

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES AND THE SEED OF ABRAHAM

(Discourse by A. I. Ritchie, 1911 Convention Report starting page 117.)

We often hear people say they do not believe the church should have any interest in the Old Testament prophecies. They say those were intended for the Jews; they are all fulfilled and have passed away; that we have our interest in the New Testament. A great many of us followed that idea for some time until we got hold of present truth. As a matter of fact, the Old Testament Scriptures were the ones that the Lord and the apostles referred to; they were their complete authority at all times; they always refer to them and said, "Thus it is written." The Lord based all his teachings upon the Old Testament Scriptures. When Satan assailed him, he referred to the Old Testament Scriptures. He did not give his opinion, or reply to statements from his own mind or thoughts; he referred to the Scriptures—it is written so and so. When the apostles went forth to show that Jesus was the Christ, they always referred to the Scriptures. The Old Testament Scriptures were the only Scriptures in existence at that time. And the apostle writing to Timothy advised him to learn how to rightly divide the word of truth. And he said it was a good thing for him that he was versed in the Scriptures from his youth up. And the Lord authorized the Old Testament Scriptures just as St. Paul in Romans said that the things written aforetime were written for our learning, that we might have confidence, and might have hope, and might be steadfast through knowing the things that were written, knowing what things to expect, and knowing when they should be fulfilled, and thus we might know where we are living and might not stumble or fall when these things should come to pass.

The Bible is different from any other book in the world; there is not another book at all like it. Take all the holy books of all the other religions and they are child's play as compared to the Bible. They are productions of men, and they are as far below the Bible as the production of a child would be below the production of a man. There is nothing of any consequence in them at all. They nearly all pretend to give a short cut along the line of having character; they seem to give the idea that if you have character you do not need to die at all, promising a short cut to life. But the Bible is the only book that really recognized the source of death. It is the only book that recognizes death to be a fact, how death shall be overcome, and how sin shall be taken out of the world, and how the world will be filled eventually with those who love righteousness, those who will be in harmony with the eternal principles of righteousness and with God.

The Lord gave his revelations from time to time in a peculiar way—in a way that is peculiar to himself. No other person or being could give revelations of the same kind at all. In all the heathen religions they have what they pretend to be revelations, and those are just merely catch phrases that might be understood in any one of three or four different ways, and if one way does not fit then you can have another way. It reminds

one of the way the prophet Mohamet was going to prove himself a prophet. You have heard how he was going to have a mountain moved to him. On a certain day he ordered the mountain to come to him several times, and, of course, the mountain did not come to Mohamet. And Mohamed said, "The mountain will not come to Mohamed, so Mohamed will go to the mountain, and we will be together anyway." So that is on a parity with all other religious teachings aside from the Bible. The Bible is the only thing we have with us that is righteous and miraculous at the same time.

In the beginning when man sinned, and when the penalty of death was passed upon him, and he fell from his plane of righteousness and could find no way back again, the Lord gave the promise then and there that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Of course, Adam and Eve did not understand what that meant. But Eve seemed to have the hope that of their descendants one would arise who would undo what had been done that day. So in the course of time when Cain was born. She called his name Cain, and said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." She thought Cain was the seed. But Cain was not the seed, and Abel was not the seed, and none of their immediate children were the seed, and about 2040 years passed by before God said any more about that seed that was to bruise the serpent's head, that was to undo the result of sin that was introduced in the Garden of Eden by man. But God had not forgotten about that seed; he had not forgotten his promise, and he had not hastily made a promise that he was not able to fulfill, because the apostle Paul told us this plan was made before the foundation of the world, and the one who was to be that seed was foreknown before the foundation of the world. So God had not made a promise that he would have any difficulty in fulfilling. But the Lord made the promise in a very vague way, and he had a particular reason for doing so. The Lord gave these promises one after another in a kind of sequence, one growing out of the other, and each one being a little more explicit than the one preceding it. And he gave these promises not that he might mark out a line for himself to follow, for fear he might get lost and stray from that promise, but he marked out this line with a line of prophecies, so that his children, those who would obtain the reward of faith, and those who would obtain the reward of being in harmony with God, might be those who would walk by faith only, and he has made faith the test for these six thousand years now. Those who were tested by their faith before Christ, those who obtained a good report with God, obtained it by their faith. The ancient worthies spoken of in the 11th chapter of Hebrews received a good report because of their faith, and their works attested their faith; but their works were insufficient without faith. But their works proved their faith, and showed they had that faith in the promises God had given to them; and so these promises grew out of one another, and whoever would know how God was going to carry out this plan of blessing mankind would have to go back and find this list of promises one after another. They are all God had given. He did not tell anybody anything different at all. None knew anything different from what was written, and it was the things that were written that were to guide the Lord's people, so they might serve him in a pleasing and acceptable way.

