

Lessons on the Baha'i Revelation

As Taught by W. Hooper Harris



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**Lessons on the
Beha Revelation**

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PREFACE.

In consenting to the publication of the following Lessons in religious truth, the writer wishes it to be fully understood that they are simply his own personal, imperfect presentation of the primary principles and proofs, the spiritual and Scriptural foundations on which he believes the Revelation of Baha rests, compiled from sources which are open to every inquirer. In his opinion the Revelator, Baha, and his Commentator, Abdul Baha, can alone speak as having authority in this religion, and the standard by which the value of the efforts of individual followers of Baha in spreading the Cause of the Kingdom of God must ever be measured is the Revealed word, or Utterance of the Great Fountain Head of our Faith.

The Truth which has been revealed to us in these latter days is a many-sided Truth—a Truth which can be presented in many different ways and from many different view-points—a Truth which will expand and grow through the ages to come as, in the course of moral and spiritual evolution, mankind becomes more and more able to comprehend and assimilate it.

Nothing whatever is claimed for these Lessons. They must stand or fall on their own merits. They are simply a view of the Bahai Teachings as seen through the eyes of an American believer, presented in a form which he believes will help to open the way to a fuller and clearer comprehension of them by the Western mind. They are published on the individual responsibility of the writer and publisher in response to numerous requests for copies of them coming from our believers in different sections of the country. In the Spirit of Love they are presented to our people as a contribution to the Great Cause, with the hope that they may be found of service.

Yours in His Name,

W. HOOPER HARRIS,
CHARLES E. SPRAGUE.

LESSONS ON THE BAHAI REVELATION

AS TAUGHT BY

W. HOOPER HARRIS-

LESSON i.—The Word Made Flesh.

The Eternal Word of God, speaking through Christ, said, "**I am** Truth." God is Truth. There can be no truth outside of God, for God includes all truth. God makes Himself known to His creatures through His Word, which was with God, and which comes out from God, and which is God.

This Word of God the prophet refers to as being He whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting. (Micah, v, i-ii.)

We are living in a most wonderful Age, an Age of mighty achievements, of wonderful knowledge. The world is beginning a distinctly new era. Never was the necessity so great as now, or the time so opportune, for another "going forth" of the Eternal Word, or a more-complete revelation of spiritual truth.

In this day of "Isms," and of the multiplication of beliefs, the people of the world are ill sore need of safe and sure guidance, in order that the standard of Unity may be upraised and the bewildered children *of men gathered under its* protecting folds. This standard must be, and can only be upraised by one having authority, and through whom speaks the Eternal Word.

Some million of people on the earth to-day believe with the writer of this that the Word of God has with great power and glory manifested itself in this our day, and that a fuller revelation *for the new age or cycle* has been received from Him who alone can speak as one having authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees.

In this great message which has come to the world in these latter days, it is the Word of God which speaks. Verily, there is no God but God.

Since God has given us the lamps *of reason and of* conscience to light us to His Truth, and since faith should be founded on knowledge, people should not believe on authority, but should "prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good." Every seeker after truth has a perfect right to inquire, and to receive assurance, as to the nature of that which he is to receive

First, then, it should be known that all those who truly follow in the footsteps of the Great Master, are in peace and harmony with all men, and practice the great precept, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."* This revelation comes to fulfill—not to destroy Our God is the God of Love, and He will not take from the humblest of His creatures any true and good thing which their hearts have cherished. The truth is eternally true, and will forever stand; and only that which is untrue shall pass away.

In this age of scepticism and of doubt and denial of the Bible, this revelation can show its absolute truth, and revive and restore the faith of the discouraged and Convince the unbelieving, for it furnishes the key which unlocks its true meaning and interpretation.

We make the same declaration to-day that Paul made 1800 years ago on Mars' Hill to the Athenians: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive in all things ye are too superstitious, for as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription: 'To the Unknown God.' Whom, therefore, you ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." We most earnestly believe that we have a more complete and perfect revelation of religious truth than has ever been given to the world before, and we want to share with ail, in the spirit of brotherly love, what has been given to us without money and without price.

Since it is religious truth we are seeking, it is necessary at the very outset to have a clear conception of what religion really is.

Religion, hi the individual sense, is simply the relation of the soul to God, and the recognition of its dependence on God, through which relation and recognition it hopes to obtain complete, perfect and conscious union with its source.

Pure religion is of the heart—not of the head—for Love is its root and Knowledge only its branches. God is to be perceived by the heart, hence it is written, ⁴"Only the pure in heart shall see God." Only through the love of God dwelling in us, through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us, can we have any real comprehension of spiritual truth. Without the spiritual birth the soul is in darkness; through the spiritual birth it comes into recognition of the Christ, or Word of God, and through this recognition it enters into the Kingdom of Heaven. God's Anointed One, His Word, is the door to His Kingdom; hence it is also written that no one having the Spirit of God will call His Christ anathema, and no one can say that Christ is Lord, save by the Holy Spirit. With regard to this the testimony of Jesus Christ and his disciples was:

John iii, i-viii. "Except a man be born of the Spirit from above, he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

John i, xii. "To as many as were born of the Spirit of God, he gave power to become the children of God."*

Matt xvi, xvi. "When Peter answered and said to him, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,' Jesus answered him: 'Flesh and blood have not revealed it to you, but My Father which is in Heaven/ It was on this recognition of Himself, through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us, that Christ established His Church—upon the Spiritual Rock, and not upon the man Peter.'"

We see clearly, therefore, that in the individual sense the object of God's revelation to us is to enable us to know God through the spiritual birth, and to obtain admission to His Spiritual Kingdom.

In accordance with this understanding of religion in its relation to the individual, we will show that the power of the Holy Spirit of God has been and is being manifested on the earth through this great Truth in greater abundance and fragrance than was ever before known among men. We will show that it is a blessed privilege *to* be living on the earth in this great age, "For this is a far greater time than any preceding period in the whole history of the world, and God is now causing to descend upon those who are serving Him, the highest of his gifts and blessings." We will show that through faith, in the light of this wonderful new Revelation, the baptism of water, of the spirit and of fire can be obtained by every sincere and earnest seeker, and the perfect at-one-ment, or union of the soul with God accomplished.

In its general sense, religion is the relation of the whole human race to God, and the purpose for which it is now and has been in times past revealed to men, is for the improvement of society, the progress of the world, and the promotion of intellectual, moral and religious freedom among men. "Ye shall know the truth," said Christ, "and the truth will make you free." Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty; for God desires his creatures to come to Him and serve Him through choice and love, and not through force and fear.

"The mission of all the prophets, the relation of all the Scriptures, the diffusion of the instructions of God and the descent of His law, were all in order to establish agreement and union and to strengthen love and harmony among nations of different customs and thoughts, of diverse beliefs, doctrines, rites and habits, and various classes, creeds and races.

"That men have made of that which was intended to produce concord and agreement 'the cause and reason of hatred/ and that 'religious hatred and rancor has been a world consuming fire' was not the fault of the prophets who brought the revelations, but of their followers, who were incapable of understanding and assimilating the truth they brought. That the truth as brought by each Revelator has been corrupted, has been the inevitable result of the inability of those to whom He came and their successors to grasp the full meaning and purpose of what He taught, and to hold to it in its purity. Every revelation has had its year or cycle, and this in accordance with the spiritual law. 'The Kingdom of Heaven resembles the

year. As the year has four seasons, so also the Kingdom of God on earth has its periods or seasons; and remember, that the seasons are caused by the movement of the earth, and not by the movement of the sun.' (That is to say, by the actions of men and not by the decree of God).

"Before the coming of the spring the earth looks as if dead and lifeless, but when it appears all the earth seems to spring into life and brightness, into a new existence of beauty and joy. All nature is clad in fresh green; the grass springs up, the leaves bud, and the trees are covered with blossoms. But the spring passes, and then comes the summer, in which the promise of the spring is fulfilled; the spring blossoms ripen into fruit, the fields are covered with yellow grain, and the result of the new life of the spring is manifested in the luxuriance of the summer. Then comes the autumn, in which the life of the spring and summer begins slowly to fade. Finally, winter comes, and the life of the earth seems to be completely extinct—dead.

"So it is also in spiritual things. The cycle of every prophet has its periods of spring, summer, autumn and winter. When Moses appeared and the new life and light of God shone on the earth through him, the people were as dead souls—without life; but when he gave his teaching, then began the springtime of souls and they awoke into life, full of joy and beauty. Afterwards came the period of their summer time, when the lives of these followers of Moses had become gradually fashioned and moulded by his teachings, and the fruit of his labors appeared, but, after a time, hearts became heavy, faith grew slack, and the people gradually lost the truth and reality of the revelation of their great teacher, and then presently the period of their winter came, when they grew corrupted by outer influences, and were as dead, without fruits and without life.

"Then came the springtime of the revelation of Jesus Christ, which also in its cycle passed through the periods of rise, fullness, decline and deadness," until the springtime of revelation has again appeared, and the world is ready to sound the dominant note of a higher octave.

This is the springtime of souls; "and always, when the Word of God is manifested on the earth, the eyes of the spiritually blind are opened, the ears that were deaf to the Voice of the holy Spirit are at last unsealed, the lame man leaps as an hart, and the tongues of the dumb sing the praises of God "

The great revelation of the truth of God which has descended from Heaven in these latter days of the revelation of Jesus Christ, is the Springtime of the Kingdom of God, and the sure promise of that for which all true hearts have yearned, "The long promised Peace, the Brotherhood of Man, and the Federation of the World."

"Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." The season of corn and wine has again arrived.

Does not the world need a renewing of its faith, a placing of institutions on the solid foundation of the Spiritual Rock? Everywhere about us true-hearted men are turning anxious eyes in all directions, looking hard to see if they cannot find some rift in the dark clouds which hover over the earth, through which the promise of a better day is shining. We have found the rift in the clouds; we have seen the light; we know the better day is even now at hand; and we desire to give to others freely that which we ourselves have received without money and without price.

Read Isaiah, fifty-third chapter, and the first chapter of St John's Gospel.

We have seen that the cycle or year of every prophet has its spring, summer, autumn and winter, and that the advent of every prophet to the earth is the springtime of souls, when the spiritually blind are made to see, the spiritually lame to walk, and the spiritually dead are raised. While the prophet brings with him the springtime, he comes in the gloom and darkness of the winter time of the prophet who preceded him. For instance, when Jesus came 1900 years ago, it was the winter time of the cycle of Moses, and the Jews were in a condition of darkness and corruption, of spiritual deadness.

And when Jesus came, although the signs of His coming were apparent and the necessity for His coming fully recognized, and the people were expecting Him and praying for Him to come, and knew that the time must be near at hand, yet when He came they despised and crucified Him because of their traditions, and their literal interpretation of the Scriptures, and their foolish expectation of miraculous signs and wonders appearing in the heavens and on the earth.

When Jesus came, the signs which it had been prophesied would occur, did not appear openly, and were not fulfilled literally, because when God sends His Word to the earth the real and more important signs which appear and which accompany him are not physical disturbances of nature and the happening of impossible, incredible and unheard of things, but are, on the contrary, spiritual signs and conditions.

And as it was with Jesus when He came, so it was with all the prophets of God, and will be.

When God renews His covenant with man he purposely does it in such a manner that the unwise and the self-righteous and the wicked shall not understand. The truth is sealed up from them. To them God has said (Isaiah, vi, ix-x,) "Hear ye, indeed, but understand not; and see ye, indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."

Only he that hath an ear to hear, that is, spiritual hearing, can hear the trumpet call of the angel, which is the Voice of the Spirit, when God sends His Chosen One to the earth. When he whose right it is comes to the earth as the Center of

God's Covenant, only his sheep will know his voice at first, and only his elect will hasten to him and recognize him, because they are like him in spirit. He draws them to himself just as the magnet draws the iron. The magnet does not attract brass, or zinc, or copper. It attracts only iron, and the product of iron, steel. Just so, when the Word of God incarnates itself and comes to dwell in the Temple of the Chosen One, only the spiritually wise will understand and be partakers in the first resurrection—the foolish will not understand.

Now the powers of the true prophet, by which the souls of the discerning will be drawn to him, are these:

First—He has the power of love. His heart, entirely cut from the world and everything it contains, is aflame with the love of God, and that love, dwelling in him and working through him, attracts so powerfully all who are sincerely and earnestly seeking the truth, that they are irresistibly drawn to him, and would be willing to lay down their lives for him, and he, in turn, is ready and anxious to lay down his own life for the sake of those who love him, and those whom he has come to teach and to save. "Greater love than this hath no man, that he lay down his life for his friend," and those who lay down their lives for the Incomparable Friend are the martyrs of God.

Second—He has the power of immediate and direct knowledge. He knows what he knows, and does not need that anyone should tell him anything. His oneness with the Infinite Spirit is so complete, so perfect, that "all that the Father hath is his,"* and when he opens his mouth it is God who speaks. He gives new life to all who take hold of the hem of his garment with the hands of faith, or who turn to his face and go to him with sincere hearts. He has the power of opening the door of spiritual understanding to all who seek, and of interpretation. It is written of Christ that, walking with His disciples, and with no book before Him, He began with Moses and explained to them all the Scriptures concerning Himself.

Third—He has the creative spiritual power—the power to say, "Be," and it is. His words are the words of life—the words of the Eternal Spirit, and however plain and simple they may be, they live forever, and become the bread of life for his people to feed on for the entire dispensation of which he is the lawgiver. Christ said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." And again, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." Many wise and learned philosophers had lived and taught and written before Christ, and had pointed out the truths which Christ emphasized; it is argued by sceptics and agnostics that Christ's teachings brought nothing new to the world—that everything He taught had been taught before His time. Suppose it to be true—what of it? Where are the great religions founded by these men? What has become of their systems? Where are their millions of followers? Where are their rolls of immortal martyrs who have died to preserve what they taught, and make it effective among men?

Their books are confined to the shelves of great libraries and are read only by scholars; but the poor, the ignorant, the unlearned and the simple-minded, as well as the learned, for nearly nineteen hundred years have fed on the words of Christ in their hearts, and when too poor to own any other book, have owned a Bible.

The fourth great power of the true prophet is that he can foresee and foretell the future, and give the signs for the next great Appearance,

These are the true signs of the Appearance of the Word of God on earth, and if the Jews had understood these spiritual proofs, instead of looking for an earthly king and kingdom, and expecting a literal fulfillment, they would not have rejected Jesus and crucified Him.

In the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John we are told that, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was-God." That "the word was made flesh and dwelt among men." From this it has been argued that Jesus was God Himself. And yet, just a few paragraphs further on the writer tells us that "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Now, if Jesus was God Himself, those who had seen Jesus had seen God; and yet the statement is made, "No man hath seen God at any time." How, then, could Jesus have been God?

It is necessary that we know just what is meant by the Incarnate Word of God, or the Word made flesh. God cannot be divided against Himself, and inclusively dwell in the spiritual realms and as an Incarnation of God on the earth at the same time, and that "Infinite and Peerless King does not divide His Infinite Glory with anyone." He, "singly and alone, abideth in His own place, which is holy, above space and time, mention and utterance, sign, description and definition, height and depth." He "hath been and will be holy for everlasting, above ascent or descent," No human eye hath ever seen Him, or can. But he incarnates His "Most comely Names and Attributes," His Word, that is to say, the effulgence of His Glorious Light, His creative spiritual thought and purpose in His Anointed, or Chosen Ones, and they become to us His Interpreters, and through belief in them we receive His spirit and the power to become the sons or the children of God.

God, the Infinite, is like the light of the sun, and His Chosen One is like a mirror, If you hold a beautifully polished mirror opposite the sun, you will see the rays of the sun reflected in the mirror. The light streaming from the surface of the mirror will be so bright that it will blind you if you look directly at it. That light says to you, "I am the sun," and it speaks the truth. The light you see, although reflected from the mirror, is the real light of the sun. And so, the Infinite God reflects Himself in the mirrors of His Chosen Ones, and at one time the mirror will say, "I am the prophet of God," and at another time, "I am the Son of God," and at another time, "I am God," and at still another time, "I am the Servant of God."

