

JESUS CHRIST THE DIVINE REDEEMER

Our Lord's Teaching and Works

by
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One of the most desperate quests of our time is for personal identity. Beneath the weight of countless millions of souls, behind the faceless facade of statistics, sociological categories, and psychological "types," the individual feels himself lost, totally absorbed and insignificant. By joining a "group," he may feel for a few moments an illusory sense of reality, of at least corporate identity, as if a single soul had taken possession of alienated individual fragments and formed a robot, a death-in-life machine. Separate from his fellows he finds the loneliness intolerable, and he fears the infinite void, the dark endlessness of non-being.

To millions, the inevitability of individual death demonstrates irrefutably the ultimate absurdity of the universe. That which is inescapably doomed to nothingness can make no valid claim to significance, meaning, or identity. The materialistic existentialist may try to make anxiety itself, the fear of non-being, become the basis of being; and the mystic may try to conceive of nothingness as the ultimate good. But neither can touch the unassuageable yearning of the human consciousness for redemption and continuation, for illumination and fulfillment, for purposeful being and timelessness--for, in short, an abundant life.

Over the millennia, men have tried to explain on natural grounds this strange tension in man, this discontented self-scrutiny that finds no peace and no end. Some say it results from the discrepancy between what man is, after (in this view) his long rise upward from the mud, and what he may become. But in what does this awareness of what he "may become" reside? How can natural forces, always seeking their own level, "naturally" produce that which is dissatisfied with itself? Others attribute the tension to the malignancy of imagined Dark Powers in the universe, which hate man. But then how is man also capable of happiness? Natural (biological) man is neither so miserable as infinite malice could accomplish, nor so happy as infinite beneficence could cause. There must be another ingredient, another dimension, where the secret lies.

The Bible tells us what it is: man's own greatest gift, his freedom. Without freedom, happiness would be un-self-conscious and hence compatible only with a lower nature than man's. Moral responsibility is a power, an element of greatness, an aspect of being dependent upon a spiritual nature, permitting man to commune with God. And the Bible tells us the reason for man's predicament. It is moral (spiritual) rebellion and its consequence, alienation--not merely separation, for man cannot find that place in the universe where God is not, but alienation, with offense. Man has initiated antagonism between himself and the only wise God, between himself as creature and God the Creator, between himself and Truth, Goodness, Beauty, Order, and Meaning. "Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:2).

This is the hardest truth man confronts, to say with Job, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer you? I will lay my hand over my mouth" (Job 40:4); to know that, apart from God's grace, "you will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of

the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores . . ." (Isa. 1:5,6)

The consequence of this alienation is spiritual death. Since the fall of Adam, all men have been born into a doomed life, in which the desires of the body and of the mind are felt and gratified (Eph. 2:3) but in which the spiritual capacity is dead because of sin (rebellion).

In this condition of spiritual death, no hope can come from ideas, or from ethics, or from metaphysics, or from social structures. Only he who first gave the spirit life, God, can, by another act of creation, restore life to it. "I, even I, am Yahweh, and beside me there is no savior" (Isa. 43:11).

So every page of the Bible speaks of the Person of God our Savior, every promise of salvation tells of a Person. Every gracious offer is of healing for personal alienation. "Look to me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other" (Isa. 45:22). "Acquaint now yourself with him, and be at peace" (Job 22:21a).

And the great light emanating from the Person of God, shining throughout the Old Testament, becomes focused with brilliant intensity on the Person of that God, in the form of Son and Servant, revealed in the New Testament, whose name is Jesus. "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life . . ." (1 John 5:13). "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, whom he poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5,6).

From beginning to end, the matter is one of personal relationship, of identify, of a love relationship between God and man, broken by man, and healed by God, who took the form of sinful flesh to redeem all who call upon his name in faith. Without a personal encounter, there is no restoration, "for no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11).

This essay is written within these convictions and certain others: first, that the Old and New Testaments are our sole infallible source of information about God and his salvation, and are written for our instruction, not for our argument and refutation; second, that the scriptural view of history and man is valid in reason and faith, compatible with all true knowledge and man's nature and need; and third, that the historical Jesus of the New Testament is he of whom the prophets spake, the Ancient of Days, known to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end . . . who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" whose words to his redeemed, as to John, are, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last. I am he who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of hades and of death" (Rev. 1:8c, 17, 18).

"Both to Do and to Teach"

Manmade religions so uniformly consist only or chiefly of a set of teachings, of formulas for living, of principles of conduct, that many (even many Christians) mistakenly believe that the central significance of Jesus is that he gave us moral instruction. But if that were true, the Incarnation need not have taken place, for there is no inadequacy in the moral instruction of the

law recorded in the Old Testament. The same Lord who spoke to Moses on the mountain could have spoken again to expand, emphasize, or clarify any aspect of the moral code given to the nation of Israel. He need not have humbled himself and taken on the form of a servant; he need not have left the courts of everlasting glory and been born of a Jewish virgin; he need not have hungered and thirsted, or been tempted and smitten; he need not have died on the cross, or risen from the dead, or ascended to the Father. If teaching were all that were required, the Scriptures would end with Malachi. Actually, all these events took place that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

No, it is not that the teaching is inadequate and needs improvement; it is that man is inadequate--dead, spiritual, indeed--and needs a Savior. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20).