After 2045 years the Lord spoke to Abraham words which are familiar to us, but he gave it to them in a way that requires faith. He said to Abraham, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto a land I will show thee." He did not even tell him where he was to go, but he said, "You start out and travel, and when you are traveling I will indicate to you where you are to go. I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." There was the promise that God was going to bless all the families of the earth; and so in the same way he was going to bring that blessing through Abraham. Now a little further on, in the 22nd chapter, the Lord elaborated a little on that promise. "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." Notice the Lord used the expression here that the seed shall be as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the seashore. You remember Abraham expected the blessings would come through Isaac, but the blessings did not come through Isaac. Isaac grew up to be a man but finally died. When he was a young man the Lord required Abraham to offer him as a sacrifice on the altar. Of course Abraham could not understand what that meant, and as a usual thing, the Lord's people are required to do a great many things they do not understand at the time. For instance, when the Lord Jesus was washing the disciples' feet, Peter says, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." And he went on to explain, "What I do now you cannot understand, but you will understand later. There were a great many things the Lord introduced into the lives of his people which requires them at the time to walk completely by faith; and if there is any one who cannot step out and walk by faith he will not be of that faith class."

Some time ago I was talking to a young man who had recently been ordained in a college to preach in the Methodist church. I was stating to him that the only hope we had for life after this life was by a resurrection from the dead. He had thought as a good many of us have thought, that we did not die at all; that if a man did really die once he would not live again—nobody could make him live again. When I told him the only hope we had of life after this life was a resurrection from the dead, he said, "To a thinking man, to a man who understands and thinks a good deal, the idea of a resurrection from the dead is an impossible thing." I did not suppose it was so difficult to believe the Word of God before that, but here was a young man ordained to preach the Word of God, who said it was impossible for him to believe that God could raise the dead. That is very much the same way the apostle Paul spoke to the people on Mars Hill. Why should we consider it an impossible thing that God should raise the dead? God is going to raise the dead. I have thought perhaps there are a great many people who cannot exercise faith at all; and if that

be true, then they cannot overcome the world by their faith; they cannot be of those who will obtain a good report from God by the exercise of faith. And if we have the faculty of exercising faith in God's Word, then we are to rejoice very much. We have to make all the use we possibly can of that faculty we have and build it up, and pray to the Lord as the apostles did, "Lord, increase our faith," and lay hold on his promises, and know what those promises are, and find out there are certain promises given way back in the past that have come to pass exactly as they were given, although no one could see how they would be fulfilled.

It seems to me all these promises given way back from Genesis right down through the Bible, one after another, and seemingly very peculiar promises, seemingly very conflicting, and a great many which have already been fulfilled, and a great many of which are to be fulfilled in the future, were given, so that those who are of the faith class might have something to lay hold on; that they might have something to build up a faith structure on. We would have no faith if we had nothing to believe. We cannot have a faith by believing, as some people believe, that all things turn out all right in the end, and there will be a golden age of which the poet sang, and so on; that is not faith at all; that is merely a kind of a good hope without any basis. The apostle Paul tells us what faith is. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. So, then, faith is believing what God has promised in his Word; what God has promised he will do. If we believe these things God has promised, then we are exercising faith. If we believe any other kind of things, no matter what they are, or how reasonable they might seem to us, we are not exercising the faith pleasing and acceptable to God. The faith that is pleasing to God is that faith which lays hold on his promises, and believes he is able to guide us and direct us toward a certain given point.

You remember it is faith in God's promises Moses knew about, and that enabled him to turn aside and not accept the throne of Egypt. He chose to be associated with the people who were slaves at that time, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of the court for a time, and although he might possibly have been king of Egypt. You see there was an exercise of faith. If Moses had not known about the Abrahamic promises and the future coming to the very people who were in slavery at that time, he could not have exercised faith; he could not have turned aside from the things that appeared to be the best things the world had to give to associate himself with people who were slaves and ground down to the very bottom.