The mirrors all speak the truth. With this explanation, you will understand why it was that Jesus said, "It is not Me, but the Father who dwelleth in Me who doeth the works;" and again, "I and My Father are One;" and again, "My Father is greater than I"

We see that Jesus was indeed the Word of God made flesh, and yet that He was not God Himself, for it was not in any sense the flesh or the man that was God, but the Word or Spirit which dwelt in him.

With this understanding of the meaning of the Incarnate Word of God, let us study the mission of Jesus, to see just what it was and how he accomplished it. In the first place, Jesus was not the great Manifestation of God for the time of the end, and for the great Day of Judgment. He did not claim to be. He said that He came to save the world, not to judge it. If He had brought the great Kingdom of the time of the end, He would not Himself have appointed another day, and He would not have taught His disciples to pray to the Father, "Thy Kingdom come." Nor do we find the great prophecies for the end of the days fulfilled in Jesus.

Take, for instance, Isaiah, ix, vi:

"For unto Us a child is born, unto Us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

Christ never called Himself the Mighty God; on the contrary, he said, "Call not Me good; there is only One good, that is God." He has certainly never been called the Everlasting Father. He Himself disclaimed the title of the Prince of Peace, for He said, "Think not that I come to bring peace. I come not to bring peace, but a sword."

At the time when the Kingdom of God should come, the Jews were to be scattered in the different countries of the earth, and were to be gathered out of the nations and brought to Jerusalem,

Ezekial, xxxvii, xxi. "And say unto them, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them unto their own land."

Micah, 5th chapter. "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord; as the showers upon the grass." * "And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the gentiles in the midst of many peoples."

Jeremiah, xxiii, iii. "And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase."

At the time Jesus came the Jews were not scattered, but were a prosperous nation with their Sanhedrin, their High Priest, their Temple and their laws. You will see later on that instead of being gathered out of the countries by Jesus, they were destroyed and scattered for rejecting Him.

The prophet spoke of One who was to come from Edom and Bozrah. Isaiah, lxiii, i: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel?" * * "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Jesus did not come out of Edom and Bozrah, and there is no record to show that He was ever in Arabia. This cannot refer to Him.

In Malachi we read, *'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.'" John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ; but when they went to him to inquire if he was Elijah, the following is the record of what took place:

"And he confessed and denied not, but confessed, (I am not the Christ.)' And they asked him, 'What then?' Art thou Elias?' And he saith, (I am not/ Art thou that prophet?' And he answered *NO/

And when the disciples of John went to Jesus and asked Him, "Art thou He who should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered, "Go and tell John these things which ye do see and hear; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." He did not claim to be the One who was to come at the end of the days, and He did not tell them that they were not to look for another. As has already been said, He Himself appointed another day, and gave the signs for the great coming. From all this we see that the great prophecies were not fulfilled in Christ. Now, since He was undoubtedly the Son of God and His Christ, and wa* exactly what He claimed to be, and every word He spoke was true, He must have come with some special message, and for some special purpose.

If we study the prophets and His own words, to discover just what His mission was, we shall see that He came as the bearer of good tidings; to preach the Gospel of the coming of the Kingdom of God; to prepare the way for that coming; to teach His disciples to pray for that coming, and to minister to the poor. He also came, strange as it may seem, as you will see from the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, to be rejected and crucified by the Jews. He knew that He was to be crucified, and so told His disciples

In the 52nd chapter of Isaiah, 5th verse, we read: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, 'Thy God reigneth.' "

Isaiah, xli, xxvii. "The first shall say to Zion; behold, behold them, and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings."

The testimony of the New Testament as to the mission of Jesus is; (Matthew, iv, xxiii.) "And Jesus went all about Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom." (Mark, i, adv.) "Now after that John was

put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God." (Luke, iv, xviii) "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath appointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted; to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke, iv, xliii.) "And He said unto them, 'I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also, for therefore was I sent/ M

Jesus, you see very plainly, was sent to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom and the coming of the acceptable year of the Lord.

And, although He prayed that it might be otherwise, and that that bitter cup might be removed from Him, He also came to bring the sword of persecution to the Jews; and He knew that for rejecting and despising Him they would be destroyed among the nations, and persecuted among the gentiles by those who called themselves Christians. There is no record in history of such a destruction as that which overtook the Jews, or of such awful persecutions as they have suffered for nearly nineteen hundred years. His heart aflame with love and pity, Jesus, looking down the vista of the centuries, foresaw the awful doom hanging over those who were His own people, and to whom He had come as His own, and they received Him not, and He begged the Father that, if it were possible, He should not be obliged to drink that awful cup. Nevertheless, as He said, "Thy Will, and not Mine, be done." (See St. Luke, 19th chapter, beginning at 41st verse, where Christ wept over Jerusalem; and his agony at Gethsemane.) It was over the condition of His people that He wept and it was for them He prayed, and not on His own account. He had no fear of death.

The prophecies in regard to this cutting off of Jesus and the desolation of the Jews are very plain, and many of the Jews, long before the time of Christ, understood these prophecies. I quote from Taylor's "Reign of Christ on Earth":

*In Yemen (Temen of the Scripture) a rabbi told Mr. Wolffe that his tribe did not return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. When Ezra by letter invited their princes to return, they replied: 'Daniel predicts the murder of the Messiah, and another destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple; therefore we will not go up until He shall have scattered the power of the holy people—till the 1390 days (meaning years) are over. * * But we do expect the coming of the Messiah,' " etc.

The prophecy in Daniel which is here referred to is found in the 9th chapter, 24th, 25th and 26th verses.

From that great prophecy you will see that seventy weeks (of years) were determined on the Jews, and that "after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off," etc., and that from that time to the end of the war, "desolations were determined." "

We know that this prophecy refers to Jesus, because the calculation of the time brings us down to the exact year of his crucifixion. The commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem here referred to was issued by King Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign, which, as accurately fixed by the chronology of the Bible itself, and the British Astronomical Association, was the year B. C. 457. God has said with regard to prophecy, "I have given you a day for a year;^M and all students of prophecy know that a prophetic day is a year. Calculate the seventy weeks of Daniel, or 490 years from the year B. C. 457, and it will bring you exactly to the year A. D. 33, the date of the crucifixion of Christ.

Another clear prophecy that Jesus would be crucified is found in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, before referred to. Another exact prophecy is found in Micah, v, ii: "But thou, Bethlehem Ep'irata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth to Me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

"Therefore¹ (on account of this One from Bethlehem) "will He *give* them up until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth; then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel—and He shall stand forth and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the Majesty of the name of the Lord His God, and they shall abide, for now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth."

Messiah was to come, and on account of His coming and cutting off, God was to give the Jews up to persecution until she which travaileth should bring forth. Then, when the desolation of the Jews should be accomplished, Messiah was to return and stand and feed the people in the Name of His Father, of the Lord His God, and was to be great unto the ends of the earth.

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LESSON a.—The Vision of the Kingdom.

We have seen that Christ did not bring the Great Kingdom of Peace for the end of the days, but that He appointed another day, and taught His disciples to pray for its coming. In the coming of that Great Kingdom the desire of the nations is to be realized, and the world is to have a universal religion and is to be at peace. Justice and mercy are to prevail, and all the people of the earth are to become as one kindred and one family.

In order to prepare the way for this longed-for consummation all religious hatred, all narrow-mindedness, bigotry, intolerance and fanaticism must be removed and annulled. This can be accomplished by the simple recognition of the great truth that all the religions of the world have arisen and shone from the same dawn-ing-place, and have been different expressions of the same truth, their seeming differences being with regard to the time and place where the revelations were received. To say "All is from God" is a healing medicine, and to recognize that all religions, or, rather, all the different forms of the One religion, however corrupt they may be at the present time, were originally revelations from God through His appointed Messengers, will in itself establish the broad base on which the edifice of Unity may be built, and prepare the way for great progress and advancement.

When we have become broad-minded enough to approach the subject of religion in this catholic spirit, we shall be astonished and delighted to find how much there is to respect and admire in religious systems which we have perhaps hitherto thoughtlessly and intolerantly condemned.

In the Literary Digest of October 20, 1900, is an article entitled, "Will Buddhism and Christianity be Friends instead of Enemies?" The writer of this article says that an eminent scholar who devoted a lifetime to the study of the world's religious systems came to the conclusion that they all taught their followers to choose the good and avoid the evil, and that the central precept of them all is, "To love the good God and be good." He continued: "It is evident that the inhibition of intoxicants by the Buddhist and Mohammedan faiths has done and is doing a vast good in the world."

The truth is that all the people of the earth have had their prophets and teachers, through whom the reality of religion has been revealed to them, but through the blighting curse of priestcraft, and through the inability of the people to understand, assimilate and properly develop the revelations which came to them, every

system of religion has become corrupted and overrun with imaginations and superstitions, and Christianity is by no means an exception to the rule. With each of them that which St. Paul said has been true, that because they had regard for the creature rather than for the Creator, their foolish heart has been darkened.

One of the oldest religions known among men, the Parsee, whose founder was Zoroaster, or Zardasht, as our Persian friends call him, is still one of the purest of religions, and is possibly freer from corruptions than any other known. Some of the teachings of Zoroaster, as you will see, have not been very much improved on since his time, which by some scholars is placed as early as 4000 B. C, and by others as late as 700 B. C. Among other things, Zoroaster taught:

"All good thoughts, words and works are done with knowledge.** The antithesis implied is, that all evil thoughts, words and works are the result of ignorance.

⁴⁴All good thoughts, words and works lead to Paradise. All evil thoughts, words and works lead to hell."

"In the name of God, the Giver, Forgiver, rich in love, praise be to the name of Ormazd, the God with the name, 'Who always was, always is, and always will be/ the heavenly amongst the heavenly, with the name 'from whom all rule is derived/ Ormazd is the Greatest Ruler, Mighty, Wise, Creator, Supporter, Refuge, Defender, Completer of Good Works, Overseer, Pure, Good and Just/*

⁴All good do I accept at Thy Command, O God, and think, speak and do it. I believe in the pure law; by every good work seek I forgiveness of sins. I keep pure for myself the serviceable works, and abstinence from the unprofitable. I keep pure the six powers—thought, speech, work, memory, mind and understanding. According to Thy Will am I able to accomplish, O Accomplisher of Good, Thy honor, with good thoughts, good words, good works.^H

That the great lawgiver of the Chinese, Confucius, was one of the greatest and purest teachers the world has ever known is admitted on all hands.

Being asked by one of his disciples what constituted the perfect man, Confucius drew no impossible picture of virtue, but simply responded:

"Seeking to be established, the true man establishes others; wishing enlargement, he enlarges others."

Confucius affirms that knowledge and belief should be the same thing: "When you know a thing, to hold that you know it, and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it—this is knowledge.⁰ To this he adds: "To see what is right and not to do it is want of courage."

To one of his disciples who asked about death, he said, "How can you understand death, when you do not yet understand life?¹"

In his ethics we find the golden rule in the negative form, thus: "What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men."

arisen who rejected idolatry; worshipped the one true God; lived lives of prayer; practiced chastity, benevolence and justice, and were ready to do and to bear everything for the truth. All this came from the depth of conviction in the soul of this one man."

In the North American Review for November, 1900, is a very able and interesting article by Mr. Oscar Mann, a student of comparative religions, on the rapid growth of Mohammedanism in the nineteenth century. To show the wonderful influence for good Mohammedanism exerts, especially over the black races of the Dark Continent, where it is rapidly spreading, the writer quotes Mr. R. Bosworth Smith, one of the best judges of the African races, as follows:

"The worst evils which prevailed at one time over the whole of Africa, and which are still to be found in many parts of it, and those, too, not far from the Gold Coast and the English settlements—cannibalism and human sacrifice and the burial of living infants—disappear at once and forever. Natives who have hitherto lived in a state of nakedness, or nearly so, begin to dress, and that neatly; natives who have never washed before begin to wash, and that frequently, for ablutions are commanded in the sacred law. * * * The tribal organization tends to give place to something which has a wider basis. In other words, tribes coalesce into nations, and with the increase of energy and intelligence, nations into empires. The well built and neatly kept mosque, with its call to prayer five times a day * becomes the centre of the village, instead of the ghastly fetish or juju house. The worship of *QXIG* God, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and compassionate, is an immeasurable advance upon anything which the native has been taught to worship before. * * * Manufactures and commerce spring up—not the mute trading or the elementary bartering of raw products which we know from Herodotus to have existed from the earliest times in Africa, nor the cowrie shells, or gun powder, or tobacco, or rum—but manufactures involving considerable skill, and a commerce which is elaborately organized. As regards the individual, it is admitted on all hands that Islam gives to its negro converts an energy, a dignity, a self-reliance and a self-respect which is all too rarely found in their pagan or their Christian fellow countrymen."

These extracts show us that the study of the beliefs of other peoples will increase our faith in the mercy and loving kindness of God, and show us that in one form or another He has revealed His Truth to all mankind.

And not only do we find that all forms of religion teach the people to "love the good God and be good"—we also find the prophetic thought and teaching of the final coming of the Kingdom of God to the earth common to them all. And this is not only the hope of all religion, but it is also the teaching of the philosophers.

"The Sibyllene Verses, as presented by Virgil, point to an age to come, and a

new birth of nature, and at the same time link this glorious Kingdom they depict With an exalted Personage who would, they say, reduce all mankind to a single empire." (Taylor.)

"Robert Hort, A. M., in the seventeenth century, in a sermon on the Millenium, wrote as follows: *In Plato's dialogue, the philosopher having spoken of the first happy condition of the world and its fall, adds': 'But in the end, lest the world should be plunged into an eternal abyss of confusion, God, the author of the primitive order, will appear again and resume the reins of empire; then He will change, embellish and restore the whole frame of nature and put an end to decay, of age, sickness and death.' " (Taylor's Reign of Christ),

Hort continues: ⁴⁴Plutarch, having related the doctrine of the ancient Persians concerning the evil introduced into the world by Arimanius, concludes it thus, 'But there will come a time, appointed by fate, when Arimanius shall be entirely destroyed and extirpated; the earth shall change its form and become plain and even; and happy men shall have one and the same life, language and government"

(Taylor.)

*'According to the authority of Strabo the ancient Gymnosophists had a similar tradition, and believed in a time when the ancient plenty should be restored." (Taylor.)

"All the heathen nations believed that the renovation would be brought about by some divine hero. Virgil in his fourth eclogue describes the renovation of both the physical and moral world in a manner very little differing from the sacred writings, and the Chinese philosophers entertained the same notions concerning the corruption and the future renovation of the world." (Taylor.)

The Hindoos are taught that whenever the faith *of men grows slack on* the earth, and there is a great falling away and a general decaying of things, that God begins to energize and wake up and reincarnates Himself on the earth. The Indian philosophers are looking for an incarnation of an "Atavar," or God-man, such as, for instance, Buddha was. The Jews still look for the Messiah, and the Christians for the second *coming of* Christ; the Mohammedans for the return of *the Twelfth Imam*, or Imam Mahdi, and the world generally for a deliverer.

The Aztecs, at the time the Spaniards came, had a tradition that a great deliverer would come in the return of their God. The writer is informed by a friend of rare intelligence, who is acquainted with every school of occultism, that the South American Indians, the descendants *of* the Aztecs, have a tradition that the *Incus* will return to them when the last vestige of the Spanish power disappears from America. This was accomplished in the war with Spain. Even the North American Indians have the tradition in the legend of Hiawatha, their Savior, who is to come and deliver them from the whites and restore their hunting grounds.

The dream is universal. The necessity is universal. The world is waiting for the coming of One who can speak to all nations with authority, and in whose teachings all religious differences can be sunk and forgotten.