It is, therefore, only on the basis of what Jesus *did*, and of *who he is*, that his perfect teaching is authoritative, available, and meaningful. Luke is quite clear on this point when he describes the nature of his own earlier writing: "The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, . . . speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:1-3). "Both to *do* and to *teach*"--and these doings and teachings are to be received because of who Jesus is, he by whom the worlds were made, the only Lord.

Wise man in all ages have uttered profound words, but none but the God-man Jesus Christ has been able to say, "Lazarus, come forth," as well as to teach about eternal life; or to say truly, "For as the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the son to have life in himself"; or "I am the resurrection and the life"; or "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

From the first, therefore, we must recognize that Jesus the redeemer is he who has *acted* to redeem us; his teachings are authenticated by his deeds and may be received only by those who have accepted the work of redemption in their own lives. The King's laws apply only to citizens of the kingdom. To those who reject the king, he has only judgment, not instruction, for "he who believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). This Nicodemus had to learn painfully when he tried to engage in an ethical dialogue with a king into whose kingdom he had never been born. God is a God of the living (spiritually), not the dead; the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is for the redeemed.

Let us, therefore, always observe both what Jesus did and what he taught in the same context, that of his Lordship. And let us also have in mind another and infinite dimension of his teachings, namely, that he *is* the Word made flesh. His teachings are not merely helpful counsel but divine truth itself, incarnate (embodied). "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). "If anyone keeps my word, he shall never see death" (John 8:51). "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Here is a unique and marvelous dimension of reality, the only unalterable reality, the reality that is with God from eternity, and that is God, and that was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

All this, then, is a wholeness, a perfect unity--teachings, doings, being.

Jesus and His Kingdom

The centrality of the Kingdom in Jesus' ministry, both his teaching and his works, is a matter some overlook and others find confusing. Many think of the Kingdom as being peculiarly of the Old Testament, and of the Church as being in some way a substitute for it in the New Testament. Others think of the Kingdom as that which is promised exclusively to national Israel; still others as a magnificent but rather vague condition of heaven; yet others as a condition that gradually improving man will ultimately set up for himself on this earth by ever more closely obeying the social teachings of Jesus.

The topic is vast, and no pretense is made here of dealing with it in any complete or definitive way. There are endless books on the subject, some useful.

The present purpose, rather, is to underscore certain plain and key assertions about the Kingdom, as we find Jesus himself uttering them, and also to note how they are relevant to the larger picture of Jesus as redeemer and king.

We must clearly understand that though Jesus' human activities had little or nothing of the outward marks of earthly kingship, yet his every deed is an assertion of his royal rights and of his kingly powers. We must understand, too (and here we touch on a subject of great interest and almost limitless opportunities for biblical study), that the concept of the Kingdom of God is inscrutable unless we view it from the perspective of the Old Testament. Surely all those who first came to Jesus understood it in this light and strove to comprehend it in terms of all that Moses and the prophets had written, precisely as Jesus instructed. In other words, the coming of Jesus was not the intervention of a newly devised plan of God, unexpectedly inserted into the stream of history because of the imperfection of an earlier plan, namely, the law. Rather, it was the perfectly harmonious, immutably planned working out of the Gospel of redemption that began to operate the instant after Adam and Eve fell and corrupted the heritage of mankind.

We cannot begin to read the New Testament without having this continuity thrust upon us. The first verse of the first chapter of the first book of the New Testament insists upon it: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, *the son of David, the son of Abraham*" (Matt. 1:1). John takes us back to the ultimate beginning and tells us of Jesus before time began--"In the beginning was the Word. . . ."

The Kingdom of which Jesus taught will have no end. It is timeless, perfect, blessed, and it is the heritage of the redeemed. It is that unimaginably glorious rule from which Satan rebelled and in natural enmity to which every man since Adam has been born. (The glorious fact that for the redeemed, God is not only sovereign but also Father, that the Son himself is Elder Brother, and that believers are joint-heirs with him, is an immense truth, but not the aspect of the Kingdom now being considered.)

The announcement of this Kingdom by the inspired writers of the Old Testament was sufficient in every dimension for any Jew in Jesus' day to accept him as the promised king, provided the wholeness of scriptural delineation was studied and believed. For the majority of Jews, however, misled by their religious leaders ("Let them alone. They are blind leaders . . ."--Matt. 15:14), only those prophecies speaking of the power and visible rule of the promised king were remembered. Those about Jehovah's Suffering Servant were ignored or spiritualized away.

