

## PART SECOND

# THE THINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

## CHAPTER V

### THINGS CONCERNING THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST.

Israel unable to redeem themselves; and the nations equally powerless to their own regeneration—The reconstruction of the social fabric the work of Omnipotence by the hand of the Lord Jesus at his approaching manifestation—He will re-establish the kingdom and throne of David—The priesthood of Shiloh—The Ezekiel temple to be built by Christ—Of the Name of Jesus—Of repentance, remission of sins, and eternal life—Death-bed and gaol repentance.

BY this time, I presume, the reader well understands what the Lord has promised, or covenanted, to do. Let him, then, in view of these “exceeding great and precious promises”, take a mental survey of Canaan, of Israel, and of the nations—of Canaan in its desolation, of Israel in their dispersion, and of the nations in the abyss of mortal ignorance, and of dark and cruel superstitions; and prostrate under the iron heel of blood-stained and murderous tyrannies. This is truly a bottomless abyss from which neither Israel nor the Gentiles are able to extricate themselves. The Strength of Israel has hid His face from them; they are therefore powerless among the nations, and can neither “restore all things”, nor return to their country. As for the pagan, Papal, Protestant, and Mohammedan peoples, their case is equally desperate with that of the Jews. They groan under the armed oppressor; they sigh after “liberty, fraternity, and equality”; they long for the regeneration of society; but instead of looking to heaven for deliverance, they curse God and despise His laws; and grasping the sword, undertake the amelioration of society by deeds of blood! Mankind have not yet learned that the world’s redemption from all its evils is from God; nor are they aware, such is the impenetrability of human ignorance, that they have neither virtue, knowledge, power, nor wisdom, enough to deliver themselves from their miseries, and to reconstitute society to the promotion of their own happiness, and to the glory and honour of the Most High. There is no man, nor any combination of men, under the heavens, that is competent to the work of social regeneration. If individuals be unable to regenerate themselves, which is unquestionable, no association of persons, however multitudinous, can renew the world, and make it what it ought to be. That it needs regeneration is self-evident to all the “sons of light”; and that it cannot of itself compass that necessity is equally apparent to all, save those who are of the night. What, then, is the hope of the believer in the world’s extremity? Let the “testimony of God” be our oracle; and let Him reveal to us the help He has provided, the deliverance in reserve.

In the testimony a voice is heard addressing the nations in these words, saying, “Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from afar: the Lord hath called me from the womb; *from the bowels*” Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Second Chapter 5. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

*of my mother hath he made mention of my name.* He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft: and said unto me, Thou art my servant, o Israel, *in whom I will be glorified*". Need the reader be told who this great and mighty one is? Whose name was mentioned by the Lord before his birth? Hear the scriptures—"And Gabriel said to Mary, Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS (*Heb.* Jehoshua, or Jehovah-tzidkenu, the Lord our righteousness), for he shall save his people from their sins. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him *the throne of his father David*: and he shall reign *over the house of Jacob for ever*; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

But he was born, and has departed, and is hid in the shadow of the Lord's hand; and has neither received David's throne, nor does he reign over Israel, who, though yet to be ruled by him, "curse their king and their God, and look upwards". We shall see how this is. In the oracle quoted, the Lord Jesus, who makes proclamation to the isles of the Gentiles, announces himself as *the Servant of Jehovah in whom He will be glorified*. Now a servant implies work to be performed for, and in behalf of, another. What work, or service, then, has the Lord Jesus to execute for the Father? "Behold, the Lord will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold *his reward* is with him, *his work* before him." We want to know what this work is. Hear then what the word saith. "The Lord formed me from the womb to be his servant *to bring Jacob again to him*." But is the restoration of the tribes of Israel all he will have to do? We shall find not; for Jehovah says to him, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the desolation of Israel: *I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth*".