This One must come as the Manifestation of God Himself in order to be acceptable to all. No less a Savior would do. He must come as Christ to the Christians, as Messiah to the Jews, as the Mahdi to the Mohammedans, and as the One they are expecting to all. He must fulfill the prophecies of all the Scriptures and sacred writings. If He came as the particular One expected by the adherents of any particular faith, His coming would be limited to that faith, and would not be a universal coming. He must come with a New Name, and thus avoid the accumulated prejudices of centuries of religious strife.

That just such a One is to come, and that He is to be the Manifestation of all the Names, Attributes and Effulgences (though not the essence) of God Himself, our own great prophets teach. See:

Isaiah, vi, vi. Isaiah, xxxv, iv. Isaiah, xl, x, xi and xii. Isaiah, xxiv, xxiii. Zachariah, xiv, v. Job, xix, xxv, xxvi and xxvii. Epistle of Jude, xivth verse. Revelations, i, iv, v. Daniel, ii, xlv.

Christ taught it plainly in His parable of the vineyard which was hired out to husbandmen. The servants who were sent to the vineyard were the prophets; the *Son* was Jesus; the Lord of the Vineyard who was to come *Himself* and punish the wicked husbandmen was God. Christ also teaches it in the Lord's Prayer. It is the Kingdom of the Father which is to come.

The hope of *this coming of the Kingdom of God* is a theme upon which the Apostle Paul and the Gospel writers loved to dwell, and it was the central doctrine of the early Christian church. It was not until the fourth century after Christ, when the early faith began to be corrupted by the creeping into it of the pagan superstitions through its becoming the State Religion of Rome, that the church commenced to look about to find some means of explaining away this great doctrine, and the Christian teaching was gradually corrupted by the Alexandrine philosophers and the Gnostics. Allegorical interpretation was resorted to to show that the church itself was the second coming and the Kingdom of God. This sad work culminated in the celebrated decree of the Roman Emperor, Phocas, in A. D, 607, proclaiming the head of the church at Rome the Universal Pontiff of Christendom, or Pope. The Pope completed the work by adopting the motto, "Vicarius Dei Filii," or "Substitute for the Son of God."

But all this was not what Christ had taught or the early Christians believed. The Master had told His disciples (see John, xiv,) that if they loved Him and kept His commandments, that both He and His Father would come and take up their abode with them.

He had said (Matthew, xxvi, xxix,) at the Last Supper: "And I say unto you that I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom." And again, in Luke, "For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come." And when he ate the bread, "For I say unto you I will not eat any more thereof until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God."

In the Gospel known as the Testament of the Twelve, a book which has been much written about, and which, whether it is canonical or not, was much read and regarded as authoritative in the early church, we read:

"The Most High will visit the earth, coming as a man, eating and drinking with men in quiet; He shall crush the head of the dragon. The saints shall arise from the dead and each will worship on his scepter the King of the Heavens, and His Kingdom is an Eternal Kingdom which shall not pass away."

In the record of the proceedings of the Council of Nice, as late as the year A. D. 325, where all the Christian churches were represented by delegates, we find the following:

"We expect new heavens and a new earth according to the Holy Scriptures, at the appearing *of* the Great God, and our Savior, Jesus Christ," etc.

From all this it will be seen that God Himself was to come, as foretold by the prophets, taught by Christ and the Apostles, and believed by the church for the first three centuries.

All who are following the pure teachings of Christ and not the traditions of the church led astray by theology, must have this hope. And they must look for the Manifestation *to come as a man*, eating and drinking with men and fulfilling the laws and conditions of human life, and not for a miraculous and impossible coming.

St. James tells us that the spirit of the Antichrist is that spirit which denies that Christ came in the flesh. When we deny that Christ was a man just as we are, though He was the Word made flesh, and make Him a miraculous creature, half human and half divine; that is, not flesh and blood after the manner of men, or when we expect him to come again in a rain-cloud with some supernatural body, or resurrection body which he ascended into the heavens with, we are under the dominion of the Opposer—the Antichrist. We are not following the pure beautiful, simple teachings of the Master, but are following the Woman spoken of in Revelations who was arrayed in purple and bedecked with gold and precious stones, but had written upon her forehead the awful words, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth/'

The love of mystery is the mother of superstition. It is opposed to the truth, and in it tyranny and priestcraft have always found that which enabled them to exercise their baneful dominion over the minds of the people.

This Woman, with Mystery written on her forehead, is all decked out and bejewelled, waiting for the coming of the Bridegroom, whom she has taught the people to believe can only come to her, His chosen; but the Bridegroom will not come to such as she is—for the true Bride of Christ, though she may be dwelling in obscurity and unknown to all except the pure minded and the simple hearted, and expecting no such great honor, but only waiting and praying as the Master told her to do, to come and heal the broken-hearted and bring mercy and peace to the earth, will be the true and chosen Bride of the Lamb.

As to the manner of that coming the great prophet Daniel wrote, "the wise will understand, but the foolish will not understand."

When the signs of the Kingdom of God are caused to descend, only the spiritually minded will see and apprehend them, for these signs are the means which God has chosen to test his creatures and separate the tares from the wheat. If the coming of the Chosen One was heralded by such open and plain signs that none could fail to comprehend, but all must see and tremble, how then could God so elect —those who in their hearts treasure the truth and care nothing for signs and wonders, be separated from the Pharisees, the self-righteous and the wicked. The trumpet of the angel is for those who have ears to hear, and the day-star arises in the hearts of those who know. Those who love their fellow men and walk in the way of the Spirit and of the commandments of God will not be veiled from beholding His Beauty by the *ignorance* and the superstitions *of men*.

LESSON 3.—The Signs of the Kingdom.

We have seen that the signs which attend the coming of the Word of God to the earth do not appear openly. The Jews rejected the Manifestation of Jesus, because they believed literally, that the moon was to be confounded and the sun ashamed, the host of heaven dissolved and the heavens rolled up as a scroll, the sun turned to darkness and the moon to blood. (See Isaiah, xxiv, xxiii; xxxiv, iv; Joel, h\ xxxi; Amos, viii, ix.) It was to be a time of great trouble, of death, of the sword, of captivity, of famine and of earthquakes and natural disturbances. (Isaiah, ii, xxi; Joel, xii, xxx; Haggai, ii, vi.) The wolf was to dwell with the lamb, the leopard to lie down with the kid, and the lion was to eat straw like the ox. (Isaiah, xi,vi.) The light of *the moon was to be as the light of the sun*, and the light of the sun was to be sevenfold. The Mount of the Olives was to cleave in the midst, and one part was to move eastward and one part westward. (Zechariah, xiv, ii, iii, iv, ix.) A son of David was to sit upon the throne. (Jeremiah, xxxiii, xvii.) Elijah was to come as the forerunner and cry in the wilderness "Make straight the Way of the Lord." The dead were to be raised from their graves.

We who know that Christ came as a great spiritual teacher and taught that God was a Spirit, and was to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and who understand that His Kingdom was a spiritual one, and His rule over the hearts of men— that His Kingdom was not of this world—doubtless look down the centuries at those Jews and think how foolish they were to have been looking for all these impossibilities; but are we any wiser?

Paul said that Christ was a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. In the 110th psalm it was prophesied that He was to be a priest forever, and after the order of Melchizedek. Now who was Melchizedek? Nobody knows. A mysterious character mentioned only a few times in the Bible. He was the King of Salem, which means the King of Peace. Abraham went to visit him, and, although Abraham was the prophet of God and His friend, and talked with God, and God made His covenant with him, nevertheless he went and paid homage to this King of Salem, paid him tribute, bowed himself before him and called him the priest of the Most High God. No genealogy of Melchizedek is given, and no visible line of priests can be traced to him. This is the sure proof that the true descent is the spiritual descent, and the true order of priests those who have the power of the Holy Spirit No physical descent from a king and no line of ordination can accomplish *it Christ*

at

made no claim to descent from David, and had no authority from any priesthood. He was a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek, that strange and mysterious King of Peace whom Abraham went to visit Yet in spite of all this, millions of Christians to-day make much of Christ's *alleged* descent from King David (which two of the Gospel writers do not mention at all), and expect that when Christ comes again He will come with great pomp and power and glory as a King, just as the Jews were looking for Him in their time. What does forever mean? It means that when He comes again He will still be a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and that His power and authority will be a spiritual power and authority, as it was before. Not only are the Christians *looking for the coming of* a Davidic King, with great pomp and circumstance, but when Christ comes again they expect all the signs to occur for which the Jews were looking. What right have they to call the Jews infidels, and *to* despise them, as many Christians do, when they are looking for the very thing which they condemn them for having expected?

In the 24th chapter of Matthew we find the great prophecy of Christ about the *time of* the end, and the Christians, interpreting this literally, are blinded, just as the Jews were. Here are the signs given by Jesus, which they expect to see literally fulfilled:

- 1.False Christs will appear.
- 2.There will be wars and rumors of wars.
- 3.Famines, pestilences and earthquakes in divers places.
- 4.False prophets would arise and deceive many.
- 5.Because of iniquity the love of many should wax cold.
- 6.The Gospel shall have been preached as a witness to all the world.
- 7.The Desolating Abomination shall be seen standing in the Holy Place.
- 8.As the lightning cometh out of the east and is seen even in the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.
- 9.That immediately after the tribulations of those days the sun would be darkened, the moon would not give her light, and the stars would fall from heaven.
- 10.The sign of the Son of Man shall be seen in the heavens and will come in the clouds with great power and glory.
- 11.He will send His angels before Him with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather His elect.
- 12.As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when He comes again.

Now, is it possible for educated and intelligent people in this age of science and learning to believe that all these things will happen literally? That Christ will come down out of heaven in the clouds, that the sun will be darkened and the moon not give her light, and the stars fall from heaven, and that actual angels blowing great trumpets will come before to announce Him? It is impossible for them to believe this, and millions, because of these foolish and literal interpretations, do

not believe the Bible at all. But if they understood that Jesus meant all these things spiritually, and that they are to be spiritually interpreted, they would not be veiled from the fact that they were all being fulfilled, and that the time of the end spoken of by Christ is now at hand. Every sign which Christ gave has appeared, even to the persecutions and killing of those who should believe at the time of His coming, but which we have omitted because the Christians do not expect persecutions. We will go more fully into this matter of the persecutions prophesied about in another lesson*

The time has now come to let it be known that every sign has appeared. The sun has been darkened, the moon does not give her light, the stars are falling from heaven, and the heavens are being shaken; that the Kingdom of God has descended from the heavens of the divine will in the form of a glorious virgin, and has been established on the earth, and that the day is here when the blind will be made to see, the lame to walk, the dumb to speak and the dead to live again. This is a tremendous statement, but it is nevertheless true, and we pray that God will give us all the spiritual understanding to realize it, so that we may not be denied the great gifts and blessings which He, in this age, is to shower upon those who love and serve Him.

We will now take the signs which Jesus gave us in their order, and see their real meaning and fulfillment:

First—False Christs would appear and show great signs. The marks of the false Christs, as Jesus gave them, were that they would be pretenders to miraculous powers; occultists who would show signs and wonders. Many such have appeared, and there are several in the United States at this time. These claim to be reincarnations of Jesus of Nazareth, or else to be the same human personality as Jesus; but the real Christ is the Word of God, or the Word made flesh, and when it comes to the earth it can choose its own instrument through which to speak, and does not need to impersonate any former teacher or prophet. Jesus proved this when He told the people that John the Baptist was Elijah. "This is Elijah which was to come, if you will receive it." Now John was not the same personality as Elijah; he had a distinct personality as John the Baptist. But John the Baptist was the Spirit of the Forerunner—the Voice crying in the wilderness. And so the people thought Jesus Himself was one of the great prophets returned. And He indeed was, for He was all the prophets, the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega, the One whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting (See Micah, v, ii); the Christ of God, as Peter called Him; but at that time He had a distinct Personality as Jesus of Nazareth.

Second—There would be wars and rumors of wars. This is true both materially and spiritually. When the Kingdom of God draws nigh, there is always a great commotion on the earth. But the higher interpretation is spiritual. Never was

there a time when there was so much religious controversy, conflict and differences of opinion as at the present time, and never was Christianity so badly a house divided against itself as now, with its heresy trials, its isms and its higher criticism. Spiritualism, Christian Science, Theosophy and open denial of the authenticity, literal accuracy and inspiration of the Bible have produced such confusion of thought and of tongues, that the masses of the people do not know where to turn to find the truth, or who to believe and follow. There are so many religious doctors nowadays that the spiritually sick are like to be physicked to death, and are dying from the very excess of remedies.

And now see how wonderfully this very condition is foretold by Ezekiel, the prophet;

"Sou of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds, 'Woe be to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flock? Ye eat the fat and ye clothe ye with wool, ye kill them that are fed; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered because there is no shepherd; and they became meat to all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.' "

(Ezekiel, xxxiv, ii, iii, iv_f v.)

This warring of sects and creeds and isms and religious theories and opinions is what Jesus meant would take place at the time of the end, when there should be ⁴Wars and rumors of wars, and nation would rise against nation."

Third—There would be famine and pestilence, etc. This means, in the inner or real interpretation, spiritual starvation and pestilence, the very starving of the flock about which Ezekiel is prophesying in the passages just quoted. The shepherds feed themselves and grow fat, but the flocks of God are starved. There can be no greater famine than a spiritual famine, when the people cannot get to eat of the bread of heaven. The people to-day are begging for spiritual bread, and running, ^uLo, here, and Lo_t there," (after every teacher) (with itching ears) in a vain effort to get the satisfaction which their souls crave. Thank God they shall get it! Listen to the promise:

Ezekiel, xxxiv, xi, xii: "For thus saith the Lord God, ⁴Behold, I, even I,' " (that is, God Himself) ^M 'will both search my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all the places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day/ ^M

Fourth—False prophets will arise and deceive many. This is so evidently fulfilled in the many false teachings of these days that comment is useless. Everyone can find examples for himself.

Fifth—Because of iniquity the love of many should wax cold. This is also painfully evident in the great lack of religious faith amongst the masses of the people, and in the complaints of the preachers that the people cannot be induced to attend the churches. Fine music, sensational sermons, politics, and even theatrical entertainments are resorted to to get them to come to the houses of worship, where they go, the great majority of them, apparently to be entertained rather than to worship God.

Sixth—The Gospel shall have been preached as a witness of Christ to all the nations. There is no nation to which the Gospel of Christ has not been preached, and it has been translated into every tongue.

Seventh—The Desolating Abomination shall be seen standing in the Holy Place. The Desolating Abomination, as was shown in the First Lesson is mentioned in the 9th chapter of Daniel, and also in the 12th. 1250 days were given for the overspreading of abominations. This means 1-250 years. It refers to the desolation and persecution of the Jews, the corruption of the truth by the temporal power, the possession of the Holy Land by strangers and the religious strife of the last twelve centuries. The Desolating Abomination was set up *by the* Mohammedan Caliphs *in the year A. D. 687 or thereabouts*, when they took possession of Palestine and built a Mohammedan mosque over the site of the Temple of Solomon, The Desolating Abomination is now seen standing in the Holy Place. God's promise is that the Jews, His "peculiar people/* shall be restored to honor and shall again possess their ancient inheritance. The Zionian movement, which is growing so rapidly among the Jews, and which has been so much written about lately, is an indication that this prophecy may be literally as well as spiritually fulfilled. God grant that it may!

Eighth—As the lightning shineth out of the east and is seen even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. It is easy to perceive that this cannot be interpreted literally, since the lightning does not shine out of the east, but its flash and glare is seen wherever the storm cloud is. The meaning is that the light would come out of the east, where the sun rises, and whence every prophet has appeared. Both the spiritual and material light shines from the east. The message of this great truth comes out of the east like the lightning flash to every one *who* receives it, and *it is spreading with* lightning-like rapidity to the west.

Ninth—Immediately after the tribulations of those days the sun would be darkened, the moon would not give her light, and the stars would fall from heaven. This means that the Sun of Truth, the spiritual Sun, will be darkened. The day of God is always a day of gloom and darkness. The gloom and darkness are the clouds which obscure the light of the Sun, and it is in these clouds of superstition, ignorance, false teaching and the decadence of faith, that the Son of Man (the prophet) appears. The people are given over to delusions because the Sun of Reality has grown dim, and following their own imaginations, their foolish hearts are darkened.

