, at the beginning of the three and a half years, will break his covenant with the Jews (by virtue of which they will have re-established the temple worship, Dan. 9:27), and show himself in the temple, demanding that he be worshipped as God (Mt. 24:15; Thes. 2:4). (2) The active interposition of Satan "having great wrath" (Rev. 12:12), who gives his power to the Beast (Rev. 13:4, 5). (3) The unprecedented activity of demons (Rev. 9:2, 11); and (4) the terrible "bow!" judgments of Rev. 16.

tions as shall be saved through their witness." If the "elect" means the Jews in Matthew, what does it mean in Mark? If Matthew's gospel be for the Jews, for whom was Mark's gospel designed?

Furthermore, Peter says, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Every believer is one of the "elect". We are admonished to make "our calling and election sure". That does not mean that we are to make Jews of ourselves, surely! The apostle Paul said he endured all things "for the elect's sake": Did he mean for the sake of the Jews? Or did he thus endure for the sake either of the Jews or Gentile nations, but all outside the church, who may still be on the earth after the church is raptured? Surely the plain teaching of Scripture everywhere is that all who believe whether Jew or Gentile are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ". Hear these Scriptures:

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"; "Elect of God, holy and beloved"; "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things"; "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory"; "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness"; "And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven."

Two of the passages we have just quoted deserve special attention. In one the term "elect" is applied to angels. Surely these are not Jewish angels! The other passage, "Elect of God, holy and beloved," is from Colossians the third chapter and twelfth verse. I am not aware that the church at Colosse was a Jewish church? Indeed in the eleventh verse of the same chapter, Paul writes, "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all." Only in this passage in the New Testament does "Greek" precede "Jew," perhaps because the letter was written to Gentile Christians. Notwithstanding they were "elect of God."

It is worthy of note also that the Scripture which describes the nucleus of "The church of the Thessalonians," reads, "And some of them (Jews) believed and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." But without distinguishing between Jew and Gentile, Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God."

The "elect" simply means the body of believers, and they will still be on the earth, still subject to deception, during the tribulation, whenever that may be. To the disciples as representative of all the other disciples who should come after them He said, "Behold, I have told you before."

I affirm that there is no scripture in the New Testament or in the Old, which, by any fair interpretation, can be made to teach that the word "elect" in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, or in the thirteenth chapter of Mark, is restricted to the Jews, or to others who may live through the tribulation period, outside of the blood-bought church

of the Lord Jesus Christ. If the "elect" are still here, and if these lying wonders are designed to deceive if possible the very elect, it means that there is no rapture of the church—can be no rapture of the church—until the close of the tribulation period, when the Son of man shall come "with power and great glory", with all His holy angels with Him.

Again we come to the second epistle to the Thessalonians, and the first chapter—"It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Dr. Gray, in his article, in which he so graciously, and with his customary beautiful spirit, criticizes my sermon, quotes that text. Although I must return to it next Sunday, I shall read it as it appears in *The Moody Monthly*:

"But when shall that rest be entered upon? At the time 'when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God'—in parentheses Dr. Gray inserts, 'Gentile nations'—and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ'—and, in parentheses is inserted, 'Jews'."

Can you tell me on what principle, or on what authority, those words are inserted?—that those who "know not God" are Gentiles, and they "that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" are Jews? When shall the Lord's people enter into "rest?" When shall our righteous God recompense rest to those who are troubled? Listen: "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire." If that be so, His revelation from heaven "with flaming fire" is simultaneous with the resurrection of the righteous dead and the rapture of those who are in Christ. Surely it cannot be contended that the church shall be raptured, and then wait for all the period of the tribulation to enter into rest? No! We shall be for ever with the Lord from the hour in which we are caught up to meet Him in the air.

We come now to the great passage which we have already read in second Thessalonians. The doctrine of the second personal, visible, coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is the "blessed hope" for which believers ought always to be looking: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." I am jealous for that truth. I do not want to see it dragged in the mire. I do not want to see it made absurd. I do not want to see it divorced from any legitimate use of one's sanctified common sense. It belongs to the whole body of revealed truth. But nowadays, if you speak of the second coming of Christ, in the view of many people, you are a little bit off balance, and are called a fanatic of some sort; it makes no difference to what school of interpretation you belong. Why? Because no doctrine of Scripture has been associated with such extravagances, with such vagaries, with such utterly grotesque interpretations of Scripture.

What is responsible for it? The theory that Jesus Christ may come at any moment. I am convinced it is not taught in the Word of God. Are you shocked at that? Listen. Paul has written one letter to the Thessalonians: he writes another in which he says, "We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him"—somebody says

"That is the secret rapture." On what principle? "They shall gather together his elect from the four winds. Surely we shall be gathered to Him at His coming—that ye be not shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit—any kind of inner voice—nor by word, nor by letter as from us." In other words, "Do not misinterpret what I have written to you; do not misunderstand what I have already written to you—as that the day of Christ is at hand."

' By that pre-tribulation rapture theory whether secret or otherwise, we must distinguish between the rapture of the church and the day of Christ. They split and "divide," and they call that "properly dividing the word of truth". To me it appears to be not dividing, but mutilating the word of truth.—"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first"—two things must precede the Lord's coming: a "falling away", an apostasy, and "that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? . And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."

What does that mean? Does it not mean that God, in His sovereign power, restrains until it is His will and purpose to withdraw His restraint? I do not know what the hindrance is. If you study the history of this doctrine you will find that from the beginning until this day there have been many conjectures as to the identity of that withholding power: once it was thought to be the Roman Empire, now, frequently the Holy Spirit is named. Had God intended us to know He would have told us. But the important matter is this, that when in God's plan and purpose all restriction, whatever that restriction may be, is withdrawn, then shall that Wicked one be revealed.

