

CHAPTER 1: EXCAVATING FOR BURIED TRUTH

"It is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, without miraculous interposition, it must be in the same way as knowledge is come at by the continuance and progress and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints-as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is that all incredible what a book, which has been so long in possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered." Butler's Analogy.

On a certain morning in the later part of December 1913, we were at worship in the home. The Scripture portion for that morning was the 18th chapter of Luke. The narrative of the Rich Young ruler seemed to grip attention; and when the last two verses of the account were reached something happened which cannot be easily described in words. We were not conscious of being in an especially spiritual mood at the time. Nevertheless something happened which has changed a good many things and the process of transformation is still going on.

It was as if instantaneously and supernaturally a ray of light was flashed into my mind and heart. After a pause of a few seconds I said to my wife, "I see something new; and then finished the chapter. When worship was over I at once took my Bible again and began to seek confirmation, or refutation, of the vision. With note book and pen in hand the New Testament was examined from beginning to end with the greatest care and much prayer for guidance, the search extending over many months and the results filling several notebooks. Since then much truth by way of confirmation has been found in both Testaments. There is now absolutely no doubt in the writer's mind that a truth of apostolic authority has been recovered; and that he is wholly indebted to the goodness and mercy of God for such a gracious revelation. It is not often that he gets truth in this way. The experience was just a little touch of Eph. 1:17, 18. Such moments of union and communion between the Vine and the branches ought to be far more common.

May both the writer and the reader be graciously favored by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him as in the following pages we proceed to dig through the successive strata of traditional deposit, ecclesiastical presupposition and prejudice in order to the recovery and due recognition of a truth which in the primitive Church played no small part in keeping the disciples of the ascended Christ in a state of grace, of watchfulness, and of submission to the Word and Spirit of God; and for the want of which today Christians are for the most part living in a state of self-sufficiency and practical indifference to the claims of God. The Holy Spirit has foretold us it would be so.

The method of procedure in exposition is the opposite of the one pursued in the first study. In that we began with a principle which was allowed to unfold itself organically from centre to circumference. In the present study we begin at the circumference and work inward to the principle. And once a biblical principle is found, it matters not where, it will be met again and again, modifying, expanding, intensifying, and adding or subtracting as the text and context may require. Let the reader therefore be prepared for new meanings in words, in phrases, and also new conclusions made necessary by new premises.

Before coming directly to the study of this interesting narrative we will notice three significant facts:

1. The narrative (Luke 18:18-30) is recorded by all three of the Synoptic Evangelists. This should warn us that we are to look for something of more than ordinary importance.
2. At the turning point in the record Jesus introduces His exposition by a solemn and instructive, "Verily I say unto you."
3. All three, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, introduce the narrative of the conversation between Christ and the Young Ruler immediately after the account of the little children being brought to Christ for His blessing. The disciples resented this act as an intrusion; but He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." On an earlier occasion Jesus had said to the twelve when He saw the spirit of carnal rivalry moving in their hearts: "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted (delivered from the power of natural selfishness) and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt.18:1-3). Surely the men addressed were saved (John 15:3 and 17:11, 12); but they were not then in the kingdom in the sense which Jesus meant, and they knew it. The kingdom referred to belongs to the age to come. Their need was the very need of the Young Ruler. Their danger was petty, selfish rivalry; his danger was wealth. Let the reader ponder this thought carefully and at once he will begin to suspect the traditional interpretation of our narrative—that he is a sinner seeking salvation.

We will now repeat the account as given by Luke:

"And a certain ruler asked Him saying, 'Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And Jesus said unto him, 'Why callest thou Me good? None is good save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do

not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and mother.' And he said, 'All these have I kept from my youth up.' Now when Jesus heard these things He said unto him, 'Lackest thou one thing, sell all that thou hast and distribute to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me.' And when he heard this he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, He said, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.' And they that heard it said, 'Who then can be saved?' And He said, 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.' Then Peter said, 'Lo, we have left all and followed Thee.' And He said unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake who may not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the age to come, life eternal'" (Luke 18:18-30).

Let the reader compare and contrast the accounts in Matthew 19:16-30 and Mark 10:17-31.

Note specially that what Matthew calls the kingdom of heaven, Luke and Mark call the kingdom of God. This does not imply that in all respects they are exactly identical. For present purposes, however, they are. Luke says the young man was a ruler, perhaps of the synagogue, possibly of the Sanhedrin. Matthew and Mark close the narrative with the solemn words, "But many that are first shall be last, and the last first."

THE YOUNG RULER ALREADY SAVED

The fact we wish to establish in our study of the narrative is that this Young Ruler is already saved, in the only sense in which a Jew, or indeed any man, could be saved prior to the vicarious death of Christ on Calvary. This man was no legalist, and he was not a hypocrite. His humility, earnestness and enthusiasm put to shame the great mass of Christian profession of today. In proving, specifically, that this Young Ruler was already a saved man when he came to Christ, we will thereby prove some other things incidentally; namely, for example, that the governing desire in this young man's heart ought to be the governing impulse the heart and life of every child of God on earth; and, further, that his loss in the age to come is going to be shared by the vast majority of the saved of this Christian dispensation. This being so we are not only all equally interested in the correct interpretation of the narrative as a matter of sound exegesis; but also because his opportunity then is our opportunity today, and also his peril then is our peril now.

Before coming to a constructive study of the passage let us note a fact on the negative side as affording strong presumptive evidence against the traditional interpretation.

While all the preachers, commentators and exegetes have been able to examine, are of one mind in the opinion that the Young Ruler was unsaved when he approached Christ, and that the way in which he presented his case proves him to have been a legalist, we have yet to find the first man who has given any valid reason for thinking so. They assume the fact and then proceed to draw their conclusions and make their observations. This popular method of studying God's Word justifies the following general statement; namely, dogmatic deduction based on gratuitous assumption is the curse of theology, philosophy and science. No real lover of Christian freedom and manhood can afford to be continually deceived and misled and cheated by any such cunning wiles of the great enemy of God and man. Let us take nothing for granted.

A PRELIMINARY SUGGESTION

In turning back the pages of history a thousand, or two thousand years, to study a particular event, or series of events, there are two problems ever standing in the foreground which must be dealt with and if possible solved in some degree, before the matter in hand comes under consideration. One at that end and the other at this end, namely:

- 1 Objectively—What was the historical setting of the said event considered socially, politically, religiously? Who were the actors in said event and what was their relation to one another and to their environment? What elements of fact and fiction were involved in the situation? What did the speaker, or speakers, really mean in what he or they said? This is no easy problem and yet it has very much to do with a true estimate of the event in question, the study of our narrative concerning the Rich Young Ruler.
- 2 Subjectively—What elements of fact and fiction hold the mastery in the inner being of the student, or investigator, and thereby affect the very warp and woof of his own mental, moral and spiritual make up; and thus, in the one case, opening his eyes to see things as they are in the light of actual truth; or, in the other, effectually perverting and nullifying his power of vision and compelling him to arrive at false conclusions? And these are not really two problems, but two phases, or sides, of one and the same problem, the correlation of subject and object. For example, how utterly impossible for the typical Jew of today, or any day, to form a true estimate of the Christ of the Four Gospels. An inner force impels him to falsehood.

If only truth is fact, and the antithesis of truth is fiction, then what a vast amount of unreality there is in the ponderous world-system of today, view it from what standpoint we may, socially, politically or religiously. For religion divorced from the living Christ becomes part and parcel of the world-system. The Christian sees the error of the Jew and is convinced of the folly and fatality of his course. But, inconceivable as it may seem, I wish to affirm modestly that since the days of St. Augustine to the present there has been and is no representative system of theology, Roman Catholic, Greek, Lutheran or Protestant, which has not erred at this very point. The creeds, confessions and theologies of Christendom know the Savior theoretically, as the Son of God, but they do not know Him truly as the Son of Man; they know Him as Christ but they do not know Him as the Christ. Nevertheless, God has not left His Son without witnesses in respect to His true Messianic character and claims.