The moon gives her light by reflection from the sun, and, of course, when the sun becomes darkened, the light of the moon ceases. By "the moon" is meant the religious system which reflects the light of the former revelation. The ministers and the shepherds of the people, the guides and ecclesiastical lights, are the stars which fall from the heavens of religion. The Sun of Truth has now changed its dawning-place, and the true light no longer comes from the horizon to which they are looking. All that is left of the old faith is practically a mere traditional belief, to which people cling for the want of a better. Even the very priests themselves have ceased to have any vital faith in the dogmas and literal interpretations they are paid to preach and defend.

Tenth—And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and then the Son of Man will be seen coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Now "the heaven" here means both the outward and inward heaven; the material heaven and the spiritual heaven. And there are two stars which appear, one an actual star or configuration of the planets which becomes visible in the heavens, and the other the day-star of hope and expectancy which rises in the hearts of the lovers of God, caused by the Spirit that goes before the Face of God to prepare the way, and which is first made manifest by the appearance of the Forerunner, the Voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the Way of the Lord." Both these stars are seen when the coming of the Son of Man is at hand. They have accompanied every Manifestation of God. Ximrod, the great ruler in the time of Abraham, according to the Eastern books and traditions, had a vision and called the astrologers and priests to interpret it, and they told him of the appearance of a star in the heavens, and that the time for the appearance of a Great One on the earth was at hand. We are also told in these traditions that a forerunner appeared on the earth and announced the coming of Abraham. The people of that day were also warned of the calamities which would overtake them if they did not repent and return to God. So, also, according to these same books and traditions, before the birth of Moses the priests and astrologers warned Pharaoh that a Great One, a prophet, was to be born who would be the cause of calamity to him and his people, and a forerunner appeared among the Hebrews and comforted them with the glad tidings that a great deliverer was at hand. Pharaoh, knowing that this deliverer was to come to the Hebrews, ordered all their male infants to be slain.

All are familiar with the wise men of the East who saw the Star of Christ in the heavens, and set out to find him. These were Persian magii, sun worshippers, so called, though they only regarded the sun as a symbol, and were great students of astrology, which was the astronomy of the day. They saw the Star of the Messiah, and knew the time was at hand. John the Baptist was the forerunner who gave the glad tidings on the earth immediately before the coming of Christ, and caused

the day-star of hope to rise in the hearts of the people. And now the promise is that when the Kingdom of God comes the Star of the Son of Man shall again appear. It has already appeared. The wise men of the East, that is to say, those who study the stars, believing that in their courses they have a relation to life here on the earth, tell us that the earth is again in its Messianic period. A few months ago in Boston there was a convention of astrologists in which they agreed and announced that the configuration of the planets now was exactly the same as in the time of Christ. So this great sign has plainly appeared. The Forerunner has also appeared. This will be *fully* explained in another *lesson*.

That all the tribes of the earth should mourn, means that at that time there would be great distress on the earth, both spiritual and material; cruelty, oppression and bigotry, a "squeezing in," literally, just the conditions that exist at the present time.

The heaven from which the Son of Man will come, is the heaven of the Divine Will and Authority, which is precisely the same heaven from which Christ came nineteen hundred years ago. Jesus said, "And no man hath ascended to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven." There are not two real heavens, only one. The heaven Jesus Christ was in was the same He came from, and the same He will come from again. Christ said, "I came down from heaven, not to do My own Will, but the Will of Him who sent Me." So you see, Christ said that He had come down from heaven the first time, and when He told His disciples that He would come again from heaven, He meant from the same Heaven of the Divine Will, and did not mean the last statement to be understood literally any more than the first. Just as He came from the Heaven of the Divine Will in a human form or body before, so He will come again.

The clouds that He was to come in have already been explained. It only needs now to be proved from the Bible what they are. These prophecies with regard to the day of God will make the meaning plain:

1a Zepheniah, i, xv: ⁴⁴"A day of wasteness and desolation. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness."

Read Joel, ii, i, ii and xxx: "A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains."

Isaiah, lx, ii: "For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee," (see how plainly Isaiah calls Him the Spiritual Sun) "and His Glory shall be seen upon thee." This passage shows very plainly that the clouds symbolize spiritual conditions, and that the glory is a spiritual glory.

Ezekiel, xxx, iii: "The day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day."

Every prophet has come in the clouds. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the wickedness and darkness on the earth at the coming of Abraham is familiar

to us all; the conditions which existed at the time of the coming of Noah were worse. When Moses came, the Jews were wholly given up to the flesh pots and idolatries of Egypt; and Christ spoke of the generation to whom He came as a "generation of vipers/" Now, although the prophet comes in the clouds, he comes with the Power of the Creative Word of God, which can say "Be/* and it is. The "Power and Great Glory^M to which Jesus refers, means that at the Great Coming, the proclamation of peace will go forth and the nations will listen to it; the spiritual stone which has been steadily rejected heretofore will be made the chief stone of the corner, and the spiritually minded will rule the earth.

Eleventh—He will send His angels before Him with the sound of a trumpet. These are the Messengers of the Kingdom and the Voice of the Spirit, God sends His Spirit before His Face to prepare the Way. The meaning is plainly spiritual. In the first chapter of Revelations St. John tells us that "He was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind him a Great Voice, as of a trumpet." The trumpet of the angel can be heard only by those who are in the Spirit—that is, those who have the spiritual ears to hear it. If our minds are prepared for it, when we receive this message, we will hear the trumpet of the angel and accept the truth.

Twelfth—It shall be as it was in the time of Noah. This is evident to all, and needs no comment. Men are marrying and giving in marriage, eating and drinking and making merry, with no knowledge of the wonderful spiritual message which has come to the earth. "That day shall come as a thief in the night." The Kingdom of Heaven comes not with observation, and the world at large is in ignorance of the fact that a new dispensation of God's Truth is already at hand.

The three greatest signs that the times are fulfilled, and that the great day is at hand, are:

1. The decadence of faith.

2. The appearance of the isms.

3. The wonderful increase in knowledge which has marked the last half of the present century.

This last sign is given by Daniel in his 12th chapter, where he says: "In that day knowledge shall be increased."

The first sign has already been sufficiently commented upon and proven, but we cannot refrain from adding that the prophet Isaiah said, "In that day there will be a people who will honor Me with their lips, but their hearts will be far from Me." In that day, said Paul, there will be a people who will "have the form of Godliness but will lack the power thereof." Jesus said, "When I come again shall I find faith on the earth?" Facts speak for themselves.

With regard to the second sign, it is plainly evident that these isms have appeared in the last half century. Spiritualism appeared in this country in Rochester in 1847, and the rest have followed in its train. Paul wrote in 1st Tim., 4, 1: "Now

the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, *giving* heed to seducing spirits and doctrines *of* devils."

The prophecy of Joel tells us that in the last days God will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, and that "the old men shall see visions and the young men dream dreams," etc. We have no record of a time when people took such an interest in, or so generally believed in, psychic phenoma as they do now. The Spirit of God is abroad, and that something unusual has happened, is happening or is about to happen seems to be in the very atmosphere. Learned professors of reputable colleges are investigating psychic phenomena, although they differ as to the explanation. The truth is that all this is the working of the Spirit of God through these peculiar channels for a special purpose. The people who receive these visitations do not know what they mean. They are simply one of the great signs of the times which always appear at the coming of a prophet, and when they have fulfilled their purpose they disappear. Practically the same conditions attended the coming of Jesus. The following quotation from M. Renan's "Anti-Christ" will sufficiently prove this historically. Speaking of the Revelation of St. John, he says:

When we read the Apocalypse without knowing its date or holding the key, such a book seems to us a product of the most individual fancy or caprice, but when we set the vision in its place, in the interval between Nero and Vespasian, when the empire underwent the greatest crisis it had ever known, it is found to be a work marvellously adapted to the conditions of the general mind just then; we may say, too, the condition of the globe itself, for as we shall soon see, the psychical phenomena of the time made an element in the universal horror. Everybody was wild about miracles—never was the mind so taken up with prodigies and signs. The Divine Father seemed to have veiled His Face. Loathsome spectres, monsters born of the slime, mysteries, seemed to float in the air. Everyone thought himself on the eve of some unheard of thing; belief in signs and omens was universal.¹

With regard to the last sign, that knowledge should be increased. Within the last fifty years the world has moved forward with leaps and bounds. Compare the condition of the world to-day with what it was before the year 1844 and you will realize what a wonderful increase in knowledge has taken place. It is as if we were living in an entirely different world from the one people lived in then. Steam and electricity and the wonderful inventions of modern times have brought countries *into* closer relationship than the cities of New York, Boston and Philadelphia were in the early part of the century. All this is to prepare the world for the Kingdom of God and the Universal Brotherhood. The glad tidings have come, and the angels of God have made the announcement, "Peace on earth, good will to men"—the Son of Man does not come this time to bring with Him a sword, but comes to make good the proclamation of the angels, and to bring with Him to the earth the City of God, which John in vision saw descending from the heavens, as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rejoice, O people, and be glad, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.

LESSON 4.—The Ruler of the Kingdom.

1. The finite cannot comprehend the infinite.

a. "God (the Infinite) singly and alone abideth in His own place, which is holy above space and time, mention and utterance, sign, description and definition, height and depth." * * "For that Peerless King (the Infinite) hath been and will be holy for everlasting, above ascent or descent.' •

You will see from these quotations that our conception of and reverence for God the Infinite is such that we do not attempt to describe or define or in any way to limit Him. It is impossible. Now, since we cannot in any way define or limit God or lay down exact rules with relation to Him, it necessarily follows that so far as the conception of the Infinite is concerned,

2. Each soul must approach it in its own way, and form its own conception of it.

That conception will necessarily be in accordance with the degree of soul growth or apprehension to which we have attained; and as through the power of the indwelling spirit we grow in our conscious realization of our nearness to the Infinite and the continual presence of the Spirit of God, our conception will expand and enlarge and our faith grow strong. God the Infinite can only be known to each one of us as He manifests Himself to our individual consciousness. And since the great end which each of us has in view is to have God take up His residence in us,

a. * Therefore must no stranger find his way into the city of the heart, so that the Incomparable Friend may come unto His Own Place."

Now the manner in which the consciousness of the presence of God in the heart will come to each one is beyond all knowing or description. It is one of the mysteries of true religion that

b. "The ways unto God are as many as the breaths of His creatures, and unto each nation hath been appointed a separate rite."

As the Apostle Paul says, there are differences of administration and differences of manifestation, but the same Spirit which worketh all in all. But though we do not attempt to define or limit the Infinite in any sense, or to lay down any hard and fast laws or rules, nevertheless God has certain attributes and characteristics through which (while we may not be able to define the Infinite or understand the essence, any more than we can understand or explain the essence of a piece of iron or any

other essence, but can only know that such essence exists through its attributes) we may approach Him and enter into communion with Him and feel His Care and His Love for us.

3. God has attributes through which He can be approached.

a. John, i, xviii: For though "no man hath seen God at any time, an only begotten Son, which is in the Bosom of His Father, He hath (interpreted) Him.⁰

And not only by His Son, but by His Great Prophets and Redeemers and Chosen has God been interpreted to us. We know that these men came out from God because what they have taught and teach us verifies itself in our own experience, is in consonance with our reason, and is attested by fulfilled prophecy and the actual facts of history. Thus heart, reason and spirit are satisfied and a perfect faith attained.

4. God's Manifestations of Himself have been:

a. First through Moses and the Law.

b. Next through Christ, the Spirit, as the Truth and the Way.

c. And last, through the Great Manifestation for the Time of the Ehd for Justice and Judgment.

5. Through these Manifestations He was and is the Manifested, and as the Infinite He is the Secluded; therefore is He called

a. The Manifested and the Secluded.

By these Manifestations of Himself and the truth that comes through them, attested by prophecy and by history, and by the power of the Spirit working through them, and by "signs" we are able to throw away imaginary gods and to follow the

6. Knowable and Attested Truth.

This is to disregard every evil spirit, crave the witnessed light and turn our faces to the Exalted Position, to the One Great God.

And now we will consider some of the great attributes of God as revealed to us by His Prophets, Redeemers and Chosen* First we will consider

7. His Oneness and Singleness.

We believe, because our reason teaches us, and all the great prophets have so taught, that God is One and Single, the Creator, the First Cause, the Absolute, the Father, the Maker. We do not believe that He can be divided into different personalities. Therefore, believing in God as the Unity, we are Unitarians. That the Old Testament teaches the Lord God Jehovah as the One, the Single, the Individual needs no proof. But listen:

a. Isaiah, xlv, xii: "I have made the earth and created men upon it; I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded."*

b. Job, xii, x: "In whose hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind."

c. Deut., vi, iv; "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord."

- d. Zech., xiv, ix: ⁴⁴In that day there shall be One Lord, and His Name One/'
- e. Exodus, xx, xx.
- f. Isaiah, xliii, xi: "I, even I, am the Lord, and beside Me there is no Savior."
Isaiah, 45th chapter.

Not only is the Old Testament thus definite, but the New is not less so. We do not care to go into any discussion of the manner in which Christ and the Holy Ghost have been set up by and made the equals of the Creator. There is a true Trinity which runs through all nature and which we find in man himself, and we certainly believe in Christ and in the Holy Spirit as reverently and as lovingly as the most indoctrinated Trinitarian in the world. We simply want to point out that Christ Himself taught the Oneness and Singleness of God; denied that He, as the man Jesus, was in any sense God; denied even that He was good, as God was good, and steadily insisted that it was not Him, but the "Father**" working through Him as a channel, who did the works and taught the wisdom. The lawyer, you remember, came to trap Him on this very point, and asked Him which was the greatest of the commandments, and Christ answered—

- g. Mark, xii, xxix: "And Jesus answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord/ ^M

- h. Matt., xix, xvi, xvii: "And behold, one came and said to Him, 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' And He said unto him, 'Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but One, that is, God.'

And again:

- i. John, xiv, xxviii: "Ye have heard how I said unto you I go away and come again unto you. If ye loved Me ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father; for My Father is greater than I."

These are only a few of the many utterances of Jesus which show that He disclaimed in any sense being the Infinite God, or in any way equal to Him. It is true that He taught that He was One with the Father; but He taught that that was in the sense that you and I can be one with Him in the Spirit through the spiritual birth; for He taught that we could aspire to everything that He had, and could be joint heirs with Him. Every one of us ought to strive to be as perfect and as pure and to attain to as great power with the Father as Christ had. If He is the firstborn of many brethren, the elder brother, it is our privilege and our right and our duty to try and imitate Him, and reach as high a plane of soul development as that on which He dwelt. Have we the courage and the strength and the faith, the sublime self-sacrifice, the absolute sweetness and purity of character to reach that high supreme station? Whether we have or not, we should, like the Apostle Paul, die daily to the flesh, and press forward to the goal. Paul would have been as great as Christ if he could. That was the ambition of his life. That was why he rejoiced in

in tribulations and sufferings and regarded his martyrdom as a triumph. He knew the path the soul had to tread to get the great baptism of fire, and therefore he hailed affliction and privation in the way of God with joy.

8. Personality of God.

While, as we have seen, we *do not limit God as to Personality*, we believe that His greatest attribute is Personality, Intelligence, Individuality, Identity.

a. To deny God Personality is to limit Him by negation; is to make Him less than His creatures.

b. This denial of the Personality of God leads to imaginations and superstitions.

c. Having lost anchorage in the Oneness of God, people fall a prey to subconscious influences, and commence to wander through that land of wandering, the psychic nature, without guide.

d. In other words, when we desert God, He gives us over to our delusions; and while we are boasting that we cannot accept the idea of a Personal God, chances are that we will set up and worship all sorts of things as gods—that we will be surrounded by a thousand gods and a million devils.

THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM.