The Lord Jesus, the servant of Jehovah, then, is in reserve at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, for the purpose of a future manifestation, not to destroy the earth, and to burn up the wicked, but to fulfil the covenants of promise; in putting an end to the desolation of Canaan, restoring the tribes to their native land, re-establishing the commonwealth of Israel, enlightening the nations, regenerating society, filling the earth with the glory of the Lord, establishing his sovereignty in the world, and in rewarding the saints. All this is to be accomplished when the Lord comes. The God of the fathers will then remember the covenants which He *began* to fulfil when He called Israel out of Egypt under Moses; and when He called Jesus out of Egypt in the days of Archelaus. These were but earnest of the good things to come, in the manifestation of which the promises will be perfected in every jot and tittle of the word.

This is the sense in which James understood the testimony of God. "Simeon" said he, "hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, *to take out of them a people for his name*." Then, in quoting the words of Amos, he continues, "*After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men (Edom) might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord*". This was adduced as a quietus upon the Judaizers to prove the acceptance by the Lord of Gentiles as well as of Jews, and upon the same terms. But I have introduced it here to show the arrangement of things in relation to the work to be performed. We see that there is a certain labour to be finished—to wit, the taking out a people from among the nations for the Lord's name. By the time this is accomplished, *the Lord will return*. But what does the text before us say he returns for? *To set up David's kingdom which is in ruins*. But again, what ulterior purpose is to be effected through this restitution? The turning the Gentiles from their delusions, to serve God according to the

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institutions of the Age to come. *The people for the Lord's name* are the saints or "heirs of the kingdom". Such an institution requires administrators; and as from its nature only righteous and immortal men can inherit it, it became necessary to *call them out*, first from Israel, and then from the nations, upon the principle of *the obedience of faith*. This is one reason why so many ages have elapsed from the *promise of it* to Abraham until now. If it had been possible to set it up in Abraham's time, where would have been the kings and priests to answer its requirements, seeing it is to rule over all nations? It would have been a kingdom without rulers. Hence, the gospel, or glad tidings, concerning it have been preached for the purpose of obtaining kings, priests, and princes of all ranks and degrees, for the kingdom, when the time comes for the God of heaven to establish it by the hand of His servant, the Lord Christ.

If Jew or Gentile aspire to this glorious station in the Age to come, "*the prize*" is attainable on the simple condition of believing the things concerning the Kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ, and of being baptized; and thenceforth walking as becomes men who are to be, not only the rulers, but the companions of Christ, and examples of the nations in righteousness, equity, and faith. The time, however, for collecting together *the nobility of the kingdom* is almost elapsed. It has been continuous with the desolation of Jerusalem. She was to be "trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled". These times are almost accomplished. Only a few more years remain, and then "the accepted time and day of salvation" will have passed. The door into the kingdom will be shut, and no more can obtain a right to enter it. Men who may survive the worse than Egyptian plagues coming upon them, may live in the future age in hope of immortality when the age has passed away; but in the glory and honour of Shiloh's "everlasting dominion", they will have neither part nor lot.

#### THE PRIESTHOOD OF SHILOH.

In the everlasting covenant made with David, the son promised him, who is to sit upon his throne and to wear his crown for ever, is also set forth as a sacrificial victim; as it is written, "In suffering for iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes due to the children of Adam". So the passage is rendered by Adam Clarke. It is in strict accordance with the truth in the case: and in agreement with the testimony, which says, "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed".

But, being a sacrifice for sin, who should be the priest in the case, and enter into the Most Holy with his blood to make atonement, or reconciliation, for his people? Where there is a sacrifice there is also of necessity a priest. There were priests under the law of Moses, who went into the Most Holy with the blood of the slain beasts, and sprinkled it upon the lid of the ark called the propitiatory, or mercy-seat, upon which the cherubic faces looked. But the blood of David's Son was not to be sprinkled there. It was not to be carried into the Most Holy made with hands, either by himself, or by the high priest of the law: and wherever its memorial was presented, it could only be exhibited by a high priest. The Son of David could not officiate as a priest on earth so long as the covenant from Sinai continued the law of the land; because it permitted only the tribe of Levi to minister in holy things. He belonged to the tribe of Judah, "of which Moses said nothing concerning priesthood". He could not enter into the temple after his resurrection and present himself before the Lord in its most holy place; neither could the Levitical high priest enter heaven with the memorial of Shiloh's death.