The primal condition of my ability to emancipate the truth involved in the object of my contemplation from its fictitious historical entanglements is that I first eliminate the fictitious from my own mental and spiritual constitution; and thus free my personality from what is fictitious in my environment whether near or far as to space or time. By full and continuously intensifying surrender to Christ this can be done. This is what He came to do in the "joint-heirs" with Him in the coming kingdom. Reader, where do you stand in reference to the above problem? This will have much to do with what you may see in the following exposition.

CONSTRUCTIVE STUDY OF THE NARRATIVE

The Young Ruler's question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Let us seek for the basis of this earnest interrogation in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and in Jewish hopes at the time of our Savior's Advent.

1. It is very manifest from even a superficial of the Old Testament that the theocracy established in Israel through the agency of Moses was no mere experiment in government. It was the earnest of a theocratic rule, or kingdom, which is yet to be, and which will embrace the whole world.
2. God promised David a Son who should sit upon his throne forever (2 Sam. 7:1-14). Solomon was a type of the true Son of David—the Christ, the Messiah. The One who has the keys of Hades and Death, has also the key of David (Rev. 1:18 and 3:7). Peter at Pentecost declared that David was not yet ascended into the heavens (Acts 2:34). David notwithstanding his own comparative failure, and the actual failure of his successors on the same throne, knew and believed that God would give him a Son to sit on his throne and establish it forever:

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ (the Anointed One) to sit on his Throne" (Acts 2:29, 30).

This was the hope of all the prophets and teachers in Israel from Moses to Malachi (Isaiah 11 and 12).

3. When the apostasy of Judah became such that God could tolerate their wickedness no longer, He sent them into the Babylonian captivity. At the same time that God took governmental power in the earth from Israel, and the kingship from the line of David, and gave both to the Gentiles in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, He did so only for a time. The times of the Gentiles are definitely limited in both Testaments (Dan. 2:44; and Luke 21:24). The sovereignty must return to Judah, not to the two tribes only but to the twelve, then no longer divided but one forever (Isa. 11:13; Ezek. 37:15-28; Amos 9:11-15). This is guaranteed by the Abrahamic Covenant.
4. This hope of the Old Testament is carried over by the Holy Spirit into the New Testament; and, with a vastly enlarged conception of the Kingdom, becomes the hope of the apostles, the prophets and all the saints of the primitive Church.
 - a. The angel Gabriel assured Mary that her Son was the Royal Heir to the Throne of David, and that He would in due time be placed there.

"And the angel said unto her, 'Fear not Mary for thou hast found favor with God. And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shall call His Name, Jesus. 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'" (Luke 1:30).

What a fearful evidence of the corruption of the human heart and the ruin of the intellect, when men, saved men, can lend themselves to a spiritualizing process the effect of which is to destroy the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning the kingly mission of the Son of God and the overthrow of Satan's power in the world. But they do it to their own undoing. The failure of the Young Ruler and its dispensational consequences will be found in the judgment day to the little in comparison with theirs. We have spoken above of the vicious process of basing dogmatic deduction on gratuitous assumption; and we may add that the

whole history of the corruption of Christianity affords no more damaging example of the inherent evil of the process than is found in the traditional theory of post-millennialism.

- b. The wise men asked, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"
- c. Jesus Christ as the Son of David claimed the Throne of David and His claim was rejected by the Jews. Instead of crowning they crucified Him (Matt. 22:42-45; 23:37-39; 21:1-9).
- d. It is an unmistakable fact, to those who have the ability to see facts, that the early part of Christ's ministry was occupied almost wholly concerning the Kingdom and that in the sense of Himself as the Son of David reigning on David's Throne (see Matthew, chapters 1--12). Matthew is specially the Gospel of the Kingdom. The rejection of the Christ by the Jews resulted in their rejection by God, the postponement of the Kingdom, and the introduction of the present parenthetical dispensation during which God is taking out of the world a people for Himself, but is not seeking to save the world. The latter is impossible while Israel is in bondage and Christ-King is personally absent.
- e. The apostles taught that that which constituted the hope of Israel as an earthly people is also the Hope of the Church in this dispensation as a heavenly people. Titus 2:11-13.

Here then we have the sufficient basis of the Young Ruler's question and the ground of his hope. As a God-fearing Jew and an honest son of Abraham he cherished the common aspirations of his fathers. He was building on the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-18; 15:1-18).

Very true, indeed, his notions of the kingdom were crude; but not nearly so much as that of the average Christian today. Besides, if after the apostles had spent had spent three years in the school of the Great Master, and their notions were still very crude, surely we can afford to be somewhat charitable toward this heroic young man. His motive was pure, his manner respectful, and his enthusiasm such as may well be copied in the twentieth century of our Lord.

THE QUESTION

What shall I do to inherit eternal life?

The first word here that demands attention is the little but mightily potent "I", the mysterious Ego. What fathomless depths lie unexplored in the heart of this

formally insignificant little dissyllable? Here is a subject, yonder is an object. How shall I effect their correlation; or, failing to correlate them, how long must I go on at war with both; or, is there something in both subject and object not reconcilable? And how shall that something be determined so that I may know what is real and what is fictitious in myself and the not-myself? Since the object is infinite and the subject is in all points the counterpart, must not my salvation and the salvation of the universal cosmos be in some way bound up in some mysterious unity of origin, process and destiny? And if there is to be a Savior must He not be greater than both subject and object? And must He not be above and beyond the relative? Must He not live and move and have His being in the absolute? And, if so, how can even He save me and the world to which I belong except He come into the relative and in some way identify Himself with it and partake of its limitations and sorrows? Can the "I", the ego, -myself, with its threefold consciousness of the world and self and God, ever get so free from itself, myself, and so into unity with God that in the knowledge Him and in the love of Him, I shall come to a real knowledge of what I really am and may possibly become. What am I? Who am I? Whence came I? And whither am I going? Pertinent questions surely. And what has the world's best philosophy to say in reply? Nothing, absolutely nothing that is worth saying, except it be by way of mental recreation.

Now, please, let us note two things: All these questions and more are involved in the searching interrogation of this Young Ruler. There is nothing there that is not here. There is vastly more here than there. Second, the only one to whom any man can go, if he is to have an answer which will satisfy, is the One to whom this young man went. The French philosopher said, "I think, therefore I am." And where did that lead him? But a far greater than he said and he said it with profound humility, "what I am, I am by the grace of God." And where did this lead the Apostle of the Gentiles? It was he who said again, "For me to live is Christ." Yes the "I am" of the Christ of God, or continue in bondage to the elements of the world. Thus only can the real truth of personality be found and preserved.

What must I do?

But this question holds in its bosom another; namely, "What must I not do?" And bound up with these two inseparable interrogations there are profound implications and suggestions as to moral possibility, opportunity, responsibility and inevitable final accountability. The positive implies the negative, and vice versa. And in threading my way between the two, so as not to err to the right or the left, I cry out in conscious helplessness, "Who is sufficient for these things in a world like this?" In view of these facts how true are the words of the Master: Straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto the life, and few there

are that find it.

Considering human nature as it is we need not be surprised that the Young Ruler turned back after he had made such a splendid effort to enter in. The commentators who denounce this young man, and have themselves vastly less to lose in order to enter, do not realize that where he was after "the great refusal" is exactly where they, for the most part, are now-outside the Messianic Kingdom. We sympathize with the young man because for many years we have been seeking to get this question experimentally answered; and so far we can only say with Paul, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before I press towards the Mark for the Prize." Yes, the young man was not after salvation, but after the "prize." We will see by and by exactly what this is.