Whenever Jesus' role was questioned by a Jew, Jesus never replied by directing attention away from the Scriptures. Rather, he opened them up more fully, as he did to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. And so the modern Christian who would better understand Jesus' teaching of the Kingdom must study *all* his teaching, including the words he gave Moses and the prophets to speak, as recorded in the Old Testament.

At the moment, however, our attention must be directed almost entirely to the words from his own lips during his earthly ministry, and to his works.

A basic truth to be learned is that Jesus' teaching of the kingdom *is* the Gospel. It is not a peripheral matter; it is what he came to announce. "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). The primacy of the teaching is put beyond question: "Seek *first* the kingdom . . ." (Matt. 6:33).

It was man's rebellion from the sovereignty of God that, in Eden, brought death and all its woes--"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree. . . ." The doom of disobedience is to be cast out of the Kingdom, as Adam and Eve out of Eden, and then discover that only in God's eternal realm is there order, or meaning, or light, or peace, or joy.

It is also the doom or disobedience to truth that the rebel wanders in self-induced disorder, progressively less capable of knowing the difference between truth and error, righteousness and sin, wisdom and folly. He is utterly self-slain, without all hope of self-restoration, depraved (corrupted) in his every capacity. Hence, had not God in his grace maintained, through his Chosen People, Israel, a line of communication of truth and teaching (just as he maintained a living seed-line from Eve to Mary), the heraldic announcements of John the Baptist and the royal proclamation of Jesus would have fallen on ears as totally bewildered as Pilate's. Jesus came to his brethren, to the children of Israel, because he was their promised Messiah, of course, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled ("to the Jew first"); but he also presented himself to them because in all the rebellious world only the Jew had any idea of the meaning of the Kingdom of God. Only he was familiar with such words as, "Behold! My servant whom I uphold, my elect one in whom my soul delights! I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. . . . I, Yahweh, have called you in righteousness, and will hold your hand; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:1, 6). No recorded apostolic sermon of the New Testament fails to relate Jesus' mission to the promises given to Israel, that is, promises of a kingdom.

The nature of the Kingdom. This, too, is a large and complex topic. Jesus taught much about the nature of the kingdom, mostly in parables--"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto. . . ." Although biblical scholars do not agree on every detail of the interpretation of the parables, the major points of the teaching can be asserted with confidence.

First, the Kingdom of Heaven is not now visible on earth; nor is it of this world. "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight . . ." (John 18:36). The rulers of world power, the centers of human authority, the citadels of world thought, the patterns of the world's political structure, the nature of the world's philosophy--these are all foreign. They are all set up in enmity against the Kingdom of Heaven, under, indeed, the ultimate rule of Satan, who "was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him . . ." (John 8:44). Therefore Jesus came not as a welcome king visiting, after long absence, his loyal citizens, but as a rejected monarch. "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not

come to bring peace but a sword" (Matt. 10:34).

When the Almighty unsheathes his sword, there is no doubt of victory; so we know, also, that the heavenly Kingdom will conquer the world. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33c). The final and visible victory will be the consequence, not of a gradual leavening of the kingdom of the world by the influence of the Kingdom of Heaven (indeed, it is not provable that leaven is ever used in Scripture as a symbol of good influence), but of the appearing of the King himself, coming in power and in terrible judgment. "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels" (Matt. 16:27a).

Second, therefore, we learn that until that Day of the Lord, promised throughout Scripture, the Kingdom of Heaven is within, for the kingdom is wherever the true King reigns; wherever the individual heart has surrendered, in repentance and faith, becoming as a little child (Matt. 18:3), accepting without question the gracious words, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). Every group of believers compose, as it were, a "cell" of loyalty to the true king in the midst of treason, a part of the great secret underground, although they live in the Satanic world system, they are not of it. They serve as ambassadors to the true king and are assured of a perfect means of communication at any instant with the throne, through prayer. And they are equally assured of the ultimate control of all history by the King, who withholds his judgment only that souls may hear about and accept his offer of amnesty, and may be saved, before the doors of time forever close and eternity resumes its changeless sway over the universe. "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16).

We learn, third, that perfect obedience is a condition of the Kingdom. Just as disobedience--disbelief, rebellion--shattered the perfect existence of Adam and Eve in communion with God, so must a perfect obedience (beyond the capability of fallen man) restore the union. Here, centrally, is our God both King and Savior; for it is the King who accomplishes the perfect and atoning obedience in our behalf, creating something far better than merely a restored Edenic relationship. "I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38). A psalm is echoed: "Then I said, Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me, I delight to do your will, O my God, and your law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:7,8). "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). And the promise: "Though he was a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. And having been perfected, he became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him" (Heb. 5:8,9). The principle is enunciated first in Genesis, in the promise to Abraham: "In your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice" (22:18). Without this obedience, the kingdom may not be entered, nor are "good works" possible. "Then they said to him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he sent. . . . And this is the will of him who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:28,29,40).