So, when the Lord called Abraham to offer his son on the altar, Abraham remembered the promise, as the apostle Paul tells us, God said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," and he had faith enough in God that if he had allowed him to put Isaac to death he would give him back again from the dead, and he laid him on the altar, ready to carry out what God requested of him; and in doing so he received him back in a figure, from the dead. He exercised faith in a remarkable degree. He was said to be the father of those who would

be justified by faith, or the father of the faithful, indicating the great measure of faith in God that he had. Now, when we look at the faith exercised by some of those old prophets, and the fathers in ancient times, it should bring to us a measure of shame, I think sometimes—the faith that Abraham illustrated when he left his home and went right out into the wilderness; the faith that Jacob illustrated when he left home that he might inherit the promises; and the faith Abraham exercised when he laid Isaac on the altar, and the faith Moses showed when he turned aside from the court and went out into the wilderness that he might be used of God to preserve his people; and the faith of the different ones in olden times like the prophets. They exercised the same kind of faith we have to exercise now, and they did not have nearly as many fulfilled promises to help them build their faith on as we have now. We have, we might say, hundreds of promises that have already been fulfilled—hundreds of types of promises together that have been fulfilled—and if we wish to, we can gather them together and get them in tabulated form before us, and have great foundation for our faith. It is a remarkable thing just now, when we are able to look back by the aid of history, and with the aid of our Bibles, and with the aid of present truth, and see how the Lord has guided and taught his people, that there are so many people who cannot exercise faith. And there seem to be many people now who did have a measure of faith who are losing it.

It is interesting to watch how the Lord developed that promise and how he enlarged it. At the first, the promise was just a very small thing—“The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” That promise was as wide as the whole human race. There had not been a single person born yet, so that seed might include any one of the human race at all; it did not specify. Take the word “house” and it is wide enough to include every kind of a house in the world; so, the term “seed” is wide enough to include any person that might be born—Cain or anyone after him. And the different qualifiers, which would be the different prophecies and types with more particularity, would be the adjectives which would limit the application of that term “seed.” The same as if we would say a “brick” house: that would exclude all the other kinds of houses in the world—all the stone, cement, and frame houses, etc. It would exclude all other kinds of houses except a brick house. And so the time came when the Lord gave Abraham a promise that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed; that was one great qualifier, one great adjective, as it were, that narrowed down the application of the term “seed” very largely. Possibly a hundred thousand people lived on the earth at the time of Abraham, but the Lord said, “In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

That narrowed the application of the term “seed” very much. The same as if we say “brick house” it excludes all other kinds of houses, but there are a great many kinds of brick houses. So Abraham had seven sons, but, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called.” And so Isaac was not the seed, and Jacob was not the seed either; and others following after him were not the seed. But they were in the line of the seed. And then there were promises to indicate more particularly who the seed should be. So add the qualifiers to

the term “house” and say “a two-story brick house with three chimneys and so many windows”—use the different qualifiers to describe that house, and finally get the street number, city and state, and so on, and we could limit the application of the term “house” right down to the particular house we had in mind, so it would not have reference to any other house at all. And that is just what the Lord did in regard to his prophecies concerning the Messiah. He gave type after type, prophecy after prophecy, who that seed should be, until finally when that seed did come, the Scriptures described him so completely that it could not be anybody else at all, for perhaps thirty or forty different reasons. So there is no question about who the Messiah was, no question about who the seed was. For instance, there were a great many descendants of Adam—all descendants from him, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and so on; and there were a good many who were born in Bethlehem; and there were a good many who went, perhaps, from Bethlehem down to Egypt, but there was only one person who fulfilled all these conditions; and when the Lord came it was his desire that he might fulfill all the Scriptures concerning himself. Others came before him who claimed to be Messiahs, and who claimed to fulfill some Scriptures, and tried to do some things told about the Messiah; but when the Lord Jesus came he fulfilled all the prophecies, one after another, that spoke of the Lord Jesus Christ, and narrowed down the application of the term “seed” to himself alone, and it could not apply to anybody else at all. So then, we can see how the term “seed” began as wide as the whole human race and narrowed down, prophecy by prophecy, type by type, until it rested on the Lord Jesus Christ alone—like an inverted pyramid, if you like; it narrowed down to the Lord Jesus Christ, and pointed him out as that seed; it could not be anybody else at all. The apostle Paul tells us that the law covenant was given to bring the children of Israel to Christ.