Salvation is won by BELIEVING, but he prize by DOING. Salvation is dual in the Scriptures. [Salvation is] first from the guilt of sin; and, second from the power of sin. Every believer has the former, but this by no means implies that he will ever possess the latter. Only those who endure unto the end will have salvation in the second degree (Matt. 24:13). And if those who do not endure unto the end miss the second stage of salvation, what will be the consequence, the penalty? They will lose the Messianic Kingdom for the bliss and glory of which the Young Ruler was longing, being impelled in some degree by the spirit that moved the heart of the "father of the faithful"; but he found himself unable to "walk in the steps of that faith of his father Abraham which he had being yet uncircumcised" (Rom. 4:12). Who of us has not failed in this same walk?

Jesus said to His disciples: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). The word here translated "do" is one of the greatest in the New Testament, occurring nearly 600 times; and is translated by many different English words. Until a man is born from above he cannot do any works acceptable to God.

Salvation in the first degree is wholly by faith, faith in the works of another, even Christ the Redeemer. But after faith has come and the foundation of Christianity is laid deep in the spirit of man, not merely in his soul, all progress is conditioned by works of faith and love. The new life must find expression in acts of obedience, long suffering, and also in daring deeds of valor in the great conflict with the powers of darkness. Relatively speaking, the Reformers placed altogether too much emphasis on justification, and too little on sanctification. This defect continues until the present day in all the Reformed Churches. They seem only to have seen salvation in the first degree. When Christ comes and believers stand before the Bema (2 Cor. 5:10) the judgment will proceed, not on

the basis of faith, but of works as the only adequate proof of faith (Rev. 22:12). Referring to the second degree of salvation as the condition of entering the Messianic Kingdom, James says, "Can faith save him?" implying that it cannot (see Matt. 7:13, 14 and Luke 21:36). But Christians who fail in good works generally excel in evil works. The result is judgment (Luke 13:23-30; John 5:29). The traditional eschatology applies this latter passage exclusively to unsaved sinners, but we will prove later that this is another gratuitous assumption based on the misinterpretation of the narrative with which we are now dealing.

What shall I do to INHERIT eternal life?

A very superficial examination of the three scriptural words, "inherit", "inheritance", and "inheritor", indicates that they are all family words. They are never applied to a person who is yet outside the pale of salvation. Did Christ rebuke the Young Ruler for his use of this family word? By no means! Then did He not thereby virtually admit that the questioner was acting within the limit of his rights as a son of Abraham?

The very first time the word *inherit* occurs in the Bible, it has specific reference to the coming Messianic Kingdom.

"And he, Abraham, believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness. And He said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it" (Gen. 15:1-18)?

When a man is born again he becomes an heir; but heirs do not inherit till they come of age (Gal. 4:1, 2). But even before that time he may disinherit himself by misconduct. Only those who by spiritual growth pass out of the imperfection of childhood and grow up into Christ in all things will be able to establish their claim to the inheritance. Once the children of Israel came under the Blood of the Passover Lamb in Egypt they became heirs of all the wealth of the Land of Promise; but of the number over twenty years of age only Joshua and Caleb entered in. In Hebrews 3 and 4 the Holy Spirit applies this to the Church and shows that the peril of believers then, is the peril of believers today. The Young Ruler saw his danger, and in this he differs widely from those who denounce him as a legalist. Listen to the solemn words of Paul:

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

The words, "are sanctified," ought to read, "have been sanctified." The Corinthians were sanctified in Christ judicially, but in themselves, actually, they were carnal, mere babes in Christ, and as such they had no title to the inheritance; and Paul was honest enough to tell them so in the most explicit terms (2 Cor. 12:19-21; compare Gal. 5:19-21). Morally and spiritually, relative to their dispensational standing, the Young Ruler was on a much higher level than either the Corinthians or the Galatians, and there is no room for doubt that they were saved in the first degree.

What shall I do to inherit ETERNAL LIFE?

Owing to the fact that "Eternal Life" is the subject of the second chapter of the book we will only touch on the matter very briefly here. We have shown, and it is generally admitted, that the word salvation has a dual, or two-fold meaning in the Bible. Namely, as exhibited in justification and sanctification; that is, in deliverance from the guilt of sin, and deliverance from the power of sin. But while this fact has been generally admitted, there has been, and is, an implied assumption that wherever the former has been made good the latter must follow as a matter of consequence. This is a most fatal error, as millions of the redeemed who have passed over the lines know today to their sorrow and irreparable loss.

The Westminster Standards are very misleading in their teaching in this respect. Question 37 in the Shorter Catechism asks;

- Q. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?
A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory.

As we will prove in the next chapter there is absolutely no warrant in the Bible for any such teaching. The same theory, however, is held by most evangelical teachers of the present day.

Martin Luther injected deadly poison into the veins of the German, or Lutheran Church, the results of which are in such pathetic evidence in the war now being waged in Europe. He says:

"It is therefore as absurd and unsuitable that they, the righteous, should do good works, as if they were to say God should do good, the sun should shine, the pear-tree should bring forth pears three and seven should make ten, as all this ensues of necessity of the case from the nature of the thing."

Thus Martin Luther negates the very essence of the teaching of Jesus Christ as when He said "If ye now these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 3:17). In the light of the above extract it is easy to see why Luther disliked the Epistle of James, calling it an "Epistle of straw."

The expression "kingdom of heaven," or "kingdom of God" is also very common in Scripture. This also is dual. In Matthew 13 the kingdom of heaven is spoken in seven parables, and every time it refers to Christendom in the present dispensation, or age. But in passages like Matt. 18:3, it has reference to the Messianic Kingdom in the age to come when Christ through restored Israel will reign over all the nations in the world. The failure to observe this important distinction is a source of deplorable confusion in Bible study and teaching.

But until that memorable morning in December 1913, I never dreamed that the phrase "Eternal Life" was dual. That blessed ray of illumination made me to know it, and diligent examination of the Word confirmed it. This is what I mean by "The Dualism of Eternal Life." We will therefore for the present postpone the examination of these words till the next chapter. And though this is the strongest argument we have to present in opposition to the traditional interpretation of our narrative, we trust we shall be able in this chapter, without it, to demonstrate the truth of our position; and in doing so will undermine the foundations of that system of eschatology which has held sway in the churches for hundreds of years. It is because of the momentous issues involved that we are going so slowly and cautiously in our exposition of the narrative in hand.

The reply of Christ to the man's question:

"Why callest thou Me good? None is good save One, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother" (Luke 18:19, 20).

1. There is in these words no rebuke as to the Young Ruler's conception of what he was wanting, but only as to the substance and mode of his salutation. The Master wanted the seeker to think more deeply and thereby recognize His Divinity in order to deepen his faith and intensify his assurance. This was the stumbling block to the orthodox Jew.
2. Christ in reply to the question proposes something to be done. He knew exactly where His questioner was morally and also spiritually. If the man was unsaved and Jesus knew it, would He not have dealt with him accordingly? But if, on the other hand, the man was saved, and was sincerely desirous to qualify for a place in the Messianic Kingdom; and that

qualification could only be secured by holiness of life, by deeds of righteousness, by deep self denial, what better answer could Jesus have given than the one before us? According to the traditional theory a man can have salvation, and break every one of the commandments enumerated by the Savior, and yet enter the millennial kingdom, because, they say, it is all of grace. But Galatians 5:19-21 and 2 Corinthians 12:19-21, not to cite other passages, prove the falsity of the assumption. Listen to the testimony of the Holy Spirit:

“Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my laws” (Gen. 26:5). “Showing mercy to thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments” (Ex. 20:6). “If ye love me keep my commandments” (John 14:15). “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them he it is that loveth Me” (John 14:21). “And whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 John 3:22). “Blessed are they that do His commandments, at they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the City” (Rev. 22:14).