Fourth, Jesus teaches of the Kingdom that it is both a present possession of the believer and a future condition; that the Kingdom is a matter of progressive revelation and final manifestation, of stages of fulfillment and climactic emergence. Just as the first coming of the Lord Jesus himself was anticipated by a succession of foretypes, until finally he himself was born in Bethlehem, so the Kingdom was foreshadowed, under various foretypical kings (David, most

notably), until the King himself appeared and declared himself: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presses into it" (or ". . . presses his way into it with violence," that is, by the drastic action of repentance, self-condemnation, the exercise of faith--all empowered by grace) (Luke 16:16).

When Jesus walked the earth, the Kingdom was literally present on earth, even though Caesar remained on his throne and Satan continued to rule the world. For the Kingdom is where the King is. Wherever Jesus sat or walked with his disciples, there was the true Kingdom--the King, the authority, the rule, the laws, the citizens, the environment. "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). The external kingdom of Israel, set up to reflect the rule of God, had failed through disobedience. Its outward power had vanished, and its spiritual center was dead. "Therefore say I to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you . . ." (Matt. 21:43). And to the disciples, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32b).

Since the resurrection and ascension of the Lord, the Kingdom is set up in every believing heart, under the rule of the Holy Spirit. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). The body is the realm: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). Until the Lord comes, the kingdom is of the spirit, for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6); "and I will pray the Father, and he will give you another helper, that he may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; but you know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:16,17). The kingdom is thus the immediate inward possession of the believer. Released from servitude to Satan (" . . . because he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world"--1 John 4:4) and to sin ("for sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace"--Rom. 6:14), the believer spiritually dwells in the peace of the everlasting Kingdom. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20).

Outside is the world, which hates the Kingdom. "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19). With his inner citadel of the spirit "kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5), the believer assumes the high honor of serving as ambassador of the kingdom. "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain . . ." (John 15:16).

Fifth, we learn that if the Kingdom is a present spiritual possession of the redeemed, it is also unmistakably, in its ultimate manifestation, a climactic event in future history.

Although there is disagreement among modern biblical scholars as to whether Jesus taught such a future event, to anyone who reads the Bible trustingly, the issue seems beyond question. (For a useful summary of the positions of a dozen or more contemporary scholars, see Norman Perrin's *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963].) As a matter of fact, few who deny the futurity of the Kingdom deny that Jesus taught it, or that his disciples and the early Church expected it; rather, the concept is dismissed as a misunderstanding on the part of both Jesus and his followers, consequent upon their over-

confident and "materialistic" reading of the promises of the Old Testament. Needless to say, such a view does not accept Jesus himself as Lord and King, nor as the Incarnate Word, but only as a gifted prophet, subject to error and misunderstanding.

Jesus' words are quite direct: "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels" (Matt. 16:27a). (One must remember Daniel 7:13,14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.") "The Son of man will send out his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:41,42). "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24:29-31). "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

To many who believably await the return of the King, the quietest words are somehow the best: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2b, 3). Just before his ascension, his disciples asked him again: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said to them, It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in his own authority" (Acts: 1:6,7). But two angels (of what must have been a mighty host unseen by the disciples), who had received the high honor of attending the Lord on this occasion of his victorious departure from the earth he had redeemed, left us an explicit word: "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11b). There are really only two attitudes toward these things: either "Amen," or "Not so, Lord"--though Satan would like us to consider a third, one of hesitant, debilitating, Prufrockian doubt: "Yea, has God said . . .?"

Jesus' "hard sayings" about the Kingdom must be understood in the light of the finality of the Kingdom, of its absolute ultimate judgment and its universal sway. It is not a realm in which it would be rather pleasant to be; it is the only environment of salvation, outside of which is eternal condemnation. "He will thoroughly clean out his threshing floor, and gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Luke 3:17). "Then I saw a great white throne and him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. . . . And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:11,15). "Therefore Sheol has enlarged itself and opened its mouth beyond measure; their glory and their multitude and their pomp, and he who is jubilant, shall descend into it" (Isa. 5:14).

Jesus employs every power of parable, metaphor, and direct injunction to shock his listeners into a realization of the urgency, the overwhelming importance, and the immutability of each individual's choice in regard to the Kingdom. Anything is better than living and dying outside the Kingdom--any maiming, any loss, any sacrifice. "It is better for you to enter the kingdom of

God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire" (Mark 9:47b).

Hence, too, the terrible "Woes" pronounced on the religious leaders of Israel, ". . . for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in" (Matt. 23:13). It would be better for a man that a millstone be tied about his neck and that he be cast into the midst of the sea, than he should cause the least seeker of the Kingdom to stumble in his search.