We have now come to the point where, in the orderly presentation of our subject we ought to consider the nature of the great Kingdom of God to be established, in which all the religions of the earth are to find their fulfillment, and the dreams and hopes of all the sincere lovers of God and humanity their realization.

The prophets of all nations have been unanimous in foretelling that the Day of God would come when He should establish His rule on the earth; the question we have to consider now is the manner in which we are to expect this Kingdom or "Ruledom" to be established.

At the outset, in order to get as clear a conception of the Ruler of the Kingdom Himself, so that from His very nature we may form some idea of the character of the dominion He will exercise, it will be well to consider the definition of God which Jesus gave us. "God," he said, "is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth." This He said when he was asked where, in the latter days, God was to be worshipped.

If God is a Spirit, or better, Spirit, then from His very nature it must follow that His Kingdom will be a Spiritual Kingdom. We are therefore not to look for a material Kingdom to be set up in some particular place, but for a "Placeless" Kingdom to be established in the hearts of men, citizenship in which can only be obtained through the medium of the consciousness, since "no man can say that Christ (The Word) is Lord save through the Holy Spirit."

From the prophets we learn that *it* is a Spiritual City which is to descend from the heavens, which they have symbolized as the Bride, or Virgin; the Truth, or Word of God, is the Bride, and the Revelator, or Manifestation, is the Center of that Truth, or the Bridegroom, and the Child which is born of that Divine Union is the Revelation, or Faith.

The announcement of the Great Kingdom of Peace, the message of which will be the subject of our next Lesson, is made in the following beautiful and holy Tablet:

"O ye, the beloved of God and the children of God, the New Heaven is already established and the New Holy Jerusalem is already descended from Heaven, from the Presence of the Almighty, in the form of a Glorious Virgin, excellent in her beauty, an unequalled gem among the other virgins, secluded in the tents, ready to receive- The highest of the angels of the Kingdom have called in the ears of the inhabitants of the earth and heavens with a loud and melodious voice, saying:

"This is the City of God, and His Residence with the holy and sanctified souls of His servants. He *shall live with them, for they are His people and He is their God.*"

The Song of Solomon is a divine poem celebrating this great event and foreseeing it in vision. It is the Song of the Christ, the Anointed One, in honor of His nuptials with the Heavenly Beloved—the Word of God. And St. John in the vision on the Isle of Patmos, so sees the Golden City coming down from heaven as a Bride adorned for her Husband, the Holy Virgin descending for her marriage to the Lamb of God, from which Holy Union is born the Divine Child (God with us), the pure faith of God on the earth, the New Revelation in the condition of Edenic Purity.

In the Bible we have prominently and conspicuously before us three different symbolic women; the first, the Virgin, mentioned by Isaiah (vii, xiv), who was to conceive and bear a child and call his name Emanuel; second, the woman mentioned in the 12th chapter of Revelations, clothed with the sun and with the moon under her feet, where she is to be preserved 1260 days (years), and whose son is to rule the world with a rod of iron; third, that painted and bedecked creature in the 17th chapter of Revelations, *who* had in *her* hand a cup full of abominations, and upon whose forehead was written the name, *'Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth."

The figure of the woman is the symbol of the Truth of God. The three women mentioned symbolize the Truth of God in three different conditions, *or stages*:

First—The Virgin, the Pure Faith, as it comes from the hands of the Revelator.

Second—The woman here represents the Truth pursued by superstition and priestcraft (the dragon) fleeing into the wilderness, from where, after the 1260 years, the Revelation is to come which is to rule all nations with a rod of iron.

Third—The Truth corrupted by superstitions and priestcraft and degraded.

Here read Isaiah, vii, xiv to xx.

That this Virgin mentioned by Isaiah is not a real woman a little study of the text will disclose,

The Christian theologians have made this 7th chapter of Isaiah refer to Mary, the mother of Jesus, but this interpretation will not do.

Because, first, the Virgin was to name the child Emanuel (God with us); but Mary called the child Jesus, which means Savior.

The real child was not fed on butter and honey.

Before the child should be old enough to know good from evil great destruction was to overtake the Jews. No destruction came during the lifetime of Christ. If you take the chapter literally the prophecy is clearly not fulfilled in Jesus. It is plain, therefore, that the interpretation is not literal, but spiritual. Interpreted correctly, the fulfillment is exact.

First—The Word of God (Virgin) married to the Lamb (Christ) gives birth to the pure faith (Christianity). The disciples of Jesus called Him God with us, the Christ, and Thomas said, "My Lord and My God," It was the Truth, the Spirit Jesus brought that was God! with us. The presence of Christ was with His disciples more powerfully after His crucifixion than it had been before.

Second—That the child was fed on butter and honey means the spiritual food of love and wisdom which strengthened the early Christians.

Third—While the new faith was yet in its infancy and purity, before any corruptions had crept in and it was in the stage of martyrdom, the destruction of Jerusalem came and a million and a half of the Jews were put to the sword. Isaiah prophesies of this destruction, "And the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost parts of Egypt, and it shall come and rest in the desolate valleys," and it was indeed so. No such complete destruction and dispersion ever overtook a people as then overtook the Jews, only thirty-seven years after the crucifixion of Jesus.

If the early Christians had attached the importance to the miraculous birth of Jesus that the constructors of theology have, surely St. Mark and St. John would say something about it; but they both commence their accounts with the advent of the 'Forerunner. There is reason to believe, too, that the accounts given in Matthew and Luke were not part of those Gospels as originally written but were added after the Alexandrine school of Christian philosophy had commenced theology building. At any rate, the two accounts are contradictory and are of such a character that they cannot be taken literally. Both Matthew and Luke give genealogies of Christ — but they do not agree with each other. Then, too, they both trace Christ back to David through Joseph. If we deny that Joseph was

his father the genealogy falls to the ground. Then, too, Christ himself disclaimed it. He quoted the ninth Psalm 'The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand'. "How**", said Jesus, "could David call him Lord, if he was his father?" The Apostle Paul claimed for Jesus no descent from David, but asserted that he was "a priest forever after the Order of Melchisedek" to whom no genealogy or "apostolic succession"¹ can be traced. So that both Jesus and Paul interpreted the Virgin spiritually. If you take the Virgin in Matthew and Luke literally, you must take all the rest of the account literally. Read it carefully, and you will see that this cannot be done.

Add to all this the fact that the brothers of Jesus, according to the account, did not believe in him, and that his mother, to whom the angel appeared and to whom such astonishing things had happened and such astonishing revelations been made, did not at all understand his mission, and that when his mother and his brethren called to see Jesus he refused to admit them, and, pointing to his disciples said "behold *my mother* and *my brethren*", and we can see that the whole account, taken literally, is not only so miraculous as to be impossible of real belief, but is also contrary to the real facts of the history of Jesus.

Then, in conclusion, we may consider the uselessness of the story. Why require people to believe that which, from the very nature of things, admits of no proof? People are not converted to Christianity by proving miracles to them, but by preaching the love of Christ. Remember what Jesus said "If they will not believe Moses and the prophets (the word of God because of its truth) neither would they believe though one were to return from the dead." And again, "A wicked and an adulterous *generation seeks a sign.*" Christ did *not rest his case on miracles*, but on his words, which he said "were Spirit and life." The only possible purpose this literal interpretation could serve is to prove that Jesus was the one prophesied about by Isaiah; but we have seen that the Spiritual interpretation does this more completely than the literal — so, as a matter of reason and common sense, what possible purpose can the literal interpretation and dogma serve?

The purpose of going into the matter of this dogma, is not to antagonize a belief that anyone may hold sacred, and we all have the God-given right to believe as we please, but it is hoped that the real and spiritual interpretation will be seen to be so much preferable, so much more explanatory and in accordance with Spiritual truth and the facts of history, that the old conception can be quietly laid on the shelf as a thing over which men have quarreled for ages to no good purpose.

The Spiritual interpretation teaches us this:

That, as Jesus of Nazareth was born of human parents after the manner of men, though he himself said he came down from heaven, so when the Son of *Man* about whom Jesus prophesied comes in the clouds of ignorance, superstition and unbelief,

down from heaven, he will come in the same way Jesus came — in the flesh as a man, in the same way that you and I and every one else comes — of human parents.

He will come, as he came before, to do the will of Him who sends him, and he will *bring* with him the New Holy Jerusalem, the Word of God, his Revelation, his Covenant, or Testament. And we should never forget that that which in reality comes is the Truth of God, the Pure Faith on the earth, and that the Revelator who brings it is the Great Center to which all eyes must turn for knowledge and inspiration. In that day, said God through Joel, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.' ■

We must expect, then, a personal Revelator, or Prophet, or anointed one to appear, who shall "come as a man, eating and drinking with men in quiet/'

LESSON 5. — The Message of the Kingdom*

Mirza Abdul Fadzle, one of the teachers of this great faith in the East, was invited to a religious discussion at the *city* of Kashan, a place of *some* 30,000 inhabitants, with three distinguished Rabbis and some equally well known Mohammedan Mullahs. At that conference he asked Mordecai, the most learned of the Rabbis, how, since the Prophet Isaiah had been sent from God authorized to close the eyes, seal up the ears, and harden the hearts of the Jews, and the Prophet Daniel had been sent authorized to "Seal up the Book" until the time of the end, anyone could have any confidence in the interpretations of the Rabbis, or how it was possible for them to understand the inner signification of the Scriptures? Mordecai, of course, could not answer him.

And this same thing was true of the Christians. Christ told them that he had many things to tell them, but that they could not hear them at that time; that at the time of the end the hidden things would be revealed, and he quoted with approval the very chapter in Daniel where the Prophet is told to close up the Book till the time of the end. How then, the book being sealed and the time of the end not arrived, is it possible for Christians to attain to the real inward signification and prophetic meaning of scripture?

And yet, as you will see, some of the students of prophecy have come wonderfully near to the Truth- While the real and exact interpretation has been veiled from them, they have nevertheless caught occasional clear glances of the Truth.

Totten, the American writer and student of prophecy, worked out the year 1892 as the year of Jehovah. He says that cabalistically the letters Jovh in the word Jehovah have the numerical value 1892. Whether this be true or not; the year 1892 was the year this great student of prophecy fixed as the year of God.

Dr. Cummings, the English student of prophecy, fixes the year as 1867.

Samuel Miller, the founder of the Adventist Church, fixed 1844 as the year.

We shall see that all of these men were close to the truth.

In the year 1844 the Millerites gave away their property, dressed themselves in white, and went out to see their Lord coming in the clouds, and expected to be caught up into the air to meet Him, they did know that the words "breath" and "air" are the symbols of the spirit, and that Christ himself compared the spirit to the wind, and that being caught up in the air meant to be brought into spiritual

union with Him, nor could they comprehend that the clouds were not what we commonly understand the word to mean. And so they were disappointed, Christ did not come to them. But they were not entirely mistaken — for in that very year, on the 23rd day of May, in that country where Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's Vision, the stone the prophet spoke about rolled down and the message of the coming of the Kingdom of God was delivered.

This year 1844 was a great year in the history of the earth. At this period there was great religious excitement all over the world.

The movement of the Millerites excited great attention everywhere; there were great religious revivals. In 1847 Spiritualism made its appearance at Rochester and the excitement was increased. Nor was this excitement confined to civilized countries. The Mohammedan countries were aflame by the delivery of the great message, and even China was in a ferment on account of the Tae Ping Movement, which came near to overthrowing the then ruling Dynasty and opening China to the foreigners in the Spirit of brotherly love. The Tae Ping movement was a Christian movement, inaugurated by this Tae Ping, who had found a copy of the Testament translated into Chinese, and had become a Christian by reading it. Read the account given by James Freeman Clark in his Ten Great Religions.

The Spirit of God was making itself felt over the world. "I will send my Spirit before my face." If you study closely you will see that since this time, 1844, or thereabouts, there has been a great awakening in almost every department of human life; and while, religiously, people have come to question the liberal interpretation and to break away in great numbers from the old dogmatic teaching about the Bible, nevertheless there never was a time when religion was as widely discussed, as much written about and as prominently before the minds of the People as it has been for the last half-century, and particularly in the last few years, when even the great daily newspapers devote considerable time and space to it. The meaning is that while it is the Winter time, the night time, the time of clouds and thick darkness for the old order which must pass away, nevertheless the Spirit of God is preparing the way for the spring-time of souls, when there shall be general resurrection and rejoicing, a new heaven and a new earth, and the "Goodness of the Lord" shall be seen in the land of the living.

On the 23rd of May, in the year 1844, being the Mohammedan year 1260, the forerunner of the Kingdom, the Voice of One crying in the wilderness make straight the way of the Lord, the Spirit of the Prophet Elijah, as written in Malachi, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the great and notable day of the Lord/" appeared in Persia. This Messenger and Forerunner of the Kingdom of God was a young man of twenty-five years, by name Mirza Ali Muhammed, and known in history as the Bab.

"The Bab was a young merchant of the pure lineage. He was born in 1819, and he was brought up in Shiraz in the arms of his maternal uncle Mirza Sayyid All the merchant. On attaining maturity he engaged in trade in Bushire, first in partnership with his uncle and afterwards independently. He was noted for Godliness, devoutness, virtue and piety, and was regarded in the sight of men as so characterized.

The wonderful inspiration of the Bab and his pure and lofty character are matters of history. Those who knew him best loved him most. The most learned and pious people flocked to his standard. The Sufi philosophers in particular, and those who looked beneath the surface of Scripture and had glimpses of the inner meaning and significations, gathered around him, and the hearts of the sincere were everywhere made glad; but the hearts of the Pharisees were darkened. The Mohammedan doctors and lawyers, just as did the Jewish in the time of Christ, commenced to invent lies and stir up the hearts of the people and the minds of the rulers against him and against his followers.

They said that the *4Babis allowed their women to go unveiled, and to sit with them their in assemblies; that they taught the equality of the woman with the man, that they were communists and that they contemplated arebellion and the overthrow of the Go/ernment of the Shah an! the substitution of some kind of communism or socialism.

And here we want to call attention to what Christ said, that at the coming of the Son of Man and of the Kingdom of God, those who believed would be persecuted and hated and killed for his name's sake. At the instigation and through the connivence of these Pharisees of Persia, the Mullahs, between 30,000 and 50,000 people, followers of the Bab, were martyred in the twenty years succeeding the announcement of the coming of the Kingdom. And never in the whole history of the world, have there been more glorious martyrs than these, and we do not except the early christian mart rs, glorious as they were. These people, all of them, so far as we have the account, laid do.vn their lives with a patience and quietness, a firmness and sweetness, that almost passes belief, and most usually with smiles on their faces and thanksgiving on their lips. Those people died blessing those who put them to death, and martyrdom was not a thing dreaded, but a thing rather saught by them. They could have saved their lives by simply saying "I am not a Babi;" but there are no cases on record where their courage failed them at tho critical moment and they recanted. They were put to death in every manner which the Oriental imagination could invent. Strangled with the bow-string, hewn in pieces

by knives, red hot bricks applied to their breasts, holes cut in their flesh and candles inserted — they died all sorts of deaths without flinching, without recanting, and blessing their persecutors- One of the most notable of these martyrs was a woman — the celebrated Kurratu '1 Ain. She was a poetess and writer, and exceedingly beautiful. She was one of the Bab's earliest disciples, and was one of his 18 Letters of the Living, or Apostles. Seated behind a curtain, she used to lecture and preach to the people and made many converts, especially among the learned. The Bab called her "Her Excellency, The Pure."

Prof. Brown M'rites of her as follow s>

4'The appearance of such a woman as Kurratu '1 Ain is in any country and any age a rare phenomenon, but ix* such a country as Persia it is a prodigy — nay almost a miracle. Alike in virtue of her marvellous beauty, her rare intellectual gifts, her fervid eloquence, her fearless devotion and her glorious martydom, she stands forth iucomparable and immortal amidst *her countrywomen*. *Had* the Babi religion *no* other claim to greatness, this was sufficient — that it produced a heroine like

Kurratu '1 Ain."