There is no getting away from the fact that in the traditional interpretation of Christianity there is a vast amount of downright Antinomianism. We would not belittle the Reformation. It was a magnificent work of God's Spirit. But it stopped short of the goal. The order of the kingdom as to growth is, "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." This is the order both for the individual and the Church. The Reformation stopped in the ear, hence the estimate of Christ in His judgment of Sardis which is a type of the Reformed Churches (Rev. 3:1-6).

To illustrate our point we will take one brief quotation from Martin Luther in his commentary on the Galatians. He says:

"Good works ought to be done; the example of Christ ought to be followed-Well, all these things will I gladly do. What then followeth? Thou shalt then be saved and obtain everlasting life? Nay, not so. I grant indeed that I ought to do good works, patiently suffer troubles and afflictions, and to shed my blood also, if need be, for the cause of Christ; and yet am I not justified, neither do I obtain salvation thereby."

As to salvation in the second degree this teaching is totally unscriptural. But there are some exceptions to this scene of ruin and spiritual desolation, and so the Holy Spirit adds:

"Thou has a few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy" (Rev. 3:1-5).

Believers become worthy only by good works wrought through faith and love (Rom. 4:12; Luke 20:35; Rev. 19:7; Phil. 2:12, 13).

3. Christ says to the Young Ruler, "If thou desirest to enter into The Life, keep the commandments" (Matt. 19:17). Notice the definite article before life. Both the Authorized Version and Revised Version have overlooked the distinctive significance of this little word in their translations. As will be shown later this is a very common error on their part. If the Savior had said, "If thou wilt enter into life", the reference might have been to life in regeneration; that is, to salvation in the first degree; but when He inserted the article it is quite evident that He had in mind full deliverance from the power of sin and entrance into the Life more abundant which in John He declared He came to impart to all those who will fulfill the conditions; and thus follow Him all the way (John 10:9-11; 15:9 and Luke 9:23; 21:36).
4. He is commanded to love his neighbor as himself (Matt. 19:19). This sums up all the commands in the second table of the Decalogue. It is the Golden Rule. Note as follows:
 - (1) This command is a New Testament precept.
 - (2) No unsaved man can possibly keep so holy a command. The fact that Christ required of him such a high standard implies grace in the man's heart, but not enough to carry him through. There are two words in the Greek for love in both the verbal and the noun forms: *agapaō* and *phileō*. The former is much the stronger word and it is this the Savior makes use of in His command to the Seeker after the deeper Life. When Jesus said to Peter, "Lovest thou Me", He used *agapaō*, but when Peter replied, "Thou knowest that I love Thee", he was careful to use *phileō*.
 - (3) How many Christians today love their neighbor as themselves? Why apply a test of character to this young man, whom they regard as unsaved, which they will not apply to themselves as saved. If living out the Golden Rule is to be the standard, not one out of a thousand can be saved even in the first degree. How absurd then to apply that rule to a man who is an utter stranger to grace as this man in the narrative is supposed to be. The Golden Rule means DOING, and only a really well saved man can do after this fashion.

The Young Ruler assures the Master that so he has kept the commandments. "All these have I kept from my youth up."

1. This man must have been honest and truthful; for if had lied the Master would have known it and have charged him so. The absence of any rebuke is proof that what he said was true. Let it also be borne in mind that under the Law the human heart was not searched as under the Gospel. Jesus was seeking to carry the young man over from the Old order to the New, and so dealt with him gently. No man ever was saved in the primary sense by keeping the law. Jesus, therefore, only required relatively perfect obedience to its demands even in His own people.
2. The Young Ruler shows his modesty in that when Christ said, "If thou wilt enter into the life, keep the commandments." He used for KEEP the strong word tereō, but when the Ruler made reply he used the milder word phulassō. That is, he means to say that he has been guarded on all these points; but would not deny that at times he had failed in his fidelity. Surely this is the mark of a sincere, truth-loving soul; a man of real humility; in short, a saved man, a man who was pressing towards the goal amid many temptations to draw back; for his high position both in Church and State must have brought him into trying situations. Nevertheless, on the whole, he had preserved his integrity.

The enquirer's second question: What Lack I Yet?

He was positive after years of watchfulness and study of the coming Kingdom and its glory, that he had some of the qualifications requisite to enter. On the other hand he was not fully satisfied. His heart was not completely at rest. He did not have the full assurance of Faith. The fifteenth Psalm sets forth the qualification of those who would share the glory of the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus comes. Let any man who knows he has salvation in the first degree read that Psalm honestly and with a heart open to the truth and he will most assuredly realize that there is still something lacking.

The second reply of the Master.

"And Jesus said unto him, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow me'" (Matt. 19:21).

"And Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, 'One thing thou lackest; go thy way sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up thy cross, and

follow Me” (Mark 10:21).

Let us examine these touching words very carefully. Note:

1. Jesus beholding him loved him. Was this the love of pity for a lost sinner yet in his sins? Not by any means. Not by any means. It was the love of appreciation, of admiration. The Savior saw wonderful possibilities in this Young Ruler. Possibilities not merely for the young man, but for Himself as well. His great heart longs for the companionship of those with whom He can enter into full friendship and fellowship (read John 17, and the Song of Solomon). “He loved him.” It is the very word used in John 11:5. “Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus”.

It is only said five times in the Four Gospels that Jesus, using the verb *agapaō*, loved certain individuals. They are John the Evangelist, Martha, her sister and Lazarus, and the subject of our narrative. It is also said of the apostolic body when Jesus washed their feet (John 13:1). The expression “His own” would exclude Judas.

Now it is certain that John and the other ten apostles were saved, Martha and her sister and Lazarus were saved. Why exclude the Young Ruler from the class in which the Holy Spirit places him without specific evidence to the contrary?

But if we examine Mark 10:21 and John 11:5 we find that while the verb is the same the mood is different; and in this there is profound significance. In the latter the tense is imperfect and might be translated, Jesus was loving Martha, and her sister and Lazarus. But in the case of the Young Ruler the verb is in the aorist tense, and indicates an act, in this case, begun and ended. Thus he lost the opportunity of his life (see John 14:21-23). So far as the blessedness of the age to come is concerned, he lost his soul (Matt. 10:32-39). Deliverance from this condition of self-centeredness is the Great Salvation provided for every believer who is willing to become wholly centered in Christ (Heb. 2:1-3). This is the secret of fruit-bearing (John 15:1-10).

2. If thou desirest to be PERFECT.

Here we have another key word. We cannot think without words. But even with them we are continually exposed to danger unless we attend closely to our definitions. This is necessary, not only because different words have different meanings, but the same word has different meanings in different connections. These difficulties are of themselves sufficient to tax the

resources of a really honest soul if that were all. But the perplexity of the problem of Bible interpretation is intensified a hundredfold by defective and even false translations. These facts show how in the very nature of things there must be few real teachers. Few have the time needed; fewer have the natural gifts and intellectual acquirements; and fewer still have that love of God and His Word, written and living, which must ever lie at the basis of the whole process.

The word here translated *perfect* misleading, since to most minds it conveys the idea of sinlessness, which in its application to any but Christ it never means.

The word is telos, an end, or the end. It answers excellently in the connection to our English word goal. If thou desirest to reach the goal, do so and so. The special point to be noted is that, in the estimation of the Young Ruler and of the Master also, the questioner has long ago entered the race; the starting point has been left far in the rear; but the goal has not been reached, and there are many difficulties in the way. It is not implied that the act of parting with his great wealth would of itself decide the contest in his favor. But it would remove a very great hindrance, an almost insuperable barrier, to the successful prosecution of the race.