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What, then, was to be done? David's son must appear in heaven in his own person, and as the high priest of a new law offer himself before God.

But the covenant made with David, while it speaks of his son as a sacrifice, and, by implication, of his resurrection, and future occupation of his throne for ever; says nothing about him as high priest of his kingdom. Hence, in order that he might enter his divine Father's presence as a high priest, and hereafter sit as a priest upon the throne of David's kingdom, "*the word of the oath*" was given for the purpose. This was necessary; for "no man taketh this honour upon himself, but he that is called of God, as Aaron was". David's son was called to the high priesthood of the kingdom, as distinctly as Aaron was to the same honour under the Mosaic law. "He glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee; saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec."

Here, then, are *two orders of priesthood*—the Order of Melchizedec, and the Order of Aaron. Melchizedec's was contemporary with Abraham; Aaron's was not instituted until 430 years after the confirmation of the covenant. Of Melchizedec, the apostle could have said much more than he did say; but he has said enough to give us an idea of his order of priesthood. In this he was without predecessor, or successor, without sacerdotal genealogy, and without beginning of official days, or end of life; but, assimilated to the Son of God, abideth a priest continually; of whom also it is testified that he liveth. The Aaronic priesthood was the reverse of all this. Its priests were descended from Aaron, their mothers were of the tribe of Levi, their fathers in office before them, upon which they entered at thirty years, and vacated it at fifty. But the priesthood of Shiloh is not like this. His pedigree is royal, and not sacerdotal. He had no predecessor, nor will he ever vacate the office that another may take his place.

It is probable that Shem was the personage to whom Abraham paid tithes on his return from the slaughter of the kings. Abraham died thirty-five years before Shem reached his five hundred and second year, after the flood. At this date, Isaac was one hundred and ten, and Jacob fifty; so that they were contemporary with Shem for these periods of their lives. There is no account of Shem's death in the scripture; on the contrary, it is testified, as we have seen, that the person called Melchizedec still lives. Now, Melchizedec is a word expressive of the character of the person who bore it. It signifies king of righteousness, or righteous king. He was the greatest king in Canaan, and reigned in Salem, which signifies *peace*, and is afterwards called Jerusalem; so that this righteous king was King of Peace. Shem, king of righteousness, and king of peace, and priest of the Most High God, is the type, contemporary with the holder of the promises, of the Seed, or Christ, on the throne of the Kingdom of God.

The word of the oath, saying, "I have sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec" having changed the priesthood of the kingdom, "there is made of necessity also a change of the law" of the State. No revolution was more complete and radical than that necessitated by the substitution of the Melchizedec for the Aaronic priesthood of the commonwealth of Israel. Under the Mosaic code the regal and pontifical offices were divided, and held by two distinct orders of men. The regal was hereditary in the family of David, and the pontifical was hereditary in the family of Aaron; but when the new code shall be promulgated, that, namely, which is to "go forth from Zion" when Christ shall give peace to the world, and judge among the nations, the kingly and priestly offices will be united, and their functions exercised by one person, even Jesus, "who is King of Righteousness and King of Peace, the Priest of the Most High God", as Melchizedec was. Jesus the High Priest will inherit the throne of David by virtue of the covenant made with him. If Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Second Chapter 5. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

there had been no other oaths than that with Abraham, and this with David, David's son could not have been a priest upon his throne; but the *word of the oath* coming in, the throne and pontificate of the kingdom become the right of Christ, the Lord.