What is said about him? "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming", the *epiphany* of His *parousia*, shining incomparably above the brightness of the sun, destroying the person or system, whatever it is, that sets itself against God with the "brightness of his coming".

Paul says, in effect, Do not be deceived and carried away, as though that day were at hand. Enough will take place before it comes to insure that it will not overtake you as a thief. When Christ comes, He will come suddenly, unexpectedly, at last, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man", but there will be a series of events leading up to His coming, which may unmistakably be identified. Therefore we shall not be in darkness, so that that day shall overtake us as a thief.

My brethren, if you eliminate that theory that Jesus Christ may come at any moment, you will have removed the rock upon which this doctrine has been all but wrecked in the thought of millions of people. You say, "We must watch for His coming." Quite true, but remember He said, "Lo, I am with you always." "Thou God seest me." He sees me now. I shall see Him more clearly, but He will not see me more clearly when He comes in glory than He sees me at this moment. I must live my life before His omnivident gaze, remembering that all

things are naked and open to the eyes of him with Whom we have to do and that from Him no secrets are hid.

Do you tell me that the apostolic church expected the Lord's return? We will deal with that more particularly later; but do you tell me that when Jesus Christ left this earth nearly two thousand years ago He said in effect to His disciples, "I may come back at any moment", when He knew He would not come for at least nearly two thousand years? You cannot escape the problem that view creates by saying that in His sight a thousand years are as a day, and a day as a thousand years. God is a God of truth; hence He could not have said when employing language for human understanding that He might come at any moment when He knew He would not come for two thousand years. His word, properly interpreted, in my judgment, does not say He may come any moment. Nobody may know when He shall come, but "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." He knew the whole programme always, and He knows when the white horse and his Rider will come down the skies.

I affirm when Christ shall come again He will terminate the dispensation of grace. He will come without a sin offering unto salvation. He will come to effect the redemption of the purchased possession. He will come to open the book where He closed it in the synagogue at Nazareth when He there proclaimed "the acceptable year of the Lord", and will read on as He proclaims "the year of vengeance of our God." The idea that countless millions will be saved after the Lord has come for His church, I am convinced, is a grievous error, which finds no support in the Word of God.

All I have said will be printed. Accept it if it is true to Scripture; if it be not scriptural, reject it; but do not reject it until you have searched the Scriptures to see whether these things be so.

As for you who are not converted, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Now is the time to be washed in the blood; now is the time to be made a new creature in Christ Jesus. I cannot even promise you to-morrow. We may not be here to-morrow. It may, for somebody here this evening, be now or never.

I heard Dr. Pettingill speaking over the radio from Chicago at half past one in the morning a little while ago. He said many things I could not accept, about the tribulation, and the nations being judged in the valley of Jehoshaphat, but when he closed with an earnest gospel invitation, I said, "Hallelujah! I am with you in that. The Lord bless your testimony."

Though I have tried to instruct those of you who are Christians, I dare not close without the most earnest appeal to the unconverted of which I am capable. As though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Nor can I promise you any opportunity to repent and believe the gospel beyond this hour, and this moment. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

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Lecture Text: Numbers 20 to 22.

We shall glance very hastily at chapters twenty and twenty-one. On their way to Canaan, now that they have had some thirty-eight years or more of wandering in the wilderness, the children of Israel come to the border of Edom, and they ask permission to pass through the land, giving promise that they will keep to the highway, and that they will pay for whatever they use; but permission is refused them. Edom was a relative of Israel's. When permission was refused, Israel did not fight their way through, but they took a longer journey compassing the land of Edom. Sometimes "the longest way round is the shortest way through," and it is well sometimes to avoid conflict: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

You will observe that king Arad the Canaanite came out and fought against Israel, and the Lord delivered him into Israel's hand; and they obtained a great victory.

It is possible to win a battle—to win many battles—and yet lose the war. On the other hand, it is possible to lose many battles, and win the war. Early successes do not always prophesy ultimate victory. When you young ministers go to a new field, and people try to puff you up by telling you that you are the only minister they ever had, and if, indeed, you have some gift from God, and have some measure of success and the king of Canaan goes down before you, keep your head; remember there are other battles to fight, and that you are engaged in a long war.

Immediately following that, Israel resorted to their usual practice. They were like the rest of us: they were born grumblers—and they continued to grumble to the end of the chapter. They were always murmuring at something. It was then fiery serpents were released upon them, and the Lord instructed Moses to make a serpent of brass—you are familiar with the story that is carried forward into the New Testament. Its typical importance is so obvious that I think comment unnecessary. I pass it, not because it is unimportant, but because I trust we are all familiar with it.

Then again they came to a place where they lacked water, and whereas God had brought water out of a rock on other occasions, now He told them to dig a well. You must not try to shut God up to one method, and assume that because He has brought you a victory at one time in a particular way, He has only one way of working. He may strike a rock in one instance, and give you a pick and shovel to dig a well with the next time. Most people prefer the rock, but do not forget there is plenty of well-digging ahead.

Then they came to Sihon, king of the Amorites, and to Og, the king of Bashan. All this was "on this side of Jordan." They had not yet crossed the river. These were the outposts of the enemy, so to speak. We have seen in our earlier study that the land of Canaan, with its walled

fortresses and its giant warriors, is really a type, not of heaven, but of "heavenly places in Christ Jesus", the spiritual dwelling place of those who are called to "wrestle not against flesh and blood".

I have known not a few people, who, because they have obtained victory over Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan, think now they ought to be knighted and elevated to the peerage, that all their fighting is done. You will generally find the people who talk about the eradication of the old nature base their assumption on the fact that they have been victorious in their battles with Sihon and Og. Some man before his conversion was addicted to drink, or had an unclean tongue, or had formed some other external evil habits. Sins and weights were many, and when he has fought a few battles, and has been delivered from these lesser matters, he imagines he has reached perfection. But he is still on this side of Jordan, and he will find in the years to come, if he goes on with God, right unto the very end, that there are still, after countless battles, many nations to be dispossessed.