It is a fact that telos is never once applied in the New Testament to an unbeliever, or to a sinner seeking salvation. Let us take a few examples:

- “Be ye therefore *perfect*, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48).
- “But when that which is *perfect* is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (1 Cor. 13:10).
- “Let us therefore, as many as be *perfect*, be thus minded, and if in anything ye be otherwise minded. God shall reveal even this unto you” (Phil. 3:15).
- “That we may present every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus” (Col. 1:28).
- “Let patience have her *perfect* work” (James 1:4).
- “*Perfect* love casteth out fear” (1 John 4:18).

Neither is it anywhere implied that when a state of such perfection is reached no further progress is possible, or desirable. When a young man

has reached twenty one years of age he may be said to have attained to the telos, to maturity, the goal, so far as the state of perfection is concerned; but he may make great progress in that state. The application to our present study is surely apparent to all unprejudiced minds. If the Young Ruler had had the courage, the faith, the grace, to lay all his wealth at the feet of the Master just then; he would by that act have entered the "state" of perfection. In the light of the Sermon on the Mount how few Christians ever enter this holy, heavenly state of absolute surrender? The believer who refuses to give up his unjust profits in business, his worldly companions, is much further, from the Kingdom of God than that young ruler. Let us go on to perfection (Heb. 6:1).

One Thing Thou Lackest

1. "Go thy way". The Go and the Come are inseparable. There are 44 words in the Bible translated go. The one used here is hupagō. We will note three examples of its use.

"Jesus saith unto her, 'Go call thy husband and come hither'" (John 4:16).

"Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof *goeth* and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matt. 13:44-46).

"And He said unto him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam'; he went his way therefore and washed and came seeing" (John 9:7).

The Young Ruler had not found in Christ and His gift the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price; and therefore he had not found himself at a sufficient depth in order to realize how profoundly self-centered he was, He who would find himself must first find the Christ. And he who has really found the Christ has already found himself (read Acts 9). There is no way out of self into Christ, but that of self-denial and self-sacrifice. In proportion as one goes out of himself and into Christ he objectifies the self, the fallen nature, and is thus enabled to distinguish between it and the true ego. It is only thus that a man can come to really hate his own life, his own self, and yield to God in absolute surrender (Luke 14:25-35). This truth would revolutionize current psychology if only it could be seen and believed; and the reflex effect on theology and anthropology would be most beneficent.

The attitude of the Young Ruler to the world and to his fellow men was not just right. To "Go" and make it right, was the condition of getting right with God at that deeper depth of his being which would constitute his essential qualification

for entering the kingdom.

2. Go Thy Way, Sell Whatsoever Thou Hast, And Give To The Poor.

"Whatsoever thou hast". That left him nothing. Much grace is needed even today to meet such an ordeal. How absurd to expect an unsaved sinner to meet such a drastic requirement. Why sinners should be expected to do what is experimentally impossible to 999 saints out of every 1000 even in this dispensation of grace?

"Sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor". WHY?

- (a) To test and prove his faith. Very good.
- (b) To indicate the infinite superiority of the things of God over the things of this world. Very good also. But you have not yet touched the heart of the problem.
- (c) There were many poor in those days and their needs were many. That is also to the point.
- (d) The poor were poor because he was rich. Their misfortune was his opportunity. That's it.

The civil law sanctioned his method of acquiring and retaining what was not really his by the Law of Moses, that is, of God. When the children of Israel entered Canaan every family had its portion of land; and the landmarks were for a time scrupulously observed. There were no owners of large estates until the economic system established by God had been thrust to one side by inhuman and godless rapacity (Num. 27:1-11).

Mark says he had great possessions (ktēmata polla). This word ktēmata specifically indicates that the Young Ruler's wealth was in landed estates. What according to Moses should have been divided amongst thousands of people had passed by wicked legislation into the hand of one aristocratic family to which this young man had become the legal heir. He had sinned grievously, though unconsciously, against his fellow men. This is why all the commands enumerated by the Master belonged to the Second Table of the Decalogue. Christ had said, "Thou shalt not steal" and he thought he had really kept that command. The fundamental reason of the difficulty rich men have in entering the kingdom, in its secondary sense, lies in the fact that they as a rule get their wealth dishonestly. Then as it accumulates they more and more set their hearts on it, trust in it, and make it their God.

3. THOU SHALT HAVE TREASURE IN HEAVEN

It is impossible for any man except by the grace of God given in very rich measure to lay up treasure in heaven and on earth at the same time. But it is possible with God. If God could get a man of wealth honestly acquired, wholly surrendered to Him, so as to trust Him absolutely, and throw all "the tricks of the trade" to the wind, there is no telling what might he accomplished. If rich men who are Christians could only see that God hates robbery for burnt offering; and that all such only increase their guilt; and if they could see that after being delivered from the guilt of sin they are by their unholy methods exposing themselves to fearful suffering during the coming age, they might in many cases be turned from the broad to the narrow way (Matt. 7:13, 14).

How blessed that we can during this brief probation on earth lay up treasure in heaven. Every kind act and loving deed done in the Name of Jesus will be remembered and rewarded. But where the great sacrifice is withheld such deeds coming forth a true heart of love even on a small scale, are not easy (Rom. 12:1, 2).

4. TAKE UP THY CROSS AND FOLLOW ME.

This is a very, very, difficult requirement. Very few Christians do it. Such a demand is never made of unbelievers; that is, of unsaved sinners. It means scorn and contempt and persecution. Those who do so are strangers and pilgrims in the earth (1 Peter 2:11). But they look for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:9, 10).

It is very probable that Christ's call to this young man would have resulted, if accepted, in his becoming a herald of salvation; and he might have left behind him a record similar to that of Philip, or Barnabas, or even Paul. Contrast our Narrative with Phil. 3:7-14.

“THE GREAT REFUSAL.”

This is what Dante called it (see Farrer's *Life of Christ*). "And when he heard this he went away very sorrowful; for he was very rich". This supreme moment comes to every believer when it is forever decided whether or not he is to share the inconceivable glory of the coming Messianic Kingdom (1 Cor. 2:9, 10). Indeed, there are two crisis moments: the first when salvation in the first degree is accepted or rejected; and the other when salvation in the second degree is at stake. Millions have come under the blood in Egypt (type of the world) and have crossed the Red Sea (type of the baptism of separation (Rom. 6:3-5), but they have not entered the Land of Promise; they died in the

wilderness (Rom. 8:13, 14). The type and antitype agree perfectly. How few of the saved will be found in possession of the wedding garment (Matt. 22:1-14, and Heb. 12:14). The Master's Comment:

"And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, He said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God. For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God" (Luke 18:24, 25). "How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God" (Mark 10:24).

Weymouth's translation here is very vivid: Jesus saw his sorrow and said, "With how hard a struggle do the possessors of riches ever enter the Kingdom of God". Note: if there is one truth that lies right out on the surface of the Bible it is this, that salvation from the guilt of sin, salvation in the first degree, is by faith apart from works because it is a gift, and the idea of struggling for this is utterly foreign to the whole scheme of redemption. This is perfectly true both of the type and the antitype. Look at the type. What had Israel to do when the destroying Angel was about to pass over Egypt? Simply to slay the Passover Lamb, sprinkle the blood on the two side posts and on the upper door post; then go inside and feast on the lamb roast with fire (Ex. 12:1-14). Surely that did not require any effort, or struggling. What could be easier, or simpler? But that was only salvation in the first degree. When, however, they crossed the Red Sea, and went three days journey into the wilderness all was changed. The wilderness life brought indwelling sin to the surface. This was God's purpose that He might show them how wicked their hearts were and lead them to throw themselves on Him for every need. But instead of humbling themselves and keeping in mind the almighty power of God, their Jehovah, they fell to murmuring and wanted to return to Egypt, and to their old bondage (Ex. 14:1-26). Their real difficulty and danger was not in the lack of water and bread, but in the unbelief of their wicked hearts, for God was abundantly able and willing to meet their need. But they must be tried, and the trial proved the unfit to enter the Land of Promise. Compare Numbers 14:1-45. They, though saved in the first degree, perished in the wilderness. Now turn to the antitype, 1 Corinthians 10:1-10.