#### SHILOH TO BUILD A TEMPLE.

In the everlasting covenant made with David it is declared of his immortal son by the Lord, saying, "*He shall build a house for my name*". David wished to execute this great national work, but was forbidden. It was afterwards accomplished by Solomon, and in this he eminently typified the "greater than Solomon", who is to construct a similar edifice, only on a vastly more magnificent scale. This will appear from the following testimony. After Solomon's temple was laid in ruins, and while the Jews, after their return from Babylon, were erecting a new one upon the site of the old, the word of the Lord came to the prophet, 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 shall be a priest upon his throne.* And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord".

Let the reader turn to the texts below, and he will have no doubt as to the person styled the Branch. The Melchizedec Son of David, then, is to build the Millennial Temple in Jerusalem to the name of Jehovah; and as the Tyrian Gentiles aided Solomon to rear his edifice, so those who are far off from Jerusalem, where the prophecy was delivered, are to co-operate in the erection of Shiloh's, which is to be "*a house of prayer for all people*", when the Lord shall "plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people". If the reader wish to know more about the temple to be built by Shiloh in Jerusalem, he can consult Ezekiel. The description comes in between the battle of Armageddon, in which Nebuchadnezzar's image is broken to pieces on the mountains of Israel, and the earth shining with the glory of the Lord. The first nine verses of the forty-third chapter show that the era of the temple described is when Shiloh "dwells in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and his holy name they shall defile *no more*". This is conclusive; for ever since their exode from Egypt until the present time, they have incessantly defiled the Lord's name; but the prophecy contemplates a period when they shall do it "*no more*".

When the Lord Jesus shall sit upon the throne of his father David, as high priest of the nation, and has dedicated the temple to the Most High, what then? "Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house (or temple) of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and *we will walk in his paths*". "The sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar." And "there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts".

#### THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST.

If I have been successful in making a distinct impression upon the reader's mind as to the nature of "the kingdom of God and of his Christ"; and that impression has originated within him a desire to know *what he must do to inherit it*, it remains now to direct his attention to the things of the name of Christ. This is a subject which would occupy very much space if all were to be said about it that

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would be profitable. I find myself, however, compelled to confine myself to a mere sketch, which the reader must more highly finish as the result of his own investigations.

The *name* of Jesus Christ comprehends all that is affirmable of him; and is, therefore, the summary of his character as a prophet, sacrifice, priest, and king. Hence, to understand his name we must know what is testified of him in the law, the prophets, the psalms, and the apostles. From the Old Testament we may become acquainted with the Shiloh's name. This is absolutely necessary: for unless we understand what sort of a person Christ was to be, how can we, when we learn the name of Jesus as described by the apostles, be able to say that the name of Christ as set forth in the prophets, and the name of Jesus, are the name of one and the same person? But by comparing the apostolic *history* with the testimony of *prophecy*, we can intelligently confess that "Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ the Son of the living God". This, then, is a first principle of the name of Jesus. Admit that he is the Shiloh, and all things predicted of the Shiloh are solely applicable to him.

Now there are certain things affirmed of Jesus Christ, the belief of which is highly essential to the constituting of a believer an heir of the kingdom. These things have regard to Jesus *as an offering for sin*. He died, was buried, and rose again. These are facts. But what is the truth, meaning, or doctrine of the facts? "He was delivered for *our* offences, and raised again for *our* justification"; that is, for the justification of those who believe the gospel of the kingdom. It is a great mistake to suppose that the belief in the sacrificial part of the name of Jesus Christ, is sufficient for salvation. Salvation in the kingdom is not promised to those who only believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and died and rose again for sin. It is *equally* necessary to believe in the promises of the covenants; not more so, but equally so; for if one believed the things of the kingdom, but rejected the sacrifice of Jesus, and his resurrection, he could not be saved. The gospel must be taken as a whole, and not cut up into pieces, and one or two selected which suit the taste, and the rest set aside as unimportant and non-essential. Without the sacrificial ingredient of the name, there would be no means of justification by the name; but then *Jesus as a sin-offering* is not the end of faith; but a means to the end, which is the inheritance of the kingdom with him in all his glory.