This pure, beautiful, gentle and highly gifted woman her persecutors subjected to all sorts of indignities and finally strangled with the bow-string, throwing her into a well which they filled with bricks and broken stones, ami leaving her there. She died as the Babis always died, with great resignation and without umrmer or complaint.

Now these persecutions are in themselves one of the greatest, if not the very greatest of signs. The prophets tell us, all of them, that the time of the end is to see the persecution of the Holy people. Christ himself plainly prophesies it in the ?4th Chapter of Matthew verses 30-31. Now, if he came in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, as a mighty Monarch and Ruler, a King on David's Throne, could they have the power to persecute and kill his followers?

Christ also said "By their fruits you shall know them," and the people were to know where the Truth was at the time of the end by the fruit it would bear. What more glorious fruit can the tree of truth bear than that which lays down its life for a friend, and shows fortli kiudness and gentleness and patience under the hands of the persecutor? How can God show where his Truth, his real truth is, save through his rnartvrs?

ⓂWhere the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

Turn your eyes to our people in the East, and inquire of their reputation from friends and foes alike, and you will see where the eagles are gathered.

Thousands upon thousands of people believed in the Bab in a very few years, in fact, in almost a few days. Never was a prophet so quickly received, and never did a religion grow with such astonishing rapidity. And now, beginning only in the year 1844, when the announcement of the Kingdom was first made, we number more than a million believers distributed in various countries.

We have among our believers people who were formerly of almost every religion — Mohammedans, Shi'ites, Sunnites, Parsees, Jews, Christians and Buddhists,

and they all worship together as friends and brothers, all religious differences sunk in the new faith. In Persia, where the Jewish population is estimated at about 25,000, fully two-thirds of them, and all of the younger generation, are of us. The same is true of the Parsees, or Zoroastrians, who are very easily converted. And yet these people, the Jews and the Parsees, have been considered the most tenacious in faith and the hardest of all peoples to induce to change their religious opinions, there could be no greater proof of the great power of this religion than this one, that Jews and Parsees are converted by it by thousands and lay down their old, traditions and narrow minded ideas forever,

What the Bab taught was this:- That that which the prophets had foretold had come to pass. That he was but the forerunner of One whom God would manifest, whose shoe-latchets, so to speak, he was unworthy to unloose. He used to say "When He whom God shall manifest appears, His very presence, together with His power of utterance and explanation will be His sufficient Signs, and one saying of His will be worth my whole Book of Beyan," (Or utterances) which was a Book he wrote for his followers while he was in prison at Maku. He taught that He whom God would manifest might appear at any time, and warned his followers to incline to belief rather than to doubt. As he taught the people he would have near him a divan or chair over which was spread a beautiful Turkish shawl, indicating that the Manifestation of God might come to occupy the seat thus provided at any minute. The Bab was martyred in 1850. The manner of his death was as follows: A nail was driven into a wall and he was hung, or suspended from it by a rope, together with a young man who had acted as amanuensis for him, in such a manner that the head of the young man was on the Bab's breast. A firing party, or company of soldiers, was brought out and commanded to fire, which they did in three successive volleys, or files. When the smoke cleared away it was found that the Bab was uninjured — the bullets had simply cut the ropes with which he was bound, and he was found quietly seated in the cell from which he had been taken. The amanuensis was killed by the volleys. The Bab was again tied up to the wall, and the soldiers ordered to fire, but they refused. Another firing party was then sent for, who finished the work, but we are told that only the body of the Bab was hit — his face was not marred at all, or very slightly disfigured. So died this pure soul — a martyr to the truth of the glorious message which he had brought to the world.

BAHA'U'LLAH.

At his death he appointed as the head of the Babist Church, one Mirza Yahya, known as Subhi-Ezel, who occupied that place temporarily, until the year 1852, when HE WHOM GOD SHOULD MANIFEST, foretold by the Bab, appeared. This exalted personage is known in history as Baha 'Ullah, which means "The Glory of God."

Baha'u'llah was born in 1817. In 1852, when he announced himself as being "He whom God should Manifest," he was 35 years of age. His family name was Mirza Huseyn Ali, of Noori, (Noori meaning the City of Light) and he was of the

family of one of the ministers, and was of noble lineage, although not himself a nobleman.

•'Although he combined lofty lineage with high connection, and although his ancestors were men of note in Persia, and universally sought after, yet he was not of a race of Doctors or a family of scholars. Now this youth was from his earliest adolescence celebrated amongst those of the Ministerial class, both relatives and strangers, for single mindedness, and was from childhood pointed out as remarkable for sagacity, and held in regard in the eyes of the wise. In the eyes of the common people he enjoyed a wonderful esteem, and in all gatherings and assemblies he had a marvelous speech and delivery. Notwithstanding lack of instruction and education such was the keenness of his penetration and the readiness of his apprehension that when during his youthful prime he appeared in assemblies where questions of divinity and points of metaphysics were being discussed and in presence of a great concourse of Doctors loosed his tongue, all those present were amazed, accounting this as a sort of prodigy beyond the discernment natural to the human race. From his early years he was the hope of his kindred and the unique one of his family and race, nay, their refuge and shelter.

"His eloquence was like evident sorcery. He had a mighty power of utterance and exposition. Learned Doctors and Divines who were chosen to refute his arguments and convict him of error, after an hour or so of conversation would "Unfold like the rose,"* be stirred like the multitude, and abandoning altar, chair, pulpit and preferment, apply themselves to the furtherance of his objects, and become martyrs in his way."

Such was the personality of this wonderful man, the manifestation of God, the servant of the Infinite.

The Bab had declared that the Glory of God, He whom God would Manifest, would announce himself in the year "After awhile" in the following language:

'I am a letter out of that most mighty book, and a dew drop from that limitless ocean; and when he shall appear in my true nature, my mysteries, riddles and intimations, will become evident and the embryo of this religion shall develop through the grades of its being and ascent. And this event will disclose itself in the year "After awhile." The year "A while"*¹ was the year A. H. 1268, and the year "After awhile" would therefore be the year A. H. 1269, which corresponds to our christian year 1852.

Shortly after the Manifestation announced his true mission the Babis, the Shah ordered him to renounce his allegiance to Persia and to leave his dominions. Thus he became a man without a country and was not subject, except in the sense of being an exile and prisoner, to any of the Kings of the Earth.

Leaving Persia he went to Baghdad, where he lived about eleven years, constantly writing and teaching and growing in fame and in power.

In 1867 he went to Adrianople (or rather was exiled there), and in that year (dimming's) he publicly laid claim to being the fulfillment of all the prophecies and the Manifestation of God—About the year 1869 he was sent from Adrianople to Akka, the headquarters of our Faith.

When he first went to Akka it was the most desolate of all places, a veritable habitation of the owl and the bat. It was the city where the Turkish government sent its criminals and political suspects, and still sends them—a prison place selected because it was pestilential and fever breeding. After the Manifestation went there, the desert and the solitary place were made to rejoice, and that which had been a plain filled with mouldering bones became a flower garden.

Prof. Edward G. Brown, of Cambridge, who visited it about 1890, describes it as follows;

"The last day was perhaps the most delightful of all, and I was greatly astonished on entering the Acre plain to behold a wealth of beautiful gardens and fragrant orange groves, such as I little expected to find in what Baha has stigmatized as 'The most desolate of countries/ I subsequently mentioned this feeling of surprise to the Babis of Akka, who replied that had I seen it when Baha first came there nearly two and twenty years ago, I should not have deemed the title misapplied, but since he had dwelt there, it had assumed this fair and comely aspect."

In the 35th chapter of Isaiah, one of the most beautiful in the Bible, you will find a prophesy about this. Acre (or Akka) is at the northern extremity of the Valley of Sharon, and is very evidently the place (near Mt. Carmel) to which the Great Seer referred.

Seven years of the Manifestation's life in Acre was spent in confinement in a single room, and two of them in chains. During that time he was continuously at work writing and perfecting the religion of the Great Kingdom.

In 1860, while still at Adrianople, Baha wrote letters or tablets to the Kings and Rulers of the Earth, in which he invited them to the spiritual banquet of the Kingdom of God, which had been spread, and announced Himself to them as the Manifestation of God and the fulfillment of all the prophecies. This time, 1867-9, the time which the English student of prophecy, Dr. Cummings, figured as the time of the end, was, as will be seen, the time which the prophets had fixed for this general announcement to the world.

Baha sent tablets, among others, to the United States, England, Russia,

France, Egypt and the Holy See, or Pope. We do not know what became of the one sent to the United States. Queen Victoria, upon receiving the tablet sent to her, said: "If this thing be of God, it will stand; if not, time will take care of it," or words of like import. This was considered a wise and good answer.

The Czar sent an Ambassador to investigate, and we are told he was deeply impressed if not converted to the Faith. Whether this fair treatment of the Manifestation's invitation has anything to do with it or not, the fact is that Russia has enjoyed an almost unexampled era of prosperity in the past thirty years, and is rapidly becoming the most important and influential factor in the Eastern problem which is vexing the world. It is also worthy of comment that the country which treated the letter of the Manifestation with respect has had the great honor to have called the first great conference of the nations looking to the establishment of universal peace. It should also possibly be noted that in Russia capital punishment has been abolished and the Siberian exile system abandoned. In Count Lea Tolstoi, too (may the blessing of God rest on him), Russia has the honor of having produced one of the very greatest men of this and all other ages.

When Napoleon III. received the tablet, he tore it up and exclaimed: "If this man be God, then I am two Gods/* When the Manifestation's messengers returned to him the answer of the Emperor of the French, He addressed to him a second letter, in which He told him that he had thrown the invitation of God behind him, and that instead of being "two Gods," he would be humiliated, would lose his crown, and would die an exile. This prophecy of Baha was literally fulfilled. Only a short time after this event the war between Germany and France broke out. Napoleon was badly beaten, forced to abdicate, and died an exile in England in 1873. He deserved his fate, and his own acts brought it on him. For the gratification of his own personal ambition he had plunged two great nations into war, and hundreds of thousands of lives went out in order that he might be exalted as the worthy *successor oi that scourge ot* nations, the *Corsican Bonaparte*.

To Ishmael Pasha, the Khedive of Egypt, the letter or tablet of the Manifestation was sent by the hands of six messengers. The Khedive treated the invitation with scorn, and promptly imprisoned and banished the messengers who brought

it. Whereupon Baha wrote him that he, Ishmael Pasha, would die in exile from his own country and his dead body would be sent back to it, but that the six messengers of the Kingdom of God whom he had banished would be liberated and return to their wives and families and friends. This prophecy was also liter-

ally fulfilled. Ishmael Pasha, who had been one of the most cruel and merciless tyrants the world had ever seen, was deposed by the English Government, banished, *died* in exile, and his dead body was shipped back to Egypt. The great English general, Chinese Gordon, finding the six messengers of the Manifestation in prison and no accusation against them, released them, and they returned to their friends and families.

The Pope did not kindly receive the tablet sent to him, and he was told that the City of Rome would be taken from him, which all the world knows happened shortly after.

These events are matters of history. We have authentic copies of the tablets and their dates, and the fulfillment is plain and open to all. Many wonderful stories are told of the prophetic utterances of Baha and of their fulfillment. We have shown that one of the true powers of the real prophet is foreknowledge of the future.

Of his wonderful personality many stories are also told. One in particular of a Mohammedan Mullah, writer and philosopher, Nabil, who swore an oath by the Prophet that, for the sake of the True Faith he would kill Bahauallah, whom he regarded as a menace to the Mohammedan religion. So, with dagger and pistol, he sought out the Manifestation to kill him. But when he saw Baha'u'llah and looked into his face, he threw dagger and pistol away, knelt at his feet, kissed the hem of his garment and straightway became his devoted follower.

A pathetic story is told of a Turkish soldier at Akka, whose duty it was every day to adjust the shackles *to* Baha's limbs at meal time and at other times when he had to be temporarily free. This soldier was converted to the Babi faith without any teaching whatever through this daily contact with his prisoner. He used to kiss the hands and limbs of the man on whom he was putting chains, and finally his task became so abhorrent to him that he would cry like a child and threaten *to* refuse to obey orders and give it up. But the Manifestation would encourage and console him, and remind him that he was a soldier, and assure him that it was all right, and that he must not take it to heart, but must do his duty to those whose right it was to command him.

Of the spiritual power which manifests itself through the Babi Faith and of the personality of its great leader, we have the following from Prof. Brown, whose description of the Acre plain we have already given:

"So here at Bahji was I installed as a guest, in the very midst of all that Babism accounts most noble and most holy; and here did I spend five most memorable days, during which I *enjoyed* unparalleled and unhopd for opportu-

nities of holding intercourse with those who are the very fountain heads of that mighty and wondrous spirit which works with invisible but ever-increasing force for the transformation and quickening of a people who slumber in a sleep like unto death. It was in truth a strange and moving experience, but one whereof I despair of conveying any save the feeblest impression. I might, indeed, strive to describe in greater detail the faces and forms which surrounded me, the conversations to which I was privileged to listen, the solemn, melodious reading of the sacred books, the general sense of harmony and content which pervaded the place, and the fragrant and shady gardens whither in the afternoon we sometimes repaired; but all of this was as naught in comparison with the spiritual atmosphere with which I was encompassed. Persian Muslims *will tell* you often that, the Babis bewitch or drug their guests, so that these, impelled by a fascination which they cannot resist, become similarly affected with what the aforesaid Muslims regard as a strange and incomprehensible madness. Idle and absurd as this belief is, it yet rests on a basis of fact stronger than that which supports the greater part of what they allege concerning this people.

"The spirit which pervades the Babis is such that it can hardly fail to affect most powerfully all subjected to its influence. It may appall or attract; it cannot be ignored or disregarded. Let those who have not seen disbelieve me if they will: but should that spirit once reveal itself to them they will experience an emotion which they are not likely *to forget*/*

Of his audience with Baha, Prof. Brown writes:

"Though I dimly suspected whither I was going and whom I was to behold (for no distinct intimation had been given to me), a second or two elapsed ere, with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untenanted. In the *corner*, where the divan met the wall, sat a wondrous and venerable figure, crowned with a felt head-dress of the kind called *taj* by Dervishes (but of unusual height and make), around the base of which was wound a small white turban. The face of Him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which Kings might envy and Emperors sigh for *in vain*!

"A mild, dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued: 'Praise be to

God that thou hast attained! Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile. We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment. That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religions should cease and difference of race be annulled—what harm is there

in this? Yet so it shall be. These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the Most Great Peace shall come.....Do not you in Europe need this also? Is not this that which Christ foretold?_____Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind. These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family_____Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this> that he loves his kind/ "

The Manifestation departed from the mortal form and went to the glory beyond the veil of the seen in the year 1892. Heie let it be noted that he left Teheran an exile as the guide and leader of the Babi». in 1852, and that, as he departed this life in 1892. his mission had occupied precisely forty years; for just exactly forty years he had been an exile and a prisoner, a man without a country, owing allegiance to no earthly sovereign or potentate, and during that forty years he had continually refreshed the thirsty earth with the water of his teachings. A period of exile, of fasting, of prayer and of teaching.

Following are extracts from an account of the departure of Bahauallah, translated from the Persian and condensed by Mirza S. M. Raffie:

"At Acre, nine months before its occurrence, the Manifestation announced the date of His departure to his son Abbas Effendi, and also spoke to others of it. On Saturday, the nth Shaval, ijog (corresponding to A. D. 1892), he was taken ill with fever, but he told no one of it. On Sunday a large number of Believers assembled, but during the night the fever had increased so much that he could see but one believer at a time. On Monday, the third day of the fever, but one believer was with him; before noon another came. The Manifestation remained up, sometimes sitting and sometimes walking about. Later Haji Niaz Karrmani arrived on a pilgrimage. He was admitted to the presence of Behauallah and a crowd of Believers also. From that time on till Wednesday people were continually coming and going all day. After Wednesday no one had permission to go. One of the Branches (sons), Mirza Zio'Ollah. reported that the Manifestation said to him; "I have written a book with my own hand and have

sealed it with my seal, and everything needful for you and for all the believers is in that book/' This is the Kitab El-Ahd (the Book of the Covenant, the will of Baha).