"But with most of them God was not well pleased for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things".

Surely the moral of this is not difficult to apprehend.

The keeper of the prison at Philippi said to Paul and Silas "'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house.'" The keeper of the prison did as they taught him with

the result that right there and then, without any struggling, he was saved. That was salvation in the first degree. He had now in him the germ of the coming Kingdom, and to develop that seed of life he must make an open confession of Christ; he must cut with the fashionable society of the City; he had to stand for truth and righteousness as revealed in the Scriptures. Is it not likely, yea certain, that he met with persecution, and perhaps lost his position in the government? This no doubt seemed hard, but Paul had shown him that this is the way into the kingdom. Then also, as now, the wilderness life as in the case of Israel brought out the enmity of the flesh to God and His will; and men came to realize how depraved they were by nature, and how they needed deliverance from the evil of their own hearts more than from the external evils in the world about them. The overcoming life brings freedom from the power of indwelling sin, from the fear of men, and gives entrance to the Messianic Kingdom. Yes, indeed, "we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22; Rev. 3:21). There is no path but this (Matt. 7:13, 14). Oh, that preachers and Christians generally could see this truth! Then they would also see that they are in the same place of peril as the Young Ruler whom they now think to be a mere legalist. How delusive is the power of established custom and how fatal.

How HARD IT IS FOR THEM THAT TRUST IN RICHES TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD. The Kingdom of Heaven and The Kingdom of God are used interchangeably. This does not imply that in every respect they are absolutely identical. How shall we understand the phrase? It is customary for postmillenarianism to identify the Kingdom of God and the Church. This is a very great error and is productive of infinite confusion. Postmillenarianism believe and teach that Christ will not come till the end of the world, as they say; and that He is now reigning as King; that He will never come back to found a Kingdom on earth over which He will rule in person; that none will be raised from the dead till the end of the world, and that saved and unsaved will all be judged at the same time. Premillennialism takes the opposite position all along the line. The former have to admit that the latter was the teaching of the Church for at least the first 250 years of her existence.

We will not now discuss the Kingdom of Heaven, or of God, any more than to say that the new birth (John 3:3-5) does not introduce a man to the Kingdom in the sense in which the term is used in our narrative. Why is it so difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom?

1. Because he usually acquires his riches by means of unjust laws and by oppression of the poor.
2. Because such sins cannot be righted by mere confession. There must be

restitution in order to get right with God or man.

3. Because the rich cannot learn the lesson of perfect trust.

CHRIST'S TEACHING CREATES ASTONISHMENT

“When His disciples heard it they said, ‘Who then can be saved?’”

Why were they astonished? Because they had been under the false impression that as soon as Messiah came and set up the Kingdom all sincere Jews would enter simply because they were sons of Abraham. This is the very mistake, in substance, made by Christians today. The dualistic content salvation is as apparent in the Jewish dispensation as in the Christian, if only we come to the word of God with an open mind. The heroes mentioned in Hebrews 11 are not average believers of Old Testament times. They are samples of the overcomers of those pre-Christian ages. The writer says:

“And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise (of the Kingdom); God having provided some better thing concerning us that apart from us they should not be made perfect” (Heb. 11:39, 40).

The “us” of the last clause are the overcomers of the present dispensation, those who have gone unto perfection, the goal, the telos. See Phil. 3:7-14; Matt. 24:13; and Heb. 6:1-3. Heb. 6:4-8 and 10:26-31 present the judgment of God on believers who apostatize and go into a state of permanent disobedience to God and conformity to the world. They will be excluded from the Messianic Kingdom, but some time during, or at the end of the Millennium, they will be restored, having paid the very last mite (Matt. 5:25, 26). Here again type and antitype are in perfect accord. This is the theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews as a whole. Read especially Chapters 3 and 4, and Num. 14. Is it any wonder that the Young Ruler was anxious? And is it not astonishing that believers are now so indifferent to the Great Salvation (Heb. 2:1-3)? The first stage of salvation is easy because it is by faith regardless of past conduct (John 4:1-29); but the second is very difficult because it is altogether a matter of character (Rev. 14:1-5; 1 Cor. 13:1-13; Rev. 3:4).

But why did the disciples generalize what the Master had apparently specialized? They saw the young man go away very sorrowful because he was very rich, and could not make the sacrifice. Why should they express surprise when they were so poor, and the majority of the followers of the Christ were so poor, and bound to be so? There was a reason. The record says, as already pointed out, the young man had “great possessions”—*ktēmata polla*. But when

the Master said, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God”, He used a different word, namely, chrēmata in dative plural with the article (tois chrēmasin). This is very instructive and explains the astonishment of the disciples; for while the term ktēmata has special reference to property in land and real estate generally, chrēmata is wealth, riches, in any shape or form. Presumably it may include those physical, intellectual, and vocal qualities in which men trust and by means of which they press to the front in the rivalry of the world. The article differentiates between the riches of this age and the ages to come. How hardly shall they that trust in the riches (of the world) enter into the Kingdom of God? But Jesus assures them that with God even this is possible. God's Word and Spirit are able to break the strongest fetters the Devil can forge and apply, if only the person will let go and yield to His Divine operation, not otherwise.

Peter's interest and curiosity are aroused. Thank God for Peter. His pertinent interrogation points have given us some things that are very precious and which might not otherwise have been known. He, in this case, interjects two declarations with a timely interrogation:

“Behold we have left all” • “And have followed Thee”
“What shall we have, therefore?”

How many Christians can sincerely go before God today and say to their Savior individually. Behold I have forsaken all and have followed Thee? And if they cannot say it what claim have they to the glory of the age to come any more than this aristocratic but honest young Jew? They say that our Savior does not treat all who come to Him as He did the young man of our narrative. Why not? If God is no respecter of persons when it is a question of entering in at the first gate why should He become such when it is a question of entering in at the second gate? All Israelites could freely enter into the Court of the Tabernacle by a door thirty feet wide; but only the Priests could enter the narrow door into the Holy Place, and not even then unless they had first washed their hands and feet in the Laver at the entrance. Compare Ex. 30:20, 21; Rom. 8:13; John 13:8; Heb. 12:14.

Bengel draws a contrast between Christ's treatment of the Rich Young Ruler and Zacchaeus, also a rich man, in the next chapter (Luke 19:1). The tax gatherer offered half his goods to the poor and the Master seemed quite satisfied with the offering and especially because of its voluntary character. From this Bengel assumes that Christ's demand on the Ruler was something special and in no way a general law of the Kingdom. But he overlooks the significant fact that Zacchaeus raised no question concerning his prospects for a place in the coming

Messianic Kingdom. Thus the two cases are not at all parallel. The Ruler was running in the race for the prize, while Zacchaeus was after the free gift. This is plain from Luke 19:9, 10. The inflexible demand of Christ for all who would enter the Kingdom when He comes is stated in such Scriptures as Luke 9:23; 14:25-35; 13:24; John 14:21, 23.