I pass that by to come to the problem of Balaam's story. I do not know that I have ever preached a sermon from Balaam's history. To me, this bit of history is one of the greatest problems of the Old Testament. I recommend these chapters, twenty-two to twenty-five, to you for your most diligent study. I think some time we must have an essay on, "Balaam who loved the wages of unrighteousness".

Personally, I am averse to making apologies. I used to know a man when I was a boy whom I occasionally heard preach, and invariably he began by apologizing for a headache, or a backache, or some other kind of ache—and before he got through I cordially wished he had a good many other aches, for whatever he had he always succeeded in communicating to me in an exaggerated form. I think it is unwise for a preacher to ask the "indulgence" of his audience because the poor man has not had time to prepare his message.

I offer no such apology as that, but simply tell you that this story is one of such subtlety, that it is, in my judgment, so profound it requires weeks and months and years of careful examination. I have read it a hundred times and more, and yet, as I say, so far as I can recall—I would not be absolutely sure—I have never presumed yet to preach upon the subject. I may perhaps, if I live to be as old as Dr. Haldeman, venture upon it.

This evening I shall offer you a few suggestions, first of all, to show you *the importance of the subject*. Balaam is mentioned in the book of Joshua. He is referred to centuries afterward by the Apostle Peter as a man "who loved the wages of unrighteousness". He is referred to by Jude, who describes his sin as the "error of Balaam". Later, when John had that marvellous vision when he was "in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ", Balaam was again mentioned in one of the messages to the churches (Pergamos) against which the Lord complained that they had there "them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel". Balaam became a synonym for something with which God, through all the ages, was especially displeased.

The character of this strange man is well worth studying. As I have said before, it is one of the most subtle stories in the entire Bible. The psychology of it is most

interesting, and, at the same time, startling. So that all I can do for you this evening is to direct your thought to certain lines of study in connection with this interesting and profound chapter of history, particularly the twenty-second chapter.

I.

First of all, I should like you to *look at these two characters as they appear together on the page of history*, Balak, the king of the Moabites, and Balaam the son of Beor. Neither of these men was an Israelite. We know who Balak was, a Moabite. He came of the same stock as Ruth the Moabitess. He was a blood relation of Israel, a descendant of Lot. Perhaps on that ground it is possible to account somewhat for Balak's knowledge of the true God, for it is quite evident that he had some knowledge of Jehovah, though he was not an Israelite.

Then, on the other hand, Balaam was not an Israelite: he was a foreigner. Notwithstanding, it is quite evident that he had a certain knowledge of the true God. He knew something about Jehovah, and had had communication with Him. He came from the land of Mesopotamia, the land of Laban and Bethuel, with whom Jacob had tarried. These men had some knowledge of God, and that knowledge had been handed down very probably from generation to generation. Though we have no reason to believe that any special divine disclosure had previously been vouchsafed to either of them, yet there was an intellectual knowledge, at least, of the God of Israel.

Both these men were religious men. And let me warn you that the greatest problems of life will always be found in the religious realm. Do not allow anyone to suggest to you that a shallow mind is competent to deal with religious problems. I have met not a few people—and many of them religious people—who are themselves bundles of contradictions, paradoxes incarnate. I remember a lady meeting me in this church some years ago, and speaking of a certain religious type, of whom she said, with fine discernment, "They seem to be able to believe one thing with one side of their brain, and the very opposite with the other."

Have you not met a great many people who seem to be very religious, and, at the same time, utterly unethical? whose religion appears to have absolutely no relation to life and conduct? Their minds are full of religious knowledge, but it seems never to get into their hearts, or to express itself in their lives.

These men were not unintelligent, by any means. They were something more than ignorant devotees of a religious cult. And yet, combined with their knowledge of the true God, there was a strange trust in some sort of incantation, some kind of magic. Religion, to them, was something that was to be used as a conjurer uses his tricks, as a sorcerer his sorcery.

Balak sees a great company come out of Egypt until they fill the land, more than a million of them on the march. He has already heard that they have been victorious over the king of the Canaanites; he has already heard that Sihon and Og have licked the dust before their conquering onslaught. Now as he sees them approaching him he is full of fear, and wonders if he cannot turn religion to account: "If I can only get them cursed, and employ some sort of superhuman art, some kind of magic, I shall be saved from disaster."

That type of religion still prevails. There are people who still think it is in the power of men to curse or to

bless. I remember reading a sermon of Spurgeon's years ago, in which he said, "I notice the Pope has been very busy cursing England lately; and I have also observed that when His Holiness undertakes to curse England, England seems to become unusually prosperous." I do not vouch for the accuracy of the words, but that was the substance of his remark.

But there are people who look upon religion as little more than a weapon which they may employ against people they dislike. Many of you doubtless have received chain letters asking you to offer a certain prayer so many times, to copy the letter a certain number of times, and to send the copies on to others—and threatening you with dire consequences if you did not do exactly as you were told. Those who write such letters, as well as those who are made afraid by them, appear to believe that religion is a kind of magic which can be invoked for one's undoing. Balak confounded the religion of Jehovah with the black arts of the magician,—and he has numerous modern successors.

Balaam was not a prophet of the Lord apparently; he is later called, in the book of Joshua, "The soothsayer," (Joshua 13:22). In the Acts of the Apostles it is recorded that one Simon the sorcerer professed conversion in Samaria: "Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. . . . And when Simon saw that through laying on the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." To himself he appears to have reasoned: "That would be wonderful if I could still practise my sorcery. I could turn religion to profitable account; I could make money. This new religion would at least enable me to justify my claims to greatness." But you remember Peter's answer, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." There are many modern religious cults which have analogous principles as their basic philosophy, and even evangelical orthodoxy, when it is of the head only, is too often invoked for cursing rather than blessing.