Lastly, under this heading of Jesus and his Kingdom, note the significance of his mighty acts of power, his miracles. It is all well and good to have one claim a status for himself, but does he have the identity and the power that the status demands? The acts of Jesus were "signs," performed not primarily to diminish immediate human suffering in Palestine but to attest to himself. For every blind man who received his sight, thousands remained in darkness; for one Lazarus raised from the dead, thousands who died that day remained in the tomb; for every man released from demons' possession, legion remained enslaved. If the works of Jesus were intended to alter the balance of suffering and well-being in the world of his day, they utterly failed.

But this was not their purpose. When John the Baptist, in prison, heard of the works of Jesus but saw no visible, worldly evidence of a growing power, "he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:2,3). Jesus' answer was to remind John of the prophecies about the redemptive work of the promised Messiah, and to point to their fulfillment in his own works. "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: the blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of me" (Matt. 11:4-6). This is confirmed in the actions and words of Jesus immediately after his defeat of Satan in the wilderness. Returning "in the power of the Spirit" into Galilee, and going into the synagogue to teach, he heralded his own arrival by reading from the Prophet Isaiah (61:1,2): "The Spirit of Yahweh is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of Yahweh. Then He closed the book . . ." (Luke 4:18-20). The beautiful propriety of "closing the book" at that precise point (in the middle of Isaiah's sentence) is that the next phrase has to do with the second coming of the King, in judgment: ". . . and the day of vengeance of our God" (Isa. 61:2)

So, from us as from John the Baptist, the Lord commands attention to and belief in his works, for in them he proved his identity and his kingship. "For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom he will. For the Father . . . has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him" (John 5:21-23). Throughout all history, unbelievers have denied his miracles; but it is a peculiarity of our times that denial is now an accepted position within some areas of the Church itself, and some of its seminaries. As always, the heart of the problem is not a matter of adequate evidence, or of satisfying the intellectual processes, but of the will, set in natural enmity against belief. Jesus, knowing the heart, perceived no sincerity in those scribes and Pharisees who came to him, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it . . ." (Matt. 12:39). Ample evidence for the sincere seeker of truth is provided; the pretense of needing more evidence on the part of those already predetermined not to believe cannot stand before the eye of Jesus. Saving belief is impossible without repentance,

and to repent is to do violence to one's own self-esteem (hence Luke 16:16), achieving "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). The two go together. Mere intellectual assent without repentance and faith is a condition of the devils, who also believe, and tremble (Jas. 2:19). Jesus does not break through the door of the heart; it must be opened from the inside. And in a deeply significant statement, he declares: "If anyone wills to do his will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on my own authority" (John 7:17).

As "signs," Jesus miraculous works were to demonstrate much more than sovereignty and power over the natural universe and the world of physical things. Each act also demonstrated spiritual sovereignty. Bodily disease he cured, but never without spiritual significance. ". . . the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins . . ." (Matt. 9:6), and to the skeptical bystanders he demonstrated his power by healing the sick of the palsy. The fact that all bodily illness, all pain and suffering, and death itself are the consequences of sin is the clear teaching of the Bible. Therefore, the relation between the physical acts of healing and the spiritual power to save from sin is demonstrable.

So when the blind were made to see, we find the power to heal the physical disability of blindness a demonstration of the power to make the spiritually blind perceive the truth of God, and the deaf to hear, both physically and spiritually, and the lame to walk, and the leprous (the most specific physical sign of sin) to be cleansed. Above all, Jesus demonstrated his ability to give that eternal life which he promised--"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25). Wonderful words, but are they within the power of him who spoke them? When Jesus entered into the silent room where lay the corpse of Jairus' daughter, no human hope could expect more than tears of compassion. But beside that lifeless body stood the One who had created her, given her a soul, stretched out the heavens with his finger, brought forth all that is. So in that room the three disciples heard a quiet voice: "Little lamb"--a term of endearment, from the lips of him by whom the world were made!--"I say to you, arise" (Mark 5:41). That quiet voice reached the remotest corners of infinite space, and at its command the soul returned, and the child lived again. This is not strange, for when the same Being commanded, "Let there be light," had not the mighty beam burst forth?

No power of nature ("Even the winds and the sea obey him!"), no affliction of the body, no spiritual sickness, no dart of Satan--not even the awful one of death itself--can withstand the power or dispute the rule of this Jesus, a fact his deeds prove. ". . . the Son quickens whom he will" (John 5:21). "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believes on me should not abide in darkness" (John 12:46). "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30).

No wonder Paul says it is beyond the power of the imagination to conceive of the ultimate realm of such a king!

Jesus the Redeemer

The heart of the Gospel, the "good" part of the news of the Kingdom, is not that there is such a kingdom but that there is a way into it, a door of entry, a method for achieving citizenship--in short, a redemption. If this were not so, news of the eternal realm of which Jesus is King would be unbearably ironic, for no unrighteousness may enter into it, and none is righteous. "Because

there is wrath, beware lest he take you away with one blow; for a large ransom would not help you avoid it" (Job 36:18). "God is angry with the wicked every day. If he does not turn back, he will sharpen his sword; he bends his bow and makes it ready. He also prepares for himself instruments of death" (Ps. 7:11b-13a).

