

and lessons are drawn for the Apostles in the Church
 vants; for God's servants in this Age are Christian:
 and Gentile sections no reference is made to 'ser-
 are, as throughout Scripture, moral: in the Jewish
 not faith; whereas the signs presented to the Church
 signs obvious to the senses, for they walk by sight,
 Jewish and Gentile sections, and their signs are
 figurative: words of sight, not faith, occur in the
 sections all is literal—in the Church section all is
 whose destiny it reveals. In the Jewish and Gentile
 peculiarly characteristic of the group of mankind
 sections radically distinct from the rest, is
 Three Sections.

Thus each main section,
 (3) the Church; and (4) the Gentile.
 two further questions, the destiny of (2) the Jew;
 destiny of the Temple, and then, in answer to their
 in answer to the disciples' first question (1) the
 utterance; and the revelation is *fourfold*, revealing,
 are selected to receive and transmit this world-
 (Dan. vii. 2, 3; Rev. vii. 1, 9, etc.): so *four* apostles
 the end of the Age. Four is the world-number
 (1 Cor. x. 32), all of whom remain in the world up to
 JEWS, THE GENTILES, AND THE CHURCH OF GOD"
 of the three inspired divisions of mankind—"THE
 folds, in three deeply serrated sections, the destiny
 therefore expect, the totality of mankind: it un-
 that embraced the world, covers, as we should
 OUR Lord's great prophecy, evoked by questions

The Prophecy on Olivet

"THE VANGUARD" REPRINTS.—90

PRESENT DAY LEAFLETS.—2.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH.

The denial of the Virgin Birth of Christ, together with the acceptance of an Incarnation, is a system heading straight for Gnosticism. It is a growing denial. "The giving up of the Virgin Birth at last," says one who has abandoned it, "gave some of us a considerable shock. But it would be the height of folly and unchristian charity for any of us to affirm that a non-belief in the Virgin Birth is incompatible with the strongest and most reverent faith in the Incarnation of our Saviour Christ Jesus." *Then the Incarnation must have been wrought through some other means than in the Conception.* This is Gnosticism. THE FIRST KNOWN CHRISTIAN TEACHER TO DENY THE VIRGIN BIRTH WAS CERINTHUS, THE GREAT Gnostic OF EPHEBUS. Our Lord, Cerinthus taught, was born Son of Joseph; the Christ, a Divine Being, descended upon Him in the waters of Jordan; on the cross the Christ abandoned Jesus, who cried after Him, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Gnosticism is perhaps the deadliest internal foe the Faith of Christ ever confronted, and it is foretold as the basis of the approaching Apostasy. 1 Tim. iv. 1-3.

The Church. Church section is wholly diverse. Parables immediately begin, and compose the whole section; for to us it is given to know the *mysteries* of the Kingdom. Thus the first section is local, and directed to Judea: the second is universal, even as literal, in the second figurative: 'night' in the first is literal, in the second figurative: 'sleep' in the first is literal, in the second figurative: 'winter' in the first

The Jew. Matt. xxiv. 7-31. Thus, after the first question of the apostles has been met by the announcement of the Roman destruction (Matt. xxiv. 1-6), and separated by a great gulf from the rest—"But the *End* [concerning which the disciples asked, the consummation of the Age] is not yet," the Jewish section—uttered for "them that are in Judea" (xxiv. 16)—at once deals with a literal 'holy place,' or rebuilt temple; 'salvation' is used in the sense of physical deliverance; the Gospel named is the Gospel of the Kingdom; escape is by physical flight to the mountains; prayer is to be offered that the *sabbath* be not violated by the flight emphasised, for the Jew is still in danger from messiahs in 'inner chambers'; and the tribes of the land, beholding Messiah's descent in glory, and penitent, are gathered as God's earthly elect, not from Heaven, but from the four winds. *All is Jewish throughout.*

section only, for it alone concerns them and us. All three sections are radically distinct in phraseology and theological import.

The Gentile. Matt. xxv. 31-46. The Gentile section gives the last act of the old Age before the actual establishment of the Kingdom, and covers the last remaining portion of mankind at the End. It is wholly silent on the Church, and its reference to the Jew—the 'least brethren'—is veiled: in it 'all the nations'—the mass of Gentiles—are gathered before Christ. In all three sections Christ appears in His universal title as Son of Man; and, in the Jewish section, as Son of Man

is literal, 'summer' in the second figurative: 'house' in the first is literal, in the second figurative. So also, whereas the Jewish escape is earthly, across the mountains into the wilderness, the Church escape is heavenly—a sudden and mysterious disappearance off the earth altogether: the Jewish escape depends on physical activity, the Church escape depends on spiritual watchfulness: therefore prayer in the one case is for the avoidance of flight on a sabbath or in winter, in the other case it is for moral worthiness (Luke xxi. 36). Sex is a disability to the Jewish escape; it is none to the Christian. *No household (xxiv. 45) since our Lord spoke has been recognised by God except the Christian Church;* so also the Parable of the Virgins, ready and unready for the Advent, is manifestly *Christian;* and the Parable of the Talents is especially stated (xxv. 14, 19) as extending from Advent to Advent, and is therefore also Christian. So the two living (xxiv. 40), one rap and one left, and the ten dead (xxv. 1), five prudent and five imprudent, together make up the Twelve of the whole Church. *All is Christian throughout.*