Every believer is in Christ, eternally so, but we have overlooked the fact that in Christ, the True Tabernacle, there is an Outer-Court, a Holy Place, and a Holiest of all. All the saved in the first degree have access to the Outer-Court in Christ, but only those who enter the School of Christ, who forsake all, and become actual disciples can advance beyond that. And the conditions of discipleship are very severe (Luke 14:25-33-35). The word, *mathetēs* (disciples) comes from the verb *manthanō*, to learn. The mental activity involved in this kind of learning is merely preliminary and formal. The essential factors are volitional and affectional; and the process is inseparable from suffering. "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5:8). The Young Ruler is not alone in his failure to enter the School of the Christ. The way into the Holiest is very narrow. All believers are priests potentially, just as they are all sons potentially; but none become priests, or sons, actually, till through the Divine discipline they have passed through the narrow door leading to the Holy Place (Mal. 3:1-3; Rom. 8:13, 14; 2 Tim. 2:10-13). To refuse, in this dispensation of the Spirit, to pass on from the Outer-Court in Christ, to the Holy Place, and thence to the Holiest in Christ, is a greater sin than it was for the children of Israel to refuse to enter Canaan and possess their inheritance. The results will be even more serious (Numbers 13, 14; Heb. 3, 4; Gal. 5:19-21). The way in now, as then, is by works as the only sufficient evidence of faith and love. The faith and love that forsake all and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23; Psalm 45:10, 11; Rev. 19:7).

"Behold we have left all and have followed Thee". Both verbs are in the aorist tense and denote definite action taken at a given and known time in the past, and the effect continuing up to the moment of speaking. But while this was true of the twelve (eleven) it was not true of all His professed disciples (John 6:66, 69). It is by actual tests in hard places that the Master proves who are and who are not true disciples, and who shall enter the Kingdom at His Coming.

WHAT SHALL WE HAVE THEREFORE?

Peter not only put that question for the twelve, but for you and me. What shall I have in that Day of Days? Jesus said to the Ruler, "Thou shalt have treasure in heaven". But there were conditions—a go sell--and-come follow Me. "The children of this world are wiser than the children of light", because they

know how to lay up treasure in this age far better than the latter do for the age to come. But we shall assuredly reap as we sown. No law is surer than this.

Comparison of the Young Ruler and Peter:

- (a) They are both saved.
- (b) Their questions were equally acceptable to the Master.
- (c) In both cases the basis of their hope and interest lay in the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming Messianic Kingdom.
- (d) Neither of them had a clear conception of the nature of the Kingdom, or of the time and manner of its introduction.
- (e) Both earnestly desired to enter and participate in its joy.
- (f) Both realized that the Master was able to give the desired instruction, and lead in the way thereto.
- (g) They both hungered and thirsted after righteousness.

Points of Contrast:

- (a) Peter was a poor man, relatively, while the young Ruler was rich.
- (b) Peter found it comparatively easy to forsake his little all and follow the Master. With the Ruler it was not only difficult but impossible.
- (c) With Peter the higher motive ruled, and in the Ruler the lower. It was not so in everything; just in this one thing; but failure here was disastrous.
- (d) With the Ruler it was Jesus plus material goods, but with Peter Jesus was all and in all (John 6:68).
- (e) Under the supreme test the Ruler broke down irrecoverably; while under what was to Peter the supreme test he broke down but recovered himself (Matt. 26:69-75).
- (f) Peter had in his heart something the Ruler did not have. He could say, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. The other could only say, Good Master.

- (g) Peter will have a place in the Messianic Kingdom while the Ruler will be excluded. But may he not have returned and complied with the Master's request?

A double query: If the circumstances of birth, early education, and general environment, had been reversed, and Peter had been rich and the other poor, would Peter have acted as he did? Will God take note of these things in the Day of Judgment? Surely!

The reply of Jesus to Peter's question:

"And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the Regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My Name's Sake shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. And many that are first shall be last; and the last first" (Matt. 19:28-30).

"And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's; but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses and brethren and sisters, and mothers and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the age to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first" (Mark 10:29-31).

We will examine this mine of natural riches (chrēmata) which is to be exchanged for the riches of the Coming Kingdom.

1. The first fact to be carefully noted is that these riches of the Kingdom are only for those who forsake all and follow Jesus, and keep on following Him to the end of the race. He that endureth to the end shall be saved with the great salvation (Heb. 2:1-3; Matt. 24:13).
2. What has to be given up is all that which is most dear to the natural heart. Naught else will constitute a sufficient demonstration of perfect love to God and man (Mark 12:28-31).
3. The return is an hundred fold in this present time, this dispensation. Young translates Mark 10:29, 30 thus: "And Jesus answered and said—who may not receive a hundred fold now, in this present time." That is, all disciples will not receive a full reward, but they may, if they wish to follow Jesus fully (2 John 8). True disciples are the seed sown on good ground and bring forth

fruit thirty-fold, sixty-fold, and hundredfold. Who hath ears to hear let him hear.

4. "Shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This governmental power is elsewhere extended to all overcomers (Rev. 3:21).
5. "With persecutions." This is what above all things fallen human nature dislikes. To escape this what will not the average Christian do? To drift with the bewitching current, to receive the plaudits of men, to bask under the sunny smile of the rich and affluent how delightful-to the flesh. But it is the Master Himself who says, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you." Yes, "of YOU".
6. In the Regeneration. In the *palingenesia*, *palin*, anew, or again, and genesis, a begetting, a second birth. What the new or second birth is to man now; that will the *palingenesia* be to the world, the *kosmos*, in the age to come. "The whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for (the coming of Christ and the consequent) manifestation of the Sons of God" (Rom. 8:19-22).
7. "And in the age to come Eternal Life." Matthew puts it, "and shall inherit eternal (everlasting) life."

Christ concludes the narrative with the very solemn words: "But many that are first shall be last and the last first". The Young Ruler was very highly favored in many ways. He had plenty of time to study the prophecies; he was in close touch with the priests and could enquire of them as to the meaning of the promises to Israel; and he was one of the favored few of our race who have had the opportunity to talk with the Great Teacher face to face. But he turned his back on his only Helper and chose the broad way in preference to the narrow.

It is for the candid reader to say whether or not we have established our thesis; namely, that the Young Ruler is not a sinner seeking salvation in the first degree; but a true, yet imperfect, son of Abraham seeking entrance to the coming Messianic Kingdom. If we have succeeded in doing this we have not only found the key to the true interpretation of the narrative; but we have established a principle which affects the whole realm of the traditional eschatology; and proves it to be thoroughly unscriptural. And yet we have left untouched two of the most important facts in the narrative. Namely, "Eternal Life", and the "Kingdom of God". As we proceed with our study the evidence will increase and intensify. May we have grace to lay hold of the precious promise of the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth.

A CONFIRMATORY COMPARISON

According to Luke the question asked of Christ by the Young Ruler had been asked once before by a Lawyer (an interpreter of the Mosaic Law); and in this we find ample confirmation of our interpretation:

"And behold a certain Lawyer stood up and made trial of Him, saying, 'Teacher what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And he said unto him, 'What is written in the law? What readest thou?' And he answering said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.' And he said unto him, 'Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live'" (Luke 10:25-28).

It is notable that the account of the Rich Ruler is found in all the Synoptical Gospels, but not in John; while the incident of the Lawyer is peculiar to Luke. There is a reason for this. The Synoptics present the human, historical side of the Christ, as the Son of Man; the prominent feature of which is His claim to be the Messiah of Israel as foretold by the Prophets of the O. T.; and the validity of that claim as demonstrated by His genealogy, His works, and His Life; and then the model for holy conduct as the Law demanded. But John presents the Deity of the Christ as the back ground and support of His holy life and marvelous works and Messianic claims. According to the Jewish conception of the Scriptures every Jew who was circumcised and sought to order his life by the Law of Moses was eligible for a place in the Messianic Kingdom. This was quite correct and approved by Christ. Where they erred was in the false interpretation of the Law and of the Prophecies. They gave much attention to the ceremonial part of the Law, tithing mint, anise, and cumin. But they neglected the weightier matters of the (moral) Law. Hence, the righteous anathema of the Savior (Matt. 23:13-33).