There is a bit of unwritten history here, something that is merely hinted at; and I think it is indicative of the character of Balaam. Perhaps I ought to read it to you, though it occurs in a later chapter. After they had warred against the Midianites Moses said, "Have ye saved all the women alive? Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord." Balaam was not wholly unknown to Israel, and Balak, I fancy, had a pretty shrewd idea, from Balaam's record, that he would not be wholly unresponsive to his approaches.

When people ask you to do certain things, it will be well to ask yourself, "Why do they ask me to do that?" There are some people who would never be asked to curse Israel. Why was Balaam asked to do it?

Look at that a moment, will you? "The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak"—they had the money with them—"and he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam."

That sounded very pious, did it not? Some would commend Balaam's course as right. I do not think it was. I think that is where Balaam took the first wrong step. I grow weary of people who always say, "I will pray about it." There are some things about which I do not need to pray. You say, "You do not? That astonishes me." Then you must be astonished. I repeat, about some things I need not pray. I do not need to ask the Lord whether I should pay my debts, if I have any. I do not need to ask the Lord whether I should be straightforward and honest. I do not need to pray about a plain principle or precept of the Bible to find out whether I should be guided by it or not.

What if you are approached with some such suggestion as this: "We are planning to take a certain course. We are going to destroy a certain minister's influence. Will you join us?" Will you answer, "I will pray about it"? I need not pray about it: I have my answer ready. Do you know what it is? Capitals—full organ, all stops out—"NO!" Say it! Do not spend all night praying about it. When a man is faced with a request to do wrong, and he asks to have time to think it over, you may know exactly what he will do in the end. He has the Lord's answer before he asks for it.

Still in mercy the Lord came to Balaam. "And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying, Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out. And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak"—now listen—"Get you into your land: for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you.—I am very sorry. I should like to go. If it were left with me, I would go with you. I wish you every success. I hope you will be victorious over the Israelites; but the Lord will not let me go, so I shall have to stay at home."

Did you ever know people to act like that? The Lord knew that in the moment Balaam said, "Lodge here this night", he desired to do the will of Balak. The Lord saw into Balaam's heart, and knew that he wanted to go—and that already he had his eye on the "rewards of divination". He said, "I do not want to be too covetous, I do not want to expose myself too much; but if I can keep my religion and get the rewards too, it will be a fine thing. I will pray about it over night."

I hope I may be able to help you young men and women to see that the most abominable things that hell itself can design have been wrought, down through the years, by religious people, by people who pray, and who have sought divine sanction for what they do.

"And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us." But I know what Balak said: "How did he say it? Did he say, 'No', at once?" "No; he did not. He asked us to stay over night." "If he had asked you to stay another night the answer might have been different. He is not hopeless. Go back, and stay

another night." "And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they."

That is the psychology of it. Have you learned how to say, No, in such a way that the persons to whom you say it know well that to the last syllable of recorded time that, No, is registered; and it cannot be changed? If so, you will not be bothered again. I have thousands of detractors, and all kinds of enemies; but I can scarcely think of anybody who ever came to me the second time when I said, "No"! They knew that ended it, and that they might just as well go home and stay home. That is the way to answer the devil always—to say, No, so emphatically that he will not only hear it, but feel it.

More honourable princes came to Balaam and said, "Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me: for I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me; come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people." I do not know why I missed this story when we were in the old Convention controversy. It is full of suggestiveness at that point. When anybody talks like that, listen attentively, and I think you will be led to say, "Somewhere I have heard a voice like that—'All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me'."

Who is this that offers that kind of reward? I do not think there is much chance of anybody's offering to promote you to honour in the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec! I think you are quite safe in that respect. Somebody may tempt you to leave us on that ground, but I do not think there is much danger while you remain. Balak will probably offer anybody a reward who will curse us.

"And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak"—and here are the difficult passages—"If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more"—"Look here, I am as orthodox as you are, every whit. I preach the gospel just as you do. I believe in the inspiration of Scripture. I believe in the atonement. I believe in all these things just as you do. I do not believe in your methods, but I am not for sale. If Balak were to offer me his house full of silver and gold, he could not buy me."

Did you ever see a carpenter trying to find a solid place in the wall with his hammer? At one point he taps and it sounds pretty hollow!—"House full of silver and gold"! That is a brave answer if it is really sincere. But it would be dangerous to offer Balaam a "house full of silver and gold."

"Therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more,—I am going to have another prayer-meeting. I will see if I cannot get the Lord to consent. He told me once, but I will have another prayer-meeting. Stay to-night, and it may be the Lord will change His mind." Balaam did not really enquire of the Lord to learn His will. He made a determined effort to obtain divine sanction for doing his own will. He cloaked his self-will and his covetous desire in an ultra religious pose. Alas, alas! How many do so still!

How often the resolve, "I will pray about it", really means, "I must use religion to get my own way"!

Here is one of the most terrible things in the Bible. I hope you will be able to see this principle: "And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." You can keep on praying that the Lord will let you have your own way until at last the Lord will let you have it. Did you ever see a wise mother treat a child like that? Having said, No, several times, although she knew what was in store for her wayward child, she said, "All right; if you will have your own way, go and learn by experience the folly of it."

That is what God said. While sovereignly He put his bit in Balaam's jaws, and held him with a strong rein, He said, "All right; I will make you do my will, although you are seeking the wages of unrighteousness." Thus God consented, thus He gave Balaam permission to go. A superficial student of that chapter may say, "There is a contradiction here. Where is your divine inspiration?" No other book than this would dare to speak thus. No book in any language contains such profound sayings as these: "Rise up and go with them"—and this, "God's anger was kindled because he went."

"And the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way, but the angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; and he smote her again. And the angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff", so determined was he to get through.