A very circumscribed and superficial view of the gospel is that which finds it stated in the words, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the scriptures", The "*our*" for whom Christ died are those who believe in the gospel of the kingdom, not those who are ignorant of it; or, as the apostle expresses it, those "*who keep in memory A CERTAIN WORD I preached unto them*". What word? That which he taught among them a year and six months; and which he preached wherever he went. The word concerning "*the hope of Israel*", on account of which he was taken prisoner to Rome; and which the Jews listened to patiently, so long as he did not mention the name of Jesus; but when that was introduced, they opposed themselves and blasphemed. Because the apostle is made to say in the common version that he "*delivered first of all*" the death and resurrection of Christ, persons, who know no other than their mother tongue, conclude that the sacrifice of Jesus for sin was the first thing spoken, and the very gospel itself! But the apostle did not write "*first of all*"; his words are ἐν πρώτοις, that is, *among the first things*. And why does he call up the things mentioned in the third and fourth verses in preference to the other things he delivered? Because he was about to refute the Platonic notion taught by some in Corinth, to wit, "that there is no resurrection of the dead"; and to do so it was necessary to remind them of his having preached to them the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus; which was all a fable, if there were no future resurrection as they said, because it had "passed already": "Ye are then", said he, "yet in your sins, and they who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

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Three things were to be preached in the name of Jesus Christ to them who believed in the promises made of God to the fathers. These were. first, *repentance*; secondly, *remission of sins*; and third, *eternal life*. To preach the kingdom in the name of Jesus Christ was to expound the things concerning it; and to offer them to all who would become the subjects of repentance and remission of sins in his name. Neither “*flesh and blood*”, nor “*sinners*”, can inherit the kingdom of God. These are fixed principles. But why not? Because “*the kingdom shall not be left to other people*”, and because those who inherit it are to possess it *for ever*. Now “*flesh and blood*” is *mortal*; how then can mortality inherit immortality? It is a physical impossibility. In other words, a man who only lives seventy years, cannot hold office for a thousand years; he must be made deathless before he can retain it for ever. Again, it is a moral impossibility for sinners to possess the kingdom, because the law of the kingdom is that “*he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God*”. It is the inheritance of saints, to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Two things are therefore indispensable before Jew or Gentile can inherit the kingdom—first, a moral purification; and secondly, a physical, or corporeal, purification. The first is compassed in obeying the truth; the last, by a resurrection unto life.

Now, the repentance which results from believing the gospel of the kingdom is not “*sorrow for sin*”; nor does it contain the least bitterness or remorse of feeling in it. The scripture word translated *repentance* is *μετάνοια*, and signifies *a change of mind and purpose*. When such a change takes place from believing the truth, it is a disposition and mode of thinking such as characterized Abraham, who is the model of the faith and temper which precedes justification in the name of the Lord. But a change of mind and purpose, however “*evangelical*”, is only granted for repentance in the name of Jesus Christ. That is to say, though a believer of the gospel of the kingdom might possess this state of mind and child-like disposition, he would not be regarded as in repentance any more than in Jesus until the name of Christ was named upon him according to “*the law of faith*”. It imports not how much a woman loves a man, she is not his wife, and therefore entitled to none of the benefits he is able to confer, until she puts on his name according to law. The name of Christ consummates everything. “*Complete in him*”; but out of him everything is imperfect. Faith is unfinished, and the change of mind and disposition is incomplete, until the believer of the gospel of the kingdom puts on the name of Christ. In the act of doing this, his faith is counted to him for righteousness, or remission of sins that are past; and his change of mind and disposition is *granted* to him for repentance.