In the first place, the law covenant with all its parts and with the pictures given in it, was given with the stipulation that the one who would be the Messiah would keep the law completely, and would enter into life as promised to those who would keep and do all the things contained in that law. And then the prophecies of John again pointed out who would be the Messiah, and the law covenant pointed out there was no one could keep the law at all. The Jews could make a better attempt to keep the law than any Gentiles could, because they were educated and taught by the Lord’s dealings with them. The Gentiles were not only without God, but without hope at all. The Jews did seem to have a kind of a hope, but the hope they had turned out to be a false one, because they were not able to meet the requirements of that hope. So all the law covenant could do with the Jews was to educate them to a certain extent, then show them their sin and separation from God, and point them to Christ—point them to the Messiah which was to come, and the one in whom all their hope lay.

Now when the Lord came he fulfilled all of those prophecies one after another. For instance, he was born of a virgin, fulfilling one prophecy; he was born in Bethlehem, fulfilling another prophecy; after he was born the children in that vicinity were killed,

fulfilling another prophecy; he was taken down to Egypt, fulfilling another prophecy; and in time he was brought back from Egypt, and taken to the land of Nazareth, and that fulfilled another prophecy. And then when he began his ministry he was preceded by John the Baptist, who quoted the very prophecies referred to, saying he was sent to make straight paths, etc. So prophecy after prophecy was quoted and fulfilled right there before their eyes. Then when he began his ministry he fulfilled a prophecy again, because he came right at the very time that the true Messiah should come—at the end of the sixty-nine weeks—and the very first sermon he preached was a sermon on time prophecy, saying, “The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” For instance, he referred to that prophecy in Daniel where it says Messiah should come at the end of the sixty-nine weeks, and there is no doubt the Lord explained that prophecy at that time and showed that it applied to himself. And if anyone had not studied the time prophecies up to that time, and did not understand how to apply them, did not understand what they meant, that was a chance then to start to study time prophecy, because their attention was drawn right to them. There was only one prophecy that would apply to him in that way, and there was no reason for any of the Lord’s people after that not understanding time prophecies. But we find three and one-half years after that they did not understand them. Then when he began his ministry he began teaching in parables and dark sayings, which fulfilled another prophecy saying that he would do those things, that he would teach them in parables and dark sayings and teach things which were kept secret from the foundation of the world. The apostles tell us that this gospel began to be preached by our Lord Jesus; he was the first one to preach it, and that fulfilled another prophecy. Then he went about doing good. He had twelve apostles, corresponding to twelve tribes of Israel. Then he spoke to them as one having authority, and he went up and down through the land of Judah, not going to the Gentiles at all, saying that he was only sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. All of these things were exactly in harmony with the prophecies. So you see he fulfilled one prophecy after another, and always confined himself to those things which were written.

Then when he came down to the end of his life, he came back to Jerusalem on the very day foretold by Zechariah at the end of three and one-half years; and it was also foretold by Daniel—just two verses beyond the verse the Lord referred to three and one-half years before. Now the Pharisees and others of the Lord’s people, had been taken by surprise. And the Lord preached a sermon on time prophecies at the beginning of his ministry, and there was no reason why they should be taken by surprise three and one-half years afterwards when he referred to a verse just two verses further on in the same prophecy. He came into Jerusalem on the very day foretold by Daniel and Zechariah, in the midst of the week in the Spring, the only time he could come—it could not be any other time. If they had known the Scriptures and been prepared for the fulfilling of those things that the Lord had spoken by his holy prophets, and which things had to be fulfilled—as the Lord said not one jot or tittle should pass away until all be fulfilled—they would not have been taken by surprise, they would not have objected to the king when he came, after they had

been waiting five hundred years for him. But they paid more attention to the traditions of the elders, and this, that and the other thing, about their standing with the Roman nation, and the Pharisees especially paid more attention to what the people thought of them, than what the Lord thought of them. They did not know the prophecies, and the Lord said the reason they were cast out and their house was left unto them desolate, was, that they did not know the day of their visitation. That is the reason he gave for it. And if they had had their attention drawn to that prophecy three and one-half years before that, and had three and one-half years to find out that day, and did not do it, it would be quite proper that they should be cut off at that time; and so they were. You remember he went to the temple that day and fulfilled a prophecy right there, when the children cried to him in the temple and the crowd shouted "Hosanna to the son of David!" They called out seven different calls, and each of those seven calls are recorded in the Old Testament prophecies. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna to the son of David!" These were prophetic cries, words that were put right into the Bible for the Lord's people to know and to use.