You say, "But Balaam had prayed!" How many have I known who have gone through the form of prayer when they have set their heart upon some iniquity, and were determined to have their own way! They pray, and pray, and pray; and thereafter everybody who gets in their way, whether an ass or an oracle, is smitten with a staff.

A very tractable gentleman was Balaam! Looking for the cloud and fire, was he not? I think not. He merely professed to desire divine guidance. But the Lord, in His mercy, stood in the way.

Long ago I heard a man preach a strange sermon, but I think there was much truth in what he said. The title was something to this effect: "How God Puts Obstacles in the Sinner's Way." He described God as putting a wall across the path. The man is determined to do evil; but the Lord, in His mercy, builds barrier after barrier until at last one is built on the edge of the precipice—but the man leaps over it.

The Lord put an angel with a drawn sword right across the path, but Balaam did not see him. It is hard to see anything when you have made up your mind what you are going to do. When a man has made up his mind that at all costs he will pursue a certain course, he cannot see even an angel standing across his path with a drawn sword.

"The Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?" I do not see any special difficulty in that. It was supernatural, of course, but I can conceive of no difficulty. The Lord made man's mouth, and He can make an ass to speak, if He will—and I suppose He can make him cease from speaking too. Sometimes I wish He would!

"And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee." You can get some logic even from a quadruped: "The ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me: and the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive. And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned: for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again. And the angel of the Lord said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak."

I think I must stop there for to-night—perhaps I had better read to the end of the chapter: "And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast. And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour? And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak. And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjath-huzoth. And Balak offered oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people."

Please study chapters twenty-three and twenty-four between now and next Thursday. They are most profound. They have in them Balaam's prophecies, and I think we shall at least learn from our study of Balaam that God is a sovereign God, and that it is for ever true that no one has power to curse those whom God has blessed. It is my earnest hope that I may be able to say some things to you young men and women that you will never forget.

In your ministry of the Word you will be thronged with Balaks; you will have multiplied temptations to go in the

way of Balaam, to be seduced from your fidelity to God and His gospel, to have your affections alienated from the Prince of glory, in order that you may set them upon the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them. Study Balaam in order that you may be as unlike him as you possibly can.

Anticipating our later study, we may remark what a terrible thing it is that a man should have power to set in operation in the world such a train of evil influence as can never die out! Did you ever think of that? By and by in our study of the kings of Israel we shall find that after Jeroboam set up calves of gold in Dan and Bethel, of each successor, without a solitary exception, until at last Israel is destroyed as a nation, it is said, "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." Here is this Balaam whose name stands out to this day on the page of history as a synonym for perfidy, for treachery of the basest sort, as representative of the capacity of a human soul to receive the devil in all his fulness into his life. What a horrible thing that is, to have come into the world to set in operation a train of evil that goes on, not only to the end of time, but to the ages of ages beyond. God save us from it by His sovereign grace!

A CALL TO THE REGULAR BAPTISTS FOR A CONVOCATION TO BE HELD IN CHICAGO.

Beginning May 15th

To the Regular Baptist Brotherhood:—

We have come upon times when the faith and courage of the loyal followers of Christ are being severely tested. It is vital therefore, that those who hold harmonious beliefs should stand together and encourage one another.

To make this possible, the committee appointed by the Bible Union, June, 1930, is calling a body of Regular Baptist delegates to meet at the Beldon Avenue Baptist Church, Chicago, the week of Pentecost, beginning Sunday, May 15, 1932.

As Regular Baptists our purpose in coming together is to discuss the high Scriptural principles for which, in the Providence of God, we have stood from apostolic days down to the present, and what can be done by us to advance them; missions, and our present duty, and other spiritual and practical matters of mutual interest.

We suggest that the delegation consist of the Pastor and one delegate for each one hundred and fraction thereof of the membership of the local church appointing them.

It is our thought in calling this meeting of Regular Baptist delegates, that of those bearing the Baptist name, such only as do believe in the inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility, and authority of the Bible shall be entitled to representation in this convocation.

We have it in mind that after due consideration of the whole matter a nation-wide association shall be formed to attend to the interests and carry forward the work of the Regular Baptists.

This call carries with it a request for prayer that our churches may be in a complete accord with the Divine mind, our assembly on May 15th dominated by the Holy Spirit, and that our chief aim may be to honour and glorify our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

H. C. FULTON,
D. R. WALKINSHAW

MAX SCHLMPF,
OLIVER W. VAN OSDEL.

Program of Regular Baptist Convocation,

to be held in CHICAGO, ILL.,

May 15 to 18, 1932,

at the BELDON AVE. BAPTIST CHURCH,
Beldon Ave. and No. Halstead Sts.

HOWARD C. FULTON, Pastor

SUNDAY, MAY 15th—11:00 a.m. Pastor HOWARD C. FULTON, "What Regular Old Fashioned Baptists Stand For." 7:45 p.m. Evangelistic Service. MONDAY MAY 16th—2:00 Devotional Hour, "The Significance of Pentecost." REV.