The positive truth of which Gnosticism is a denial is surpassingly lovely. All requirements of Messiahship mingled, as only God could blend them, in our Lord. MESSIAH HAD TO BE THE LEGAL HEIR OF JOSEPH. Both Joseph and Mary were in unbroken descent from David, Joseph through Solomon, Mary through Nathan; but Joseph was heir of the *elder* branch; no Jew, therefore, could accept Jesus as Messiah, unless, in the eyes of the Law, he was son of Joseph. Betrothal, under the Law, involved the legal status of wedlock (Deut. xxii. 23-24); so, *after* the espousal, and *before* the marriage, took place the conception by the Holy Ghost. So also God's angel said: "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife" (Matt. i. 20); and Gabriel could say, with the Law on his side, "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David" (Luke i. 32). For Jesus was the legal Heir of the Head of the eldest branch of the Royal House.*

Another requirement had to be met. MESSIAH HAD TO BE THE SON OF A VIRGIN. The seed of the woman was the first promise of God. Gen. iii. 15. Isaiah is more explicit. "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign"—an unmiraculous conception would be no sign—"behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Is. vii. 14). "How?" asked Mary. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.

* Rom. i. 3 seems to prove that Luke's genealogy is Mary's. Jehovah's word (Jer. xxii. 30) irrevocably barred the ancestry of Joseph from producing the Messiah; therefore, if Jesus was Joseph's Son, He was not the Christ. Our Lord was heir of Solomon without being the actual seed of Jehoniah.

... For no word from God shall be void of power" (Luke i. 35). What God says God can do: if from stones God could raise up children to Abraham—and God's Word says so—miraculous conception cannot be impossible. *Without it there could be no Messiah according to the Prophets.* "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman"—flesh of our flesh—"made under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4).

A third requirement had to be met. MESSIAH HAD TO BE THE SON OF GOD. For it is written:—"Unto us a child is born, . . . and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David" (Is. ix. 6). The throne of David—the Son of Joseph; a child is born—the Son of Mary; the Mighty God—the Son of the Most High. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called . . . the Son of God." Not, shall be the Son of God; that He always was: but, shall be called the Son of God; for "the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh." Jesus was born the Christ. "There is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke ii. 11).

So all competing claims of Scripture coalesce in the Virgin Birth, with which the Christian faith is established, without which it is destroyed. In Joseph, the legal Heir; in Mary, the human Sacrifice; in the Holy

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Age.
*destiny of the whole world at the consummation of the time of the End, our Lord thus answers by revealing the shown to Himself. Worldwide questions, covering the bassadors of Israel, which Christ will accept as grace shown to the miraculously gifted (Mark xiii. 11) am-ripeness to be reaped; and (3) for the Gentile, grace Christian, perpetual watchfulness and prayer for instantaneous flight, on a given signal; (2) for the reveals its sole avenue of escape: (1) for the Jew, each group our Lord portrays its peculiar peril, and finding safety through his kindness to the Jew. To safety in the wilderness, the watchful believer destiny of all mankind; the faithful Israelite finding Thus our Lord, as Universal Prophet, unfolds the *Gentile throughout.*
 upon Christ as the Jehovah of the Jews. All its world immediately before the Advent, and based Christ; but a law of works peculiar to the Gentile the Law of Moses, nor works done after faith in works—"inasmuch as ye did it"; but it is neither (Eph. i. 4), judgment is not by faith, but by a law of the world' (xxxv. 34), unlike the Church elect 'before' in a later epoch, and elect 'from the foundation of world. So for the Gentile alive at the Advent, saved as King, and as a King unknown (xxxv. 37) to the Gentile hold, and also as Bridegroom; and in the Gentile, only; but in the Christian, as Lord of the House-*

Ghost, Immanuel: in Joseph, the Son of David; in Mary, the Son of Man; in the Holy Ghost, the Son of God: in Joseph, Heir of Israel (Matt. xxi. 38); in Mary, Heir of the world (Rom. iv. 13); in the Holy Ghost, Heir of all things (Heb. i. 2). The Branch of God was grafted into human stock *from without*: so, in the manner of all grafts, it bore its own fruit, not the fruit of the stock. "That which is to be born shall be called *holy*." But where lay the supreme reason of the Virgin Birth? MESSIAH'S BODY HAD TO BE THE SOLE BURNT OFFERING. The reason for Bethlehem is in Calvary. "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. *Wherefore* when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, *but a body didst Thou prepare for Me*; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast no pleasure: then said I, Lo I"—with a Body prepared, not so much for the birth, as for the bruising (Gen. iii. 15)—"am come . . . to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 4). God could not be bruised for sin: God *incarnate* could be, and was. Is. liii. 5. It was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin: *it is impossible for the blood of the Son of God not to take away sin*. What remains? *That we identify ourselves with the Sacrifice*. "And he"—the sinner—"shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him" (Lev. i. 4).

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