Then again you remember he was fulfilling a prophecy when he was crucified; when he was betrayed, prophecy was fulfilled; when his garments were parted on the cross, prophecies were fulfilled, and when he was raised, another prophecy was fulfilled. The types were being fulfilled right along. And those who were the Lord's people had a chance to know those prophecies and their remarkable fulfillment. If they had been men such as Nathaniel, who was trying to serve God, they would have fed on those prophecies, and understood them, and would have been able to know them when they were quoted to them, and know when they were fulfilled.

When the Lord Jesus was a boy he learned these prophecies, and when he began his ministry at the age of thirty years he knew them, and, with the Father's help, fulfilled them the best he could. We know this is true because in the Garden of Gethsemane he said that he could have had twelve legions of angels to protect him, but he said, "How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled?" He recognized that was the very thing he had to do, go over into the hands of the world; and if he should call on the heavenly Father for protection at that time it would prevent the fulfilling of the Scriptures, and he would not fail in the fulfilling of those types. We do not know how those things would have gone wrong, but he did not intend to let them go wrong. He knew these Scriptures and fulfilled them himself. And the Lord's people should know the Scriptures and try to act in harmony with them, and they will receive the Lord's blessing for so doing. So when he fulfilled all of these things he earned the life which was promised to the one who would keep the law covenant. He proved that he was the seed that came from Abraham. He also proved that he was the seed promised in the Garden of Eden, and so the prophecies and everything else struck down upon him, and the seed did come at last. As soon as the seed was developed, the Lord began to show that there was more than one man in the seed. For instance, he said, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny

himself and take up his cross and follow me.” “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

He said to the apostles, “Ye who have forsaken all and followed me, in the regeneration shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Now because he was the seed which was to come, because he had fulfilled the prophecies and lived in harmony with the Father’s will, and had proved himself to be in harmony with the principles of righteousness, he was that seed which was to bless all the families of the earth. And now he says, “I am going to have a crown, and I am going to have others also, and when I am sitting on the throne blessing all the families of the earth, and judging them, you twelve disciples will be sitting on the throne with me, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;” also indicating that the promise which came down to him was in a measure to be shared by others—those twelve apostles.

Again, the foundation of the spiritual temple had twelve foundations, which are the twelve apostles of the lamb, so that they are associated with the Lord Jesus. In the twelfth chapter of John he seems to refer to the same thing again, indicating that although he had gone by himself in fulfilling these prophecies, and had proved himself to be the seed, and had earned the distinction, the prize, and the promise offered, yet it was to be divided up; he was to share honors with others. In the twelfth chapter of John, beginning with the 24th verse, he says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” That refers to himself. And he says, “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” Now, did he refer to himself alone or to others, possibly? The next verse shows: “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: If any man serve me, him will my Father honor.” Now he indicated that the privilege of service he had was to be shared by others, and these things were understood at that time, for John says that afterwards when they received the Spirit they understood these things; and the apostle Paul explained a great many of those things in his epistles, so we can understand them now, indicating that when the Lord was on the earth he knew he was going to share his blessings with others. For instance, in the seventeenth chapter of John we have another suggestion that shows the same thing. In his prayer he says, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as, thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” Now, who was that one to be, that one that was to be the seed, making of the twain one new man? “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.” The glory which the Father promised to the Lord Jesus, he was willing and glad to share with those who would be his followers, and who would believe on him through the Word he gave to the apostles.

A little later on the apostle Paul explained a good deal about this very matter. In the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians he says, "But now are they many members, yet but one body." "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