CHAS. FIELDS, Chicago, Ill. 3:00 "New Testament Evangelism." (Speaker to be assigned). 4:00 "The Place of the Word of God in Apostolic Preaching." REV. C. E. WOOD, Grand Rapids, Mich. 7:30 Song Service. 8:00 "The place of the Cross in the Ministry of the Apostles." REV. EARLE GRIFFITH, Toledo, Ohio. TUESDAY, MAY 17th—9:00 a.m. Devotional Hour. "Apostolic Faith and Fellowship." REV. CHAS. F. FREDMAN, Toledo, Ohio. 10:00 Discussion and Business. 11:00 "The Place of the Resurrection in the Preaching of the Apostles." REV. I. VAN WESTENBRUGGE, Grand Rapids, Mich. 2:00 p.m. Devotional Hour. "The Place of Prayer in the Apostolic Church." REV. JOHN MUNTZ, Forestville, N.Y. 3:00 "Apostolic Missionary Endeavour." REV. E. E. SHIELDS, Chicago. 4:00 Discussion and Business. 7:30 Song Service. 8:00 "Apostolic Counsel for Apostate Days." REV. H. G. HAMILTON, Buffalo, N.Y. WEDNESDAY, MAY 18th—9:00 a.m. Devotional Hour. "The Place and Power of the Holy Ghost in the New Testament Church." REV. ISAAC PAGE, Chicago. 10:00 Discussion and Business. 11:00 "The Place of the Second Coming of Christ in Apostolic Preaching." REV. M. E. HAWKINS, Mishawaka, Indiana. 2:00 p.m. Devotional Hour. "The Preeminent Christ—The Lord of the Church." REV. GEORGE KEHOE, Faribault, Minnesota. 3:00 "A New Testament Church." REV. JOHN J. VAN GORDER, Butler, Pa. 4:00 Discussion and Business. 7:30 Song Service. 8:00 "The Things that God Hath Prepared for them That Love Him." REV. OLIVER W. VAN OSDEL, D.D., Grand Rapids, Mich.

JARVIS STREET ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual meeting of Jarvis Street Baptist Church was held Friday, April 29th, with a large attendance of members. It was a veritable love feast and service of thanksgiving from beginning to end. The Treasurer's report, showing a small balance in all funds, was adopted by the singing of the doxology. While the church's total revenue, like that of every other institution, was less than for several years past, the total receipts amounted to \$63,885.58. The additions to the church totalled 142.

A summary of the year's work was given in the Deacon's report, presented by Mr. George Greenway; the report is printed below:

DEACON'S REPORT.

With gratitude and thanksgiving we present this brief report, and record the faithfulness of our covenant-keeping God. The past year has been one of continual blessing, and although we have had experiences which sometimes caused a little disquietude, we have never been discouraged, "for His Compassions fail not"; and when the issue is fidelity to our God and His truth, we have no fear as to the result. To the glory of His name, we unhesitatingly affirm that not once has the standard been lowered. Men and women have been pointed to the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the World", and salvation through the atoning blood has been faithfully set forth. We thank God that many have looked away to Calvary's cross, and like Bunyan's Pilgrim, have found that their burden has rolled away, and they have seen it no more. Beside this, God's people have been built up and strengthened so that many who were weak have become strong, and are now good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Especially encouraging has been the work among the young people of the Church—and the large number of young men and young women who attend our services on the Lord's Day is a special feature in our church services. Our great Bible School is a sight worth seeing. Each of the various departments has its own Superintendent and staff of teachers, and their devotion to this work is above all praise. Absentee scholars are reported each Sunday and visited during the next week. This often gives an opportunity for presenting the gospel to the parents and others, and inviting them to the service of God's house.

The Toronto Baptist Seminary connected with our church continues its good work, and has had a large attendance of students. The harmony and good feeling existing between the students and Faculty is very marked, and the Seminary continues to be a benediction to all concerned.

We must also mention the excellent service rendered by our choir. They make melody in their hearts and with their voices unto the Lord, singing for the glory of His name, rather than for the praise of men. Our splendid and devoted organist and our choir leader are worthy our best thanks for their efficient service.

(Continued on page 16)

Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

Vol. 7 No. 2

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

Lesson 20 May 15th, 1932
SECOND QUARTER.**THE SILVER TRUMPETS.**

Lesson Text: Numbers, chapter 10.

Golden Text: "And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." Numbers 10:35, 36.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Psalm 119:89-104.
Tuesday—Psalm 81:1-16.
Wednesday—Isaiah 55:1-13.
Thursday—Ezek. 33:1-9.
Friday—Heb. 4:11-16.
Saturday—2 Tim. 4:1-8.

I. THE BLOWING OF TRUMPETS,
(vs. 1-10).

The thoroughness with which God organized His people and made provision for every contingency is made clear as we continue our study in these early books. The people were arranged in tribal divisions, each under a captain, and having its own place in the camp and on the march. The pillar of cloud resting upon the tabernacle, the outward manifestation of the presence of God, governed the movements of all in the camp, but in order to make known the will of God, as indicated by the cloud, instruction was given to make two trumpets of silver, which would be sounded at the proper times to give the necessary direction. No particular description of the trumpet is given other than that they were to be made of a whole piece of silver (v. 2), but according to information gained from other sources, they were straight, and at the end not unlike the instruments of the present day belonging to that category. Made in this manner the sound issuing from them would be clear and shrill, and in the clear air of that eastern land it would be heard quite easily over the area of the encampment.

The use to which the trumpets was put was in general for the "calling of the assembly, for the journeying of the camps" (v. 2), and in order to make known to the people the purpose of God. The order and time of the marching of the tribes were made known by distinctive sounds, just as in a military camp the bugle by its varied notes makes known the orders of the commander. To gather the whole assembly together both trumpets were used (v. 3). To summon the princes but one trumpet was sounded (v. 4), and by a certain manner of blowing the tribes knew when to break up camp, and set out on the march, (vs. 5-7). This gives us a picture of perfect discipline. Every movement was under control, no part of the camp could move before the trumpet sounded, and then only in its own order. The pillar of cloud regulated all, but the trumpet made known the will of God to the people, manifest in the cloud. To the priests God gave the responsibility and privilege of blowing the trumpets, (v. 8). They were therefore the heralds of

God's will to the people, making known His purpose concerning them. It was their duty to declare His purpose, and not to express their own desires.