"If he does not turn back. . . ." In eternity, there is, as it were, no room in which to turn. But the Gospel of the Kingdom tells us that in this life, in the dimension of time, eternity may be grasped. However, there is only one way to turn, which is to say "to repent." "Unless you are converted [*strepheo*, to turn], and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). Having turned, we face the Redeemer, who teaches what we need to know for our redemption. "Good and upright is Yahweh; therefore he teaches sinners in the way" (Ps. 25:8). This verse is echoed in the New Testament: "And Jesus, when he came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So he began to teach them . . ." (Mark 6:34).

Jesus phrased the teachings on redemption in various ways, to meet the specific needs of those who were ready to listen to him--Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the Rich Young Ruler, Zacchaeus, the disciples who forbade the little children to come to him; yet the summation is always the same: "Come unto me." ". . . he who believes in me has everlasting life" (John 6:47). As the child listens with complete responsiveness and belief, so must they listen who turn to Jesus. ". . . He who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24). The alternative is explicit: "But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:5,6). "And who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:17b).

No concept in all Scripture is richer in meaning or more central to the nature of God and of man's need than that expressed in the English verb "to redeem." This is expressed in the original tongues in a variety of words, each suggesting a slightly different dimension, a different facet of the truth. A modern dictionary gives as the chief meanings "to buy back," "to win back," "to liberate by payment," "to free by force," "to release from blame or debt," "to ransom," "to restore," "to reclaim." The force of two Hebrew words, *depuh* (Isa. 50:2) and *paraq* (Ps. 136:24) gives an additional dimension: "to separate," "to break off, to deliver."

Every meaning listed, and other implicit shadings, are directly relevant to man's need; and every action implied in the accomplishment of redemption is indicative of God's nature and work. The predicament is man's, caused by his own rebellion; the solution, if there is to be one, must be totally God's. "Thus says Yahweh, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6). "I, even I, am Yahweh, and besides me there is no savior" (Isa. 43:11). "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are mine" (Isa. 43:1b). "I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to me, for I have redeemed you. Sing, O heavens, for Yahweh has done it . . ." (Isa. 44:22,23).

Such words stud the Old Testament as diamonds a setting. They are as specific and "hard" as the warnings--the Lord "will not at all acquit the wicked" (Nah. 1:3); "Now consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver" (Ps. 50:22). Except for the "shadowy" lessons of the ritual sacrifice of the Temple worship, "which was a figure for the time

then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices" (Heb. 9:9), no one of the Old Testament knew *how* the great promise of redemption could ultimately be accomplished in a way that would at once maintain God's immutable justice and yet clear (redeem) the sinner.

But once the cry of John the Baptist was heard,--"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)--everything began to fall into place. Every foreshadowing, every foretype, every prophecy, every promise of the Old Testament stood forth sharply, as if a mist had blown away from a blazing mosaic. Over and over Jesus affirmed that his own coming and his redeeming works were in fulfillment of the Scriptures; that he was that same God who had said, "Look to me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other" (Isa. 45:22), and, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9); that he alone has come down from heaven: "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. . . . if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins" (John 8:23,24); that he alone is the Good Shepherd as prophesied in the Scriptures: "Indeed I myself will search for my sheep and seek them out" (Ezek. 34:11); that he is the sole source of power: "For without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5); and that there is no other savior, no other redeemer: "No man comes to the father, but by me" (John 14:6; Isa. 43:11).

And above all else, he revealed the manner in which the age-old promise of redemption should be fulfilled--that he, Son of God and Son of man, would go to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover, and "be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn him to death and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and scourge him, and spit on him, and kill him. And the third day he will rise again" (Mark 10:33,34). In historical fact and in spiritual reality, the redemptive works foretold in detail throughout the entire Old Testament are, on Calvary, wrought, achieved, accomplished to the last detail, until on the cross he cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30). As he had declared: "The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. . . . No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again . . ." (John 10:11b, 18). Therefore "you know," writes Peter, "that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18,19). And the praise will rise in heaven: ". . . for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood . . ." (Rev. 5:9)

The wholeness, the perfection, the total efficacy of this act, this atoning, redemptive death that he "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18), is totally available to all who will accept. With equal (and fearful) force, rejection of this free redemption carries condemnation. "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:29). There is no other means of cleansing, "For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap, yet your iniquity is marked before me," says the Lord GOD" (Jer. 2:22). But always the dark warning is illuminated by the bright promise: "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ [God's] Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). The clarity of our knowledge as well as the perfection of the proffered redemption carries a burden of responsibility. "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?" asks T. S. Eliot, echoing Hebrews 2:3, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation . . .?" "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin" (John 15:22). What that sin is he explains in declaring that a work of the Holy Spirit is to "convict the world of sin . . . of sin, *because they do not believe in me*" (John 16:8,9).