You remember, when the apostles went out, as described in the Acts of the Apostles, this was the burden of their message: "That this Jesus whom ye crucified, God hath made both Lord and Christ. This is the Son of David, which was to come; he is the seed of Abraham that was promised, and God hath made him Lord, and they crucified him. You did not know you were doing it, but you were helping develop that very seed that was to be developed, helping to fulfill the prophecies which said he would be despised, his life taken, and he would be cut off, not for himself, but for others." So the apostle says here that this Christ is not one person, but a number of persons, and the Lord indicates that it was not only himself that was the seed that was to come, but he included the apostles in that. Now, the apostle Paul seems to show that the whole church are members of the body of Christ, in the third chapter of Galatians. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith, not 'And to seeds,' as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." "And, if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." So this seed is not only Jesus; we have it narrowed down not only to Jesus, but we have it enlarged until it included the apostles, and then the apostles, when they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, were permitted to show it not only included the apostles, but also those who believed into Christ through their word; and those who would be immersed into Christ, those who would have the mind of Christ, those who would have the same attitude and same relationship toward God's will that Jesus had, would be all one in Christ, have the same thought, and in that sense of the word, Christ began about 1900 years ago, and he has been in the world ever since in the members of his followers. The Lord indicated that also to Paul on the way to Damascus. He said "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Jesus had been crucified when he said that, but he indicated that when Saul was persecuting the early members of the church who believed into Christ, and who had committed their whole lives to his service, he was persecuting him. This seems to agree with the thought given in Isaiah, where it says, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." That is, those who were nominally the Lord's people, and who said they delighted to do the Lord's will, were the Pharisees, or holiness men. The nation that were God's people, instead of desiring to do God's will, and rejoicing to do his will, and rejoicing to see his will exemplified, when Jesus came doing God's will, and doing the very things God would have done had he been in the flesh, resented everything he did. They reproached and abused him, and instead of reproaching God, whom they did not know, and could not see, and could not get at, they reproached the one who was his representative. The reproaches they would liked to have heaped on God, had they known how to do so, fell on the one who was his representative. Then the reproaches that would have fallen on Jesus, fell on his followers, the members of his body, and the reproaches of those who would like to reproach God are still falling on certain people in the world now, and will continue to do

so as long as that class is being developed. The reason the Lord permits this is so a certain class can be taken out who will seek and love righteousness in spite of all the opposition of the world, and so prove by their faith that they are able to overcome the world and all its allurements, and the opposition of the world.

So this class extended out and became wider and wider, and the question was, how many would be in it. It kept on developing, and has been developing a certain class for now over 1800 years, and that includes all those who are immersed into the Body of Christ, all who are participators in his sufferings, and all who are made conformable unto his death, those who are filling up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ. And all of the texts which indicate our association with Jesus in his sufferings, associate us with him in the begetting of the Holy Spirit. And in Revelation we read there are to be 144,000 of these besides the Head. This class will be taken out and finished at the end of the gospel age, very soon now we understand, and then the seed class will be complete at any rate. So you see the seed began way at the beginning, and certain ones were drawn off, and others were drawn off, and still others were drawn off, and it was narrowed down, and narrowed down, and none of the prophets were Messiah, none was the Messiah except Jesus Christ. And when it narrowed down and focused on the one person, then it was shown that these same prophecies could be interpreted in another way to include all of those who would have the Christ spirit—the same kind he had. “Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ.” And if you have the same mind in you as was in Christ, then you will be made a partaker in his sufferings and in his death, and all who will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution as he did. Ye are not of the world, even as he was not of the world; we are taken out of the world; as he was separate from the world, so we are not of that class to be judged along with the world, but are to be judged along with the seed class, and developed as the seed class. So that the seed class begins to widen out, and includes more and more until at the end of the Gospel age it is completed.

Now, a great many of the Lord’s people have the thought that the Lord’s plan ends there. It is a peculiar thing that the Jews thought that also about 1900 years ago. They were encompassing land and sea to make proselytes, and trying to get everybody to be Jews, and the Lord says they better have left these people alone. When you have a proselyte he is two-fold more a child of hell than he was before. And he says they were even worse off than Sodom and Gomorrah, which, if they had been left until now, would repent of the things they did. These people were really worse off when converted from heathenism to Judaism than if they had been left alone. So during the Gospel age nominal Christians think, “When we get the world converted, God will burn the earth up.” So at the present time they have begun to despair of converting the whole world, and they say when the Lord has got all the church out, he is going to burn up the earth, and all of those who will not join the church. That is not the plan of the Lord at all. Just as soon as the seed is taken out, and it includes not only the little flock, but also the great company, who are

associated with the little flock, God will be just ready to fulfill the promise made to Abraham, “In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

Now the question comes, where are we in this plan? Are we right down near the time Satan is to be bruised, and when the families of the earth are to receive their promised blessing? Have we any indications to show us where we are now, that we may know how the Lord expects us to live and act? I call your attention to two or three prophecies. There are probably two or three hundred prophecies which are being fulfilled right in our midst now. We see the fulfillment on all sides of us. Of course, if we did not know these prophecies we would not know they were being fulfilled. If we recognize God is the one who has given these prophecies, and the one who is carrying out their fulfillment, then we have every reason to have faith and trust and rest in him.