On the ninth day of the illness, the Greatest Branch (Oldest Son) went to the House of Pilgrimage, and gave the love of Baha 'Ullah to all the believers, and said to them: "He says, with his blessed tongue, be patient, quiet and firm in your faith. Be careful to give the message to ail the world. No one must be alarmed; I am with you *everywhere*, and I remember you.** The believers were very sad because these words foretold the departure of the Manifestation. Their tears overflowed-

On Sunday, the fifteenth of the illness, all the believers assembled at the palace of Behje, All the tourist pilgrims were present also. The Manifestation sent one *oi* his *sons* to call the believers together at His bedside. They *c^me* in confusion and in tears, kissing the limbs and the feet of His Holiness. He blessed them all and said: "I am satisfied with you all. Wherever you go. I hope that you will *fm*]* a door open to you, a^d that you all. with one mind, in harmony and love, will spread the word of God all over the world wherever you can." On the last *day oi the ittne><< nbovt* two o'clock in the morning, he passed out. Concerning his departure he had written a tablet nineteen years before the event, and six years after his arrival *at Akka*.

Hadji Niaz Karmam (whom we shall possibly some day have the honor of seeing in this country) asked the privilege of building the Manifestation's tomb, and with his own hands dug out the ground for the first stone.

Baha 'Ullah at the time of his departure was *77 years* and *10 months* old (Mohammedan time), or about 75 years of our time. He was born in 1817, departed in 1892, and consequently lived 75 years. He was 35 years old when he left Teheran as the leader of the Babis, and his mission, as already noted, lasted just 40 years.

ABDUL BAHA ABBAS—THE BRANCH .

The year 1892, which Totten had figured out as the year of Jehovah, was the year the Manifestation completed his day on this earth, and said, "It is finished. In the Book of Ahd. the Book of the Covenant, and the Kitab 'I Akdas, the Book of Laws, and in special tablets and otherwise, he plainly told the people that when the sun of his beauty had set, they were to turn their faces to Abbas-Efendi, the Greatest Branch as the Center of the Covenant and His Testament.

So, in this year 1892. the mantle of His Father s power and authority fell on

the shoulders of the Son, who is at the present time the great head of our people, though he is a prisoner and an exile at Akka. While we believe Him to be the incarnation of the Word of God, the Spirit of the Christ, and the second coming about which Jesus prophesied, He himself makes no claim whatever. He calls himself simply Abdul Baha, which, being interpreted, means the Servant of Baha. He speaks of Himself as one clothed in the mantle of servitude for the Beloved of El Baha, that is to say, for the people of Baha.

Prof. Brown, in writing of his impression of Him at the time he saw Him, before the Spirit of His Mission had fallen on Him (Abbas) and while He was simply one of His Father's followers, says:

"One more eloquent of speech, more ready of argument, more apt of illustration, more intimately acquainted with the sacred books of the Jews, the Christians and the Mohammedans could, I should think, scarcely be found even among the eloquent, ready and subtle race to which He belongs. These qualities combined with a bearing at once majestic and genial made me cease to wonder at the influence and esteem which He enjoys even beyond the circle of His Father's followers. About the greatness of this man and his power no one who had seen him could entertain a doubt." Since the Personality behind the veil of Being has made the Temple of His Body the place of Its abode and speaks through Him, his radiance and glory are such as to defy description. Just as Prof. Brown said of Baha: "The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it," so in the case of Abdul Baha not a pilgrim has returned from paying a visit to the Holy City (and many Americans have gone there) who can give any adequate description of the Personality they beheld. Not a one. so far as the writer of this knows, and he knows personally many who have gone, has come back doubting. They all bear the same testimony: 'Truly, this is the Christ of God.' If you ask them, however, to give you an account of their sensations when in His presence and a description of His person, they all agree that it is impossible. The testimony of the English scholar that no one who had seen him could entertain a doubt as to His greatness and power, is corroborated by every returning pilgrim.

The life that He leads, a prisoner and an exile, surrounded by enemies who are continually telling lies about Him and plotting His downfall, while He gives Himself to prayer, is a perfect fulfillment of prophesy. He is indeed wounded in the house of His friends, and has found His enemies to be those of His own household: for, as the brothers and family of Jesus igo years ago did not understand His mission and refused to follow Him, and Jesus, pointing to His disciples,

said, "Behold my mother and my brethren/* so now Abbas (which means in the Arabic Lion—the Lion of the tribe of Judah) finds His brothers jealous of Him and continually plotting to injure His reputation and prevent the progress of the Cause of God. They might as well undertake to prevent the sun from shining or the rain from falling. The gentleness, the patience and the kindness with which he continually treats these poor, misguided ones is a continual example and reminder to His followers, who, of course, being human, find it hard to be patient and gentle when they see their beloved Master insulted and calumniated. Nevertheless, such is the sweetness of the temper of these people that they never return word for word in kind, always return good for evil and answer insult by kindness.

What a perfect fulfillment of prophecy all this is can be seen by reading the 109th and 110th psalms.

Psalm 109. "Hold not Thy peace. O God of my praise, for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and have fought against me without a cause. For my love they are my adversaries, but I give myself unto prayer. And they have returned me evil for good and hatred for my love. SET THOU A WICKED ONE OVER HIM, AND LET SATAN STAND AT HIS RIGHT HAND/'

Just as Judas was the Treasurer of the Twelve and turned traitor, so a trusted old man, who was one of the Manifestation's followers, and held a post of honor in the household, has been the instigator of this trouble, and has been Satan standing at the right hand of one of the brothers of the Greatest Branch, in whose mind he has succeeded in sowing the seeds of wrong guidance. It is the continual prayer of our people that these mistaken ones and the handful who are misled by them, may be loosed from the error which binds them.

In the 110th psalm we read:

"The Lord said unto my Lord (the Manifestation said *to* the Branch), sit Thou at my right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion. Rule Thou in the midst of Thy enemies/*

Prophecy could not be more plainly written than this. The rod of strength goes out from Zion, and the people *of* the Kingdom everywhere have their faces turned in trust and confidence to the Branch. There, a prisoner and surrounded by those who are plotting His downfall, even in His own household, he is nevertheless a mighty Ruler, ruling in the midst of His enemies. The prophecies about the Branch are wonderfully clear. Psalm 80:15: "And the vineyard

which thy right hand (the Manifestation) hath planted and the Branch which thou madest strong for thyself.¹

Isa. 4:2: "In that day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel/"

Jer. 23:5: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch and a King shall reign and prosper and shall execute judgment and justice on the earth."

Jer. 33-*5' "In those days and at that time will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land."

Zach. 6:12: "And speak of them saying, thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts saying, Behold the Man WHOSE NAME is the Branch, and he shall grow up out of His place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. Even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule upon his throne and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

And that those who were high in position in the Kingdom would question the authority of the Branch, and would be blinded by their own misguided ambition, is also plainly foretold.

Zech. 3:8: "Here now, O Joshua, the high priest (the old man before referred to was likened to Joshua), thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men wondered at; for behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch."

Ezek. 8:17: "Then He said unto me, hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the House of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger, and, lo! they have put the Branch to their nose."

The Manifestation and the Branch, the TWO, are necessary to the complete fulfillment of prophecy, together with the Forerunner, the Bab. The Great Kingdom of the time of the end was to be the Kingdom of God and of His Christ, and the Christ was to appear in that Kingdom, as clearly shown in the talk *on* the "Christ." "We expect," said the assembled Christians at the Council of Nice, "a new heaven and a new earth at the coming OF THE GREAT GOD, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ." At that time the counsel of peace was to be between THEM BOTH.

In conclusion, when Christ was transfigured on the mount, he was lifted in the Spirit to the glory of the Kingdom of the time of the end, and the disciples

saw speaking to Him Moses and Elias, and wanted to build a temple to each one of them—three temples. In this great vision they were shown that at the time of the end there was to be a threefold manifestation of *God on* the earth—three persons in one Truth, and that Truth the Oneness and Singleness of God the Infinite, and the establishment of His Kingdom among men through His Holy Spirit and His TWO anointed ones.

LESSON 6.—Proofs of **the** Kingdom.

Before considering the Scriptural and other proofs of the message of the Kingdom, we should have a clear conception of what is meant by "The Manifestation of God." This has already been illustrated by the mirrors, and the definition and meaning of the Word made flesh; but since the accusation has been and will undoubtedly be made again that we worship an anthropomorphic God, or a human being like ourselves as the essential and Infinite Creator, it will be well enough to settle the matter by reference to the words of Baha Ullah himself, setting forth in his own language the station he claims and the manner in which God the Infinite called him to his mission. The following, taken from the Arabic Exordium to the letter written to the Shah of Persia (the messenger who took it being killed) is unmistakably plain:

"O king, verily I was as anyone amongst mankind, slumbering upon *my* couch. The gales of the ALL-GLORIOUS passed by me and taught me the knowledge of what hath been. This thing IS NOT FROM ME, but from one who is mighty and all-knowing. This (himself) is a leaf which the breezes of the Will of Thy Lord, the Mighty, the Extolled, have stirred."

"For that Peerless King (the Infinite) *is holy for everlasting, above ascent or descent.*"

According to Baha, the different incarnations of the Word of God on earth are the manifestations of THE NAMES AND ATTRIBUTES of God, not of the Essence.

With this matter *of* what we mean by the Manifestation of God made plain, we will proceed to the proof of the message.

The real proof of the truth is, in the last analysis, that it is true; and consequently the utterances of a prophet; what he teaches, his REVELATION,, must be the final test of the divinity of his mission. If his words are the words of God_f they will *stand, for they are* Spirit and Life; but if they are not the words of God they will fall, for they have not the life-giving properties of the Eternal Word. If he who brings a message to the world be front God, as a Manifestation of God, the creative power of God will make his mission a success, for the word of

God will not return unto him void, **but** will accomplish that whereunto it is sent. Whether his work shall live or die, that is the supreme test of the prophet.

See Deut, 18th chapter, 20th, 21st and 22A verses.

"But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart. How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shall not be afraid of him."

Jesus explains the meaning of this statement of Moses when He says: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

The first and greatest proof, therefore, that Baha was the Manifestation of God, is His Word—His Utterances—His Revelation to the world of the Eternal Truth; and the true strength of the Bahaist Faith will be found in the great principles for which it stands—the truth which it teaches and the life which it imparts to those who through it take hold of the Garment of God. That the utterances of Baha will live, and His Cause grow and prosper, the fact that in only fifty years of teaching this wonderful Revelation of Truth numbers millions of followers scattered in the various countries of the world bears convincing testimony.

Next in order of proof would be the wonderful Personality of Baha, and of Abbas, described in the message.

Then we should consider the wonderful spirit which pervades the Bahais, as described by Brown.

After that should be considered the number and character of the martyrs of this faith.

As to what the spirit of this religion can do for its believers, we will let the English scholar (Brown) speak:

"To the ethnologist also it (the Bahai Faith) may yield food for thought as to the character of a people, who, stigmatized as they often have been as selfish, mercenary, avaricious, egotistical, sordid and cowardly are yet capable of exhibiting under the influence of a strong religious impulse a degree of devotion, disinterestedness, generosity, unselfishness, nobility and courage which may be paralleled in history but can scarcely be surpassed/¹

We will now take up the Scriptural proofs:

1st. The light was to come out of the east. All the great prophets have

appeared in the east. The sun rises in the east.

2d. The star of this Truth appeared first in Persia, as Daniel said it would, and finally rested over the prison-place, Akka, which is close to Bethlehem. The star of Christianity was first seen in Persia by the Magii, and finally rested over the manger at Bethlehem. The fact that the stars of the two Revelations—that of Christ and Baha—parallel each other, is proof that this is the second coming, in the Kingdom of His Father, which Christ prophesied.

THE FORTY-YEAR AND DAY PERIODS.

It has been pointed out already that the period during which Baha was the Acknowledged Head and Leader of this people was exactly forty years since he was exiled from Persia in 1852 and finished his mission at Akka in 1892.

This great period of forty years during which God would water the earth with His teachings is plainly foreshadowed and foretyped in the Bible and prophesied about. Moses was forty days on Mt. Sinai preparing the tables of the law; Samuel fasted forty days; the waters of the Hood (water is the symbol of truth) were rained on the earth for forty days, and Jesus fasted forty days, and after his resurrect-on was forty days with his disciples teaching them the things of the Kingdom. But, most significant of all, Moses, leading the people out of Egypt, and from bondage, through the wilderness to the promised land, was just forty years with them, during which time they were being fed on the manna from heaven and the water of life from the Rock of Truth. See also the fourth chapter of Ezekiel, where God appoints forty years (I have given you a day for a year) for the time of the great prophecy about Jerusalem's being besieged. This number forty is indissolubly connected with a time which was to be a time of exile, siege, banishment, imprisonment and persecution of some Great One, on whom tribulations and burdens were to be laid, during which time the teachings of God, nevertheless, were to flood the earth.

THE PLACE.

Isa. 35:1-2: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God."

A few miles to the north of Akka is Mt. Lebanon, and a few miles to the south Mt. Carmel. which latter mountain is in the northern edge of the Valley of Sharon. Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, is within a few miles. Akka fits exactly the description which Isaiah here gives; and what more appropriate place could be chosen for the establishment of the New Holy Jerusalem (the outer material city) than the very neighborhood where Jesus was born? As for the conditions mentioned by the prophet, we have seen from the description of Prot. Brown that before Baha went there the Akka plain was a wilderness and a solitary place, and that after Baha went there it blossomed like the rose. This plain of Akka had been a battle-ground between the Christians and Turks during the crusades, and it was filled with human bones—the bones of soldiers who had been killed in those great religious wars of the Middle Ages, and left on the field without burial. A place of desolation.

In the 9th chapter, 1st and 2d verses of Isaiah, we read: "Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

The prophet here exactly describes Akka. It is in the land of Zebulon and Naphtali, and on the way by the sea, for it was the way of the Crusaders into the Holy Land; it is beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Nations, and it is a place of darkness and death, being a Turkish prison. Prophecy could not possibly more accurately describe the place where the Manifestation of the time of the end would appear than Isaiah has done in these two chapters, the 9th and 35th.

Daniel also shows us plainly the place of the Manifestation in his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's Vision, as already pointed out. The figure in this second chapter of Dan. is that of a man—standing erect, the feet squarely under the head. It means, therefore, five different conditions of the territory on which the image stood, being the dominions over which Nebuchadnezzar ruled—for you cannot disjoint the image and move any portion of it to another section of the world without destroying its unity. The interpretation plainly means that the stone of the Kingdom of God would roll down on Persia in the days of "these latter kings," at the time of the Mohammedan rule, and that it would break the image at its feet implies that the Mohammedan Religion will be the first to be supplanted by the new Faith.

In the 12th chapter of Revelations, also, we are plainly shown in the symbol of

the Woman clothed with the sun and with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars, that the Truth for the Time of the End was to appear in a Mohammedan country.

First, in explaining the symbolism of this woman in 12th Revelations, we would point out her identity with Hagar by the similarity of the symbols used in the two stories:

1st. Hagar was driven into the wilderness. This woman flees into the wilderness,

2. Hagar gave birth to the child Ishmael; this woman also gave birth to a "man-child."

3d. Hagar is about to die in the wilderness, and God miraculously preserves her and her child. The woman in 12th revelations is pursued by the Dragon, but is preserved from him and given a "place" of refuge for 1,260 days, and her child is "caught up to heaven."

4th. God promises Abraham and Hagar that He is going to make a great nation out of Ishmael; the child of the woman in Revelations was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.

5th. God promised that Ishmael should beget twelve princes, and the woman in Revelations wore a crown of twelve stars.

Now, to identify the Woman in Twelfth Revelations with Hagar is to identify her with the Mohammedan Revelation, for Mahomet is Ishmael.