The reply of Abraham to the rich man in Hades proves that in the writings of Moses and the Prophets they had all the light they needed to enable them to distinguish between right and wrong in human conduct (Luke 16:31). In this connection let me point out a significant fact in reference to the relation of the three Synoptic Gospels to the Gospel according to John and the remainder of the N. T. It will be admitted that there is no greater word in the N.T., than "believe" and its cognates. Then here is a point of deep significance: in the three Synoptical Gospels the word occurs about 30 times; in John's Gospel 90 times; and in the remainder of the N.T., over 100 times. Not only so but this also: In the Synoptical Gospels this important word is not used, prior to the resurrection, in reference to salvation from the guilt of sin, but in reference to a special promise (Luke 1:45); in reference to mighty works (Mark 11:22-24); to healings (Matt. 9:29); and, very especially, in reference to Christ being the Son

of David, the Heir to David's Throne; in short, the King of the Jews (Matt. 2:2; 21:5; 27:11, 29, 37, 42). Here we have the Gospel of the Kingdom, but not the Gospel of the Grace of God for this Gentile Age. But in John's Gospel and in the rest of the N.T. while Kingdom truth is never absent, it is viewed rather from its celestial side.

Briefly presented the state of the case is this: In the Synoptical Gospels it is taken for granted that the true children of Abraham are already saved and heirs of the Messianic Kingdom, that is of "Eternal Life", the popular synonym of the Kingdom of God in the Age to come; and that all they had to do to inherit "eternal (age-lasting) life" in Messiah's Kingdom was to order their lives according to God's revealed will in the Old Testament (see Ezek. 18:1-18; Psa. 15).

Viewing the matter in this light, as presented in the Synoptical Gospels, we see how natural and proper it was for the Young Ruler to ask Christ what he must do to enter the Messianic Kingdom—the Golden Age of Israel's Prophets.

That Christ did not expect any honest Jew at that time and under the aspect of truth presented by Mathew, Mark and Luke, to approach Him on any other basis is quite apparent from the cordial reception the young man received and the directions given him.

All this shows how unjust and lacking in discrimination is the traditional interpretation which represents the inquirer as seeking salvation from the guilt of sin, and on this baseless assumption charges him with legalism and self-righteousness. But for the sake of comparison, or contrast, let us assume that the young man was seeking salvation (as a sinner) by works, and that Christ disapproved of his conduct because of this fact. Granting this we turn to the case of the Lawyer (Luke 10:25-37) for light.

The fact is apparent on the surface that the question asked of the Master by the two men is identically the same: Namely—"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" What was the Masters reply to the lawyer? Did he reply as did Paul to the keeper of the prison at Philippi? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved"? Not at all! Neither the Lawyer nor the Ruler asked to be saved in this sense. As honest sons of Abraham they rightly took this for granted and the facts proved in each case that they had considerable grace in their hearts. And in neither case did the Master deny or challenge the validity of the assumption. But if, on the other hand, we put a post-Pentecostal interpretation on the two passages, that is, after the offer of the Kingdom had been withdrawn from the Jews (Matt. 23:37-39), and grant that the Rich Ruler and the Lawyer were seeking salvation in the sense that the Church has usually understood that word,

and thus condemn the Ruler for his legalism, we are at the same time bound to censure the Savior for telling the Lawyer to do the very thing we condemn in the Ruler. But this we dare not do. We must either condemn both or justify both. Christ did not condemn either, but counseled them to go forward in the path in which they were already walking, only to go farther and deeper.

When the Lawyer had given the substance of the Moral Law as consisting in love to God and man, the reply of the Master was, "This do and thou shalt live." What did He mean by that? The traditional view supposes that by so doing he would be saved from the guilt of sin and receive the new birth. But if so that would be salvation by works, would it not? Nevertheless that was not Christ's thought. But rather thus: This do and it shall be said of thee as of Zacharias and Elizabeth, "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Law blameless." Luke 1:6; and when you die you will die in the faith (of Messiah's Kingdom, Heb. 11:13); and during your sojourn in the intermediate state, you shall have your place among the living (Matt. 22:31, 32), and not among the dead (John 6:49; Rom. 8:13); and then you will be rewarded with a part in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6; Luke 20:35; 21:36) and shall live in all the restored and perfected powers of your redeemed manhood, and share with the Son of David the glory of His Messianic Reign and Kingdom.

Then when the Lawyer asked, "And who is my neighbor?" there came from the lips of the Master the beautiful story of the traveler who fell among thieves while on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho. And what a fearful indictment of the religious leaders of that day, and especially of their interpretation of the Scriptures. Spiritually understood the way from Jerusalem to Jericho is still very dangerous, but right there may be found and illustrated the two ways of Matt. 7:13, 14. And what if that "certain man" was the Savior Himself? And if so the Jews were the "thieves" and they too in their leaders played the role of Priest and Levite, while it remained for the despised Samaritan to minister to the Man of Sorrows. Compare Luke 20:9-15; 7:36-38; 23:26.

Thus we conclude that the question that was on the lips of every pious Jew, equally becomes the lips of every sincere Christian: "What shall I do to inherit eternal (Millennial) life?" And the compassionate Savior has not left us without an answer (Luke 14:25-33; Heb. 12:14; 1 John 3:1-3).

I may remind the reader before we pass on that he ought not to leave this chapter until he has satisfied himself of the radical antagonism between the Premillennial and the Postmillennial conceptions of the Second Coming of Christ. The man who accepts and stands by the latter deliberately puts himself in the power of the great enemy of God and man, and as deliberately defies

the Holy Spirit to lead him into the truth. Our narrative of the Young Ruler is only one out of hundreds and even thousands of Scriptures which cannot be understood apart from the Premillennial view of Christ's Second Advent, His parousia, or personal presence. One of the most notable of these is Rev. 20:1-6. It is the antagonism between truth and error, between righteousness and unrighteousness, between God and Satan. Yet I have no definite assurance that even Premillennialists, generally, will accept my interpretation of the narrative we have been studying. If they reject it they must do so on postmillennial grounds.

In conclusion let us not forget where we are ethically and exegetically: If we have established our thesis we have accomplished two positive ends with certain negative results following by logical implication. Positively, (1) we have found the correct interpretation of the narrative of the Rich Young Ruler; and (2) we have established a principle of interpretation of universal significance throughout the total length and breadth and height and depth of the Revelation of God in His Holy Word. Our entire outlook on God and Human Destiny is fundamentally transformed. And, on the negative side, we are obliged to infer that the whole body of Reformed Theology is affected, discounted more or less; and the traditional eschatology is demonstrated to be an elusive fabrication, a cruel imposition, a masterpiece of the Prince of the Power of the Air. If the reader has any doubt of this let him resolve by the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit to follow the clue still further.

While we believe our argument is conclusive as to the true interpretation of the portion of Scripture under consideration, the reader will remember that we have omitted the testimony of two sections, the evidential value of which is of infinite significance. The first of these is found in the expression "Eternal Life", and the second in the complimentary conception of the Messianic-Theocratic Kingdom. The former we will at once proceed to examine in our next chapter.

As the work stands in manuscript form there are seven chapters, the title of the seventh being, "The Covenanted Messianic-Theocratic Kingdom", but I find it impossible to get the last chapter in without extending the work beyond certain necessary limits. But the argument is not only complete as far as it goes, but also, I believe, unanswerable, so far, at least, as the main contention is concerned. I am hopeful that the seventh chapter will appear before long in another connection.