Some of the indications of the time in which we are living, are, the great increase of knowledge, much running to and fro, and the rolling together of the heaven like a scroll—this rolling together of the great church systems, or nominal Christianity. Another one is the gathering together of the nations into treaties. It is not so very long ago that nations began making treaties, one with another, and I might draw your attention to the fact that Great Britain kept out of treaties for a great many years; they were the nation that kept alone, and they seemed to profit by that experience; but now Great Britain has several treaties and alliances, and all nations of the earth are bound together, not only by treaties, but commercial interests, and the world has gathered to such a place where [it is](#) easy for the Lord to do what he says he is going to do—pour out on them his anger. Another prophecy is, that there would be a great many wealthy men at that time. The wages of the working men are kept back by fraud. That would seem to indicate the condition of things where this would be possible.

Another thing foretold was, that at that time the Lord’s people presumably would not give heed to sound doctrine, but would be turned aside to fables. And I do not know anything more fabulous than the doctrine of evolution, which is, I think, but little more reasonable than Aesop’s Fables, and yet educated men say they believe it.

Then again, another prophecy was, that blindness in part would happen to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. If we have indications that the Lord is returning his favor to Israel, that would be a very strong proof that we are living near the end of the time that the seed is to be taken out, or near the time when the seed is about to be completed. We have a good many illustrations of this. About thirty years ago there were only a few thousand Jews in Palestine, and now, I believe there are about 7,500 in Jerusalem alone; and it was not many years ago that the early and latter rains were not falling in Palestine; they have been falling now for about twenty years. Another indication of the turning of God’s favor to the Jews is the growth of Zionism. Another indication is, that last Fall a meeting of the Jews asked a Christian minister to speak to

them on their own prophecies; and in a great many places the Jews are anxious to know what their prophecies are.

And then again, in the city of Toronto last year there were over 500 Bibles with New Testaments in them sold to Jews alone; and you could not sell them if they did not want them. In New York last year there were more than five times as many Bibles sold to Jews than there had been the year previous. Last Fall a sister was out giving literature regarding one of our meetings, and she gave a tract to a Jewess. She says, "Where are you Christians going to stop? You take from us everything that is the best we have." The sister says, "What do you mean?" "Because you took Jesus away from us, and he is the best man our nation ever brought up." I have spoken to a number of Jews who believe that Jesus was a great man. It was not a hundred years ago when it was customary among Jews to spit on the ground as soon as the name of Jesus was mentioned, they hated the name so much. Now they are ready to listen to the name of Jesus, and discuss whether or not they were guilty of his death. A great many of them say now that it was not us who killed Jesus; it was the Roman government. All of these things are little straws indicating that we are living in a peculiar period of the world's history, and the blindness is being taken away from Israel.

Then the little flock is almost completed; the people for his name are almost taken out. If that be true, then there is not very much longer for you and me to stand the rest of our tests regarding our faith, to see whether we are of the faith class, or of the class to be judged of the Lord. The faith class are those who seek after the Lord, seek after his will, and are glad to do his will, and do it where it costs something. The other class are those who love the things of the earth so much the Lord will have to put a bit in their mouth and drive them as we drive dumb animals. The faith class are typified by the sheep. For instance in Psalm 23 the Lord is like a shepherd, and if you have noticed, when you call a sheep if it is going to come to you at all it will run. And if you go to drive a sheep it is almost as hard to drive sometimes as a hog is. But in the East the shepherd goes ahead of the sheep and the sheep follow; and with the sheep class of the Gospel age, and the sheep class of the preceding age, the faith class always follow after the Lord, always delight to do his will, want to know his will, and choose his will in preference to their will, or anybody else's will. That is the class being taken out now. They will receive tests to see whether they are of that class or not, whether they will overcome the world by faith in his promises, whether the Lord's promises are sufficient to lead them right out from the worldly things and to follow him alone. So the only thing for us to do is to become well acquainted with the promises God has given to us. These promises are not given for the benefit of the world in the Millennial age, or for the benefit of the prophets, because they did not understand them; they were not given for the benefit of the heathen; they were not given for God's own benefit; they were given for us upon whom the ends of the ages have come. And if we do not feed on them, and do not know what they are, then we will be pretty sure to stumble when a hard test comes to us. "The Lord, your God, doth prove

you, whether ye love the Lord your God or no.” Shall we fall or stand when the test comes to us?