Ishmael was despised in his birth; he was a wild man, and his hand was against every man and every man's hand was against him; he became an archer, and he dwelt in the desert. Nevertheless, God was to multiply him exceedingly and he was to beget twelve princes.

This is an accurate description of the Bedouin Arabs, who lived in the desert and plundered caravans—an exact description of the people of the desert to whom Mahomet gave his revelation. Then, too, it is a peculiar circumstance that the word "multiply" in the Hebrew text, where God says He is going to "multiply Ishmael exceedingly." is the same word exactly as the Arabic word Mahomet. (See Gen. 16th, 17th and 21st chapters for story of Ishmael). The Arabs themselves claim to be Ishmaelites, and will show you the very well—Zem-zem, near the Caaba at Mecca—where Hagar found water for her child. God was to make Ishmael a great nation. The manner in which Mohammed took these disorganized Arab tribes, sunken in idolatry, robbers, killing their own children when they did not want to keep them, and in a short time made a great people of them, they coming into possession of the whole of Asia Minor, of Turkey in Europe and

of almost the whole of Spain, is one of the miracles of history. Not only that, but he raised them in intelligence to such an extent that it can hardly be calculated to what degree modern learning is indebted to their scholars and philosophers. The followers of Mohammed were far superior in intelligence to the inhabitants of the Christian countries *of* the same age, and more civilized, for Europe was going into the dark ages, from which it did not emerge until the twelfth century, and the Roman Empire, rotten to the core, was *in* the last stages *of* dissolution. In the miraculous spread and virility of Mohammedanism, and the learning of its scholars and philosophers, you have God's promise to Hagar fulfilled, that He would make Ishmael a great nation. If this is *not* the fulfillment, then where is it? We see how marvelously God kept his promise to Abraham about Isaac, in Christ and Christianity—what about the fulfillment of his promise to Hagar?

Ishmael was to beget twelve princes. The Mohammedan Faith begot twelve Imams—their great spiritual guides and princes. These twelve Imams are the twelve stars or the woman in 12th Revelations.

The figure in 12th Revelations is *the* Truth driven into the wilderness, and the truth is "THE ONEXLSS OF GOD." and prayer to and spiritual worship of that God. which the Christians had corrupted by prayer to the Virgin Mary, to the Saints, to the Trinity, and by many other superstitions. However much Mohammedanism may have been corrupted since, and however low she may have fallen. Mohammedanism in its purity, as the Prophet taught it. was a much higher truth than the corrupted Christian Faith, which was in the world at the time he came.

But there are additional details which show *us* that the woman who fled into the wilderness was Mohammedanism, if we need them, in the symbolism of the Sun, with which she is clothed and the moon which is under her *feet*, *for* even physically and materially interpreted, the Sun is indissolubly linked with Persia as the Country of Zoroastrians or so-called sun-worshippers, whose very flag bears a picture of the sun. and the moon (crescent) with Turkey. But the better interpretation is that the Sun was the Sun of Truth, or Revelation, and the moon the moon of reflection, or the Imamate. or Church. Or, Mahomet was the Sun, and the Moon AH. the Great Imam, just as Christ was the Sun of the Christian Revelation, and Peter was his moon.

The eagle is the symbol of God's power to protect, even in the sense of military strength. Mohammedanism had to fight for its life against the Christian Crusaders, and did so with such skill that the united forces of Christendom could never do anything more than gain a temporary foothold in Palestine, See

Exodus 19:4, where God says: "You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you ON EAGLES* WINGS and brought you *to* myself." This refers to the destruction of Pharaoh's army.

It would be impossible to find more perfect symbology than this twelfth chapter of Revelations. The very beginning *oi* Mohammedanism *is the* FLIGHT *oi* the prophet in A. D. 622 through the wilderness, or desert of Arabia from Mecca to Medina. Then, to conclude the matter, there was an actual woman, FATIMA, the daughter *oi* Mohammed and the *wife oi* Ali, who *was the mother, or* ancestress of the Imams, and so was clothed with the sun (Mahomet); supported by the moon (AH), and with a crown of twelve stars (the Imams).

To *sum up*, the *proofs oi the place of the* Manifestation *are*:

1)Isa. 9 and 35. being accurate descriptions of Akka.

2)Daniel, 2d chapter. The feet of the image on which the stone was to roll, indicating the *setting up* of the Kingdom first in Persia.

3)The star of this Truth paralleling the course of the Star of Bethlehem, indicating this as the SECOND coming of the same star.

4)The *12th* chapter of Revelations, showing the driving of the truth into the wilderness where Hagar and Ishmael had gone (Mahomet), from where He was to appear who wo'?ld rule all nations with a rod of iron.

5)Add *to this* the general fact that no prophet has ever arisen anywhere else than in the East, and that the Sun of Truth, like the sun of the ether atmosphere, rises in the east.

THE DATES

And now we will consider the prophecies relating to the time the Kingdom was to be set up.

First, with regard to the computation of prophetic time. In Ezek. 4:6 you will find that God has appointed a prophetic day to be a year—"And behold, I have given you a day for a year." The Biblical "time" mentioned in Daniel and Revelations in the prophecies as to "a time, times and half a time," is 360 years. It is the metonic cycle, 19 times 19—not precisely 19 times 19, but just a fraction less—the calculation 19 times 19, with proper allowance made for this fraction less, making exactly 360. The calculation is based on the lunar translations—the revolution of the earth and moon around the sun.

Time (360), times (2 times, 720), and half a time (180) give us 1,260. So the time, times and a half are the same as the 1,260 days—that is to say, 1,260 years.

Now for the interpretation of all this.

In the year 607 A. D., the Prophet Mahomet had his revelation in the cave near Mecca. This is the appearance of the woman. In that very year, 607 A. D., Phocas, the Byzantine tyrant of the Roman Empire, by a royal decree proclaimed the head of the body of Christians at Rome the Universal Pontiff, Pope, or Religious Sovereign of the world. Here we have the beast and the dragon—the *one* giving his power and authority *to* the other—Caesar taking the church of Christ under his protection and becoming his patron, and the church of Christ, through a power-loving and degenerated priesthood, giving the ecclesiastical sanction to the acts of the State. Thus Phocas, who had murdered his predecessor, Maurice, together with Maurice's whole family, in order to seize the throne, received a letter from the Roman Bishop congratulating him upon his accession and upon the circumstances attending it*

Clearly understand that we do not take the Protestant view that the Pope is the beast, or Antichrist, of Revelations. We make no distinction whatever between the different sects of Christians. They are all our brothers, and are all of them right to the extent that they follow the example of their Master and walk in the way of love and mercy and truth. With their differences of dogma and doctrine we have nothing to do. We are dealing with the facts of history, with things that happened more than 1,200 years ago, and we show that, through its representatives, and not without protest, the Christian Church *in* the year A. D., 607 was fathered by the Roman Empire, became the creature of the State, began to love temporal things and temporal power, and that, ever since that time Christianity has been a perfect babel of confusion, of warring sects and creeds, of hatred, intolerance, persecution and bloodshed, a house divided against itself, a darkened revelation which had lost its sun. It *matters not* what our individual opinion may be—look at it from the world standpoint, the broad standpoint, and who shall tell us where the true Church of Christ is? The representatives of 500 or more different sects will answer, when the question is asked, "Here!"

This condition of affairs, too, is clearly foreseen by the prophet in the ninth chapter of Revelations, where he speaks *of* the two witnesses who are given power that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and have power over waters to turn them into blood, etc. They were to prophecy 42 months (1,260 years). For the 1,260 years of the Mohammedan Revelation, heaven HAS BEEN SHUT, and the water of truth has been turned to blood in both Mohammedan and Christian countries, Mahomet's Revelation having been even worse corrupted than Christ's. The shutting of heaven, of course, means that men would be blind to the truth—

This explanation is given to make what will follow plain.

In Revelations 12:6 we read: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred three score days."

Now, the Hegira, or FLIGHT, the beginning of Mohammedanism, was in A. D. 622, from which date the Mohammedanism chronology runs. Since the woman is the Mohammedan Revelation, we must use the Mohammedan time, and the 1,260 years are Mohammedan years. The rule given for reducing Mohammedan, or moon years, to Christian, or sun years, is to deduct three per cent. from the Mohammedan years; 3 per cent of 1,260 is 37.8, or 38 years; 38 years from 1,260 years leaves 1,222; 1,222 years added to 622, the date of beginning, brings us to the year 1844, the date of the Bab's announcement, and the date the Miller-ites were looking for Christ.

But we do not really need this calculation, since the Bab announced himself in the year A. H. (After the Hegira) 1260, and the Mohammedan year 1260 (the years of the woman) was our year 1844.

But not only did the Bab announce the coming of the Kingdom on the 22d day of May, 1844, but on the night of that day, unknown, of course, to the Bab, the Master, Abdul Baha, was born. This is absolute proof by date, that Abdul Baha is the BRANCH. It is also a complete vindication of Miller's correctness in his time interpretation. Taking it materially, he was deceived as to the manner of coming, not as to the time.

THE DRAGON AND THE ANTICHRIST—THE BEAST.

A further study of the symbolism of this 12th chapter of Revelations will complete the proof that the Woman is the Truth of God driven into the wilderness of Ishmael (Mahomet), and that the dragon and the beast are respectively the symbols of superstition and tyranny—the superstition embodied in a corrupted priesthood, the tyranny in the Roman Empire.

We are told in this 12th chapter of Revelations that there appeared SIMULTANEOUSLY *in the* heavens, TWO great wonders—a woman and a dragon. In the next chapter, the 13th, there appears a beast. The dragon is described as having seven heads and ten horns, and the beast as having ten horns and seven heads. And the dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority; and the whole earth wondered after the beast, and they worshipped the dragon because he gave his power to the beast. The beast also had power to make the people worship his image, and unless they did, and had his mark, they could not buy or sell.

so blind that they would hate each other, and persecute and kill and massacre in the name of Him who had taught them to love those who deSpitefully used them, to pray for their enemies and to return good for evil. Think of killing your brother in the name of Christ! Who can read the history of the past 1,200 years and doubt that God "has hidden His Face" and that heaven has been shut?

The dragon in this chapter represents the superstitions and imaginations of the Roman paganism, which was pursuing and seeking to corrupt the truth, and the unholy alliance of a fallen priesthood, with a corrupt government, symbolized by the one giving the other his power, is the real Antichrist. The real Antichrist is the spirit of worldliness corrupting and degrading the Truth—the Disciple of Christ rendering the things of God to Caesar, and lusting after temporal power.

The study of the symbols will show us plainly that it is this unholy alliance of Church and State which is intended and warned against

The Book of Revelations was written about the year A. D. 68, and the Revelator, as the prophets always did, uses the facts and things of his time to illustrate his prophecy.

The color given is red. Red was the Imperial color. The dragon and the beast both have seven heads. At the time the prophecy was written there had been exactly seven Caesars, as follows: Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero and Galba. There were, you know, seven crowns on the seven heads. The beast and the dragon have ten horns—the ten provinces of the Roman world of that day—Italy, Achaia, Asia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain and Germany. These provinces were ruled over by the Proconsuls, each of whom had all the power of the Emperor in his own province, and were real, though temporary, kings.

The beast had power to make the people worship his image so that they could not buy or sell unless they did.

Moses had said: "Thou shall not make to thyself any graven image," etc. Caesar was considered divine—claimed to be a divinity. The coin minted for circulation in Syria by the Roman Empire bore the image and superscription of Caesar. This was the money of Palestine, for the Emperor controlled the currency. So the Jews could not buy or sell without using these coins with the image of one who claimed to be a divinity on them, and so were compelled to worship from their rigid standpoint the image and superscription of Caesar on the coin. The description of the beast as having power to force the people to worship his image in order to buy and sell is given to show that the Roman Empire is intended.

We are told that the number of the beast is 666. The Hebrew letters have a

numerical value, just as do the Roman. The Hebrew or Arimaic inscription on these coins was NERON KESAR. M. Ernest Renan, in his work on "The Antichrist," shows and proves that the numerical value of NERON KESAR is 666.

To leave no doubt that it is the temporal power and authority invading the church, and the church lusting after the things of the world, which is the Antichrist, the UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE, the number of the dragon, or corrupted priestcraft, is also 666.

The motto adopted by the priestcraft, corrupted by temporal power and love of the world, was and is VICARIUS DEI FILLII—Vicar or substitute for the Son of God! Now it works out thus, numerically:

V.....	equals	5
I.....	equals	1
C.....	equals	100
A.....	(No val.)	0
R.....	(No val.)	0
I.....	equals	1
U.....	equals	5 (The Latin U and V are the same).
S.....	(No val.)	0
D.....	equals	500
E.....	(No val.)	0
I.....	equals	1
F.....	(No val.)	0
I.....	equals	1
L.....	equals	50
I.....	equals	1
Iequals	t
666		

So we see that in the year A. D. 607 the woman and the dragon and the beast appear—the former the truth of God driven for refuge into the wilderness, the two latter together forming the Antichrist.

We are dealing now with Rome and the dragon, and will use the Roman, or Christian, chronology.

The dragon appears Add	A.D. 607
Christian years 1260

1867

This is the year of the general announcement of the Manifestation at Adrian-ople—the date on which He proclaimed himself, not merely to the Babis as the One whom God would Manifest, spoken of by the Bab, but to the world, as the fulfillment of all prophecy. Two years after this, 1869, He wrote the celebrated Letters to the Kings; 1867 is the date worked out by Dr. Cummings, the English Millenarian.

We have already shown that the prophecy in the 9th chapter of Daniel about the 70 weeks brings us down to A. D. 33, the date of the cutting off or crucifixion of Christ.

Dan. 8:14 reads: "Then I heard one saint speaking and another saint said to that certain saint which spake, how long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me. unto two thousand three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*"

The cleansing of the sanctuary means the clearing away from the truth of all superstitions. This was not to be done until the time of the end. Not until the Son of Man should come with POWER, could the sanctuary be cleansed. The power of God must come, not simply the light, to drive the money changers and the false teachers out of his temple.

The time when this prophecy commences to run is not given. But the time is fixed in the 9th chapter, the next, as being the time of the issuance of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem—the date on which every Jew had his eyes fixed—shown in the 7th chapter of Ezra to have been the year 457 B. C.

Full time of prophecy.....	2.300 years
Commenced B. C	
.....	
457	

Gives us, after Christ

.....
1*843 complete years,

and brings us into the year 1844. Again the date of the announcement of the Bab and the interpretation of Miller is verified. And we are given here A CHAIN of prophecy:

From 457 B. C, 490 years (70 weeks), brings us to A. D. 33, the crucifixion of Christ, and carried on 2,300 years brings us to 1844, the time of the end, the "Second Coming."

In the 12th chapter of Daniel, 7th verse, we are told that there will be a time, times, and half a time to the time of the end, from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away.

The daily sacrifice was taken away by the Mohammedans, who built a mosque over the Temple of Solomon. The Mohammedans also put out the continual fires of the Persians.

Beginning of Mohammedanism, when the sacrifice was forever made impossible	622
1,260 years (time, times and a half) of the Mohammedan calendar, equal of the Christian calendar, years_____.....	1,222
Result, A. D.....	1,844

The 1,290 days, or years, from the setting up of the abomination of desolation to the end of it, means the end of the rule of the beast in the church, the decline and fall of the temporal power and priestly authority in temporal matters, and the rapid growth of the recognition of the fact that the Kingdom of God is a Spiritual Kingdom and His rule over the hearts of men. The restoration of the Jews to honor is also included. The trial of Captain Dreyfus is a striking illustration of the wonderful change in sentiment with regard to the Jews which has taken place.

"Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred and five and thirty (1,335) days."

This is the great date. It is the time set for the inauguration of the great peace—as Baha called it, THE MOST GREAT PEACE—when there will in all probability be an international parliament, or Parliament of Man, a "Federation of the World," and a consequent beating of the weapons of war into plowshares and pruning hooks.

That will be the commencement of the Great Era, or New Age, which has been commonly referred to as the Millennium.