Just as the Kingdom awaits final culmination and manifestation, though it is a present reality and the possession of every believer, so the work of redemption awaits completion and fulfillment, though each believer is in present possession of eternal life--"He who has the Son has life" (1John 5:12a). Even as the whole creation groans and travails, awaiting the consummation of God's plans, so "even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23); for "we have this treasure in earthen vessels," suffering the ills of the flesh, but "knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise up us with Jesus," and knowing, too, that "if our earthly house . . . is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, . . . that mortality may be swallowed up by life" (2 Cor. 4:7, 14; 5:1, 4). Until that Day of the Lord, the security of the redemption is absolute, for it is not in our feeble hands; rather, we "are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5). "This is the will of the Father who sent me, that of all he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day" (John 6:39); "For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Heb. 10:14). The stamp of possession of God the Holy Spirit is on every one of the redeemed, "whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:28).

The Resurrection

The assurance of redemption is precisely equated in Scripture to the fact of the resurrection. "Him God raised up the third day . . . through his name whoever believes in him will receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:40,43). For he "was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). "If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17).

Little wonder, therefore, that of all that the apostles and early disciples taught, the core of unshakable conviction was the actual, physical, historical resurrection of the Lord. Over and over they asserted, as the ground and basis of their message, that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures, and that he was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that he was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that he was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also . . ." (1 Cor. 15:3-8). Always they spoke as witnesses--"That which we have seen and heard we declare to you" (1 John 1:3); "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Pet. 1:16).

There is equally little wonder that this fact should throughout all history have been the stumbling block of the secular realm and the point of attack from a world determined not to acknowledge this King, "even denying the Lord who bought them" (2 Pet. 2:1). Christ's patience was remarkable toward those who, between his resurrection and his ascension, demanded more evidence; but he also made it clear to Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus that the real barrier to belief is in the heart, not the head: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:25). This is that ignorance which is *willed*, of which Peter speaks (2 Pet. 3:5), and also Paul, who describes unbelievers as "being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. 4:18). For, in all truth, no intellectual or rational impediment stands between the most careful thinker and belief in the resurrection. The evidence is overwhelming, if it is truly and

honestly examined. (As good a place as any for the secular-minded to start is with *Who Moved the Stone?* by Frank Morrison [London, 1930, and many reprints, including paperbacks]). Therefore the most common protective gesture of the "willingly ignorant" is to walk quickly away, with a jest and a smile of superior wisdom--as happened to Paul in Athens: "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter." And the consequence of this willed ignorance was the immediate departure of the king's ambassador: "So Paul departed from among them" (Acts 17:32,33). No one is forced into the Kingdom; no one is beaten until he says he believes; no one is deprived of his terrible right to go his own way, not even Judas, who was not forcibly expelled from the Last Supper but who rather heard the terrible, permissive word: "What you do, do quickly." And he "went out immediately. And it was night" (John 13:27,30). The alternative remains unchanged to this day: either the Inner Room of fellowship, faith, and light, or the darkness and loneliness of the night outside. Each soul freely chooses; none is compelled.

To try to retain Christianity without the resurrection is like trying to retain a definition with nothing to define. If Jesus did not rise, then he was not who he said he was; he did not do those mighty works his biographers say he did; his teachings are no better than the pious utterance of other mere humans; his promises are invalidated; his self-confidence was self-deception; and the apostles (who swore contrary to all this) were the most conscienceless deceivers in the history of the planet.

If all this were, despite its melancholy, inescapably taught by logic and historical research, then it would have to be accepted, no matter how grim. But, on the contrary, to accept it in even the most preliminary way is to embrace manifest logical absurdities and to do violence to the most elementary principles of historical scholarship.

This is not the place in purpose or in scope to attempt even a cursory survey of the evidences of the truth of the resurrection; but perhaps it is appropriate to note one contemporary line of skepticism that tries, futilely, to keep Christ and yet deny that he genuinely rose from the dead. Though centered in the "Bultmann school," it is better known in England and America in the phrase of James M. Robinson, "a new quest of the historical Jesus," a movement sometimes now called "post-Bultmannian." This point of view (in over-simplified summary) declares that there was a real Jesus but that (as is demonstrably true of so many figures of mythical prowess) his nature and his work were gradually exaggerated, altered, and given fabulous dimensions by adoring writers, who step by step added wondrous deeds and swelling words to the record. So, for example, has it been with the story of King Arthur. It is up to the student of history to determine what actual core of humble truth lies behind the facade of fiction. This he does by unpeeling one layer of the fabulous after another from the real figure. Practitioners of this theory utter with confidence such judgments as, "clearly a later elaboration," or "palpably a combination of fabulous ingredients from the Fertility God myth."