The blowing of trumpets was ordained to be an ordinance for ever throughout the generations of Israel, (v. 8), and the same was observed on set occasions afterwards, as in wartime, (31:6), on the removal of the ark, (I Chron. 15:24; 16:6), the anointing of Solomon, (I Kings 1:34, 39), the dedication of Solomon's temple, (2 Chron. 5:12; 7:6), the laying of the foundation of the second temple (Ezra 3:10), the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem, (Neh. 12:35, 41), and other festivities, (2 Chron. 29:27). In the future the greatest trumpet of all will sound when the Lord returns to reward His own, and to judge the wicked, (Matt. 24:31; I Cor. 15:52; I Thess. 4:16). Trumpets were used to summon into God's presence, to give the signal for the march, to arouse to danger, and to announce festivals. They therefore sounded the notes of command, direction, warning, comfort, and joy.

The spiritual significance of the trumpets is manifest in the fact that they were used by the priests to declare the will of God to the people. In discussing the use of tongues, Paul says, "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (I Cor. 14:8), emphasizing the necessity for a clear testimony to Jesus Christ on the part of His servants, and thereby in illustration linking the testimony of the Christian with the blowing of the trumpets. To His priests God has entrusted both duties. We have noted in former lessons the fact that children of God compose a New Testament priesthood, (I Pet. 2:9). The privilege and responsibility of being entrusted with the declaration of God's will may here be explained, also the necessity for making that declaration so clear that others will not misunderstand it. Let not the herald make an uncertain sound with the trumpet. The word of God, which may be taken as symbolized by the trumpet is all right in itself, and infallible in its nature, but there is the possibility of not sounding it properly. Some do not know how to bring music out of it, they do not have the musical ear, they are interlopers in the priesthood. They blame the instrument for the bad music, and sometimes tinker with it, in an attempt to improve it, as in the case of the Modernists, when, if they but knew it, it is the would-be musicians who are deficient and not the instrument. There is a great need of faithfulness in proclaiming the truth of God in pulpits, on platforms, in classrooms, and in private conversations.

There may be helpful thought in the material of which the trumpets were made. Silver directs our attention to the atonement money of Israel, (Ex. 30:11-16), and atonement connected with the work of our Lord on Calvary. We see therefore in a picture the chief message of God to His people, and to the world, to be related to Christ. The message of the Bible relates to the redemptive work of Christ. In the Old Testament it is predicted in type and statement, in the gospels it is carried out, in the Acts and epistles it is preached and taught, and in the Revelation it is consummated in reference to man. Christ is found throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. He is the purpose of the

writing, and the explanation of the teaching. Note our Lord's reference to the Old Testament scriptures in this respect, (John 5:39; Luke 24:27) also the preaching of Peter, (Acts 2:25-36), and Philip, (Acts 8:35). Point to Christ and explain His plan of salvation.

II. THE JOURNEY OF ISRAEL,
(vs. 11-36).

"And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony and the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran" (vs. 11, 12). The Israelites entered the wilderness of Sinai on the third month after their going forth from Egypt, (Ex. 19:1), so the time of their sojourn there was about one year. Much had taken place during that time, they had been instructed in the laws of God, and were prepared and organized nationally to live a separate life in their own land. The laws given to them have not been surpassed to this day, and while some, due to their nature, have ceased to be operative, the whole code could very profitably be studied by modern statesmen. Basic principles are manifest in these laws that require to be recognized, such as the ownership by God of land and people, and the necessity for justice between man and man. It is true that the laws of civilized lands are related to the Mosaic code, but they do not follow the principles as closely as they ought. Note the fact that God was the Author of the laws.

At the conclusion of their preparatory period the Israelites received the command to resume their march toward the promised land, and they went forward on the first stage of the same, a three days' journey, (vs. 13, 33). On the march perfect discipline was observed, the people moved at the command of God, and each tribe was in its place with its captain in command. The tribe of Judah led the way, (v. 14), Issachar followed, then Zebulun, (vs. 15, 16). After these came the tabernacle, (v. 17), although the ark went before on this journey to search out a resting place for the people, (v. 33). Reuben followed, (v. 18), then Simeon and Gad, (vs. 19, 20). Next in order came the Kohathites bearing the most holy furniture, (v. 21). Sufficient was the plan of the march that before the arrival of the Kohathites at the new camping-ground, the tabernacle was erected and ready to receive the sacred articles which they bore, (v. 21). The other tribes in their order brought up the rear, (vs. 22-28). Before leaving Sinai Moses gave an invitation to his brother-in-law to accompany the nation on the march. His invitation was of an earnest nature, "Come then with us and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel", (v. 29). He desired Hobab to share in the national blessing. It is the privilege of the Christian to invite others to go with him to the promised land, and he can assure them that the Lord will do them good. Explain some of the blessings here and hereafter of travelling in the way of God. Note also the refusal of Hobab, (v. 30), the insistence of Moses, (v. 31, 32), the presence of the cloud, (v. 34), and the prayer of Moses, (vs. 35, 36).

Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

Vol. 7

No. 2

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

Lesson 21

May 22nd, 1932

SECOND QUARTER

THE FLESH POTS OF EGYPT.

Lesson Text: Numbers, chapter 11.

Golden Text: "I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone." Numbers 11:17.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—Ex. 16:1-15.

Tuesday—Ex. 16:16-36.

Wednesday—Is. 50:1-11.

Thursday—Mark 9:38-50.

Friday—Matt. 6:19-34.

Saturday—Col. 3:1-11.