But *a right* to eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God is also imparted to the believer through the name of Christ. The life-giving efficacy of his name is derived from his resurrection as the first-fruits of them that sleep. Had Jesus not risen from the dead, men could not have obtained a right to eternal life through his name. This is the doctrine of the apostles and the prophets. An unrisen sacrifice is only a temporary propitiation for sin. This was the nature of the sacrifices under the Mosaic law. Hence the law had no vitality in it; “*for if there had been a law given that could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*” But this was impossible. Moses was the mediator of the covenant from Sinai. He died, and the Lord buried him; but there was no testimony added of his resurrection: and though he byes (for he appeared to Jesus on the Mount), it was after the law came into force. The Mosaic law is, therefore, a minister only of death and cursing. But Jesus died and rose again, and lives for evermore. Hence, the gospel in his name, and the new code hereafter to be promulgated from Zion, are efficacious to the bestowal of a right to eternal life upon all who believe through his name.

While a believer is out of Christ, he is in his sins, and while he is in his sins he is under the sentence of death; for “the wages of sin is death”. As soon, however, as his sins are forgiven through Christ’s name, in the act of forgiveness he passes from under the sentence of death; and as there is no middle, or neutral position, he comes under the sentence of life, and rejoices in hope of the kingdom of God. Thus Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility *to light in the gospel of the kingdom*. There is no other way of obtaining them than through his name, and by a resurrection from the dead; or, if living at the setting up of the kingdom, by a change in the twinkling of an eye. Such is the doctrine of Christ as opposed to the vain philosophy of Plato. The Papist and Protestant admirers of this heathen speculator, contend for the hereditary immortality of an immaterial essence, innate in sinful flesh; while the Lord Jesus has made known that life and incorruptibility are attributes of the kingdom of God, which they only can obtain who are accounted worthy on gospel principles of inheriting it. In fine, incorruptible life is part of the reward of the righteous: and nowhere in the Bible is immortality predicated of, or promised to, men who die in their sins. Out of Christ, immortality there is none.

#### DEATH-BED AND GAOL REPENTANCE.

By “*the great salvation*” is meant deliverance from the grave by a resurrection to life, and a share in the kingdom of God. This, as we have seen, is predicated on faith in the promises made to the Fathers, an Abrahamic disposition, baptism into the name of the Holy Ones, and faith made perfect by works. In other words, salvation is promised to those only who walk in the steps of Abraham’s faith. To deny this is to deny the testimony of God. His own Son was not exalted until he was made perfect by suffering. “He that believes the gospel, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believes not shall be condemned.” This fiat has never been revoked; it is, therefore, as valid and exceptionless as when it fell from the lips of the Son of God.

Now, in view of this irrefutable truth, what shall we say of that system which holds out assurances of “heaven” to men of earthly, sensual, and devilish lives, when they find themselves prisoners of disease, and convicts in the clutches of the law? When death stares them in the face, they are exhorted by their “spiritual guides” to “make their peace with God”; and even when preparing for the scaffold are taught by “gaol chaplains” to expect to meet in heaven the companions of their crimes; and that by partaking of the “sacrament” they are making their souls ready “to meet their God”! And upon what is all this “consolation of religion” founded? Upon a terrible apprehension of the molten and flaming sulphur in hell’s cauldron, into which the “penitents” are taught their “immortal souls” will be plunged by God, and where they will be tormented by the Devil for all eternity. A gaol-chaplain at Coventry actually burned a female convict’s hand with the flame of a candle as a foretaste of her tortures after death if she did not repent! This was his plan of proceeding in the “cure of her soul”! But if disease, or crime, had not captured the “penitents”, their career would have been still onward in iniquity. Finding there is no escape from death, either by the rope, or in the ordinary way, their audacity and impiety are suspended. They are imposed upon by the clerical assurance that the Lord is “waiting to be gracious”; they are directed to the thief upon the cross; and they are deceived by the falsehood that “while the lamp holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return”. All is ready, the gospel feast is prepared, and nothing is wanting but for them to believe that Christ died for them, to be sorry for the past, profess themselves at peace with God and all mankind, and to pray for forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Thus the “spiritual guides” of the people shrieve them to perdition. An act of the mind, prompted by terror and their persuasions, is proposed by them as a set off for a whole life of impiety and crime! What base views must such men have of the God whose ministers they pretend to be! Their “consolations” are unmitigated blasphemy, and false from first to last. Need they be surprised at the little impression they make upon the public mind by their preaching; and that mankind are daily increasing in infidelity? The million, though ignorant, are not fools. “What necessity for us”, say they, “to trouble ourselves about religion? We can be shrived in half-an-hour for all the offences of a long life of sin.” It is the preachers that make men infidels by the preposterous absurdities they preach in the much-abused name of Christianity.