The hitch is that records of the life of Jesus are utterly unlike those of any figure of myth. There *was no* gradual accretion of the miraculous. It is precisely the earliest (indeed, as now acknowledged, the contemporary) sources that are the most precise and inflexible in declaring the miracles and in insisting on the resurrection. The most wonderful deeds are precisely those preached by the apostles and other disciples to crowds who were in a position, had the claims been untrue, to hoot them to scorn. Indeed, it was by reminding the crowd of the miracles they had seen Jesus perform that the apostles compelled belief. The shout of triumph that Jesus was risen was made on the spot where it occurred, and in the presence of those who could instantly

and effectually have scotched the claim once and for all had it not been true. Hundreds and thousands believed, and the Jewish and Roman authorities were unable to refute the specific, undaunted, repeated assertion of eyewitnesses that the Lord was alive, precisely as he had promised. Within a few weeks, a group of dis-spirited, defeated, frightened disciples became transformed into irresistibly courageous witnesses, willing to receive any punishment and torture, flatly refusing to deny what they knew to be true of their own physical experience: that their Lord was alive, victorious over death and hell, as he had declared.

These are the facts of history. The rational man must consider every possible hypothesis put forward to explain them and accept the one that is adequate. The "demythologizing" approach is neither faithful to the facts of history nor logically coherent. Honest skepticism must take recourse in a position once stated to the writer: "I agree that no hypothesis except the resurrection explains the facts; but I refuse to accept it, and I always will."

In sum, the resurrection, not the ethical teachings, was the earliest burden of the messages the apostles preached. "Him God raised up on the third day, and showed him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with him after he arose from the dead" (Acts 10:40,41); "to whom he also presented himself alive after his suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). The presentation was unfailingly sober, factual, unchanging. Paul's manner was always to reason with his hearers "from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead . . ." (Acts 17:2,3). And the aged John, seeing in his great vision a Being whose glory overwhelmed him, before whom he fell as one dead, felt with amazement a touch and heard a voice with which he had grown familiar years before: "He laid his right hand on me, saying to me, Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. "I am he who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. . ." (Rev. 1:17b, 18).

Conclusion

"Man is that great and true *amphibium*, whose nature is disposed to live, not only like other creatures in divers elements, but in divided and distinguished worlds: for though there be but one to sense, there are two to reason, the one visible, the other invisible. . . ." So wrote Sir Thomas Browne over three hundred years ago, memorably phrasing a truth he had learned from Scripture and from his own self-examination.

The reality of the visible is, by and large, the only reality to the modern temper, despite the teaching of science that visible matter and invisible energy are but two forms of a single "reality." Science, however, can teach us only of the intangible, not the spiritual, for "the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). To discern the nature of the spiritual and to know that it is the only dimension within which to meet God, it is necessary for one to be taught of God, "giving thanks to the Father . . . who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son . . . who is the image of the invisible God . . ." (Col. 1:12,13,15). We have no sure source of knowledge about the unseen world except in the words of Jesus, for "no man has ascended up to heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven. . . . He who comes from heaven is above all. And what he has seen and heard, that he testifies . . ." (John 3:13,31,32).

Hence we walk by faith, not by sight, in earnest expectation and fervent hope; ". . . but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses . . ." (Rom. 8:24-26). "A little while, and you will not see me; and again a little while, and you will see me, because I go to the Father. . . . Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you" (John 16:16,22).

Such seemingly irreconcilable dualities as flesh and spirit, sin and righteousness, time and eternity, hell and heaven, creature and Creator, the world and the Kingdom of God, death and life are ultimately to be resolved only through a new creation, a new divine work, undertaken by that same Jesus by whom all things were first made (John 1:3). It will not be by a blending of the warring ingredients into a kind of cosmic half-way-good melange that the Kingdom will finally be set up. Nor is it by merely diminishing the power of death and sin that Christ has conquered; nor is it by extending time hugely into the future that life is made everlasting. It is by the creative "work" of God, of the kind that in the beginning flung out the heavens in space and breathed spiritual life into Adam and Eve. "My Father has been working until now," Jesus said, "and I have been working" (John 5:17).

The new creation begins with each redeemed soul. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). The Kingdom is peopled, not with those who have been rehabilitated, but with those who have been reborn. ". . . unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:5,6). "Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1a).

The new creation will be culminated when the "heavens and the earth, which are now . . . kept in store, reserved for fire until the day of judgment . . ." vanish; whereupon "we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:7,13). Paul gives a hint of a final, humanly unimaginable totality of glory, "when he [Jesus] delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when he puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:24,25).

If we at all believe what Jesus has taught us, the next "sign" the earth sees will be, not a king in disguise, renewing his offer of healing and pardon, but the "wrath of God . . . revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men . . ." (Rom. 1:18); "he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked" (Isa. 11:4b). Israel "will look on me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning . . ." (Zech. 12:10,11). As for the world, as presented in John's vision, "the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne . . ." (Rev. 6:15,16). Acknowledgment of his sovereignty, formerly refused by free choice, will then be enforced without choice, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" [Phil. 3:10].