I. THE FIRE OF THE LORD, (vs. 1-3).

The wilderness journey was not without its trials for the Israelites. They were undergoing experiences never before encountered; the new life was strange to them, and complaints were frequently on their lips. By some, such circumstances might be urged in extenuation of their attitude, yet it must be remembered that God kept in very close touch with them. He gave them His commands through one of their own number, divinely chosen, and manifested His abiding presence with them in the pillar of cloud. He provided for all their needs, gave them victory over their enemies, and guided them on their journey, therefore they had no reason to doubt Him, or to complain of His attitude toward them. We do not wonder then that their complaint is said to have been "evil in the ears of the Lord" (v. 1). It must be confessed that we also pour out our complaints just as needlessly, and we fear they are just as evil in the ears of the Lord. We sometimes blame others for these outbreaks, or assign the nerves as the cause, but we shall have to bear the responsibility for them. Explain the blessedness of complete trust in God, and the necessity for guarding against a fault-finding spirit, (Rom. 8:28; I Tim. 6:6). God chastised His people in this case, and consumed with fire those who were in the uttermost parts of the camp. This punishment caused the people to cry unto Moses, who prayed to God for them, and the fire was quenched, (vs. 2, 3). Sin brings punishment in its train, and the way to escape evil consequences is by obedience unto God. Emphasize the spiritual blessedness here and hereafter arising from obedience.

II. THE LUSTING OF THE MIXED MULTITUDE, (vs. 4-9).

When the Israelites came up from Egypt there came with them a mixed multitude, (Ex. 12:38), who were not members of their race. These were possibly Egyptians, and while dwelling with the people of God they were not of them. They were of a different stock, having a

different history, different ideals, purposes, expectation, and parentage, and worshipping in reality a different God. They were with the Israelites for some reason other than the fact that they were of them. They remind us of some in our churches who are not true spiritual Israelites. They are in the church but not of it in the highest sense. They are the unregenerate, the mixed multitude. They enter the church under various circumstances, and for diverse reasons; sometimes in childhood, not understanding the nature of the step they are taking, sometimes in maturity without a real change of heart. Some become members for business reasons, others from a sense of respectability, while still others are deceived concerning their spiritual condition, mistaking a mere profession of salvation for real possession. Explain the nature of and necessity for assurance of salvation.

The mixed multitude fell a lusting for Egypt's food, and the children of Israel were affected by their example, and complained of the manna, desiring the fish, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlick of Egypt, (v. 5). The adoption of such an attitude meant backsliding and definite rejection of the provision of God. He had graciously sent the manna unto them, in appearance as a coriander seed, "and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium", (v. 7). The people gathered it, and ground it in mills, after it had fallen upon the dew in the night, or they beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans and made cakes of it, "and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil", (vs. 8, 9). Of this angel's food, (Ps. 78:23-25) the Israelites said, "Our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes", (v. 6). The people of God had been led astray by the specious arguments of the mixed multitude and desired the introduction of the food of their days of bondage into the diet of their new and liberated life. Spiritually it symbolizes the introduction of the world into the spiritual realm.

Unregenerate church members have no taste for the heavenly manna; they desire the things of the world. Instead of being satisfied with prayer, Bible study, and spiritual work, they argue that in these days it is necessary to introduce other methods into church work in order to retain the interest of the people, and sometimes they lead the children of God astray with their arguments. They suggest dramatic clubs, sports clubs, card parties, concerts, dances, and support their proposals with the argument that spiritual fare is insufficient for these days, and that one must use these worldly methods in order to stimulate a desire for spiritual food. But such is not the result of trying these worldly schemes. Feeding on Egypt's food never aids the appetite for the heavenly manna. Worldliness and prayerful Bible study do not go together. It must be either the one or the other. To the child of God living in touch with his Lord, the heavenly manna is satisfying. He feeds on Christ with contentment, and makes spiritual progress, (John 6:48-51). He lives the new life, (2 Cor. 5:17), seeks to win others for his Saviour, (John 1:35-51), and follows His Lord in self denial and cross-bearing, (Matt. 16:24). Note the real satisfaction of living whole-heartedly for Christ,

and the fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation without the aid of worldly methods, (Rom. 1:16). Give an explanation of feeding on Christ through the word of God.

III. THE COMPLAINT OF MOSES, (vs. 10-15).

The complaint of the people manifesting lack of confidence in God, and rebellion against His commands, displeased Moses, and angered the Lord greatly, (v. 10). It also discouraged Moses in his work of leadership. From the natural standpoint we do not wonder at such an effect on him. He loved his people, he had done his best to guide them in God's way, and their divine Master and Lord had manifested His love for them, and exercised His great power on their behalf, yet in spite of all this they had shown such ingratitude. They were a difficult people to deal with, so easily stirred, and so unreasonable in their demands, and Moses felt the burden of leadership, and prayed for deliverance therefrom.

Leaders of the present day who do not have such great responsibility as this ancient servant of God, can sympathize with him, although not justifying him in his complaint. Human nature is disappointing, and brings many a sorrow to the heart of the true leader, and if so to him, how must the heart of God be affected? It is blessed to know that He considers our frailty and forgives our transgressions when we repent of them, (I John 1:9). Note the necessity for obedience to the divine commands, and the blessed effects of the same, in the avoidance of trouble, the satisfaction of doing one's duty, the blessing received by others through us, and the glory given to God.

IV. THE DIVINE PLAN, (vs. 16-35).

God places no burden upon us heavier than we are able to bear, and recognizing the heaviness of the burden borne by His servant, Moses, the Lord proposed a plan for his relief. He gave instructions to gather seventy elders of Israel unto the tabernacle of the congregation that he might put upon them the spirit which was upon Moses, that they might share with Moses the burden of the people, (vs. 16, 17). This was done, and God placed upon them His spirit, and "they prophesied and did not cease", (vs. 24, 25). Two of the men for some reason did not gather with the others, but they also prophesied, leading Joshua to protest to Moses, who gave a most gracious reply, (vs. 26-30), reminding us of our Lord's reply under somewhat similar circumstances, (Mark 9:38-40). The promise of flesh is given, (vs. 18-23). Note particularly the encouraging nature of verse 23. The fulfilment of the promise is recorded, (vs. 31, 32), and the punishment stated, (vs. 33-35). Emphasize the power of God, and the fact that sin always brings evil consequences.