But the worst, and most repulsive, form of ministerial blasphemy is exhibited in gaol-chaplain consolations. These are a striking manifestation of clerical ignorance of the letter and spirit of the truth. The scripture saith, that “*no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*”; and that even “he that hateth his brother is a murderer”, and, consequently, beyond the pale of mercy. Murder can only be pardoned through a faith in the truth that works by love and purifies the heart, and made perfect by obedience. If after this such a believer fail of the grace of God, and hate and murder his brother, there is no forgiveness with God, “he shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth upon him”. What with sprinkling infants in the name of the Lord, and calling it Christian baptism; shriving reprobates at the gates of death, and calling it repentance; and committing their loathsome carcasses to the earth under a repetition of “*common prayer*” read over myriads of times, and styling it Christian burial; surely there is superabundant reason to conclude, were we even ignorant of the truth itself, that both priests and people are deceiving and being deceived.

To call the popular system of religion by which we are surrounded the religion of Christ, is not only a misnomer, but an imputation on the wisdom of God. Infant-sprinkling, death-bed repentances, and “Christian burials”, as they are termed, are mere human inventions. They belong to the apostasy, and are no part of the “things of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ”. If a man serve the lust of his flesh all his life, no remorse, or resolves on a bed of death will serve in the least. “He that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap”; and again, “to be carnally minded is death”: and “they that are in the flesh cannot please God”; and “if ye live after the flesh ye shall die”. These are testimonies which, in few words, show that there is no salvation for a man who serves himself all the days of his life, and when he is no longer able to grasp the world, offers the extreme fag-end of his existence to God. It is like eating all the meat of a joint, and throwing the bone to your friend. If he would feel himself insulted, in what estimation would God hold a similar treatment of His majesty; would He not spurn the hypocrite from His presence, and justly too?

It is because of these abominations that the judgments of God are falling upon the nations. Ministerial and popular iniquities have brought the pestilence upon this people; and war and famine upon others. They are but the beginning of sorrows. The present storm may lull; but it is only that it may gather force to sweep before it all refuges of lies. “Woe to the world because of offences!”

In former pages I have endeavoured to show the reader what the truth is. I have advanced nothing, that I can recollect, but what I have adduced “the law and the testimony” to prove. Let him view the landscapes of the moral world by the light of the truth, and he will behold the darkness visible. He will see its drapery in tatters, and its rags falling to pieces from very rottenness. Its fabric is rent from the dome to its foundations; and its structure is like a bowing wall and a tottering fence. There is no safety under its roof. Even the owls and the bats of its crannies are panic-stricken. Come out, then, Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Second Chapter 5. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

dear reader, and leave the den, if unhappily you sojourn there. Believe the truth for its own sake, and obey it; and if you stand alone, be of good courage. There is more real satisfaction in knowing, and being able to prove, the truth, and in contending single-handed for it, than in all the honour and enjoyment derivable from the applause of men, or the abundance of the world's goods a man may possess.

If the righteous "scarcely be saved" what scope is there for the ungodly and the sinner; and if judgment began at the house of God in the persecutions it endured, "what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" Be not deceived by the traditions of the Gentile scribes and orators. Their ministrations have no vitality in them, and leave their flocks in their own predicament, "dead in trespasses and in sins." Therefore "come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."